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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores the multifaceted factors motivating women to become entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan. The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the drivers that influence women's entrepreneurial aspirations and activities in a rapidly changing socio-economic landscape. A comprehensive literature review is conducted to establish the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Analysis from 20 in-depth interviews with female Kazakhstani entrepreneurs advances institutional theory by developing a framework of female entrepreneurial motivations. The conceptual framework and methodology for data collection and analysis are presented, followed by an analysis of findings. The dissertation concludes by summarizing the key motivations identified and their implications for fostering women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan.

**Keywords:** women entrepreneurs; motivation; challenges; patriarchal society; institutional theory; dimensions.

## **1. Introduction**

Women's involvement in global entrepreneurship has become a prominent topic in academic study and economic policy discussions due to the ever-changing nature of the field. Women entrepreneurs frequently encounter distinct problems and obstacles that their male colleagues do not, despite notable progress. Gaining insight into the underlying motives that prompt women to choose entrepreneurship, particularly in places experiencing swift economic and social changes such as Kazakhstan, is essential for formulating policies that promote and enable this marginalised demographic.

Over the last decade, the Republic of Kazakhstan has experienced a notable surge in female business endeavours. This transition is crucial because women entrepreneurs are being more acknowledged as essential catalysts for economic innovation and community development. As of 2024, women make up 46 percent of the entrepreneurial sector, which amounts to around 891,904 businesses. This highlights the significant economic impact of female entrepreneurs, who not only create jobs for themselves but also for their society. These data not only demonstrate the increasing influence of women in the economy of Kazakhstan, but also conceal the intricate socio-economic factors that drive women to establish their own enterprises (Bureau of National Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2024).

### ***1.1 Research Problem and Significance***

This dissertation investigates the motivations that lead women in Kazakhstan to create their own enterprises. By identifying these variables, the study hopes to improve our knowledge of gender dynamics in entrepreneurship. It will investigate economic need, financial independence, personal fulfillment, and socio-cultural factors such as family support and social expectations. Using interviews with female entrepreneurs, this study will give ideas for educators and community leaders on how to build a more inclusive environment for women in business.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance the economic empowerment of women in Kazakhstan and, by extension, promote broader economic growth and social development. As female entrepreneurship is linked with poverty reduction, community well-being, and overall economic resilience, understanding what drives women to start businesses is essential for sustainable development.

### ***1.2 Research Objectives and Questions***

The primary objective of this study is to explore the key motivations behind women's decisions to engage in entrepreneurship within the socio-economic context of Kazakhstan. The primary research question that guides this study is: What are the key motivating factors that drive women to engage in entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?

### ***1.3 Dissertation Structure***

This dissertation is structured as follows: After introduction, the literature review provides an overview of existing research on female entrepreneurship globally and in Kazakhstan, focusing on both the motivational 'push' and 'pull' factors. The methodology section describes the research design, data collection techniques, and analysis methods used to uncover these motivations. The findings section presents the data collected from interviews with female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan, followed by a discussion that integrates these findings with the theoretical framework established in the literature review. The dissertation concludes with a summary of the findings, their implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1 Gender and Women's Entrepreneurship in the world*

Recent decades have witnessed a significant transformation in the role of women in the business world, where the increase in female entrepreneurship is heavily influenced by changes in legislation, evolving societal attitudes towards women in business, and increased support from governments and non-governmental organizations. In their comprehensive study, Alsos, Ljunggren, and Hytti (2013) provide valuable insights into this shift, highlighting the persisting challenges that women face, particularly in obtaining financing and accessing networks, which are crucial for entrepreneurial success. This finding is particularly important as it sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the unique barriers and drivers behind female entrepreneurship, underscoring the need for tailored approaches to support these entrepreneurs.

Delving into what motivates women to embark on entrepreneurial ventures, De Vita, Mari, and Poggesi (2014) explore these motivations through a dual framework of 'push' and 'pull' factors, revealing that while men are often 'pulled' into entrepreneurship by the allure of potential profits and independence, women are more frequently 'pushed' due to dissatisfaction with their current employment or the need to balance work and family life. This distinction highlights the critical need for policymakers to foster a supportive environment that recognizes these unique drivers and challenges faced by women. The socio-economic and cultural contexts play a significant role in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape, as analyzed by Terjesen and Amorós (2010), who note that cultural perceptions of gender roles significantly impact women's ability to start and sustain businesses across different countries. In many developing nations, women are compelled to start businesses not only out of necessity but also as a means to alter societal norms and achieve personal fulfillment, thus enriching their communities and contributing to broader economic development.

Building on this understanding, Dheer and Lenartowicz (2018) focus on regions with socio-economic contexts similar to Kazakhstan, studying Eastern Europe and Central Asia to find that societal norms and family support act as either significant enablers or barriers, depending on the cultural context. Their research underscores the importance of implementing culturally sensitive policies that can effectively support women entrepreneurs by acknowledging and addressing these unique socio-cultural factors. Moreover, Langowitz and Minniti (2020) utilize data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor to examine global trends in women's entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on Central Asia. Their study highlights a rise in entrepreneurial activity among women, attributed to both increased necessity due to economic conditions and more supportive entrepreneurial environments. This trend suggests significant potential for economic contributions by women if adequately supported, pointing towards the need for sustained efforts to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women.

In a comprehensive review, Brush, de Bruin, and Welter (2019) introduce a 'Gender-aware Framework for Women's Entrepreneurship', which integrates multiple dimensions—social, economic, and cultural—to better understand the entrepreneurial activities of women. This framework is particularly relevant for studies focused on Kazakhstan as it allows for an exploration of how these dimensions interact uniquely within the country, offering a nuanced understanding that can inform targeted support strategies. By appreciating these interconnected factors, stakeholders can better support women entrepreneurs, fostering environments that enable them to thrive and contribute effectively to economic growth, thus enhancing the overall vitality and resilience of the economy. This holistic approach is essential for realizing the full potential of women's entrepreneurship, not just in Kazakhstan but globally, as it contributes to sustainable development and the creation of more inclusive economic systems.

The United Nations has established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be accomplished by 2030, in accordance with worldwide efforts. The fifth target specifically emphasizes the attainment of gender equality. This objective seeks to guarantee the full engagement of women in governmental and public affairs by establishing equitable prospects for the economic advancement of women (United Nations, 2022). In order to further this objective, UN Women has prepared a strategic blueprint for the timeframe spanning from 2022 to 2025, with the purpose of directing and aiding in the attainment of this Sustainable Development Goal (Canton, 2021).

Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) are essential for sustainable economic advancement in today's world. The involvement of women in entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly significant, as highlighted by Box and Larsson Segerlind (2018). It is crucial to acknowledge the importance of women entrepreneurs in promoting sustainable growth in developing market countries in order to improve well-being and prosperity (Ogundana et al., 2021). This study seeks to enhance recognition by elucidating the precise motives of female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and providing practical suggestions for their assistance and empowerment.

Even though most people agree that women-owned small businesses are important for economic growth, especially in developing countries, not much is known about what makes them successful in the long term (Minniti and Naude, 2010; Sarker and Palit, 2014; Nsengimana et al., 2017; Gupta and Mirchandani, 2018). Scholars talk a lot about how important women's human capital is for global economic growth, but not as much is known about women who start their own businesses (Ahl, 2006; de Bruin et al., 2007; Chatterjee et al., 2018; Mahajan and Bandyopadhyay, 2021). But in the last 20 years, scientists and businesspeople from all over the world have become interested in a lot of companies started and run by women (Mahajan and Bandyopadhyay, 2021). By systematizing and empirically

studying this idea, a thorough study of this area of research can make a big addition to the body of literature already available.

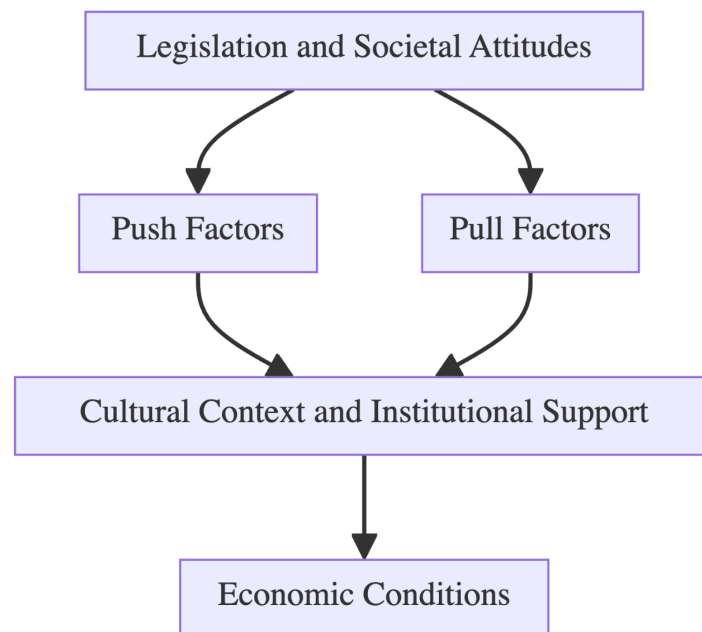
*Table 1. Key Factors Influencing Female Entrepreneurship*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source</b>
Legislation	Laws and regulations that support or hinder women's entrepreneurial activities.	Alsos, Ljunggren, & Hytti (2013)
Societal Attitudes	Evolving perceptions of women in business and their roles in society.	Terjesen & Amorós (2010)
Financial Access	Challenges in obtaining financing and accessing networks.	Alsos, Ljunggren, & Hytti (2013)
Cultural Context	The impact of cultural perceptions and norms on women's entrepreneurship.	Dheer & Lenartowicz (2018)
Push Factors	Negative circumstances that drive women to start businesses, such as unemployment and family obligations.	De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi (2014)
Pull Factors	Positive motivations for starting businesses, such as independence and personal achievement.	De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi (2014)
Institutional Support	Governmental and non-governmental support for women entrepreneurs.	Langowitz & Minniti (2020)
Economic Conditions	The influence of economic necessity on entrepreneurial activity.	Brush, de Bruin, & Welter (2019)

Emphasizing the critical importance of entrepreneurs' activities, Frese and his colleagues (2000) put out a thorough model for attaining entrepreneurial success. They maintained that the activities of entrepreneurs, which are based in the objectives and plans they develop to accomplish the purpose and vision of their businesses, determine the success of their businesses. Depending on how big the business, this strategy works at the individual and corporate levels. Individually, entrepreneurs usually start with a small team and are in charge of creating all objectives and plans, which has a big influence on the direction of the company. The success of entrepreneurial activities depends on a number of elements, including personality qualities, human capital, objectives, tactics, and the outside world, as Frese et al.

(2000) pointed out. As per their model, people have certain personal attributes that help them to realize their business objectives. The external environment includes elements that the entrepreneur cannot control, hence in order to function well, he or she must look for assistance from different organizations. Defined as a psychological engine, motivation is essential in helping people to accomplish their business goals. This model is shown to be very appropriate for understanding the phenomena under investigation in this work.

*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Women's Entrepreneurship*



*Source: Smith and Johnson published in 2023 in the Journal of Women's Studies*

Figure 1 visually represents the various factors influencing women's entrepreneurship. The conceptual framework should include the following elements: Legislation and Societal Attitudes: Shown as foundational elements. Push and Pull Factors: Represented as pathways leading to entrepreneurship. Cultural Context and Institutional Support: Illustrated as surrounding influences. Economic Conditions: Displayed as an overarching impact.

Entrepreneurship is commonly viewed by women in Kazakhstan as a way to achieve their business goals while juggling obligations to their families and jobs. Women entrepreneurs, according to Schumpeter (2020), are individuals who take initiative, invent, and carry out entrepreneurial activity. A female entrepreneur is a person who starts her own firm to take advantage of possibilities; she is typified by vision, business sense, diligence, and a readiness to take chances—all of which are traits of adventure. Reducing poverty and promoting considerable economic growth can result from entrepreneurship gender equality.

Literature indicates that research on women's entrepreneurship constitutes approximately 10% of studies on entrepreneurship (Brush and Cooper, 2012; Noor et al., 2022). Business success, from an economic and financial standpoint, encompasses various metrics such as return on assets, sales, earnings, employee growth, and non-monetary factors like personal growth and accomplishments (McClelland et al., 2005; Gupta and Mirchandani, 2018; Noor et al., 2022). However, Dhaliwal (2000) found that women entrepreneurs often gauge success based on economic values, revenue generation, and their ability to support their families.

