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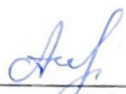
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# Table of content

1. ABSTRACT.....	iv
<u>2. INTRODUCTION.....</u>	5
<u>2.1</u> Research Problem.....	6
<u>2.2</u> Significance of research .....	7
<u>2.3</u> Novelty of research .....	8
<u>2.4</u> Research Purpose: .....	9
<u>2.5</u> Research questions: .....	10
<u>3. LITERATURE REVIEW.....</u>	11
<u>4. METHODOLOGY.....</u>	20
<u>4.1</u> Data Collection Procedure .....	20
<u>4.2</u> Data Analysis .....	20
<u>4.3</u> Results .....	21
<u>4.4</u> Reliability and Validity .....	30
<u>4.5</u> Narrative Analysis.....	31
<u>4.6</u> Data Interpretation .....	33
<u>5. Recommendations .....</u>	36
<u>6. CONCLUSION.....</u>	37
<u>7. LIMITATIONS.....</u>	41
<u>8. REFERENCES.....</u>	44

## LIST OF TABLES

1.	<i>Table 4.1 Motivation for Entrepreneurship</i> .....	22
2.	<i>Table 4.2 Barriers and Challenges</i> .....	23
3.	<i>Table 4.3 Sources of Support</i> .....	25
4.	<i>Table 4.4 Strategies for Success</i> .....	27
5.	<i>Table 4.5 Age Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs</i> .....	28

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.	<i>Figure 4.1 Motivation for Entrepreneurship</i> .....	22
2.	<i>Figure 4.2 Barriers and Challenges</i> .....	23
3.	<i>Figure 4.3 Sources of Support</i> .....	24
4.	<i>Figure 4.4 Strategies for Success</i> .....	25
5.	<i>Figure 4.5 Age Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs</i> .....	28

## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation explores the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, through a detailed narrative analysis. By interviewing 30 women entrepreneurs, this study aims to understand their motivations, challenges, support systems, and strategies for success. The findings reveal that women in Shymkent are driven by both economic necessity and the desire for independence. Financial barriers, cultural norms, and family responsibilities are identified as significant challenges. However, support from family, friends, professional networks, and government programs plays a crucial role in their entrepreneurial journey. The study highlights the importance of continuous learning, networking, and innovation as key strategies for overcoming obstacles and achieving business success. Based on these insights, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the entrepreneurial environment for women in Shymkent. These include improving access to financial resources, promoting gender equality, providing childcare and family support services, and developing robust networking and mentorship programs. The recommendations aim to address the specific needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, fostering a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and support organizations can help women entrepreneurs in Shymkent overcome barriers, achieve their business goals, and contribute significantly to the region's economic and social development. This dissertation contributes to the academic understanding of women's entrepreneurship in a specific cultural and economic context and offers practical solutions for enhancing women's entrepreneurial success.

# INTRODUCTION

## **Background of the study**

The development of women's entrepreneurship is a key factor in socio-economic progress and gender equality in modern society. In recent years, this topic has attracted significant attention from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, as it opens up new opportunities for economic growth, innovation, and social integration (Brush et al., 2006; Kelley et al., 2017). In this context, studying women's entrepreneurship in specific geographical and cultural settings becomes a relevant research task.

The city of Shymkent, the third-largest city in Kazakhstan, represents a unique case for studying women's entrepreneurship. The economic and cultural environment of Shymkent has its own characteristics that influence women's entrepreneurial activities. On the one hand, Shymkent is a rapidly developing economic center with a diverse structure of small and medium-sized businesses (Musina & Baizhanova, 2018). On the other hand, traditional gender roles and cultural norms continue to impact the social and economic opportunities for women (Dosymbekova & Tulebayeva, 2020).

The aim of my research is to conduct a detailed analysis of the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent. In particular, I strive to identify motivational factors, barriers, and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, as well as to study the sources of support and success strategies they use to overcome difficulties and achieve their goals.

