



## The Effect of Social Capital Aspects on Entrepreneurial Behavior of the Members of Rural Women Cooperatives in Mazandaran Province

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** Women play a significant and growing role in business development and their entrepreneurship has attracted so much attention throughout the world. Since women entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior are influenced by several factors, the present study aims to explore the impact of social capital and its components on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women who were members of cooperatives across Mazandaran province, Iran.

**Design/methodology/approach-** The statistical population was composed of 1396 members of 11 rural women cooperatives out of which 320 individuals were taken as the research sample using proportionately allocated stratified technique based on Krejcie and Morgan's table. Data were collected with a self-designed questionnaire composed of two sections for social capital in five aspects and entrepreneurial behavior in six aspects. The validity of the research instrument was checked by a panel of experts and its reliability was estimated by Cronbach's alpha to be 0.921 for social capital section and 0.905 for entrepreneurial behavior section. Data were analyzed in descriptive and inferential sections using SPSS and LISREL software packages.

**Findings-** The social participation aspect of social capital and the resource supply aspect of entrepreneurial behavior were ranked the first. The qualitative assessment of social capital and entrepreneurial behavior showed that they were at a satisfactory level among the members of rural women cooperatives. According to the path coefficient calculated in the structural equations (0.9), social capital plays a significant role in entrepreneurial behavior among the members of rural women cooperatives. Also, the results of structural equations revealed that intra-group social participation was the most important aspect of social capital in terms of the influence on the entrepreneurial behavior of rural women.

**Research limitations/implications-** The dispersion of rural women cooperatives across the province and difficult access to their members to fill the questionnaire were the main constraints of the study.

**Practical implications-** Entrepreneurial behavior can be strengthened and developed by improving social capital through communication of cooperatives with other agencies and institutions involved in rural affairs such as other successful cooperatives, regular meetings to clarify the activities of cooperatives, and the enhancement of women's awareness of opportunity recognition and decision-making through holding training workshops and courses of practical entrepreneurship.

**Originality/value-** The results can be used by relevant organizations to develop and accomplish pre-determined goals for rural women cooperatives through strengthening the issue of entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Social capital, Social participation, Entrepreneurial behavior, Rural women cooperatives

**Paper type:** Scientific and Research.

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## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial behavior is an overwhelming and necessary need for all individuals and organizations (Thompson, 1999). The cooperative sector is one of the non-governmental organizations that pursue entrepreneurship as a goal. The cooperative sector is a suitable platform for developing entrepreneurs so that it can strengthen entrepreneurial morale and behavior and play a role in the prosperity of its positive attributes (Rahimi, 2008). The adoption and application of entrepreneurship approach can improve the productivity of all production factors, organizational capabilities, and competitiveness indicators of cooperatives (Talebi & Zahedi Anbardan, 2016).

In the contemporary world where entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing concept, women have an increasingly important role to play in entrepreneurship and business development. In this respect, women entrepreneurship is a matter of particular interest throughout the world. The 2002 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, published by the Kauffman Foundation, emphasizes that women's entrepreneurship plays a prominent role in the health of nations' economies. Anvari (2012) states that the development trend can be accelerated by considering the role of rural women in production, distribution, and consumption and also, as active actors in changing society in the social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. Hence, women's rural cooperatives can, directly or indirectly, contribute to the creation and development of entrepreneurship by pursuing such goals as creating employment for job-seeking women, development rural women's organizations, participating in crop and animal production, optimally serving low-income rural women, and using bank and investment facilities for rural women (Ebrahimi, 2005). These cooperatives have a profound impact on the culture of rural communities, increase decision authority among rural women, and lay the ground for entrepreneurship and the employment of rural women as a large fraction of rural workforce (Shiri & Ajili, 2010).

Studies on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs have always tried to answer the questions as to what the entrepreneurial requirements of organizations are and how they can be institutionalized in organizations to pave the way for their emergence and development. Most research studies on entrepreneurship have explored and enumerated the personality characteristics of entrepreneurs and

have been of structural type, but they have been criticized for neglecting social relationships (capital) networks as a non-economic factor. As a social phenomenon, social capital leads to creativity, ideation, facilitation of innovative behaviors, and risk-taking behaviors and can play a significant role in entrepreneurship by relying on such indicators as relationships, trust, and coherence of individuals. This kind of capital is critical for entrepreneurial activities because entrepreneurship is a socio-economic process that relies on social conditions and context in two ways: first, entrepreneurs are the product of their social environment, and second, entrepreneurship is a social activity, and consequently, social ties and links influence the nature of businesses. Social capital helps entrepreneurs overcome resource constraints (Bauernschuster, Falck, & Heblich, 2010). Therefore, it is of crucial importance to consider the role of social capital, which provides entrepreneurs with access to rich information and social support during the entrepreneurial process (Rabiei & Sarabi, 2013). Individuals who have stronger social capital can influence the establishment and development of businesses and reach new markets (Lin & Huang, 2005). Thus, social capital is important to entrepreneurs so that entrepreneurs residing in groups with higher social capital are in advantage within their networks and can effectively recognize and exploit commercial opportunities (Rabiei & Sadeghzadeh, 2011).

Entrepreneurship is a domain that has always been struggling with challenges, but female entrepreneurs are faced with graver problems than their male counterparts because of gender discriminations established at a deeper level of cultural behaviors in societies. This makes it more necessary to study them. Given the significance of entrepreneurship for women, the present study focuses on the impact of social capital, as a key factor in collective environments such as rural cooperatives that are formed to create and develop entrepreneurship, on entrepreneurial behavior. Along with assessing social capital among female members of cooperatives and their entrepreneurial activity level, the present work addresses the impact of women's social capital on their entrepreneurial behavior. Identifying the dimensions of social capital that are more influential on the display of entrepreneurial behavior was another goal.