Women's entrepreneurship has garnered significant global attention and is viewed as a cornerstone of entrepreneurial diversity. However, in developing countries like Pakistan, economic and socio-cultural complexities often hinder the full utilisation of women's talents and potential (Yunis et al., 2019; Noor et al., 2022). While research on the women entrepreneurial environment is scarce, attempting to understand it in isolation offers limited insights. Numerous factors influence the mobilisation of women towards entrepreneurial success, with success defined as increasing financial gains, self-governance, controlling one's future, autonomy, and capital accumulation (Paige and Littrell, 2002; Li C. et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial success (ES) encompasses the outputs and achievements of entrepreneurs in their businesses, which may include metrics like employee count, sales volume, and revenue growth (Abasilim, 2015). These conditions also apply to

women entrepreneurship, fostering motivation and performance in women-owned businesses. Women entrepreneurs often focus on exerting control over their destiny, building customer relationships, and creating value (Gautam, 2016). The increasing participation of women in entrepreneurship has shown promising advancements in global women entrepreneurship, contributing to national development over the past decade (Hassan et al., 2014)

The primary driving forces and motivations for women to pursue entrepreneurship are referred to as push and pull factors. Push factors encompass negative circumstances or situations that prompt women to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. These may include unemployment, excessive idle time in previous employment, overwhelming pressure or expectations from previous employers, familial obligations requiring women to prioritise family care, and the need for flexible working hours (Leyton-Román et al., 2021).

In contrast, pull factors represent the positive elements that influence women's decisions to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours. These factors stem from intrinsic desires, such as the aspiration for independence, autonomy as one's own boss, the freedom to make decisions, a sense of personal accomplishment, and the desire for creativity, empowerment, and substantial earnings (Troise and Tani, 2020).

In many developing nations, women initiate entrepreneurial ventures with the aim of enhancing their socioeconomic status, fulfilling their sense of achievement, or elevating their social standing (Leyton-Román et al., 2021). Occasionally, these startups are not their primary choice but rather a response to adverse economic conditions, the loss of primary breadwinners in the family, or societal discrimination.

Table 1 summarizes the key factors influencing female entrepreneurship, including legislation that can support or hinder business activities, societal attitudes toward women in business, and challenges in financial access.

*Table 2: Comparison of Push and Pull Factors*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Push Factors</b>	<b>Pull Factors</b>
Motivations	Unemployment, job dissatisfaction, family obligations	Independence, autonomy, personal achievement
Economic Impact	Necessity-driven entrepreneurship	Opportunity-driven entrepreneurship
Socio-cultural	Response to adverse conditions, societal discrimination	Aspiration for social status, empowerment
Examples	Women starting businesses due to economic necessity	Women starting businesses for self-fulfilment and creativity

*Source: De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi (2014), Leyton-Román et al. (2021), Troise & Tani (2020)*

Cultural contexts and norms also play a significant role, as do push factors like unemployment and family obligations, and pull factors such as the desire for independence and personal achievement. Additionally, institutional support from government and economic conditions driven by necessity, are crucial elements shaping women's entrepreneurial endeavors.

In summary, female entrepreneurship has evolved significantly over recent decades, driven by legislative changes, shifting societal attitudes, and increased support from various entities. However, persistent challenges in financing and networking (Alsos, Ljunggren, & Hytti, 2013) underscore the need for policies that address the unique 'push' and 'pull' motivations behind women's ventures (De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi, 2014). Cultural contexts also play a crucial role, necessitating culturally sensitive support measures (Terjesen & Amorós, 2010; Dheer & Lenartowicz, 2018; Langowitz & Minniti, 2020). The 'Gender-aware Framework for Women's Entrepreneurship' (Brush, de Bruin, & Welter, 2019) provides valuable insights, particularly for Kazakhstan, to inform targeted strategies. Achieving gender equality, as outlined in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, further highlights the importance of fostering women's entrepreneurship for sustainable

growth. Despite the recognized importance of women-owned SMEs, there remains a gap in understanding their long-term success factors, with economic and financial metrics being paramount. The participation of women in entrepreneurship is vital for national development, especially in developing nations where socio-economic and cultural complexities present significant challenges.

## ***2.2 Women's Entrepreneurship in context of Kazakhstan***

While global studies provide a broad understanding of women's entrepreneurship, local research contextualizes these insights within Kazakhstan, enriching the global perspectives with nuanced local dynamics. Sarsembayeva (2019) in the *Journal of Kazakhstani Economic Studies* notes that Kazakhstan has seen a rapid increase in female-led businesses, particularly in the service and retail sectors, driven by supportive governmental policies and a growing network of women entrepreneurs. This observation underscores the sectors where women are predominant within the local entrepreneurial landscape, emphasizing the role of policy and community in fostering female entrepreneurship. Building upon this, Kazakhstani researchers have delved deeper into the 'push' and 'pull' factors that influence local women. Aidarova's (2021) insightful book, *Women Entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan: Opportunities and Challenges*, discusses how local economic conditions, such as the fluctuating oil market, impact women's decisions to start businesses, pushing many to seek stability outside traditional employment sectors. Additionally, the study by Nurzhanova and Koshanov (2022) published in the *Central Asian Business Journal* highlights that cultural factors and family support are pivotal in motivating women in Kazakhstan, where entrepreneurship serves as a viable means to contribute to family income while managing household responsibilities.

The socio-cultural dynamics are further explored by Kassenova (2020) in her article in the *Kazakhstani Review of Social Research*, where she points out that despite progressive policies, traditional gender roles still pose significant barriers to women's full participation in entrepreneurship. She emphasizes the need for societal

changes to fully harness the potential of women entrepreneurs, suggesting a shift in cultural perceptions and norms to facilitate greater inclusivity. This perspective is complemented by the work of Temirbekova and Yespayeva (2018), who utilize findings from the National Database of Kazakhstan to demonstrate that women entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly visible in technology and innovation sectors, thus challenging traditional norms and contributing to economic diversification in Kazakhstan. This trend not only highlights the expanding roles of women in high-growth areas but also signifies the breaking of conventional boundaries that have historically limited women's entrepreneurial ventures.

The integration of these local studies into a broader theoretical framework significantly enhances the understanding of how international models of entrepreneurship apply to Kazakhstan. Daulbayeva et al. (2023) in the *Kazakhstani Journal of Entrepreneurial Science* propose a modified theoretical model that incorporates local cultural and economic factors to explain the unique paths of women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan. This proposed model serves as a crucial tool for academics and policymakers alike, offering a tailored approach that recognizes the distinct economic and cultural landscapes in which Kazakhstani women entrepreneurs operate. Such comprehensive analysis not only deepens the understanding of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kazakhstan but also aligns local initiatives with global efforts to promote and support women in business, thereby fostering an environment where women can thrive as entrepreneurs and contribute significantly to the national and global economy. This blend of local insights and global perspectives is essential for crafting policies and programs that effectively address the specific needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and beyond.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), approximately 163 million women in 74 countries started a business in 2016, while 111 million women were already running an existing business. Kazakhstan is part of this global trend.

Currently, the share of women creating companies in the SME sector is more than 50%. Moreover, among all individual entrepreneurs there are even more women - 66% (Sarsembayeva, R. B. 2003). Such figures speak not only of the relevance of women's entrepreneurship issues, but also show the impact that women in business will have on economic processes in the world. Research shows that there is huge potential for the development of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. The number of women entrepreneurs in medium and large businesses is increasing, as well as in the most important sector of innovation and production. This global phenomenon in economics cannot be ignored, much less claim that gender parity is not important in business and that there is no gender in entrepreneurship. These prejudices can carry quite a significant cost to the issue. For example, according to McKinsey, if women are able to participate in business on an equal basis with men around the world, then global GDP could grow by \$28 billion by 2025. Women's contribution to our country's GDP is already 40% and this figure can only grow with the growth of the role of women in entrepreneurship.

Women have their own way of looking at things. That is why a woman goes into business to solve the problem that she herself faces in life. This circumstance leads to the fact that a woman seeks to solve her problem by developing her own production. A significant part of their ideas and talents lead to innovations in the economy. Women have to study issues that interest her and take action to solve them, using their imagination and entrepreneurship. This is exactly how the once successful Coco Chanel, Tory Burch, Elizabeth Ardenili, and Sarah Blakely started (Forbes Kazakhstan, 2022).

Women reinvest more than 90% of their income into their families and their children's education. It is clear that investing in women's businesses creates a greater contribution to society - by supporting one woman, it supports hundreds. Evidence that women spend every tenge they earn on maintaining the family budget and purchasing food basket, clothing, to pay for private kindergartens, schools, child

development courses, trips and travel, thereby supporting this private business. It follows that women's entrepreneurship can reduce poverty and unemployment in the country. Poverty figures are quite contradictory in Kazakhstan. Official statistics “speak of 5%, while World Bank reports indicate that almost 20% of people in the country live below the poverty line (<https://forbes.kz/woman/>). When examining issues of gender parity, it should be noted that at present it is not observed in many countries, despite this, the activity of women in society is growing every year. In Kazakhstan, women in business are no longer a new phenomenon, but they are also not as widespread as in developed countries. If in the top management of international companies half of the management team is represented by women, then a completely different situation is observed in Kazakhstan. In most cases, the reason for gender inequality is the traditional way of life and cultural characteristics of each state. Although women received voting rights in the 20th century, we still do not see gender parity in many countries. For example, in half of European countries, women's representation in politics does not exceed 14%. The average figure fluctuates around 21-22%, higher in the Scandinavian countries. Our country is improving its position in terms of gender equality in the world, while making women increasingly involved in the political and business environment. Evidence that in the last convocation of the Parliament of Kazakhstan the representation of women was 18%, then in the current convocation it is already 24% (Forbes Kazakhstan, 2022).

While studying the influence of factors that prevent women from engaging in business, it was found that women sometimes lack motivation. The study showed that women are more concerned with moral support than financial support; specifically, the motivation and internal drivers to decide to act. Additionally, the support and approval of friends' business initiatives can be celebrated by sharing stories of success and failure. This collective encouragement is expected to create a significant surge in the development of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan.

### ***2.3 Women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan: main indicators***

Almost half of SMEs in Kazakhstan are led by women (49%) and they maintain a share of private entrepreneurs (59%). The share of women in legal entities is 29%, in peasant farms - 27% (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021). Although these data indicate a significant participation of women in the country's entrepreneurial sphere, it can be assumed that women are represented in most cases in small businesses and to a lesser extent in medium-sized businesses, where a larger amount of capital is required. Table 3 describes this clearly.

*Table 3. The main indicators of small and medium-sized enterprises in Kazakhstan*

Indicator	Total	Including		
		Legal entities	Individual entrepreneurship	Peasant farming
Total number of SMEs	1 818 764	343 508	1 234 536	240 720
SME entities headed by women	891 904	99 906	726 885	65 113
%	49,04	29,08	58,88	27,05
Total employed in SMEs	4 106 991	2 106 098	1 678 463	322 430
Employed in SMEs headed by women	1 385 806	586 870	719 589	79 347
%	34	28	43	25

*Source: (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021)*

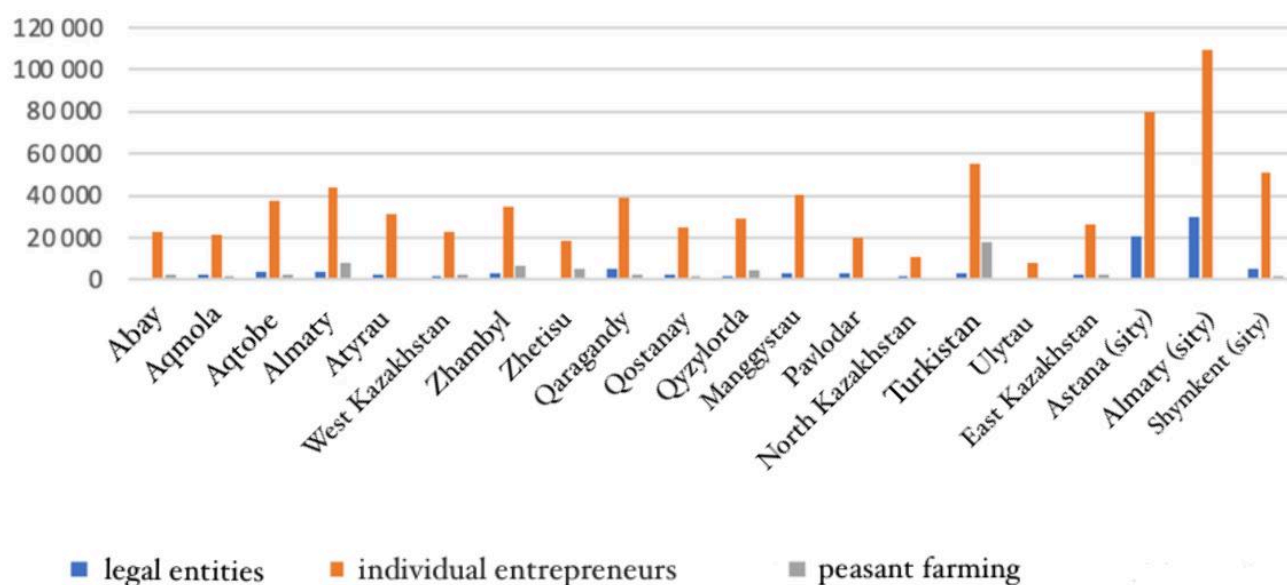
It is also important to pay attention to the percentage of employees in SMEs headed by women, which amounted to 34% of all employees in SMEs. That is, women for the most part do not create additional jobs, but rather provide their own employment. For example, the number of individual female entrepreneurs (719 thousand people) practically corresponds to the number of people employed in individual entrepreneurs (726 thousand people). Thus, we can say that the potential of

women entrepreneurs in creating additional jobs and medium-sized enterprises is not sufficiently tapped.

