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Factors Affecting the Entrepreneurial Activities of Rural Women in Iran

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Abstract:
Objective: The importance of entrepreneurship is attributed to its role in transforming society towards technical and innovative changes and leads to economic growth as well as the transformation of new knowledge into new products and services. Today, social capital is considered as one components of nations' wealth and as a tool for capacity building in communities and organizations. It is also effective in order to prevent and reduce social harm and success achievement of social welfare programs as well as individual and social well-being improvement. The main aim of this study was to identify and analyze the effect of social capital on entrepreneurial activities of Fars province specialized companies in Iran to improve their status.
Methods: This descriptive research was accomplished using survey and required data was collected through questionnaire. Stratified random sampling was used and sample size was estimated to be 380 rural women. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by the viewpoints of professors as well as conducting a pilot study, calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, respectively.
Results: Based on the results of path analysis, social capital and social networks activities had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activities. Business plan writing skill, creativity, entrepreneurial motivation, family communication, supportive policies, educational-counseling policies, and business environments also had a direct and significant effect on social capital. Creativity, entrepreneurial motivation, family communication and educational policies had a direct and significant effect on social networking activities, as well.
Conclusions: Enhancing the ability of entrepreneurs to start and continue entrepreneurial activities, paying attention to the role of social networks and their interacting as well as considering social capital as a link between business networks by identifying entrepreneurial opportunities and providing resources and facilities are essential in this regard.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is one of the requirements of this century. Organizational entrepreneurship as a factor in growth and development is one of the most important indicators in achieving the desired future (McLean et al., 2003). According to Burnett (2000) a country must experience both economic growth and fundamental changes in the structure of the economy in order to achieve economic development. In this regard, the entrepreneurs coordinate these transformations and create new channels for economic activity and employment. Therefore, entrepreneurship development has become one of the main goals and has been considered as one of the most applied and practical strategies to fight many of the problems of society such as stagnation, inflation, unemployment, poverty and social justice development. Most studies in entrepreneurship has been research on entrepreneurial personality characteristics, entrepreneurship environment, structure, and the formation process of entrepreneurship. Therefore, the effect of social capital on the entrepreneurship development is neglected. Today, social capital is considered as one components of nations' wealth and as a tool for capacity building in communities and organizations. It is also effective in order to prevent and reduce social harm and success achievement of social welfare programs as well as individual and social well-being improvement.

The main concept of social capital refers to communicating and its importance. Individuals in communication with each other would do things that cannot do them lonely or have many problems to do. People are connected through a set of networks, and they have shared values with other members of the network, so that these networks create a source and a kind of capital (Field, 2003). Social capital along with economic and human capital are the three pillars of each society development. Social capital refers to the potentials and abilities of individuals when they participate in a cooperative and collective way. According to Portes (1998), social capital makes individuals empowered and get many benefits through membership in networks and other social structures. For the successful formation of entrepreneurial activity, apart from the proper identification of opportunities, it is necessary to update knowledge and information as capital. Social capital as a social phenomenon leads to creativity, idea show, and facilitation of procedural behaviors and risk taking (Coleman, 1998). Social capital by addressing links between members of a network or group as a valuable source, creating norms and mutual trust aiming to meet the goals of the members. Also, identifying social capital as a capital at the level of macro-level management in both national and organizational levels could be created a new understanding of socio-economic systems and help managers to better managerial systems (Ashena, 2005). The links that lead to social capital are created at each individual and organizational level. Although these links are mainly attributed to individual factors at the organization level, these links might be different in terms of directness or indirectness, and severity of relationships.

Social capital is often realized through the identification of networks and operational network relationships.

Each person has different areas for social relations such as economic or social relations, and so on. The individual has relationships with others in each domain. A social network is formed when these relationships are based on specific, commonly held, predictable, and supervised behavioral norms by others. Each community includes a combination of networks. People typically participate in several networks such as a network of work and leisure networks, etc. Networks make exchange and information collection easier and provide better collaboration and interaction (Renani et al., 2006). Some studies have shown that individuals gain access to each other's knowledge and skills through mutual interactions, thereby increasing their human capital. Thus, it can be said that the dimensions of social capital that make communication relevant to learning and gaining knowledge in social network lead to the production or increase of human capital (Nademi, 2011). Interactions and networks, for some reason, lead to increased profits in the community. First, social networks expedite and facilitate information flow and provide useful information about different opportunities and options for individuals as well as reducing costs in social interactions, significantly. Second, networks reinforce social links and lead to the accumulation of social power. It plays an important role in decision making and choice of policy makers and, lastly, social networks defend one against aggression and improve identity and cognition of individual, and his access to resources through networks is possible as well. The individual enhances his competencies through social connections (Azari and Omidvar, 2012).

2. Literature review

Many studies emphasize on the effect of different dimensions of social capital on entrepreneurship. Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) argued that limited social capital was indicative of inadequate interaction with foreign companies, and for organizations that did not have the necessary resources to start a new investment, all the strategic goals and programs failed to be achieved without adequate resources, and in there would be no innovation which will be an obstacle to entrepreneurial orientation in organizations. Therefore, social capital of organizations plays a very important role in the entrepreneurial orientation of organizations. Bierly and Chakrabarty (1996) have looked at the importance of informal networks of friends and family at the start of an entrepreneurial enterprise, and believe that social networks also significantly affect the decision-making process for potential entrepreneurs; thus, the social network is extremely important at the stage before it starts. Coleman (1998) has introduced social capital as a social feature that promotes creativity, idea show, and facilitation of innovative and risky behaviors which are among the indicators of

entrepreneurship. In a study regarding the role of social and human capital among start-ups, Venkataraman (1997) have emphasized that entrepreneurship involves two processes for recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities and exploiting those opportunities. Some social processes may increase the ability to recognize or exploit opportunities. De Carolis and Saparito (2006) showed that interactions and opportunities exploitation would be improved due to social capital and recognition.