This study is based on qualitative methodology, including narrative analysis and semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs. This approach allows for the collection of in-depth and contextualized data on the personal and collective experiences of the participants, contributing to a better understanding of various aspects of their entrepreneurial activities (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

My research also relies on theoretical frameworks, including the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), Gender Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory (Isenberg, 2010). These theories help structure and interpret the data obtained and connect the results with existing academic discussions and practical recommendations.

The relevance of my research is driven by the growing role of women's entrepreneurship in economic development and social transformation. The findings can contribute to the development of effective support measures and programs aimed at stimulating women's entrepreneurial activity, as well as overcoming existing barriers and limitations (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019; World Bank, 2020).

Thus, my research contributes to the understanding of the processes and factors influencing the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent and offers valuable insights for further research and practical initiatives in this area.

## **2.1 Research Problem**

Women's entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and promoting social progress (Brush et al., 2006). Despite its importance, women entrepreneurs often face significant barriers that hinder their entrepreneurial activities. These barriers can be attributed to socio-cultural norms, limited access to financial resources, inadequate support networks, and insufficient policy frameworks (Kelley et al., 2017).

In Kazakhstan, particularly in Shymkent, the entrepreneurial landscape presents unique challenges and opportunities for women. Shymkent, as a rapidly growing economic hub, offers a dynamic environment for business activities (Musina & Baizhanova, 2018). However, traditional gender roles and cultural expectations continue to impact women's participation in entrepreneurship (Dosymbekova & Tulebayeva, 2020). Understanding the specific factors that influence women's

entrepreneurial activities in this region is essential for developing effective strategies to support and empower female entrepreneurs.

The primary problem addressed in this research is the lack of comprehensive understanding of the motivational factors, barriers, sources of support, and strategies for success among women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. Existing research often overlooks the unique socio-cultural and economic context of Shymkent, leading to a gap in knowledge about how local conditions affect women's entrepreneurial experiences.

## **2.2 Significance of research**

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute both academically and practically to the field of women's entrepreneurship. This study fills a critical gap in the literature by providing a detailed examination of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. By focusing on a specific geographical and cultural context, this research adds depth to our understanding of how local conditions influence women's entrepreneurial activities.

From an academic perspective, this study enhances existing knowledge by identifying the motivational factors, barriers, and success strategies specific to women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. It integrates various theoretical frameworks, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), Gender Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory (Isenberg, 2010), to provide a comprehensive analysis. This multi-theoretical approach not only enriches the academic discourse but also offers a nuanced understanding of the interplay between individual motivations, social norms, and systemic support.

Practically, the findings of this research have significant implications for policymakers, support organizations, and practitioners. By highlighting the specific barriers women face, such as financial constraints, cultural norms, and family responsibilities, this study can inform the development of targeted interventions to support women entrepreneurs (Brush et al., 2006; Kelley et al., 2017). The evaluation

of existing support systems and their effectiveness provides valuable insights into areas where additional resources or improvements are needed.

Moreover, documenting the strategies employed by successful women entrepreneurs offers practical lessons and best practices for other aspiring businesswomen. These insights can help new entrepreneurs navigate challenges more effectively and enhance their chances of success. The recommendations derived from this study can guide the creation of more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems, fostering economic growth and gender equality in Shymkent and beyond.

In conclusion, this research not only contributes to the academic understanding of women's entrepreneurship in a specific context but also provides actionable insights that can drive policy and practice improvements. By addressing both the theoretical and practical aspects of women's entrepreneurial experiences, this study aims to support and empower women entrepreneurs, ultimately contributing to broader socio-economic development and gender equality (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019; World Bank, 2020).

### **2.3 Novelty of research**

This research brings a novel perspective to the field of women's entrepreneurship by focusing on the unique socio-economic and cultural context of Shymkent, Kazakhstan. While much of the existing literature on women's entrepreneurship addresses general trends and challenges globally (Brush et al., 2006; Kelley et al., 2017), this study delves into the specific experiences of women entrepreneurs in a rapidly developing Central Asian city. This localized focus provides new insights that are often overlooked in broader studies.

