



THE IMPACT OF BRANCHLESS BANKING ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

In Pakistan, women entrepreneurs face numerous challenges when opening and managing bank accounts for business operations. Branchless banking serves as a vital tool to address these obstacles. This study investigates the impact of branchless banking on women entrepreneurs using a quantitative methodology, based on a survey of 50 individuals, including both women entrepreneurs and Islamic bankers.

Our research concludes that societal and domestic challenges significantly hinder women's ability to visit physical bank branches, as doing so often conflicts with household responsibilities. Furthermore, safety concerns frequently necessitate a family member's accompaniment for branch visits. The study also found that a majority of women entrepreneurs lack awareness of branchless banking products, services, and operational mechanisms.

Despite these barriers, the findings indicate that branchless banking has a positive impact on women entrepreneurs. We recommend that Islamic banks actively include women entrepreneurs in their target markets and develop strategies to market branchless banking products effectively. Creating awareness is essential to bridge the information gap. Moreover, there is a pressing need to introduce gender-specific financial products, such as; relaxed credit assessment criteria, issuances of letter of guarantees and letter of credit facilities, gold or cash backed easy financing schemes, consumer financing, supply chain management, payroll & cash management services, wealth management products, dedicated ADC (Alternative Delivery Channels) services.

Key Words: *Branchless Banking, Women Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, Islamic Banks.*

1. Introduction

Women's empowerment and gender equality are central to the government of Pakistan's agenda. Pursuing these goals is a key priority within the National Gender Policy Framework and broader national planning initiatives (Akram & Yang, 2021). Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly recognize the importance of empowering women; SDG Goal 5 is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, with a specific focus on their economic participation (Akram, 2020).

The rising cost of living has intensified the need for dual-income households, as traditional reliance on a single male breadwinner often a husband or father is becoming insufficient. This economic pressure encourages women to seek income to meet essential household needs. According to Firdausi (1999) for Women Entrepreneurs economic factors (financial), social background and cultural factors are directly influences them and factors that influence indirectly the number of Women Entrepreneurs are: government policy, social, environmental stability, and the national economic conditions in the country. However, according to Creevey (1996), the most dominant of these factors is a factor of social and cultural backgrounds which include; religion, formal



education and skill level, age, ethnicity and habits, marital status, and geographic location of the area.

The entrepreneurship means equity-based composition of modern institutions and their fair working, as modern institutions are derived from traditional ones (Umar et al., 2024). Access to financial institutions is very important in supporting the development of Women Entrepreneurs (Parveen & Akram, 2021).

According to the latest Gender Development Index (GDI), Pakistan's female HDI value is 0.465, compared to 0.622 for males, which remains within the lowest tier (Group 5). In terms of the Gender Inequality Index (GII), Pakistan is ranked 135th out of 193 countries, with a GII value of 0.522. In comparison, neighboring countries such as India and Bangladesh are ranked 108th and 129th, respectively.

While Pakistan's regulatory framework is ostensibly gender-neutral, certain provisions coupled with rigid socio-cultural norms result in de facto occupational segregation (Nawaz et al., 2022, 2021). A primary example is the apparel industry, where the labor force remains approximately 90% male, a stark deviation from the regional South Asian average where women constitute nearly 80 to 90% of the workforce. Historically, this disparity was attributed to the Factories Act of 1934, which restricted women from working beyond 19:00. Although recent legislative reforms, such as the Factories (Amendment) Act 2023, now permit women to work evening shifts provided employers ensure safe transport and security, significant implementation gaps remain.

1.1. Permissibility for Women to work in the light of Islam

Islam permits women to work and earn their own livelihood, provided the nature of the work is honorable and adheres to Sharia principles of modesty. The Quran explicitly acknowledges women's economic agency, stating, "For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned" (Surah An-Nisa 4:32). This establishes that a woman's labor and property are her own, independent of her male relatives. This permissibility is further reinforced by the Hadith where the Prophet ﷺ told the wife of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, who was a skilled artisan: "You have a reward for what you spend on them [your family]" (Sahih Bukhari), confirming that women can engage in trade and even support their households. Historical precedents, such as Khadija (RA) being a prominent businesswoman and Shifa bint Abdullah (RA) serving as a market controller in Medina, demonstrate that women have long contributed to the professional and economic spheres within the ethical framework of Islam.

