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Unleashing the Full Potential: Understanding the Economic and Socio-Economic Consequences of Female Labour Shortage in Karachi

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Abstract

With an emphasis on cultural norms, governmental regulations, high-quality education, and women's empowerment, this study explores the major forces influencing economic and socioeconomic activity in Karachi, Pakistan. Based on information gathered via a structured questionnaire, quantitative analysis is used in the study to demonstrate the important influence of these factors. It is discovered that cultural norms have a significant detrimental impact on economic activity, decreasing its likelihood by 97.2% for every unit increase. However, there are substantial positive effects associated with women's empowerment and high-quality education, which increase the possibility of economic participation by 215.6% and 132.8%, respectively. Furthermore, with p-values less than 0.05 validating their effects, cultural norms and women's empowerment are important predictors of socioeconomic activity. The probability of socio-economic activity is lowered by 95.5% by cultural norms and 69.9% by women's empowerment. The results highlight how crucial it is to remove cultural obstacles and encourage women's involvement to further the social and economic development of Karachi. These observations offer policymakers insightful direction for fostering a more diverse and prosperous urban economy.

Keywords: Female Labour Shortage, Cultural Norms, Economic Impact, Socio-Economic Consequences, Women's Empowerment.

Introduction

In Karachi, Pakistan's largest and most economically influential city, a critical issue has persisted for decades—an acute shortage of female participation in the labour force (World Bank, 2019). Despite Karachi's status as a dynamic economic hub, women's engagement in the formal workforce remains significantly lower than their potential. This gender disparity, a matter of urgent concern, has far-reaching implications for the women and the city's economic growth, gender equality, and overall societal well-being. The importance of women's empowerment in addressing this issue cannot be overstated. Gender disparities in labour force participation are not unique to Karachi but are a global concern that has been widely discussed in the literature. In Pakistan, as in many countries, women face various barriers to entering

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and remaining in the workforce, including cultural norms, early marriage, limited educational opportunities, and societal expectations (International Labour Organization, 2018). The challenges perpetuate gender inequality, hinder women's access to economic opportunities, and affect household incomes.

Karachi's economic significance makes it an ideal context for investigating the financial and socio-economic consequences of the female labour shortage (Amber & Chichaibelu, 2013). As a sprawling urban centre, Karachi hosts a diverse population, reflecting various cultural norms and practices that influence women's workforce participation. The city's unique and complex sociocultural dynamics offer a rich backdrop for understanding the multifaceted nature of this issue.

Numerous significant revelations are made by the study on the socioeconomic and economic effects of Karachi's female labour shortage. Disparities between the official and informal labour markets, where women are more likely to work in the informal sector and typically face job insecurity and minimal benefits, are among the factors contributing to this shortfall. Additional obstacles that limit women's participation in the workforce include safety concerns and inadequate transportation. Women's ability to labour for pay is also severely restricted by marriage and family obligations; early marriages and social expectations are two factors that contribute to this problem. Restrictive gender roles are assigned by strongly ingrained cultural norms in Karachi, which deters women from pursuing employment outside the home. A greater level of education is associated with better work prospects and economic activity, which is why it is recognized as essential for increasing female labour force participation (Pakistan Ministry of Labour, 2020). Government actions are crucial, and although some have been successful, more focused measures may be needed to solve the shortfall. Economically, the shortage has led to lower productivity, increased labour costs, and restricted economic progress. Socioeconomically, it has maintained gender inequality and upheld traditional gender norms. To solve the deficit and increase female economic involvement, investments in women's entrepreneurship, education, and vocational training are crucial. The research highlights the necessity of all-encompassing policy interventions. It supports initiatives to tackle the complex nature of the female labour shortage and its wider consequences for women's welfare and economic advancement in Karachi. The potential for change is significant, and with the right interventions, we can make a substantial difference.

This research seeks to address this critical gap in the study by comprehensively examining the impact of the female labour shortage in Karachi. By assessing the economic and socio-economic consequences, identifying root causes, and evaluating policy interventions, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of this complex issue. The research also considers the potential health-related challenges and disparities experienced by women due to limited economic independence resulting from the labour shortage. This study is not only academically relevant but also holds

significant policy implications. Policymakers in Karachi and beyond require evidence-based insights to design and implement effective interventions aimed at increasing female labour force participation, promoting gender equality, and fostering economic growth. This research is of utmost importance in understanding and addressing these issues. Furthermore, this research aligns with the global commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, contributing to the broader discourse on women's rights and opportunities.