The novelty of this research is further highlighted by its multi-theoretical approach. By integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), Gender Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory (Isenberg, 2010), this study offers a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between individual motivations, social norms, and systemic

support. This theoretical integration is not commonly found in existing studies, making this research distinctive in its depth and breadth.

Another innovative aspect of this study is its methodological approach. Utilizing narrative analysis and semi-structured interviews, this research captures the personal and collective stories of women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. This qualitative method allows for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of these women, providing rich, context-specific data that quantitative methods might miss (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Additionally, this study examines the effectiveness of local support systems and identifies specific strategies employed by successful women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. By focusing on practical outcomes and real-world applications, the research offers valuable recommendations for policymakers, support organizations, and practitioners. This practical orientation bridges the gap between academic research and actionable solutions, which is often a limitation in existing literature (Brush et al., 2006; World Bank, 2020).

In summary, the novelty of this research lies in its specific geographical focus, multi-theoretical framework, qualitative methodological approach, and practical implications. By addressing these unique aspects, the study contributes original insights to the academic discourse on women's entrepreneurship and offers practical solutions to support the growth and success of women entrepreneurs in Shymkent and similar contexts.

#### **2.4 Research Purpose:**

1. To analyze the motivational factors behind women's entrepreneurial activities in Shymkent
2. To identify and understand the barriers and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Shymkent.
3. To evaluate the existing support systems for women entrepreneurs and their effectiveness.

4. To document and analyze the strategies used by successful women entrepreneurs to navigate challenges and achieve success.

**2.5 Research questions:**

- What are the main motivational factors driving women to become entrepreneurs in Shymkent?
- What barriers and challenges do women entrepreneurs face in Shymkent?
- What sources of support are available to women entrepreneurs in Shymkent, and how effective are they?
- What strategies do successful women entrepreneurs in Shymkent employ to overcome barriers and achieve success?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the research work of many researchers, we can see that the development of women entrepreneurs is solving many problems. Especially the issue of fighting poverty. Based on another research of the researchers, in order to check the flexibility of women and men for entrepreneurship, it was determined that the special factor in a female entrepreneur, her emotional state, being sympathetic leads to the development and excellent management of the business in the future from the point of view of entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007; Yadav & Unni, 2016). Through this, we can determine that women make bolder decisions and management in social professions than men.

The influence of women entrepreneurs on starting a business can be divided into four different stages. They are motivation, recognition opportunities, purchasing resources, and factors that contribute to entrepreneurial success/productivity and distribution (Sullivan and Meek, 2012). First of all, motivation helps a woman to achieve a high result in any work. A woman gets motivation from her soul. Financial assistance from the state may give a person enough confidence to reach the top of the initiative. Influence of close people, stability, and support in the family. Through this, a woman could develop her entrepreneurship morally and economically. Some sensitive souls may not be strongly affected by this. Because some sensitive souls are insecure about themselves and their low social status. She puts a big barrier in front of her and cannot pass that stage. Another period that has a strong influence on the second is recognition opportunities. At first, glance, being a female entrepreneur may seem like an easy development along with men. However, if a woman entrepreneur does not have the first recognition opportunities and strong knowledge, it will be easy to make her bankrupt at any time. She can widely promote her field by using her resources and research (Sullivan & Meek, 2012). In order to achieve productivity and success, every entrepreneur can find these qualities in a woman and become a real pioneer entrepreneur by going through the stages.

The main problem of the research here is to follow the development of the female entrepreneur, increase her knowledge and more clearly study how they overcome difficulties and achieve success (Moreira et al., 2009; Vita et al., 2013; Bruin et al., 2007; Gundry et al., 2002). As we all know, the situation is not the same in all countries, many countries are suffering from hunger around the world. How many families are living in hardship and poverty? However, as the researchers have shown in the index, if the women's society is also involved in business, they have the opportunity to employ other women citizens and solve this problem of poverty. If we conduct research from an economic point of view, we can achieve success. For that, first of all, women need quality education. It is necessary to raise a girl child with all-around flexibility from a young age. As a result, self-confident women grow up, become educated, and are not afraid of any obstacles.