1.2. Acceptability of Women Entrepreneurs

The cultural construct of "male honor," inextricably linked to the perceived chastity and modesty of female relatives, severely constrains women's physical mobility and social interaction (Kabeer et al., 2021; Ramzan & Javaid, 2025). These traditional taboos create a "mobility barrier" that prevents women from accessing public markets and financial institutions, effectively legitimizing male dominance in the public and economic spheres. Consequently, the interplay of social norms and domestic responsibilities creates a significant "gendered time poverty," which further marginalizes women's participation in formal entrepreneurship (Roomi et al., 2018; Amin, 2022). The business environment for women in Pakistan reflects the complex interplay of many factors, which fall into two basic categories.



1.3. Islamic Banking Institutions

Islamic Banking Institutions (IBIs) operate under specific licenses to provide Shariah-compliant financial products and services rooted in Islamic jurisprudence. The industry has maintained an aggressive growth trajectory, driven by increasing public demand for interest-free solutions.

As of June 2025, the institutional landscape comprised 6 full-fledged Islamic banks and 16 conventional banks operating Islamic banking windows. The outreach has expanded to a vast network of 6,017 branches and 2,735 Islamic banking windows (as of mid-2025), reflecting a significant deepening of Shariah-compliant financial access across 132 districts in Pakistan.

1.4. Branchless Banking

Branchless Banking represents a disruptive financial model that delivers banking services without reliance on traditional physical branches. By utilizing a network of third-party agents such as retail shops and pharmacies and leveraging mobile technology, BB extends financial services to "last-mile" customers. This model utilizes Alternative Delivery Channels (ADCs) and mobile wallets to facilitate core banking functions, including real-time fund transfers, bill payments, and deposit mobilization, effectively decoupling financial access from geographical proximity.

1.5. Branchless Banking Global Overview

On a global scale, Branchless Banking (BB) underpinned by the rapid proliferation of mobile money has evolved from a specialized financial inclusion initiative into a fundamental pillar of the modern digital economy. According to the GSMA (2025), the sector reached a critical inflection point in 2024, with registered accounts surpassing 2.1 billion and monthly active users (MAUs) reaching 514 million. The systemic maturity of this industry is further evidenced by its transaction throughput; in 2024 alone, the ecosystem processed approximately 108 billion transactions with an aggregate valuation of \$1.68 trillion, representing a substantial 16% year-on-year increase.

While Sub-Saharan Africa maintains its position as the global benchmark facilitating 65% of the world's total transaction value the World Bank Global Findex (2024/25) indicates a broader trend of convergence, with global account ownership climbing to 79%. This expansion has played a pivotal role in narrowing the gendered financial gap across several emerging economies. However, despite these advancements, significant "last-mile" challenges persist. Approximately 1.3 billion adults remain excluded from the formal financial system, largely due to entrenched structural barriers such as limited digital literacy, lack of formal identification, and persistent mobility constraints.

1.6. Branchless Banking in Pakistan Overview

Branchless Banking has emerged as a cornerstone of financial inclusion in Pakistan, fundamentally reshaping the country's digital economic landscape. By September 2025, the sector achieved a significant milestone with 141.5 million registered accounts, of which 64.8 million are actively utilized. This growth is supported by an extensive nationwide network of 756,480 BB agents, who facilitated 129 million over-the-counter (OTC) transactions valued at PKR 0.9 trillion in a single quarter.

Furthermore, a profound structural transition toward mobile-centricity is evident, as branchless mobile app users surged to 79.2 million by the end of FY 2025. This digital proliferation is underscored by the fact that approximately 90% of retail transactions in Pakistan are now processed through digital channels. These metrics signify a paradigm shift from traditional brick-



and-mortar banking to a ubiquitous digital-first model, effectively lowering the barriers to entry for unbanked and underserved populations.