The research delved into the study's methodology, objectives, theoretical framework, and findings, shedding light on the economic and socio-economic consequences of the female labour shortage in Karachi.

Rationale of the Study

The study addresses a critical societal issue in Karachi, where female labour force participation is significantly lower than the potential. Understanding the economic and socio-economic consequences of the female labour shortage is crucial for policymakers, researchers, and the community.

Problem Statement

Karachi, Pakistan, faces a persistent and significant challenge in the form of a substantial shortage of female labour force participation. Despite being Pakistan's largest and most economically influential city, Karachi's female labour force participation rate remains considerably lower than its potential. This issue presents multifaceted economic and socio-economic consequences that require thorough investigation and analysis.

Research Questions

Economic Activity in Karachi

How do cultural norms, government policies, quality of education, and women's empowerment individually impact economic activity in Karachi?

Socio-economic Activity in Karachi

2. How do cultural norms, government policies, quality of education, and women's empowerment individually impact socio-economic activity in Karachi?

Research Objectives

- To investigate the relationship between cultural norms**,** quality education, women's empowerment, government policies, and economic activity in Karachi.

- To investigate the relationship between cultural norms**,** quality education, women's empowerment, government policies, and socio-economic activity in Karachi.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

Gary Becker's human capital theory suggests that individuals' investment in education and skills enhances their productivity and earning potential. In the context of female labour force participation in Karachi, this theory helps us understand the importance of education in increasing women's employability and contribution to the workforce (Becker, 1993).

Gender Role Theory

Gender role theory posits that societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles influence individuals' behaviours and choices. In Karachi, deeply ingrained cultural norms often prioritize women's roles as homemakers and caretakers, which can discourage them from pursuing employment. This theory helps us analyze how these norms shape the city's labour force dynamics and female labour shortage (Eagly et al., 2012).

Structural Functionalism

As proposed by Emile Durkheim, Structural functionalism examines how societal structures and institutions function to maintain social stability. This research context helps us explore the role of various social and cultural structures, such as family dynamics and community norms, in perpetuating or mitigating the female labour shortage in Karachi (Durkheim, 1893/1984).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory provides a critical lens through which to examine gendered power dynamics in society. It helps us scrutinize the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources between genders in Karachi and how this inequality contributes to the female labour shortage. This theory also guides our analysis of policies and empowerment initiatives to challenge gender disparities (Tong, 2009).

Structural-Functional Approach

The structural-functional approach focuses on the interplay between societal elements to maintain equilibrium. This research assists in understanding how the female labour shortage in Karachi affects various components of the social and economic system, such as labour markets, households, and businesses, and how these elements interact to perpetuate or alleviate the issue (Merton, n.d.).

