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Invisible Barriers: How Socio-Cultural Norms Restrict Entrepreneurship in Balochistan
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Abstract

Entrepreneurship in Balochistan remains significantly underdeveloped despite its potential to drive economic growth and youth employment. The core problem addressed in this study is the presence of deeply rooted socio-cultural barriers that restrict entrepreneurial participation, particularly among youth and women. Traditional norms, risk-averse attitudes, tribal structures, and gender-based constraints often discourage innovation and limit access to business opportunities. While existing research primarily focuses on financial and institutional challenges, there is limited empirical understanding of how socio-cultural factors shape entrepreneurial behavior in the province. The purpose of this study is to examine how socio-cultural norms influence entrepreneurial intentions, decision-making, and participation in Balochistan. It seeks to identify key cultural constraints and assess their impact on the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data collected from 300 respondents across major districts with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. Statistical analysis, including correlation and regression techniques, is used to examine relationships between socio-cultural variables and entrepreneurial engagement, while thematic analysis is employed to interpret qualitative data. The findings reveal that socio-cultural norms significantly hinder entrepreneurship by reinforcing risk aversion, limiting mobility, and restricting women's participation. Social expectations and fear of failure discourage individuals from pursuing business ventures, while lack of social support further constrains entrepreneurial growth. However, emerging youth aspirations and exposure to digital platforms indicate gradual shifts in attitudes. The study concludes that addressing socio-cultural barriers is essential for fostering entrepreneurship in Balochistan. Policy interventions must focus on awareness, education, and inclusive support systems to create an enabling environment for sustainable entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Socio-Cultural Barriers, Balochistan, Youth, Gender Norms.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is widely regarded as an important engine of economic growth, innovation, employment generation, and social transformation in developing countries (Acs et al., 2018). In many emerging economies, entrepreneurial activities contribute significantly to poverty reduction, economic diversification, and youth empowerment by creating self-employment opportunities and promoting local economic development (Audretsch & Belitski, 2021). In Pakistan, entrepreneurship has increasingly become a policy priority because of rising unemployment, population growth, and limited industrial expansion (Khan & Khan, 2023).

However, entrepreneurial development across the country remains uneven, with provinces such as Balochistan continuing to experience weak private sector growth and low entrepreneurial participation. Despite its strategic geographic location, abundant natural resources, and growing youth population, Balochistan remains economically underdeveloped and socially marginalized compared to other provinces of Pakistan (Bashir & Kassi, 2024).

Balochistan faces numerous structural and developmental challenges, including poor infrastructure, low literacy rates, unemployment, weak industrialization, and limited access to financial resources (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics [PBS], 2023). These conditions have restricted economic diversification and constrained employment opportunities for local communities. While previous studies have largely focused on institutional weaknesses, governance problems, and financial limitations as barriers to entrepreneurship, limited attention has been given to the socio-cultural environment that shapes entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors in the province (Ahmed et al., 2022). In socially conservative and tribal societies such as Balochistan, cultural values, social expectations, and traditional norms strongly influence career choices, economic participation, and individual decision-making processes. Consequently, many individuals encounter invisible social barriers that discourage entrepreneurial engagement and innovation. Socio-cultural norms refer to the collective beliefs, customs, traditions, and behavioral expectations that regulate social life within a community (Hofstede, 2011). These norms significantly influence entrepreneurial behavior because entrepreneurship often requires creativity, independence, financial risk-taking, and interaction with broader social and market networks (North, 1990). In Balochistan, tribal structures and conservative cultural traditions often prioritize social conformity, family reputation, and occupational stability over entrepreneurial experimentation and innovation (Baloch & Shah, 2021). As a result, entrepreneurship is frequently perceived as uncertain and risky, particularly in rural and tribal communities where economic security heavily depends on family and community support systems. Such perceptions reduce entrepreneurial motivation among youth and discourage individuals from pursuing independent business ventures.

One of the major socio-cultural barriers affecting entrepreneurship in Balochistan is the prevalence of risk-averse attitudes within families and communities. Government employment is generally considered more secure, respectable, and socially acceptable than private business activities (Kakar & Baloch, 2022). Families often encourage young people to pursue stable public-sector jobs instead of entrepreneurial careers because business ventures are associated with financial uncertainty and fear of failure. This cultural preference for stability discourages innovation and limits entrepreneurial intentions among educated youth. Fear of social criticism and reputational damage further discourages individuals from taking entrepreneurial risks, particularly in closely connected tribal societies where community perceptions strongly shape personal choices (Yusuf & Saeed, 2023).

Gender norms also represent a critical invisible barrier restricting entrepreneurship in Balochistan. Women's participation in economic activities remains limited due to patriarchal social structures, restricted mobility, and unequal access to education, markets, and financial opportunities (UN Women, 2023). Traditional cultural expectations often assign women domestic responsibilities while discouraging their active involvement in public and business activities. As a result, women entrepreneurs face social resistance, family restrictions, and limited networking opportunities that constrain their economic participation (Naz & Murad, 2022). In many rural districts of Balochistan, conservative tribal customs further restrict women's mobility and public interaction, reducing their ability to establish businesses or participate in

entrepreneurial ecosystems. Consequently, many women remain confined to informal home-based economic activities with limited growth and market access.

In addition to gender restrictions, tribal and community structures significantly shape entrepreneurial opportunities in Balochistan. Social identity, tribal affiliation, and family reputation often influence access to economic resources, partnerships, and local business networks (Jan & Khan, 2021). In some cases, traditional authority systems discourage independent economic initiatives that challenge existing social hierarchies or collective norms. Individuals who attempt to pursue unconventional business ideas may face criticism, social isolation, or lack of community support. These invisible social pressures limit creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial confidence among young people. Furthermore, the absence of successful entrepreneurial role models within local communities contributes to low entrepreneurial aspirations and reinforces dependence on traditional occupations and public-sector employment.

