

Influencing dimensions of entrepreneurship on economic empowerment of Women's cooperatives in Sari County, Iran

Gholamreza Dinpanah^{1*} and Ali Javanmard²

Agricultural Extension & Education Department, Islamic Azad University, Sari Branch, Sari, Iran
Office of research and technology, Islamic Azad University, Sari Branch, Sari, Iran

Corresponding author: Gholamreza Dinpanah

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to determine effect of dimensions of entrepreneurship on economic empowerment of women's cooperatives. The research population consisted of 123 women member cooperative in Sari County, Iran. The methodological approach of this study was descriptive-correlative. Validity of the instrument was established by a panel of experts consisting of senior faculty members and research committee advisors. Reliability analysis was conducted by using Cronbach alpha formula and result was 0.81. The results showed that 6.5, 49.6 and 43.9 percent of women expressed that their economic empowerment were weak, moderate and good respectively. Also the results of the multiple regression analysis (stepwise method) revealed that motivation of progress, creativity, self-reliance and internal control explained 37.3 percent of variation of economic empowerment.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, economic empowerment, rural women.

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute 49.3 percent of population and 33 percent of labor force in Iran. As it is observed from Iran Population Pyramid for 2010, Iran is a young-populated country (Statistical Center of Iran, 2010). Women play a critical role in agricultural production and in the rural economies of developing countries. Women must not only have equal rights, capabilities and access to resources and opportunities, but they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices. Empowerment of women in rural areas is dependent on several factors, including ownership and control over land; access to diverse types of employment and income-generating activities; access to public goods (such as water, village commons and forests), infrastructure, education and training, health care and financial services and markets; and opportunities for participation in political life and in the design and implementation of policies and programmes (United Nations, 2005).

The empowerment of rural women has a direct impact on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration in all areas, including development, security and human rights, and particularly in relation to poverty eradication (United Nations, 2005).

A successful agenda for the empowerment of rural women requires the dismantling of values, structures and processes that maintain women's subordination and that are used to justify inequality in access to political, economic and economic resources. Education plays an important role in this process. Studies in many countries have shown that education for girls is the single most effective way of reducing poverty, although it is not sufficient by itself. Inequalities in education and skill acquisition can explain the fact that women benefit less than men from economic opportunities as well as the trend towards the increase of women among the poorest in the population. Women entrepreneurs have been designated as the new engines for growth and the rising stars of the economies in developing countries to bring prosperity and welfare. A variety of stakeholders has pointed at them as an important 'untapped source' of economic growth and development (Minniti and Naudé, 2010). The World Economic Forum identified women entrepreneurs as "the way forward" at their annual meeting in 2012 (World Economic

Forum, 2012). Others speak of women entrepreneurs as if they are the 'New Women's Movement'. They state: "forget aid, focus on foreign investment in women entrepreneurs as key drivers for growth and development" (Vossenbergh, 2013).

Conditions for female entrepreneurship in a country tend to be similar to those for entrepreneurship in general (Delmar, 2003; Verheul et al., 2004). Considering the low rate of entrepreneurial activity in Iran, one would expect even lower entrepreneurial activities for women who do not usually have equal access to resources as men do. Men are almost twice as much to be early stage entrepreneurs as women, as and more than twice as much to be established business owners as women. (Allen et al., 2008)

Mirghafoori et al, (2010) has identified family, education, personal characteristics, financial, socio-cultural, and legal factors as the main barriers and components affecting women entrepreneurs in Yazd (Eastern Province in Iran). Javaheri, (2005) considers family barriers, inconsistency in role expectations, educational system, stereotype beliefs and labor environment problems as the main gender barriers in entrepreneurial activity.

Islam, (2009) in a research about agricultural entrepreneurship in Africa indicated that increasing educational opportunities would help rural women to organize small groups to sell their products. Rural women should also be trained about marketing techniques.

Nawaz, (2009) referred to lack of entrepreneurial education in agriculture sector, which would negatively affect the employment opportunities that exist in this sector.

Kundson et al, (2004) in a study about farmer's entrepreneurship skills confirmed that agricultural entrepreneurship is in early stages of development and to determine the type of needed training, there is need for more research.