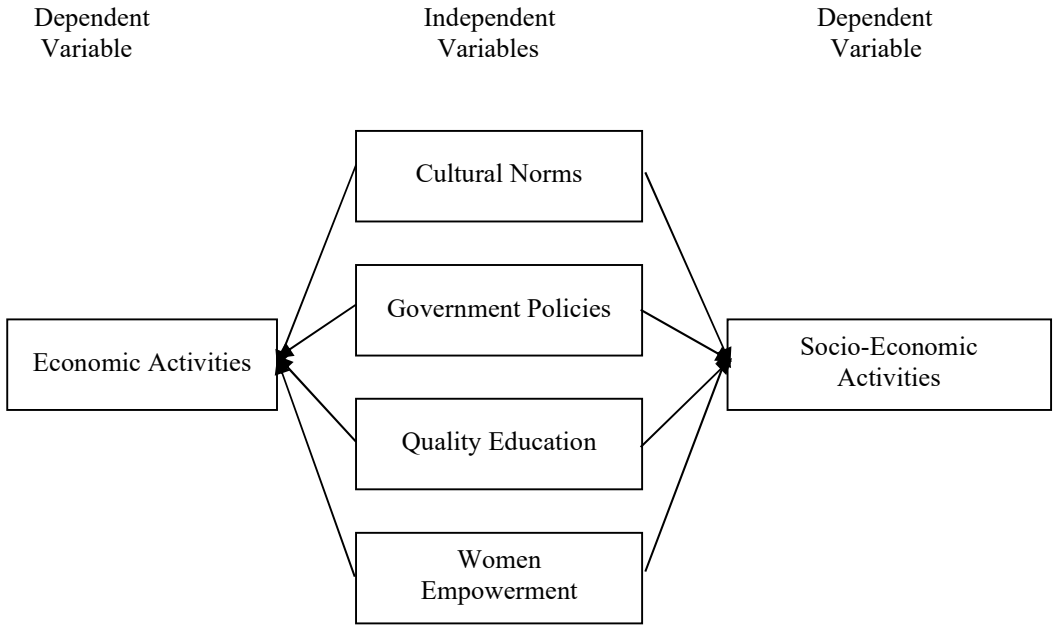
Human Development Approach

As Amartya Sen advocates, the human development approach emphasizes enhancing individuals' capabilities and freedoms. In the context of Karachi, it aids in assessing the impact of the female labour shortage on women's overall well-being, including their access to healthcare, education, and decision-making power within households (Sen, 1999).

Intersectionality Theory

Introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality theory acknowledges that individuals' experiences of inequality are shaped by the intersection of multiple identities, including gender, race, class, and ethnicity. In Karachi, understanding how these intersecting identities influence women's labour force participation and access to opportunities is essential for nuanced analysis (Crenshaw, 1989).

Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses of the Study

H_1: Cultural Norms have a significant impact on economic activity in Karachi.

H_2: Government Policies have a significant impact on economic activity in Karachi.

H_3: Quality Education has a significant impact on economic activity in Karachi.

H_4: Women's Empowerment has a significant impact on economic activity in Karachi.

H_5: Cultural Norms have a significant impact on socio-economic activity in Karachi.

H_6: Government Policies have a significant impact on socio-economic activity in Karachi.

H_7: Quality Education has a significant impact on socio-economic activity in Karachi.

H_8: Women's Empowerment has a significant impact on socio-economic activity in Karachi.

Significance of the Study

This research holds substantial significance on multiple fronts. Firstly, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing an in-depth analysis of the economic and socio-economic consequences of the female labour shortage in Karachi, shedding light on an often overlooked yet critical issue. Secondly, the findings of this study have practical implications for policymakers, as they can inform the development of targeted policies and interventions aimed at addressing gender disparities in the labour force and promoting women's economic Empowerment.

Review of the Literature

The economic and socio-economic consequences of the female labour shortage have been a subject of increasing concern in Karachi and many other regions across the globe. The shortage of female labour in the workforce can have multifaceted implications for both the local economy and the well-being of women themselves. This literature review examines key factors influencing the female labour shortage in Karachi and the associated economic and socio-economic consequences.

Factors Influencing Female Labour Shortage

Informal vs. Formal Labour Markets

Research by Mahmood and Naseem (2018) highlights the disparity between Karachi's formal and informal labour markets. While women may be more active in the informal sector due to flexibility and reduced barriers, this often leads to a lack of job security and benefits. Barriers such as limited access to transportation and the absence of safe working environments contribute to the low participation of women in the workforce (Amin et al., 2017). These barriers are particularly pronounced in Karachi, where public transportation can be inadequate, and concerns about women's safety are prevalent.

Marriage and Family Responsibilities

Marriage and family responsibilities are significant determinants of female labour force participation (Qureshi & Khan, 2019). Early marriages and societal expectations regarding women's roles as caregivers limit their ability to engage in paid work. Early marriage remains a significant barrier to female labour force participation in Karachi (Hassan & Ali, 2020). Societal expectations often prioritize women's roles as wives and mothers, limiting their ability to pursue employment.

Cultural Norms

Like much of Pakistan, Karachi has deeply entrenched cultural norms that assign specific gender roles and responsibilities (Nawaz & Akhtar, 2021). These norms often discourage women from engaging in paid work outside the home, contributing to the labour shortage. Gender stereotypes and traditional cultural norms often limit women's participation in the labour force (Smith, 2017). In Karachi, as in many other parts of Pakistan, societal expectations often prioritize women's roles as homemakers and caretakers. These stereotypes can dissuade women from seeking employment outside the home and perpetuate the gender gap in the labour market. Cultural norms and attitudes toward women's societal roles are critical in the female labour shortage. Research by Khan and Siddiqui (2018) examined the influence of patriarchal norms on women's participation in the labour force. They found that challenging traditional norms and promoting gender equality were essential steps toward increasing female workforce participation.

