

Factors Affecting the Growth of Women-Owned “Traditionally Feminine Businesses”

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The number of women starting and owning businesses has grown noticeably during the past decade. Most of such businesses are restricted to “traditionally feminine” areas such as handicrafts, needlework, food processing and beauty culture etc. Majority of such businesswomen operate at the micro level while only a minority has been able to successfully develop their businesses to the macro level. In contrast, the number of male business operators who successfully run traditionally feminine businesses at macro level is relatively higher than that of their female counterparts. This raises the research question as to what prevents females successfully reaching the macro level. The objective of the study is to investigate the factors affecting the growth of women-owned traditionally feminine businesses from micro to macro level.

The study was conducted in two stages. In stage one, a case study strategy was adopted to get a better understanding of the subject being studied. Fifteen women business operators who were engaged in traditionally feminine businesses, registered at the Central Province Women's Chamber of Small Industries and Commerce were included in the sample. Multiple data collection methods were adopted to collect data. Generalization of the findings of the first stage to a wider population was examined through the second stage of the study, which was a questionnaire survey. The main factors affecting the growth of women-owned businesses were found to be male domination, dual role stress, lack of spouse's involvement in the business, restrictions on venturing out, social taboos, and poor utilization of social networks. The implications should necessarily view the women-owned businesses as a system of cooperative relationships and different training approaches are important to upgrade the women business operators in the country.

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