



ENTREPRENEURIAL CHALLENGES OF TRANSGENDER ENTREPRENEURS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Transgender people have a tough time integrating into mainstream society and starting enterprises due to social marginalization. Sporadic transgender individuals have laid the foundation for the company's launch. The goal of this study is to examine the barriers to business success faced by transgender business owners in Pakistan. Twenty transgender business owners from all around Pakistan who had abandoned begging and commercial sex work were among the interviewees. Ground theory research identified seven key areas: rivals; prejudice, a lack of financial and human resources, natural calamities, a lack of product knowledge, and technical barriers are just some of the problems we face. Participants indicated it was difficult to start a business because of discrimination and a lack of funding. These findings go beyond what we already know about the challenges faced by cisgender entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Gender, Transgender, Transgender Entrepreneurs, Challenges, Entrepreneurship, Pakistan



1. Introduction

The World Health Organization states that "transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and expression do not conform to the norms and expectations traditionally associated with the sex assigned to them at birth; it includes people who are transsexual, transgender, or otherwise considered gender non-conforming." Anyone who identifies themselves through psy will fall under this definition (Policy on the Welfare of Transgender Individuals, 2018) The transgender population constitutes a marginalised segment of society (Asiyah, 2014).

Transgender people were regarded with dignity in Pakistani traditions and customs prior to colonialism. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 effectively made transgender individuals illegal. Prejudice and marginalization have increased to varied degrees over the world, despite colonialism's rejection of it (Panneer et al., 2019). One of the various religions that have existed from the beginning of time is Hinduism. (Bhattacharya, 2018). Hindu mythology's "ardhanarishvara" stands for the union of male and female elements in Godas well as their inseparability (Sampath & Baskaran, 2016).

Since the Ramayana and Mahabharata, transgender people have existed. In North India, they are known as Hijras, and in South India, they are known as Aravani (Kalra, 2012). (Poguri et al., 2016). The transgender community is viewed with ambivalent views in Hinduism since they ask the Hijra people for their blessings before marriage and childbirth but also because they are ostracised by society as a whole (Kalra, 2012). The truth has shown that transgender people are denied access to necessities including restroom facilities, career opportunities, and health care. 2019 (Panneer et al.).

The isolation of transgender people causes them to turn to begging, commercial sex work, construction and other low-wage activities. Isolation manifests and is documented as a form of social exclusion (Kattari & Begun, 2017). (Panneer et al., 2019) and a few transgender people have created their own businesses (Delliswararao&Hangsing,2018). Recently, researchers have been more interested in transgender studies. Research in the field of transgender studies is currently centered on cross-disciplinary subjects that draw on the discourses of the social and natural sciences, the arts, and psychology. The understanding of gender, identity, and desire in various contexts has benefited from these related research (Bhattacharya, 2018).

To gain a better knowledge of the transgender population as well as real economic concerns, this study examines the difficulties transgender company owners confront. Transgender entrepreneurs have a unique set of commercial obstacles that can only be



understood via the use of a grounded theory method, which makes data collection and analysis much simpler.

2. Literature Review

In the early stages of beginning a business, entrepreneurs face a variety of difficulties, such as a weak economy and a regulatory environment that is ambiguous and complex (Benzing, Chu, & Kara, 2009).

Poor infrastructure, limited access to capital, corruption, and unfavorable economic policies plague small business owners in developing countries just as much as they do in developed ones. These challenges include a lack of clarity in business laws and difficulties evaluating small businesses due to the poor design of their contracts and assets (Chu, Kara, Zhu, & Gok, 2011). Women entrepreneurs have been the subject of literature on the subject for more than 30 years, and because they employ 40% of the workforce, they are viewed as a valuable resource for the nation (Jennings & Brush, 2013). (Ganesan, Kaur, & Maheshwari, 2002).

Women business owners have succeeded in breaking the "glass ceiling" and making their place in a society that is dominated by men over the years (Hariharaputhiran, 2014). It is not uncommon for female entrepreneurs to face issues such as gender bias and lack of operating capital as well as a lack of confidence in marketing and the absence of family support, mistrust, lenders and collateral security. However, the number of men and women who choose entrepreneurship as a vocation is still significantly lower among the former (Artz, 2017). (Ganesan et al., 2002).

Families that do not know about gender non-conforming people have simply rejected their transgender offspring, despite Pakistan's reputation as a diversified nation that embraces all cultures and customs (Delliswararao & Hangsing, 2018).