## 2. Research Theoretical Literature

### 2.1. Entrepreneurial behavior

Entrepreneurship refers to the process of value creation by providing a unique combination of resources to take advantage of an opportunity (Janghorbanian, Kamkar, & Samavatian, 2010). Entrepreneurship is, in fact, the innovative use of resources to exploit opportunities. Citing Drucker (1985), Ahmadi, Shafei & Mehfakherienia (2012) state that entrepreneurship is more a behavioral pattern than a personality characteristic. This behavioral pattern can be taught to people to learn how to behave entrepreneurially. Citing Scheiner (2009), Neghabi, Zafarian, Yousefi & Rezvani (2012) state that the display of entrepreneurial behaviors is an inherent phenomenon occurring in humans since their birth. An entrepreneurial action refers to conceptualization and implementation of a new idea, process, product, service, or business, and an entrepreneurial agent is an individual or group of individuals that are in charge of prospering an entrepreneurial action. In a broader sense, entrepreneurial behavior encompasses all actions taken by people that are associated with the exploration, assessment, and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Janghorbanian, Kamkar & Samavatian, 2010). By an inclusive definition, entrepreneurial behavior is the pursuit of activities by individuals through creating and exploiting innovative combinations so that opportunities can be identified and seized (Mair & Marti, 2006).

### 2.2. Social capital

Social capital used to be applied just in general and its functions have never been discussed in specific environments. This concept has recently found its way into organization analyses (Rabiee & Sadeghzadeh, 2011). Social capital is a desirable element for intra-group collaborations so that the higher the social capital is, the less costly the accomplishment to the goals will be for the group. If the features like trust, awareness, and participation (social capital) are not adequately available in a group, the costs of cooperation will increase and the achievement to performance will depend on establishing costly regulatory and controlling systems (Shahosseini, 2012). The term "social capital" refers to capitals like social trust, norms, and networks drawn by people to solve their general problems (Adam & Roncevic, 2003). Adler (2002) argue that social capital is a basis to explain and describe the connections of people and organizations. In other words, the broader, more stable and deeper the relationships of the

individuals, the more the social capital available for them (Alvani, Nategh & Farahi, 2007).

Like physical capital and human capital (i.e., tools and training that enhance individual productivity), social capital refers to the features of a social organization (e.g., networks, norms, and trust) that facilitate coordination and collaboration to gain mutual benefit (Azkia & Firuzabadi, 2008). Zare, Namirani, Shabanali Fami & Ghasemi (2011) state that social capital encompasses concepts such as trust, cooperation, and collaboration among the members of a group or community that form a purposeful system so that the emergence of a level of social capital in a region or location can lead to a collective action and ultimately lead the process of cooperation and development. A collective action cannot happen unless there is a good reserve of social capital (Onyx & Bullen, 2005). Social capital is an important resource for individuals and can influence their potential to take action and the quality of their life (Coleman, 1998). Social capital is mostly perceived to be based on sociocultural factors and its recognition as a type of capital, both at macro-management and at organization and enterprise management levels, can create a new perception of sociocultural systems and can help managers better direct their system (Rabiee & Sadeghzadeh, 2011). Wickellen argues that, in addition to economic factors like market advantages and capital that affect entrepreneurship, non-economic factors (e.g., the network of social relations) are also involved in entrepreneurship so that social capital as a social phenomenon drives creativity and ideation and facilitates innovative and risk-taking behaviors as major entrepreneurial indices (Coleman, 1998). Social capital is of particular importance for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs in social groups that enjoy high social capital are most probably in advantage within their networks, so they are more likely to recognize and exploit commercial opportunities more effectively (Rabiee & Sadeghzadeh, 2011).

### 2.3. Literature Review

The review of the literature shows that studies in Iran and other parts of the world have approached the topic of social capital, as well as entrepreneurial behavior and development, from different perspectives. In a study in Africa and China, Ado, Su & Wanjiru (2016) examined learning and knowledge transfer and the interplay between culture and social capital. They employed structural, relational and cognitive indices to measure

social capital. Gelderman, Semeijn & Mertschuweit (2016) used the same indices to measure social capital. They argue that the cognitive aspect of social capital is more influential than the relational and structural aspects on the strategic performance of companies. Mair and Marti (2006) addressed employment creation by social entrepreneurship. They found that the variables of training, high educational level, job experience, and financial support were effective in the extent and development of businesses (entrepreneurship). Yoon, Yun, Lee & Phillips (2015) used structural, cognitive, and relational indices to measure social capital and its impact on entrepreneurship. Their findings showed the positive effect of social capital on entrepreneurship development. Maden (2015) focused on personality characteristics of entrepreneurial women and the motives driving their decisions to start businesses in Turkey. They reported similarity among entrepreneurial women with respect to their personality characteristics (specifications, motives, challenges, and support). Also, it was found that the determined women had a stronger and more innovative mind and could take advantage of the unique opportunities in their business environments. The study of Nasrolahi & Jalilvand (2014) on the assessment of the social capital impact on women entrepreneurship indicated that social capital in structural, relational and cognitive aspects had a significant and positive effect on rural women's entrepreneurship. Likewise, Kwon, Heflin & Ruef (2013) found that people in societies with higher levels of social capital are more tended towards group cooperation than those in societies with lower levels of