Lashkarara et al. (2011) argued that personal skills are the most effective factor of entrepreneurship skills. In this regard, based on the studies of Izadi and Rezaei-Moghaddam (2017) and Adelaja et al (2007), the positive effect of some personal traits like creativity, need to success and entrepreneurial motivation on facilitating the process of agricultural entrepreneurship development have been emphasized. Masoomi (2015) presented a set of psychological variables such as self-efficacy, achievement motivation and creativity as the influencing factors on entrepreneurship process and they could be considered as discriminant components in differentiating entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs.

Family conditions and communication as well as its effect on entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors have been considered by many scholars. Indeed, the decisions for entering a business or following an entrepreneurial idea are depended on some factors like childhood condition, communicative situation of family and role models (Ahmadpour Dariani, 2004). According to Golred (2005), economic needs and conditions of household is the most important factor in involving women into entrepreneurship process, and afterward, family conditions of entrepreneur, financial and emotional supports of family and finally network supports of household are considered as the main factors of women entrepreneurship development. Morris and Lewis (1995) also believed that family background, previous experience and visiting other`s businesses could have great effect on the individuals` attitude toward entrepreneurship. Fallah Jelodar et al (2008) introduced financial supports and counselling supports of government as the main factors of rural women entrepreneurs` success. It is also revealed in the similar study in Singapore that presented economic policies and other financial supports of government as the effective factors of entrepreneurship development (Tang and Yeo, 1995). Parker (2005) has also argued that counselling policies and government support from businesses could be seen as influencing elements in development of entrepreneurship.

Introduction of the agriculture development specialized holding company: In recent years, planners and decision makers have come up with a strategy to set up nongovernmental funds to support the development of investment in the agricultural sector and reduce unnecessary government enterprises in this sector. Establishing non-governmental funds supporting the development of the agricultural sector with the participation of producers and their money, alongside government assistance (specialized holding company) as an infrastructure with

the nature and function of financial and credit institutions, among which are the steps taken to improve social capital. These funds, with a minimum investment of 51% by non-governmental producers, are managed by the selection of board of director members and other contractors among themselves, and the government as one of the shareholders is only for direct communication with the state and getting informed from the programs and executive policies. Marvdasht rural women's agricultural support fundwas founded in March 2010 with an initial capital of 140035 million Rials in Marvdasht. Current capital is 12340000 million Rials. Estahban rural women's agricultural support fund was established in 2011 with its initial capital of 992.93 million Rials, the current capital is 6956.75 million Rials. Shiraz rural women's agricultural support fund established in 2011 its initial capital is 1144.07 million Rials and the current capital is 9047.30 million Rials (Organization of Agriculture Jihad, 2016).

In general, the three companies will provide facilities for agricultural and rural activities, including livestock raising, native breeding, floriculture, and the production of medicinal plants. These companies hold specialized training programs on fund management, business skills, entrepreneurship, trade regulations, trade facilitation and training in agricultural activities. The main activities of rural women`s of these three counties include greenhouses, vermicompost, shopkeeper, animal husbandry, dairy, sewing workshop, beekeeping, gardening, baking, molding, vegetable packing, mushroom breeding, quibbling, drying and packaging of herbs and vegetables. There are many influencing factors on entrepreneurial activities of rural women entrepreneurs including business environment, motivation, knowing how to write a business plan, supportive policies as well as educational and counselling policies. These factors are necessary but not enough in development of entrepreneurship process. Some other components such as women`s participation improvement, networking methods for knowing how to create a network as well as commitment and trust to the group are considered as complementary important factors which are supported by the *theory of Bourdieu* on social capital. Overall, social capital and social network activation are the two components that were seen as intermediate variables in the model of the study. Thus, the main purpose of the study is to identify and analyze the effect of social capital on entrepreneurial activities in specialized holding companies of Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban of Fars province in Iran in order to improve their status. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study were to identify effecting factors of social capital and entrepreneurship activities of rural women as well as the relationship between social capital and the improvement of entrepreneurial activities. Providing some applied recommendations for improving the entrepreneurial activities of the members is final goal of the study. There is also some hypothesis for the study as follow:

H1 Business plan writing skill, creativity, business environment, entrepreneurial motivation, family communication, supportive and counselling policies have direct effect on entrepreneurial activity development of rural women.
H2 The variable of social capital has direct effect on women`s entrepreneurship development.
H_3 Social network activity has direct effect on entrepreneurship development of women.
H_4 The variables of business plan writing skill, creativity, business environment, entrepreneurial motivation, family communication, supportive and counselling policies have also indirect effects through the intermediate variables of social capital as well as social network activity.

3. Research Methodology

The required data for this descriptive research was collected using survey through structured questionnaire. Firstly, the research background and theoretical foundations were studied through a library study. After interviewing the experts, the variables were identified and the questionnaire was developed. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the professors of Department of Agricultural Extension and Education. Reliability was also determined by conducting a pilot study and calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In order to conduct a pilot study, 30 rural women out of research area were selected and the questionnaires were completed. The alpha coefficient obtained for the research variables was between 0.82 and 0.95 (Table 1).

Table 1- Cronbach`s alpha coefficients of research variables

Variables	Alpha coefficients
Entrepreneurial activity development	0.95
Creativity	0.85
Business plan writing skill	0.89
Entrepreneurial motivation	0.97
Family communication	0.82
Supportive policies	0.93
Educational-counseling policies	0.92
Business environment	0.86
Social capital	0.84
Social network activation	0.95

The research population include all of the members of Agricultural Development Specialized Holding Companies of Fars province in three counties of Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban. Stratified random sampling was used in order to estimate a random sample of women entrepreneurs. It should be mentioned that these women are labeled as rural entrepreneurs that the nature of their employment are

different from the other rural women who work in common agricultural activities. Therefore, a sample of 380 women entrepreneurs was selected due to Morgan table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). According to Table 2, 10 to 15 individuals were selected from the company of each village based on the total members of that company. Thus, 8 villages of Shiraz, 10 villages of Marvdasht and 7 villages of Marvdasht were chosen.