1.7.Problem Statement

Women's financial inclusion in Pakistan has reached a historic milestone in 2025-2026, with the overall inclusion rate soaring to 52%, a significant jump from just 4% in 2018. This progress is largely driven by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)'s "Banking on Equality" policy, which has seen active bank accounts held by women nearly double from 20 million in 2021 to 37 million as of June 2025. Branchless banking remains a critical gateway for this growth, with female-owned branchless accounts reaching 44.96 million by September 2025, representing roughly 31.8% of all such accounts nationwide.

Despite these gains, a stark gender gap persists in entrepreneurship and credit access. While women-led businesses received over Rs. 230 billion in financing between late 2024 and 2025, approximately 93% of these were financing, highlighting that most female entrepreneurs remain clustered in entry-level segments. Only 1% of all commercial bank financing currently go to women-led enterprises. To address these structural barriers, the SBP began implementing the Women Entrepreneur Finance Code in January 2026, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at increasing women's financial participation to 25% by 2028.

1.8.Research Question

What is the impact of Branchless Banking on Women Entrepreneurs?

1.9.Research Objective

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of Branchless Banking on Women Entrepreneur's domestic issues, security issues, family support, society perception, internet accessibility and awareness of branchless banking.

This study is based on liner relationship between independent and dependent variables for evaluating the impact; whether have positive or negative impact of Branchless Banking on Women Entrepreneurs.

1.10. Model

Impact of Branchless Banking = Women Entrepreneur's domestic issues + security issues + family support + society perception + internet accessibility + awareness of branchless banking.

2. Literature Review

2.1.Theoretical Perspective:

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a critical written account of the current state of research on topic of "Impact of Branchless Banking on Women Entrepreneurs". The theoretical literature review has helped establishing the fact that what theories already exist, the relationships between them, to what degree the existing theories have been investigated, and to develop new hypotheses to be tested.

2.2.Literature Review

Women Entrepreneurs

(Sumaira & Azam, 2012) studied Gender and work-life balance: a phenomenological study of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan. This study explores different influencing factors on women's work and family roles in the unique Pakistani socio-economic and cultural environment. The used methodology analyzed data about challenges faced by Women Entrepreneurs to achieve work-life balance. Their own businesses give them flexibility, control and freedom to juggle with their



family and social responsibilities. Lack of sufficient time, gender bias, social and cultural norms as well as family responsibilities are the most significant challenges women face to achieve balance in a patriarchal Islamic society.

(Goheer, 2003) studied Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan: How to improve their bargaining power. In the study, he made efforts to determine the attitudes and commitment of the women to growing and expanding their enterprises. The study also described the barriers and constraints, as well as the support and opportunities facing these Women Entrepreneurs. Moreover, he identified that women financing is also a challenge, and mostly financing schemes to SMEs are offered to male.

(Jennifer E Jennings, 2013) studied Women Entrepreneurs Challenges the Broader Entrepreneurship Literature. They approach these objectives from the standpoint of informed pluralism, seeking to explore whether and how women's entrepreneurship research offers extensions to and can be extended by general research on entrepreneurs and their ventures (Umar et al., 2024).

(Babar & et al., 2012) studied, "Gender Specific Barriers to Female Entrepreneurs in Pakistan: A Study in Urban Areas of Pakistan", where the prime objective of this study was to determine gender specific barriers for female entrepreneurs in Pakistan and to determine the impact of barriers to entrepreneurialism. The finding of their study was that Pakistani female entrepreneurs were found to exhibit many similarities in issues with other female entrepreneurs in developing countries. The findings indicated that factors like "Lack of finance, Restriction on mobility, Limited decision making, Lack of role models and guiders, Men's hold on markets, Family pressure and Discrimination are major barriers in the way of entrepreneurialism.

(Daphne Halkias, 2011) studied, "Challenges facing Women Entrepreneurs in Nigeria", Management Research Review, his study seeks to examine the business and social profiles of 67 Women Entrepreneurs in three regions of Nigeria in order to identify patterns of entrepreneurship and social and economic challenges facing women business owners in Nigeria. From the results presented, it is evident that female entrepreneurship in Nigeria is driven by micro-financing as well as family dynamics that work to shape and influence the birth of a business.