Based on the articles of many researchers on women's entrepreneurship, we notice another significant factor and a very important point. It is a woman's health. None of the above-mentioned periods will happen if the woman is not healthy. As a result of the misconception of many people, many women lose their health, have children, and do not see any doctor, even if they are sick. Therefore, it can be said that poverty and health are the same concepts (Peters et al., 2008). Why? Because if you are poor, you will not have money for your health, if you are not healthy, you will be poor and unable to do any work. That is why, in many developed countries, conditions have been created so that women can pass all the checks that check women at workplaces (Madi & Hussain, 2007). However, there are countries where this situation has not been established. This is one of the main factors that adversely affect the development of women.

The importance of these studies is that women do not start entrepreneurship in the desert world. Because women see business as a solution to their problems. For example, the researchers' most recent study included Colombia and India, among the least developed countries (Sullivan and Meek 2012; Perrini et al. 2010). If we focus on their case studies, the founder of KidSmile company encountered a very difficult situation in her life, went to her family to observe her situation, and noticed that there

were no people who could make it possible for the little girl to smile. A Colombian businesswoman who started her industry with the same enthusiasm. In the second case study, a Colombian entrepreneur who started a unique business, FrutoBendito, wants to create a flexible schedule for herself around her child and thrives for people who like her want to bring joy to their children. Next founder of BankaBioLoo company, which everyone thinks India is in a bad situation, but in the midst of its main problem. Based on this, it was opened in order to solve the sanitary problems of women. The founder herself had a similar problem, so she took up this case. Next up is Sugawara Medical Center. The founder of this company studied in this field herself and created a business in this field in order to improve her knowledge (Eugenia Roscaa, Nivedita Agarwal, Alexander Bremc, 2020). Asian women entrepreneurs face significant challenges in securing financial resources. Gender biases in lending practices and limited collateral are particularly acute in many Asian societies (Tambunan, 2009). In many Asian countries, legal and regulatory frameworks may not be conducive to women's entrepreneurship. Complex bureaucracies and discriminatory laws can hinder business establishment and growth (Mitra, 2002). Access to education and targeted entrepreneurial training programs significantly enhance the capabilities of Asian women entrepreneurs. Education empowers women with the knowledge and skills necessary for business success (Deshpande & Sethi, 2009). Family support is crucial for women entrepreneurs in Asia. In many cases, family members provide financial backing and emotional support, facilitating the establishment and operation of businesses (Kelley et al., 2013). Technological advancements, particularly the proliferation of the internet and mobile technologies, have provided new opportunities for Asian women entrepreneurs. E-commerce and digital platforms lower entry barriers and expand market access (Javadian & Singh, 2012).

The influence of religion and traditional practices can both hinder and support women's entrepreneurship in Asia. While some religious and cultural practices restrict women's activities, others may provide a supportive community framework (Nakata & Sivakumar, 1996). Traditional gender roles and societal expectations can be particularly restrictive in Asian cultures. These norms often limit women's

participation in entrepreneurial activities and influence the types of businesses they can pursue (Roomi & Parrott, 2008). Strong community ties and social networks play a vital role in supporting women entrepreneurs in Asia. These networks offer access to resources, knowledge, and markets, fostering entrepreneurial growth (Ahl & Nelson, 2015). The presence of successful women entrepreneurs as role models inspires others and provides practical insights and mentorship. Such role models can challenge traditional norms and demonstrate the potential for success (Bullough et al., 2015). Various Asian governments have implemented programs to support women's entrepreneurship, including microfinance schemes, training programs, and business development services. These initiatives aim to reduce gender disparities and promote economic participation (Tambunan, 2017). Non-governmental organizations and international bodies play a significant role in supporting Asian women entrepreneurs through funding, training, and advocacy efforts. These organizations help to raise awareness and mobilize resources (Bajpai & Goyal, 2014). Efforts to reform discriminatory laws and create a more favorable business environment for women are crucial. Legal reforms that promote gender equality can significantly enhance the entrepreneurial landscape for women in Asia (Panda, 2018).

