Photography in Pakistan: Sustaining a Career in The Digital Age

By

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“In this digital age, is talent enough to sustain a career in photography in Pakistan, or does training provide an edge?”
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the roles of talent and training in photography and to what extent each of the two contribute to sustaining a career in the field, in Pakistan. By analysing vague terms such as talent and success through international literary references along with opinions from local photographers, I have set the parameters for what these terms stand for in reference to this dissertation. Furthermore, by studying the changing trends in the industry, the advent of the digital age, social media and the roles these things have played on photographers and their careers today, the dissertation provides an understanding of the kind of challenges and obstacles, along with the various positive changes that upcoming photographers should be aware of. In order to grasp what people are looking for when hiring photographers today, the dissertation also provides a view of the clientele, such as individuals hiring photographers and executives at advertising agencies.

The significance of this research is to assist current practitioners in the industry in the hiring process of upcoming photographers, as well as those interested in entering the field to grasp a better understanding of what is really out there. The dissertation has been conducted through two major research strategies: (1) a quantitative analysis of what the target market (SEC A, A' of Pakistan) are looking for when hiring photographers and (2) a qualitative analysis consisting of interviews with local photographers and executives at advertising agencies. Data for the secondary research has largely been collected from newspaper articles, books and academic journals. This dissertation challenges the views on talent in photography, and how far one can go with it, while simultaneously questioning whether or not training provides an edge in ones success in the career, particularly in Pakistan.
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INTRODUCTION

As a student of Communication Design at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, like many others I came at crossroads in my fourth semester when we were required to shortlist our minors. After much debate with myself and fellow students, I decided to select photography. However, I often find myself wondering whether this decision will facilitate me in making a career in the field, if I wish to pursue one.

Currently in Pakistan there are various socio-economic factors affecting present and aspiring photographers in the elite and upper middle class. The acceptability of photography as a career is on a rise nowadays, unlike the situation five or ten years ago. Identifying this change in time, Hammad Nasar states in Engaging Urban Realities through a 'Thinking photography', 'Perhaps the biggest vector of change is the increasing interest in photography by a new generation of artists. This has resulted in increased opportunities for the display and circulation of images...'

Due to this factor, there are a significant number of people who are practicing photography professionally, and many more youngsters who aspire to pursue a career in the field. The availability of cameras including professional Digital SLR's, is also a significant factor in the socio-economic development effecting this strata of society in Pakistan. These days just about everyone has a camera, whether they be Cyber shots, SLR's or DSLR's; and the same fraction of society is also actively present on social networking sites, allowing them to share their photographs in a quick and easy manner. The presence of cameras in the hands of nearly anyone that falls within the target market of this research, as well as their presence on social networking

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1 The target population as specified for this research is of Socio Economic Classification (SEC) A-1, A-2 residing in Pakistan.
sites serves to provide a platform for recognizing talent, be it coming from a thirteen year old possessing a cyber shot or an Indus Valley graduate with a Nikon or Sigma. So how does one decide which of the two is more capable of a career in photography? Is it enough to simply be talented, or are there certain elements that provide an edge towards the process of having a career in the field? How significant are the roles of training and education in the process of sustaining ones career in the field? These are all questions to be answered in the dissertation titled, 'In this digital age, is talent enough to sustain a career in photography in Pakistan, or does training provide an edge?'

The dissertation targets individuals from the upper middle class of Pakistan who are associated either as practitioners or clientele in the photography industry. The research will first delve into local and international literary references that will provide a deeper understanding of the topic at hand. Following this will be a detailed analysis of the research methods of this dissertation in order to understand the route taken to tackle the thesis statement. Furthermore there will be an application of these methods demonstrated in the Findings and Analysis chapters of the dissertation which constitutes the primary research and provide views of photographers from Pakistan as well as executives at advertising agencies and other individuals who are beneficial to the progress of this research.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Factors:

In order to study a topic rooted in Pakistan, such as photography, it is important to look into the social standing of the subject in context to the target market.

An article published in *The Express Tribune* in December 2010 identifies the social implications associated with possessing a Digital SLR in Pakistan. Calling it a 'new trend' to do away with the cyber shot cameras and upgrade to a DSLR, blogger Ovais Munshi practically condemns the act. 'This is all in a bid to capture the same moments you normally would – except in higher resolution.' While the blog article mostly mocks the buyers as being largely illiterate of the subject matter, and the act of purchasing this gadget as one attempted to fit in, it also highlights a very important socio-economic status of the DSLR as well as the 'photographer'. The desire to possess a DSLR and its association with being the new 'trend' despite it being highly priced create an understanding that the use of professional cameras is entering the mainstream use of the medium. Hence, the disparity between those working professionally and those simply following the trend, or exploring a new hobby, is significantly blurred. Munshi ends by warning readers to avoid riding on this 'bandwagon,' 'Very few of you will ever go through the hassle of learning techniques and improving skills to turn the hobby into

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4 Munshi, 'Buying a DSLR doesn't make you a photographer.' The Express Tribune Blogs.

5 Munshi, 'Buying a DSLR doesn't make you a photographer.' The Express Tribune Blogs.

6 Munshi, 'Buying a DSLR doesn't make you a photographer.' The Express Tribune Blogs.
a career. But for the majority, this niche of individuals will be forgotten. Their expensive Nikons
and Canons are the loves of their lives – for a while.\textsuperscript{7}

On the other hand, Hamna Zubair and Maha Amin write about the a new variety of photographers emerging in Pakistan in an article published in \textit{The Express Tribune} titled, 'Wedding photos: Flash forward.'\textsuperscript{8} Narrowing the genre of photographers to those doing wedding photography, the authors begin by narrating the condition of wedding photography a few years ago, 'Photo studios across Pakistan would sell bridal packages that included videos and photographs of the reception, mehndi and what-not, as well as a more formal bridal photo shoot that took place in a makeshift studio at the bride’s house.'\textsuperscript{9} Elaborating, they say that the disadvantage of this were the resulting 'unnatural' and 'static'\textsuperscript{10} photographs. Moving on Zubair and Amin describe the new 'breed' of photographers that provide a more flexible approach to the same task. The article provides case studies of three photographers who are responsible for creating and upholding this new and upcoming style of photography that cherishes candid moments, namely, Zeeshan Haider, a graduate of the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Kohi Marri of Oxford University and Kashif Rashid, a graduate of the Institute of Business Administration. The authors quote Marri to highlight the reason for a rise in demand for such photographers, 'People are sick of intrusive, loud, and obnoxious photographers who shout at people, telling them what to do and where to stand. I believe everything has to be an organic part of the event and I try to work in harmony with the crowd’s state of mind.'\textsuperscript{11} The article summarises the styles and techniques of these photographers, along with the advantage of the

\textsuperscript{7} Munshi, 'Buying a DSLR doesn't make you a photographer.' The Express Tribune Blogs.
\textsuperscript{8} Hamna Zubair, Maha Amin, 'Wedding photos: Flash Forward.' The Express Tribune Magazine: Life and Style, (Posted Dec 16th 2010).
\textsuperscript{9} Zubair and Amin, 'Wedding photos: Flash Forward.' The Express Tribune Magazine: Life and Style.
\textsuperscript{10} Zubair and Amin, 'Wedding photos: Flash Forward.' The Express Tribune Magazine: Life and Style.
\textsuperscript{11} Zubair and Amin, 'Wedding photos: Flash Forward.' The Express Tribune Magazine: Life and Style.
disparity in their price range. Simultaneously, the authors quote clients with whom they have worked, concluding with recommendations from each of these photographers for those aspiring to begin a career in wedding photography.

The quotes provided by clients in the previous article, along with the photographers themselves expresses what may be a new culture of interaction between photographers and clients. Photography in Pakistan may be considered a field surfacing in the socially and financially superior sector of society. Clients and photographers alike emerge from within this strata of society, and while some photographers may not, they climb their way to the top. Hence, it is interesting to note the role of nepotism (*Sifaarish*\(^\text{12}\)) in Pakistani culture and how it effects employment at large. According to a survey conducted in 2009 by the Gilani Research Foundation,\(^\text{13}\) 69% of Pakistani's expressed that unemployment has risen in the past few years. At the same time, 49% of Pakistan's associated nepotism as the root cause of unemployment; decrease in natural resources (31%), growing population (31%) and economic growth (21%) were the other contributing factors. Furthermore the research states that unemployment led to an increase in poverty and crime, postponed marriages, search for jobs abroad and a lack of law and order. Therefore, the use of nepotism as a tool to obtain jobs in Pakistan can be considered as a cultural defect causing various problems to arise. At the same time, keeping in mind the target market of the research, it may serve as a non-merit based tool for admission into various fields, including photography.

\(^{12}\) *Sifaarish* is the local term for nepotism and is defined on dictionary.com as *patronage* bestowed or *favouritism* shown on the basis of family relationships, as in business and *politics*.

Defining Talent:

_The Critique of Judgment: Analytic of the Sublime: Fine Art is the Art of the Genius_\(^{14}\) written by eighteenth century philosopher Immanuel Kant, identifies the term 'genius' as one associated solely with fine art. Kant states that the beauty of a product of art cannot be judged through rules and concepts applied to produce it, because it's existence and success are not based upon these factors, but on the natural talent in an individual that gives the 'rule to art'\(^{15}\). He refers to this natural talent as the 'genius'. The work of a genius in the view of Kant, must always be original; though originality is not always 'exemplary'\(^{16}\), so he clarifies further that it must also have the same aesthetic appeal on its audience as it had on the genius while he produced it. Furthermore Kant explains that the work of a genius cannot be taught, for even the genius cannot provide a systematical and methodical explanation for how it was created. In addition, Kant defines the 'model'\(^{17}\) as the only form of learning from a genius for there is no recipe for the masterpiece. And this forms the basis for Kant's theory of the genius; 'Nature prescribes the rule through genius not to science but to art.'\(^{18}\)

Furthermore, Kant divides art into mechanical and aesthetic (fine art). The mechanical presupposes a purpose while the aesthetic is based upon pleasure. Yet there is no fine art that does not consist of a mechanical element. 'Genius can do no more than furnish rich material for products of fine art; its elaboration and its form require a talent academically trained, so that it

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\(^{15}\) Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.137.

\(^{16}\) Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.137.

\(^{17}\) ‘...models i.e. be exemplary; and, consequently, though not themselves derived from imitation, they must serve that purpose for others, i.e. as a standard or rule of judging.’: Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.137

\(^{18}\) Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.137.
may be employed in such a way as to stand the test of judgment\textsuperscript{19} In other words, without practice and skill the genius cannot produce anything worthy.

Corey W. Dyck's, 'Spirit without lines: Kant's attempt to reconcile the genius and society\textsuperscript{20} analyses the 'anthropology'\textsuperscript{21} in which Kant questions whether the genius or the scientific mind is responsible for contributing to the advancement of culture. He writes, 'The capacity to construct aesthetic ideas must nonetheless be distinguished from the ability to exhibit them.'\textsuperscript{22} Dyck suggests that in order for a genius to create a work of art, he not only requires the innate talent but also the nurturing or 'synthesising' of this talent in order to give his aesthetic ideas a form. In saying so Dyck reinstates Kant's words mentioned earlier, '...its elaboration and it's form require a talent academically trained...'\textsuperscript{23} Therefore we can assume that even in Kant's view, there are certain theoretically learnt elements that contribute to the production of a work of genius.

In 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform,'\textsuperscript{24} Joseph S. Renzulli identifies that there is no single definition for giftedness as there are various areas of giftedness and the term cannot be narrowed down to one spectrum of life. Renzulli states that giftedness can be divided into two forms, 'School-house Giftedness' and 'Creative-productive Giftedness.'\textsuperscript{25} He emphasises that both forms are equally significant and often interact with one another and that there should be special programmes that encourage both forms of giftedness.

\textsuperscript{19} Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.139.
\textsuperscript{20} Corey W. Dyck, 'Spirit without lines: Kant's attempt to reconcile the genius and society', 2004. Idealistic Studies, Volume 34, Issue 2.
\textsuperscript{21} Dyck, 'Spirit without lines: Kant's attempt to reconcile the genius and society' 2004, p.154.
\textsuperscript{22} Dyck, 'Spirit without lines: Kant's attempt to reconcile the genius and society' 2004, p.154.
\textsuperscript{23} Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.139.
\textsuperscript{25} Renzulli, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform,' p.97
The former can simply be defined as 'test-taking' and lesson based giftedness which is generally measured through IQ tests. Whereas, creative-productive giftedness is the ability to create original products that are designed with the intention of producing an impact on multiple target audiences.

**Training and Nurturing Talent:**

In the previous section we touched upon a section of Joseph S. Renzulli’s, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform.' In the same document Renzulli states that programmes designed to nurture creative-productive giftedness, 'emphasise the use and application of information (content) and thinking processes in an integrated, inductive, and real problem-oriented manner.' He also states that giftedness can be cultivated through interaction of a person and his or her environment and a particular aspect of human enterprise.

Previously, we also discussed Kant's view of the 'genius' along with Dyck's analysis on the subject. In addition to these views, the doctorate dissertation titled, 'The Moral Nature of Artistic Genius,' by Brian Schampan Huges of Columbia University, argues that Kant's views of the genius are representational of the Romantic era and undermine art education by linking the word genius with 'talent' and 'nature'. He tackles the concept of the genius with a modern approach, identifying the various opinions and theoretical studies on the 'genius' and its role in art education. Huges revisits the various implications of a genius in view of Kant and his critics, in

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26 Renzulli, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform', p.97
27 Renzulli, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform', p.97
28 Renzulli, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform', p.98
30 Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.137
order to benefit those who wish to seek art education. Not only is genius an intersection of practice, narrative, and tradition, but how the concept signifies the way artists relate to one another, learn from each other, and develop as members of community.\textsuperscript{31} He provides an in-depth analysis of various literature in order to support the argument that a genius is not an inborn talent but an amalgamation of various other elements of life, intending to elevate the status of art education, something that he feels historical and traditional views on art tend to reject.

However, an institutionalisation of the visual arts in order to nurture talent comes with baggage of its own. Darren Newbury, author of Talking about Practice: Photography Students, Photographic Culture and Professional\textsuperscript{32}, argues that the biggest problem with the institutionalisation of a field such as photography is that it is available to everyone. Hence he highlights the significance of creating a disparity between the educational and professional use of the camera, and the more common use of the camera. Newbury claims that in order to do so students and professionals must devalue the popular use of the tool in order for them to sustain a professional status. In doing so, they create a hierarchy by which photography taught academically acquires a higher standard of acceptance as opposed to the mainstream photography. He also states that giving more significance to the techniques of production in an educational system can achieve this hierarchy.

While on the other hand, Andrea Kárpáti speaks of the traditional system by which talent in visual arts is evaluated academically. In the article, 'Detection and Development of Visual

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{31}Hughes, 'The Moral Nature of Artistic Genius,' p.233}

Talent,\textsuperscript{33} Kárpáti states that the ability to draw is often associated with 'talent' in the visual arts, which is why often the inability to produce work that possesses an in depth understanding of form, perspective or other elements of linear drawing leads to an alienation of that work as one that does not meet the criteria of visual art. After stating that no one skill contributes to giftedness in the creative arts, Kárpáti goes on to question why some people did extremely well in their childhood but failed to outshine professionally, whether it was because their talent disappeared over time, or there were external factors contributing to their creative decline. Kárpáti confirms his claim that social factors contribute to ones realisation of creativity by quoting a research conducted at the University of Chicago. In addition he recommends the form of study that must take place in order to provide formal education in the field of visual arts. 'First, we need to reveal those skills and abilities that constitute the mindset of the visually creative person in order to detect and properly develop her gifts. Second, we need to engage in a continuing social study of talented individuals to see how their fates are influenced by the interaction of their character.'\textsuperscript{34} Kárpáti provides case studies of talented individuals to conclude that there are numerous human capabilities that possess visual talent, hence no one gift or facility secures talent in the visual arts.