Hosseini et al, (2012) concluded half of respondents were somewhat agreed about the role of entrepreneurship of education in creating employment. Respondents indicated that entrepreneurship education could improve the business management.

Upadhye and Madan, (2012) in their research conclude that there is a marked change in the personality, the economic and the economic status of these women. The results are found to be statistically significant. However, the fact remains that skills, earnings, honors, work efficiency and even the elevated economic status of women entrepreneurs need not necessarily change the approach of society towards women. The male dominance in society is reluctant to change their attitude towards women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In relation to objective, this research is functional, since the results can be employed by programmer and policy makers. In order to reach precise and reliable data we used quantitative method. Because this research simply investigates existed conditions and defines them and there is no possibility to control or manipulate the variables, it is descriptive. Because the gathering of information about the views, beliefs, thoughts and behaviors or group characteristics of a society is statistical and also it is under recognition, so it is measuring. Furthermore, because it investigates and analyzes the relations between independent and dependent variables, it is correctional. Statistical population of this research involves all the women member of cooperative in Sari County (N=123). Determine super facial and content validity, several copies of questionnaires were given to some entrepreneurship and empowerment specialists in Iran. After receiving, we points necessary modifications, these final modifications and we points were applied and above – mentioned questionnaires prepared to determine the reliability of research tools and to gain variance for sampling , a primary test was carried out . In this test, the above -mentioned questionnaires were given to 30 users who were geographically, economically, culturally and economical similar to the statistical community. After the analysis of this data, coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha was 81 percent for all variables of ranked scales.

The independent variables (dimensions of entrepreneurship) include motivation of progress, self-reliance, internal control, creativity and risk able. Dependent variable was economic empowerment. In order to determine the motivation of progress, self-reliance, internal control, creativity and risk able we measured with 7 questions, 4 questions, 5 questions, 8 questions and 8 questions respectively were evaluated that all had six – choice spectrum of likert. (None=0, very low=1, low=2, average=3, high=4, very high=5). Consequently, the minimal score for motivation of progress, self-reliance, internal control, creativity and risk able were zero and the maximal was 35, 20, 25, 40 and 40, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Economic empowerment of women's cooperatives

The economic empowerment of women's cooperatives was measured by 6 questions including: 6 pieces spectrum of likret. Score giving to the mentioned spectrum was as follows: none=0, very low=1, low=2, average=3, high=4, very high=5. Then, the maximum score was 30, and the minimal was zero. Table 1 illustrates the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), coefficient of variance (C.V) and the rank of questions of economic empowerment, from the viewpoint of women's cooperatives. According to the table, ability decreasing poverty and neediness, ability marketing and ability of home management are among the most important empowerments for women. Table 2 shows situation of economic empowerment of women's cooperatives in Sari County, Iran. According to results, 6.5, 49.6 and 43.9 percent of women expressed that their economic empowerment were weak, moderate and good respectively. The mean of economic empowerment was 18.8 and its standard deviation was 3.8

Table 1. prioritizing questions related with economic empowerment of women's cooperatives (n=123)

Questions	M	SD	C.V	Rank
Ability decreasing poverty and neediness	4.25	0.72	0.169	1
Ability marketing	3.07	0.82	0.267	2
Ability of home management	2.98	0.84	0.281	3
Ability business and increasing income	3.14	1.15	0.368	4
Ability of saving of money	2.93	1.31	0.446	5
Ability of pay of loan	2.43	1.19	0.489	6

None=0, very low=1, low=2, average=3, high=4, very high=5

Table 2. situation of economic empowerment of women's cooperatives

Situation	Frequency	% of Frequency	Cumulative % of Frequency
Very low(0-6)	0	0	0
Low(7-12)	8	6.5	6.5
Moderate(13-18)	61	49.6	56.1
High(19-24)	45	36.6	92.7
Very high(25-30)	9	7.3	100
Total	123	100	-

M= 18.8

SD=3.8

Relation of dimensions of entrepreneurship with economic empowerment of women's cooperatives

Table 3 shows a meaningful level, relation direction and intensity dimensions of entrepreneurship with economic empowerment of women's cooperatives. There is meaningful and positive relation motivation of progress, self-reliance, internal control and risk able with economic empowerment in 99% level. Also there is between creativity and economic empowerment in 95% level significant correlation and positive.