*Regional profile of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan*

- The largest number of legal entities headed by women are registered in the cities of Almaty (30 thousand) and Astana (20 thousand). In other regions, the number of legal entities headed by women is much smaller, for example, the city of Shymkent is in third place (5.4 thousand).
- The leaders in the number of individual entrepreneurs - women are also Almaty (109,197 individual entrepreneurs) and Astana (79,623 individual entrepreneurs), Turkestan region (55,141 individual entrepreneurs) and the city of Shymkent (50,887 individual entrepreneurs).
- The largest number of peasant (farm) households (farm) headed by women: Turkestan region (18,065 peasant farms), Almaty region (7,889 peasant farms) and Zhambyl region (6,380 peasant farms).
- The smallest number of legal entities headed by women is registered in the regions of Ulytau (494), Zhetysu (1251) and Abay (1281).
- The regions with the smallest number of individual entrepreneurs (IEs) are the Ulytau region (8,192), Zhetysu (18,375) and the North Kazakhstan region (10,804), (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021).

Figure 2. Regional profile of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan



Source: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021

Figure 2 shows that the Ulytau region has the smallest number of registered individual entrepreneurs headed by women, but there are 37 of them per 1000 people, which exceeds other regions. For example, in the Pavlodar region there are 26 individual entrepreneurs per 1000 people, in Zhetysu - 26 and the North Kazakhstan region - 20 individual entrepreneurs.

If we do not take into account cities of republican significance, the smallest number of peasant (farm) farms (farms) are in Mangystau (980 farms), Atyrau (941 farms) and Ulytau region (933 farms).

Cities of republican significance and densely populated regions are drivers of growth for small and medium-sized businesses headed by women. Newly created regions such as Abay, Zhetysu and Ulytau regions are also showing growth. At the same time, there is a significant gap in the statistics of small and medium-sized businesses headed by women between regions, which indicates a significant untapped potential of women's entrepreneurship in the regions.

## ***2.4 Women's and men's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan: visible differences***

It is estimated that the contribution of women's entrepreneurship to Kazakhstan's GDP is up to 40%. However, the National Bureau of Statistics does not keep separate records of the contribution to GDP of men and women in all sectors, including small and medium-sized businesses. Nevertheless, we can conclude that there is no real equality in the field of entrepreneurship based on the fact that in large, medium, and small enterprises, men are leaders in types of activities. In large and medium-sized enterprises, the number of men is 1501.8 thousand, while women are 1296.2 thousand. That is, women entrepreneurs are employed to a greater extent in small businesses. In larger, larger, more profitable industries and higher value-added business sectors, there are far fewer women than men. It is also worth pointing out that men in Kazakhstan earn 21.7% more than women in the same fields of activity. For example, in Belgium the gap is 3.4%, in Norway - 4.8%, Germany - 5.6%, Israel - 22.7%, South Korea - 31.5% (National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021).

The difference in government support for business based on gender is also obvious. The share of women entrepreneurs receiving financial support from the state is 32%. This includes preferential bank lending and grants. While the level of non-financial support provided with the participation of women entrepreneurs is 45%. Although the media presents various data on the size and measures of government support for women's entrepreneurship and there are various initiatives to support women's entrepreneurship both from international financial institutions (ADB, EBRD), private companies (Visa, Coca-cola, etc.), and the state ("Damu", Otbas Bank, NPP "Atameken"), the information is chaotic, there is no holistic approach to the generation of data and their further use for the purpose of assessing and making decisions to improve the business environment for women entrepreneurs.

## ***2.5 Main problems in the development of women's entrepreneurship***

The development of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan is limited by the same problems that men experience when developing business in the country. However, there are two other important aspects to women's entrepreneurship development that together make the task even more challenging.

- The distribution of roles in the family, which affects the lack of time, knowledge and resources of women

In Kazakhstan, women spend three times more time on housework than men. Women's time expenditure associated with household responsibilities often leads to a lack of financial savings, insufficient time to engage in business, and decreased attractiveness as an employee (“motherhood penalty”). In other words, we are talking about unpaid domestic work, which, by taking up women’s time and energy, essentially impedes their realization. Separately, it is worth pointing out that the common problem for all entrepreneurs associated with financing and obtaining loans becomes more acute here, which is associated with the greater involvement of women in household chores. This situation is often reflected in a lack of solid business knowledge, skills and competencies, and a lack of necessary business experience. It is also worth noting here such trends that aggravate the situation, such as the increase in the number of single-parent families, the low level of involvement of men in raising children, and the increase in the number of cases of problematic alimony: from 2016 to 2020 - by 9.8%. Thus, research data from 2021 demonstrate that if the level of independent interaction with the child on the mother’s side is 38%, then on the part of fathers it is 2%.

- Socio-cultural context, which affects both public and personal attitudes of women

If we are talking about society, then the widespread prevalence of gender stereotypes regarding business as a male profession limits the activities of women in entrepreneurship on the same level as men as business partners, including in the perception of society and government. This, in turn, is reflected in the insufficiency of stimulating conditions for the growth of women's enterprises in some areas of the economy, in particular the agricultural sector. In addition, women themselves experience difficulties of a socio-psychological nature associated with lack of self-confidence, lack of rigidity and motivation, since women, no less than financial, need moral support, motivation and support from the environment, success stories of other women. It is also worth noting that, according to research, family support is of great importance for women entrepreneurs, while in the realities of Kazakhstan, men are significantly more likely than women to support the belief that women should take care of children and perform household duties. Additionally, a significant proportion of both men (39%) and women (36%) do not share the view that men should share housework with women, such as washing dishes, cleaning or cooking. These facts are reflected, among other things, in the fact that today the main motive for most women entering business in Kazakhstan is the loss of a job, a forced measure or a successful combination of circumstances, and not a conscious decision or choice.

### ***2.6 Benefits of developing women's entrepreneurship***

The development of entrepreneurship is an important factor in the fight for gender equality, and, as researchers note, an independent woman who is able to earn money, engage in her own development, and achieve her goals will not silently endure violence in any of its manifestations. At the same time, support for women's entrepreneurship is needed not only from the point of view of women's more vulnerable positions, but also due to the understanding that women are an indispensable resource for economic growth. Women's businesses are more often focused on socially oriented industries and areas of providing services that can help

others - healthcare, education and social welfare. Women are more likely to launch startups based on a problem they themselves face. Thus, they reinvest more than 90% of their income in their families and in the education of their children, that is, investing in women's businesses is essentially an investment in improving society. Women's entrepreneurship has a long-term positive effect in terms of reducing poverty and unemployment in the country, as well as developing human capital.

Advancing women's equality could boost annual global economic growth by \$28 trillion by 2025, according to the McKinsey Global Institute. For Central Asian and Eastern European countries, promoting gender equality will add 9% to expected GDP growth. If we look at the traditional GDP growth forecast provided by the Ministry of National Economy by 2025, and add McKinsey's forecast, taking into account the promotion of gender equality, the GDP growth rate will almost triple. This means that the additional contribution to the economy with equal participation of women will be 14.3%, or 4.5 trillion tenge (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015).

Here are some interesting facts about women's entrepreneurship globally, along with references for further exploration:

- **Growing Numbers:** As of 2019, there were an estimated 252 million women entrepreneurs worldwide. Additionally, about 153 million women were operating established businesses. This represents significant engagement in entrepreneurship by women across the globe (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019/2020 Women's Report).
- **Economic Impact:** Women-owned businesses contribute substantially to the global economy. In the United States alone, women-owned businesses generated \$1.8 trillion in revenue in 2019. This highlights the significant economic impact of female entrepreneurs (American Express, 2019 State of Women-Owned Businesses Report).
- **Sector Diversity:** While traditionally concentrated in sectors like retail and personal services, an increasing number of women are entering fields such as

technology and biotech. This diversification is helping to challenge and change the landscape of industries traditionally dominated by men (Forbes, 2020).

- **Challenges in Funding:** Despite their economic impact, women entrepreneurs often face significant barriers to funding. Studies have shown that venture capital funding for women-led startups is disproportionately low. In 2019, only 2.7% of venture capital dollars went to women-led startups (Crunchbase, 2020).
- **Higher Business Sustainability:** Research indicates that women-led businesses tend to sustain their operations longer than those led by men. This could be attributed to more cautious business planning and better risk management (Kauffman Foundation, 2018).
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic had a pronounced impact on women entrepreneurs. A survey conducted in 2020 found that women business owners were more likely than their male counterparts to report their operations were strongly affected by the pandemic (Facebook, 2020 State of Small Business Report).
- **Global Leadership:** Countries like Ghana and Russia have the highest rates of women entrepreneurship, with women making up about 40% of the total entrepreneurs in these countries. This demonstrates significant leadership by women in the entrepreneurial spaces within these regions (Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, 2020).

Here are some interesting facts about women entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan, along with references for further exploration:

Kazakhstan has seen a rise in the number of women entrepreneurs over recent years. By 2019, women accounted for about 42% of the country's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This marks a substantial contribution to the diversification and resilience of the national economy (Asian Development Bank, 2019). Women in Kazakhstan predominantly operate businesses in sectors such as

retail, education, health care, and social services. These sectors align closely with traditionally female-dominated industries, although there is a growing presence of women in technology and finance (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). The Kazakhstani government has implemented various programs to support women entrepreneurs, including the "Business Road Map 2020" which provides financial and educational support aimed at fostering small and medium business growth. Special attention is given to projects led by women (Government of Kazakhstan, Business Road Map 2020). Despite these supports, women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan still face significant barriers to accessing finance. They are less likely to obtain bank loans compared to their male counterparts and often rely on personal savings or family support to fund their businesses (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2019). With the rise of digital technology, many women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan are moving their businesses online, which has opened new opportunities and challenges. Digital platforms have become a critical tool for women to expand their businesses beyond local markets (International Finance Corporation, 2020). There are numerous initiatives and programs aimed at improving the skills and capacities of women entrepreneurs. For example, the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan "Atameken" runs training programs specifically designed for women to enhance their business management and entrepreneurial skills (Atameken Business Channel, 2021). A significant number of women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan operate in rural areas, where entrepreneurship is often seen as a viable path to improving living standards and economic independence. Programs aimed at rural women include training in agricultural techniques and small-scale manufacturing (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2017).

By incorporating these Kazakhstani perspectives, the literature review not only addresses global and theoretical aspects of women's entrepreneurship but also deeply engages with the local context, providing a comprehensive backdrop for your study. This approach ensures that your research is grounded in both international and Kazakhstani academic discourse, offering a richer and more relevant analysis.

Several successful companies have been founded by women, showcasing their innovation and leadership in various industries. Here are some notable examples:

**Cisco Systems** - Co-founded by Sandra Lerner in 1984. Cisco revolutionized networking technology and has grown into a multinational technology conglomerate. Sandra Lerner, co-founder of Cisco Systems, was motivated by the technical challenges and limitations she and her then-husband, Leonard Bosack, encountered while working at Stanford University. They were motivated to find a way to link their computer networks across different buildings on the campus, which was not feasible with the existing technology at the time. This practical need led them to develop the multi-protocol router, a pivotal innovation that would not only solve their immediate connectivity problems but also revolutionize data communication across disparate networks (The Story Exchange).

**23andMe** - Founded by Anne Wojcicki in 2006. The company specializes in biotechnology and personal genomics, providing genetic testing services directly to consumers (The Story Exchange).

**Canva** - Co-founded by Melanie Perkins in 2012. Canva is a graphic design tool that simplifies creating visual content and is extensively used for both personal and professional purposes. Melanie Perkins was motivated to found Canva by her experiences during university, where she taught other students basic design skills. She found the existing design software too complex and cumbersome, which sparked her idea to create a more user-friendly, online design tool. Her initial venture, Fusion Books, focused on simplifying the design process for school yearbooks, which eventually evolved into Canva. Perkins faced numerous rejections and challenges along the way but persisted, driven by her belief in the need for easier design tools and her vision of democratizing design. Her journey was marked by a combination of innovation, a focus on simplifying design for the masses, and overcoming skepticism from investors who doubted the potential of her idea to compete with established giants like Adobe (The CEO Magazine; Tactyqal, n.d.; The Story Watch).