However, John H. Zenger writes in the Talent Issue of the \textit{Harvard Business Review} in an article titled, 'Making Yourself Indispensible', 'If you want to get to the top, develop skills that compliment what you already do best,'\textsuperscript{35} in other words, implying that one should identify the one gift they possess and take it forward to the next level. However, in 'The Jack-of-All-Trades


\textsuperscript{34} Kárpáti, 'Detection and Development of Visual Talent.' p.81

entrepreneur: Innate talent or acquired skill?'\textsuperscript{36} Olmo Silva discusses the 'Jack of all trades'\textsuperscript{37} theory of entrepreneurship which concludes that for a successful business a balance of acquired skill in various fields is necessary. However, Silvia argues that doing so does not increase one's chances of becoming an entrepreneur. In view of this we may look upon 'Liberal Art' institutes, ones that comprise of a balanced mixture of various fields providing students a wider sense of exposure. However, studies\textsuperscript{38} show that while these institutions breed a greater civic sense in students, they are not necessarily responsible for breeding entrepreneur's or career-oriented individuals, on the contrary students are more politically and socially involved. Having said that, Robert C. Snider argues in favour of a liberal arts education for the production of better photographers in, 'Photography and the teaching profession.'\textsuperscript{39} He speaks of photography as a profession that requires exposure to the world and life in general and hence should be taken on in the field of liberal arts in order to delve into a more diverse experience.

But it cannot be said that art education is the sole practice for nurturing talent, be it in photography or another form of visual art. John C. Maxwell, a leadership expert, identifies thirteen vital tips in his book, Talent is Never Enough,\textsuperscript{40} which can be used to nurture one's talent into success. He begins by quoting French poet, Edouard Pailleron, 'Have success and there will


\textsuperscript{37} 'A recent theory developed by Lazear (2002) suggests that individuals mastering a balanced set of talents across different fields, the Jacks-of-All-Trades (JATs), have a high probability of becoming entrepreneurs.' Olmo Silvia, 'Can the Jack-of-All-Trades Attitude be Trained?' (May 2004).

\textsuperscript{38} '...liberal arts colleges—by virtue of their primary focus on teaching, their small size, residential nature, quest for genuine community, engagement of students in active learning, concern for a general and coherent education, and emphasis on the development of the whole person—provide the most important kind of undergraduate education for the 21st century... They are sui generis, themselves a special kind of pedagogy.': George D. Kuh, 'Built To Engage: Liberal Arts Colleges and Effective Educational Practice.' (November 15, 2003). (Invited paper prepared for the ACLS Conference on Liberal Arts Colleges in American Higher Education Williamstown, Massachusetts)

\textsuperscript{39} Robert C. Snider, 'Photography and The Teaching Profession' Journal of the University Film Association, 25.3 (1973): 59-60.


\textsuperscript{40} John C. Maxwell, Talent is Never Enough (California: Thomas Nelson, 2007).
always be fools to say you have talent,"\(^{41}\) in order to point out the misconception associated with
talent and success. He brings to question the fact that if talent were ever enough, then how come
there exist extremely talented people in history and at present who are not extremely successful.
Having said that he moves on to his thirteen tips that will aid a person in nurturing their talent;
belief lifts talent, passion energizes talent, initiative activates talent, focus directs talent,
preparation positions talent, practice sharpens talent, perseverance sustains talent, courage tests
talent, ability to teach expands talent, character protects talent, relationships influence talent,
responsibility strengthens talent and teamwork multiplies talent. Though Maxwell elaborates
extensively on each of these techniques they are all quite self explanatory. Notably in Maxwell's
view, there is no specific mention towards art education or formal training in the pursuit of
nurturing ones talent.

A Career in Photography:

Evident from the research on Nepotism discussed in the first section of this literature review,
unemployment is on the rise in Pakistan. Along with the repercussions of unemployment is the
downside of possibly stepping into the wrong career path. Hence many people are now turning
hobbies such as baking, writing and photography into serious full-fledged careers. In *The
Express Tribune* article, 'Career advice: When Photography is more than just a hobby,'\(^{42}\) Ayesha
Ahmed claims that a career in photography requires more of an innate talent than acquired
training. However, she identifies that training can nurture ones inborn talent and place them in a
better position in this competitive field. She also mentions that the requirement for any entry

\(^{41}\) Maxwell, *Talent is Never Enough*. p.1

\(^{42}\) Ayesha Ahmed, 'Career advice: When Photography is more than just a hobby,' *The Express Tribune*, (Posted: April 2, 2011).

http://tribune.com.pk/story/137672/career-advice-when-photography-is-more-than-a-hobby/
[Last Accessed: Dec 1st 2011]
level job in industrial or scientific photography or photojournalism, requires a degree in either photography or the industry that he or she is venturing into as a photographer.

Turning photography as a hobby into a career may be a recent trend in Pakistan, but internationally it has been happening for some time. Back in 1993, Norman R. Hyot published an article in 'Boys Life' titled 'How I make Money.' The article sums up the young boy's experience as a photographer. He narrates how he bought a camera, and in four years managed to gain recognition in his little community. He shares his experiences working on small jobs to make ends meet and eventually concludes that 'there are a lot of opportunities for a fellow with a camera.' Yet he mentions that his failures outweigh his successes but that it is only the beginning of this venture. Hyot states that he is primarily laying the foundation for a successful career by meeting the right people, learning business ethics and increasing his observation skills.

Thanks to the wealth of information on photography available at ones fingertips through advancements in technology, it is not as difficult today for aspiring photographers to venture into the field as it was back in 1993. Books such as John Harrington's, *Best Business Practices for Photographers* is evidence of such literature. Taking a business oriented approach towards a photography career, Harrington writes about certain solid business principles that that withstood the test of time, and how it is increasingly important for photographers especially today to apply these principles in their professional dealings. He states that his aim for writing this book was to help photographers sustain their careers rather than just depend on their skills to do all the work. In a day and age where survival without a stable income is close to impossible he ridicules the

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43 Norman R. Hyot, 'How I make Money,' *Boys Life* 1993. p.28
44 Hyot, 'How I make Money,' *Boys Life*, p.28
idea of photo credits by questioning whether one can pay their mortgage with it.\textsuperscript{46} In his book he emphasises on various elements of business that a photographer must be in tune with, such as 'what you generate should exceed what you spend on expenses\textsuperscript{47}, customer service ethics and dealings, asset management, negotiation, long term gain is more important than short term gain etc. Harrington also mentions that one should get to know what they do not know in order to sustain a career, be it marketing, asset management, communication skills or how to deal with clients.

On a similar note, Selina Maitreya writes about the various aspects of business that one ought to keep revising in their professional agenda in order to sustain a career. Maitreya's book titled, \textit{How to succeed in commercial photography},\textsuperscript{48} begins by identifying that the relationship between a photographer and his clientele is perpetually changing due to evolving marketing and selling formulas in the field as well as employer and photographer relationships. 'There is a huge change from when an existing relationship between a buyer and a photographer was the exclusive reason to hire a talent.'\textsuperscript{49} Maitreya goes on to emphasise that in order to build and sustain a career that caters to ones financial, creative and professional interests while simultaneously keeping up with changing trends in the industry, one must constantly keep revisiting and revising certain elements in their professional agenda. The first of which is value, it's identification and development in photography followed by the vision one creates for their career. Thirdly, dealing with people and transforming cultures that help one revise their approach

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Harrington, \textit{Best Business Practices for Photographers}, p. 6
\item \textsuperscript{47} Harrington, \textit{Best Business Practices for Photographers}, p.xxxviii
\item \textsuperscript{49} Maitreya, \textit{How to succeed in commercial photography} .
\end{itemize}
towards human-centred elements of their business. Furthermore, Maitreya stresses on the importance of being up to date with ever changing photographic trends and tools, as well as the tools for sales and marketing. Finally she mentions persistence and faith is the key to facilitate sustainability in ones career.

In his book titled, *Photography Your Way: A Career Guide to Satisfaction and Success*, Chuck DeLaney provides a different approach to being successful and satisfied in ones career as a photographer. The author lists three basic things that one must be clear about before venturing into the field; the nature of the medium, what skills is one bringing to the table and what more to get out of it, and what holds one back in the field. He describes photography as a 'democratic and accessible' medium, and states that while it is an advantage, it also means there is more competition out there. He goes on to say that while equipment is expensive one doesn't always need so much of it, and that there are multiple ways of receiving training. DeLaney also emphasises that the profession holds no boundaries on race, sex or physical ability. Furthermore he goes on to identify the significance of knowing your skills and what more you want to learn. He says, 'There's no career guide better than a view of the lives and works of others who devoted their days to the pursuit of photography.' DeLaney says it is easier to eliminate what one is not interested in doing in the field in order to identify the remaining options. In doing so one can narrow down to what interests them a lot faster. Lastly he says that one must be clear of what holds them back in the field, and make sure they don't let it hold them back.

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52 The book has been written by an American writer and hence we cannot assume that the description of the boundaries will be the same in Pakistan is it is in the American culture.
back; avoid getting washed away by negative emotions, bad encounters, failed projects, difficult clients etc.

DeLaney defines success in photography as the ability to create something that pleases the photographer as well as brings pleasure to those with whom the work is shared. He also lists a number of things that serve as tips to attaining this success; don't expect too much, be patient, don't limit yourself to what interests you at present, and don't get frustrated by the 'if only's.' DeLaney concludes by saying that 'Success in photography requires just one magic ingredient, that ingredient is you; you - unleashed.'

54 DeLaney later emphasises on this point by saying that it is okay not to have a goal from the start, and that at times unprecedented things come ones way that allow us to explore various possibilities. So he identifies the importance of keeping an open mind to what comes ones way and the significance of exploring them. p.30
55 DeLaney talks about how negative emotions should not bring one down. Business and finance often interfere in the career and to get bogged down by, 'if only I had better equipment, if only I had his or her contacts, if only I had his or her sales techniques, or if only I had gone to so and so school' but to rise above these thoughts and be persistent with the correct attitude is more likely to build on ones success as a photographer. p.8
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for this dissertation, 'In this digital age, is talent enough to sustain a career in photography in Pakistan, or does training provide an edge?,' was divided into primary and secondary objectives.

Primary objective: Is talent enough to sustain a career in photography in Pakistan.

Secondary objectives:

1. The role of the digital age and how it has affected sustaining careers in the field.
2. The role of training and what factors provide an edge in sustaining a career in the field.

In order to reach the above objectives, the dissertation has been split into primary and secondary methods of research. The secondary research was divided into social factors, defining talent, nurturing talent - through training and other means - and careers in photography. Articles and blogs from the Express Tribune deemed significant in defining the social factors associated with this research. However the question of authenticity of the blog articles as a resource simply made them a starting point reference, which was further explored after conducting primary research.

In order to define the subjective term 'talent,' I explored its implications in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and those who opposed his ideas, to help attain a better understanding of the historical connotations of the word. The journal article by Joseph S. Renzulli which identifies the different types of talents also aided in clarifying the definition of the term specific to varying subjects at hand. Having identified talent, it was vital to explore the nature of the term and its capabilities. Hence I delved into texts that identified the ability to

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58 Renzulli, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform,' p.97
nurture talent, and furthermore, nurturing talent by receiving training in photography. The article by Brian Schampan Huges\(^59\) was highly beneficial as it explored this possibility with respect to the definition of talent or 'genius' provided by Immanuel Kant. Darren Newbury\(^60\), Andrea Kárpáti\(^61\) and Robert C. Snider\(^62\) offered a direct association with nurturing talent in photography, whereas John C. Maxwell\(^63\) and Olmo Sylvia's\(^64\) texts provided insight on external factors associated with nurturing talent. Furthermore, to begin referring to careers in photography, it was significant to refer to the culture of acquiring careers in Pakistan via nepotism in order to remain grounded in the demographics of this research. Having said that, books by Selina Maitreya\(^65\), John Harrington\(^66\) and Chuck de Laney\(^67\) helped the research by defining the boundaries for the term 'success' in photography.

While the articles all seemed significant in reference to the research topic, the problem lay in a lack of local articles and books that may have provided a more relevant perspective on the study. Hence, after carrying out the secondary research pertinent to the dissertation topic, the next step was to map out the process of acquiring first hand information.

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59 Huges, 'The Moral Nature of Artistic Genius.' p. 233
61 Kárpáti, 'Detection and Development of Visual Talent,' p.81
62 Snider, 'Photography and The Teaching Profession,' p.59-60
63 Maxwell, Talent is Never Enough
64 Silvia, 'Can the Jack-of-All-Trades Attitude be Trained?'
65 Maitreya, How to succeed in commercial photography .
Target Population:

The target population for this research, as specified earlier is falls under the Socio Economic Classification (SEC) A-1, A-2\textsuperscript{68} residing in Pakistan. By the nature of photography being a largely expensive medium, despite existing examples of individuals from various strata of society who are practicing photography professionally, I have limited the target audience to the specified strata. The target includes all those associated with the profession either as practitioners, aspiring photographers or prospective clientele.

Types of Study:

Since the question being addressed in this dissertation is largely subjective, qualitative research methods have been used for the most part in conducting the primary research. However, the dissertation also includes quantitative research methods where they deemed beneficial to the dissertation.

a. Qualitative: To determine the opinions, decisions and justifications of those hiring photographers for various tasks, those trained and untrained individuals practicing photography, as well as those teaching the subject, within the quoted target market.

b. Quantitative: Design a questionnaire that surveys 100 individuals within the target market falling under the category of a photographers clientele to understand their psyche and decision making process.

\textsuperscript{68} ‘Annexes: Socio Economic Classification (Urban).’ p.2
Research Methods:

As mentioned earlier, the method of research has been largely qualitative. This process involves the use of semi-structured interviews, only varying in the case of an individual's professional status, qualification in the field, or the direction in which an interview was proceeding. The choice of questions was based upon the information that was not available through primary research, or proved to be inadequate in forming the basis of the research. Most interviews were conducted in person, and recorded with permission of the interviewee while two were conducted via email, according to the convenience of the interviewee. Existing photographers were interviewed, those who have received no professional training as well as those trained, in order to identify the cause of their success and its continuation, and how far talent alone aided in their success. The interviewed photographers, Adeela Badshah, Kashif Rashid, Lali Khalid, and Kohi Marri, who have only been working in the industry for a few years, also provided an insight on the current situation of photography in Pakistan and how aspiring photographers have a similar or different process to undergo before becoming successful. A comparison between how the industry has evolved from twenty years ago till today was drawn by photographers who have been around for some time, namely Arif Mehmood, Farah Mahbub and Amean Jan. Interviewing practicing photographers also provided insight on what is considered as 'talent' and 'success' in photography, providing a great deal of clarification on the topic at hand. Mehbub and Jan also provided a teachers perspective to the

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69 Adeela Badshah is a freelance photographer. She is also a photography professor at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVSAA)
70 Kashif Rashid is the founder and owner of K-Bridals studio, Karachi.
71 Lali Khalid is a photography professor at the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore and freelance photographer.
72 Kohi Marri is freelance photographer based in Karachi.
73 Arif Mehmood is the founder and owner of photo agency White Star.
74 Farah Mehbub is a photography professor at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVSAA)
75 Amean Jan is the founder and owner of the photo agency 18% Grey. He is also a photography professor at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVSAA)
topic at hand. Interviewing various photographers provided an educated yet variable opinion of the medium at hand and its implications on society today.

Whereas individuals at Ad agencies, namely Art Director at JWT, Natasha Dubash and Chief Creative Officer at Saatchi and Saatchi Ali Reza Mumtaz were consulted in order to determine the criteria for hiring specific photographers. As individuals who have been in the field during this digital boom, they were also able to compare how this hiring process differs today from say five or ten years ago.

In addition, the dissertation also consists of quantitative research which has been used to judge the opinion of the general strata of the elite and upper middle class, who are hiring photographers for weddings, parties and photography for their SME's (Small and Medium Enterprises). Questionnaires were structured in a concise manner in order to attain only the information required and not unnecessary opinions.