social capital. In Australia, Cramb (2006) found a significant relationship between social capital and educational level. Christoforou (2005) reported the significant effect of such factors as marital status, age, income, occupational status, unemployment, and income injustice on social capital. Similarly, Poon, Thai & Naybor (2011) emphasized the strong effect of social capital on women's entrepreneurship. According to Yohanes, Zainul & Kholid (2017), social capital and entrepreneurial orientation are very influential on business strategies. Gulumser, Levent, Nijkamp & Poot (2012) consider social capital a supplement of natural and human capitals in the process of rural development. Meanwhile, social capital plays a major role in rural development, especially entrepreneurship, with the emphasis it has on networking, trust, and communications inside a society. Madriz, Leiva & Henn (2018) reported that human and social capitals were positively related to the tendency towards being an entrepreneur. In a study in China, Echtner, Brent-Ritchie & Charlotte (2011) focused on the effect of social capital on tourism entrepreneurship and reported its significant impact on business and entrepreneurship development. Bruynis, Goldsmith, Hahn & Taylor (2001) argue that mutual trust among the members of a cooperative partially determines their development and promotion. In their study of the relationship between social capital and entrepreneurial intention of agriculture students, Shakiba, Hejazi & Hosseini (2016) concluded that among different aspects of social capital, the structural aspect had a significant, positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention.

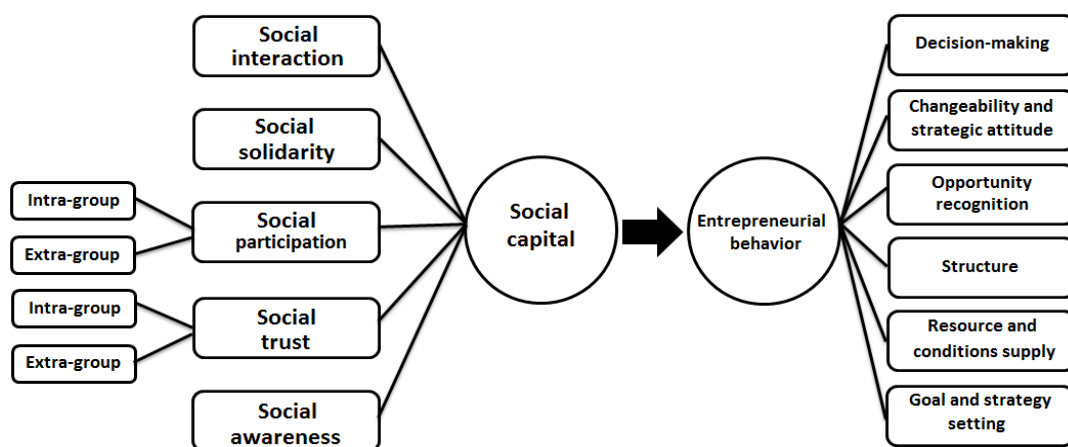


Figure 1. The conceptual model of the impact of social capital and its aspects on entrepreneurial behavior among the members of rural women cooperatives

(Source: Research findings, 2018)

Karami & Alibaygi (2015) revealed a significant relationship between shared vision and social capital indices (social trust, norms, and networks) in the development of agricultural entrepreneurship and also a significant relationship between social trust, norms, and networks in the development of agricultural entrepreneurship. According to Rabiee & Sadeghzadeh (2011), the structural aspect of social capital had the strongest and the cognitive and relational aspects had the weakest effect on entrepreneurship. According to what was described above and given the importance of social capital in developing cooperative entrepreneurship, the question arises as to whether social capital in cooperatives, especially in rural women cooperatives, is effective in the display of entrepreneurial behavior or relevant activities. The answer to this question can play a significant role in accomplishing the goals of cooperatives. On the other hand, the availability of huge active female human resource at different age and educational levels across the province of Mazandaran makes it imperative to evaluate social capital in cooperatives, especially in women cooperatives. Thus, the present study of rural women cooperatives aimed to investigate the social capital at the disposal of the members of rural women

cooperatives and explore the impact of social capital and its aspects on their entrepreneurial behavior across Mazandaran province. The conceptual model of the research (Figure 1) was developed based on the literature review, research background, and research objectives.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Geographical Scope of the Research

The present study was carried out on 11 rural women cooperatives in five counties of Ramsar, Noor, Amol, Sari, and Behshahr in Mazandaran province, Iran. The province of Mazandaran with the capital city of Sari is located in the north of Iran on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. The province contains 22 counties and is one of the crowded provinces of Iran. It neighbors the provinces of Golestan, Semnan, Tehran, Alborz, Qazvin, and Guilan (Figure 2). Thanks to its special climatic location, high climatic diversity, high annual precipitation, and the proper distribution of the precipitation across the plains and crops, Mazandaran has very fertile arable lands so that it has traditionally been a major pillar of agriculture and food supply of Iran.