Women's Empowerment Through Education

Educational Empowerment is crucial for increasing female labour force participation in Karachi (Abbas & Rehman, 2021). Women who receive higher education are more likely to participate in the formal labour market and access higher-paying jobs. Entrepreneurship and microfinance initiatives can empower women to overcome

barriers and engage in economic activities (Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2017). These programs provide financial support and training, allowing women to start businesses and become economically self-reliant.

Government Policies and Initiatives

Government policies and initiatives play a pivotal role in addressing the issue of female labour shortage (Khan & Ahmed, 2019). In Karachi, government programs aimed at empowering women and promoting their participation in the workforce can significantly mitigate the shortage of female labour.

Health and Well-being Impact on Women's Health

The economic consequences of female labour shortages extend to women's health and well-being (Raza & Haider, 2019). Limited economic independence can restrict women's access to healthcare and quality of life in Karachi. Psychological impacts, such as dependence and low self-esteem, are often experienced by women, not in the labour force (Khan & Ali, 2018). These effects can further hinder their social and economic Empowerment.

Economic and Socio-economic Consequences

Economic Consequences of Female Labour Shortage

It has far-reaching effects on the city's economic landscape (Aziz & Nasir, 2021). One prominent impact is on economic growth, where the shortage constrains the city's ability to harness the full potential of its female workforce, thereby limiting its overall workforce capacity. Additionally, studies have pointed to a potential mismatch (Khalid & Rizvi, 2020) between the skills women possess in Karachi and the labour market demands. This mismatch can act as a barrier to female labour force participation and hinder their economic contributions. Furthermore, the economic implications of this shortage extend to the local economy (Hussain & Siddiqui, 2016), leading to reduced labour force productivity and increased operating costs for businesses, which, in turn, can impede economic growth. For instance, research by Khan and Ahmed (2021) highlights how the shortage of female workers in the manufacturing sector has raised labour costs for businesses, affecting the private sector and the city's broader economic development. Consequently, the underutilization of high-quality female talent significantly constrains the city's economic potential.

Socio-Economic Consequences

Gender Inequality Impact: The shortage of female labour in Karachi can perpetuate gender inequality by limiting women's access to employment opportunities and

financial independence (Malik et al., 2021). This gender inequality can, in turn, impact household incomes and the overall socio-economic status of women in the city.

Interconnected Societal Dynamics: The female labour shortage in Karachi is not an isolated issue but rather a reflection of larger social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Understanding the implications of this shortage and its contributing factors is crucial for developing effective policies and interventions to address this multifaceted challenge.

Educational Attainment and Female Labour Force Participation: Access to education is a pivotal factor influencing female labour force participation in Karachi. Research by Ahmed et al. (2020) showed that women with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in the labour force. Therefore, investments in education can be a powerful tool in increasing female workforce participation and mitigating the shortage.

Socio-economic Consequences and Gender Inequality: The socio-economic consequences of the female labour shortage are closely tied to gender inequality. A study by Siddiqui and Malik (2019) highlighted that the shortage perpetuates gender disparities in income and access to opportunities. Women not part of the labour force are often economically dependent on male family members, reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting their decision-making power.

Policy Interventions and Empowerment Initiatives

Gender-Responsive Policies

Gender-responsive policies and legal reforms are essential for improving the labour market dynamics for women (Ahmed & Saleem, 2021). These policies can promote equal opportunities, reduce discrimination, and enhance workplace conditions.

Vocational Training and Skill Development

Vocational training programs, particularly those tailored to the needs of women, can equip them with the necessary skills to access and thrive in the labour market (Saeed & Farooq, 2019). Such programs are crucial for addressing skill gaps and improving employability. The female labour shortage in Karachi is deeply intertwined with broader societal and economic structures. In this section, the study delves into specific aspects of this challenge, exploring potential strategies to address it and the implications of the shortage for women's well-being.

Supporting Entrepreneurship

Expanding support for women's entrepreneurship initiatives and microfinance programs can empower women to contribute to the economy while maintaining flexibility to address family responsibilities (Saeed & Farooq, 2019).

Comprehensive Education

Comprehensive education programs for girls and women are vital to enhancing their skills, employability, and economic independence (Malik & Ahmed, 2022).