Branchless Banking

(Lucky Nugroho, 2017) studied Mobile Banking for Empowerment Muslim Women Entrepreneur: Evidence from Asia (Indonesia and Bangladesh). They concluded that Implementation of this program must have the support of all stakeholders, including the cooperation between the banks with microfinance institutions to expand the reach of the benefits of this technology. And, this research is my base paper.

(Gift Kimonge Dzombo, 2017) studied the Effect of Branchless Banking Strategy on the Financial Performance of Commercial Banks in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to analyze the individual effects of agency banking and electronic banking channels on the financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya and the combined effect of both agency and electronic banking on the financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Study findings indicated that when used in isolation; both agency and electronic banking had a significant negative effect on the financial performance of commercial banks at 5 percent significance level. However, when agency and electronic banking channels were used together as a multichannel strategy, they had a significant positive effect on bank's financial performance at 5 percent significance level.



(Muhammad Zahid, 2017) studied Branchless Banking in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges. SWOT analysis postulates that BB has many opportunities for Govt., society, customers, banking and cellular communication industries, national and international investors. The detection of fraudulent and unlawful transactions, lack of security, trust and reliability, absence of users' friendly technologies, and risks aversion in BB are the issues which require attention.

(Mustafa, 2016) studied Impact of Alternative Factors On Usage of Telco-Led Branchless Banking Services: Empirical Evidence from Pakistan. This study analyzes the impact of alternative factors on usage of Branchless Banking services among different mobile users in Pakistan. The study found perceived usefulness had a strong positive impact on Branchless Banking adoption, while having a bank account was found to have a strong negative impact. Salaried persons, low-income groups and less educated population segment are more attractive towards usage of Branchless Banking products. The study concludes that mobile operator based Branchless Banking services has huge potential to reach unbanked and untapped segment of the society in Pakistan.

(Nida Zuberi, 2017) studied Emerging Trend of Branchless Banking in Pakistan. The main objective of conducting this research is to determine the trend of Branchless Banking in Pakistan and how financial industry will boost the economy of Pakistan through this opportunity? Another purpose was to analyze and identify the need of Branchless Banking in financial industry in this technological and innovative environment. This research study indicates that as banking industry is growing and people are moving towards adoption of Branchless Banking, because from current situation which we can see that in future Pakistan economy will be at boom stage.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Quantitative technique deals with surveys through questionnaire from Women Entrepreneurs and Financial Institutions officials. The results of the Survey-questionnaire is converted using inbuilt parameters of SPSS.

3.2. Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion. For the purpose of this research, the data is collected through Survey-questionnaire. In Survey-questionnaire, it was informed to respondents that it will be used only for academic research and analysis purpose and therefore all information will remain confidential.

3.3. Population and Sample

The survey was conducted from total 50 people. It was divided in to three segments; 35 Women Entrepreneurs and 15 from Islamic Financial Institutions officials was set as the study's target audience for the purpose of Survey.



4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Reliability Analysis

Variables	Reliability	
	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Domestic affairs – internal	4	0.951
Society perception being women – external	4	0.932
Support available by family members	4	0.973
Security Issues	4	0.898
Accessibility of Internet	4	0.991
Awareness of Branchless Banking of Islamic Bank	8	0.964

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.951	6

The Cronbach's Alpha average is 0.951 which is considered as closer to optimum reliability of data set and is acceptable in accuracy terms. In particular the variable shows the excellent amount of internal consistency of data set.

4.2. Results

The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of Branchless Banking on Women Entrepreneur's domestic issues, security issues, family support, society perception, internet accessibility and awareness of branchless banking.