Table 2- Research Sample in different studied counties

County	Total members of company	Sample	Percent
Marvdasht	1500	160	42.2
Shiraz	1403	128	33.6
Estahban	783	92	24.2
Total	3686	380	100

The path analysis was done using AMOS for data analysis. It can be estimated from the total number of 3600 rural women, and the sample size according to the Morgan table (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) was estimated to be 380, of which 160 from Marvdasht, 128 from Shiraz and 92 of Estahban were evaluated. 8 villages were selected from Shiraz, 10 from Marvdasht and 7 from Estahban. To provide better understanding of the research variables which were used in the models of the study, the conceptual and operational definitions of these variables have been presented in Table 3.

Table 3- Definition of the research variables

Variables	Definitions
Creativity	It is the use of mental activities to create a new idea or concept. It also usually means something new and valuable. This variable was measured using questions related to underlying the framework, having diverse ideas, having a sense of innovation, doing things the same way and doing multiple things at once.
Business plan writing skill	A business plan is a re-certification and a comprehensive introduction to employers, entrepreneurial group or person to provide different plans for the employer staff as and providing consulting services as well as easy-to-use permits. It is an important item for women entrepreneurs to learn how to write the business plan.
Business environment	This variable uses questions such as the factors affecting the performance of economic entities such as the quality of governance systems, stability of laws and regulations, quality of infrastructure, etc. are changed beyond the authority and power of business managers. This variable is due to the time taken to start an entrepreneurial activity, the waiting time to get a loan, the use of various types of assets as collateral and obtaining the relevant licenses, etc.
Family communication	It means the exchange of information, concepts and feelings between family members. This variable was measured using questions such as consulting parents, spouse and children and spending time deciding with family members.

Supportive policies	The mean policies to protect and support specialized parent companies. These policies utilize easy access to raw materials, access to government facilities and loans, easy access to markets for selling products, government infrastructure provision, government support for women entrepreneurs, and so on.
Educational-counseling policies	It is providing specialized assistance to empower entrepreneurs to tackle problems at different stages of the business. This variable uses the economic feasibility of the plan, the amount of access to comprehensive business studies, the amount of training to develop skills, and the amount of training to start a new business.
Social capital	It was measured using the components of social trust, social cohesion (solidarity), social participation and relationships network. *Social trust* is the degree of confidence an entrepreneur has in relation to his or her friends and acquaintances, strangers and government agencies and their employees. It was measured using questions such as accepting each other, giving each other things, lending money to each other, accepting guarantees and trusting agricultural extension experts. *Social solidarity* means the degree of solidarity, cooperation, and assistance that exists among individuals in specialized parent companies. It was measured by questions such as helping each other in tasks, accepting each other's tasks when something happened to one of them. *Social participation* implies the development of relationships in the form of voluntary associations, clubs, unions, and groups that are usually local and non-governmental in nature, with community members consciously and voluntarily participating with specific goals in mind. It was measured by questions such as participation rates in various religious meetings and celebrations. *Networking relationships* indicates entrepreneurs' relationships with other people within and outside society. It was measured using questions such as level of conversation with family members, meeting relatives, consulting with friends and acquaintances, meeting with agronomists and experts, and friendly relations with government employees.
Social network activity	It is a socially structured social network composed of individuals. They exchange ideas, thoughts and feelings, and include organizational social networks and virtual social networks. This variable is represented by questions including membership in social networks (WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram), amount of activity on social networks, amount of time spent on social networks, and use of information shared on social networks for entrepreneurial activities.
Entrepreneurial activity development	Entrepreneurship is a dynamic phenomenon whose emergence requires the smoothness of the context and the impact it has on structures. Entrepreneurial development is an evolving process that requires structured and planned follow-up of support functions and the provision of favorable contexts. This variable was measured using the components of profitability, adaptability, customer and employee satisfaction, competitiveness, idea commercialization, job creation, innovation, sustainability, environmental protection and regional development. The variables were evaluated using questions in 5-item Likert scale.

References: Lashgarara et al., (2011); Izadi and Rezaei-Moghaddam (2017); Adelaja et al (2007); Masoomi (2015); Ahmadpour Dariani, (2004); Golred (2005); Morris and Lewis (1995); Fallah Jelodar et al., (2008); Tang and Yeo, (1995); Parker (2005).

4. Results and Discussion

Demographic factors: Providing a brief overview of the respondents, the mean of their age was calculated which equaled 39 years with the standard deviation of 9.94. The age range of respondents were between 20 to 68. The mean of their educational level was 8 years. Based on results, the most frequency has belonged to the individuals with high school (35.3 %) and primary school degrees (34.3 %), and the least has belonged to those who are illiterate (0.8%) (Table 4).

Table 4- Frequency distribution of respondents in terms of educational level

Educational level	Frequency	Frequency percent	Cumulative percent
Illiterate	3	0.8	0.8
Primary school	130	34.3	36.4
High school	134	35.3	73.2
Diploma	55	14.5	88.2
Associate degree	14	3.7	92.1
Bachelor and Master	29	7.7	100
Mean: 8.05		Standard Deviation: 3.97	
Min: 0		Max: 19	

Most of respondents were married (88.9%) and only 8.7 percent of them were single. Household members represent the number of individuals who live together. Due to the results of frequency distribution, the least household members equaled 2 and the most populated household has 16 members (Table 5).

Table 5- Frequency distribution of respondents in terms of household members

Household members	Frequency	Frequency percent	Cumulative percent
Less than 3	33	8.7	8.7
3 to 4	115	30.3	39
4 to 5	127	33.4	72.4
More than 5	93	24.6	97
Missing	12	3.0	100
Mean: 3.47		Standard Deviation: 2.61	
Min: 2		Max: 16	

According to Table 6, majority of respondents are living in their fatherland village as permanent housing (95.4%) and only 2.4 percent live in the village just for special seasons.