Government Initiatives and Women's Empowerment

Government policies and initiatives have the potential to address the female labour shortage. Malik et al. (2022) evaluated the impact of a government-sponsored Karachi program that provided women with skills training and entrepreneurial support. The findings positively affect female labour force participation, suggesting that targeted interventions can yield meaningful results. Women's empowerment programs, including skills training and entrepreneurship initiatives, can alleviate the female labour shortage in Karachi (Zubair & Malik, 2018). These programs aim to enhance women's economic independence and decision-making power, encouraging participation in the labour market.

Research Methodology

The research style employed in this study was mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a thorough knowledge of the socio-economic and economic effects of the scarcity of female labour in Karachi. To gather data for the quantitative component, a non-probability convenience sampling method was selected due to its effectiveness in light of time and resource constraints, and data were obtained from a sample of 300 respondents. People who live in Karachi were the unit of analysis. Data was collected using a closed-ended, five-point Likert scale questionnaire that was delivered via WhatsApp and electronically administered using Google Forms. To find patterns and links in the data, statistical analysis was done using SPSS, including regression analysis and chi-square testing. To give the context and depth of the findings, the qualitative component of the study involved evaluating secondary data from pertinent research, scholarly publications, and reports. All participants provided informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection procedures were respected, and the research complied with ethical norms to preserve respondents' rights and dignity. These ethical considerations were scrupulously followed.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 01
Effect of Shortage of Female Labour on Economic Activity in Karachi

Response	Percent
No	35.0
Yes	65.0
Total	**100.0**

Table 01 shows information about the impact of the female labour shortage on Karachi's economic activity. The majority (65%) of respondents believe there is an effect, while a significant minority (35%) do not see such an impact.

Table 02
Effect of Shortage of Female Labour of Socio-economic Activity in Karachi

Response	Percent
No	23.3
Yes	76.7
Total	**100.0**

Table 02 provides an overview of respondents' opinions regarding the impact of the female labour shortage on Karachi's socio-economic activity. A significant majority (76.7%) of respondents believe that the shortage has indeed affected the city's socio-economic aspects, while a smaller portion (23.3%) do not see such an impact.

Table 03
Cultural Norms played a role in the shortage of female labour in Karachi

Response	Percent
No	41.7
Yes	58.3
Total	**100.0**

Table 03 shows that most respondents (58.3%) believe cultural norms contribute to this shortage. A significant minority (41.7%) do not attribute the shortage to cultural norms.

Table 04
Government Policies have played a role in improving the shortage of female labour in Karachi

Response	Percent
No	55.0
Yes	45.0
Total	**100.0**

Table 04 shows that a majority (55.0%) of respondents do not believe that government policies have effectively addressed the issue, while a significant portion (45.0%) see them as having improved the situation.

Table 05
Quality Education has played a role in improving the shortage of female labour in Karachi

Response	Percent
No	46.7
Yes	53.3
Total	**100.0**

Table 05 shows that a slight majority (53.3%) of respondents believe that quality education has improved the situation. In contrast, a significant portion (46.7%) do not attribute the improvement to the quality of education.

Table 06

Women's Empowerment has played a role in improving the shortage of female labour in Karachi

Response	Percent
No	40.0
Yes	60.0
Total	**100.0**

Table 06 shows that a majority (60.0%) of respondents believe women's Empowerment has improved the situation. In comparison, a substantial portion (40.0%) do not attribute the improvement to women's empowerment efforts.

Table 07

Model Summary for Binary Logistics Regression Analysis on Economic Activity in Karachi

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	255.143[a]	0.359	0.494
a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than 0.001.			

Table 07 presents the Model Summary showing that Cox & Snell R Square is 0.359, suggesting that the model explains 35.9% of Karachi's economic activity variance.

Table 08

Variables in the Equation of Binary Logistics Regression Analysis on Economic Activity in Karachi

		B	SE.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	Cultural Norm (1)	-3.590	0.457	61.717	1	0.000	0.028
	Government Policies (1)	-1.595	0.378	17.849	1	0.000	0.203
	Quality Education (1)	0.845	0.411	4.232	1	0.040	2.328
	Women Empowerment (1)	1.149	0.418	7.552	1	0.006	3.156
	Constant	2.516	0.330	58.061	1	0.000	12.384
a. variable (s) entered in step 1: Cultural norm, government policies, quality education, women empowerment.							