**Sampling Technique:**

Convenience sampling will be used in order to conduct this segment of the research. 'Convenience sampling is used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. The sample is selected because they are convenient.'\(^{76}\) This is a non-probability method of sampling in which members are selected from the population in some non-random manner. The purpose of using this form of sampling is to ensure that the individuals approached for the purpose of this research are exposed to or have participated in the process of hiring photographers, for whatever personal or professional reason.

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\(^{76}\) William B. Armstrong on, 'Planning Your Survey: A brief primer on strategies and approaches.' : 37
http://studentresearch.ucsd.edu/sriweb/Presentations/PlanningYourSurvey.pdf [Date accessed: 30th November 2011]
The advantages of the technique are that it avoids error and uneducated responses, whereas the disadvantage lies in the possibility of missing out on varied opinions. However for this academic research paper, it deemed to be the most effective.

The data collected through quantitative research will be analysed with the use of SPSS\textsuperscript{77} (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Once the questionnaire is coded, all data from the questionnaire will be directly fed into the software and tabulated. Data collected from these findings will be used together with the literature review and exploratory study in order to strengthen the research.

\textsuperscript{77}'SPSS is among the most widely used programs for statistical analysis in social science. It is used by market researchers, health researchers, survey companies, government, education researchers, marketing organizations and others. Statistical analysis, data management (case selection, file reshaping, creating derived data) and data documentation are features of the base software.'

'Data Analysis.' p.55 (http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/3405/13/13_chapter%207.pdf) [Last accessed: 2nd February 2012]
FINDINGS

Following are the tabulated results of the hundred surveys of individuals who fall under the target market of this research SEC A-1, A-2 in Karachi, Pakistan. The survey was conducted at Park Towers and Forum Mall.

**Purpose of hiring photographers**

- Events: 63%
- Professional: 24%
- Personal: 7%
- Other: 6%

**Criteria for hiring photographers**

- Portfolio/Quality of work: 48%
- How well known a photographer is: 41%
- Varies from genre to genre: 11%
Characteristics of a successful job

- Quality of work: 47%
- Professionalism: 41%
- On time delivery: 12%

Basis for rehiring a photographer

- Quality of work: 61%
- Easy to work with: 30%
- Personal relationship: 3%
- Other: 6%
ANALYSIS

The terms talent and success cannot be narrowed down to one single definition. In order to tackle a question that consists of subjective terms such as talent and success, this dissertation proposes definitions taken from philosophy, international literary references along with local perspectives provided by photographers in Pakistan. As mentioned in the secondary research, in 'The Critique of Judgment: Analytic of the Sublime: Fine Art is the Art of the Genius'\textsuperscript{78} Immanuel Kant glorifies the genius as one whose talent is purely innate. In view of photographer Amean Jan,\textsuperscript{79} the idea of a talented individual closely syncs with the theory of Immanuel Kant's 'genius.' Jan states that he's not a strong believer in talent. He expresses that talent is something that a selected few are blessed with, for everyone else who has the passion to produce good work, they need to work hard to achieve it, 'Not everyone is a born Picasso, let's admit it.'\textsuperscript{80} Furthermore Kant describes the genius as one who must always be original; photographers Kashif Rashid\textsuperscript{81} and Kohi Marri\textsuperscript{82} would strongly agree. Rashid identified talent as the ability to produce something that people have not seen before whereas Marri described it as the ability to stand out and be distinguished by a certain style in ones work. Author of 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform,'\textsuperscript{83} Joseph S. Renzulli also defined talent as one's ability to produce original work designed to attract a large number of people. He also mentions the importance of human interactions and experiences that cultivate giftedness in an individual. On a similar note, Farah Mahbub\textsuperscript{84} identified talent as a mixture of inborn abilities.

\textsuperscript{78} Kant, 'The Critique of Judgment,' p.136-9.
\textsuperscript{79} Amean Jan interviewed 3rd Feb 2012. [Interview was conducted in person, and was recorded and transcribed]
\textsuperscript{80} Jan, interviewed 3rd Feb 2012.
\textsuperscript{81} Kashif Rashid interviewed 29th Feb 2012. [Interview was conducted in person, and was recorded and transcribed]
\textsuperscript{82} Kohi Marri interviewed 30th Jan 2012. [Interview was conducted in person, and was recorded and transcribed]
\textsuperscript{83} Renzulli, 'The Identification and Development of Giftedness as a Paradigm for School Reform.' p. 95-98.
\textsuperscript{84} Farah Mehbub interviewed 25th Oct 2011. [Interview was conducted in person, and was recorded and transcribed]
and the environment a person has been in because of which this talent has either been developed or suppressed. Photographer Lali Khalid along with Mehbub also stressed upon one having an 'eye' for photography, the ability to look at a photograph, one's own or another, and be able to tell whether it is good or bad. Khalid and Rashid both linked the technical-know how of photography with the term talent. In his article 'Spirit without lines: Kant's attempt to reconcile the genius and society' Corey W. Dyck, stresses upon the importance of differentiating one's ability to construct ideas with the ability to execute them; in other words playing on the significance of technical know-how.

In order to move forward with this research it is important to set the parameters for what will be referred to as talent in the following text. Hence, after gathering information from the above sources one can sum up talent as an amalgamation of various elements. It can be characterised as an inborn ability that is nurtured through environment and human interaction. The qualities of a talented person can then be defined as one who has the ability to produce original work, and execute ideas by demonstrating a powerful understanding of the medium, which in this case would be the camera.

It is needless to say that in order to sustain a career in any field one must be successful in it. Hence, after clarifying the term talent, one is confronted with another ambiguous term; success. In a nutshell, Chuck DeLaney in Photography Your Way: A Career Guide to Satisfaction and Success defines success as something that pleases the photographer while simultaneously bringing pleasure to those with whom it is shared. On a similar note, Lali Khalid expressed that even more important than recognition, was the ability to understand one's own work and utilize

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85 Lali Khalid interviewed 4th April 2012. [Interview was conducted via Skype, and was recorded and transcribed]
that understanding to affect others with it. Meanwhile, Farah Mehbub, Kohi Marri and Kashif Rashid, strongly associated recognition with success. Rashid felt that global recognition was more important, while Marri suggested that recognition that lasts even decades after a photographer is gone, is what really matters. Having said that, none of the female photographers associated monetary gain as a measure of success in their careers. Perhaps because the cultural responsibility of earning a living in Pakistan rests on a man's shoulders. On the other hand photographer Amean Jan identified that success is very subjective; for the meaning changes from person to person based on what they aim to achieve through that success. After giving examples of how success to some can be categorized as excelling in a certain genre of photography, while to others it may mean something else, he went on to identify that his personal definition of success would be to sustain his career whilst simultaneously fulfilling his financial obligations. Rashid too valued the financial aspect of success, but did not consider it more important than global recognition.

So by and large the definition of success for the purpose of this research may be narrowed down to three things; one's ability to connect with and understand his or her own work, to be recognised and appreciated in one's lifetime and after and thirdly to be able to sustain ones career financially. It is by this definition that we will proceed to approach the term success throughout this dissertation.

It is understood that there are many factors that may be associated in the success of one's career. But before approaching them we will touch upon the technological advancements that have globally and locally impacted careers in the field of photography. Amean Jan briefly
describes the media boom that took place during the 'Musharraf years' by stating, 'the opening up of new channels created more exposure along with greater opportunities for more publication work.' He goes on to say that an increase in publications in turn led to a greater demand for photographers. We can say that careers in photography have been largely affected by this media boom and the current digital age. However the effect has been both positive and negative. Similarly, Adeela Badshah states that things are moving a lot faster now, but she also explains that while it is great that production is faster now, 'what happens when production is faster is that quality is compromised.'

The availability of DSLR's and access to social networking sites have created a platform for photographers to display their talents. As Chuck DeLaney mentioned, the camera is a 'democratic and accessible medium,' emphasizing that it monopolizes the quantity of people accessing cameras, for personal or professional usage. On the other hand, Darren Newbury in, 'Talking about Practice: Photography Students, Photographic Culture and Professional Identities,' notes that the accessibility of the medium poses a challenge for those who are serious about making a career. Arif Mehmood defines this challenge by stating that there is an abundance of imagery now available due to accessibility of the medium. He goes on to say that, 'the good and bad and
brilliant have all been stacked together and no one has time to look for the brilliant.\textsuperscript{95} Having said that, Kohi Marri and Amean Jan find that the accessibility of the medium should be looked upon positively. So, while it creates a competitive environment it may be seen as a good thing. In an interview, Marri stated that the more people that get into it, the more it becomes a viable career option. And since photography is a service based occupation, it is important for it to be considered a credible career in order for people to take photographers seriously. While Jan on the other hand stated that a larger number of photographers in the industry allows for a greater pool of ideas, creativity and exposure. A similar opinion was expressed by Hamna Zubair and Maha Amin in an article published in \textit{The Express Tribune} titled, 'Wedding photos: Flash forward,'\textsuperscript{96} which highlights new and upcoming photographers in the genre of wedding photography in Pakistan, bringing to light the availability of more options and variety in photographers today. Mehmood defines this shift by stating that the market has become more 'consumer oriented'\textsuperscript{97} in other words, expressing that photographers are getting increasingly interested in meeting the demands of their clientele.

Kashif Rashid, expressed different views regarding the social media and its implications on the industry of photographers. He claims that people have always followed talent; so while social media helps, a combination of talent and hard work will take you further. He emphasised on the way the current big names in photography in Pakistan, such as Athar Shehzad and Tapu Javeri\textsuperscript{98} have climbed their way to the top and social media had no role to play in their success. In addition, Rashid who has only recently entered the industry, clarified a misunderstanding that

\textsuperscript{95} Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012.
\textsuperscript{96} Hamna Zubair, Maha Amin, 'Wedding photos: Flash Forward.' The Express Tribune Magazine: Life and Style, (Posted Dec 16th 2010).
\textsuperscript{97} Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012.
\textsuperscript{98} Athar Shehzad and Tapu Javeri are renowned Pakistani fashion photographers.
many people have regarding social media; people will definitely like ones Facebook pages, comment on photographs and even request a shoot. But the minute finances are brought into the picture, you will never hear from people again. Kohi Marri also believed that platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are not the place to start off ones career; he emphasises on the importance of first building ones portfolio, getting out there to work and after building a considerable clientele; create a Facebook page to tell others what all you are already doing. Adeela Badshah, while admitting the wonders of social networking sites as platforms goes on to compare them to a personalized portfolio or website stating that Facebook pages etc are 'casual' in comparison and 'it's the difference between a business card and writing your number on a napkin.' The insight from both photographers identifies that social networking only provides a platform to display ones talent, however it does not considerably help one build or sustain a career in the field.

Furthermore, Kashif Rashid also drew a broader picture in light of the impacts of social media. An MBA student, he explained how statistically, if platforms such as Facebook are helping photographers in any way, then they are helping all photographers in the same way; in effect, cancelling out the positive effect it has on the individual and multiplying the advantage it provides to the industry at large.

Having looked into the impact of the digital age upon photographers today, it is also significant to understand where the industry will go in the years to follow. Amean Jan, having worked thirteen years in the industry and having seen and experienced the digital boom, explains that it is impossible for any photographer who wants to sustain a career in the field to do so.

99 Badshah, interviewed 5th March 2012.
100 Badshah, interviewed 30th March 2012.
101 Photographer Kashif Rashid completed his MBA from The Institute of Business Administration, Karachi in 1999.
purely through social networking sites, or the kind of work they provide one with. He stresses upon the significance of taking up commissioned work and commercial projects. Jan then explains how the supply of photographers in Pakistan exceeds the demand for such commissioned work; hence, sooner or later the 'less serious' photographers will gradually disappear. Similarly Arif Mehmood describes this demand and supply curve by stating, 'What will happen is that the cake is going to be cut into little pieces and after that there will be no cake.' He goes on to say that eventually only those individuals with good people skills and ability to market themselves will remain, clarifying that these photographers may not necessarily be 'good' but if they can sell themselves, they will stick around whereas some good ones who couldn't sell themselves may not.

Keeping in mind the definition of success that has been identified for the purpose of this research, it is increasingly important to explore what components assist in achieving success, and the hurdles encountered on the path to success in photography in general as well as in Pakistan today before delving into whether talent is enough to sustain a career in photography. Darren Newbury after identifying the accessibility of photography as a medium, speaks of devaluing the popular use of the tool. He stresses upon creating a hierarchy and states that one way to achieve this would be through various techniques of production. Lali Khalid expresses, 'you can't just have a good eye, I mean yes that's probably 80% of it but 20% is your know-how of the camera, editing for those who edit, how to be detail oriented.' Khalid also identified a problem in the local industry which is that there is a monopoly of certain photographers in the field who

102 Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012.
103 Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012.
104 Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012.
105 Newbury, 'Talking about Practice: Photography Students, Photographic Culture and Professional Identities,' p.421-434
106 Khalid, interviewed 4th April 2012.
have been around for years and are chosen for work based on their name and not their technical or aesthetic knowledge. She expressed that this was a massive challenge for individuals stepping into the field as breaking into this monopoly of photographers is not easy. Amean Jan and Adeela Badshah too emphasised on the importance of standing out from the crowd in order to sustain ones career. On a similar note Kashif Rashid, having recently entered the industry as mentioned earlier, shared his experiences of how it was very difficult to get his name out there. While Kohi Marri highlighted that organization was a key ingredient to sustain ones career and was a hurdle that every photographer must overcome in order to progress.

Considering most of the photographers mentioned earlier have only been in the field for roughly ten to fifteen years, insight into a comparison between the challenges faced by photographers today and over twenty years ago was drawn with the help of first hand information from photographers Farah Mehbub and Arif Mehmood. Mehbub claims that to remain successful she felt her greatest challenges were that she was in a third world country. Lack of resources and information about technical processes often led to dependency on those with access to these goods abroad. Yet, Mahbub finds that this hurdle only led to making photographers of the time more aware and technically sound. 'You know how you get carved with time and it chisels you and makes you prettier with time, so I think it just carved me that way.'\textsuperscript{107} Mehmood on the other hand describes that back in the day the 'genius' in a photographer used to be identified by referring to his or her contact sheets in order to see the process by which they reached to a beautiful image. He defines that now that process no longer exists with the digital camera, making it far easier yet emphasizing that easier does not mean it's 'better'.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{107} Mehbub, interviewed 25th Oct 2011.
\textsuperscript{108} Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012.
Since the research approaches the current socio-economic scenario of photographers and their success we went on to ask her about the hurdles photographers may face in their careers today. Farah Mahbub responded that photographers today are impatient and use the camera like a 'machine gun'. She explained the importance of thinking before shooting, and getting the right shot in one go rather than arriving at a photograph after a series of 'Rambo' like shooting. While on the other hand, Adeela Badshah claims that anyone can be a photographer if they keep shooting because eventually after shooting dozens of pictures they will be able to identify what works and what doesn't, hence eventually learning to eliminate and recreate.

Farah Mehbub went on to express the importance of understanding the rules of photography, especially today since digital cameras have led us to work on chance. 'Photography mein jo bhi genre hai un sab kay rules hain there's no such genre that doesn't have its boundaries set and told... [and] there are some rules in photography that you cannot break.' Seeing that there are a number of factors that upcoming photographers need to be prepared to encounter before managing to reach a certain point in their career in order to sustain it. One may say that in light of the challenges mentioned above, a talented individual may find it relatively easier to stand out and break the market, but as some of the photographers also mentioned, if one is hard working and persistent, they are likely to progress. The comparison of hurdles faced by photographers earlier and today has been drawn to help one understand a benchmark set by senior photographers, and the challenges faced by the current generation to live up to those standards in order to be successful.