Table 6- Frequency distribution of respondents in terms of their housing in village

Household members	Frequency	Frequency percent	Cumulative percent
Permanent	362	95.4	2.4
Temporary (seasonal)	9	2.4	97.6
Missing	9	2.4	100
Total	380	100	

Causal model analysis of influencing factors on women's entrepreneurship activity: The causal model of affecting factors on the rural women's entrepreneurship activity have been presented in Fig 1. In path analysis, the effects of a set of variables on each other were measured using AMOS software and the standard coefficients of the path were obtained. Requirements for fitting data - model includes:

- Chi-square ratio to degree of freedom (df) should be less than 5;
- The CFI and NFI values must be greater than 0.095;
- RMSEA value should be less than 0.06.

As can be seen in Figures 2, 3 and 4, the proportional values of fitness indices in the models of all three counties indicated suitable data-model compatibility.

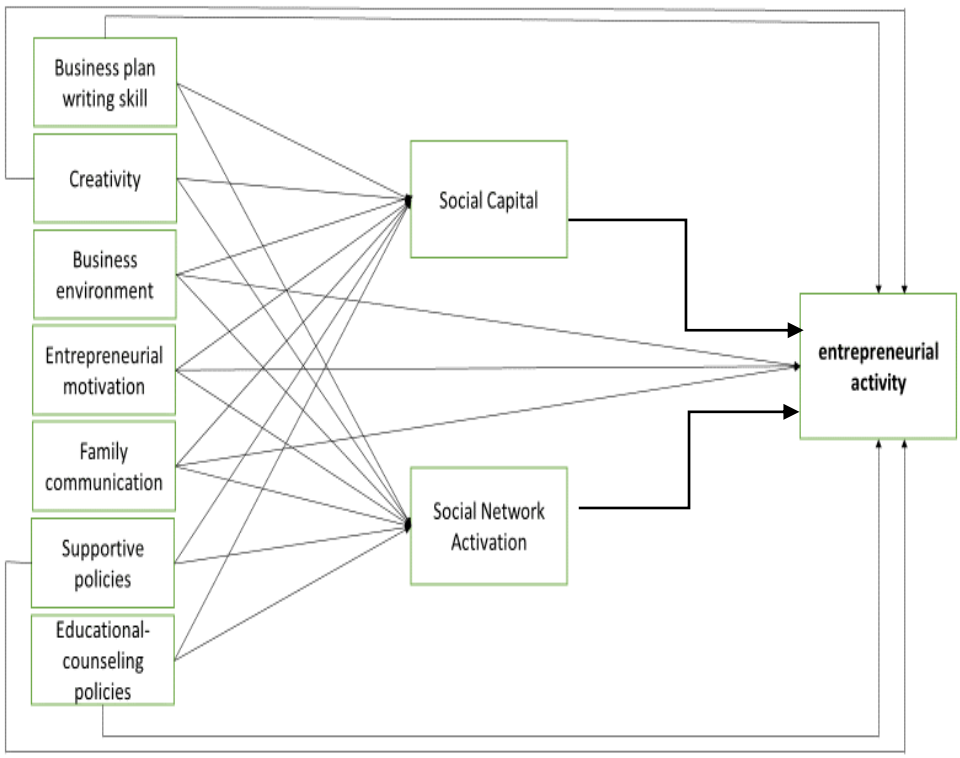


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

Causal effects of variables on social capital of rural women: To differentiate the effects of variables on social capital of rural women in micro-funds of these three counties, the research model was analyzed using AMOS. The results shown in Table 7 and Fig. 2, 3 and 4 indicated that among the influencing variables, the entrepreneurial motivation had a direct and significant effect on the social capital of rural women. These coefficients were 0.140, 0.136 and 0.122 in Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban, respectively. Rural women who had a higher incentive for entrepreneurial activities had more social capital. The entrepreneurship motivation lead to business and profit motivation and ultimately women's financial independence and their social capital improvement. The variable of business plan writing skill for entrepreneurial activities had a direct and significant effect on social capital of women, so that these coefficients equaled 0.123 in Marvdasht, and 0.143 in Shiraz, and 0.113 in Estahban. The variable of government support policies for rural women to carry out entrepreneurial activities also had a direct and significant effect on the social capital of the members of the three counties. The values of these coefficients were 0.108,

0.144, and 0.106, in Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban, respectively (Table 1). Rural women's creativity was another influencing factor which had a direct and significant effect on social capital of rural women in Marvdasht (β = 0.11, P = 0.0001). But it was not significant in other counties (Estahban and Shiraz).
The variable of educational-counseling policies had a direct and significant effect on the social capital of rural women, as in Marvdasht (β 0.138, P = 0.001), Shiraz (β = 0.138, P = 0.003) and Estahban (β = 0.130, P = 0.0001). Rural women who benefit from educational counseling programs held by the funds had higher social capital. Family communication had a direct and significant effect on social capital of rural women, and the results are significant in Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban, respectively (β = 0.133, β = 0.123, β = 0.130). The business environment had a direct and significant effect on social capital of women, which results in Marvdasht (β = 0.141, P = 0.0001), Shiraz (β = 0.140, P = 0.0001) and Estahban (P = 0.003, β = 0.132) were significant. Women who work in an appropriate business environment and are aware of the features of loans and facilities at a proper time showed a better entrepreneurial activity.