Table 08 shows that the p-values for all variables are less than 0.05, indicating that all variables are statistically significant predictors of economic activity. Additionally, the Odds Ratios offer a further understanding of these predictors' impact on the likelihood of economic activity. For instance, a one-unit increase in Cultural Norms is linked to a significant 97.2% decrease in the odds of economic activity. A one-unit increase in Government Policies corresponds to an 80.7% decrease. Conversely, Quality Education shows a positive impact, with a one-unit increase associated with a substantial 132.8% increase in the odds of economic activity. Notably, Women's Empowerment has the most significant impact, with a one-unit increase leading to an impressive 215.6% increase in the odds of economic activity.

Table 09
Model Summary for Binary Logistics Regression Analysis on Socio-economic Activity in Karachi

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	203.264[a]	0.336	0.507
a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than 0.001.			

Table 09 presents the Model Summary showing that Cox & Snell R Square is 0.336, suggesting that the model explains 33.6% of Karachi's socio-economic activity variance.

Table 10
Variables in the Equation of Binary Logistics Regression Analysis on Socio-economic Activity in Karachi

		B	SE.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1[a]	Cultural Norm (1)	-3.104	0.512	36.788	1	0.000	0.045
	Government Policies (1)	-0.652	0.437	2.228	1	0.136	0.521
	Quality Education (1)	0.048	0.427	0.013	1	0.911	1.049
	Women Empowerment (1)	-1.201	0.387	9.626	1	0.002	0.301
	Constant	4.286	0.554	59.858	1	0.000	72.674
a. variable (s) entered in step 1: Cultural norm, government policies, quality education, women empowerment.							

Table 10 displays that the p-values for Cultural Norm, Women Empowerment, and the Constant have p-values less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating their statistical significance. This study suggests that Cultural norms, Women Empowerment, and the Constant play significant roles in predicting socio-economic activity. Furthermore, it reveals that the change in the odds of socio-economic activity is associated with a one-unit change in each predictor variable while keeping other variables constant. For instance, a Cultural Norm with an Odds Ratio of 0.045 implies that a one-unit increase in Cultural Norm is linked to a substantial 95.5% decrease in the odds of socioeconomic activity. In contrast, Women Empowerment, with an Odds Ratio of 0.301, indicates that a one-unit increase in Women Empowerment corresponds to a notable 69.9% decrease in the odds of socio-economic activity. These odds ratios provide valuable insights into the magnitude and direction of each variable's impact on Karachi's socio-economic activity.

Discussion

The discussion highlights the nuanced impact of cultural norms, government policies, education, and women's Empowerment on economic and socio-economic activities in Karachi, as supported by the research findings.

Economic Activity

Cultural Norms

Table 08 supports Hypothesis 1, which posited that Cultural Norms significantly impact economic activity in Karachi. The p-value for Cultural Norms is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. Additionally, the Odds Ratio of 0.028 suggests a substantial 97.2% decrease in the odds of economic activity associated with a one-unit increase in Cultural Norms. This study aligns with prior research emphasizing the influence of cultural norms on women's labour force participation (Khan & Siddiqui, 2018). It underscores the importance of challenging and reforming traditional norms to promote women's economic engagement in Karachi.

Government Policies

Hypothesis 2, proposing that Government Policies significantly affect economic activity in Karachi, finds robust support in Table 08. The p-value for Government Policies is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. Furthermore, the Odds Ratio of 0.203 implies a notable 80.7% decrease in the odds of economic activity with a one-unit increase in Government Policies. This study underscores the pivotal role of supportive policies in encouraging women's participation in the labour market (Hassan & Ali, 2020). Policymakers should consider policy reforms that promote gender equality and facilitate women's economic Empowerment.

Quality Education

For Hypothesis 3, which postulated a significant relationship between Quality Education and economic activity in Karachi, the findings in Table 08 validate this hypothesis. The p-value for Quality Education is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. Moreover, the Odds Ratio of 2.328 signifies a substantial 132.8% increase in the odds of economic activity associated with a one-unit increase in Quality Education. This study aligns with human capital theory, emphasizing the importance of education in enhancing women's economic prospects (Abbas & Rehman, 2021). Promoting quality education for women can be a strategic approach to boost their economic participation.