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111 Mehbub, interviewed 25th Oct 2011. [Translation: In every genre of photography there are rules, there's no such genre that doesn't have its boundaries set and told... (and) there are some rules in photography that you cannot break]
Coming back to the subject at hand, 'Is talent enough to sustain a career in photography in Pakistan, or does training provide an edge?' most photographers responded that talent was not enough and at the same time expressed different opinions on where the 'edge' lay. John C. Maxwell's book, *Talent is Never Enough* touches upon thirteen tips that will aid a person to nurture their talent. Similarly, Farah Mehbub also spoke strongly about nurturing ones talent in order to sustain a career. Mehbub identified that the first element of success for a photographer was passion, drive and desire. While those who have been more exposed and whose natural talent has developed over time may have an edge over the ones that do not, it is not impossible to nurture oneself into becoming an aesthetically sound photographer. Nearly all the other photographers also made similar points. Kohi Marri emphasised the need to be rigorous and thorough with your work, 'Be the first to arrive, be the last to leave, make sure you've covered all your angles, make sure you have multiple shots in case someone walks into the shot or some are out of focus, so you have various focusing points. These things are not talent based, they're just hard work.' Adeela Badshah gave a lot of importance to constantly 'reinventing' oneself because the pace is a lot faster now and the variety far greater, giving people more options to chose from in case a certain photographers work begins to look monotonous. Most of the photographers attributed elements such as passion, drive, hard work, consistency, organization, broadening ones career, not giving up and far sightedness as key components to sustaining a career in photography, especially in Pakistan. Whereas, Lali Khalid and Kashif Rashid also emphasised on the need to become technically sound, to educate oneself or to get an education that will help them understand the parameters of the medium at hand bringing to light the significance of training in some form. Rashid who is qualified with an MBA also mentioned the

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113 Marri, interviewed 30th Jan 2012
114 Badshah, interviewed 5th March 2012.
need to be ethical and business minded. At the same time executives from leading advertising agencies, Chief Creative Officer at Saatchi and Saatchi, Ali Reza Mumtaz\textsuperscript{115} and Art Director at JWT, Natasha Dubash\textsuperscript{116} also contributed to this argument. While Dubash highlighted that talent is very important to succeed in the industry but alongside that one must work hard and have the ability to develop technical skills, stay up to date with the global advancements in the industry and commercial requirements from the medium. Mumtaz on the other hand stated that talent alone may be enough to sustain ones career in photography; however a mixture of talent and good PR and business skills will take an individual further.

Having looked into what photographers categorize as success and what they feel leads to sustaining a career in photography, I went on to approach the views of those individuals and corporations involved in the process of hiring photographers, and what they look for during their hiring process and how they assess an individual before rehiring. Furthermore, a survey\textsuperscript{117} was conducted of individuals who on a regular basis indulge in the process of hiring photographers for various purposes such as weddings, events, exhibitions etc. The study exhibited that most individuals hiring photographers are doing so for events, while some are hiring for professional purposes. Furthermore, Natasha Dubash, also explains that in the hiring process of photographers at the agency, selection is based on the genre of photography that is required for a specific job. Hence when selecting who to hire, they look into who is best at what. At the same time Ali Reza Mumtaz says that ideally the criteria for hiring photographers should be talent; however there are many factors that contribute to it, such as 'experience with a client, relationship with an agency,

\begin{footnotes}
\item Ali Reza Mumtaz, interviewed 6th April 2012 [Interview conducted via email]\textsuperscript{115}
\item Natasha Dubash, interviewed 5th April 2012 [Interview conducted via email]\textsuperscript{116}
\item The survey consists of a hundred questionnaires conducted of people who fall directly under the target market of this research, the statistical results of which may be found in the Findings chapter\textsuperscript{117}
\end{footnotes}
and current standing in the market.\footnote{118} Mumtaz also shares his international work experience by expressing that in the United States of America (USA) photographers are primarily hired based on the work that they bring to the table; while in Pakistan photographers do not go into 'niches'\footnote{119} unlike in the USA where a photographer is selected based on his expertise. He also mentions that print is not given as much importance in Pakistan and hence enough attention is not paid before hiring the right print photographer. Similarly, the results in the questionnaires summarized that twenty two percent felt that the criteria for hiring a photographer varied from genre to genre, whereas the majority felt that the it lay in either the quality of work (i.e. portfolio) or how well known the photographer was. Photographer Arif Mehmood defines the latter by stating that the photographers in Pakistan 'feed on one another,' in other words emphasising the significance of 'networking' which he defines as 'the call of the times.'\footnote{120} Having said that, the research conducted by the Gilani Research Foundation\footnote{121} also highlights the role of nepotism and its impact on employment. Keeping in mind the target market of this research it is significant to note the role of a cultural phenomenon such as nepotism, or 'networking'\footnote{122} as Mehmood defines it, and its impact on the industry at large. However, the process of networking may speed up the process by which someone attains recognition, but it does not make his or her work any better.

Individuals and the heads at the above mentioned advertising agencies were also questioned about what characteristics of a photographer contributed to his or her success at a specific job. Ali Reza Mumtaz briefly sums it up by saying that the work should be phenomenal; however there are certain other factors that come into play as well, 'delivery on time, easy to work with, has an idea on the product's history, experience, honesty. Original work counts a lot for me; a

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\begin{itemize}
\item\footnote{118} Mumtaz, interviewed 6th April 2012 [Interview conducted via email]
\item\footnote{119} Mumtaz, interviewed 6th April 2012 [Interview conducted via email]
\item\footnote{120} Mehmood interviewed 30th May 2012.
\item\footnote{121} Gilani Research Foundation. (Posted May 18th 2009).
\item\footnote{122} Mehmood interviewed 30th May 2012.
\end{itemize}
photographer that has looked to do things differently, or is eager to treat something differently. Also, I would tend to pick someone who has more hunger for the work than someone who is doing it for the pay check.'

Whereas Natasha Dubash emphasised on the importance of technical know-how, while she mentioned that other factors would be professionalism and one's ability to work with a number of personalities. Questionnaires proved that the most important factor was quality of work, cutting it close with professionalism. On time delivery was also an extremely important factor. After every well done job comes a reward.

I further questioned the basis on which photographers are re-hired or recommended to others; Natasha Dubash once again concentrated on the photographers technical equipment as well as how easy or difficult he or she is to work with. Ali Reza Mumtaz on the other hand identified that the work was definitely the leading factor however, the photographers relationship with the agency or the client as well as how well he or she managed to deliver were important considerations before rehiring or recommending a photographer. A mixture of views of Mumtaz and Dubash was reflected in the responses from the questionnaires which gave great importance to the quality of work and how easy or difficult a photographer was to work with. In one instance an individual stated that it was the overall experience that counted the most.

While the most significant factor associated with a photographers success was the quality of work, a great deal of importance has been given to technical know-how. Having said that many photographers described technical know-how as a major component of a good portfolio. Therefore we may say that it is important to nurture ones talent; many photographers felt that this can be done through persistence and hard work while others felt that training in photography does play a significant role in the process. Farah Mahbub stated that in today's world she would

123 Mumtaz, interviewed 6th April 2012 [Interview conducted via email]
not recommend foregoing the opportunity to receive formal training in the field of photography provided they have the chance to do so and the finances to support it. 'In this day and age if you have the opportunity to, then yes go and study it [photography].'\textsuperscript{124} Having said that she is aware that not everyone has the resources to do so, and therefore goes on to point out that it is the age of communication and the internet can be incredibly resourceful, the only thing in her view that cannot be achieved through the internet is the desire. Furthermore, Selina Maitreya emphasises in her book \textit{How to succeed in commercial photography}\textsuperscript{125} that it is important to keep up to date with the changing trends and evolving industry in order to sustain a career in the field. Similarly photographer Kohi Marri stated, 'technology is improving and expanding very fast and if you don't keep up with technology you will be left behind.'\textsuperscript{126} Adeela Badshah stresses on the same point, saying that photographers need to keep 'innovating'\textsuperscript{127} themselves. Both Identify that even if one has received training in photography, it's not enough; for one needs to repeatedly stay updated with the quick changing medium and its demands. Therefore as photographer Kashif Rashid states, training is not some 'divine intervention,'\textsuperscript{128} there are other ways to learn as well, we may say that while ideally it is better to be trained, an untrained photographer may also manage to begin his or her career. However, keeping in mind that he or she would have to provide themselves with some form of training in order to sustain it; be that through the internet and books or workshops that keep one constantly updated with the ever changing trends in the industry.

\textsuperscript{124} Mehbub, interviewed 25th Oct 2011
\textsuperscript{126} Marri, interviewed 30th Jan 2012
\textsuperscript{127} Badshah, interviewed 5th March 2012
\textsuperscript{128} Rashid, interviewed 29th Feb 2012
Photographers also provided insight upon what gives trained photographers an edge over the untrained and vice versa. Farah Mehbub states that her biggest advantage in not being trained was that through trial and error she became technically sound and hence confident. To learn from mistakes led to the sweeping away of any insecurities and fear that nestled within her. But it was not all uphill. She goes on to say that the greatest disadvantage in being untrained is that it takes a lot longer to reach to a certain point. Those who receive training are saved by their teachers from falling into pit holes. While they too learn from their mistakes, they have the advantage of having a lower risk of falling and being pulled out a lot faster when they do fall. And in this day and age time is a very important factor. However, they too are accompanied by a great disadvantage; to be taught by someone often leads to mimicking their style of work. Call it inspiration, but it holds back a student's own mannerism and style. Which is why as a teacher Mahbub felt that the most important role of one in a position like hers was to bring out from within her students the talent that they already possessed. 'My success would be to help students find what is already inside of them.'

On the other hand photographer Kohi Marri states, 'I think if you're untrained you might actually save time because you learn exactly what you want to learn; at the same time I think I learnt things that I might have not thought I needed to know or I might not have considered learning otherwise.' He goes on to call his education a 'fuller and broader experience' and identifies that all those things he didn't think he needed to know, are coming in handy now that he is practicing in the field. At the same time he describes the advantage of an untrained individual as one who is uninhibited, willing to take more risks and make the most of every opportunity, whereas a trained photographer in his view may be too restricted by what he or she has learnt. Furthermore Marri states that attitude is very important in

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129 Mehbub, interviewed 25th Oct 2011
130 Marri, interviewed 30th Jan 2012
131 Marri, interviewed 30th Jan 2012
sustaining any career, and at times not being trained keeps peoples feet on the ground, 'a lot of formally trained photographers may be slightly cynical because they feel like they already know. While untrained photographers will put in that extra effort to get it right, because every shot it an opportunity and every job is an opportunity.' Conclusively, Arif Mehmood provides his opinion in a nutshell, 'There isn't a set equation that a good education will produce a good photographer, but I think it is important.'

Therefore, it cannot be said that one has a great advantage over the other and vice versa, but that to be aware of how either being trained or untrained may negatively affect someone is the key to surviving the negative associations attached with choosing which path to take. Alongside this I would say that to neglect technical skills altogether would perhaps not take one far.

\[132\] Marri, interviewed 30th Jan 2012

\[133\] Mehmood, interviewed 30th May 2012
CONCLUSION

One may say that an individual's talent will certainly assist one in making a career, and perhaps even take them places. But as Lali Khalid shared her experience of talented students at the National College of Arts who studied photography with her, but did not pursue their careers for long; the element of passion, drive, and commitment must be rooted within a photographer in order for him or her to sustain a career. And while talent helps, it is not the only way. A hard working individual who does not have talent riding on his or her backs may go further in life than the one who is talented but not as driven. So we may say that while talent may be point A of one's career, some individuals, may jump the gun with their hard work and reach point B without the inborn ability. Amean Jan also expressed that he felt he was not talented and that was the driving force that make him work harder and get to where he is today. As mentioned earlier, since photography is a service based industry, ones character also plays a significant role in his or her success in the field. We may give importance to a certain amount of training and education, be it formal or self-taught; in order to stress that to be in the industry one must be up to date with the quick-changing medium and the needs of clients and customers alike. While being aware of the fact that photographers in the past have rode on talent to sustain their careers, it is needless to say that times have changed. Not only this but alongside talent these successful individuals had the passion, drive and commitment to nurture their talent and sustain their careers in the field. Hence I may conclude that while talent is a significant factor in assisting one in gaining recognition, various other characteristics strongly contribute to the success of an individual, not to mention help one in sustaining his or her career. At the same time it is important to note that training will only be advantageous to someone in sustaining their career if they use it to benefit themselves, but if a trained individual does not have the drive and
determination to succeed then he or she does not have an edge over the one with passion yet no training. In an ideal situation a person with a perfect balance of talent, zeal, commitment and training would be most successful in the industry; but while there is still plenty of room for the one without either talent or training, there is perhaps no room for one who does not have the desire and commitment to outperform themselves and others, and remain disciplined towards a successful and sustainable career.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Q.1. Have you ever hired a photographer for any particular reason?

Yes   /   No

Only proceed with the following questions if your answer to Q.1 was yes.

Q.2 Please circle one of the following purposes that you have hired a photographer:

a. Events   b. Professional reasons   c. Personal reasons   d. Other

Q.3 What is your criteria for hiring a photographer?

a. Portfolio/ Quality of work

b. Well known photographer/ Recognition

c. Varies from genre to genre

Q.4 In your experience with photographers, how would you characterise a job that was successfully executed?

a. Quality of work   b. Professionalism   c. On time delivery

Q.5 What would be the basis for re-hiring or recommending a photographer in future?

a. Quality of work   b. Easy to work with   c. Personal relationship   d. Other
Appendix 2: Transcribed Interviews

Interview 1: Farah Mahbub, Photography professor, Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.
Interviewed 25/10/2011. [Interview conducted in person, recorded and transcribed.]

Q. In your view, what is talent?

A. I think to have someone be successful in something you need to have some inclination, or some, _thora sa rujhan aap key andar hona chahiya_\(^{134}\), meaning your weight should be slightly leaning towards that particular field for example um I can think of so many students that needed very little instruction and so many students that needed instructions that.. for the knowledge to sink in took a little longer in time, so the only thing I can remember in my experience is that there were some students that just had the eye, you know they picked up things they quickly understood what they liked what they didn't like. I think if students could learn to be self critical rather than self obsessed _tou un ki talent mein izaafa ho sakta hai_\(^{135}\). In terms of talent say there were some students who had exposure to the world that I felt were more in tune with the visual aspect of photography, but it's not something that couldn't be taught, of course it could be taught, the only time I felt that some people were not cut out for it was when the technicality of executing something was such a burden on them that it felt like it was not his or her cup of tea. There are some kids who are visually so in tune, because environment has eventually helped them somewhere, _kahan baray huay, kahan gaye_\(^{136}\), I don't know where they're coming from, but somehow they did have information or naturally did things which I had not taught them, and I cannot take credit for that, but it was there and it made them stand apart from the rest of the students. So what happens is that some people need to be taught more and some less, and end of the day if someone is interested in something, _koi kuch bhi seekh sakta hai_\(^{137}\). But _farq tab ata hai jab aap dekhtay hain kis pe time ziyada guzarna parta hai_\(^{138}\) and the only reason you gave someone less time was not because he wasn't deserving of it but because he already knew it, and just showed it so beautifully in his work that you say okay. Just as at home, with siblings and all

\(^{134}\) There should be some inclination within you

\(^{135}\) there would be an increase in their talent (potential)

\(^{136}\) where they grew up, where they'd been

\(^{137}\) anyone can learn anything

\(^{138}\) the difference is when you see who you need to give more time to
some children need more attention than others. So yes I would say to some extent there was some natural talent, some people are just good at making something and some are not. *Tou kuch cheezain hain jo*\(^{139}\) you were born with them, now where they developed, in your home environment, your upbringing, where you lived, where you were brought up... so there are several elements that could contribute to that natural talent but it had existed I've seen it *aur sirf un bachon kay saath yeh hota hai kay un ko itni mehnat nahi karni hoti hai jitni un ko karni hoti hai jo sirf shok rakhtay hain magar koi background nahi rakhtay.*\(^{140}\)

**Q. What is your view on success and how far do you think you in your career have been successful in your career?**

A. I think success is when people understand you or when they appreciate you or listen to you... *Izzat tou Allah detay hain, hum na kissi se izzat lay saktay na cheeni ja sakti hai, na ghol ke pilayee ja sakti hai, yeh woh cheez hai*\(^{141}\) which I give complete credit to divine intervention, so respect tou is given and taken by Allah. *Jahan tak raha sawal kay aap ko ata hai ya nahi ata hai, woh bohat simple hai, agar mein ne jo seekha woh mein sikha sakti houn*\(^{142}\) it's because someone can understand it, and if someone cannot understand it then I'm a failure and the fact that I feel that there are students out there who have brought me great honour and respect and I have great warmth for them because my job as a teacher was to help them find the wonder in them, I didn't put it there it was always there I just directed them to the wonderful human or talent that resided within them. So my success would be to help students find what is already inside of them and if I have managed to do that by Allah's grace then...