Table 7- Direct effect of variables on social capital in studied counties

Variables	Shiraz		Estahban		Marvdasht	
	Direct effect	Sig.	Direct effect	Sig.	Direct effect	Sig.
Business plan writing skill	0.143	0.0001	0.113	0.002	0.123	0.001
Creativity	0.023	0.230	0.110	0.365	0.111	0.0001
Entrepreneurial motivation	0.136	0.002	0.122	0.0001	0.140	0.001
Family communication	0.123	0.0001	0.130	0.001	0.133	0.002
Supportive policies	0.144	0.004	0.106	0.001	0.108	0.001
Educational-counseling policies	0.138	0.003	0.130	0.0001	0.138	0.001
Business environment	0.140	0.0001	0.132	0.003	0.141	0.0001

Causal effects of variables on social network activity: Based on Table 8, the entrepreneurial motivation had a direct effect on the social network of rural women in all three counties among the influencing variables (Marvdasht (β = 0.108, = P = 0.0001), Shiraz (B = 0.116, P= 0.0001) and Estahban (β = 0.100, P = 0.0001)). Rural women who had a higher incentive for entrepreneurial activities had more social networking. Women who had a higher incentive to engage in entrepreneurial activities were more likely to seek income and develop their abilities more quickly. The variable of rural women's creativity had a direct and significant effect on social network activity of rural women. The results showed that these coefficients were 0.112, 0.110 and 0.102 in Marvdasht, Shiraz, and Estahban, respectively. The variable of educational-counselling policies had a direct and significant effect on the social network of rural women in all three counties, these coefficients were significant in Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban,

respectively, as equaled 0.103, 0.109 and 0.102. Rural women who had counseling and educational programs held by the funds had a higher social network activity. Family communication of rural women had also a direct and significant effect on social network activity of rural women. According to result, the coefficients in Marvdasht, Shiraz and Estahban were 0.111, 0.122 and 0.113 respectively.

Table 8- Direct effect of variables on social network activity in studied counties

Variables	Shiraz		Estahban		Marvdasht	
	Direct effect	Sig.	Direct effect	Sig.	Direct effect	Sig.
Business plan writing skill	0.170	0.233	0.120	0.455	0.123	0.673
Creativity	0.110	0.0001	0.102	0.0001	0.112	0.0001
Entrepreneurial motivation	0.116	0.0001	0.100	0.0001	0.108	0.0001
Family communication	0.122	0.0001	0.113	0.0001	0.111	0.002
Supportive policies	0.168	0.768	0.187	0.368	0.211	0.882
Educational-counseling policies	0.109	0.0001	0.102	0.0001	0.103	0.0001
Business environment	0.023	0.455	0.043	0.399	0.023	0.433

Causal effects of variables on entrepreneurship activities of Marvdasht: Due to Table 9 and Fig.2, the effect of entrepreneurial motivation on entrepreneurship activity of rural women was direct and significant ($\beta = 0.121$, $P = 0.001$). Women who had a higher incentive to show their abilities and improve their production level in terms of quantity and quality had been more successful in their entrepreneurial activities. The entrepreneurship motivation of women had indirect effect on entrepreneurial activity through social capital and social network activity ($\beta = 0.013$). This finding is consistent with the study of Masoumi (2015). The variable of business plan writing skill had a direct, positive and significant effect on rural women's entrepreneurship activity ($\beta = 0.116$, $P = 0.0001$). This finding indicated the importance of business plan features, business plan writing skills, and alignment with other business initiatives to further the objectives of entrepreneurial activities. Women's business plan writing skill had indirect effects on entrepreneurial activities through on social capital ($\beta = 0.012$). The rural women's creativity also had a direct, positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity ($\beta = 0.102$, $P = 0.003$). In fact, women who had an interest in creativity components such as undermining common rules, interest in challenging jobs requiring thinking, having a variety of ideas and lack of interest in guessing, had better entrepreneurship development. Also, the variable of creativity had indirect effect (0.028) on entrepreneurial activity through intermediate variables of social capital and social network activity. The effect of family communication on women entrepreneurship activity was direct, positive

and significant (β = 0.102, P = 0.0001). In other words, women who had more family support had more entrepreneurial activities. Family communication had an indirect effect on entrepreneurial activity through social capital and social network activity as well (β = 0.018). This result is consistent with the study of the Renani et al. (2006). The variable of supportive policies had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.130, P = 0.0001). Entrepreneurial women who used more corporate sponsorship rules had developed more in their entrepreneurial activities. Supportive policies had an indirect and positive effects on women's entrepreneurship development through social capital (β = 0.015). This finding is consistent with the research by Galkina and Cock (2011), which investigated the effect of supportive infrastructure on entrepreneurship. The variable of educational-counselling policies had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.100, P = 0.0001). Educational counseling policies had an indirect effect on women's entrepreneurship through intermediate variables of social capital and social network activity as well (β = 0.002). The social capital variable had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.143, P = 0.0001). Rural women with higher social capital and its dimensions (trust, solidarity, social participation, and network of relationships) could have a favorable effect on entrepreneurial activity. This finding is consistent with the research of Rafatjah and Ghorbani (2011). The variable of social network activity also had a direct, positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.102, P = 0.002). Rural women could have an effect on entrepreneurial activity using the social network as well as the connections they receive through these networks.

Table 9- Total, direct and indirect effects of variables on entrepreneurial activity in Marvdasht county

Variables	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Significance level
Social Capital	0.143	0.143	-	0.001
Social Network Activation	0.102	0.102	-	0.002
Business plan writing skill	0.128	0.116	0.012	0.0001
Creativity	0.130	0.102	0.028	0.003
Entrepreneurial motivation	0.134	0.121	0.013	0.001
Family communication	0.120	0.102	0.018	0.002
Supportive policies	0.145	0.130	0.015	0.0001
Educational-counseling policies	1.102	0.100	0.002	0.0001
Business environment	0.135	0.122	0.013	0.350