Eunices are people whose gender identification is at odds with their sexual orientation (Sampath & Baskaran, 2016). The vast majority of the difficulties transgender people face are physical and legal (Sellers, 2014). A lack of identifying documents, a poor socioeconomic standing and substandard housing, no sex (Bund 2013), disrespect, discrimination, and a zero-tolerance policy among pupils and school employees are just a few of the challenges they confront. To put it another way (Asmy & Nagaraj, 2015). Transgender people experience much greater health inequalities than cisgender people (Eisenberg et al., 2017).



Begging and commercial sex work are a transgender person's primary sources of income, and even if they find other employment opportunities, they will still engage in these activities (Chettiar, 2015). Transgender women avoid employment opportunities because of the discrimination and exploitation they may face (Bund, 2013). The majority of transgender people reported having a wide range of mental health issues, including sadness and low self-esteem, PTSD and major depressive episodes, OCD and panic disorders, as well as thoughts of self-harm and suicide as a collective (Virupaksha & Muralidhar, 2015). Although many transgender people are victims of assault and abuse, some have opted to work for themselves and start their own businesses despite these hardships (Chakrapani, 2010). When it comes to transgender people and entrepreneurship, it's important to recognize the challenges they face.

Statement of Problem

People who identify as transgender were not included in past studies, which meant that transgender entrepreneurs were not given adequate attention.

Objective of the Study

The study's purpose is to identify the challenges transgender business owners experience when they first begin their enterprises.

Methodology

Researchers Barney Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss of the United States were the driving force behind the development of Grounded Theory (Kenny & Fourie, 2014). An methodology that can be adapted to suit the needs of the project (Tie, Birks, & Francis, 2019). Gathering, synthesising, interpreting, and conceptualizing qualitative information for theory creation are all steps in the inductive process of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2001).

Grounded theory differs from other qualitative procedures in that it places a strong emphasis on comparing methods and collects and analyses data in real time. Early category construction, intermediate analytical writing between data coding and first draught writing, concept development sampling, and sampling are all examples of this. f) Postponing the literature review g) making an effort to develop a hypothesis (Charmaz, 2001). In other words, qualitative research that develops a theory or provides a comprehensive account of an event, occurrence, or action based on the viewpoints of numerous participants is what is meant by "grounded theory" (Creswell, Hanson, Clark, & Morales, 2007).



An empirical theory can only be developed by collecting data, and this data can only be used to support hypotheses that are then tested. Due to its nature as an exploratory method, it generates more ideas than it tests (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Grounded Theory is the most well-known qualitative methodology when compared to all others (Chenail, 2009). Particularly when little is known about a phenomenon, grounded theory is helpful (Lu, 2017). 2019 (Tie et al).

3. Recruitment

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support transgender people recruit study participants. Snowball sampling was used to find new contributors to the project. Twenty transgender company owners were included in the study's sample.

The following inclusion requirements must be met by transgender business owners in order to be included in the study:

- 1) After realizing their gender, they started the business.
- 2) The transgender independent business owners who engaged in commercial sex work and begging were excluded from the study.

Procedure

In a qualitative research paradigm, asking and attentively listening to participants is the greatest approach to learn about their experiences and subjective feelings (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Research at Christ (Deemed) University in Karachi's Center for Research has given its blessing to this process. The individual gave verbal consent once the protocol was approved and after outlining the study's objective. Participant information is kept totally confidential and can only be used for academic purposes. Interviewees have the right to refuse any question or leave at any moment during the interview. In advance of the interview, written informed consent was secured. Face-to-face interviews and phone interviews were both used to find the right candidate for the job. Semi-structured interviews were used in the study.

The interview was taped using a recording device and began with an open-ended question, with the participant's permission. The study's goals, the confidentiality of the data collected, and the participants' anonymity were all explained to the participants. For face-to-face interviews, the participants were given the forms by the NGO moderator, who read and signed them before handing them off. The interview schedule was modified in light of earlier discoveries, and data gathering was stopped once saturation was reached. Field



notes were created after each interview, and they contained the participant's demographic data as well as any interesting findings from the researcher. The interviewer relaxed the interviewee by starting the conversation with general inquiries. The interviewer will ask a few demographic questions to gauge the interviewee's comfort level before moving on to questions from the semi-structured interview agenda. The central theme of "challenges" served as the framework for the questions. The main idea was included into a free-form question, such as "What challenges did you have in your business?"