**Q. What about success in your career as a photographer?**

A. When I began photography I used to harp on something that was made fun of, *kay fine art photography kya cheeze hai*\(^{143}\), photography cannot be an art. and for years and years and years this debate went on where I saw fashion photographers, photojournalism being very common but for some freaky reason fine art photography took forever to be accepted in the society of

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\(^{139}\) Therefore, there are some things that
\(^{140}\) And the only thing that happens with these kids is that they don't need to work as hard as those kids who have the desire but no background.
\(^{141}\) Respect is given by God, we can neither take respect nor snatch it, nor can it be stirred and drunk. This is that thing that..
\(^{142}\) Where the question about whether I know something or not, that's really simple, if what I've learnt I can teach..
\(^{143}\) What is fine art photography
Pakistan, the reason I'm happy now is that my last show was the third or fourth solo where it was the first time I had where instead of explaining what I had done I was talking to people about the concept rather than having them understand that photography is an art. I mean I didn't have people argue how much Photoshop, not Photoshop, and Photoshop is not the reason someone is doing good work, you need to have some idea some thought, it's just a tool, just like the camera is a tool. So because it's a tool, how I use it is the outcome. So fine art photography *jab kissi level par aa kar accept hona shuru hui tou*\(^{144}\) it was nice to see it happen in my lifetime, because there was a time I used to wonder that *pata nahi mein dekh sakun gi ya nahin*\(^{145}\), because to have someone accept photography as an art was great, I've done it, it's done and there were lots of people who contributed to it, I was just one of those blocks that make the whole wall. a tiny contribution, but I'm glad I could contribute on some level, and I'm glad I had millions of other people in Pakistan doing it, but it's nice to say we're there now.

**Q. What are some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career?**

A. the only thing I can think of is that photography was not recognised, you could not always find the materials, the chemicals, the paper, so the importing was important, asking for favours, collecting money, weight duty. so there were disadvantage to being in a third world country but at the same time because I was in a third world, I had to learn to make my own stuff, so the adv was that I knew my subject better than anyone studying in a school or university because they had these things provided to them with formulas etc. so I loved the fact that I had to do more being here, and all of that.. you know how you get carved with time and it chisels you and makes you prettier with time, so I think it just carves me that way, so no regrets.

**Q. What kind of hurdles do you think photographers today may face in sustaining a career?**

A. Photographers today need to learn to be more patient. I feel that people tend to now use the camera as a machine gun, they happen or accidentally come to a photograph rather than think and shoot. I rather that you be a sniper shooter than Rambo. I'd rather have precision. do you understand? I think that's what's wrong with the generation today. *(Q. The fact that we have digital cameras?)*. There's nothing wrong with using digital. *aap ne jo ghalt khencha hai us ko*
sahi karain but khichain khichain khichain kya hota hai.\textsuperscript{146} You should not have to arrive at a good photograph by chance, but by precision. But khair\textsuperscript{147} there are styles. If you're a wedding photographer I can understand you shooting like that. But if you're a landscape photographer there are just some rules which teach you respect control command. If ethics were involved then for example a photojournalist shouldn't ever touch up his pictures, whereas the fine artist can go to any length (with touch ups). Tou jo bhi genre aap ne choose kiya hai un kay rules hain, un ke rules ko samjho, khoob samjho aur phir un ko apnao\textsuperscript{148}. Because that is essential. Photography mein jo bhi genre hai un sab kay rules hain\textsuperscript{149} there's no such genre that doesn't have its boundaries set and told. You just have to first read up on it and then follow rule regarding essay, right and wrong. And there are some rules just like rules of composition which you can break. but there are some rules in photography that you cannot break. Kyun ke waisay bhi hamari sari naslain janwaroon ki taraf ja rahi hain tou yeh toh wohi complete circle ho jaye ga ke ke bas ban gaya janwar.\textsuperscript{150}

Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone during your career in photography?

A. I think when you are fond of something the talent grows, when you are obsessed with something the talent grows, when you don't give up on something the talent grows and more than anything else when you make mistakes you learn to get up.. so talent helps you because woh aap key andar Allah ne gift chupaya hua hai\textsuperscript{151}, if a person discovers they have this gift, that's half the battle. Allah's put within all of us a means of earning rizq\textsuperscript{152}, some of us excel in these little things that are so particular to us and if you can discover it and work on it then there's no stopping you. I mean some people, like young people, they get bored, but you shouldn't get bored, you should be grateful that this talent is inside of you. not all of us are meant to do something, some of us are meant to do things, so if you discover what your talent is, you work on

\textsuperscript{146} Whatever mistakes you make, fix them. But what is this 'click click click click'

\textsuperscript{147} Anyway

\textsuperscript{148} So whatever genre you've chosen, it has its rules. Understand those rules, really understand them, and then apply them.

\textsuperscript{149} Whatever genre there may be in photography, they all have rules.

\textsuperscript{150} Because anyway all our future generations have gone to the dogs, this will just complete the circle of becoming the animal.

\textsuperscript{151} God has placed that gift within you.

\textsuperscript{152} Sustenance
it, you help it grow, nurture it and it becomes such a part of you that there comes a point where it
seconds to your nature.

**Q. Have you received any professional training?**

A. I've had workshops that I've attended, had the pleasure of meeting some really famous people,
and I've had the pleasure of travelling like truck loads, I mean travelling is such a major
contribution. *Us mein aap theek thak sabuk seekh jatay hain*\(^{153}\). But to give any one individual
credit for my training, no. the one person one thing the one entity that I would give any credit to
are my own mistakes, I made lots of them. and they were my best teacher. *Aisi ghaltiyan ki hain
aisi ghaltiyan ki hain keh nani yaad aa gayee aur un sab ghaltiyon ne aisa sabak sikhaya hai keh
allah ne saari zindagi yaad rahay.*\(^{154}\)

**Q. What do you think gave you an edge over trained photographers?**

A. I became more technically sound. something least expected of women in the country. I was
insecure, very insecure. I wanted to avoid the embarrassment so I would make sure I know
everything I need to avoid that situation, eventually it made me fearless. And remember, not
everyone can teach. *Kabhi kabhi jab teach kar rahay hotay hain na*\(^{155}\) one of the strangest things
that happens is that I might know something but *aap ko samjhanay kay liay mujhe phir ja kar
kitaabain parhni parhain* gi\(^{156}\).So when I became a teacher the funny thing is that I had to re-read
everything that I have already read but with time so that I could impart it and put it forward. so
there is a teaching methodology that had to be created with what I was learning or studying. so
you might understand it, it might sink in but you are not going to actually learn it unless you
learn how to have people understand it. *Parhanay kay kiay aap ko khud bohat parhna parta
hai.*\(^{157}\)

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\(^{153}\) In that you will really learn the lesson

\(^{154}\) (I've) made such mistakes, such mistakes that were unforgettable, and those mistakes taught me such lessons,
such lessons that I remembered them for life.

\(^{155}\) Sometimes when teaching,

\(^{156}\) To make you understand I have to go to the books and read them again

\(^{157}\) To teach you have to learn yourself also
Q. And what do you feel gave trained photographers an edge over you?

A. As we discussed earlier* disadvantage length of time mein hai\textsuperscript{158}. I guess end of the day you'll end up where Allah has meant for you to end up but for example I have no regrets. I don't think oh gosh I wish I'd had a teacher, yes I did wish for one but it's okay I didn't have it because it didn't mean I couldn't make it, I'm fine I have no regrets.

Q. How important do you think it is to be trained in photography today?

A. Well the advantage of being trained is that it makes the journey shorter, because with the teacher, who is going to watch you fall and save you from falling, is the advantage always, you would learn from someone experience a lot quicker and avoid disasters which you cannot avoid when teaching yourself so I would never recommend someone to do it now considering you do have the facility. my choice was never to teach myself, it was always to travel and to go get educated about it, but because financially I was not able to and in those days it was not the culture for anyone to go for a degree in photography, aur woh bhi aurat\textsuperscript{159}, it was unheard of. so in this day and age if you have the opportunity to, then yes go and study it. but if you don't have all that, then considering the age we live in, communication, internet and everything at your fingertips, I think the only one thing someone can't give you through the internet is the desire. you have got to have the desire, and if you have the desire there's no stopping you can learn anything you want. anything. I mean institutions are a great asset to society, if someone couldn't afford it, couldn't make it, then you still have options. there's no 'I couldn't'. That's giving up. I'm not for giving up.

*discussion prior to the interview: "before the internet, to be self taught took longer, there were no short cuts. It still takes longer than when you learn from a teacher who saves you from the pit holes" "...in training, disadvantage is often that the student begins to mimic the teacher. that's why I rarely show you my work. you must let students develop a style of their own."
158 Disadvantage lies in the length of time
159 That even a woman.
Interview 2: Kohi Marri, Freelance photographer

Interviewed 30/01/2012. [Interview conducted in person, recorded and transcribed.]

Q. Have you received any training in photography?

A. Yes I trained in photography along with my architecture. It was a minor subject. minor as in it took two years out of my four years in architecture. I studied philosophy of colour and composition, visualizing three dimensions in two dimensions, photographic theory, how to read images, breaking down shapes tones and textures. It was basically all theoretical. But I had to produce work along with it. So it was not technical training. The only technical training I got was how to develop film and use different filters in the darkroom to produce certain results and that was it.

Q. In your view, how would you define a 'talented' photographer?

A. Perhaps someone who makes images, that you can identify as their own images and at the same time be honest to that person, no matter what the subject or the brief or job is for, even if it's a commercial picture for a billboard or anything, there is a hint of that persons personality or style or eye or way of looking at something. For example let's look at musicians. Five musicians write love songs, and you can identify each ones style. The same thing with photographers you should be able to recognise who is doing what. That way they have a unique voice, a reason to be doing what they're doing. If they just do what they're told and they produce unidentifiable images, that could be produced by xyz, no matter how good technically, they're meaningless.

Q. Considering the digital age, availability of DSLRs, access to social networking sites that have created a platform for photographers to display their talents, how far do you think this has effected careers in the field and will continue to do so?

A. It's more accessible, more people will get into it, more are more likely to get into it. And when that happens it becomes a proper industry where people will earn let's say the same amount of money as bankers etc. It will be a viable career then, rather than oh someone who is doing this on the side. However, Facebook should not be a person's first stop. First stop is actually getting work, and when you're able to get work and people start calling you, then you can go okay maybe I should put stuff up now so that more people will know that I'm doing this. First like say
if you're trying to find a talent agent across the globe to exhibit your work, you cannot just send your portfolio and expect them to go fantastic and exhibit it, you need to get to a certain level before they acknowledge you and think you are a viable commodity. Because they think in terms of commodity. And hopefully most photographers don't think in terms of that, they think in terms of ideas and emotions, thoughts etc.

Q. What do you define as success in photography? And what does success mean to you? And how far do you feel you have been successful?

A. Well I'm just beginning. Success, it's hard to say, because a lot of great photographers don't win any awards, don't win many Acalays. There are some fantastic photographers from the 40's and 50's who are hardly ever known or noticed. But they do work that lasts, they do work that future generations can learn from and that they find a thinking process, and a creative process. That is success. Let's say 20 years from now no one knows who I am and what I've done, then I've not been successful. There are lots of rich photographers who pollute imagery as you can say, and often that considered a part of their success. Now when you look at photo books and the work of photographers etc, the work excites you right? And whether or not anyone realised if their work was fantastic at the time, they still made a difference. And I think that one person getting that excitement from your work IS important, it is a mark of success. And that will come from lots of hard work. It has to start with talent, but then you put it to use. And for me, I did it by not realizing how bad I was when I started, thinking that I was actually good and I could do anything, made me push it.

Q. What are some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career? And what are some that you feel photographers may face today?

A. Organization is the key. If you are a working photographer you need the infrastructure to work with. For that you can't be working alone. And that doesn't mean someone to carry your bags and lights around it means you have a proper set up where you have someone to edit the images with you and for you at the same time, you have someone managing your phone calls and your clients and trying to get you more work at the same time. And that person needs to be hired and employed by you, could be anyone, someone who is an MBA, someone who studied art and wants to learn the process and is willing to give up some parts of their life to help you. And that
you need to do, say as soon as you start getting work. Which I should've known earlier.

**Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone in your career? And do you feel a photographer requires more than just talent in sustaining his or her career?**

A. I don't think I can quantify that. But as far as what is required I think you need to be rigorous, more thorough in your work, be the first to arrive, be the last to leave, make sure you've covered all your angles, make sure you have multiple shots in case someone walks into the shot or some are out of focus, so you have various focusing points. These things are not talent based, they're just hard work. You need to also broaden your career. With me I do gallery work, book based work, photojournalism and wedding work, and products, street photography, still life. You just expand and keep expanding and just try and put it out there and say this is what I've done. I mean I still haven't gone to all the ad agencies and said look I do all of this and please give me some work. I need to do that, I have not yet done that. Maybe because it's usually something like 'take a picture of this bucket of dalda'. But that's not what I wake up in the morning to do.

**Q. How important do you think training in photography is?**

A. Very important. And even if you're self taught you need to go to certain workshops and keep expanding your skills because technology is improving and expanding very fast and if you don't keep up with technology you will be left behind. Unless it's your style to work in old photography.

**Q. What do you think gives a trained photographer like yourself an edge over the one who is not trained and vice versa?**

A. Well I mean YouTube has everything you can ask for. But I think if you're self taught you might actually save time because you learn exactly what you want to learn, at the same time I think I learnt things that I might have not thought I needed to know or I might not have considered learning otherwise. So it was a much fuller and broader learning experience. And even if I didn't use it at the time I'm utilizing it right now.

Having said that, I think an untrained photographer is more willing to take risks, or doesn't even know what a risk is and just does it. A trained photographer will actually assess things a bit
more, be a bit inhibited, in certain ways. Like there are some people who come to me for shoots and fashion shoots etc and I think, that's a stupid concept, I'd much rather avoid it. And someone else might jump right into it and do a fantastic job with it. And I wonder why didn't I think of that. In fact that also brings up a very important point for what you need to sustain a career in this field, and that is attitude. Attitude is very important. You should always try and remain positive and enthusiastic with your work no matter how little how dull how boring it is or how tedious it could be. I mean if you're standing on the street for say twelve hours to get that one shot, if your hearts not into it and your energy is why the hell am I doing this, you're not going to get it. If you're thinking yes must do something fantastic then you will be trying to make every picture the best picture you've ever taken. And this can be achieved whether you are trained or untrained.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add:

A. Well about the last thing, about attitude. I think it does effect trained photographers and say untrained ones, in that a lot of trained photographers may be slightly cynical because they feel like they already know. While untrained photographers will put in that extra effort to get it right, because every shot it an opportunity and every job is an opportunity.

A lot of people who don't work as potential photographers, are very talented. They do fantastic photography, and they choose not to be professional photographers because maybe they're earning better in their jobs, they're afraid to leave their jobs, etc. And also they love photography. As soon as you turn it into work, it becomes work. You have to go to the office in the morning, you have to do your thing, by the end of the day you have to produce certain results, which those guys don't have to worry about, they don't have to think 'that's a good picture but it doesn't do what I need it to do'. And people like this who do get into it, because they think it's fun, they leave early also. Sustaining the career is about having the patience to understand how you can serve others with your photography.
Interview 3: Amean Jan, Founder and owner of photo agency 18% Grey.