Table 3. Determination of relation dimensions of entrepreneurship with economic empowerment

Variables	Correlation coefficient	significant
Motivation of progress	0.536**	0.000
Self-reliance	0.468**	0.000
Internal control	0.243**	0.007
Creativity	0.191*	0.034
Risk able	0.250**	0.005

*p<0.05

**p<0.01

The role of dimensions of entrepreneurship on economic empowerment of women's cooperatives

In order to predict the role of dimensions of entrepreneurship on economic empowerment, step – to – step regression was used. Regression analysis provides the Possibility for the researcher to predict the changes of dependent variables through independent variable and to determine the share of each independent variable in the explanation of dependent variable .In the step – to – step method, the strongest variables come into the coefficient equation one by one and it continues as long as error of significant test gets to 5%. According in the table 4, motivation of progress, creativity, self-reliance and internal control respectively came into the equation from the first to fourth steps. Means that the variable of motivation of progress has the most effect on dependant variable (economic empowerment) and this variable, by itself, has explained 28.8% changes of the economic empowerment. In the second step, at motivation of progress and creativity together have explained 31.2% changes of economic empowerment variable .In the third step, motivation of progress, creativity and self-reliance have

totally explained 33.9% changes of economic empowerment variable. In the fourth step, motivation of progress, creativity, self-reliance and internal control totally have explained 37.3% change of economic empowerment variables.

Table 4. Regression analysis of economic empowerment of women's cooperatives

steps	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Sig
1	0.536	0.288	0.282	48.9	0.000
2	0.559	0.312	0.301	27.3	0.000
3	0.582	0.339	0.322	20.3	0.000
4	0.611	0.373	0.352	17.6	0.000

Table 5. Standardized and non- Standardized coefficients of economic empowerment of women's cooperatives

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig
Motivation of progress	0.42	0.59	4.86	0.000
Creativity	0.27	0.29	2.89	0.005
Self-reliance	0.40	0.37	2.86	0.005
Internal control	0.37	0.26	2.55	0.012
Constant	19.04	-	10.48	0.000

According to Beta amount in Table 5, regression equation can be written:

$$Y=0.59 X1+0.29 X2+0.37 X3+0.26 X4$$

X1= Motivation of progress

X2= Creativity

X3= Self-reliance

X4= Internal control

CONCLUSION

Results from analyzing the correlation showed that motivation of progress, self-reliance, internal control and risk able have 99 percent of positive and meaningful relation with economic empowerment. Results show that the correlation level of so motivation of progress, self-reliance, internal control and risk able with economic empowerment were equal to 0.54, 0.47, 0.24 and 0.25, respectively. According to Davis table these correlations were in average level. Also there is between creativity and economic empowerment in 95% level significant correlation and positive with intensity low (0.19).

Furthermore, the results of step- by- step regression illustrated that motivation of progress, creativity, self-reliance and internal control explained 37.3 percent of variance in economic empowerment. Results of the researches performed by (Minniti and Naudé, 2010; Mirghafoori et al., 2010; Javaheri, 2005; Islam, 2009; Nawaz, 2009; Hosseini et al., 2012; Upadhye and Madan, 2012; Ataei and Zamani Miandashti, 2011).

For improvement of economic empowerment of women suggested:

- Promoting and protecting women’s equal rights to property and inheritance through legislation, promotion of legal literacy and legal assistance to rural women, awareness-raising campaigns and training of government officials.
- Promoting rural women’s participation in decision-making, including through affirmative action, and support for women’s organizations, labor unions or other associations and civil society groups promoting rural women’s rights
- Supporting formal and non-formal education and training to build the capabilities of girls and women in rural areas and eliminate gender stereotyping Increasing capacity for gender analysis, including through training programmes and development and dissemination of methodologies and tools, to ensure the full integration of rural women’s perspectives in policies and programmes for rural development, as well as in conflict prevention and humanitarian, peace building and post-conflict rehabilitation and recovery activities

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