As a result of meeting and interviewing female entrepreneurs and listening to podcasts about the development of female entrepreneurship, I found that the main motivation for women to enter into entrepreneurship is their own money. A woman cannot be influenced by her partner's income in the same way as her own income. A woman wants to spend her own money, her own time, her favorite work. With this, the development of private enterprise begins. That is, one of the motivating factors that directly affects the development of a woman in private business is her own money.

The literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on women's entrepreneurship, focusing on key themes such as motivations, barriers, support systems, and the impact of cultural and societal norms. Special attention is given to studies conducted in developing regions, with a specific emphasis on Kazakhstan and, where available, Shymkent. This review sets the stage for the subsequent analysis and helps identify gaps that the current study aims to address.

Women's entrepreneurship has garnered significant attention globally due to its potential to drive economic growth, innovation, and social change. Researchers have explored various dimensions of this phenomenon, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. Studies suggest that women are motivated to start businesses by a mix of necessity and opportunity. Necessity-driven entrepreneurship often arises from a lack of employment opportunities, while opportunity-driven entrepreneurship is fueled by the desire for independence, self-fulfillment, and financial gains (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). Female entrepreneurs encounter numerous barriers, including limited access to finance, lack of entrepreneurial training, gender discrimination, and balancing business and family responsibilities (Brush et al., 2006). These challenges are often more pronounced in developing countries due to socio-economic constraints and cultural norms. Support systems, such as mentorship, networking, and governmental initiatives, play a crucial role in the success of women entrepreneurs. Effective support mechanisms can help overcome barriers and enhance business performance (Nichter & Goldmark, 2009). Support systems, such as mentorship, networking, and governmental initiatives, play a crucial role in the success of women entrepreneurs. Effective support mechanisms can help overcome barriers and enhance business performance (Nichter & Goldmark, 2009). Developing regions typically have weaker institutional frameworks, which can hinder business development. Regulatory barriers, corruption, and lack of access to markets are common challenges (Amine & Staub, 2009). Cultural and societal norms significantly impact women's participation in entrepreneurship. In many cultures, traditional gender roles and expectations limit women's opportunities and their ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Roomi & Parrott, 2008). Limited access to financial resources, education, and technology further constrains women's entrepreneurial activities. Microfinance initiatives and capacity-building programs have been identified as effective strategies to support women entrepreneurs in these contexts (Shah, 2013). Kazakhstan, as a transitioning economy, presents a unique context for studying women's entrepreneurship. The country has undergone significant economic reforms, yet gender disparities persist. Since gaining independence,

Kazakhstan has implemented market-oriented reforms to stimulate economic growth. However, the entrepreneurial landscape remains male-dominated, and women entrepreneurs often face systemic barriers (Aidis et al., 2007). The Kazakh government has introduced several programs to promote entrepreneurship, including specific initiatives targeting women. These programs aim to provide training, access to finance, and networking opportunities (Welter & Smallbone, 2011). Research indicates that women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan face challenges such as accessing capital, balancing family obligations, and overcoming societal prejudices. Despite these obstacles, many women have successfully established businesses, contributing to economic diversification and social development (Verheul et al., 2006). Shymkent, one of the major cities in Kazakhstan, offers a distinct context for studying women's entrepreneurship due to its diverse economic activities and cultural dynamics. Shymkent's strategic location and industrial base make it a significant economic hub. The city provides various business opportunities, yet the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women is still developing. Traditional gender roles and cultural expectations in Shymkent can either support or hinder women's entrepreneurial activities. Understanding these cultural dynamics is essential for developing effective support mechanisms. The availability of local support systems, such as business incubators, mentorship programs, and governmental initiatives, plays a crucial role in fostering women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent. These systems can help women navigate the challenges of starting and growing a business. Women entrepreneurs in Shymkent face barriers similar to those in other developing regions, including limited access to finance, inadequate training, and balancing family and business responsibilities. However, the specific cultural and economic context of Shymkent adds unique dimensions to these challenges. Engage in a particular behavior is influenced by three factors: attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory has been widely applied to analyze entrepreneurial intentions among women, suggesting that positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, supportive social norms, and a strong sense of control over entrepreneurial outcomes significantly drive women's entrepreneurial activities (Kolvereid, 1996; Krueger et al., 2000). In the