Domestic Affairs:

i) *Is it easy for a woman to go outside home during 9 AM -5 PM even if they are entrepreneurs?*

Question#1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Most Difficult	36	72.0	72.0	72.0
No	8	16.0	16.0	88.0
Sometimes Difficult	4	8.0	8.0	96.0
Yes	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Majority of women – 72% stated that during branch timing it is mostly difficult to go outside home and only 4% said it is easy for them to leave home during office hours.

ii) *Women entrepreneurs have to fulfill their household responsibilities equally than housewife?*

Question#2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Mostly Yes	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
Valid Yes	37	74.0	74.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Women have many responsibilities to manage at home me. Since women entrepreneurs have indulged in additional responsibility but even though, 74% women said that they still have to manage equal household activities together with managing business.

iii) *Household responsibilities create hurdles for women to visit a branch for conducting routine transactions?*

Question#3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Mostly Yes	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Valid No	2	4.0	4.0	18.0
Valid Sometimes Yes	7	14.0	14.0	32.0
Valid Yes	34	68.0	68.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The majority women – 68% said that household responsibilities create hurdles to visit a branch while only 4% do not consider it difficult.

iv) *Knowledge of banking products, services and basic banking operations can be acquired at home through social channels / media without visiting a branch and without compromising household responsibilities?*

Question#4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	32	64.0	64.0	64.0
Valid Agree	13	26.0	26.0	90.0
Valid Disagree	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	



The majority women think that acquiring knowledge is possible at home – 64% are strongly agree while only 10% area disagree on it.

Society perception being women – external:

v) *Women have to face more challenges in doing business compare to men in the society?*

Question#5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	43	86.0	86.0	86.0
Valid Agree	4	8.0	8.0	94.0
Disagree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Being a woman they better understand their challenges in business, 86% women are strongly agreed on that while only 6% are disagree on it.

vi) *Society perception for women and men entrepreneurs are same?*

Question#6

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	46	65.7	92.0	92.0
Disagree	4	5.7	8.0	100.0
Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

In Karachi Pakistan, 92% women strongly agreed on the fact that they have to face more challenges than a man although there are 8% women those think differently and disagree on it.

vii) *Our society does not accept women visiting a bank frequently for doing her routine transactions?*

Question#7

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	34	68.0	68.0	68.0
Valid Agree	9	18.0	18.0	86.0
Disagree	5	10.0	10.0	96.0
Strongly Disagree	2	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	



Majority women, 68%, have a view that visiting a branch by a woman frequently does not like by the society.

viii) *The perception of our society, on visiting a bank by women, can change in next 5 years?*

Question#8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I don't Think so	39	78.0	78.0	78.0
Valid Yes, it will	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Majority of women do not think that the society perception will not be changed in next 5 years while 22% yes it will change.

Support available from family members:

ix) *If you want to participate in the community/ society, you would have to seek permission to go outside home from someone, being a woman?*

Question#9

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	32	64.0	64.0	64.0
Valid No	11	22.0	22.0	86.0
Valid Sometimes	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Karachi is a metropolitan city where level of education is relatively high but even though perhaps due to culture or something else 64% women need to acquire a permission from someone at home for going outside.

x) *Family members do give moral support to women entrepreneurs?*

Question#10

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	34	48.6	68.0	68.0
Valid Disagree	12	17.1	24.0	92.0
Valid Sometimes	4	5.7	8.0	100.0
Valid Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		



Majority of women have moral support available from family members while another significant percentage of 24% still don't have any moral support in running their business.

xi) Women need a support of family members in visiting a branch of the bank?

Question#11

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	29	41.4	58.0	58.0
	Disagree	16	22.9	32.0	90.0
	Sometimes	5	7.1	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

Majority women need someone from their home to visit a branch, in response to our question 58% women agree that without support of family can be difficult to visit branch while 32% do not any support from family.

xii) Women need a support of family members for understanding banking products and operations?

Question#12

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	25	35.7	50.0	50.0
	Disagree	18	25.7	36.0	86.0
	Sometimes	7	10.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

The 50% need someone's help to understand of banking products and operations while 14% women said sometimes help requires of family member to understand the banking products and rest 36% women said don't need of help at all.



Security Issues:

xiii) It is easy for women to go outside for visiting a branch for conducting routine transactions for the business?

Question#13

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	20	28.6	40.0	40.0
Disagree	26	37.1	52.0	92.0
Partially Agree	4	5.7	8.0	100.0
Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

Due to security issues for women 52% feel that it is not an easy to visit a branch for conducting their business transaction while 40% don't agree on it and 8% are partially agreed.

xiv) Do you think, there are more security issues for woman to visit a branch compare to a man?