Interviewed 03/02/2012. [Interview conducted in person, recorded and transcribed.]

Q. Have you received any training in photography?

A. Yes I did my undergrad in Photography. But let me just come back to your topic basically, then I'll come back to my education. If a contractor built a house and an architect also builds a house. The architects complain that contractors are not architects, but contractors sometimes build better homes than architects would because they're cheaper, and architects are more expensive. Some writers never go to school, to learn how to write, they write beautifully, and some go learn the rules of writing and then they write even better. My point being that some people have the talent, and others have to go learn. I feel I do not have the talent, so I had to go and learn. I just did a talk with the second years yesterday, and they asked me something similar, that do you feel in today's day and age where technology has improved so much, there are cheap cameras, everybody is taking good pictures, you still need to go to school? And if you ask me, yes you do. Because again in a nutshell a jahil (illiterate) will always be a jahil. And education is not necessary to be, photography is not just necessary to be able to take good pictures. It teaches you an all round situation of how to see the world and what people have done in the past, how the medium is changing, you need to be able to interrogate the medium, to be able to question other photographers, to be able to have a better understanding of the work that we see; and that only comes through education, yes again leaving super talented people on the side. Everybody is not a born Picasso. Let's face it; we all like to think that we are, but we're not.

Q. You mentioned the word talent many times, so in your view, how would you define a 'talented' photographer?

A. You see in photography, or in most of the mediums, art based mediums, everything that we like or we don't like is very subjective. There's no right, there's no wrong, and if you ask my opinion about it, I feel that somebody needs to have the understanding of what they're doing; and they're not just doing it for the heck of it, so it's not necessarily what they produce; for me, the passion is very important. So because of that passion, people who may or may not have gone through school for it, but they may have still gone through websites, downloaded books, or YouTube videos or whatever, they would have still learnt. So not necessarily going to school
Qualifies you as an educated photographer, but you can learn on your own too. It's like almost like home schooling.

Q. Considering the digital age, availability of DSLRs, access to social networking sites that have created a platform for photographers to display their talents. How far do you think this has effected careers in the field and will continue to do so?

A. Okay ill talk about what's happening right now, but what imp more interested in is what will happen in the next five to ten years. Because yes I agree the population of photographers has drastically increased. Ten years ago there were a handful of photographers, today there are several, you can actually put together a directory in Pakistan. Is it a good thing? I think so yes, for starters because, our market was so small initially that it was very limited, with ideas and creativity and everybody; four people had four different styles and that was it. Now whether I like it or not that's a different story, but at least now there's a lot more options, a lot more competition, and there's a lot more exposure. NOW what needs to be done, like I said I'm more interested in the next five to ten years, is that the non serious photographers will fade out. They will have to. Because everybody yes is a photographer and everybody is posting pictures on Facebook, but they're not necessarily making their living out of posting the pictures on Facebook; you can't right, so there has to be some commercial work coming in from somewhere, and that work; we don't have THAT much work for the number of photographers we have. So it's, you know, there's too much supply and there's less demand; so only the good ones will survive; or the passionate ones.

Q. What do you define as success in photography? And what does success mean to you?

A. It really depends on each individual photographer, what their goal is. Now let's say for example if I wanted to be the biggest shadi photographer in the country, I could be. If that's successful for me then yes because that's what I want to be, but from someone else's point of view like let's say someone who does documentary work, they'd say nah that's too commercial. So now let's say if I want to be a documentary photographer in Pakistan, a very successful one, I will not make any money, but will I be successful? Yes if I have good stories, yes. So there's a problem with the question. What is success? Is it money?
Q. That's the question, what does success mean to you? It could be anything.

A. Okay for me, it is to be able to, again I'm talking just on my behalf, it is to be able to sustain as a photographer and be able to do enough work for my bread and butter. Because that itself when I started off working, was a challenge. Now it's easier. But thirteen years ago when I started off it was just getting and making enough to pay for your bills. It was a big deal now it's not; it's become easier.

Q. And what would you say has made it easier for you?

A. The media boom which happened during the Musharraf years, opening up a lot of channels, that basically opened up a lot of exposure for the local people. That also opened up a lot of opportunities for a lot of magazines. Thirteen years ago there were a handful of magazines. Today if you go in a book store, I mean they may be CRAP, I'm not questioning quality, but the quantity is MASSIVE; Meaning there's a lot more content required. So it's the media boom requiring so many photographers today; to answer your question.

Q. What are some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career? And what are some that you feel photographers may face today?

A. What I faced was, well again my time was tricky, it wasn't that long ago but because there were not that many professional photographers it's been a struggle to educate clients to understand that photography is a professional business and it's not a random hobby where you pick up a camera and take some fun pictures. It's beyond, a lot more serious than that. So to be able to convince a clientele is easier now though it was very difficult a few years ago.

What people will face today is the problem of competition. Because everybody has a DSLR and everybody thinks they are doing great work. So to stand out of that whole lot it's very important for you to have an individual style with quality work to sustain it. Because everybody will not sustain.
Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone in your career? And do you feel a photographer requires more than just talent in sustaining his or her career?

A. Zero for me. It's the passion. I'm not a very serious believer in talent. Talent for me is for the selected few; it's very very rare. It's the passion that sort of drives you. I think all the successful photographers in this country right now; that I feel are successful. Like Arif Mehmood, Tapu Javeri etc, they haven't had the kind of training that I would expect them to have, but it's the passion that has driven and they have been able to produce the kind of work that they are producing today. It's about the passion more than anything else.

Q. What do you think gives a trained photographer like yourself an edge over the one who is not trained and vice versa?

A. A better understanding of the medium. Because for an outsider a lot of art related mediums are talent based. And I don't think so. Even if you want to learn drawing, yes you can learn drawing. There are a lot of technicalities that you need to understand; to be able to paint well there are a lot of technicalities. So a person who thinks is talented and learnt on his own will not be able to decipher the technical sides. So photography is also immensely technical. Which you have to have an understanding about to be able to pursue.

Is there anything else you would like to add:

Well I would say that education generally like not just specific in photography, is becoming more and more important because people don't take you seriously otherwise. And it's almost like, the example of a contractor and an architect. People don't take contractors that seriously because they don't have the degree that the architect has. A degree! So let's say for example god forbid you need to go through a surgery, would you go to a qualified surgeon or someone who claims to be very talented at surgery? Right. So education is almost like a license to be able to do something; it's come to that because now it's not as difficult as it used to be before. So now again don't get me wrong, I'm still not saying that you have to have a degree. Education doesn't necessarily mean going to college and getting a degree at the end of the day. It means having a better understanding of what you're doing. Also better understanding of what your medium can do.
For example, I was an interior design major for a very short time, and a couple of things have stayed in my mind. For example, what music does to you in restaurants, a non educated interior designer will never know this. You go to a fine dining restaurant; it's classical music playing at a slow pace, why? because the music makes you eat slowly and you drink more wine. Fast food restaurants; music is always up beat; you eat faster leave early, more people come in. It's done very subconsciously. So a talented interior designer who does beautiful design, will not have an understanding of the effect of these things. Same thing happens in photography; we understand how people look at things, and how people see things. And to get a better understanding of what we see and what we do, we have to learn. The most important thing in photography is where everybody goes wrong is people think you have to learn how to take a photograph. That comes later, you should be able to learn how to look. Like a detective. I should be able to tell from the way you are sitting what's going on in your mind. These things can only come to you through training, you can't just be born with it. That's what I think.
Interview 4: Kashif Rashid, Founder and owner of K-bridal studio.

Interviewed 29/02/2012. [Interview conducted in person, recorded and transcribed.]

Q. Have you received any training in photography?

A. As far as formal training goes and stuff, I don't think so; I mean I don't have like a bachelor in photography or anything. I always had a knack for photography, even in my college days I had a camera in my hand and I used to just take pictures of whatever I could think of. Those were the days of film so obviously developing rolls was a bit expensive, and in student life you don't have a lot of money, so I used to look for class projects, IBA projects; in house publications that required photography, so I used to do a lot of that, I used to do a lot of marketing projects for a lot of people and at that point in time my price was that you will get the roll developed and buy the roll for me. So it was only my passion at the end of the day. I have done a few courses as such Indus Valley mein I took a six week summer course, this was after my BBA. After IBA, I had started working (in the business field) so obviously photography was not in my mind then - so this course was just to get back into photography, because after 3-4 years in the corporate world I thought maybe I should get back into it. So I took it just as a refresher. Besides that I've done a workshop in London with a fashion photographer and another one with Tapu, that was just last year. But these were after I had partially started doing photography professionally.

Q. How would you define a 'talented' photographer?

A. I put a lot of importance in the technical. So one has to be technically sound. And then he needs to do something out of the ordinary; needs to know the rules and then eventually break them because if you just know all the rules and you keep on doing things by the book then you will not get far. So talent needs to show me something which I haven't seen before.

Q. Considering the digital age, availability of DSLRs, access to social networking sites that have created a platform for photographers to display their talents, how far do you think this has effected careers in the field and will continue to do so?

A. I personally have a very different opinion on this. I think that as far as not just photography but any art form, has always been followed based on talent. I mean people always follow talent. It's not about the amount of education you have in the field, obviously that helps. If you go to
college for four years studying something you'd be better than someone who has just started out. But at the end of the day if you spend that same four years trying to learn that art then you will be better than the person that has been educated in that. At the end of the day, obviously social media, the Facebooks and twitters of the world have helped in terms of one getting business or reaching customers. But talent ko hamesha log follow kartay thay, even before the days of twitter and Facebook. I mean the older photographers that you see, they're not educated in photography; they're doing it because they've learnt that art and they're very good at it now and that happened before the days of twitter. Even other art forms you see painters, there are a lot of artists who were doing things without education at that time, even musicians for that matter, they haven't studied music they're doing it because they've learnt it, they had a passion for it and they're good now. Although social media helps, if you have the talent and you have the drive for it, you will still get work and you will still be successful. Even before DSLR's I mean, agreed things have become easier and eventually they will get easier, but even when there were the film days, if you had that talent and you had that drive, you would have learnt that art. I mean agar aap education lay letay ho tou it's not like divine intervention hoti hai, it's just that you're learning. There are other ways to learn it, books.. etc. I mean you have these platforms, but you still need to have talent. And if you have talent you will still get work otherwise as well. So I mean yes your photographs are being displayed more, more people are viewing them, but at the same time the talented photographers, their work is being viewed even more. So they're also benefitting from the social media boom. So you will see at the end people will follow talent. You can have a page you can start taking pictures, I don't know how many people will actually get commissioned work, I see so many people who are starting out and just working to build a portfolio, work some more. Very recently I was reading this post by a well known photographer Fayyaz Ahmed and he said that there are people now who are paying to take fashion photographs just to get in and take pictures. So there are people even paying to work. So irrespective of what is out there, you still need to have talent.

Q. What do you define as success in photography? And what does success mean to you? And how far do you feel you have been successful?

A. I think for the amount of time I have been in photography, I know there is obviously a long road to go; there is fashion and commercial work that I need to do more of, get more
commissioned work etc, it should come you know. In my opinion, success if I have to put it down as something concrete then I would say that it would be that you would have a lot of overseas experience. You would have done commissioned work in around five to six different countries and I feel that maybe if you have a few books published. That maybe if you have your name somewhere in a list of top hundred photographers. So while the financial helps, at the end of the day if I was to just focus on my financial benefits then I would just do bridal photography, I wouldn't take up any of the personal and fashion work which doesn't have as much return, but as an artist I think you need to things other than what just brings you money. At the end of the day photography is not just my profession it's also my hobby and you don't just earn from your hobby so I need to do more things that I enjoy also. Obviously I'm not saying money has no value, it does help you grow and helps you understand how valuable people find what you are working for, but at the end of the day it's also about recognition; maybe having a few exhibitions globally. Any photographer that you see outside kay, any good one has probably worked in ten different countries, so that's where you need to go. And I haven't done or spent a lot of time in photography; just 3-4 years. I feel that if I keep going at this pace though I should get somewhere.

Q. What are some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career? And what are some that you feel photographers may face today?

A. I think photographers today are probably going to face the same hurdles I faced earlier on, I think things have become a bit tougher in terms of the competition, so there are no barriers for entry. Initially one of the main hurdles I faced was to get the word across. I knew that whatever I was doing was different, whatever I was selling in terms of bridal photography was good, it was something that people hadn't seen before, but I still needed people to see. So I think getting the word out was the most difficult part, despite Facebook and all. Because on Facebook people come they comment, they like your photographs etc, they'll contact you and ask you to take their photographs but the moment you ask them for money, you don't hear from them again. So it's tough, to find people who actually consider you a photographer, who would end up paying you, it's not easy. That is one of the biggest hurdles. And most of the people who are not really educated in photography or don't have a diploma or four year degree, they will probably be doing something else while doing photography, so you're really I mean, you want to do it but you're not
really sure if you're good enough to be able to sustain yourself or to be able to provide for your family or put food on the table or have a career. It's a bit iffy. That's where you need to be a bit confident about what you're doing and you need to be realistic as well. And I think love also plays it's part for sure. At the end of the day you just need to hang in there, because the first couple of years you don't know if you're going to get the sort of work that you need to get to sustain a certain lifestyle that you want.

**Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone in your career? And do you feel a photographer requires more than just talent in sustaining his or her career?**

A. Absolutely, hard work needs to be there. I think one needs to have talent and be very hardworking. I mean I work my ass off in terms of late nights, especially in bridal photography, I mean you realise it's been three months that you haven't taken a day off. You may have talent and people will find you but if you want to do commercial work and you want to be a professional then you need to be hard working and you need to be ethical, all those things are very important and probably even more important than talent. There are a lot of times where I would say it's not just the artistic content that people come to us for, they will also get their deliveries on time, they will not have to run after us. Professionalism is very very important.

**Q. You mentioned before we started off that you had an MBA? How has that benefitted you in this career?**

A. I feel that not just the MBA degree but also the fact that I've worked in a corporate environment helped me develop the business, I give some sort of decision making power to people who work for me. I think if you want to turn your work into an organization eventually I think it helps, like let's say if I wasn't an MBA, my horizons would not have been as broad, I would not have that business minded thinking. I mean I see so many photographers who are a one person show, and say tomorrow they decide that they don't want to work or they just sit back and take a global tour or something, they will not be earning anything then. But we want to develop this into an organization where other photographers will come in and they will also work and the company or the organization will be the one that clients will be coming to. So that vision comes with an education in business. It expands your vision. But say I mean if I had started with
photography at the age of 17, I'd probably be further than where I am right now, so I'm late. But that means that I have less time and I need to work harder. I finished my MBA in 1999.

Q. How important do you think training in photography is?

A. It's important. The technical's of course. You need to know the rules before you start breaking them. I don't think the courses I did other than the one with Tapu, even helped me. But a lot of my training came from books, YouTube videos, seeing other people working online. I still read a lot, I've subscribed to magazines that come monthly. At any point in time I will always have one photography book that I am reading, sometimes it's about portrait photography, sometimes about getting expressions out of people, sometimes it's about the business end of things. So the training I had was absolutely not enough, so I need to be doing my own thing. Experimentation is very important, trial and error, you come back to the computer and realise maybe I could do it better this way. But at the end of the day a four year degree usually also has other things to do with it, it's usually like 30% of your courses are on pure photography and the rest are on various other things, so in those four years you are spending 30% of your time on photography, the rest of it on other things which may eventually be what you don't want to do in life. So say, this is only my opinion, that if you are really really motivated and spend four years of your life just trying to learn photography then you will be better than the person getting a major in photography. Having said that not everyone is that motivated or confident to do that but if you are then you can go through that path and get there faster.