context of Shymkent, understanding how these factors influence women's decisions to start businesses can provide valuable insights into their entrepreneurial motivations and challenges. Gender Role Theory, as discussed by Eagly and Wood (2012), explores how societal expectations and cultural norms related to gender influence individual behavior and opportunities. This theory is particularly relevant to understanding the barriers women face in entrepreneurship. Traditional gender roles often prescribe that women prioritize family responsibilities over career ambitions, which can limit their participation in entrepreneurial activities (Brush et al., 2009). Studies have shown that these societal expectations can create significant psychological and practical barriers for women entrepreneurs (Marlow & Patton, 2005). In Shymkent, where traditional gender roles are prevalent, examining the impact of these norms on women's entrepreneurial activities is crucial for designing effective support mechanisms. Social Capital Theory, articulated by Putnam (2000), emphasizes the importance of social networks and relationships in facilitating economic and social activities. For women entrepreneurs, social capital can be a critical resource, providing access to information, financial resources, and emotional support. Empirical research indicates that strong social networks can enhance women's entrepreneurial success by offering mentorship, reducing isolation, and facilitating business opportunities (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Klyver & Grant, 2010). In the context of Shymkent, where formal support systems may be limited, social capital can play a vital role in helping women overcome entrepreneurial barriers and achieve business success. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory, proposed by Isenberg (2010), highlights the importance of a supportive environment for entrepreneurial activities. This theory posits that an entrepreneurial ecosystem comprises various elements, including policy, finance, culture, supports, human capital, and markets. For women entrepreneurs, the presence of supportive policies, access to funding, and a culture that values diversity can significantly impact their entrepreneurial success (Stam, 2015; Autio et al., 2014). In Shymkent, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem can provide insights into how to create a more supportive environment for women entrepreneurs. Research on motivational factors for women entrepreneurs has

identified a range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Studies by Buttner and Moore (1997) and McGowan et al. (2012) highlight that women are often driven by the desire for independence, self-fulfillment, and the need to balance work and family life. Economic necessity also plays a critical role, particularly in developing economies where women turn to entrepreneurship as a means of improving their financial situation (Jamali, 2009). In Shymkent, these motivational factors are likely influenced by the local socio-economic context, where economic opportunities for women may be limited, and traditional gender roles prevail. Women entrepreneurs face numerous barriers that hinder their business activities. Financial constraints are among the most significant barriers, with studies showing that women often have less access to capital compared to their male counterparts (Marlow & Patton, 2005; Coleman & Robb, 2012). Cultural barriers, such as gender stereotypes and societal expectations, further exacerbate the challenges faced by women (Marlow, 2002; Ahl, 2006). Additionally, family responsibilities and work-life balance issues are frequently cited as major obstacles (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). In Shymkent, these barriers are likely amplified by the local cultural context, making it essential to identify specific strategies to address these challenges. The effectiveness of support systems for women entrepreneurs has been extensively studied. Family support is often highlighted as a crucial factor, providing both emotional and financial backing (Welter et al., 2006). Peer networks and mentorship programs also play a significant role, offering guidance, resources, and moral support (Brindley, 2005). Government initiatives and policies aimed at promoting women's entrepreneurship can provide necessary financial and educational resources, though their effectiveness varies across different contexts (Minniti, 2010; Brush et al., 2014). In Shymkent, examining the availability and effectiveness of these support systems can provide insights into how to enhance support for women entrepreneurs. Successful women entrepreneurs employ various strategies to overcome barriers and achieve their business goals. Research by Carter et al. (2003) suggests that continuous learning and skill development are vital for entrepreneurial success. Networking and building strong professional relationships are also crucial strategies, as they provide access to essential resources and opportunities

(Greve & Salaff, 2003). Furthermore, leveraging unique business ideas and niche markets can help women entrepreneurs differentiate themselves and achieve competitive advantage (Cliff, 1998). In Shymkent, understanding the specific strategies used by successful women entrepreneurs can provide valuable lessons for aspiring businesswomen.