Question#14

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	27	38.6	54.0	54.0
Disagree	21	30.0	42.0	96.0
Partially Agree	2	2.9	4.0	100.0
Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

Majority women, 54%, think that women have more security issues than a man, while 42% women feel comfortable.

xv) Women are easy target for scammers and snatchers compare to men?

Question#15

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	29	41.4	58.0	58.0
Disagree	20	28.6	40.0	98.0
Partially Agree	1	1.4	2.0	100.0
Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		



Obviously being a women they know their strength that's why 58% women agree on a fact that they are an easy target for scammers and snatchers.

xvi) Do you think women feel insecure because of harassment by branch staff or when male gaze women?

Question#16

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	23	32.9	46.0	46.0
	sometimes	22	31.4	44.0	90.0
	Never	5	7.1	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

The 46% women feel that they always feel insecure visiting a branch while 44% said sometimes and only 10% don't feel it insecure.

Accessibility of Internet:

xvii) Having an education is important to understand and operate smart phones?

Question#17

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	38.6	54.0	54.0
	No	23	32.9	46.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

Majority, 54%, of women do think that education is important for using a smart phone perhaps due to icons while 46% women think it is important.

xviii) You always have internet access as and when required?

Question#18

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	45	64.3	90.0	90.0
	No	5	7.1	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		



Karachi as urban city has no internet issues, our survey represents the same where 90% women have no internet issues.

xix) Do you use smart phone?

Question#19

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	50	71.4	100.0	100.0
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

100% women of our survey are using smart phones.

xx) You face no issue in operating smart phones and Mobile Banking Apps?

Question#20

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	48	68.6	96.0	96.0
No	2	2.9	4.0	100.0
Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

The 96% women are capable to use smart phones and mobile Apps.

Awareness of Branchless Banking offered by Islamic Bank:

xxi) Are you fully aware with banking products and operations related to the business need?

Question#21

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	7	10.0	14.0	14.0
No	29	41.4	58.0	72.0
Partially	14	20.0	28.0	100.0
Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

Most of the women have negated that they are fully aware of banking products and operations - 58% while 28% women are partially aware and only 28% are fully aware banking products and operations.



xxii) *Do you know what the branchless banking is and are fully aware of it?*

Question#22

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	4	5.7	8.0	8.0
	No	34	48.6	68.0	76.0
	Partially	12	17.1	24.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

The 68% women don't know what branchless banking which is astounding fact to understand the need of the awareness as only 8% in our sample survey women know what branchless banking is.

xxiii) *Have you seen marketing post/Ad of your bank on branchless banking?*

Question#23

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2	2.9	4.0	4.0
	No	13	18.6	26.0	30.0
	Sometimes	2	2.9	4.0	34.0
	Rarely	33	47.1	66.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

The above question is backed by the outcome of this question where 66% rarely have seen branchless banking post/marketing Add and only 4% women sometimes and have seen it.

xxiv) *Do you think, branchless banking can improve profitability and can reduce inappropriate costs – eventually can help Women entrepreneurs to support and grow?*

Question#24

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	38.6	54.0	54.0
	No	4	5.7	8.0	62.0
	Partially	19	27.1	38.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		



After knowing the basic definition of branchless banking majority, 54%, of the women in our survey had a view in favor of branchless banking.

xxv) *In your view, can branchless banking be offered by Islamic Banks considering the fact that Islamic Banks offer Riba free banking services?*

Question#25

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	29	41.4	58.0	58.0
	No	21	30.0	42.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

The 42% have a view that Islamic bank cannot offer by Islamic bank while majority of women – 58% said yes.

xxvi) *Do you know Islamic Banks also offer branchless banking?*

Question#26

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	38.6	54.0	54.0
	No	23	32.9	46.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		

In our survey, 54% women know about branchless banking offered by Islamic bank means majority of women do not even know about it. While 46% have an idea on it.

xxvii) *If Islamic Banks will offer branchless banking services, will it have differences in their products?*

Question#27

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	46	65.7	92.0	92.0
	No	4	5.7	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	71.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	28.6		
Total		70	100.0		



The 92% understands that Islamic banking products are based on Shariah laws hence they give due weightage and stated that branchless banking products offered by Islamic bank would be different from conventional products.

xxviii) If you would been given a chance to opt from conventional branchless banking and Islamic branchless banking services, what you would select?