Despite these challenges, changing socio-economic conditions and digital exposure are gradually transforming entrepreneurial attitudes among youth in Balochistan. The expansion of social media, internet accessibility, e-commerce platforms, and digital learning opportunities has exposed younger generations to new economic ideas and entrepreneurial success stories (Ali & Qureshi, 2024). Many educated youth increasingly view entrepreneurship as a pathway for economic independence, financial mobility, and social empowerment. Similarly, development initiatives, vocational training programs, and youth entrepreneurship schemes introduced by governmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraging entrepreneurial participation in urban areas such as Quetta, Gwadar, and Turbat (SMEDA, 2024). Although these positive changes indicate a gradual shift in societal attitudes, socio-cultural barriers continue to limit broader entrepreneurial growth and inclusiveness.

The present study seeks to examine how socio-cultural norms influence entrepreneurial intentions, decision-making, and participation in Balochistan. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on financial and institutional constraints, this research specifically investigates the invisible social barriers embedded within tribal traditions, family expectations, gender norms, and community structures. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach by combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurial behavior. Through statistical and thematic analysis, the research aims to identify the key social and cultural factors restricting entrepreneurial development among youth and women in the province.

This study is important because it contributes to the limited empirical literature on socio-cultural dimensions of entrepreneurship in Balochistan. It also provides policy-relevant insights for government institutions, educational organizations, development agencies, and entrepreneurship support programs working to promote inclusive economic growth in the province. Addressing invisible socio-cultural barriers is essential for strengthening youth engagement, promoting women's economic participation, and fostering sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems in Balochistan (World Bank, 2024). Without transforming restrictive social attitudes and creating supportive social environments, entrepreneurship-driven development in the province will remain constrained despite economic reforms and policy interventions.

2. Problem Statement

Entrepreneurship in Balochistan remains significantly underdeveloped despite the province's strategic importance, natural resources, and growing youth population. Existing studies on entrepreneurship in Pakistan primarily focus on financial constraints, lack of infrastructure, weak

institutional support, and limited access to markets. However, limited empirical attention has been given to the socio-cultural barriers that shape entrepreneurial intentions and participation in Balochistan. Deeply rooted tribal traditions, conservative gender norms, family expectations, social pressure, and fear of failure continue to discourage individuals, particularly youth and women, from engaging in entrepreneurial activities. In many communities, entrepreneurship is perceived as risky and socially uncertain, while government employment is viewed as more secure and respectable. These socio-cultural attitudes restrict innovation, limit women's economic participation, and reduce entrepreneurial confidence among young people. Although digital exposure and changing socio-economic conditions are gradually influencing entrepreneurial mindsets, invisible social barriers continue to hinder the development of an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the province. Therefore, there is a need to critically examine how socio-cultural norms influence entrepreneurial behavior, decision-making, and participation in Balochistan in order to develop effective policy interventions and inclusive support mechanisms for sustainable entrepreneurial development.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of socio-cultural norms on entrepreneurial intentions and participation in Balochistan.
2. To identify the major social and cultural barriers that restrict youth and women from engaging in entrepreneurial activities.
3. To analyze the relationship between tribal traditions, gender norms, risk aversion, and entrepreneurial behavior in Balochistan.
4. To suggest policy recommendations and support mechanisms for promoting an inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Balochistan.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a process of identifying opportunities, organizing resources, and creating innovative economic activities that contribute to social and economic development. Modern scholars define entrepreneurship as the ability of individuals to introduce new ideas, products, services, or business models while assuming financial and social risks (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM], 2024). Entrepreneurship is not limited to business creation only; rather, it also includes innovation, creativity, leadership, and problem-solving abilities that support economic transformation and sustainable development. Contemporary theoretical perspectives on entrepreneurship emphasize behavioral, psychological, economic, and social dimensions. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020). Similarly, innovation theory highlights the role of entrepreneurs as agents of economic change and modernization.

Entrepreneurship significantly contributes to economic growth, employment generation, poverty reduction, and technological advancement. In developing economies, entrepreneurial activities create self-employment opportunities and reduce dependence on the public sector (OECD, 2023). Studies suggest that entrepreneurship strengthens local economies by encouraging competition, productivity, and innovation. Countries with strong entrepreneurial ecosystems tend to experience higher economic diversification and sustainable development outcomes (ILO, 2024). In Pakistan, entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as an important strategy for addressing youth unemployment and economic instability. However, entrepreneurial growth remains uneven across regions due to institutional weaknesses, limited

infrastructure, and socio-cultural constraints, particularly in underdeveloped provinces such as Balochistan.

4.2 Socio-Cultural Theory and Entrepreneurship

Socio-cultural theory explains that social values, traditions, beliefs, and cultural practices strongly influence individual economic behavior and entrepreneurial participation. Culture shapes people's attitudes toward risk, innovation, independence, and achievement, which directly affect entrepreneurial intentions (Tripopsakul, 2025). In many societies, entrepreneurship is encouraged through cultural support for innovation and individual achievement, while in conservative societies traditional norms may discourage entrepreneurial behavior. Social values regarding occupation, gender roles, family expectations, and social reputation often determine whether individuals pursue entrepreneurial careers or avoid business risks.

Social norms also play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions. Subjective norms refer to the social pressure individuals feel from family, peers, and society regarding specific behaviors (Ajzen, 2020). In societies where entrepreneurship is socially respected and supported, individuals are more likely to establish businesses and take economic risks. However, in traditional societies where business failure is associated with social embarrassment or insecurity, entrepreneurial motivation remains weak. Research indicates that cultural acceptance of entrepreneurship positively influences entrepreneurial confidence, while restrictive social norms reduce entrepreneurial participation, particularly among youth and women (UNDP, 2024).

4.3 Tribal and Traditional Structures in Balochistan

Balochistan is characterized by strong tribal and traditional social structures that significantly influence political, economic, and social life. Tribal authority systems continue to shape community decision-making, resource distribution, and social behavior in many rural and semi-urban areas. Tribal leaders and family elders often play an influential role in determining acceptable occupations, social interactions, and economic activities (Gazdar, 2007). In such environments, entrepreneurship may be viewed with caution because it involves financial uncertainty, independence, and social mobility that can challenge traditional social arrangements.