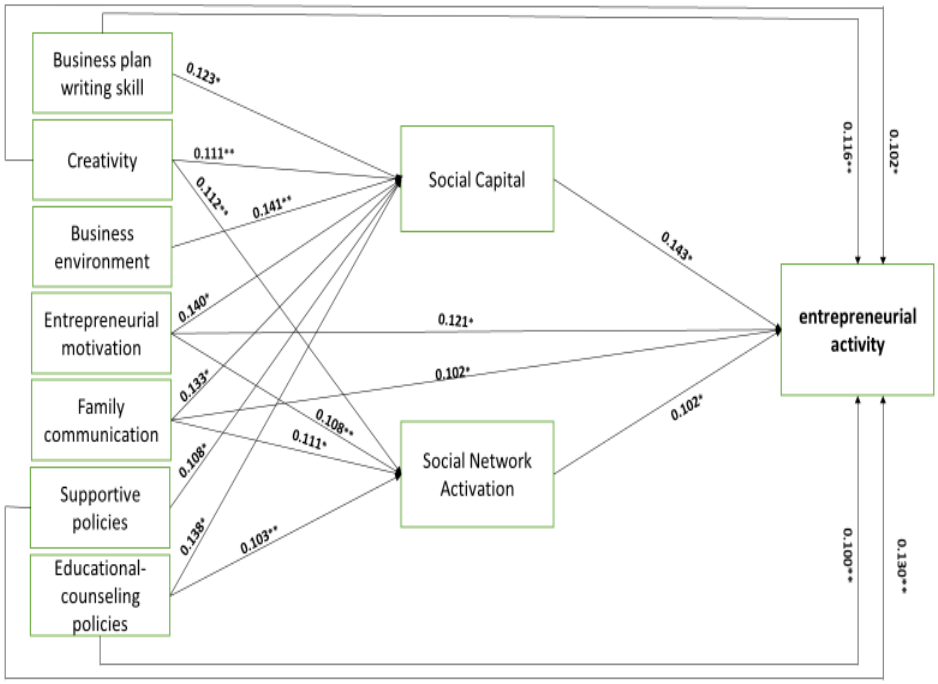


Figure 2- Causal model of effecting factors on entrepreneurial activities in Marvdasht county

Table 10- Goodness of fit measures for Marvdahst county

Measures	Value
Chi-square	36.80
df	29
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.962
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.970
Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA)	0.023

Causal effects of variables on entrepreneurial activities of Shiraz: According to Table 11 and Fig. 3, entrepreneurial motivation had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurship activity of rural women (P = 0.111, P = 0.001). Women who had a higher incentive to demonstrate their own abilities and increase their production levels in terms of quantity and quality had been more successful in their entrepreneurial activities. The entrepreneurship motivation had an indirect and positive effect on their entrepreneurial activity through social capital and social network activity (β = 0.017). These results are consistent with the study of Rezaei- Moghaddam and Izadi (2019). Business plan writing skill had a direct, positive and significant effect on rural women's entrepreneurship activity (β =

0.102, P = 0.0001). It refers to the importance of the business plan features, writing skill, business plan writing skills, as well as the alignment of women's plans with other business initiatives to further their entrepreneurial activities. The variable of business plan writing skill of women had an indirect and weak effect on improving their entrepreneurial activities (β = 0.029) through social capital. The rural women's creativity had a direct, and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.130, P = 0.002). The creativity had indirect effect (0.010) on entrepreneurial activity through the intermediate variable of social network activity as well. The effect of family communication on women's entrepreneurship activity was significant (P = 0.103, P = 0.002). Rural women who had had more family communication in entrepreneurial activities had seen more development in their entrepreneurial activity. Family communication also had an indirect effect on entrepreneurial activity through social capital and social network activity (β =0.010). The variable of supportive policies had a direct, positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.131, P = 0.001). Entrepreneurial women who used more corporate sponsorship laws had gone a long way in developing their entrepreneurial activities. Supportive policies had an indirect and weak effect on women's entrepreneurship development (β = 0.013) through social capital. The variable of educational counseling policies had a direct, positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.101, P = 0.0001). Educational counseling policies had an indirect effect on women's entrepreneurship through social capital and social network activities (β = 0.009). The social capital had a direct, positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.140, P = 0.0001). Rural women with higher social capital could have a good effect on entrepreneurial activity by the dimensions of social capital (trust, solidarity, social partnership, and network of relationships). Social network activity (including WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram) had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β =0.120, P = 0.0001). Rural women had more entrepreneurial activity through the social networking and the connections they get through these networks.

Table 11- Total, direct and indirect effects of variables on entrepreneurial activity in Shiraz County

Variables	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Significance level
Social Capital	0.140	0.140	-	0.0001
Social Network Activation	0.120	0.120	-	0.0001
Business environment	0.113	0.101	0.012	0.280
Business plan writing skill	0.131	0.102	0.029	0.0001
Creativity	0.140	0.130	0.010	0.002
Entrepreneurial motivation	0.128	0.111	0.017	0.001
Family communication	0.113	0.103	0.010	0.002
Supportive policies	0.144	0.131	0.013	0.001
Educational-counseling policies	0.110	0.101	0.009	0.0001