Question#28

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Branchless Banking services from Islamic Banks	50	71.4	100.0	100.0
Missing System	20	28.6		
Total	70	100.0		

Now, this question gives a clear hint where 100% women is willing to opt branchless banking offers by Islamic Bank rather than choosing conventional bank.

Findings

Sections	Findings Summary
Section A - Demographics	Survey was conducted from women where 68% were between the age of 18-25 where 68% have less than a year experience.
Section B - Domestic affairs – internal	Women have household responsibilities that’s create hurdle for entrepreneurs visiting a branch during branch timing. Majority of women stated this in our survey. <u>Interpretation & discussion:</u> It has been found that domestic issues / affairs of Women demands for a solution which provides them a ease of running their business that do not compromise their household responsibilities and equally allow them to run their business efficiently and effectively such as through Branchless Banking.
Section C – Society perception – external	Our society is male dominated, women have to face more challenges than a man and visiting a branch is not perceived good for women as for a man, based on our results of our survey. <u>Interpretation & discussion:</u> It is found that it is better for a woman to do banking from home considering the society perception for a women & banking which is not going to change in next 5 years. Therefore, Branchless Banking is a tool which can be used to manage society perception.



<p>Section D - Support provided by family members – internal</p>	<p>Majority of women have moral support available from family members, women need to seek permission from a man for participation in the society and need a support of man to take her bank branch because 50% women do not understand banking products and operations without the help of someone else. <u>Interpretation & discussion:</u> Banking is still difficult for women; managing and handling banking inherent challenges unless appropriate steps would have been taken by banks to reduce this gap. And, this gap can be reduced through Branchless Banking.</p>
<p>Section E - Security Issues - external</p>	<p>Majority of women think that they feel insecure, they are an easy target of scammers and snatchers if they go outside. <u>Interpretation & discussion:</u> There are certain security issues for women when they go outside home even in metropolitan city like Karachi. Hence, to counter this challenge - Branchless Banking is way.</p>
<p>Section F - Accessibility of Internet</p>	<p>The smart phones and mobile Apps are used by majority women with full access of internet all the time. <u>Interpretation & discussion:</u> Branchless Banking require smart phones and internet. Since, it is now not an issue so Branchless Banking can extend their wings to support Women Entrepreneurs.</p>
<p>Section G - Awareness of Branchless Banking</p>	<p>Majority of women are not aware about the branchless banking offered by Islamic Banks as they have not been approached properly by Islamic banks through social / marketing Advertisements. In their view, branchless banking is a way favorable to them for their business and can help them grow further. Majority of women think that Islamic products for branchless banking will be different from conventional being Islamic and 100% women are willing to acquire branchless banking services from Islamic banks over conventional banking services. <u>Interpretation & discussion:</u> Awareness of Branchless Banking is directly link with the growth of Branchless Banking subsequently with the growth of Women Entrepreneurs.</p>

5. Conclusion

Based on our research and facts gathered indicates that women in our society have domestic issues and challenges, it is difficult for them to visit bank branches which may compromise their other responsibilities such as household. They feel insecure going outside hence require a support from a man to take them to visit a branch hence family support is needed.



Through Branchless Banking Women can handle their business without compromising domestic affairs, can avoid security risk, without dependency on family members.

Majority of women entrepreneurs are not aware of what branchless banking is, about branchless banking products & services and how it operates.

However, it has been concluded that Branchless Banking has overall positive impact on Women Entrepreneurs.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that Islamic banks deploy targeted branchless banking strategies to reach women entrepreneurs. This includes creating awareness through gender-sensitive marketing and launching specialized financial products such as flexible credit criteria, cash-backed schemes, and dedicated digital services to address the unique operational needs and socio-economic limitations of women in business.

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