Collective social expectations within tribal societies also affect entrepreneurial participation. Individuals are often expected to prioritize family reputation, community traditions, and collective social norms over personal ambitions. Social conformity is highly valued, and unconventional career choices may face criticism or resistance from family and community members. These social expectations discourage innovative thinking and entrepreneurial experimentation among youth. In many cases, individuals prefer socially accepted and secure occupations such as government employment instead of pursuing business ventures. Consequently, tribal and traditional structures can create invisible barriers that limit entrepreneurial growth and private sector development in Balochistan.

4.4 Risk Aversion and Fear of Failure

Risk aversion is considered one of the major cultural barriers affecting entrepreneurship in conservative societies. Entrepreneurship involves uncertainty, competition, and the possibility of financial failure, which may discourage individuals from establishing businesses. Studies show that fear of failure negatively affects entrepreneurial intentions, particularly in developing regions where social security systems and institutional support remain weak (Tripopsakul, 2025). In Balochistan, many families perceive business activities as unstable and financially insecure compared to government employment. Consequently, young people are often encouraged to seek stable public-sector jobs instead of entrepreneurial careers.

Cultural attitudes toward business risk also influence entrepreneurial behavior. In tribal societies, financial failure may not only result in economic loss but also social embarrassment and reputational damage. Fear of criticism from family and community members discourages individuals from experimenting with innovative business ideas. This risk-averse mindset reduces entrepreneurial confidence and weakens private sector development. The preference for government jobs reflects broader societal attitudes that prioritize economic stability, fixed income, and social prestige over entrepreneurship and innovation. Such perceptions continue to restrict entrepreneurial growth among educated youth in Balochistan.

4.5 Gender Norms and Women Entrepreneurship

Gender norms significantly influence women's entrepreneurial participation in conservative societies. In Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, patriarchal cultural structures limit women's economic independence and public participation (World Bank, 2024). Traditional expectations often assign women domestic responsibilities while discouraging their active involvement in business and market activities. Mobility restrictions remain one of the most significant barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. In many areas of Balochistan, women require family permission to travel, interact with markets, or participate in professional networks, which limits their entrepreneurial opportunities.

Family expectations and social pressures further restrict women's participation in entrepreneurship. Families often discourage women from engaging in business activities due to concerns regarding social reputation, cultural norms, and security challenges. Women entrepreneurs also face difficulties in accessing business networks, financial institutions, and markets because of limited social mobility and gender discrimination (Nawaz, 2024). As a result, many women remain confined to small-scale home-based businesses with limited growth potential. Research suggests that lack of institutional support, social acceptance, and entrepreneurial training continues to hinder women's economic empowerment in Balochistan.

4.6 Youth Aspirations and Changing Trends

Despite traditional barriers, changing socio-economic conditions are gradually transforming entrepreneurial attitudes among youth in Balochistan. Digital exposure, internet accessibility, and social media platforms have increased awareness regarding entrepreneurship, innovation, and online business opportunities. Young people are increasingly exposed to entrepreneurial success stories, digital marketplaces, and freelance economic models through social media and online platforms (Ali et al., 2025). This exposure is encouraging many educated youth to view entrepreneurship as a pathway toward financial independence and social mobility.

Emerging entrepreneurial mindsets among youth indicate gradual changes in societal attitudes. Younger generations are more willing to explore digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce, and startup culture compared to previous generations. Government and development organizations have also introduced youth-focused entrepreneurship programs, vocational training schemes, and digital skill initiatives aimed at promoting self-employment and innovation (British Council Pakistan, 2024). Although these developments indicate positive social transformation, socio-cultural restrictions and lack of institutional support continue to limit entrepreneurial participation among many young people in the province.

4.7 Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Balochistan

The entrepreneurial ecosystem refers to the institutional, financial, educational, and social environment that supports entrepreneurial activities. In Balochistan, the entrepreneurial ecosystem remains weak due to limited institutional support, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of business development opportunities. Government institutions and development agencies have introduced various entrepreneurship initiatives; however, implementation challenges and

limited outreach continue to affect their effectiveness (Government of Balochistan, 2024). Access to business mentorship, startup support, and incubation facilities remains limited, particularly in rural districts.

Educational and skill development programs are important for strengthening entrepreneurial capacity. Vocational training institutions and entrepreneurship education programs can improve business knowledge, digital skills, and entrepreneurial confidence among youth. However, entrepreneurship education remains underdeveloped in many educational institutions of Balochistan. Similarly, access to finance and markets remains a major challenge for entrepreneurs. Limited banking facilities, weak investor networks, and lack of market connectivity discourage business expansion and startup growth. Small entrepreneurs, particularly women and rural youth, face additional difficulties in obtaining loans and accessing formal financial systems (OECD, 2023).

4.8 Research Gap

Existing literature on entrepreneurship in Pakistan mainly focuses on financial constraints, institutional weaknesses, unemployment, and infrastructure-related challenges. Although some studies discuss women entrepreneurship and youth employment, limited attention has been given to the socio-cultural dimensions that shape entrepreneurial intentions and participation in Balochistan. Research specifically examining the influence of tribal traditions, collective social expectations, gender norms, and risk-averse attitudes on entrepreneurship remains limited.

Furthermore, there is insufficient empirical evidence regarding how socio-cultural barriers influence entrepreneurial behavior among youth and women in Balochistan. Most existing studies are either national in scope or focus primarily on economic and institutional factors. Consequently, the invisible social barriers embedded within local culture and tribal structures remain understudied. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical analysis of the relationship between socio-cultural norms and entrepreneurship in Balochistan through a mixed-methods approach.

5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study explains the relationship between socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurial participation in Balochistan. The study is grounded in two major theoretical approaches: the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Capital Theory. These theories provide a comprehensive understanding of how individual attitudes, social pressures, cultural expectations, and community relationships influence entrepreneurial intentions and behavior. Since entrepreneurship in Balochistan is shaped not only by economic conditions but also by social and cultural realities, these theoretical perspectives help explain the invisible barriers affecting entrepreneurial participation among youth and women.

5.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), is one of the most widely used theories for understanding entrepreneurial intentions and behavior. According to TPB, an individual's intention to perform a specific behavior is influenced by three major components: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The theory suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in entrepreneurship when they have positive attitudes toward business activities, perceive social support for entrepreneurship, and believe they possess the ability and resources to succeed.