Summarizing the researchers' opinion, it is true that women's entrepreneurship increases the country's economy, but we must say that economic and moral factors have a lot of influence on their development. From this point of view, we use the Effectuation Theory, it is important what moral and economic factors influence the development of women so they can choose the right path in their profession (Becker et al., 2015). From a logical point of view, it is her health, family support, and financial assistance that affect the development of a woman. In addition to all these, they are considered economic and moral factors. That is, this is another evidence that for the development of female entrepreneurship in our study, a lot of attention should be paid to this area. This literature review highlights the significance of studying women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent within the broader context of developing regions and Kazakhstan. By addressing the identified gaps and providing a holistic analysis, this dissertation aims to contribute to the understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. The findings will inform policies and practices that can enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem and support the growth of women's entrepreneurship in the region.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative methodology to examine the development of women's entrepreneurship in the city of Shymkent. The research is based on narrative analysis and semi-structured interviews, which allow for a deeper understanding of the personal and collective experiences, motivations, and barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.

My research approach includes the use of qualitative methodology, enabling the collection of detailed and contextualized data on the personal stories and perceptions of the participants. The primary data collection method is semi-structured interviews, which allow for the exploration of individual narratives of women entrepreneurs.

The sample consists of 30 women entrepreneurs from Shymkent, representing various sectors of the economy such as retail, agribusiness, and services. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, allowing the inclusion of women whose experiences and perspectives are most relevant to the study.

### **4.1 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection was conducted in two stages:

**Semi-structured Interviews:** Interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes and were conducted in person or via video call. The questions covered topics related to entrepreneurial motivation, barriers faced, support from family and society, as well as future prospects and plans.

**Narrative Analysis:** After conducting the interviews, transcripts were made and then analyzed using narrative analysis. This method allowed for the identification of key themes, patterns, and contradictions in the participants' stories.

## 4.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis included several stages:

1. Transcription of Interviews: Each interview was transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy.
2. Data Coding: Based on the transcripts, key themes and sub-themes related to the participants' experiences and perceptions were identified.
3. Identification of Narrative Structures: Typical narrative structures and patterns were identified, helping to understand the common experiences and specific issues faced by women entrepreneurs.
4. Data Interpretation: In the final stage, the identified narrative structures were analyzed to uncover deeper meanings and interpret the data in the context of the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent.

## 4.3 Results

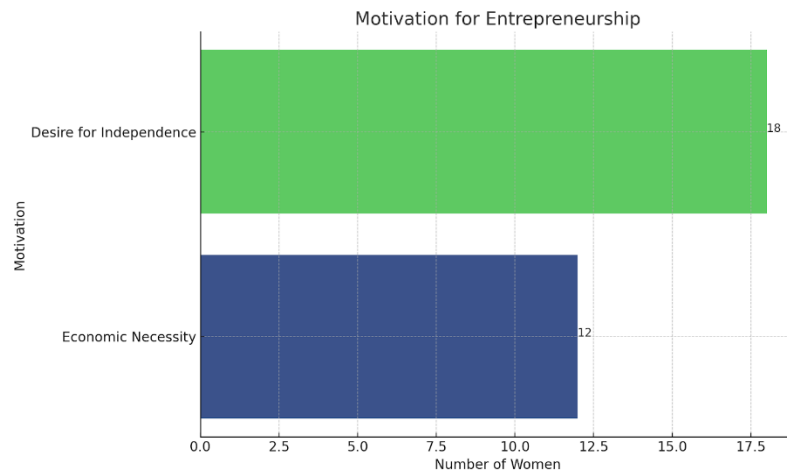
### Motivation for Entrepreneurship

Out of 30 women entrepreneurs participating in the study, the motivations for entrepreneurship were divided as follows:

*Table 4.1 Motivation for Entrepreneurship*

Motivation	Number of Women	Percentage
Economic Necessity	12	40%
Desire for Independence	18	60%

*Figure 4.1 Motivation for Entrepreneurship*



These data indicate that for most participants, entrepreneurship is a means of achieving independence and self-realization, although a significant portion of women were motivated by economic circumstances.