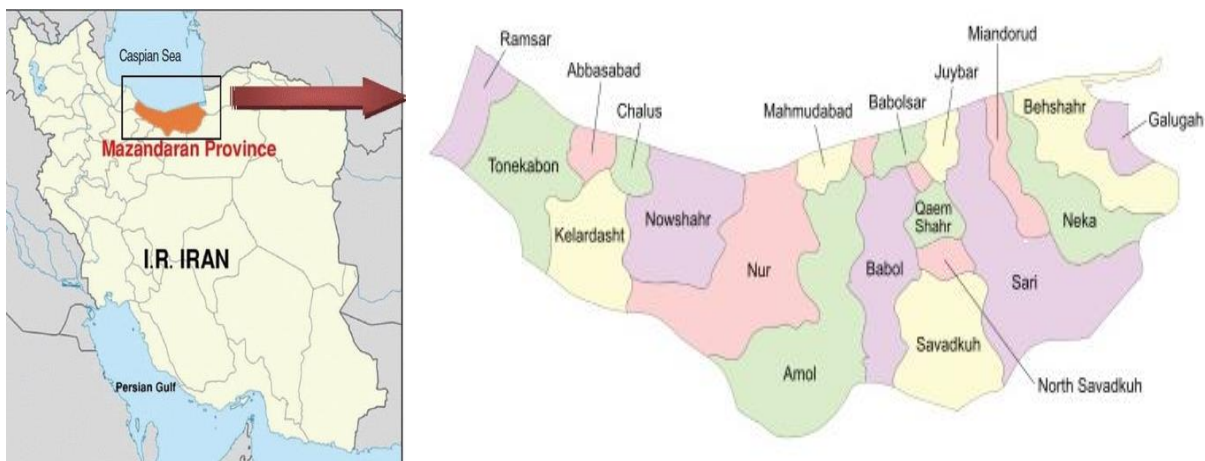


Figure 2. The map of Mazandaran province and its counties

#### 3.2. Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey. The statistical population was composed of 1396 members of 11 active rural women cooperative (with the minimum working years of three) in Mazandaran province. They were located in five counties of Ramsar (1 cooperative; 222 members), Noor (1 cooperative;

287 members), Amol (2 cooperatives; 364 members), Sari (4 cooperatives; 136 members), and Behshahr (3 cooperatives; 387 members) (N = 1396). According to Krejcie and Morgan's, 302 members were selected as the sample and it was increased to 320 participants to improve the accuracy (Table 1).

**Table 1. The selected sample size within the statistical population**

(Source: Research findings, 2018)

County	Cooperative name	Number of members	Sample size
Ramsar	Shasta	222	48
Noor	Izdeh	287	62
Amol	Dashtsar	182	39
	Koukandeh	182	39
Sari	Refah	30	7
	Kosar	31	7
	Mehr	30	7
	Golbahar	45	10
Behshahr	Tirtash	338	73
	Kejal Hosseinabad	29	6
	Ailin	20	4
Total	11	1396	302

### 3.3. Variables and indices

The research instrument was a self-designed questionnaire to measure social capital in five aspects with 67 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very high (5) to high (4), moderate (3), low (2), and very low (1). The aspects of social capital included social interaction (14 items), social solidarity (8 items), social participation (6 items for intra-group participation and 9 items for extra-group participation), social trust (5 items for intra-group trust and 11 items for extra-group trust), and social awareness (14 items). The entrepreneurial behavior of rural women was measured with 30 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) in six aspects of decision-making (4 items), changeability and strategic attitude (7 items), opportunity recognition (5 items), structure (2 items), resource supply (7 items), and goal and strategy setting (5 items). In total, the entrepreneurial behavior of women cooperative members was measured.

The validity of the research instrument was confirmed by a panel of experts. Its reliability was estimated by Cronbach's alpha at 0.921 for social capital (0.801 for social interaction, 0.708 for social solidarity, 0.729 for social participation, 0.829 for social trust, and 0.864 for social awareness) and 0.905 for entrepreneurial behavior (0.717 for decision-making, 0.822 for changeability and strategic attitude, 0.767 for opportunity recognition, 0.646 for structure, 0.776 for resource supply, and 0.659 for goal and strategy setting). After data were collected and classified, they were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics in the SPSS software package. Also, the LISREL software package was employed to derive the structural equations model and determine the extent

to which social capital and its aspects influence rural women's entrepreneurial behavior. Structural equations modeling (SEM) is capable of analyzing the role of latent variables and is used for multivariate analysis and causal interpretation to scrutinize the linear relationships between latent variables and observable variables. In its standardized form, it is ensured that the latent variables are standardized and the scale of the observable variables is retained. The main steps of the LISREL analysis include model designing, data collection for model testing, model estimation, model assessment, and model modification. To assess the fit of the structural model, the present study used the indices of  $\chi^2$ , non-normed fit index (NNFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and root mean square residual (RMR). Since there is no precise criterion for these indices, it is generally accepted that the model is appropriately fitted if  $\chi^2$  is not significant, IFI, NNFI, GFI, and CFI are >0.90, RMSEA is <0.08, and RMR is <0.10 (Shook, Ketchen, Hult & Kacmar, 2004; Baumgartner & Homburg, 1995).

## 4. Research Finding

### 4.1. Demographic characteristics

According to the results, the average age of the respondents was 35.48 years with the maximum and minimum of 60 and 20 years, respectively. With respect to the educational level, 34.1 percent were at the high-school level and 11.6 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Among the participants, 57.2 percent were married. Most responding women (65.3 percent) have been a member of cooperative for 1-5 years. The income status of the households showed that most women (59.1 percent) had an income of less than 15 million IRR<sup>1</sup>.

1. Iranian Rials = 0.000024 USD

**4. 2. Ranking of social capital and entrepreneurial behavior aspects**

To calculate the social capital index of entrepreneurial behavior among respondents, the sum of the scores of the items for each aspect was considered as the final score of that aspect. Since the aspects differed in the number of pertaining items, the ranked mean was used to make them comparable. According to the coefficient

of variations listed in Table 2, the first and last ranks were assigned to social interaction and social awareness with the numerical values of 0.13 and 0.21, respectively. The findings about the ranking of entrepreneurial behavior aspects revealed that the first and fifth ranks were related to resource supply with the lowest coefficient of variations of 0.17 and structure with the highest coefficient of 0.32, respectively.