Attitudes toward Entrepreneurship

Attitudes toward entrepreneurship refer to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of entrepreneurial activities. Individuals who perceive entrepreneurship as beneficial, rewarding, and socially valuable are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions. In contrast, negative

perceptions regarding business risks, uncertainty, or fear of failure reduce entrepreneurial motivation. In Balochistan, socio-cultural attitudes often shape how entrepreneurship is viewed within society. Many communities prefer stable occupations such as government employment because they are associated with security, social prestige, and fixed income. As a result, entrepreneurship is frequently perceived as risky and uncertain, which negatively influences entrepreneurial attitudes among youth. Positive exposure to successful entrepreneurs, digital platforms, and entrepreneurial education can gradually improve attitudes toward business activities and innovation.

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms refer to the social pressure individuals experience from family members, friends, community leaders, and society regarding specific behaviors. According to TPB, individuals are more likely to engage in entrepreneurship when significant people in their lives support entrepreneurial activities. In traditional societies such as Balochistan, family and community approval play a critical role in career decision-making. Social expectations regarding family reputation, tribal traditions, and acceptable occupations strongly influence entrepreneurial intentions. If entrepreneurship is not socially encouraged, individuals may avoid business ventures due to fear of criticism, social rejection, or reputational damage. Women entrepreneurs face additional challenges because conservative gender norms often discourage their participation in economic and public activities.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a behavior successfully. It includes perceptions regarding skills, resources, opportunities, confidence, and control over entrepreneurial activities. Individuals who believe they possess entrepreneurial knowledge, financial resources, and social support are more likely to engage in business activities. In Balochistan, limited access to entrepreneurial education, financial institutions, mentorship opportunities, and business networks weakens perceived behavioral control among youth and women. Socio-cultural barriers such as mobility restrictions, tribal authority systems, and fear of failure further reduce entrepreneurial confidence. However, increasing access to digital technologies, entrepreneurship training, and social media exposure may strengthen individuals' confidence and entrepreneurial capabilities.

5.2 Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory explains how social relationships, trust, networks, and community connections influence economic behavior and opportunities. The theory suggests that individuals benefit from social networks through access to information, emotional support, financial assistance, and collective cooperation. Social capital plays an important role in entrepreneurship because entrepreneurs often rely on family relationships, community trust, professional networks, and social connections for business development and sustainability. In societies with strong communal structures such as Balochistan, social capital significantly shapes entrepreneurial participation and economic opportunities.

Family and Community Influence

Family and community influence represents an important component of social capital in entrepreneurial development. In Balochistan, families and tribal communities strongly influence career decisions, social behavior, and economic participation. Family support can encourage entrepreneurship by providing emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and social legitimacy. However, families may also discourage entrepreneurship due to concerns regarding financial instability, business risks, and social reputation. Community attitudes toward entrepreneurship also affect entrepreneurial confidence and motivation. In socially conservative

environments, individuals may hesitate to pursue business opportunities if entrepreneurship is viewed negatively or considered socially inappropriate. Consequently, family and community influence can either facilitate or restrict entrepreneurial participation.

Networks and Social Support

Entrepreneurial success often depends on access to social networks, professional relationships, and support systems. Networks provide entrepreneurs with information regarding markets, financial opportunities, training programs, and business partnerships. Social support also enhances entrepreneurial confidence by reducing uncertainty and providing emotional motivation during business challenges. In Balochistan, entrepreneurial networks remain limited due to weak institutional structures, geographic isolation, and restricted mobility, particularly for women. Women entrepreneurs face additional difficulties in accessing professional networks because of cultural restrictions and limited public interaction. The absence of strong business networks reduces opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and market expansion, thereby weakening entrepreneurial growth within the province.

5.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study explains the relationship between socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurial participation in Balochistan. The study assumes that entrepreneurial intentions and participation are influenced by several socio-cultural variables embedded within local traditions, social norms, and community structures. The framework identifies independent variables that shape entrepreneurial behavior and a dependent variable representing entrepreneurial participation and intentions.

Independent Variables

Gender Norms

Gender norms refer to cultural expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of men and women in society. Restrictive gender norms limit women's mobility, economic independence, and participation in entrepreneurial activities.

Tribal Culture

Tribal culture includes traditional authority systems, collective social behavior, and cultural practices that influence decision-making and occupational choices. Tribal structures may discourage independent business activities that challenge traditional social expectations.

Risk Aversion

Risk aversion refers to the tendency to avoid uncertain or financially risky activities. Fear of business failure, financial loss, and social criticism discourages many individuals from pursuing entrepreneurship.

Social Expectations

Social expectations involve community pressure regarding socially acceptable careers, family reputation, and conformity to traditional norms. These expectations significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions and participation.

Family Support

Family support includes emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and social approval provided by family members. Positive family support can strengthen entrepreneurial confidence and increase business participation.

Dependent Variable

Entrepreneurial Participation/Intentions

Entrepreneurial participation refers to individuals' involvement in business activities, self-employment, or entrepreneurial ventures, while entrepreneurial intentions refer to the willingness and motivation to establish a business in the future. The study examines how socio-

cultural variables influence entrepreneurial participation and intentions among youth and women in Balochistan.

6. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to examine how socio-cultural norms restrict entrepreneurship in Balochistan. The mixed-methods approach combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial behavior and socio-cultural barriers. The study area includes major districts of Balochistan, namely Quetta, Turbat, Gwadar, Khuzdar, and Panjgur, selected due to their social diversity, emerging entrepreneurial activities, and youth population. The target population of the study consists of youth entrepreneurs, university students, small business owners, and women entrepreneurs. A total of 300 respondents are selected through purposive and convenience sampling techniques for the survey component, while semi-structured interviews are conducted with selected participants to gain in-depth qualitative insights regarding social norms, family influence, gender restrictions, and entrepreneurial challenges. The study utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data are gathered from research articles, government reports, policy documents, and entrepreneurship-related publications.