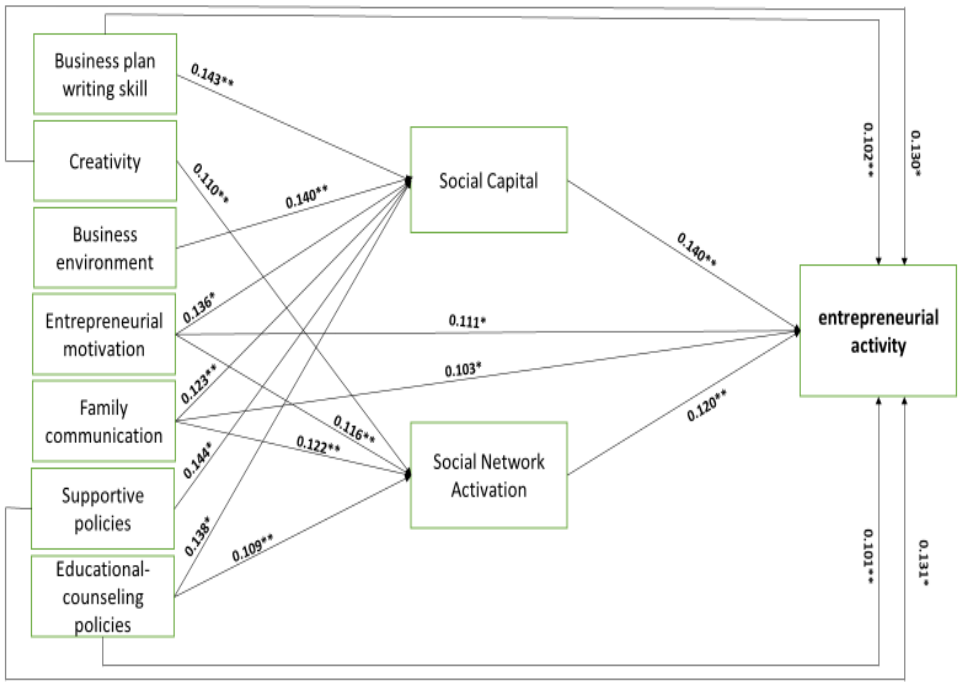


Figure 3- Causal model of effecting factors on entrepreneurial activities in Shiraz County

Table 12- Goodness of fit measures for Shiraz County

Measures	Value
Chi-square	36.40
df	29
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.952
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.960
Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA)	0.021

Causal effects of variables on entrepreneurial activities of Estahban: Based on Table 13 and Fig. 4, entrepreneurial motivation had direct and significant effect on entrepreneurship activity of rural women (β= 0.109, P = 0.001). The women entrepreneurship motivation had an indirect effect on entrepreneurial activity through social capital and social network activity (β = 0.021). Business plan writing skill had a direct and significant effect on rural women's entrepreneurship activity (β = 0.111, P = 0.0001). Business plan writing skill of women had indirect effects on the growth of entrepreneurial activities (β = 0.012) through social capital. The rural women's creativity also had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.110, P = 0.002). Rural women who had more creativity in entrepreneurial activities have more positive attitude. The creativity had an indirect effect (0.011) on entrepreneurial activity through social network activity (including WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram). The effect of family communication on women's entrepreneurship activity was direct and significant (β = 0.110, P = 0.0001). Rural women who had more family communications in relation to entrepreneurial activities had more developed businesses. Family communication also had an indirect effect on entrepreneurial activity by influencing social capital and social network activity (0.012). The supportive policy variable had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.126, P = 0.0001). Entrepreneurial women who used corporate supportive laws had grown further in their entrepreneurial activities. Supportive policies had an indirect effect on women's entrepreneurship development (β = 0.008) through social capital. The variable of educational-counselling policies had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.100, P = 0.0001). Educational counseling policies had an indirect effect on women's entrepreneurship through social capital and social network activity as well. The social capital variable had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.138, P = 0.0001). Rural women with higher social capital and its dimensions (trust, solidarity, social participation, and network of relationships) could have an influencing effect on entrepreneurial activity. The social network activity (WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram) had a direct and significant effect on entrepreneurial activity (β = 0.101, P = 0.002). Rural women could have an effect on entrepreneurial activity using the social networking and connections they get through these networks.

Table 13- Total, direct and indirect effects of variables on entrepreneurial activity in Estahban county

Variables	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Significance level
Social Capital	0.138	0.138	-	0.0001
Social Network Activation	0.101	0.101	-	0.002
Business environment	0.134	0.120	0.014	0.412
Business plan writing skill	0.123	0.111	0.012	0.0001
Creativity	0.121	0.110	0.011	0.002
Entrepreneurial motivation	0.130	0.109	0.021	0.001
Family communication	0.122	0.110	0.012	0.0001
Supportive policies	0.134	0.126	0.008	0.0001
Educational-counseling policies	0.101	0.100	0.001	0.0001

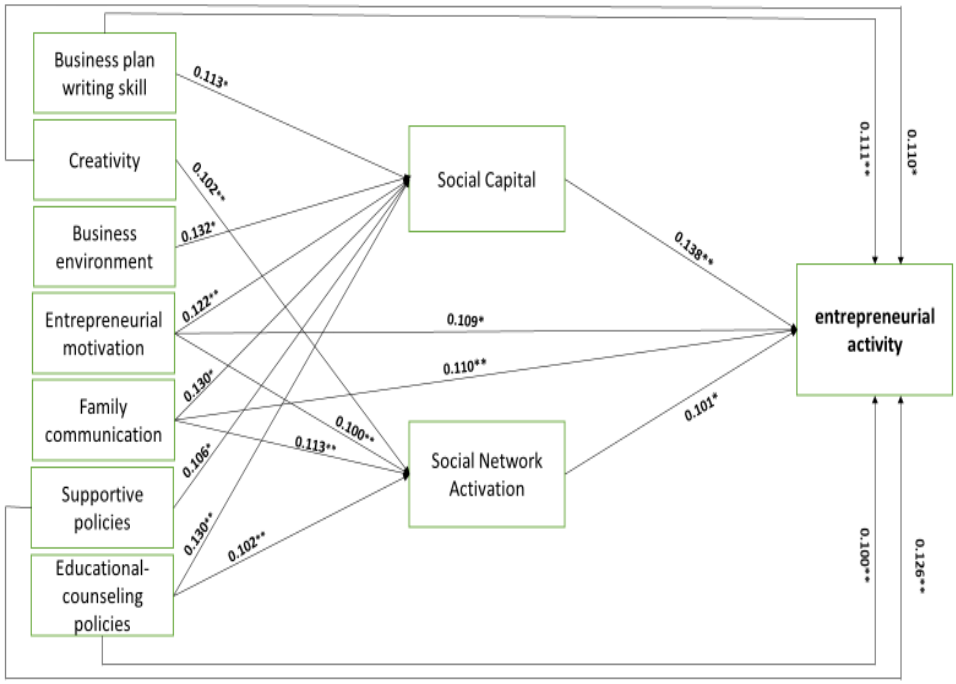


Figure 4- Causal model of effecting factors on entrepreneurial activities in Estahban county