**Table 2. Ranking of the aspects of social capital and entrepreneurial behavior**  
(Source: Research findings, 2018)

Index	Item	Ranked mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variations	Rank
Social capital	Social interaction	3.97	0.53	0.13	1
	Social solidarity	3.11	0.59	0.19	4
	Social participation	3.08	0.49	0.16	2
	Social trust	3.44	0.54	0.16	3
	Social awareness	3.15	0.66	0.21	5
Entrepreneurial behavior	Resource and conditions supply	3.20	0.55	0.17	1
	Changeability and strategic attitude	3.21	0.60	0.19	2
	Goal and strategy setting	3.24	0.65	0.20	3
	Decision-making	3.03	0.80	0.26	4
	Opportunity recognition	2.77	0.78	0.28	5
	Structure	2.69	0.86	0.32	6

**4.3. Social capital level and entrepreneurial behavior among the studied rural women: A qualitative perspective**

Social capital level and entrepreneurial behavior were assessed in four levels from low to very high.

Most women assessed their social capital level to be at a moderate or high level (Table 3), implying its generally satisfactory status. This holds true for entrepreneurial behavior too so that it was assessed to be appropriate and good for most rural women.

**Table 3. Level of social capital and entrepreneurial behavior among rural women**  
(Source: Research findings, 2018)

Factor	Assessment level	Frequency	Frequency percentage	Cumulative frequency percentage
Social capital	Low	55	17.2	17.2
	Moderate	99	30.9	48.1
	High	104	32.5	80.6
	Very high	62	19.4	100
Entrepreneurial behavior	Low	63	19.7	19.7
	Moderate	96	30.0	49.7
	High	102	31.9	81.6
	Very high	59	18.4	100

**4. 4. Impact of social capital on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women**

As can be observed in Figure 3, social capital with a path coefficient of 0.90 was significantly influential on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women cooperative members (t-value = 12; Sig. = 0.000). According to the results of social capital aspects, the most influential aspect was found to be

intra-group social participation (path coefficient = 0.84). The second and third most influential aspects were intra-group social trusts (path coefficient = 0.74) and social solidarity (path coefficient = 0.68), respectively. Among the aspects of entrepreneurial behavior, goal and strategy setting (path coefficient = 0.80) and changeability and strategic attitude (path coefficient = 0.75) were found to be the most

important. The structural equation of the impact of social capital on rural women’s entrepreneurial behavior was formed as below:

$$Y = 0.90(X_1), \text{Error var} = 0.48, R^2 = 0.82$$

Standard error = 0.13  
t-value = 12.00

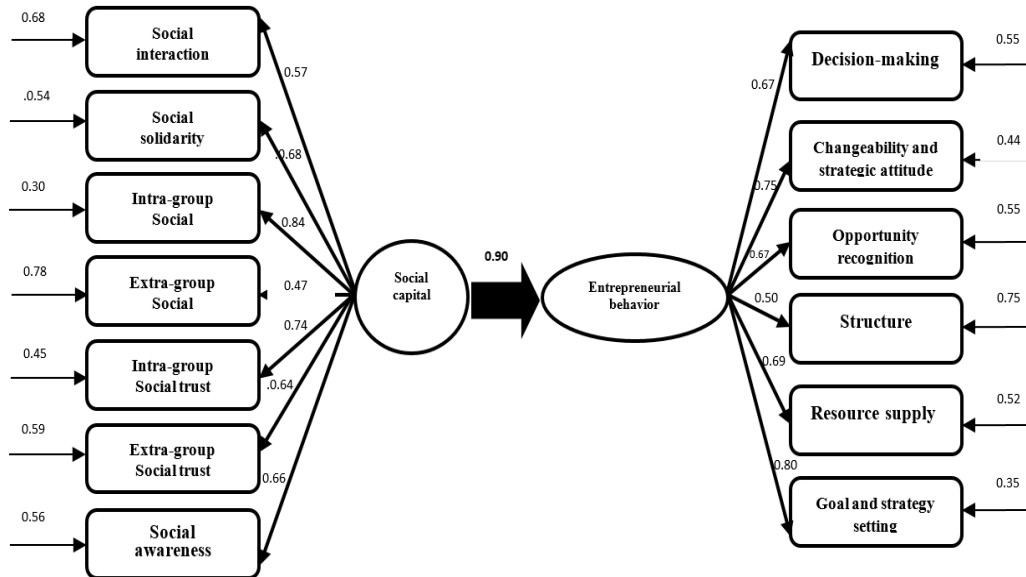


Figure 3. Structural function model of the impact of social capital on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women

Table 4. Model fit indices  
(Source: Research findings, 2018)

Fit index	Estimated value
$\chi^2/df$	2.87
RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	0.016
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	0.920
Standardized PMR	0.012
NFI (Normed fit index)	0.980
NNFI (Non-normed fit index)	0.980
CFI (Comparative fit index)	0.971

Table 4 presents the values derived for the fit indices. Their optimal values confirm the results and the derived model.