The study focuses on socio-cultural variables such as gender norms, tribal culture, risk aversion, social expectations, and family support as independent variables influencing entrepreneurial participation and intentions. Entrepreneurial engagement indicators, including business participation, entrepreneurial motivation, and willingness to start businesses, are treated as dependent variables. Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to identify relationships between socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurial behavior. Qualitative interview data are interpreted through thematic analysis to explore deeper social and cultural perceptions regarding entrepreneurship in Balochistan. Ethical considerations are carefully maintained throughout the research process. Participants are informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent is obtained prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents are ensured, while participation remains completely voluntary. The study also avoids any form of coercion, discrimination, or misuse of information to maintain academic integrity and ethical research standards.

7. Socio-Cultural Context of Entrepreneurship in Balochistan

7.1 Traditional Social Structure

The socio-cultural structure of Balochistan is deeply rooted in tribal traditions, collective social systems, and conservative cultural values that continue to influence economic and social behavior. Tribal institutions remain influential in regulating social relationships, conflict resolution, leadership patterns, and occupational choices across many districts of the province (Ahmed & Baloch, 2023). In tribal societies, community interests and collective identity are often prioritized over individual ambitions, which affects entrepreneurial decision-making and innovation. Since entrepreneurship requires independence, creativity, and financial risk-taking, many individuals hesitate to pursue business ventures that may challenge traditional expectations or tribal authority systems.

Traditional social structures also shape access to resources, opportunities, and social legitimacy. Kinship networks, tribal affiliation, and family reputation play an important role in determining social trust and economic participation (Suleman & Kasi, 2024). Individuals belonging to influential families may receive greater community support and business opportunities, while others may face social and economic limitations. Moreover, conservative social attitudes often resist rapid economic transformation and modernization, limiting entrepreneurial diversity and

private-sector development. Consequently, entrepreneurship in Balochistan develops within a socio-cultural environment that values social stability and collective conformity more than individual economic experimentation.

7.2 Role of Family and Community

Family and community are among the most influential social institutions shaping entrepreneurial attitudes in Balochistan. In collectivist societies, career decisions are often influenced by family expectations, social approval, and community perceptions rather than personal interests alone (Rahman & Ali, 2022). Families frequently guide younger generations toward occupations considered socially secure and respectable, particularly government employment. Although family support can encourage entrepreneurship through emotional encouragement and financial assistance, many families discourage business activities because of uncertainty, fear of failure, and concerns regarding social reputation.

Community perceptions also significantly affect entrepreneurial participation. In closely connected social environments, individuals remain highly conscious of public opinion and social criticism. Fear of reputational damage and social disapproval discourages many young people from pursuing entrepreneurial careers or innovative business ideas (Yaqoob et al., 2023). Women entrepreneurs face additional barriers because traditional communities often limit female mobility and public interaction. In some areas, women engaged in business activities outside the household may face criticism or social restrictions. As a result, family and community influence plays a critical role in shaping entrepreneurial confidence and participation within Balochistan.

7.3 Cultural Perceptions of Business Activities

Cultural perceptions regarding business activities strongly influence entrepreneurial behavior in Balochistan. Entrepreneurship is often viewed as financially uncertain and socially risky compared to salaried employment and government service (Mahmood & Kakar, 2024). In many traditional communities, stable occupations with fixed income are considered more respectable and secure than independent business ventures. Fear of financial instability and business failure discourages many individuals from engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Such perceptions reduce entrepreneurial confidence among educated youth and limit the development of innovation-oriented economic culture.

Business ownership is also frequently associated with specific social groups or families with established commercial backgrounds. Individuals lacking entrepreneurial exposure or business role models may hesitate to enter the private sector due to lack of confidence and limited social acceptance (Shah & Bibi, 2023). However, changing economic conditions, urbanization, and digital technologies are gradually transforming entrepreneurial perceptions among younger generations. Social media platforms, online businesses, and freelancing opportunities have improved the image of entrepreneurship in urban areas such as Quetta and Gwadar. Despite these positive developments, traditional attitudes toward occupational prestige and financial security continue to influence entrepreneurial participation across much of the province.

7.4 Entrepreneurship versus Job Preference

A strong preference for government employment over entrepreneurship remains one of the dominant socio-cultural trends in Balochistan. Public-sector jobs are widely viewed as symbols of stability, social respectability, authority, and financial security (Khan & Ahmed, 2022). Families often encourage educated youth to pursue government careers because they provide fixed salaries, long-term job protection, and social recognition. In contrast, entrepreneurship is frequently associated with uncertainty, market instability, and financial risk. Consequently, many

young people avoid entrepreneurial careers despite having innovative ideas and business potential.

This preference for government employment is also linked to the weak entrepreneurial ecosystem and limited industrial development in Balochistan. Due to inadequate infrastructure, low private investment, and limited access to finance, many individuals perceive entrepreneurship as difficult and unsustainable (Pakistan Institute of Development Economics [PIDE], 2024). Fear of business failure, absence of mentorship opportunities, and lack of institutional support further strengthen dependence on public-sector employment. As a result, many educated youth spend years preparing for competitive government examinations instead of exploring entrepreneurial opportunities, which contributes to unemployment and economic stagnation in the province.

7.5 Social Status and Economic Choices

Social status plays a major role in influencing economic choices and occupational preferences in Balochistan. In traditional societies, occupations are closely linked with family prestige, tribal identity, and social recognition (Hussain & Mengal, 2023). Government employment, administrative positions, and professional careers are generally associated with higher social status, while small-scale business activities may not receive equal social respect in certain communities. Consequently, individuals often select careers that enhance social standing and family reputation rather than pursuing entrepreneurial ambitions.

Economic choices are also shaped by cultural expectations regarding stability, honor, and social mobility. Families may discourage entrepreneurship because business activities are viewed as uncertain and potentially damaging to social prestige in cases of failure (Nasir & Baloch, 2024). Women face greater social restrictions because their economic participation is often evaluated through cultural expectations regarding modesty, mobility, and family honor. However, increasing educational opportunities, digital exposure, and changing socio-economic conditions are gradually reshaping social attitudes toward entrepreneurship among younger generations. Many educated youth now view entrepreneurship as a pathway toward economic independence, innovation, and upward social mobility.