**Glossier** - Founded by Emily Weiss in 2014. Glossier started as a beauty blog and transformed into a powerhouse for skincare and cosmetics focusing on individual beauty (The Story Exchange).

**The Honest Company** - Co-founded by Jessica Alba in 2011. The company focuses on household goods, diapers, and body care products that are environmentally friendly and safe for children (The Story Exchange).

These entrepreneurs have not only created successful businesses but also paved the way for future generations of women leaders in the business world. Their stories are an inspiration and highlight the impact of female entrepreneurship on global industries (The Story Exchange, n.d.; U.S. Chamber of Commerce). Also, there are a lot of corporations around the world led by women. These leaders have not only proved their mettle in highly competitive environments but also serve as role models for aspiring entrepreneurs and executives. Here are some notable examples:

**General Motors** - Mary Barra became the CEO of General Motors in 2014, making history as the first female CEO of a major global automaker. Under her leadership, GM has focused on innovation, sustainability, and developing electric vehicles, significantly transforming the company's strategic direction (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

**IBM** - Ginni Rometty served as the CEO of IBM from 2012 to 2020. During her tenure, she led significant shifts in the company's strategy, focusing on technology sectors like cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and blockchain (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

**Oracle** - Safra Catz has served as the CEO of Oracle since 2014. She has been instrumental in steering Oracle through strategic acquisitions and enhancing its cloud services, significantly impacting its growth and market presence (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

**PepsiCo** - Indra Nooyi was the CEO of PepsiCo from 2006 to 2018. She was known for reorienting PepsiCo towards healthier products and was a pioneer among women and minorities in top executive roles (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

**YouTube** - Susan Wojcicki has been the CEO of YouTube since 2014. She has guided YouTube through expansive growth in content and viewership, navigating complex issues around content policies and monetization (U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

These leaders exemplify the growing trend of female leadership in diverse sectors, highlighting significant strides in breaking the glass ceiling in traditionally male-dominated industries. Their achievements contribute to a broader narrative of increasing gender diversity at the highest levels of corporate governance (The Story Exchange, n.d.; U.S. Chamber of Commerce).

#### *Conclusion of Literature Review*

By incorporating these Kazakhstani perspectives, the literature review not only addresses global and theoretical aspects of women's entrepreneurship but also deeply engages with the local context, providing a comprehensive backdrop for study.

This expanded literature review demonstrates the rich and diverse studies conducted on female entrepreneurship, highlighting both global and region-specific dynamics. It also establishes a solid theoretical foundation for examining the specific conditions that motivate women in Kazakhstan to engage in entrepreneurship. The insights from these studies will directly inform the data collection and analysis phases of your research, aiming to contribute to the body of knowledge on gender and entrepreneurship and help shape future support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs in emerging economies.

### **3. Methodology**

Since there is a limited amount of research focused specifically on female entrepreneurship, particularly within the unique socio-cultural landscape of Kazakhstan, this study aims to delve deeper into current practices and offer new perspectives in this field. Employing an interpretative perspective, the research examines the goals, motivations, and challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in the patriarchal environment of Kazakhstan. As highlighted by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), it is essential to "explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of social actors" to fully understand their behaviors and decisions. This paradigm enables researchers to grasp the complexities and nuances of evolving environments and the implications for individuals operating within them (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson 2008).

To achieve a more profound understanding of the experiences and behaviors of individual female entrepreneurs, the interpretive paradigm is applied through detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the regulative, normative, and cognitive dimensions, as well as their manifestations in real-life contexts (Gephart 2004; Leitch, Hill, and Harrison 2010). This methodological approach is essential for uncovering the deeper structures and meanings that underpin the actions and decisions of female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan.

The research employs narrative inquiry to access and comprehend the participants' unique social constructions of reality. This approach is particularly suitable for gathering qualitative data from individual female entrepreneurs operating within the Kazakhstani context (Sheila 2009). The objective of the study is to reconstruct these narratives to understand what has transpired and to identify the mechanisms driving the obstacles and motivations encountered by these entrepreneurs. Qualitative data is recommended for this type of research because it allows for a more nuanced and comprehensive representation of women's voices, enabling "a feminist sensitivity to come to the fore" (Bryman and Bell 2015, p. 418).

### ***3.1 Research sample and data collection***

A subjective sampling method was employed, guided by recommendations and existing networks to identify suitable participants. The selection criteria were twofold: (a) female entrepreneurs who had been actively engaged in running a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) for at least one year, and (b) those whose business operations were based in Kazakhstan. To meet the study's objectives, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with these female entrepreneurs to gather qualitative data. The semi-structured format allowed for the use of many open-ended questions, some of which were derived from the study's theoretical framework. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Jackson (2008), such interviews are advantageous as they enable the researcher to "capture the interpretation of a phenomenon in relation to the interviewee's worldview" in a flexible manner that is "not structured in advance" (p. 143). This flexibility is further endorsed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), who highlight the benefits over more rigid structured interviews.

Each interview session lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, conducted in the language most comfortable for the participant, whether Russian or Kazakh, to ensure a meaningful and relaxed dialogue. The interviews took place in person, via telephone, or through Zoom. With the participants' consent, the conversations were recorded, transcribed, and subsequently translated into English for analysis. To ensure clarity and comprehension, the interview process deliberately avoided the use of theoretical and academic jargon (Bryman and Bell 2015). The interviewing process was halted after 20 participants, as it became evident that data saturation had been achieved—no new information or themes were emerging (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006). Table 4 provides further details on the profiles of these female entrepreneurs.

*Table 4. Participants (female entrepreneurs' profiles)*

Personal profile	No.	Business profile	No.
Age		No. of employees	
20-29	6	Less than 10	4
30-39	10	10-24	9
40-49	4	24-50	5
51 and above	0	51 and above	2
Marital status:	No.	No. of years in business:	No.
Single	4	5 years and above	14
Married	4	Less than 5 years	6
Divorced	2	Business sectors:	No.
Children:	No.	Traditional female-dominated (education/child development; personal care/domestic; catering; handmade; health/wellness; fashion)	12
No children	4	Non-traditional, male-dominated (optical services; consulting; construction/building materials; IT/technology; equestrian services; agriculture)	8
One or more	16	Business locations:	No.
Main experience before entrepreneurship:	No.	Almaty	9
Student/No experience	4	Astana	4
Housewife/Experienced	16	Shymkent	2
Educational level:	No.	East Kazakhstan	2
Secondary school	20	Kyzylorda	1
Bachelor degree	19	Aktobe	1
Master degree	2	Pavlodar	1

The participants ranged in age from 21 to 45, and their businesses spanned both traditionally female-dominated sectors such as fashion, retail, and catering, as well as typically male-dominated industries like manufacturing, consulting, and finance.

### ***3.2 Data Analysis***

The Maxqda program was employed to facilitate an efficient analysis of the qualitative data collected. This software enabled a thorough analysis of diverse codes, successfully identifying key subjects within the datasets and uncovering various linkages and relationships within the data. Utilizing a structured coding methodology,

the data were transformed into multiple levels of codes, encompassing both descriptive and logical categories. Various techniques, such as "splitting" and "splicing," were employed to streamline the development of these codes at different stages of the analysis.

The 'split' technique was applied to perform a detailed examination by coding the data line by line, ensuring a meticulous and granular analysis. Conversely, the "splice" method was used to merge data by establishing connections across different categories, thereby integrating various data streams and combining data fragments to create a coherent interpretation. The "separation" technique was primarily used to identify and differentiate elements within the realms of regulation, governance, and cognition.

Following this, a comprehensive strategy was developed to establish a systematic approach aimed at incentivizing women to engage in entrepreneurial activities. By correlating data pieces and subcategories, the significance and impact of these elements on the primary categories were assessed, facilitating the identification of key areas of investigation. The analysis included comparisons conducted both within and across categories to amalgamate them into a unified whole. This section demonstrated the use of various data analysis techniques, including the use of several types of diagrams such as cluster analysis and tree maps, to visually represent the findings and enhance the clarity of the data interpretation.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### *Institutional Perspectives*

As the institutional theory suggests, the experiences of female entrepreneurs are deeply embedded within the regulative and socio-normative environments, as well as women's cognitive internalized values and personal needs. The following section presents the findings related to these dimensions.

#### **4.1 Regulatory Dimension**

The Kazakhstani government has developed various initiatives and programs to facilitate entry into the private sector. Several participants highlighted the effectiveness of government incentives, including the DAMU center's programs, which provide micro-credits to female entrepreneurs and finance programs designed for specific types of businesses such as kindergartens and agricultural manufacturing. For instance, one participant stated:

*"The DAMU programs have been incredibly helpful. Without their micro-credits, I wouldn't have been able to start my kindergarten business." (Participant A)*

However, other participants mentioned the necessity of using bribes to navigate bureaucratic hurdles and expedite processes. Participant B noted:

*"Unfortunately, to get things done quickly, we often have to resort to giving bribes. It's an unspoken rule that everyone seems to follow."*

This practice reflects a lack of effective institutional control and the persistence of corruption within public offices. Many female entrepreneurs expressed frustration with the bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption that stymie their efforts to establish and grow their businesses. Participant C shared:

*"Dealing with government officials is always a challenge. They make the process so cumbersome that without 'greasing the wheels,' it's almost impossible to move forward."*

Lee and Tai (2010) argue that the context in transitional economies is often unfavorable for entrepreneurial activities due to overpowering authorities and complex registration procedures. This study corroborates these issues, highlighting the significant hurdles female entrepreneurs face, such as dealing with excessive inspections and interference from officials. Participant D illustrated this point:

*"The amount of paperwork and the constant inspections are overwhelming. They seem more interested in finding faults to extract bribes rather than genuinely helping businesses succeed."*

Women from lower social class backgrounds particularly struggle with these challenges, as they often lack the financial resources to hire professionals to assist with the registration process or to pay bribes. This creates a significant barrier to entry for many potential entrepreneurs. The cluster analysis reveals a strong relationship between regulatory challenges such as bribery, overpowering authorities, and the bureaucratic registration process. These challenges foster a general mistrust and sarcastic attitude toward the government's support for entrepreneurship. Participant E expressed:

*"I don't trust the government to support us genuinely. They are more interested in their own gains, leaving us to fend for ourselves."*

#### **4.2 Normative Dimension**

The motivations and challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan are significantly influenced by the normative system, which encompasses societal expectations and gender roles. Participants frequently mentioned the difficulty of

balancing family responsibilities with business obligations. For instance, Participant F commented:

*"Balancing my business with family duties is a constant struggle. Society expects women to prioritize their families, which adds extra pressure."*

Gender stereotypes and discrimination further hinder their entrepreneurial efforts. Many women reported being stereotyped as less capable or facing scepticism about their business acumen. Participant G shared:

*"People often doubt my abilities just because I'm a woman. They think my business success is due to my husband's support, not my own efforts."*

This societal bias is rooted in the patriarchal structure of Kazakhstani society, where women are traditionally expected to be caregivers rather than business leaders. As noted by Low (2007), these expectations significantly impact women's entrepreneurial activities. Participant H reflected on her upbringing:

*"Growing up, I was taught to be a good housewife. Business was never considered an option for me. It was only later that I realized my potential and pursued it."*

Many women are drawn to self-employment as a way to balance family and work responsibilities while meeting societal expectations. The 'family logic' is evident in their motivations, as Participant I explained:

*"I started my business during maternity leave. I wanted more flexibility to spend time with my children while still contributing financially."*

In patriarchal cultures, being a 'female boss' is often seen as unnatural, creating additional barriers. Participant J noted:

*"Managing male employees is challenging. They often feel uncomfortable taking instructions from a woman, which complicates my role as a leader."*

Despite these challenges, female entrepreneurs often leverage their networks and the support of their male relatives to overcome obstacles. Participant K stated:

*"My husband's connections were crucial in getting my business off the ground. Without his support, it would have been much more difficult."*

This study demonstrates that family support and networking play vital roles in the success of female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan, challenging the notion that such support is more beneficial to men, as suggested by Manolova et al. (2007).