Q. What do you think gives a trained photographer like yourself an edge over the one who is not trained and vice versa?

A. They have an edge. Because they are more technically sound. One more thing that I feel that trained photographers are better is that they know the history, in terms of who the top photographers were, they followed them etc. People like me have not really gone through that so at the end of the day while I am thinking in terms of how I can get the focus right or the entire image etc a trained photographer will think of oh you know I saw this type of work in xyz's portfolio so you know they'll be seeing works of people during their formal training, and that part of photography is very important. You need to know where photography has come from.
Is there anything else you would like to add:

I think that the topic of social media and whether it has made it easier etc, I don't agree with it. I feel that although it has helped it is helping everyone. Even after all of it, only the talented ones will make it. And even if this wasn't there, at the end of the day it has helped to get the work across. People who have benefitted from social media are more successful. I'm just saying at the end of the day you have to be good. It doesn't matter how many Facebook and twitter pages etc you have, if you're good you'll make it.
Interview 5: Adeela Badshah, Freelance photographer

Interviewed 05/03/2012. [Interview conducted in person, recorded and transcribed.]

Q. Have you received any training in photography?

A. Yes, a minor in photography at IVS.

Q. In your view, how would you define a 'talented' photographer?

A. Someone who can pick out a particular moment or something that you haven't seen before because at the end of the day everybody has a little bit of creativity in them just the same way that everyone has a bit of practical in them and all creative people aren't mad. When you go to a particular place or see a particular area, the ability to see a place like not everybody has seen before, I guess makes you a talented photographer, or individual or artist.

Q. Considering the digital age, availability of DSLRs, access to social networking sites that have created a platform for photographers to display their talents, how far do you think this has effected careers in the field and will continue to do so?

A. Okay I'm going to split this into two parts. To begin with analogue to digital well it's a big problem that we're facing today, I mean most photographers get really annoyed. I can't even begin to imagine what people like Arif even feel like because they were a part of the analogue age. It definitely makes things easier on our end because I mean the result is a lot faster. Production is a lot faster. For example in advertising, portrait, fashion week etc, we can transfer our images to the computer so that they can be sent to the printer the same night. So I would say production is faster, but what happens when production is faster is that quality is compromised. For example crafts are not the same handmade vs. assembly line. So it's almost like an assembly line of photographers. And I think anyone can be a photographer because practice makes perfect so say you have a digital camera, you are constantly taking pictures, thousands and thousands and eventually you get something that turns out right and you look at what's right about it and what isn't right about the others, and when you start doing that more; again practice will make perfect and eventually you keep improving. With film the issue that used to be is that you're taking pictures you can't see immediately what you're seeing you go give it in for developing and you find out the next day how they turned out and by then you've forgot where
you where what you saw etc. So it took a lot of training to actually see on the spot what you need to look for. So yes the digital age I would feel has come with a lot of pros but has a lot of cons as well which means I guess that there is a rise of a lot more photographers. Amateur photographers. But I don't think that's such a bad thing either because we are pretty much archiving our entire lives, and it suddenly becomes about individuality.

Q. How does a lot of people entering the field effect the careers in the field?

A. Of course it effects the careers, this is how every market has been infiltrated. At some point everyone was doctors, then engineers, and now photography is reaching its saturation and the newest thing is that everyone wants to be a director. So the next big thing that's going to happen is moving images and everyone's going to want to be a director. Careers I feel shifts according to the time, it's not necessarily bent towards something that's more glamorous. Everybody wants to do something exciting as opposed to sitting on a desk all day long. So I feel even though things like Instagram etc they do make everybody a photographer, if you notice you can tell someone who has the eye from someone who doesn't. You can see the person taking shots of everything random as opposed to someone whose shots are most composed and have more information. But then these things are all relative. For example Cindy Sherman was never considered a photographer for the longest time because she just took random shots of her house her space of herself. But in a time where giving attention to your own life wasn't done, as opposed to the current times where it's the easiest thing to do. So career wise I guess it does hamper the career in a way but again in Pakistan it's a good thing because there aren't that many photographers. There are a few, our market does need to get saturated, it's hardly saturated. Becoming a good photographer, or a known photographer in Pakistan is pretty easy because it's not so saturated. Abroad it's crazy saturated so it's pretty tough. I don't see it as such a bad thing but it's going to move on it's going to move on to a different career trend and then the people who were in it to live up to a 'trend' will move on leaving the real passionate photographers behind.

Social networking on the other hand is doing stuff like giving people the ability to create Facebook pages yeah. I think it's a great idea and it's wonderful because it's just a way of showcasing your work online and showing it to the entire world without being able to go and knocking on each and everyone's door with your portfolio, there is one forum for everyone to see. I feel either having that power is kind of scary because it can either make you or break you.
If your work is crap, people who NEED to notice are not even going to look at it. But if your work is good, the same people WILL look at it. So you will always have a fan following of people going oh wow etc but they're not the people who are going to hire you. So I guess it depends if people are hiring you and liking you and sharing your work and you're getting jobs out of that then you're doing a decent job, but it's also about improving. So it's just an easier way of passing your website on. But then again at the end of the day nothing compares to a website because it looks a lot more professional; having a Facebook page is very casual. I have a Facebook page but I'm working on a website because at the end of the day suppose you're sending in a portfolio or recommendation to a multinational client you don't send a Facebook page you send a website link. It's the difference between a business card and writing your number on a napkin.

Q. What do you define as success in photography? And what does success mean to you? And how far do you feel you have been successful?

A. Success for me is definitely not the amount of money I'm earning although that's a great thing and it's always welcome but success would be self satisfaction more than anything else. If I wake up every day knowing that I love what I do and just have a reason to wake up then I would feel my life is successful because for me career has always been part of my life, I can't separate the two; personal and work. So if everyday I'm happy about my job despite hurdles etc and I'm still content then I would feel that is success.

Q. What do you think are some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career and some that photographers will face today in sustaining their careers?

A. I started off with a year in advertising, so that gave me a backbone to what the ad world works like and dealing with clients, being patient with them. It's kind of like learning how to be with your parents, you can't tell them off because they are your parents. The same way you can't do the same with clients, You learn all this plus how to stay up late nights, how to respect everybody working in a team. Then because I started working with Amean J at 18% it gave me another sort of backbone, rather than stepping out into the market on my own figuring out how to get people to know about me, send my portfolio across etc, I already had a company that was well established. So for me as a photographer I already had someone pushing me amongst other
people in the industry. So for me it became a great way to get known, get the right contacts, meet people etc in the photography market. That's a great thing that 18% grey does for photographers. And then I joined IVS to assist in running the post graduate programme in photography, that also, the first year also gave the market a view of who is working there and helping out and I met a lot of other photographers who were teaching in the course, Tapu, Arif etc I got to know them all extremely well over the year because they were coming in as teachers. So getting to know a lot of people through the programme kind of set me up. [content removed unnecessary in relation to advertising]. It kind of just gave me a platform. So I think I skipped a lot of the hurdles that I would have otherwise faced had I left the advertising world to enter on my own into the photographer industry. So basically now, today as opposed to twenty years ago, it's easier to avoid certain hurdles because of all these platforms. Joining a photo agency, there are only two but it's a good way to enter the industry and avoid some big hurdles. At the same time both these agencies are not big enough to take on hoards of photographers. Joining the programme at IVS is also like a good platform because you are directly interacting with the practitioners in the industry, you go on shoots with them, do internships with them, you meet models, attend fashion weeks, editors etc, and you come out with a strong body of work. So it sets you up. It also gives you an idea on how to set up your business, dealing with clients, creating business cards etc all that stuff that's important for you to get out there and get started. I mean like when I joined the photography scene the only thing was the minor here at IVS and all that gives you is a skill set, nothing more. The only reason I can market myself is my advertising background.

Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone in your career? And do you feel a photographer requires more than just talent in sustaining his or her career?

A. Well, of course more than talent for sure. Talent is one thing but you need to have a keen business sense and marketing sense. For me, if you're not talented at the end of the day you're not going to get the jobs in the long run as well. It depends from genre to genre either it's great composition and beautiful work like fine art-ish or you're technically very strong. A lot of people in our commercial market are technically very very strong but they don't have the talent, or the 'eye' but people still go to them because technique is a talent on its own. Having both really helps because In the long run you have to be able to sustain yourself with talent because otherwise after a little while people will stop hiring you. Along with talent you need to learn how to deal
with clients. Because if you mess up there, in an industry as small as ours, that's it for you. I mean certain photographers in the industry have a bad reputation etc and they are dying out. You have to learn how to deal with clients because at the end of the day you are providing a service. You have to know how to market yourself, getting yourself out there etc. And the biggest most important thing that most people don't do as photographers is to constantly keep innovating yourself. You can't figure out a formula of good photography, or even if you have, you can't just keep doing that for the next ten years because NOW with the digital age and everything is moving so fast, what used to happen in ten years is happening in three years. Literally. So in the next year or two your photographs will become redundant. Which is why people stop going to certain photographers because their style has been the same for years. People need to start innovating themselves. And even though we all have styles, there's no harm in changing or reinventing your style while keeping your passion and drive and enthusiasm for the shoot consistent. It's all about coming up with new things and moving with the times, and if you're not doing that then yea you're pretty much stuck.

Q. How important do you think training in photography is?

A. Well it's a technical field so you HAVE to get some sort of training whether it's self training or formal training. You can take pretty pictures, but if you don't know how you took them then there's a problem because you won't be able to repeat that action. You can't be shooting on 'auto' all the time. So yea training is imp because technical is where you need to be trained.

Q. What do you think gives a trained photographer like yourself an edge over the one who is not trained and vice versa?

A. The only edge I foresee is that being trained in photography in Karachi and Lahore is that all the teachers are big people in the industry, so you're constantly building contacts. You also get some sort of a historical literary side of photography. The movements, and philosophy of why and what's of photography. Whereas when you enter the industry without training you just figure out HOW something is done and how you can continue to do it in order to make your career, but you don't question or reason with things because you haven't had any theoretical training in the subject. In learning all this when working with conceptual pieces you put a lot more into the work than just mechanically clicking a pretty picture.
Q. What is your opinion on nepotism?

A. Oh photography in Pakistan works on contacts or recommendations. But it's still not that simple. Your contact may recommend someone in the industry to see your portfolio or to have a look at your work etc it won't be as simple as just being hired through a contact. Word of mouth is an important factor.

Q. So what happens to the talented individual with no contacts?

A. He needs to learn how to market himself and break into the market the old fashioned way, send your portfolios and CV's to agencies and clients etc. The old fashioned way is the right way.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add:

You can be extremely talented but if you don't know how to market yourself you're not going to get far.
Interview 6: Lali Khalid, Photography professor, Faculty of Fine Art, NCA

Interviewed 04/04/2012. [Interview conducted via Skype, recorded and transcribed.]

Q. Have you received any training in photography?

A. Yes, I went to do my masters in photography at the New York Pratt Institute.

Q. In your view, how would you define a 'talented' photographer?

A. I think a talented photographer is someone who realises when he or she sees a good picture. I think you can see photographs before you actually photograph them. So if you can see and spot it and be very good at it technically as well then you are a talented photographer. I don't think you can be talented without the technical know-how of how composition matters or the exposure triangle matters and all that. So I believe you need at one level or the other to know all these things simultaneously while taking a picture, only then can you be a talented photographer.

Q. Considering the digital age, availability of DSLRs, access to social networking sites that have created a platform for photographers to display their talents, how far do you think this has effected careers in the field and will continue to do so?

A. I think it works in a good way. I think the digital age has also kind of given a chance to everyone to pick up a camera and try and be good with it. I don't think everybody is a good photographer at all, maybe I'm a bit cynical about it, but I feel like if you compare a person who goes to school for four years and studies photography day in and day out to a person who has never gone to school and realises after doing his MBA or whatever that I'm going to now pick up a camera and become a photographer there is a huge difference. But coming back to the point, these forums are helpful in a way that a lot of amateur photographers can put up their work and sometimes they get picked up by good companies or people who are actually interested in seeing what is there to see. I have never used these sites for this in my life. I have a Facebook page but I don't use it much, but people still know about my photographs and I think you kind of working consistently is more important than any of these things. I mean there were a lot of kids with me when I was at NCA who were extremely talented, really good students, but none of them pursued their career, so that comes down to what happened with the four year degree and you not being able to sustain that kind of career, at the end of the day whoever is working more hard, whether
there is talent or lack of talent, if someone understands photography without going through school, will obviously take it forward with that. But I honestly feel like being in an art school where you are learning what contemporary photography is, really changes your outlook towards what photography really is. But having said that I also think that if someone is extremely talented, like I know of a few photographers here in Pakistan who have had no professional education in photography and are still making a lot of money with these amazing shoots, I think what happens in that is that if you're in the field for ten fifteen years then by then you obviously learn the trick. I mean there's a huge difference between say fashion and fine art photography I think most can still do fashion photography must most don't even understand the term fine art photography, sadly enough. So whoever works more will take the lead. So more than the talent alone, the person needs to be more hard working and committed. Like say you take pictures everyday and you do it for at least five years, you see a huge difference in your work. For anyone to be good in any field, what makes you good is your sincerity towards your work and your commitment to making work every day. So I feel like whether you have a degree or not, if you're making work every day and doing so for ten years and you compare that to a person who went to school did four years and did not touch a camera for three years, obviously you're going to have a higher point than that person. So more than talent I think it's about working your way towards it.

Q. What do you define as success in photography? And what does success mean to you? And how far do you feel you have been successful?

A. It means knowing and understanding pictures for me. I think more than being acknowledged, I mean obviously everyone likes the idea of being a successful artist or photographer. But for me I think looking at my photograph and thinking, okay this makes sense to me. I know it is going to affect people. As soon as someone is touched by my work and they feel the poignancy and narrative in my work, I feel like I've been successful.

Q. What are some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career? And what are some that you feel photographers may face today?

A. One of the biggest hurdles is, and I speak specifically about fashion photography, that there is a giant monopoly of certain photographers, there's Athar Shehzad, Tapu Javeri, and you know
people automatically go to these people, now I have seen pictures by a lot of very famous photographers that I think are not good from anywhere, I can tell what's wrong with it technically. And some are good too. So one hurdle that I feel I faced was the fact that when I came back from Pakistan, that in order to make yourself in the market you sort of have to break that monopoly. And only one person cannot do it. If there are lots of new upcoming photographers out there you can fight your way out there, and I feel like some are still getting a chance. But most of the shoots you see in magazines and billboards, are still done by those same five six people. And I'm sure it's the same in Karachi. And that I think it was a bit of a disappointment and I don't think it's just in Pakistan I think maybe it happens everywhere. But I feel like maybe if you're a hardworking person, I feel abroad you may get a chance to prove yourself. I mean I've worked here for a few years now, but I still felt that I was not at a point where I wanted to be at after working that hard. That's a big hurdle, it's difficult to break that thing. I think another thing is in fine art photography, most people do not understand it. So it's difficult to get work etc. I feel like I've received a better response in Karachi though. I think it will be a few years before the trend changes, people don't respect, and this is everywhere, they don't respect photography as much as painting. And in the west I mean it's changing but I think in Pakistan even in NCA while I was teaching a lot of kids who wanted to do photographic work were scared that people would not come and see. So these are the challenges I think the new generation will face.

Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone in your career? And do you feel a photographer requires more than just talent in sustaining his or her career?

A. I think you require more than just talent. In my career I think I work really hard and if I didn't work this hard I wouldn't be where I am today. And you can't just have a good eye, I mean yes that's probably 80% of it but 20% is your know-how of the camera, editing for those who edit, how to be detail oriented. I mean in fluke you can get 20 good pictures, but there will come a time when that luck ends and your talent runs out because you are so dependent on looking at things and taking pictures that you have not gained any technical knowledge of actually working the camera. I don't think talent alone can do it at all, I know people who do do it based on talent alone and I really don't like their work. I mean maybe if they get lucky, and say if they are consistent in what they do then at some point maybe they can sustain their careers in it but I also
feel like just the social media will be enough to help them. I think one needs to be able to understand his or her own work before people can understand it. If anyone is doing something for a long period of time, there will obviously come a time where you understand your work and people understand it and you will be able to sustain it but you know just as a fluke you cannot sustain it.