A few of the probing questions the interviewer posed included having the participant briefly describe each obstacle they had to overcome in order to launch their business. The final question of the interview was whether they had missed any important topics that weren't on the schedule. Each interview lasted between forty and sixty minutes. After gathering the data, the researcher generated memos and verbatim transcripts of the audio interviews. The transcripts were tagged with pseudonyms like PAR1, PAR2, and PAR3 to protect the identities of the participants. The interview agenda was altered based on the findings of the first interview. Another inter coder, a Research Assistant, had assisted the researcher. The results were validated with the use of the inter coder. Data interpretation was aided by fellow coders, and the two coders argued their judgments and knowledge of the data until they agreed on each category.

Data Analysis in Grounded Theory

Using the NVIVO 12 Plus Qualitative Software, which makes it easy to manage large amounts of data, the research was conducted. Using the constant comparison approach, data collection and analysis are carried out simultaneously as part of grounded theory analysis (Lewis-Pierre, Kovacich, & Amankwaa, 2017). Transcripts of the participants' interactions were analyzed after the constant comparative analysis to better understand their opinions (Lewis-Pierre et al., 2017). Constant comparison is necessary for the development of the coding process since it requires regular evaluation of similarities among the data, participants, and classifications (Basinger, Wehrman, Delaney, & McAninch, 2015).

The initial phase and the concentrated phase are the two primary stages of grounded theory, according to Charmaz (2006). Codes were written word by word, line by line, or in little data chunks during the initial stages of coding. Codes that are comparable and recurrent were sorted, synthesized, and placed in a focused phase. Strauss and Corbin highlighted the third style of coding, known as axial coding, in which categories and subcategories are connected (Charmaz, 2006).

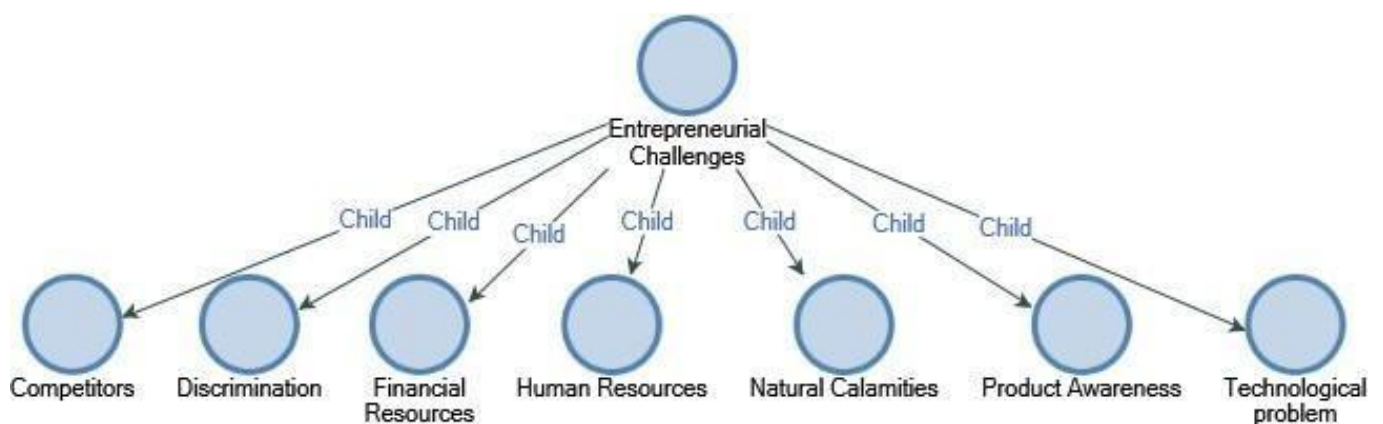


The transgender entrepreneur's entrepreneurial challenges had to be labeled in the first phase of coding of the data. The second part of the research was collecting codes that were related and giving them conceptual names. To do this, researchers kept a codebook with descriptions of each code. The next stage was to code with precision. Here, the data and codebook were examined to make sure the codes corresponded to the actions noted in the data set. The procedure was examined, the codes were aligned, and the data were also examined at the abstraction level in the final step, which entailed axial coding (Basinger et al., 2015).

In order to organize the categories that arose, diagrams were also created. The categories were interconnected, connected, and sorted into meaningful clusters. The difficulties transgender entrepreneurs confront in their businesses are then discussed.

4. Results

In this section, we first discuss the difficulties transgender business owners encounter. Transcripts from the interviews were examined using axial, selective, and open coding. The transgender individual entrepreneur had to deal with seven key obstacles, including rivals, Inequity in access to resources, including financial and human capital; climate change; natural calamities; product defects; and technological challenges.