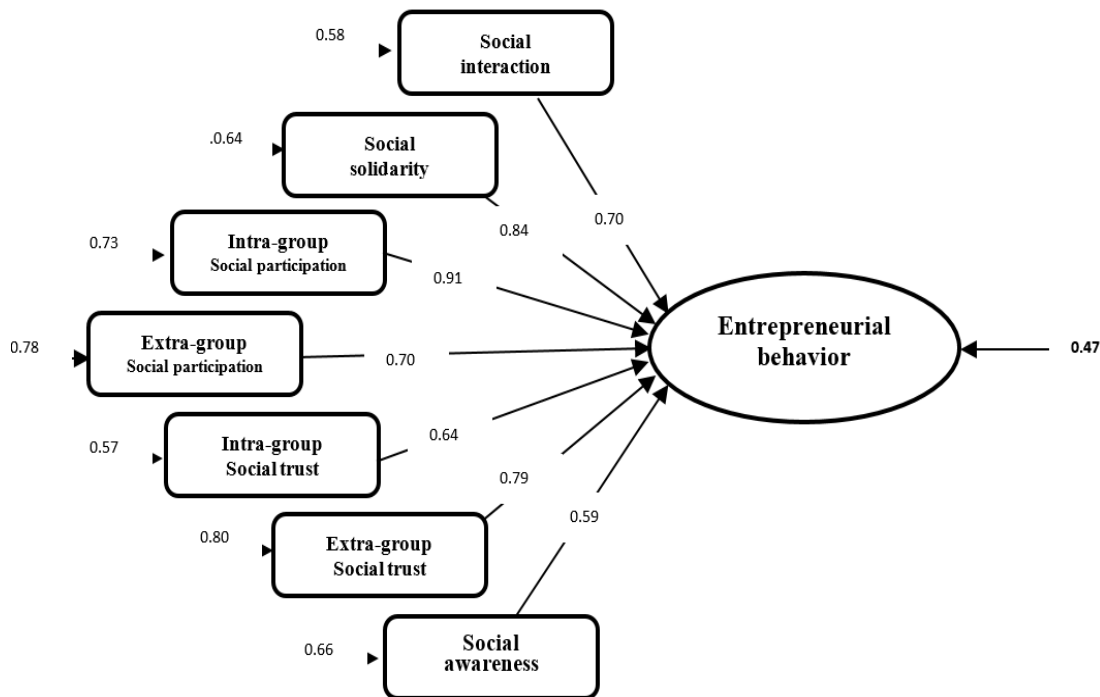
To figure out which aspect(s) of social capital could influence the display of entrepreneurial behavior among rural women to a greater extent, separate calculations were performed. Figure 4 depicts the

impact of social capital on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women separately. According to the results, intra-group social participation ( $p = 0.91$ ) and social solidarity ( $p = 0.84$ ) were most influential. Table 5 tabulates the t-values and significance levels of social capital aspects.

Table 5. The t-value and significance level for social capital aspects

Aspect	Dependent variable	t-value	Significance level
Social interaction	Entrepreneurial behavior	2.65	0.000
Social solidarity		4.72	0.000
Intra-group social participation		2.75	0.000
Extra-group social participation		2.77	0.000
Intra-group social trust		4.29	0.000
Extra-group social trust		3.53	0.000
Social awareness		2.84	0.000





**Figure 4. Impact of individual social capital aspects on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women**  
(Source: Research findings, 2018)

The indices presented in Table 6 confirm the optimal fit of the model. The structural equation of the model is derived as below:

$$Y = 0.70(X_1) + 0.84(X_2) + 0.91(X_3) + 0.70(X_4) + 0.64(X_5) + 0.79(X_6) + 0.59(X_7)$$

$$\text{Errorvar} = 1.00, R^2 = 0.68$$

**Table 6. Model fit indices**  
(Source: Research findings, 2018)

Fit index	Estimated value
$\chi^2/df$	3.05
RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	0.066
GFI (Goodness of fit index)	0.910
Standardized PMR	0.042
NFI (Normed fit index)	0.951
NNFI (Non-normed fit index)	0.940
CFI (Comparative fit index)	0.879

### 5. Discussion and Conclusions

Today, to tackle the challenge of unemployment, it is of paramount importance to consider the training of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is a major source of economic growth, innovation, product/service quality promotion, economic competition, and social mobility in communities, especially in rural areas. To supply the livelihood of rural people in general and rural women in

particular, more entrepreneurs are required in rural areas so that, in addition to creating small rural employment, this can greatly contribute to rural development. Therefore, a major concern about rural women’s entrepreneurship is how to promote entrepreneurial behaviors among them. Social capital is a major factor underpinning the development of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior among women. Hence,

given the importance of entrepreneurial behavior among people, especially among rural women, to create job opportunities in order to meet rural people's livelihood, the present research analyzed the effect of social capital aspects on entrepreneurial behavior of women in rural cooperatives in Mazandaran province.

The qualitative assessment of social capital level showed that the social capital of female members of the cooperatives was at a moderate and high level. Overall, it was satisfactory. This result holds true for the level of entrepreneurial behavior among women, too, so that the entrepreneurial behavior of most rural women was at a suitable and good level. This implies that the required conditions are in place for the entrepreneurial activity of cooperative members. According to the ranking of aspects and their role in determining entrepreneurial behavior, helping women to recognize opportunities and make suitable decisions can be effective in strengthening and developing entrepreneurial behavior.