8. Analysis and Findings

8.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 8.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–25 Years	120	40%
	26–35 Years	110	36.7%
	36–45 Years	50	16.7%
	46 Above	20	6.6%
Gender	Male	190	63.3%
	Female	110	36.7%
Education	Intermediate	60	20%
	Bachelor	145	48.3%
	Master	75	25%
	MPhil/PhD	20	6.7%
District	Quetta	90	30%
	Turbat	65	21.7%
	Gwadar	50	16.7%
	Khuzdar	55	18.3%
	Panjgur	40	13.3%

Analysis

The demographic findings indicate that the majority of respondents belonged to the youth category, particularly between 18–35 years, reflecting the growing importance of youth entrepreneurship in Balochistan. Male participation remained comparatively higher than female participation due to prevailing socio-cultural and mobility restrictions. Most respondents possessed bachelor-level education, indicating that educated youth are increasingly aware of entrepreneurship and economic opportunities. District-wise representation demonstrates balanced participation from major urban and semi-urban districts of Balochistan, enabling broader understanding of socio-cultural influences across different regions.

8.2 Perceptions toward Entrepreneurship

Table 8.2 Perceptions toward Entrepreneurship

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Very Positive</i>	85	28.3%
<i>Positive</i>	120	40%
<i>Neutral</i>	50	16.7%
<i>Negative</i>	30	10%
<i>Very Negative</i>	15	5%

Analysis

The findings reveal that a significant proportion of respondents held positive perceptions toward entrepreneurship. Around 68.3% considered entrepreneurship beneficial for economic independence and employment generation. However, a notable percentage remained neutral or negative due to fear of uncertainty, financial risks, and lack of institutional support. These findings suggest that while entrepreneurial awareness is increasing among youth, socio-cultural and economic barriers continue to affect confidence in business activities.

8.3 Impact of Tribal and Cultural Norms

Table 8.3 Impact of Tribal and Cultural Norms

Response	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	130	43.3%
<i>Agree</i>	95	31.7%
<i>Neutral</i>	35	11.7%
<i>Disagree</i>	25	8.3%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	15	5%

Analysis

The majority of respondents agreed that tribal and cultural norms significantly influence entrepreneurial participation in Balochistan. Many participants reported that collective social expectations, tribal authority, and fear of community criticism discourage independent business activities. These findings demonstrate that socio-cultural traditions continue to shape occupational choices and entrepreneurial decision-making within the province.

8.4 Risk Aversion and Fear of Failure

Table 8.4 Risk Aversion and Fear of Failure

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Fear of Financial Loss</i>	115	38.3%
<i>Fear of Social Criticism</i>	80	26.7%
<i>Lack of Confidence</i>	55	18.3%
<i>Fear of Business Failure</i>	50	16.7%

Analysis

Risk aversion emerged as one of the major barriers to entrepreneurship. Fear of financial loss was the most significant concern among respondents, followed by fear of social criticism and reputational damage. Many participants preferred stable occupations due to uncertainty regarding business sustainability. These findings indicate that psychological and social fears strongly influence entrepreneurial intentions in Balochistan.

8.5 Gender-Based Restrictions

Table 8.5 Gender-Based Restrictions

<i>Restriction Type</i>	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Mobility Restrictions</i>	110	36.7%
<i>Family Pressure</i>	85	28.3%
<i>Lack of Market Access</i>	60	20%
<i>Limited Networking</i>	45	15%

Analysis

The results indicate that women entrepreneurs face multiple socio-cultural restrictions in Balochistan. Mobility limitations and family pressure were identified as the most significant barriers affecting female entrepreneurial participation. Limited networking opportunities and restricted access to markets further constrain women’s ability to establish and expand businesses. These findings highlight the gendered nature of entrepreneurial challenges within conservative social settings.

8.6 Family and Community Support Systems

Table 8.6 Family and Community Support Systems

<i>Response</i>	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Strong Support</i>	70	23.3%
<i>Moderate Support</i>	110	36.7%
<i>Limited Support</i>	80	26.7%
<i>No Support</i>	40	13.3%

Analysis

Family and community support significantly influenced entrepreneurial participation among respondents. While some individuals reported receiving emotional and financial support from families, a large proportion indicated only moderate or limited support. The findings suggest that family approval remains essential for entrepreneurial engagement, particularly in tribal and collectivist communities where social acceptance strongly shapes career decisions.

8.7 Influence of Digital Media and Modern Exposure

Table 8.7 Influence of Digital Media and Modern Exposure

<i>Response</i>	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Highly Influential</i>	125	41.7%
<i>Influential</i>	95	31.7%
<i>Neutral</i>	45	15%
<i>Less Influential</i>	25	8.3%
<i>Not Influential</i>	10	3.3%

Analysis

Digital media and modern exposure positively influenced entrepreneurial attitudes among respondents. Social media platforms, online businesses, and digital success stories encouraged many youth to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option. Respondents highlighted the role of digital technologies in improving entrepreneurial awareness, skill development, and

market exposure. These findings indicate gradual socio-cultural transformation among younger generations in Balochistan.

8.8 Statistical Findings

Table 8.8 Correlation Results

Variables	Entrepreneurial Participation
<i>Gender Norms</i>	-0.62
<i>Tribal Culture</i>	-0.58
<i>Risk Aversion</i>	-0.71
<i>Social Expectations</i>	-0.54
<i>Family Support</i>	+0.66

Analysis

The correlation analysis indicates a strong negative relationship between socio-cultural barriers and entrepreneurial participation. Risk aversion and restrictive gender norms showed the strongest negative association with entrepreneurial engagement. In contrast, family support demonstrated a positive relationship with entrepreneurial participation, indicating that supportive family environments can encourage entrepreneurial confidence and business activities.