Table 14- Goodness of fit measures for Estahban county

Measures	Value
Chi-square	36.80
df	29
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.966
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.960
Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA)	0.021

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Women entrepreneurship is one of the most important issues in the field of entrepreneurship studies. To this end, increasing the ability of entrepreneurs to start and continue entrepreneurial activities, paying attention to the role of social networks and their interactions as well as considering social capital as a connection between business networks by entrepreneurial opportunities recognition and providing of resources and facilities in this field is essential. Social capital as a social phenomenon leads to creativity, idea show, facilitating innovative behaviors and risk taking. Entrepreneurs with higher social capital will have access to sources that cannot achieve them alone. Supporting the development of rural women's agricultural activities by increasing social capital among them would be a positive step towards the growth of entrepreneurship among women in microfinance funds. According to the findings, business plan writing skill, creativity, entrepreneurship motivation, family communication, supportive policies, educational-counseling policies, and business environment affected on social capital. Also, entrepreneurial motivation, family communication, and educational policies had an important role in social networks. The effect of social capital and social networking activity on women's entrepreneurship activities was also observed. An individual with a greater social capital can take advantage of the new ideas and the beginning of activity with the effect of exchanging information and relationships with others. Social interactions play an important role in facilitating innovation and creativity, which are among the indicators of entrepreneurship. Social capital provides networks that facilitate the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, identification, collection and allocation of scarce resources in rural communities. Social capital, with its impact through social trust and social cohesion, and social participation and the network of relationships, could increase the entrepreneurial activity of women. One of the factors that increases social capital is the creation and sustainability of social organizations. Achieving this goal, the following recommendations are emphasized:

- Facilitating processes for the formation, registration and issuance of permits for social organizations, and the reduction of bureaucracy and administrative burdens on rural women.

- Providing social gatherings and social group meetings for rural women as well as educating and informing social organizations in relation to volunteer activities and organizational procedures such as planning, reporting, bulletin delivery and organizational working conditions, such as labor laws, insurance, taxes, and, finally, support community activities related to equipping and developing financial and credit resources and the location of the organization.
- The activities of women's social networks in recent years have been growing so that rural people have been able to turn their entrepreneurial information into the social space and increase their awareness through this tool.

Virtual social networking since its emergence, along with other media, plays a significant role in the production and dissemination of news and information and sometimes are seen as alternative media. Virtual social networks as a media have affected the communication process and the interaction of the connecting process with society, especially in the field of entrepreneurship business. Thus, in this regard, if the family of rural women have a more positive attitude towards virtual networks, these women will more tend to virtual networks. It is also suggested to push rural families to use virtual social network in democratic and practical ways. Holding workshops for the proper use of virtual social networks in accordance with their job process as well as increasing the entrepreneurial activities of enterprises for rural women would be helpful.

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سازه‌های مؤثر بر فعالیت‌های کارآفرینی زنان روستایی ایران

چکیده

کارآفرینی نقش مهمی در حرکت جامعه به سمت تغییرات فنی و نوآورانه دارد و منجر به رشد اقتصادی و همچنین تبدیل دانش جدید به محصولات و خدمات جدید می‌شود. امروزه، سرمایه اجتماعی به عنوان یکی از مؤلفه‌های ثروت کشورها و ابزاری برای ظرفیت‌سازی در جوامع و سازمان‌ها محسوب می‌شود. علاوه بر این، در پیشگیری و کاهش آسیب‌های اجتماعی و موفقیت در برنامه‌های رفاه اجتماعی و نیز ارتقای بهزیستی فردی و اجتماعی نیز مؤثر است. هدف اصلی این پژوهش، شناسایی و تحلیل تأثیر سرمایه اجتماعی بر فعالیت‌های کارآفرینانه شرکت‌های مادر تخصصی کشاورزی استان فارس در ایران برای بهبود وضعیت آن‌ها بود. این پژوهش توصیفی با استفاده از پیمایش انجام شد و اطلاعات موردنیاز از طریق پرسشنامه جمع‌آوری شد. طبق روش نمونه‌گیری تصادفی طبقه‌ای، حجم نمونه ۳۸۰ زن روستایی از شهرستان‌ها و شرکت‌های مختلف استان فارس برآورد شد. روایی پرسشنامه از طریق نظرات اساتید بخش ترویج و آموزش کشاورزی دانشگاه شیراز و پایایی پرسشنامه نیز با انجام مطالعه راهنما و محاسبه ضریب آلفای کرونباخ بررسی و تأیید شد. بر اساس نتایج تحلیل مسیر، سرمایه اجتماعی و فعالیت‌های شبکه‌های اجتماعی تأثیر مستقیم و معناداری بر فعالیت‌های کارآفرینانه داشتند. مهارت نوشتن طرح کسب‌وکار، خلاقیت، انگیزه کارآفرینی، ارتباطات خانوادگی، سیاست‌های حمایتی، سیاست‌های آموزشی–مشاوره‌ای و محیط‌های تجاری نیز تأثیر مستقیم و معناداری بر سرمایه اجتماعی داشتند. خلاقیت، انگیزه کارآفرینی، ارتباطات خانوادگی و سیاست‌های آموزشی نیز تأثیر مستقیم و معناداری بر فعالیت‌های شبکه‌های اجتماعی داشتند. ارتقای توانایی کارآفرینان برای شروع و ادامه فعالیت‌های کارآفرینی، توجه به نقش شبکه‌های اجتماعی و تعامل آن‌ها و نیز در نظر گرفتن سرمایه اجتماعی به‌عنوان رابط بین شبکه‌های کسب‌وکار با شناسایی فرصت‌های کارآفرینی و تأمین منابع و امکانات در این زمینه ضروری است.

کلمات کلیدی: طرح تجاری، انگیزه کارآفرینی، سرمایه اجتماعی، شبکه‌های اجتماعی.