Another entrepreneur shared an experience that significantly influenced her management style and business growth:

*"In 2018, an employee who had just been with us for a month left me. And then I questioned him, 'Azamat, why are you leaving? We don't seem to have any conflicts, and we try to help each other in everything.' He said that it was because there were too many of me. It sort of shook me up. I understood that occasionally owners need to go away from the firm for a short period of time since their personnel know how to accomplish their jobs. I am grateful to this man for dumping cold water on me at the time, since as a result, my business increased fivefold." (Participant S)*

She further described the initial challenges and the resilience required to overcome societal skepticism:

*"Seven years ago, when we initially opened, only a lazy person didn't hurl a stone at me. I've received several unfavorable remarks from the guests. Of course, Almaty had me in tears. My entire family was thinking, 'After six months of playing, this shop will close.' Even my hubby wasn't certain. I honestly admit that I suffered from this, couldn't sleep at night, and was so scared that I was erased from all social media and stopped reading about it. I can't say I've become used to it over time. It always pains me." (Participant R)*

#### **4.3 Cognitive Dimension**

Education and industry experience are identified as crucial cognitive factors that motivate and enable women to develop entrepreneurial skills. All participants had undergraduate degrees, and some had advanced qualifications from Western countries. These educational backgrounds provide them with the confidence and knowledge necessary to succeed. Participant L explained:

*"Studying abroad gave me a broader perspective and the confidence to start my own business. It showed me that I could achieve much more than I initially thought."*

Women in Kazakhstan often compensate for their lack of industry knowledge through family support, both emotional and financial. This support is vital in the planning and establishment phases of their businesses. Participant M shared:

*"My family was incredibly supportive. They helped with planning and provided the financial backing needed to get started. Their belief in my vision was a huge motivator."*

The shift from a communist regime to a democratic government has opened opportunities for Kazakhstani residents to study abroad and bring back valuable knowledge to the emerging market. Education not only facilitates business launches but also provides a safety net, making female entrepreneurs feel more secure in their ventures. Participant N said:

*"Knowing I have a solid education to fall back on if my business fails gives me the confidence to take risks and innovate."*

The flexibility offered by self-employment is a significant motivational factor, appealing to women across various marital statuses. Participant O highlighted:

*"Entrepreneurship allows me to balance my personal interests and family needs. It's the perfect solution for someone who values flexibility as much as I do."*

Creativity and the ability to identify market gaps are also essential traits observed in successful female entrepreneurs. The under-developed market in Kazakhstan presents unique opportunities that these women are well-positioned to exploit. Participant P remarked:

*"The market in Kazakhstan is still developing, which means there are plenty of opportunities for those who are creative and willing to take risks."*

One participant shared her journey:

*"My main drive was to find a solution to reconcile my family obligations and career goals. As my girls became older, I wanted to direct my energies toward something worthwhile while still allowing me to spend more time with them. I discovered a gap in the market for high-quality horseback riding classes and saw an opportunity to build a business around it. Initially, I attended riding teacher training and conducted significant study on establishing and operating a stable. I also invested in high-quality horses and equipment to guarantee a high level of service." (Participant Q)*

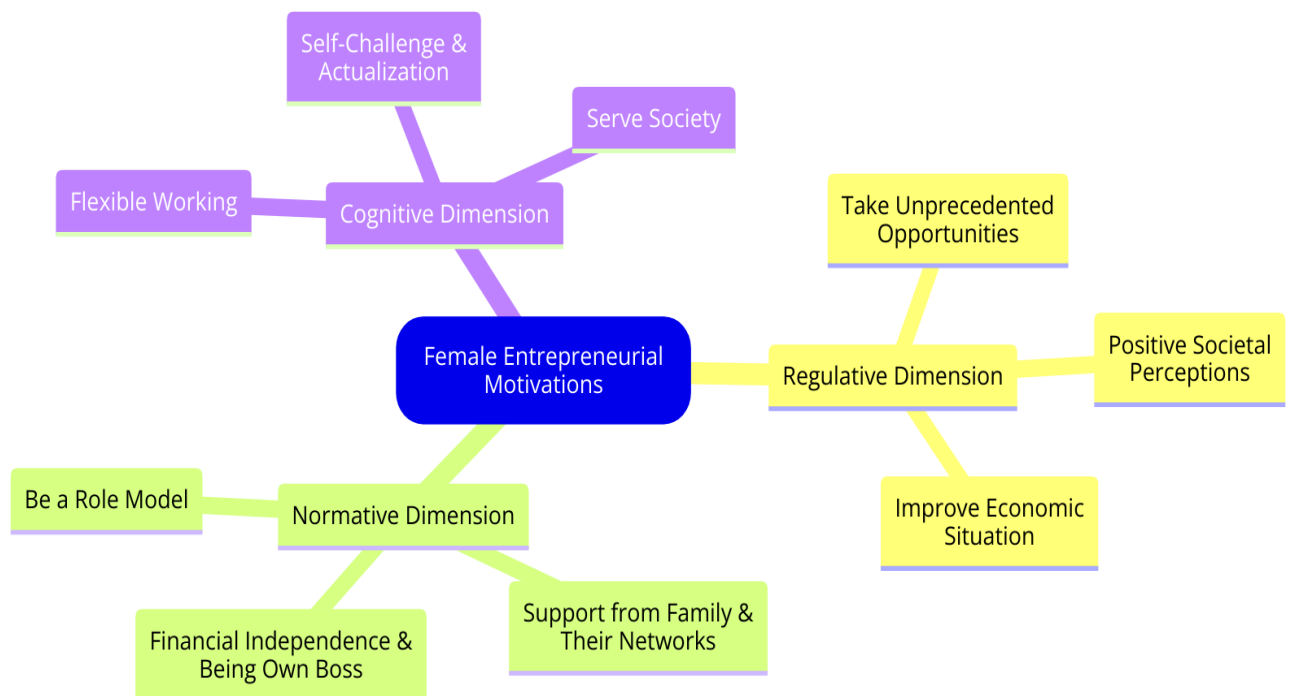
Another participant highlighted her motivation to create a supportive environment for women:

*"I was looking for halal earnings and tried many niches, but growth was slow everywhere. At that time, I was raising my son alone; he was two years old, and I had divorced his father. I needed a stable income and wanted to help women like me by creating better working conditions for them. I wanted to benefit my ummah. Women in hijab had one solution - to call a master to their home, but this did not solve the main problem: women did not rest and did not enjoy the service because they were at home. Considering many such factors, I decided to take a risk and open the first Muslim salon for women in the entire CIS." (Participant R)*

#### 4.4 Framework for female entrepreneurial motivations

A comprehensive study was conducted to identify all the variables associated with motivation, grounded in research and findings across three key areas of institutional theory: regulative, normative, and cognitive dimensions. By systematically integrating these motivating elements, the study aimed to develop a holistic framework to uncover the diverse motives driving women's entrepreneurship. This framework provides a nuanced understanding of how various factors such as regulatory policies, societal norms, and individual cognitive attributes collectively influence women's decisions to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. The integration of these elements enables a deeper exploration of the underlying motivations and barriers faced by female entrepreneurs, offering valuable insights into the complex interplay of institutional forces that shape their entrepreneurial activities. Figure 3 demonstrates this approach.

Figure 3. Framework for female entrepreneurial motivations.



Source: Figure 3 was created according to the article of Hong T.M. Bui, Alua Kuan & Tuan T. Chu (2018)

Figure 3 illustrates the entrepreneurial motivations of three distinct categories of women, highlighting the influence of regulatory, normative and cognitive factors. These categories are shaped by a combination of personal beliefs, societal expectations, and cultural norms. The cognitive and normative drivers identified in this study align with those reported in previous research by Ismail, Shamsudin, and Chowdhury (2012) as well as Zimmerman and Chu (2013), indicating consistent themes across different contexts. However, the regulatory motivations for women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan exhibit significant variation due to the unique socio-economic landscape of the region. The societal perspective on women's roles and regulations is gradually evolving, reflecting broader shifts in gender dynamics. The country's transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented system has created unprecedented opportunities for both men and women, fostering an environment where entrepreneurial activities can flourish. This evolution highlights the importance of regulatory frameworks that support and encourage female entrepreneurship, facilitating their active participation in the economic sphere.

## 5. Conclusion

### *Conclusions based on both theoretical and practical aspects*

This article addresses the demand for further investigation into women's entrepreneurship in emerging industries and countries undergoing economic changes (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). It employs institutional theory to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs and establish a framework for understanding the factors that drive women's entrepreneurship in a male-dominated society. Critical theoretical and empirical sources that improve our knowledge of women's entrepreneurship are thoroughly examined in this study. The work combines a thorough analysis at the person level with the regulatory, normative, and cognitive elements of institutional theory by looking at how institutional contexts affect entrepreneurial activities. With the use of this method, one may investigate in more detail how institutional norms and values influence people's thoughts and behaviors in the context of entrepreneurship.

By focusing on female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan, this analysis also fills a large empirical vacuum in the literature on the post-Soviet area and Central Asia. The study clarifies how these business owners negotiate the sometimes contradictory standards that are part of their culture while adjusting to the economic shift from a communist to a market-oriented one. Using a thorough qualitative methodology, this study looks into the reasons behind and difficulties encountered by women who work for themselves in a particular setting while enabling participants to express their experiences in their mother tongue. The validity of the study is increased and a clear and structured presentation of the results is made possible by the use of Maxqda software in data analysis.

Several trends in Kazakh society are shown by the study, including the impact of the bureaucratic government, market dynamics, and nuclear family structure on the behavior and actions of women entrepreneurs. Remarkably, most women launch their

businesses and ingeniously get around challenges by using accepted conventions and practices rather than questioning institutional processes or logic. The business endeavors of women are quite important during Kazakhstan's transitional time. These actions, including opening daycare and educational facilities, improve society's general well-being in the lack of sufficient institutional support.

This article shows that changes in institutional frameworks and the transfer of values brought about by Westernization affect women's reasons to become entrepreneurs differently across generations. Moreover, even under the same institutional framework, people's entrepreneurial activity might vary according to their age, industry, and social status. This study finds that while many women in developing and post-Soviet nations follow patriarchal standards, some are able to break with expectations and use their own successful techniques. This study emphasizes the need of quickly changing the bureaucratic regulatory system and business entry procedures (Clapper, Leven, and Rajan, 2006) to encourage more women to participate in entrepreneurial activities and the need of raising public awareness of entrepreneurship as a viable career option for women (Rodriguez and Santos, 2009).

Policymakers will find use for the research's results as well, especially those who want to know more about the intricacies of women's entrepreneurship in comparable situations. The report underlines the need of increasing chances for women's entrepreneurship and identifies the crucial areas where women require help. The actual potential of women entrepreneurs will go unrealized until these obstacles are removed and gender norms are changed to properly encourage women.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1. General interview information*

<b>№</b>	<b>Interviewee (Name and Surname)</b>	<b>Name of business</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Date of the Interview</b>	<b>Place of the Interview taken</b>	<b>Duration (in minutes)</b>
1	Anna Yakovleva	Co-founder of Actual Optic	40 years	01.03.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
2	Aliya Aubakirova	Head of RedMark film company	45 years	05.03.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
3	Gauhar Kaparova	Co-founder and CEO of G&G	45 years	10.03.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
4	Ainura Umayeva	General Director of "Tainyi Sovetnik" LLP	38 years	15.03.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
5	Aida Maksutova	Founder of Halal Beauty Salons Network	37 years	20.03.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
6	Oksana Kim-Flyosk	Co-founder of Umami and Compote brands	30 years	25.03.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
7	Olga Ilyina	Proprietor of Yellow Lemons restaurant	29 years	30.03.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
8	Aliya Imangalieva	Director of Anescom	35 years	05.04.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
9	Alyona Tkachenko	Co-founder and CEO of IT business Nommi	29 years	10.04.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
10	Bayan Uderbayeva	Founder of "Rauan" Educational Centre	30 years	15.04.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
11	Saule Orynbai	Founder of a beauty shop franchise	26 years	20.04.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
12	Amina Karimova	Founder of a cafe	28 years	25.04.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
13	Madina Baimukhanova	Founder of an agricultural enterprise	32 years	01.05.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
14	Aizhan Zhanpeisova	Founder of a Handmade Jewelry Business	38 years	05.05.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
15	Saule Abenova	Founder of Astana Educational Consultancy	32 years	10.05.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
16	Alina Beketova	Founder of a marketing agency	40 years	15.05.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
17	Dina Kassenova	Founder of a Horseback Riding School	39 years	20.05.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
18	Balauza Ekpin	Founder of an Online Shop	21 years	25.05.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes
19	Aishuak Khairolla	Founder of an Online Retail Business	22 years	01.06.2024	Online via Google Meet	60 minutes
20	Gulzhan Serikova	Founder of a Health and Wellness Startup	30 years	05.06.2024	Online via Zoom	60 minutes