The following categories were used to group the business challenges:

Competitors:



Entrepreneurs in the transgender community faced the same challenges as their cisgender counterparts. Due to the red ocean strategy, the transgender entrepreneur's business faced multiple competitors. As stated in PAR 5, "There is too much competition here in Goa because everyone has knowledge and knows how to prepare the traditional sweet, and it is a competitive environment and everyone wants to do their sales, so selling my products has become complicated." This is because there are many Christians in Goa. When competing for a contract with other cisgender companies, one participant said they were unable to offer a cheaper price due to the manager's preconceived notions about the transgender community. "As for a transgender individual, there are so many problems that they have to confront," said the author. I must therefore overcome numerous obstacles just to obtain one order. (PAR7).

Discrimination:

Nearly all of the study's participants reported experiencing discrimination at some point while working. It is hard for a transgender-owned business to escape discrimination. The following subcategories were included under the "discrimination" category: prejudice from customers, prejudice from vendors, and discrimination from landlords. Landlords discriminated against transgender entrepreneurs who wanted an office space to start their business. According to PAR 9, the landlords were reluctant to let a transgender person use their office space to start a business because they were conservative: "The Landlord was conservative, and they were not happy to lend the space for me when they found out that I am a transgender, and they thought I would use the office space for some illegal activities and then had to evict me." In addition to landlord prejudice, raw material suppliers held preconceptions about the study participants, according to the majority of respondents.

While begging for alms, other transgender people may have caused a commotion, as described in PAR 3: "People in the market discriminate against me when I go to get raw materials." However, transgender people were discriminated against by customers who were the final users of the goods because of the negative stigma associated with the transgender community. For example, "As I am a transgender person, the clients just do not accept a transgender person," stated PAR 13. "They would not accept a transgender person." Neither they nor I were able to get through to them. Additionally, some consumers would equate transsexuals with begging and commercial sex activities, which would lead them to ask for sexual favors, as seen by the example that follows. "The people who buy from you (long pause). I'd like to warn you that any men who show up will only be looking for sexual favors, and that is the most important consideration." Transgender people are idealized by the general public because they are seen as sexually active



regardless of their gender identity. The assumption that women are sex toys is a common one. (PAR 5).

Financial Resources:

Getting enough "money resources" is a common problem for those taking the test. Subcategories of financial resources include not having money, not knowing how to manage money, and being unable to get financial aid. Since "the first barrier which I experienced while opening a business was money troubles," as stated in PAR 14, transgender entrepreneurs confront financial difficulties while starting their own businesses. It costs me about Rs.2 to 3 lakhs to create an office, and I don't have that kind of money," as PAR 7 put it. Many transgender-owned businesses have run into this road block after getting off the ground. I have to prioritize my personal and professional life in order to make time for my loved ones and my business. I don't know anyone who could be of assistance to me in any form at this point. I still have a lot of skill inside of me, but I would need to make a significant commitment to unlock it.

I've yet to make any progress because there hasn't been a suitable investment. Since transgender people are a marginalized group in society, transgender entrepreneurs tend to have less financial knowledge, as PAR 2 noted, "To start the company for the hostel I require Rs:5,00,000." A lack of familiarity with bank lending procedures has left me unsure of how to obtain the funds I need. Another feature is that those participants who were aware of financial aid offered by banks didn't receive it, as noted in paragraph six of this section (paragraph 5). As a result, it's hard to secure a bank loan, despite the fact that I have all of my documentation ready to identify me. You have to convince many people, but that's a big challenge because they have a preconception about what you want to do.

Human Resources:

Human resources were mentioned as a challenge the study participants had to deal with throughout the interview. During the interview, it was brought up that some employees left because of discrimination from the clients, as stated in PAR 1: "Initially, the people I had employed quit the job as they claimed that the consumers did not react and they discriminated them." The transgender business owner was unable to expand their business because of a lack of personnel. As stated in PAR 2, "we are aiming to extend our business in the night as well." I am unable to set up the motel at night since I am short on labour. The study's participants made an effort to hire transgender people from the local community. Because they were already so busy with their other jobs (begging, for example), I couldn't reach any of my trans sisters, so I turned to my guru instead.



However, the transgender people refused the offer, arguing that begging and commercial sex work would pay more than other jobs. Additionally, participants mentioned that while they were working for the company, employees had defrauded them. For example, PAR 3 stated: "I started two years ago, I underwent a huge loss because the employees whom I had employed cheated me and left, as they had taken away all the money from the business, and then I had stopped the business for some time." (PAR9).