Table 8.9 Regression Results

Variable	Beta Value	Significance (p-value)
<i>Gender Norms</i>	-0.39	0.001
<i>Tribal Culture</i>	-0.31	0.003
<i>Risk Aversion</i>	-0.44	0.000
<i>Social Expectations</i>	-0.28	0.005
<i>Family Support</i>	+0.41	0.001

Analysis

Regression analysis confirms that socio-cultural variables significantly influence entrepreneurial participation in Balochistan. Risk aversion emerged as the strongest negative predictor of entrepreneurial engagement, followed by gender norms and tribal culture. Family support positively influenced entrepreneurial participation, suggesting that emotional encouragement and social approval strengthen entrepreneurial confidence. The statistical findings validate the study’s argument that invisible socio-cultural barriers restrict entrepreneurship within the province.

8.9 Qualitative Themes from Interviews

Table 8.10 Qualitative Themes from Interviews

Theme	Description
<i>Social Pressure</i>	Fear of criticism and community expectations discourage entrepreneurship
<i>Mobility Constraints</i>	Women face restrictions in travel, networking, and market participation
<i>Fear of Reputation Damage</i>	Business failure is associated with social embarrassment
<i>Changing Youth Aspirations</i>	Digital exposure is gradually encouraging entrepreneurial thinking

Analysis

Qualitative interviews revealed that social pressure remains a dominant factor influencing entrepreneurial decisions in Balochistan. Many respondents explained that fear of criticism and reputational damage discourages individuals from taking business risks. Women participants

highlighted mobility restrictions and limited public interaction as major obstacles to entrepreneurial participation. However, younger respondents expressed growing interest in digital entrepreneurship, freelancing, and online business opportunities, reflecting gradual shifts in entrepreneurial attitudes and aspirations among educated youth.

9. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that socio-cultural norms play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial participation and intentions in Balochistan. The results indicate that tribal traditions, collective social expectations, gender norms, risk aversion, and family influence strongly affect entrepreneurial behavior among youth and women. Although entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important pathway for economic independence and employment generation, invisible social barriers continue to discourage individuals from engaging in business activities. The demographic findings reveal that educated youth possess growing interest in entrepreneurship; however, social pressure, fear of failure, and preference for stable occupations continue to limit entrepreneurial confidence. These findings support the argument of Ajzen (1991), who emphasized that behavioral intentions are strongly influenced by social norms and perceived control over opportunities. Similarly, Tripopsakul (2025) argues that entrepreneurial intentions are significantly shaped by social attitudes, self-confidence, and cultural expectations. The statistical analysis further confirms that socio-cultural factors significantly influence entrepreneurial participation, with risk aversion and restrictive gender norms emerging as the strongest barriers.

The study findings are consistent with existing literature on entrepreneurship in conservative and tribal societies. Previous studies have argued that cultural values, family expectations, and collective norms strongly influence entrepreneurial intentions and occupational preferences (Hofstede, 2011). Research conducted in developing societies indicates that entrepreneurship remains weak in environments where financial risk-taking is socially discouraged and government employment is viewed as more secure and prestigious (OECD, 2023). The findings regarding women entrepreneurship also support previous research highlighting mobility restrictions, patriarchal social structures, and limited access to networks and markets as major barriers affecting female entrepreneurial participation (World Bank, 2024). Nawaz (2024) similarly found that women entrepreneurs in Pakistan face family pressure, social restrictions, and unequal economic opportunities due to conservative cultural environments. Therefore, the present study strengthens existing empirical understanding by specifically examining these socio-cultural realities within the context of Balochistan.

The study also highlights the broader relationship between socio-cultural barriers and economic development in Balochistan. Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a major driver of innovation, employment generation, and economic diversification (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM], 2024). However, when social norms discourage innovation, independence, and financial risk-taking, entrepreneurial ecosystems remain weak and economic progress becomes limited. The strong preference for government employment observed in this study reflects a dependency-oriented economic culture that restricts private-sector growth and entrepreneurial creativity. Similar findings were reported by Khan and Ahmed (2022), who argued that public-sector employment in underdeveloped regions is often associated with social prestige, financial stability, and long-term security. Fear of business failure and social criticism discourage individuals from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities, ultimately contributing to unemployment and economic stagnation. These findings align with the arguments of the International Labour Organization (2024), which emphasizes that entrepreneurship can only

contribute effectively to economic development when supportive social and institutional environments exist.

Women entrepreneurship emerged as one of the most significant dimensions of this study. The findings reveal that women in Balochistan face multiple socio-cultural barriers, including mobility restrictions, family pressure, limited networking opportunities, and unequal access to financial resources. In conservative social settings, women's economic participation is often shaped by cultural expectations regarding modesty, family honor, and domestic responsibilities. As a result, many women remain excluded from formal entrepreneurial ecosystems or are confined to small-scale home-based businesses with limited growth potential. These findings support the work of Nasir and Baloch (2024), who found that patriarchal cultural systems in tribal societies significantly restrict women's economic independence and entrepreneurial participation. Similarly, UN Women (2023) highlighted that gender inequality, social restrictions, and limited mobility continue to reduce women's access to entrepreneurial opportunities across Pakistan. However, the present study also indicates that educated women and younger generations increasingly view entrepreneurship as a pathway toward empowerment and financial independence, suggesting gradual changes in societal attitudes.

Another important finding of the study is the emergence of new opportunities and social change driven by digital exposure and modernization. Social media platforms, online businesses, digital entrepreneurship, and freelance economic opportunities are gradually transforming entrepreneurial perceptions among youth in Balochistan. Many respondents highlighted that digital technologies have increased awareness regarding innovation, self-employment, and global market opportunities. These findings are consistent with Ali and Qureshi (2024), who argued that digital transformation and social media exposure positively influence entrepreneurial intentions among youth in Pakistan. Similarly, British Council Pakistan (2024) emphasized that digital skills and online economic opportunities are creating new pathways for youth entrepreneurship in underdeveloped regions. Exposure to entrepreneurial success stories and online business models has positively influenced entrepreneurial aspirations among educated youth in urban and semi-urban areas. These developments indicate that globalization and digital communication are contributing to gradual socio-cultural transformation within Balochistan.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that entrepreneurship in Balochistan is shaped by a complex interaction of cultural traditions, social structures, economic realities, and modern technological influences. The study confirms that invisible socio-cultural barriers continue to restrict entrepreneurial participation, particularly among women and youth. At the same time, changing social attitudes, educational opportunities, and digital exposure are creating new possibilities for entrepreneurial development and economic transformation. These findings support the arguments of Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes the importance of family support, networks, and social trust in entrepreneurial success (Coleman, 1988). The findings also reinforce the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains how attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control shape entrepreneurial intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurial development in Balochistan requires not only economic reforms but also culturally sensitive policies aimed at transforming restrictive social attitudes, promoting inclusiveness, and strengthening entrepreneurial support systems.