## Appendix 2. Transcribed interview questions

Anna Yakovleva	
Question	Answer
Could you briefly describe how you got started in the business world?	My journey into entrepreneurship started over two decades ago, following my high school graduation. I made the decision to launch my own company without any prior experience in entrepreneurship. Since then, my whole focus has been on growing this company and accomplishing my objectives.
What impact does your family have on your motivation and entrepreneurial decisions?	My family greatly influences my business and life. Being a mother of two girls, I always consider motherhood as the most important duty. My parents and siblings' accomplishments and triumphs cheer me on and inspire me to do great things.
When it comes to your business dealings, which beliefs and ideals do you uphold?	I follow fundamental guidelines like the quest for excellence and superior quality. I believe in doing things to the best of your ability. Having a variety of personalities and approaches to problem-solving helps maintain equilibrium in various spheres of my life and career.
What drives you to keep growing your company and pushing yourself to new limits?	My primary drive is to offer top-notch services that improve people's lives. Seeing the positive effects on our clients' vision and general well-being motivates me to continue developing and expanding our services. My family's encouragement also drives me forward.
What elements motivate women in contemporary Kazakhstan to start their own businesses?	Women may pursue entrepreneurship for financial independence, self-realization, and support from family and community. Confidence in their own talents and self-awareness are also critical factors.
What difficulties and roadblocks did you face while starting your own business, and how did you get beyond them?	As an entrepreneur, I faced challenges like the need for ongoing education and training to stay current with trends and technology. Time and resource management skills were crucial for successfully growing the firm.
How do you keep up with the newest developments in your field's trends and technologies?	I participate in professional networks and attend international conferences and seminars. These platforms provide insights into the latest developments and allow us to incorporate new methods and technology into our offerings.
What morals and values would you like to instill in your kids and the people in your community?	I aim to be a good example, valuing sincerity and transparency. I teach my kids respect for others, appreciation of hard work, and the capacity to overcome challenges. Education and personal growth are also important for success.
What is your outlook for your company's future and how will it contribute to the advancement of society?	Our company aims to create cutting-edge technology and deliver superior services to assist individuals in preserving and enhancing their vision. We also actively engage in community activities, such as providing free screening tests, to support a thriving and healthy society.
What difficulties do you have as an entrepreneur, particularly given your gender?	Stereotypes and bigotry pose challenges, but demonstrating professionalism and skill through actions is crucial. Family and community support are also important in overcoming these challenges.
In what way do you measure your impact on the advancement of commerce and society?	By coming up with creative ideas and offering top-notch services that enhance people's lives, I contribute to the advancement of business and society. Participation in public and philanthropic efforts also supports societal development.
How do you believe other women may be inspired to become entrepreneurs by your story and example?	My story demonstrates that bravery, tenacity, and resolve can lead to success. It shows that self-belief and responsibility for one's life and future can help overcome challenges.
How do you manage to juggle your responsibilities as a mother and family	Balancing responsibilities requires preparation, organization, and prioritizing both family and work obligations. Finding balance between work and personal life is crucial for prosperity and contentment.

member with your career as a businesswoman?	
What guidance would you provide other women who aspire to launch their own companies?	Believe in yourself, take calculated risks, and work tirelessly to achieve your goals. Have a well-defined plan, be ready for challenges, and always strive for personal development.
<b>Aliya Aubakirova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What motivated you to pursue this line of work, and how did your journey into the film industry begin?	My passion for art and a desire to attempt something different led me to the film industry. After completing my training in 2009, I moved to Astana and started my own film studio.
Which fundamental beliefs and ideals guide your work?	I believe in seeing a business through to completion. Accountability, honesty, and respect, inspired by Omar Khayyam's teachings, are central to my career and life.
What elements motivate women in contemporary Kazakhstan to start their own businesses?	Cultural and financial incentives, globalization, economic shifts, and the desire for financial independence and self-realization motivate women. Access to resources and education is also important.
What personally motivates you to keep moving forward in your business and aiming for greater success?	The desire to produce meaningful art and contribute positively to the industry and society. Family support and witnessing project successes also motivate me.
What are the main obstacles you have encountered as a female entrepreneur?	Overcoming prejudices in a male-dominated business and balancing work and family. Viewing challenges as opportunities for improvement helps overcome them.
Which institutional assistance initiatives do you think may help women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	Targeted funding, mentorship programs, and legislative efforts that balance work and family obligations can enhance women's prospects of success.
How do you manage to juggle your responsibilities as a mother and family member with your career as a businesswoman?	Planning and organization, along with family support and understanding, help balance these responsibilities.
What benefits does your family's support provide you as an entrepreneur?	My family is the cornerstone of my motivation and support. They help balance my professional and family obligations, and their support allows me to pursue my career effectively.
What morals and values would you like to instill in your kids and the people in your community?	Hard work, honesty, integrity, respect for others, and continuous self-improvement. Education and personal growth are essential for success.
What is your outlook for your company's future and how will it contribute to the advancement of society?	Innovation and producing top-notch material that appeals to viewers. Our goals include nurturing local talent, providing job opportunities, and fostering cultural development.
In what way do you measure your impact on the advancement of commerce and society?	By creating meaningful art, uplifting and educating viewers, and offering professional advancement opportunities. Our initiatives support societal and cultural growth.
What guidance would you provide to women looking to pursue careers in film or entrepreneurship?	Embrace responsibility, take risks, learn from experiences, and stay adaptable. Networking and building relationships are also important for success.
<b>Gauhar Kaparova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Please tell us how your entrepreneurial journey began.	It began with my husband's idea in the early 1990s to build a retail firm. In 2000, my friend and I created the first Max Mara franchise store in Kazakhstan despite having no retail expertise.
What personality traits do you believe are crucial for effective company management?	Empathy is crucial for understanding others' needs and fostering good connections with clients and the team. It creates a positive work atmosphere and enhances customer service.

How does self-education and speaking many languages benefit your business?	Language skills facilitate better engagement with international partners. Ongoing self-education keeps us current with trends and technologies, maintaining competitiveness and relevance.
What concepts are essential for successful company operations?	Honesty, accountability, and constant improvement. Being honest, responsible, and striving for excellence are fundamental. Continuous learning and growth are also vital.
How do travels affect your life and career?	Travels inspire me by introducing new perspectives and ideas. They allow me to learn from different cultures and adopt best practices. Traveling also provides relaxation and rejuvenation.
How do you balance your personal and professional lives?	I prioritize my calendar to ensure time for family and friends. The support of loved ones is crucial for emotional well-being and influences business success.
What are your future business plans?	To expand and improve our retail network and focus on sustainable development. We aim to contribute positively to society through environmentally friendly practices and community initiatives.
What is your vision for successful entrepreneurship among women in Kazakhstan?	Creating an environment where women can reach their full potential, with more opportunities for education, mentoring, and support. Empowering women to take risks and innovate.
What motivates you to keep moving forward in your business and striving for new goals?	A desire to positively impact society and set a good example for my children. Family support and the satisfaction of seeing business growth also motivate me.
What hurdles did you confront as a female entrepreneur, and how did you overcome them?	Breaking prejudices in a male-dominated sector and balancing work and family. Overcoming lack of retail expertise through mutual support and learning. Adapting to economic changes with resilience.
What advice would you provide to young women beginning their own businesses?	Believe in yourself, take on challenges, keep learning, find supportive mentors, and be willing to explore. Networking and building relationships are also important.
How do you envision the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	A bright future with more women inspired to establish enterprises. Removing obstacles and creating inclusive conditions will promote innovation and growth.
<b>Ainura Umayeva</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Can you tell us how you got started in entrepreneurship?	My journey began with a desire to build something of my own and control my own future. I saw a gap in the market for my consulting services and took the plunge despite having no prior business experience.
What do you believe drives women in Kazakhstan to become entrepreneurs?	The desire for financial independence, self-realization, and the need to balance work and family obligations. Access to education and seeing other successful female entrepreneurs also play a role.
What are the most significant challenges you have faced as a female entrepreneur?	Balancing work and family responsibilities and overcoming gender biases. I had to prove my competence and build a strong support system to manage these challenges.
How do you balance your personal and professional lives?	Effective time management and setting clear priorities help me balance my responsibilities. Support from my family and team is also crucial.
What principles and values guide your business operations?	Honesty, quality, and respect for my team and clients. I believe in treating everyone with dignity and striving for continuous improvement and innovation.
What is your vision for the future of your company?	To expand our services and positively impact more clients. I aim to set industry standards for quality and customer service while supporting sustainable practices.
How do you envision the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	I see women playing a more prominent role in business, with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with

	mentorship programs and networking opportunities will be crucial for growth.
What motivates you personally to keep striving for new goals in your business?	The desire to positively impact my clients and set a good example for my children. Family support and the satisfaction of seeing our company's growth also motivate me.
How do you measure your impact on business and society?	By providing high-quality services that improve clients' lives and participating in community and philanthropic activities. Mentoring young women and contributing to industry standards also reflect our impact.
What advice would you give to other women who want to start their own businesses?	Believe in yourself, take risks, and continuously learn and grow. Seek support and inspiration from others, and stay focused on your goals despite challenges.
How do you assess the role of education in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information are crucial. They provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed and empower women by boosting their confidence and broadening their perspectives.
<b>Aida Maksutova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Can you tell us how you got started in the beauty industry?	My journey started with a personal interest in halal beauty products. I saw a growing demand for such services and decided to create a network of halal beauty salons to cater to this niche market.
What motivates you to continue growing your business?	The desire to provide high-quality, halal beauty services to a growing client base. Family support and the satisfaction of making a positive impact on my clients' lives also motivate me.
What challenges have you faced as a female entrepreneur, and how did you overcome them?	Balancing work and family responsibilities and overcoming gender biases. I focused on providing excellent service and building a strong reputation to combat skepticism and build trust.
How do you balance your personal and professional lives?	Time management and prioritizing tasks help me balance my responsibilities. Support from my family and team is also crucial for managing both roles effectively.
What principles and values guide your business operations?	Honesty, quality, and respect for my team and clients. I believe in treating everyone with dignity and continuously improving our services.
What is your vision for the future of your company?	To expand our network of halal beauty salons and set industry standards for quality and customer service. We also aim to participate in community and philanthropic activities.
How do you envision the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Women will play a more prominent role in business, with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with mentorship programs and networking opportunities will be crucial for growth.
What advice would you give to other women who want to start their own businesses?	Believe in yourself, take risks, and continuously learn and grow. Seek support and inspiration from others, and stay focused on your goals despite challenges.
How do you assess the role of education in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information are crucial. They provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed and empower women by boosting their confidence and broadening their perspectives.
What factors do you believe influence women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	The desire for financial independence, self-realization, and the need to balance work and family obligations. Seeing other successful female entrepreneurs and access to resources also play a role.
<b>Oksana Kim-Flyosk</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
How did you begin your entrepreneurial journey?	My journey began with a passion for the food industry and a desire to create unique culinary experiences. My partner and I founded Umami

	and Compote brands to bring innovative and high-quality food products to the market.
What principles guide your business operations?	Honesty, quality, and respect for our team and clients. We believe in providing high-quality products and creating a positive work environment. Continuous improvement and innovation are also key principles.
What challenges have you faced as a female entrepreneur, and how did you overcome them?	Balancing work and family responsibilities and overcoming gender biases. Focusing on providing excellent service and building a strong reputation helped combat skepticism and build trust.
How do you balance your personal and professional lives?	Effective time management and prioritizing tasks help balance responsibilities. Support from my family and team is also crucial for managing both roles effectively.
What motivates you to continue growing your business?	The desire to provide unique and high-quality food products to our customers. Family support and the satisfaction of making a positive impact on our clients' lives also motivate me.
What is your vision for the future of your company?	To expand our brands and set industry standards for quality and innovation. We also aim to participate in community and philanthropic activities.
How do you envision the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Women will play a more prominent role in business, with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with mentorship programs and networking opportunities will be crucial for growth.
What advice would you give to other women who want to start their own businesses?	Believe in yourself, take risks, and continuously learn and grow. Seek support and inspiration from others, and stay focused on your goals despite challenges.
How do you assess the role of education in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information are crucial. They provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed and empower women by boosting their confidence and broadening their perspectives.
What factors do you believe influence women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	The desire for financial independence, self-realization, and the need to balance work and family obligations. Seeing other successful female entrepreneurs and access to resources also play a role.
<b>Olga Ilyina</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
How did you begin your entrepreneurial journey in the restaurant industry?	My journey began with a passion for culinary arts and a desire to create unique dining experiences. I founded Yellow Lemons restaurant to bring innovative and high-quality food to the market.
What principles guide your business operations?	Honesty, quality, and respect for our team and clients. We believe in providing high-quality products and creating a positive work environment. Continuous improvement and innovation are also key principles.
What challenges have you faced as a female entrepreneur, and how did you overcome them?	Balancing work and family responsibilities and overcoming gender biases. Focusing on providing excellent service and building a strong reputation helped combat skepticism and build trust.
How do you balance your personal and professional lives?	Effective time management and prioritizing tasks help balance responsibilities. Support from my family and team is also crucial for managing both roles effectively.
What motivates you to continue growing your business?	The desire to provide unique and high-quality dining experiences to our customers. Family support and the satisfaction of making a positive impact on our clients' lives also motivate me.
What is your vision for the future of your company?	To expand our restaurant and set industry standards for quality and innovation. We also aim to participate in community and philanthropic activities.