Natural Calamities:

Natural disasters were mentioned by a few individuals as additional obstacle for transgender business owners. For the transgender business owner, the Kerala floods in 2018 were a major worry. According to PAR 14, "to earn my income I started the business, my business is a seasonal business and during the rainy seasons I would not be able to set my juice shop, as people would prefer drinking juice during summer, and floods which had come in 2018 had destroyed my business, and I was unable to do anything." As PAR 15 indicated, Covid-19 was also a difficulty for the participants: "Now that the Coronavirus issue has started, business is not going smoothly. It has been over six months since our business has started, and the customers had reacted very well, coming and eating the traditional food, and they were very happy. At the time we were going to have loyal customers, but now that COVID 19 has started, we do not know how to plan next, and our minds are very blank right now."

Product Awareness:

A lack of knowledge about the product as a whole causes problems with product awareness. While selling insurance products to the transgender population, PAR 4 stated there was a lack of awareness about the plans available. As a side note, several panelists said that the customers were unaware of these products. The lack of insurance in our transgender community continues to be a problem, as indicated in PAR 4.

This made it difficult to persuade the transgender population to purchase the coverage. The issue is that they are unaware of the value of insurance policies and how they operate. They believe that the only ways they can support themselves are through begging and commercial sex, thus they do not understand the value of insurance policies in their lives. The statement in PAR 8 that "we are encountering challenges to enhance our business" was made in reference to the fact that "there are less educated individuals on the marine vessels, and the fisher man are not aware that their boats may be repaired and, therefore, they abandon their boats near the shoreline."

Technological Problems:

The players' difficulties adapting to new market developments due to a lack of resources and technological understanding are explained by the technological problem category. It is more difficult for transgender people since they lack education from stopping their studies and are therefore unaware of current technological advancements. As said in PAR 11: "Since I left my home at a very young age and had to stop studying due to lack of



education, we are not aware of the technical changes which are taking place outside, technology has been increasing at a rapid rate, and as a result the business is going down."

5. Discussion

Transgender entrepreneurs have unique hurdles when it comes to beginning their own enterprises. Research on the challenges faced by transgender-owned businesses has been lacking to this point. Transgender business owners confront a variety of challenges, which were broken down into seven categories in the study's findings. These results support other studies that looked at the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. Due to their social marginalization and consequent lack of access to opportunities for education and employment, transgender people confront issues that are significantly more severe than those that women entrepreneurs do. In general, transgender people faced issues that were similar to those that women business owners did. A major source of trouble for any organization is the presence of rivals, however, for transgender people, gender identity is a need, making it more difficult to secure job. The prejudice and gender bias that transgender business owners had to deal with were significant obstacles as well, and they were comparable to those that women business owners encounter (Ganesan et al., 2002). (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015).

As with cisgender persons, transgender people's landlords, vendors, and clients are likely to have the same preconceptions about transgender people as do cisgender people. Most other transgender beggars would have done similarly with the cisgender patrons. An entrepreneur's biggest challenge is finding the money to start their business. However, the participants lacked understanding and awareness of the financial options available to a transgender person because of exclusion and a lack of networking with mainstream society. Research on female entrepreneurs who faced financial constraints and got less favoring than male entrepreneurs found that this outcome was consistent. The transsexual owner of the business was unable to expand because of the discrimination he faced in the job. Discrimination forced some employees to leave the company. These were the biggest challenges transgender entrepreneurs had to overcome. For the sake of transgender entrepreneurship, government rules and regulations must be encroached upon to remove the barriers faced by transgender entrepreneurs because of their stereotypical roles. It is possible to expand on these efforts, including gender-awareness training programs, gender-proofing public advertisements, and gender impact evaluations to investigate gender bias.

In addition, transgender role models can be portrayed through highlighting successful transgender company owners who have overcome gender discrimination. As a result, transgender persons will be more likely to pursue entrepreneurship as a career path as a result of regulations that provide transgender people with the funds they need. It is crucial



to consider the problems faced by transgender entrepreneurs if a policy's long-term goal is to support more transgender business owners, especially in light of the current economic crisis and rising unemployment rate.

6. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship can help transgender people overcome the obstacles they encounter (for example, gender inequalities). But prejudice and misconceptions still exist. The study's goal was to better understand the challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs. There were twenty one-on-one interviews with transgender people to learn more about the difficulties they confront. The positivist method falls short in helping to untangle complex experiences and emotions, whereas qualitative research can (Kirkwood, 2009).

Overall, the survey respondents highlighted seven business-related issues that transgender entrepreneurs confront, some of which are shared by entrepreneurs of both sexes. A few participants had enterprises that had been formed for three to four years, despite efforts to include those with more than five years under their belts. There are limitations to every study. To put it another way, the longer a business has been in existence, the more likely it is that its proprietors will have encountered challenges. In addition, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other countries because societal acceptability of transgender people varies from country to country.



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