Q. How important do you think training in photography is?

A. Extremely important. And I think it's important to get out of the country and get that training. Because unfortunately there are not too many available photography schools in Pakistan and even if you cannot get two years master or four year undergrad training you should at least get one semester kind of training of some sort to understand where photography comes from, to know it's history, it's background. To know how it was camera obscura in the beginning and how it is a Digital SLR right now. To know about all the masters, about the people who photographed all their lives. To know about artists like Eugene Atkin, it's important to know all this and the alternative methods also. I mean I know people who are photographing without training etc and I just think that most of the masses, miss that technical fault in pictures. But I as a photographer can spot it and I'm sure others can too. And that for me is offensive because you are making bad work and people still coming to you because of your name. So I think that training is important, whichever way you do it in.

Q. What do you think gives a trained photographer like yourself an edge over the one who is not trained and vice versa?

A. If you're trained you will obviously take better pictures. But if there is an untrained photographer who has a good eye, I don't think there's any one answer or any one way in which an untrained or trained person takes photographs but I think technical training along with talent will obviously have a higher weight age than just talent and no training.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add:

A. I very sincerely believe that not everyone can take pictures, even if these DSLR's etc are available for people to use. I mean notice there's just giant trend now of people just picking up cameras and immediately turning it towards themselves to take a picture. And there are a million
comments on them. People have always been drawn towards taking pictures, I mean back in the
day they would take pictures from medium or large format cameras and send them around to
family because there were such few ways to communicate. But I think that you know even if a
million people take pictures not everyone will be able to take a good picture, until and unless you
have the knowledge and educational background, you cannot be a photographer.
Interview 7: Arif Mehmood, Founder and owner of photo agency White Star.

Interviewed 30/05/2012 [Interview conducted in person, recorded and transcribed]

Q. What has changed in the photography industry from back when you started off to say now when someone like myself may be starting off in this digital age?

A. I don't know if it has to do with the digital age as such, I think it was as difficult then as it is now. Because I started editorial work in 1989, and that you can say is twenty or so years ago. At that time the ruling kings of the market did not have certificate or degree holders in the medium as far as I know, besides Asif Raza, and neither am I. What happened then was that the pace was slower of the work. The media was just starting to receive new people. Everyone gets their break here and there. I got my break into the editorial scene through fashion. You see what happens is that fashion editors and magazine editors have a way of seeing things and they keep working with the same people so they see the same kind of styles and visuals. I'm talking of 1989 when magazines like Viasge had not come out. Libaas had come out. It was a big thing to be in Libaas, it was the first fashion magazine in Pakistan. So they had got used to working with a certain group of people and had a certain idea of how the final image would be. So when I came onto the scene I came on a year or so before Tapu, and then they basically saw the visuals as something they hadn't seen before. Every photographer has his or her own take on an image so they had not seen such kind of visuals before so I was lucky they were receptive. Maybe the time was right for me to enter because they were probably getting saturated with the handful of photographers in the market and it was difficult for us to get in because these were big big names we were put up against and we were very young and we did it for the love of the thing, we never did it for the cash.

Q. Today, is it easier for people to come up into the industry, for example Kashif Rashid and Ali Khurshid, even though there were big names out there, they've have managed to make a mark in two to three years?

A. True, but if you look at say Ali, he was a landscape person. And after that he got into wedding pictures. But he had been putting up his landscape etc pictures on Facebook and flickr for like two years before he got into wedding. What happens in that is that you're getting feedback from your friends and fans and all. So he did his own bit of slogging. But now if you talk of Ali
Khurshid you relate him to wedding photography because he's made a mark in that. For me, at the present moment that is what he's known for. Whether that's good or bad is besides the point... He's worked hard at it in his own way. But it is correct to say that it has been easier for him because of the technology available these days. But you see the thing is that what digital has done is that it has made it accessible to everyone. And from an uneducated point of view as far as I'm concerned, because I don't have a degree in the media, and I know people who also have a degree in the medium who are shooting digitally. So I think technology as long as it is there to assist you, to help you and to improve you I think it's a good thing. As long as it doesn't become your main focus point and you become a gadget freak and start collecting things and stop improving your eye and your mind in terms of the photographic image. I think that is more important than any technology because back in the day also when there was no digital people were shooting on film, they still had the Polaroid camera. So that instant image was there back then also, where big money was involved. Now it's like immediate, the client sees it you see it and everybody can see it, not just where the big money is. But that doesn't mean the visual is good. To be able to view the image, whether that is good or bad is a very subjective and complicated thing. That is the major paradox or the crux of the matter. I think you have to be able to decipher good images from what is bad. And what the market has done because of the saturation of photographers, like in our time there were like five photographers, now there are more than a hundred shooting all kinds of things, so you have stratification in layers of what to chose from. If you take something like wedding. Tomorrow if someone wants to hire a photographer and they have a budget, they go on Facebook and look for someone who fits their budget. There is a variety. The choice is more. It's become more consumer orientated. But that doesn't make it great btw. Though because of word of mouth and PR etc it gets out there.

Q. Was the 'word of mouth' element as actively present twenty or so years ago

A. There was none. It wasn't there. It's much more now. Back then there were two or three photographers doing say.. wedding photography. NOW there are so many who do weddings, and many like Kohi and Ali need to hire assistants to cover events for them. This didn't happen back then. Now what's happened in the wedding market is that there is more variety. There is a tinge in the journalistic approach to wedding photography now. And the same applies to commercial etc. But in commercial there are two ways of how photographers get into that is that they are
either sought after which is how they get into the market and the other is that they have an attitude of flexibility because in commercial photography you are conforming to the client or product manager because the visual has been approved much more before you've been hired and you've been hired to deliver that visual.

In the time we are living in, if the senior people don't keep up pace and don't shoot on a constant level, either they have damn good PR to be in the market or they'll be run over. Because what happens now is that unfortunately; maybe fortunately for some, but unfortunately what's happened is that there is so much variety and imagery dumped on the consumer that the choice is very whimsical. What's happened is that the stack of imagery has become uncontrollable. So the good and bad and brilliant has all been stacked together and no one has time to look for the brilliant. So I think what we're living in is a very mediocre period of imagery and I keep repeating this in various forums of discussion, only because I have the advantage point of seeing back, this and internationally what's happening. today's young photographer is putting up things on Flickr and Facebook, I'm speaking of the majority, he's getting feedback from his peers and friends. What they are not receiving is recognition on an international level. Because I think the greed for recognition is much more in terms of name and cash. I mean everyone wants to be appreciated. But now the field of photography has become cash market. Because the world is in a very struggling situation. There was a time when doctors lawyers ka zamana tha. MBA ka zamana aaya, production media ka zamana aaya. Abhi photography mein saturation point aanay wala hai. Everybody is very much into it. I mean fine you don't need to have a degree to click a shutter. And you have time to experiment. You can learn some things online. But the pure people who have been raised on film and taught about certain rules of photography have a theory that you have to learn and then unlearn. But I'm flexible to it I don't think it's necessary because there are many people who have never shot on film. They started on digital straight away so they have no concept of the waiting period or discipline required when shooting on film. They have endless images to click so what that does is it increases the average image copy. In the old days what happened was that agencies like magnum if you wanted to be a member you used to be submitting a contact sheet because if you've done a body of work they wanted to see how much you've done on it, what was your process, if there's a good image in your portfolio how many shots did it take you to get to that image, Because a contact sheet is like a diary or a sketch book. So that genius or talent or eye of the photographer comes out on the contact sheet. Now with the
age fastly growing these visual stories, contact sheets or thumbnails, are not required. What's happening is that peoples edits have become looser because they have too much quantity to deal with. I'm not saying that great work is not being produced it IS being produced, but bad work is also being produced, it's being put up, appreciated and given a chance. It used to happen before also, but not in this QUANTITY. And this is the case internationally. This is just my opinion, I could be wrong. I try to keep up with the time.

**Q. In your view, how would you define a 'talented' photographer?**

A. A photographer whose work speaks for himself. There are a lot of people who will show you a portfolio and then talk about it, and you won't see what they're saying in their work. The talented photographers work will visually communicate itself and you will be able to conceive that this person has creativity. Creativity depends a lot on what you come up with in the space, the square or rectangle and how you communicate this to the other.

**Q. What do you define as success in photography? And what does success mean to you? And how far do you feel you have been successful?**

A. Having a great body of work.

**Q. We discussed some of the hurdles you faced in sustaining your career, what do you think are some of the hurdles photographers will face today in sustaining their careers?**

A. What will happen is that the cake is going to be cut into little pieces and after that there will be no cake. Abhi tou kaam hai kaafi. But there will come a time when only the deeply rooted strong networking people with good marketing abilities will be in the field. The others will disappear. That doesn't mean that only the bad will disappear, even the good will face that. Not everyone has good PR and marketing abilities. Someone with not very good work but the ability to sell themselves, to network may continue on. Networking unfortunately is the call of the times.
Q. How far would you say you depended on talent alone in your career? And do you feel a photographer requires more than just talent in sustaining his or her career?

A. I've always let my work speak for itself. I think that to excel in anything or any field you have to give a part of yourself to that field and that is a heavy price to pay. A friend of mine once said you have a choice you want to be a rock star photographer who is known by everyone or a great photographer who isn't as known by people but is producing great work. There's no end to learning. No such thing as complete. There's always room to improve. I can't say I've had a bad trip. God has been very kind. [content removed - PIA]. It's a tough medium to chose to have an earning from because consciously or unconsciously you are accumulating imagery. It has a documentary essence to it. You are in other words a collector. And you will leave behind a body of work whether you like it or not. So my desire or wish would be to leave behind a body or work that would be good.

Q. How important do you think training in photography is?

A. I think you need to be trained. We were lucky to have good colleagues and good support system to learn. Training always helps. I'm not saying get a masters in Fine Art photography. There are certain things people are gifted with but certain elementary things need to be learnt, or you should at least have a little bit of knowledge about it. I still learn everyday from people. I think it's important. There isn't a set equation that a good education will produce a good photographer, but I think it is important.

Q. What do you think gives a trained photographer like an edge over the one who is not trained and vice versa?

A. I think it varies according to the assignment. I think something like lighting up things and using light are important things to learn and I would hope or imagine that a trained individual would know these things, rather than an instinctive photographer. But remember sometimes that instinctive photographer has more talent sometimes and talent if always applied can actually bring one out. The technician however should have a better grasp of lighting. The one with the technical knowledge. But these technical people usually end up in studios where they get into this semi-control freak situation where they can control everything and when you're in the outdoor you can't control anything. Normally you see that people who are most comfortable in
studios don't want to shoot outdoor while those shooting outdoor are easier to get into. But again like I said it's relative to the assignment and the body of work the photographer is into.

**Q. What is your opinion on nepotism in the photography industry in Pakistan?**

A. It's networking. Our industry is very.. they feed on each other. It's been there since '89. I've seen it.

**Q. So what happens to the talented individual with no contacts?**

He will have a real problem, unless he or she is seen at a forum where their work is seen. And one of the things I've imposed upon this organization (White Star) is to find out wherever there is talent, give it a platform. Platforms are very important. And in today's world platforms are nepotized heavily. Specially where there is big money, or a teachers reputation is involved, or an ego kick; ownership and promoting. It's a very complicated market. But then again when it comes to the big bucks, the photographers assistant doesn't get much, it's the photographer who will get that. The ability to share fame is not happening. Where someone nepotises someone, there is always a vested interest. There is always a reason or a game, and in most cases a financial game.

**Is there anything else you would like to add:**

Both have a percentage to play. I think talent is very important but it has to be coupled by discipline. What I mean is that you have a substantial amount of work backing your talent. You can't be talented and producing a portfolio a year or something, not happening. The medium requires and demands that you shoot. No matter how talented you are. You have to keep your machinery all oiled up all the time. So I think both these variables play an important part in your career. Of course luck also has it's part to play.
Interview 8: Ali Reza Mumtaz, Chief Creative Officer at Saatchi and Saatchi. Interview correspondence between 01/04/2012 and 06/04/2012. [Interview conducted via email]

Here's some of the answers, I've tried to remain as broad-covering as possible. Since I'm relatively new in this market, it's also a learning experience for me at the moment. Therefore I've tried to balance it with my experience back in the US as well (which, as you'll note, was very different).

Q. What is the criteria for hiring a photographer for a job at an AD agency?
A. There's no one answer for this in Pakistan. It really should be: talent, but can be a mix of many things. Experience with the client, prior relationship with the agency, current standing in the market (hot new photographer vs. old fuddy duddy), all could be factors. A few agencies in town are also rumoured to take kickbacks (as a strict rule, we never do this) In the US, an art director or creative director would make the selection decision based purely on viewership of portfolios and the quality brought to the table. Photographers would be picked based on their expertise with the assignment at hand (for instance, is the photographer an expert at shooting cars or children?) In Pakistan, due to much less competition, photographers don't go into niches, so it's tougher to pick on that base alone. Also, print in Pakistan does not hold as much importance as it does in the US, and so there is less emphasis on choosing the right print photographer.

Q. What are the various characteristics of a photographer/his or her work that value them as having succeeded at their job?
A. Personally speaking, the work should be paramount. But there are other factors: delivery on time, easy to work with, has an idea on the product's history, experience, honesty. Original work counts a lot for me; a photographer that has looked to do things differently, or is eager to treat something differently. Also, I would tend to pick someone who has more hunger for the work than someone who is doing it for the pay check.

Q. How far do you feel a photographers talent alone can take them in their career?
A. I think it can take them places, but not as far as talent mixed with say, a sense of business and PR. An all-rounder will go further.
Q. On what basis does an Ad agency decided to rehire a photographer/ never rehire a photographer again? (are there external factors associated with this decision?)

A. Firstly, the work. But also: how well they delivered, what the working relationship was both with the agency and the client. A photographer that will go beyond what they promised will tend to be called back.
Interview 9: Natasha Dubash, Art Director at JWT

Interview correspondence between 01/04/2012 and 05/04/2012. [Interview conducted via email]

Just to give a bit of background on how things work atJWT as far as print is concerned.
The client briefs the agency and based on that the campaign is developed. A key visual is made with reference images and the client approves this. This is what is then shot. The Art Director controls the shoot and is responsible for the final outcome. There are projects where there is no actual fixed key visuals and in these cases it's up to the Art Director what is going to be shot based on the clients requirements. At JWT we shoot locally as well as internationally. We also use international photographers.

Q. What is the criteria for hiring a photographer for a job at an AD agency?
A. One of the things you need to keep in mind is the fact that there are a few sub categories in photography. Commercial, fashion, event and portrait. Then within commercial photography there are even more categories. When I'm looking at a photographer I select them with these categories in mind depending on the clients requirements and my design. Mainly we use commercial photographers and one of the main criteria is the camera they are using as the final output is for outdoor and for that we need extremely high resolution.

Q. What are the various characteristics of a photographer/his or her work that value them as having succeeded at their job?
A. The photographer must have sound technical knowledge of lighting and know how to get the most from the camera as well as the subject matter. He or she must also have a good sense of design and composition. Attention to detail is also extremely important. Be extremely professional and be able to work with different personalities.

Q. How far do you feel a photographers talent alone can take them in their career?
A. In order to be in this extremely competitive business you must have talent. However talent alone isn't the only requirement. You must also have drive and be willing to work hard and keep developing your skills and techniques. You must know and adapt with changes in the global
industry. You must also be up to date with what commercial requirements are. You must be easy to work with and professional.

Q. On what basis does an Ad agency decided to rehire a photographer/ never rehire a photographer again? (are there external factors associated with this decision)

A. The agency rehires based on the equipment the photographer has (lights and camera), quality of work, the working manner of the photographer and cost.

We may not use a photographer if we feel their equipment is not meeting our min requirements, or the quality of the images is not up to our standards and if the photographer is difficult to work with. The decision on whether to use someone or not to use them is made by the Art Director. There are very rare instances where the client may choose who they wish to use or who they don't want.