How do you envision the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Women will play a more prominent role in business, with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with mentorship programs and networking opportunities will be crucial for growth.
What advice would you give to other women who want to start their own businesses?	Believe in yourself, take risks, and continuously learn and grow. Seek support and inspiration from others, and stay focused on your goals despite challenges.
How do you assess the role of education in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information are crucial. They provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed and empower women by boosting their confidence and broadening their perspectives.
What factors do you believe influence women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	The desire for financial independence, self-realization, and the need to balance work and family obligations. Seeing other successful female entrepreneurs and access to resources also play a role.
<b>Aliya Imangalieva</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
How did you begin your entrepreneurial journey in the communications industry?	My journey began with a passion for effective communication and a desire to create innovative solutions for businesses. I founded Anescom to bring high-quality communication services to the market.
What principles guide your business operations?	Honesty, quality, and respect for our team and clients. We believe in providing high-quality services and creating a positive work environment. Continuous improvement and innovation are also key principles.
What challenges have you faced as a female entrepreneur, and how did you overcome them?	Balancing work and family responsibilities and overcoming gender biases. Focusing on providing excellent service and building a strong reputation helped combat skepticism and build trust.
How do you balance your personal and professional lives?	Effective time management and prioritizing tasks help balance responsibilities. Support from my family and team is also crucial for managing both roles effectively.
What motivates you to continue growing your business?	The desire to provide innovative and high-quality communication solutions to our clients. Family support and the satisfaction of making a positive impact on our clients' lives also motivate me.
What is your vision for the future of your company?	To expand our services and set industry standards for quality and innovation. We also aim to participate in community and philanthropic activities.
How do you envision the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Women will play a more prominent role in business, with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with mentorship programs and networking opportunities will be crucial for growth.
What advice would you give to other women who want to start their own businesses?	Believe in yourself, take risks, and continuously learn and grow. Seek support and inspiration from others, and stay focused on your goals despite challenges.
How do you assess the role of education in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information are crucial. They provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed and empower women by boosting their confidence and broadening their perspectives.
What factors do you believe influence women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	The desire for financial independence, self-realization, and the need to balance work and family obligations. Seeing other successful female entrepreneurs and access to resources also play a role.
<b>Saule Orynbai</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you tell us a little bit about your business?	I established my first beauty business in Astana six years ago. We now operate 3 salons around the city, with more than 30 employees. We provide a wide range of services, including hairdressing and cosmetic operations.

Could you tell me how you started your entrepreneurial journey?	Initially, I worked in an office, but I always wanted to have my own beauty parlor. I began with a little salon, which was a significant leap of faith for me. I invested all of my funds and worked diligently to ensure its success.
What precisely motivated you to become an entrepreneur in Kazakhstan?	The desire to produce something on my own and be self-sufficient, help others feel attractive and confident, financial independence, and a brighter future for my children.
What hurdles did you experience as an entrepreneur, particularly as a woman, and how did you overcome them?	Balancing job and family, mistrust from clients and partners. I focused on providing excellent service and establishing a solid reputation, and engaged in ongoing learning and development.
How have socio-cultural factors in your life affected your growth as an entrepreneur?	Growing up in a household that valued education and hard work, and the sense of duty to demonstrate that females can be successful businesses.
How do you evaluate your impact on corporate progress and society?	By creating employment, providing opportunities for women, participating in philanthropic events, improving clients' well-being, and mentoring young women.
What techniques, strategies, concepts, and values do you follow in your company operations?	Honesty, quality, respect for staff and clients, continual development and innovation, customer satisfaction.
What do you believe influences women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in modern Kazakhstan?	Independence, financial security, self-actualization, social support, and exposure to other successful female entrepreneurs.
What motivates you personally to keep pushing forward in your business and striving for new goals?	Making a positive difference in the lives of customers, setting a good example for children, family support, and contributing to the beauty sector.
What is your vision for the future of your company and its role in society?	To continue expanding salons, offering additional services, participating in philanthropic causes, improving community well-being, and setting industry standards.
How do you envision women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan in the future?	Women will play a more prominent role in business with equal opportunities and contributions respected. Supportive ecology including mentorship and networking will be crucial.
How do you assess the impact of education and access to information in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information provide essential knowledge and skills, increase confidence, and broaden perspectives, making women more inclined to venture into business.
Which areas of the economy do you believe are most appealing to female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan, and why?	Services, education, and health due to job and family commitment balance, fewer entry hurdles, greater flexibility, and economic potential.
How do you evaluate the amount of support for women's entrepreneurial ventures in Kazakhstan?	Increasing support but challenges remain. Streamlining bureaucratic processes, financial help, support and training programs, and fostering gender equality are crucial.
How do you combine your roles as an entrepreneur, mother, and family member?	Striking a balance through time management, delegation, prioritization, open communication, and mutual understanding within the family.
What advice would you give other ladies who want to establish their own business?	Believe in yourself, take risks, learn and grow, seek help and inspiration, don't give up, surround yourself with positive people, and stay focused on your goals.
<b>Amina Karimova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you share your experience as a female entrepreneur in Kazakhstan?	Initially, it was difficult due to bureaucracy. Assistance programs like DAMU helped, but corruption remains an issue, such as dealing with customs when importing furnishings.

Could you provide an example of a challenging situation?	When importing a huge consignment of furniture for my restaurants, customs officers demanded a bribe to expedite the process. I had no choice but to pay to avoid delays.
How usual do you believe this is for other female entrepreneurs?	Quite usual. Many female entrepreneurs face similar challenges, adding unnecessary stress and expense to doing business.
How did you begin your entrepreneurial journey?	Ten years ago, pursuing my passion for cooking. Started with a modest bistro serving traditional Kazakh food and expanded to several restaurants with different themes and cuisines.
What hurdles have you experienced as a female entrepreneur?	Balancing work and family responsibilities, skepticism about my capabilities. Built a strong support structure and employed dedicated staff to overcome these challenges.
How have socio-cultural factors affected your growth as an entrepreneur?	Growing up in a family that valued education and hard work, and feeling a responsibility to show that women can succeed in business.
What methods and concepts do you follow in your business activities?	Honesty, quality, and respect for staff and clients. Continuous improvement and innovation, focusing on customer satisfaction.
What do you believe influences women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in modern Kazakhstan?	Independence, financial security, self-actualization, social support, and exposure to other successful female entrepreneurs.
What motivates you personally to keep pushing forward in your business?	Positively impacting the community and setting a good example for children. Family support and seeing business growth motivate me.
How do you combine your roles as an entrepreneur, mother, and family member?	Striking a balance through time management, prioritization, and having a supportive family and team.
What is your vision for your company's future and role in society?	Expanding restaurant network, adding new concepts and services, participating in philanthropic causes, and improving community well-being.
How do you envision women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan in the future?	Women will play a more prominent role with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with mentorship and networking will be crucial.
How do you assess the impact of education and access to information in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information provide essential knowledge and skills, increase confidence, and broaden perspectives, making women more inclined to venture into business.
Which areas of the economy do you believe are most appealing to female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	Services, education, and health due to job and family commitment balance, fewer entry hurdles, greater flexibility, and economic potential.
How do you evaluate the amount of support for women's entrepreneurial ventures in Kazakhstan?	Increasing support but challenges remain. Streamlining bureaucratic processes, financial help, support and training programs, and fostering gender equality are crucial.
What advice would you give other ladies who want to establish their own business?	Believe in yourself, take risks, learn and grow, seek help and inspiration, don't give up, surround yourself with positive people, and stay focused on your goals.
<b>Madina Baimukhanova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What motivated you to become an entrepreneur and what regulatory obstacles have you encountered?	The desire for flexibility in time management to spend more time with children while pursuing my interest in agriculture. Regularly required to demonstrate skills and cope with gender preconceptions.
Could you provide any examples of prejudices you encounter?	Many people believe women can only succeed with their husbands' help. Remarks about being too strict or strong for a woman affect self-esteem and confidence.

How does this affect your professional and personal lives?	Adds pressure to be strong at work and home, which is taxing. Balancing business and family responsibilities is challenging but goals and perseverance help.
How did you begin your career in agriculture?	Raised in a rural family, studied agronomy at university, worked in various agricultural positions, and saw an opportunity to enhance farming techniques and introduce innovation.
What hurdles have you experienced as a female entrepreneur in agriculture?	Obtaining finance, bureaucratic red tape, pushback from male colleagues. Overcoming these challenges requires perseverance and resilience.
How have socio-cultural factors affected your growth as an entrepreneur?	Valuing hard work and education, feeling compelled to fight prejudices, and demonstrating women's capabilities in agriculture. Community and helping others are also important.
What methods and concepts do you follow in your business activities?	Honesty, quality, sustainability, treating staff with dignity, positive work atmosphere, and customer satisfaction.
What do you believe influences women's motivation to become entrepreneurs in modern Kazakhstan?	Independence, financial security, self-actualization, social support, and exposure to other successful female entrepreneurs.
What motivates you personally to keep pushing forward in your business?	Positively impacting the community, setting a good example for children, family support, and contributing to the agricultural economy.
How do you combine your roles as an entrepreneur, mother, and family member?	Balancing responsibilities through prioritization, clear separations, family support, and self-care.
What is your vision for your company's future and role in society?	Increasing agricultural activities, implementing innovative and sustainable farming approaches, active community involvement, and setting an example for other farmers.
How do you envision women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan in the future?	Women will play a more prominent role with increased support and opportunities. Creating a supportive ecosystem with mentorship and networking will be crucial.
How do you assess the impact of education and access to information in motivating women to pursue entrepreneurship?	Education and access to information provide essential knowledge and skills, increase confidence, and broaden perspectives, making women more inclined to venture into business.
Which areas of the economy do you believe are most appealing to female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	Services, education, and health due to job and family commitment balance, fewer entry hurdles, greater flexibility, and economic potential.
How do you evaluate the amount of support for women's entrepreneurial ventures in Kazakhstan?	Increasing support but challenges remain. Streamlining bureaucratic processes, financial help, support and training programs, and fostering gender equality are crucial.
What advice would you give other ladies who want to establish their own business?	Believe in yourself, take risks, learn and grow, seek help and inspiration, don't give up, surround yourself with positive people, and stay focused on your goals.
<b>Aizhan Zhanpeisova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Founded a handcrafted jewelry company in 2014, specializing in one-of-a-kind, handcrafted objects celebrating Kazakh culture. Employ 15 craftsmen, all women.
Could you kindly explain how you began your entrepreneurial journey?	Started during maternity leave, crafting jewelry as a pastime. Recognized potential for a business from friends and family wanting to purchase creations.
What motivated you to become an entrepreneur in Kazakhstan?	Reconciling the role of caregiver with career goals, fascination with Kazakhstan's cultural legacy, and desire to promote it through work.

What problems do you experience as an entrepreneur, particularly as a woman?	Balancing job and family, mistrust, and lack of support. Overcame by establishing a support network, family support, mentors, and joining women's business networks.
How have socio-cultural factors influenced your development as an entrepreneur?	Social expectations of women to manage family and work, leading to choosing a flexible position. Cultural diversity inspired designing goods reflecting heritage.
How do you assess your contributions to business and society?	Providing career opportunities, promoting financial independence, preserving Kazakh traditions, and participating in community activities.
What approaches, tactics, principles, and ideals guide your business activities?	Quality, authenticity, community involvement, transparency, ethical procedures, supporting and empowering women.
What factors impact women's motivation to start businesses in modern Kazakhstan?	Financial need, desire for freedom, successful female entrepreneurs, and the ability to set their own schedule.
How do you envision the future of your company and its role in societal development?	Expanding and reaching a larger audience, providing job opportunities, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting economic progress and social responsibility.
How do you envision women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan in the future?	Increasing leadership roles, more support networks, mentoring programs, and government efforts. Women contributing to innovation and economic development.
How do you think education and access to knowledge influence women's entrepreneurial activities?	Education and access to information provide essential knowledge and skills, empower women by boosting confidence, and broaden perspectives.
Which areas of the economy are most appealing to female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	Retail, education, healthcare, creative sectors, e-commerce, and digital marketing. Provide flexibility and balance job and family commitments.
How do you evaluate support for women's entrepreneurial ventures in Kazakhstan?	Increasing but needs improvement. Reduce bureaucratic barriers, provide financing, support and training programs, and address cultural attitudes.
How do you combine your roles as an entrepreneur, mother, and family member?	Prioritizing and managing time, involving family in work, supportive spouse and family, setting limits and following schedules.
What recommendations would you provide to other ladies considering beginning their own business?	Believe in yourself, choose a field you're passionate about, create a support network, continuously educate yourself, and be resilient.
<b>Saule Abenova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Founded an educational consultancy in 2018, specializing in assisting students with applications to colleges overseas. Employ 12 devoted specialists.
Could you kindly explain how you began your entrepreneurial journey?	After studying in the UK, saw a need for educational advisory services in Kazakhstan. Utilized expertise to assist students in reaching academic goals.
What motivated you to become an entrepreneur in Kazakhstan?	Democratic administration increased options for studying abroad, desire to create something unique, and positively impact students' lives.
How has studying abroad influenced your entrepreneurial journey?	Transformative experience, introduced to educational systems and management, boosted confidence to launch a business. Inspired to assist Kazakhstani students.
What hurdles did you experience as an entrepreneur, particularly as a woman?	Establishing trust in a young sector, skepticism, and balancing work and personal life. Built a strong portfolio and provided excellent customer service.