The results reveal that social capital has a significant influence on entrepreneurial behavior of rural women who are cooperative members. The high value of path coefficient (0.9) implies the strong positive effect of social capital on rural women's entrepreneurial behavior. This means that the stronger the social capital of an individual is, the stronger the entrepreneurial behavior of the individual will be. Hence, the improvement of social capital is an effective factor that should be given serious consideration in the context of entrepreneurship. Our findings are supported by [Yoon et al. \(2015\)](#), [Nasrolahi & Jalilvand \(2014\)](#), and [Poon et al. \(2011\)](#) who reported the positive impact of social capital on the development of entrepreneurship. Similarly, [Echtnerat et al. \(2011\)](#) pointed to the impact of social capital on tourism entrepreneurship. [Shakiba et al. \(2016\)](#) reported the positive effect of the structural aspect of social capital on entrepreneurial intention, too. According to the results, the intra-group social participation is the most important aspect of social capital with the strongest impact on rural women's entrepreneurial behavior. This is consistent with the study of [Gulumser et al. \(2012\)](#) according to which social capital plays a key role in entrepreneurship by emphasizing networking, trust, and relationships inside a community. In this respect, [Kwon et al. \(2013\)](#) argue that individuals with stronger social

capital exhibit stronger intention for participation in groups.

The results show that intra-group social trust in cooperatives is less influential than other aspects on rural women's entrepreneurial behavior. This finding implies that to improve social capital and contribute to the display of entrepreneurial behavior at a higher level, it is necessary to foster trust among people. [Mohammadi Elyasi et al. \(2011\)](#) emphasized the effect of social capital on recognizing entrepreneurial opportunities. [Karami & Alibaygi \(2015\)](#) reported a significant relationship between social trust and agricultural entrepreneurial development.

Among different aspects of social capital, extra-group social participation was less effective in determining social capital. The results reveal a relatively low level of communication and participation of women in the activities and affairs related to the outside of the cooperatives (extra-association). The enhancement of this aspect can greatly contribute to increasing women's social capital. According to the results about the high impact of social capital on the entrepreneurial behavior of rural women who are members of cooperatives, the following recommendations can be drawn to promote social capital and rural women's entrepreneurial behavior:

- Given the low share of extra-group social participation in determining the level of social capital, it is recommended to improve this aspect by establishing regular communications among cooperatives and other institutions and associations related to rural affairs such as other cooperatives, especially the cooperatives that are successful in entrepreneurship.
- The results show that intra-group social trust in cooperatives is less effective than other aspects in rural women's entrepreneurial behavior. Thus, it is recommended to hold regular meetings among the members of cooperatives and clarify the activities of cooperatives in order to improve social capital and lay the ground for taking entrepreneurial activities.
- Given the low effect of structural aspects on opportunity recognition and decision-making versus other aspects of rural women's entrepreneurial behavior, it is recommended to the CEOs and board members of cooperatives to hold training workshops and courses in entrepreneurship or take other actions to enhance

women's awareness, such as the publication of journals and brochures among cooperative members. This will familiarize members with entrepreneurial activities and motivate them to take entrepreneurial behavior.

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## بررسی تأثیر مؤلفه های سرمایه اجتماعی در رفتار کارآفرینانه زنان عضو تعاونی های روستایی استان مازندران

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### چکیده مبسوط

#### ۱. مقدمه

امروزه، مقوله کارآفرینی به سرعت در حال گسترش است و رفتار کارآفرینانه به نیازی فراگیر و ضروری برای تمامی افراد و سازمان‌ها تبدیل شده است. بخش تعاون از جمله بخش‌هایی است که با هدف کارآفرینی تشکیل شده و بستر مناسبی برای پرورش و پیشرفت کارآفرینان است، این بخش می‌تواند روحیه کارآفرینی را در افراد تقویت کرده و در شکوفایی ویژگی‌های مثبت آنان، نقش به‌سزائی داشته باشند. اتخاذ راهبرد کارآفرینانه، موجب بهره‌وری کلیه عوامل تولید و ارتقای قابلیت‌های سازمانی و بهبود شاخص‌های رقابتی تعاونی‌ها می‌شود. شرکت‌های تعاونی زنان روستایی از این موضوع مستثنی نیستند. زنان نقش مهم و رو به رشدی در زمینه توسعه کسب و کار به عهده گرفته‌اند و کارآفرینی زنان موضوع خاص و مورد توجه جوامع امروزی است. شرکت‌های تعاونی روستایی زنان نیز به نوبه خود به واسطه اهدافی همچون اشتغالزایی برای زنان جویای کار، مشارکت در امر تولید محصولات کشاورزی و دامی، خدمات‌رسانی به زنان روستایی کم درآمد، استفاده از تسهیلات بانکی و سرمایه‌گذاری برای زنان روستایی به صورت مستقیم و غیرمستقیم، نقش بسزائی در توسعه کارآفرینی دارند. در این راستا بررسی تأثیر و توجه به عواملی که بتواند در بروز رفتار کارآفرینانه زنان عضو تعاونیها تأثیر داشته

با شد، ضروری به نظر می‌رسد. از جمله این عوامل موضوع سرمایه اجتماعی است. در این راستا تحقیق حاضر ضمن بررسی ابعاد و میزان سرمایه اجتماعی و رفتار کارآفرینانه در بین اعضای تعاونی‌های زنان روستایی، به بررسی و واکاوی تأثیر سرمایه اجتماعی بر رفتار کارآفرینانه در بین اعضای تعاونی‌های مذکور پرداخته است.

#### ۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

سرمایه اجتماعی همچون مفاهیم سرمایه فیزیکی و سرمایه انسانی به ویژگی‌های سازمان اجتماعی از قبیل شبکه‌ها، هنجارها و اعتماد اشاره دارند که هماهنگی و همکاری برای کسب سود و بهره‌گیری از منافع را تسهیل می‌کنند. سرمایه اجتماعی عنصری مطلوب برای انجام همکاری‌های درون گروهی است و هر چه میزان آن بالاتر باشد دستیابی گروه به اهداف خود بهتر انجام می‌گیرد، بطوریکه سرمایه اجتماعی در یک منطقه یا مکان می‌تواند به کنش جمعی منجر شده و در نهایت فرآیند مشارکت و توسعه را پیش ببرد. بر این اساس، سرمایه اجتماعی می‌تواند از عوامل موثر در بروز کارآفرینی و رفتار کارآفرینانه باشد. کارآفرینی یک الگوی رفتاری است که می‌توان آنرا به مردم آموزش داد تا یاد بگیرند که چگونه به طور کارآفرینانه رفتار کنند. رفتار کارآفرینانه در برگیرنده تمام فعالیت‌های افراد در شناسایی، ارزیابی و بهره‌برداری از فرصت‌های کارآفرینی است. افراد و گروه‌ها، با سرمایه اجتماعی بالاتر به منابع و اطلاعات بیشتری دسترسی دارند که می‌تواند در روند تشکیل و توسعه فرآیند کارآفرینی

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مسیر محاسبه شده در معادلات ساختاری (۰/۹)، سرمایه اجتماعی تاثیر بسزایی بر رفتار کارآفرینانه اعضای تعاونی‌های زنان روستایی دارد. همچنین نتایج معادله ساختاری نشان داد که، مشارکت اجتماعی درون گروهی بعنوان مهم‌ترین بعد سرمایه اجتماعی، بیشترین تأثیر را در رفتار کارآفرینانه زنان داشته است.

#### ۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

نتایج حاصله از تحقیق، حاکی از تاثیر بسزا و بالای سرمایه اجتماعی بر رفتار کارآفرینانه زنان روستایی عضو تعاونیها بود. بنابراین تقویت و بهبود سرمایه اجتماعی بعنوان یک عامل مهم و موثر در حوزه کارآفرینی، می‌بایست مورد توجه و تاکید قرار گیرد. در این راستا، بر اساس یافته‌های تحقیق، گسترش و توسعه زمینه مشارکت گروهی، ارتباط مستمر بین تعاونی‌ها و دیگر نهادها و تشکل‌های فعال در عرصه روستایی از جمله تعاونی‌های موفق، جلسات مداوم در راستای شفاف سازی فعالیت‌ها تعاونی از جمله مواردی است که می‌تواند در بهبود سطح سرمایه اجتماعی زنان عضو تعاونیها تاثیرگذار باشد. همچنین افزایش آگاهی زنان در شناسایی فرصت‌ها و تصمیم‌گیری مناسب از طریق برگزاری کارگاه و دوره‌های آموزشی و کاربردی کارآفرینی می‌تواند زمینه تقویت و توسعه رفتارهای کارآفرینانه را مهیا سازد.

**کلمات کلیدی:** سرمایه اجتماعی، مشارکت اجتماعی، رفتار کارآفرینانه، تعاونی روستایی زنان.

#### تشکر و قدرانی

پژوهش حاضر برگرفته از پایان‌نامه کارشناسی ارشد نویسنده دوم (فاطمه عرب)، گروه ترویج و آموزش کشاورزی، دانشکده کشاورزی، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، واحد ساری، ایران است.

تأثیرگذار باشد. از این رو سرمایه اجتماعی اهمیت ویژه‌ای برای کارآفرینان دارد و کارآفرینان مستقر در گروه‌های اجتماعی که دارای سرمایه اجتماعی بیشتری هستند، در وضعیت‌های سودمند بیشتری در داخل شبکه‌ها قرار می‌گیرند، لذا احتمال بیشتری دارد که بتوانند به طور مؤثر فرصت‌های تجاری را تشخیص داده و از آن بهره‌گیرند.

#### ۳. روش تحقیق

تحقیق حاضر از نوع توصیفی پیمایشی بوده است. جامعه آماری تحقیق شامل ۱۳۹۶ عضو ۱۱ تعاونی زنان روستایی (پنج شهرستان رامسر، نور، آمل، ساری و بهشهر در استان مازندران) بود که ۳۲۰ نفر از آنها بر اساس جدول کرجسی مورگان به عنوان حجم نمونه انتخاب و نمونه‌گیری طبقه‌ای با انتساب متناسب انجام شد. جمع‌آوری اطلاعات با استفاده از پرسشنامه محقق ساخته‌ای بود که از دو بخش اصلی سرمایه اجتماعی در پنج بعد و رفتار کارآفرینانه در شش بعد تشکیل شده بود. روایی ابزار سنجش با استفاده از نظرات اساتید راهنما و مشاور و پایایی آن از طریق محاسبه ضریب آلفای کرونباخ به دست آمد که برای سرمایه اجتماعی ۰/۹۲۱ و رفتار کارآفرینانه ۰/۹۰۵ محاسبه شد. به منظور تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها در دو بخش آمار توصیفی و استنباطی از دو نرم‌افزار (SPSS و Lisrel ۸/۵) استفاده گردید.

#### ۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

با توجه به نتایج به دست آمده از تحقیق، بعد تعامل اجتماعی از ابعاد سرمایه اجتماعی و بعد تأمین منابع و شرایط از ابعاد رفتار کارآفرینانه در اولویت رتبه‌بندی قرار گرفتند. ارزیابی کیفی سطح سرمایه اجتماعی و رفتار کارآفرینانه نشان دهنده سطح مناسب و رضایت بخش آنها در میان زنان روستایی عضو تعاونیها بود. بر اساس ضریب

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