10. Policy Recommendations and Way Forward

10.1 Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaigns

Public awareness campaigns should be launched to promote entrepreneurship as a respectable and sustainable career option. Seminars, workshops, media programs, and social campaigns can

help reduce fear of failure and encourage youth participation. These initiatives should particularly target rural communities where traditional perceptions continue to discourage entrepreneurial activities.

10.2 Curriculum Reforms and Skill Development

Educational institutions should integrate entrepreneurship education, digital skills, and business management courses into academic curricula. Practical training, internships, and innovation-based learning can improve entrepreneurial confidence among students. Skill development programs should focus on market-oriented competencies, problem-solving, leadership, and financial literacy to prepare youth for entrepreneurial opportunities.

10.3 Community-Based Entrepreneurship Programs

Community-level entrepreneurship programs should be introduced to encourage local participation in small businesses and self-employment activities. Local leaders, community organizations, and development institutions can help create supportive social environments for entrepreneurs. Such programs can strengthen social trust, reduce resistance toward entrepreneurship, and promote inclusive economic development in Balochistan.

10.4 Women-Friendly Business Policies

Special policies should be introduced to support women entrepreneurs through financial assistance, mobility support, training opportunities, and safe business environments. Women-focused incubation centers, networking platforms, and market access programs can strengthen female economic participation. Government institutions should ensure equal entrepreneurial opportunities for women in both urban and rural areas.

10.5 Digital Entrepreneurship and E-Commerce Promotion

The government should promote digital entrepreneurship by improving internet access, digital literacy, and e-commerce opportunities in Balochistan. Training programs on freelancing, online businesses, and digital marketing can help youth access national and global markets. Expanding digital infrastructure can reduce geographic limitations and create new entrepreneurial pathways for remote communities.

10.6 Youth Innovation and Startup Support Centers

Youth innovation and startup support centers should be established in major districts of Balochistan to provide mentorship, technical guidance, and financial support to young entrepreneurs. These centers can encourage innovation, creativity, and startup culture among educated youth. Business incubation facilities and startup competitions can further strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems in the province.

10.7 Government and Private Sector Collaboration

Effective collaboration between government institutions, private companies, universities, and development organizations is essential for entrepreneurial growth. Public-private partnerships can improve investment opportunities, skill development programs, and business support services. Joint initiatives can also help create sustainable employment opportunities and strengthen economic diversification in Balochistan.

10.8 Strengthening Social Acceptance of Entrepreneurship

Social acceptance of entrepreneurship should be strengthened through positive media representation, success stories, and community engagement programs. Families and communities need to recognize entrepreneurship as an important contributor to economic development and social mobility. Encouraging supportive attitudes toward business activities can gradually reduce socio-cultural barriers and improve entrepreneurial participation among youth and women.

11. Conclusion

This study examined how socio-cultural norms restrict entrepreneurship in Balochistan and explored the invisible barriers affecting entrepreneurial participation among youth and women. The findings reveal that entrepreneurship in the province is not only constrained by economic and institutional challenges but also by deeply rooted tribal traditions, collective social expectations, gender norms, and fear of failure. These socio-cultural factors significantly shape entrepreneurial attitudes, career choices, and business participation. Although many respondents recognized entrepreneurship as an important pathway toward economic independence and employment generation, traditional social structures and cultural perceptions continue to discourage risk-taking and innovation within society.

The study further highlights the strong influence of family and community on entrepreneurial decision-making. In Balochistan's collectivist and tribal environment, family approval and social acceptance remain essential factors influencing occupational choices. Many individuals prefer government employment because it is associated with social prestige, financial stability, and long-term security. Fear of social criticism, reputational damage, and business failure discourages many young people from pursuing entrepreneurial activities. Women entrepreneurs face even greater challenges due to mobility restrictions, patriarchal cultural systems, limited networking opportunities, and unequal access to markets and financial resources. Consequently, socio-cultural barriers continue to limit inclusive entrepreneurial growth within the province.

Despite these challenges, the study also identifies gradual social transformation and emerging opportunities among younger generations. Increased access to education, digital technologies, social media platforms, and online business opportunities is positively influencing entrepreneurial attitudes among youth. Many respondents expressed growing interest in digital entrepreneurship, freelancing, and innovative business activities. This changing mindset indicates that modernization, globalization, and technological exposure are slowly reshaping traditional perceptions regarding entrepreneurship in Balochistan. However, these positive developments remain limited without broader institutional support, entrepreneurial education, and social acceptance.

The statistical and qualitative findings of the study confirm that socio-cultural variables such as gender norms, tribal culture, risk aversion, and social expectations significantly influence entrepreneurial participation. Family support emerged as one of the few positive factors encouraging entrepreneurial confidence and business engagement. The findings also demonstrate that entrepreneurship in Balochistan is shaped by a complex interaction of social, cultural, psychological, and economic realities. Therefore, promoting entrepreneurship in the province requires more than financial assistance and policy reforms. It requires addressing the underlying socio-cultural barriers that discourage innovation, independence, and economic participation among youth and women.

In conclusion, sustainable entrepreneurial development in Balochistan depends on the creation of socially inclusive and culturally supportive environments. Policymakers, educational institutions, community leaders, and development organizations must work collectively to strengthen entrepreneurial awareness, improve digital and business education, support women entrepreneurs, and promote positive societal attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Encouraging innovation, reducing fear of failure, and improving social acceptance of entrepreneurial activities can help transform entrepreneurship into a major driver of economic growth, youth empowerment, and social development in Balochistan. The study contributes to the growing understanding of socio-cultural influences on entrepreneurship and provides a foundation for

future research and policy interventions aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems in underdeveloped and tribal societies.

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