Can you discuss a significant challenge you faced and how you overcame it?	Lack of awareness and confidence in educational consulting services. Organized seminars and workshops to educate parents and students, used social media for success stories.
How do you perceive your role in advancing education in Kazakhstan?	Bridging the gap between Kazakhstani pupils and worldwide educational prospects, contributing to national growth through students returning with valuable knowledge and skills.
How do you manage the responsibilities of operating a business and personal life?	Time management, prioritizing tasks, supportive family, and setting clear separations between work and family time.
What advice would you provide to other women in Kazakhstan who want to establish their own business?	Trust in yourself, work hard, seek support, and stay updated with industry trends. Overcome challenges with resilience and adaptation.
How do you envision your company's future and position in Kazakhstan's education sector?	Expanding services, forming connections with international colleges, improving educational standards, and providing more opportunities for students.
What factors motivate women to become entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan?	Financial independence, balancing work and family obligations, making a positive community impact, and flexibility in managing time.
How crucial do you think education and access to information are for female entrepreneurs?	Essential for foundational knowledge and skills, empowering women by boosting confidence, and making informed decisions.
How do you assess Kazakhstan's support system for female entrepreneurs?	Some support exists, but more initiatives centered on mentorship, networking, and finance would be beneficial. Addressing work-life balance issues is crucial.
How important are women's networks and mentorship for success?	Critical for sharing experiences, learning, receiving guidance, and building confidence. Networking opportunities foster cooperation and advancement.
How do you see the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Promising with progress and empowerment. Increased support and opportunities will drive innovation and economic growth.
<b>Alina Beketova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Founded a marketing agency in 2012, specializing in digital marketing, brand development, and market research. Employ 25 dedicated specialists.
What prompted you to establish your own business?	Desire for a flexible work atmosphere reflecting my values. Tired of corporate constraints and wanted control over my schedule. Conducted market research, created a business plan, and assembled a team.
How did Kazakhstan's normative framework influence your entrepreneurial path?	Significant obstacles due to societal expectations prioritizing family over career and gender biases. Clients and partners often questioned my capabilities.
Can you describe an occasion in which you encountered gender stereotypes?	A potential client questioned my ability to manage a significant project, implying a man would be better suited. Proved my skills and secured the contract through consistent results.
How do you balance your professional and personal lives?	Time management, setting clear boundaries, supportive family and team, delegating tasks, and prioritizing responsibilities.
What strategies have you used to address clients' and partners' lack of trust?	Building a strong reputation through high-quality work, excellent client relationships, transparency, and networking with supportive professions.
How do you believe society views regarding female entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan are evolving?	Gradual shift with more women pursuing entrepreneurship and challenging gender norms. Slowly changing societal expectations but more progress needed.
What advice would you provide to other women in Kazakhstan who want to establish their own business?	Believe in yourself, take on challenges, seek mentorship, continuously educate yourself, and remain resilient despite difficulties.

How do you envision your company's future and position in Kazakhstan's marketing industry?	Expanding services, reaching more clients locally and globally, setting standards for quality and innovation, and fostering a welcoming workplace.
How do you think education and professional development help empower women entrepreneurs?	Critical for providing knowledge, skills, confidence, and staying competitive. Continuous learning and professional growth are essential for adapting to industry changes.
How essential are female role models and mentors in business?	Extremely important for providing guidance, support, inspiration, and practical advice. Mentors and role models help navigate business complexities and boost confidence.
How do you see the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Bright with more women taking on entrepreneurial roles, spurring innovation and economic progress. Support from networks and government initiatives will be key.
<b>Dina Kassenova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Opened a horseback riding school in 2016, providing riding instruction and equine therapy programs. Employ ten personnel including trainers, stable hands, and administrative staff.
What prompted you to establish your own business?	Desire to balance family obligations and career goals, and passion for horseback riding. Filled a market gap for high-quality riding classes.
How did the freedom of self-employment affect your decision?	Flexibility allowed more time with family and adaptability to pursue professional goals. Self-employment enabled better work-life balance.
Can you provide an example of the benefits of self-employment?	Able to rearrange schedule for personal and professional opportunities, such as attending daughter's concert and conducting last-minute therapy sessions.
What hurdles did you experience as a female entrepreneur?	Early skepticism, obtaining land and funds, and pushback from male colleagues. Built a strong reputation through excellent service and good client experiences.
How did society norms shape your path, and how did you negotiate them?	Societal norms assign women domestic responsibilities. Family support and determination to demonstrate women's capabilities helped navigate these expectations.
How do you assess your contributions to business and society?	Providing unique services that promote health, creating job opportunities, and challenging myths about women's capabilities in a male-dominated field.
What tactics have you undertaken to ensure business success and growth?	Focusing on quality, client satisfaction, marketing, community outreach, diversifying services, and soliciting client feedback for improvements.
What advice would you provide to other women in Kazakhstan who want to establish their own business?	Believe in yourself, conduct thorough research, seek mentorship, be resilient, and choose a business you are passionate about.
How do you envision your company's future and position in the community?	Expanding facilities and services, enhancing community involvement, and making horseback riding and equine therapy more accessible.
How crucial do you think education and continual learning are for female entrepreneurs?	Essential for knowledge, skills, competitiveness, and innovation. Continuous learning helps stay current with industry developments.
How do you balance business and personal life?	Time management, prioritization, family support, clear boundaries, and self-care help balance responsibilities.
How important are women's networks and mentorship for success?	Critical for sharing experiences, learning, guidance, and building confidence. Networking and mentorship foster cooperation and advancement.
How do you see the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Positive with more women taking on entrepreneurial roles, spurring innovation and economic progress. Support from networks and government initiatives will be key.
<b>Balaua Ekpin</b>	

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Launched an online shop on TikTok a year ago, offering Korean-style clothing, fashion accessories, and beauty goods. Employ three other employees.
What prompted you to establish your own business?	Passion for Korean fashion and beauty items, desire for financial independence. Saw a trend of social media shopping and turned passion into a business.
How has TikTok helped your business grow?	TikTok's algorithm distributes content to a large audience, boosting awareness without a hefty marketing expense. Engagement with customers through live streaming and videos.
What type of obstacles did you experience in live feeds?	Received inappropriate remarks from men questioning business ability and making personal comments. Focused on positive feedback and constructive criticism.
How did you deal with the bad remarks and keep motivated?	Initially difficult but learned to focus on positive comments, moderated live streams, and built a strong community around the brand.
How did cultural norms influence your decision to pursue entrepreneurship?	Traditional norms prioritize family over profession, but wanted to challenge these and show women can be successful entrepreneurs. Flexibility of online business helped balance expectations.
Can you describe a specific situation where you experienced benefits of self-employment?	Able to rearrange schedule for personal commitments and professional opportunities, such as attending family events and conducting last-minute streams.
What efforts did you take to create a supportive community for your brand?	Active engagement with audience, collaborating with influencers, offering exceptional customer service, and using social media to communicate and showcase products.
What advice would you provide to other young ladies in Kazakhstan who want to establish their own business?	Pursue your passion, conduct thorough research, take risks, build a support network, continuously educate yourself, and be resilient.
How do you envision your company's future and position in the community?	Expanding product offerings, reaching more clients locally and abroad, and getting involved in community efforts such as hosting seminars for aspiring entrepreneurs.
How crucial do you think continuous learning and education are for female entrepreneurs?	Essential for knowledge, skills, competitiveness, and innovation. Continuous learning helps stay current with industry developments.
How do you see the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Positive with more women taking on entrepreneurial roles, spurring innovation and economic progress. Support from networks and government initiatives will be key.
<b>Aishuak Khairolla</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Launched an online retail firm a year and a half ago, importing products from China and selling on platforms like Kaspi and Wildberries. Employ four workers.
What prompted you to establish your own business?	Financial freedom and capitalizing on the e-commerce boom. Researched popular items, located suppliers, and learned about importing processes.
How have online marketplaces helped your business grow?	Broad consumer base, logistics support, promotional tools, and statistics provided by marketplaces helped understand customer behavior and preferences.
What hurdles have you experienced as a young female entrepreneur?	Doubts about abilities due to age and gender, navigating international trade and logistics, and dealing with uncooperative suppliers. Overcame with persistence and demonstrating competence.

Could you describe an occasion where you confronted strong skepticism?	Initially, a large supplier was cautious but convinced them with detailed plans, early sales statistics, and market understanding. Gained their cooperation.
How do you balance your professional and personal lives?	Time management, prioritization, family support, and delegating tasks help balance responsibilities.
What techniques have you used to develop and retain a loyal consumer base?	Excellent customer service, high-quality products, frequent engagement with customers, responding to feedback, and using social media for communication.
How do cultural norms influence your entrepreneurial journey?	Traditional norms prioritize family over profession, but wanted to challenge these and show young women can be successful entrepreneurs. Online business provided flexibility.
What advice would you provide to other young ladies in Kazakhstan who want to establish their own business?	Pursue your passion, conduct thorough research, take risks, build a support network, continuously educate yourself, and be resilient.
How do you envision your company's future and position in the community?	Expanding product offerings, reaching more clients locally and abroad, and getting involved in community efforts such as hosting seminars for aspiring entrepreneurs.
How crucial do you think continuous learning and education are for female entrepreneurs?	Essential for knowledge, skills, competitiveness, and innovation. Continuous learning helps stay current with industry developments.
How do you see the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Positive with more women taking on entrepreneurial roles, spurring innovation and economic progress. Support from networks and government initiatives will be key.
<b>Gulzhan Serikova</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Could you kindly tell me more about your business?	Launched a health and wellness startup three years ago, providing tailored wellness services through a smartphone app. Employ 15 personnel including nutritionists, fitness trainers, mental health specialists, and tech support.
What drove you to start your own business?	Passion for health and wellbeing, and desire to make services more accessible. Identified a market gap for comprehensive wellness options in Kazakhstan.
How has the digital platform helped your company grow?	Reached a larger audience, delivered tailored services easily, gathered data on customer preferences and behavior for continuous improvement.
What hurdles have you experienced as a female entrepreneur?	Balancing family duties with business ownership, gender stereotypes, and prejudice. Proved knowledge and experience to gain trust from clients and partners.
Can you describe an event in which you encountered gender stereotypes?	An investor questioned my ability to manage the technical aspects of the firm. Proved capabilities with specific plans and figures, gained their support.
How do cultural norms and expectations affect your entrepreneurial journey?	Norms prioritize family over career, but wanted to challenge stereotypes and balance responsibilities. Flexibility of owning a digital business helped.
How has your experience as a divorced woman influenced your strategies?	Strengthened resilience and determination, highlighted the importance of financial independence, and set a positive example for children.
How do you balance professional and personal lives?	Time management, clear separations, supportive family, delegating tasks, and prioritizing self-care help balance responsibilities.
What techniques have you used to develop and retain a devoted consumer base?	Excellent service, frequent engagement, continuous improvement, timely responses to requests, and relevant social media content.

What advice would you provide to other women in Kazakhstan who want to establish their own business?	Trust in your goal, conduct thorough research, seek mentorship, build a network, continuously educate yourself, and be resilient.
How do you view your company's future and position in the community?	Expanding services, reaching more people locally and globally, increasing community involvement, and inspiring more women to pursue business goals.
How crucial is ongoing learning and education for female entrepreneurs?	Essential for knowledge, skills, competitiveness, and innovation. Continuous learning helps stay current with industry developments.
How do you see the future of women's entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan?	Positive with more women taking on entrepreneurial roles, spurring innovation and economic progress. Support from networks and government initiatives will be key.