Women Empowerment

Table 08 provides compelling evidence supporting Hypothesis 4, which proposed that Women's Empowerment significantly impacts economic activity in Karachi. The p-value for Women's Empowerment is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. Notably, the Odds Ratio of 3.156 highlights a substantial 215.6% increase in the odds of economic activity with a one-unit increase in Women's Empowerment. This study underscores the transformative potential of empowering women in Karachi's labour force (Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2017). Policymakers and stakeholders should focus on strategies that enhance women's Empowerment to bolster economic participation.

Socio-Economic Activity

Cultural Norms

Table 10 supports Hypothesis 5, which suggests that Cultural Norms significantly impact socio-economic activity in Karachi. The p-value for Cultural Norms is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. Furthermore, the Odds Ratio of 0.045 implies a substantial 95.5% decrease in the odds of socio-economic activity with a one-unit increase in Cultural Norms. This study aligns with the broader influence of cultural norms on women's lives beyond economics (Nawaz & Akhtar, 2021).

Government Policies

Hypothesis 6, proposing a significant influence of Government Policies on socio-economic activity in Karachi, needs to be fully supported by the findings in Table 10. The p-value for Government Policies is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), indicating a lack of statistical significance in predicting socio-economic activity. This study suggests that while government policies may impact economic activity, their influence on broader socio-economic aspects may require further examination.

Quality Education

For Hypothesis 7, suggesting a significant relationship between Quality Education and socio-economic activity in Karachi, Table 10 indicates that the p-value for Quality Education is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), indicating a lack of statistical significance in predicting socio-economic activity. This study implies that the relationship between education and socio-economic aspects may be more complex than initially assumed.

Women Empowerment

Hypothesis 8, positing that Women's Empowerment significantly impacts socio-economic activity, is partially supported by Table 10. The p-value for Women's Empowerment is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. However, the Odds Ratio of 0.301 implies a notable 69.9% decrease in the odds of socio-economic activity with a one-unit increase in Women's Empowerment. This study suggests a complex interaction between empowerment dimensions (Khan & Ali, 2018) and underscores the need for comprehensive empowerment strategies to consider the broader socio-economic context.

Conclusion

This research illuminates the intricate interactions that impact economic and socio-economic activities in Karachi, including cultural norms, government policies, women's empowerment, and high-quality education. The overwhelming body of evidence demonstrating how government regulations and cultural norms affect economic activity highlights the necessity of changing both culture and policy to increase women's participation in the workforce. The relevance of women's empowerment and high-quality education in fostering economic engagement and enhancing socioeconomic conditions is further highlighted by their respective roles. Although certain hypotheses provide nuanced insights, especially about government policies and socioeconomic activities, the overall results support focused tactics aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Through a holistic approach to tackling these challenges, Karachi may strive toward a future that is both affluent and egalitarian.

Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive analysis of cultural norms, government policies, quality education, and women's empowerment and their impact on economic and socio-economic activities in Karachi, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Leadership commitment must begin with a change management process that addresses cultural barriers to women’s employment, such as stereotype cultures, through awareness creation, community sensitization, and education.

- Translate and practice gender-sensitive policies that prevent discrimination for gender and provide equal opportunities for promotions, policies for flexibility in working hours, and childcare services for employees.

- Support women and girls with regard to education through increasing financial and material resources for facilities, scholarships, and financial encouragement for females.

- A long-term policy on women's advancement that includes economic, social, and political aspects of women's lives should be created. This should involve sponsoring business initiatives, microcredit, and building up confidence.

- Periodically review and assess government policies by targeting empirical evidence and social transformations for better adjustment with the help of the academy, government, and civil society.

Limitations of Research

Despite the fact that this study was designed to focus on the effects of cultural norms, government policies, quality education, and women's promotion on economic and socio-economic activities in Karachi, it is pertinent to acknowledge some of the limitations. The given research employed a type of sampling known as convenience sampling that had the potential for systematic bias. As such, the given sample cannot be considered entirely representative of Karachi's highly diverse population. Furthermore, the current study was cross-sectional in nature, and data were collected at one particular time only. Hence, it can only be concluded that more large-scale longitudinal research could provide further understanding. The use of closed-ended questionnaires indicates that some sources of data are self-reported and thus may consist of response bias where participants furnish socially desirable responses.

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