**Economic Necessity (40%):** Many women in Shymkent are driven by economic necessity to start their businesses. For some, entrepreneurship is a way to support their families and improve their financial situation. One entrepreneur shared, "I started my business because my family needed additional income. It was challenging at first, but the need to provide for my children kept me motivated."

**Desire for Independence (60%):** A significant number of women entrepreneurs are motivated by the desire for independence and self-fulfillment. They seek to break free from traditional roles and establish themselves as successful business owners. Another participant mentioned, "I wanted to be my own boss and have control over my life. Entrepreneurship gave me the freedom to make my own decisions and follow my passion."

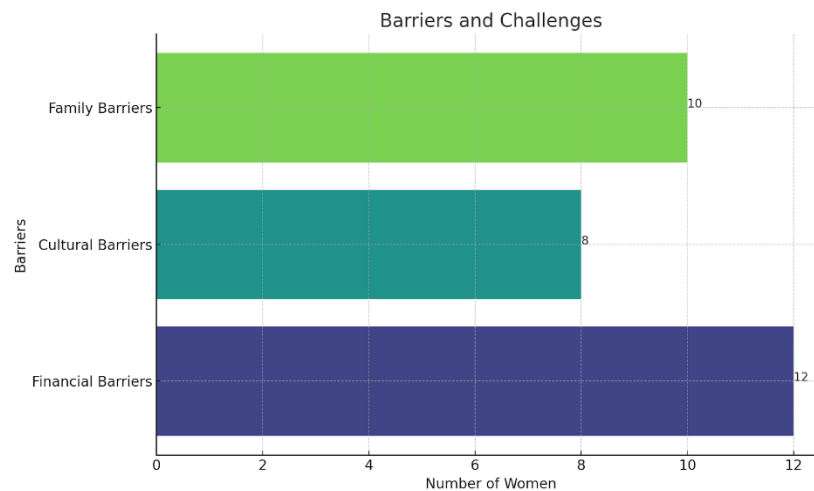
### Barriers and Challenges

Women entrepreneurs faced various barriers and challenges in their entrepreneurial journey:

*Table 4.2 Barriers and Challenges*

Barriers	Number of Women	Percentage
Financial Barriers	12	40%
Cultural Barriers	8	26.7%
Family Barriers	10	33.3%

*Figure 4.2 Barriers and Challenges*



Financial difficulties were the most common barrier, but cultural and family obstacles also play a significant role in the entrepreneurial activities of women in Shymkent.

**Financial Barriers (40%):** Access to finance is a major barrier for women entrepreneurs in Shymkent. Many women struggle to secure funding for their ventures due to a lack of collateral or skepticism from financial institutions.

One participant noted, "Securing a loan was incredibly difficult. Banks often doubted my ability to repay because I didn't have substantial assets. I had to rely on personal savings and help from friends to start my business."

**Cultural Barriers (26.7%):** Cultural norms and gender stereotypes also pose significant challenges. Women often face societal expectations that prioritize their roles as caregivers over their professional ambitions. A respondent shared, "People often questioned why I was focusing on my business instead of staying at home with

my children. Overcoming these societal expectations was one of the hardest parts of my journey."

**Family Responsibilities (33.3%):** Balancing family responsibilities with running a business is a common challenge. Many women entrepreneurs have to manage household duties alongside their professional commitments. One entrepreneur said, "Juggling my business and family was tough. I had to set strict schedules and sometimes compromise on personal time to ensure both my business and family needs were met."

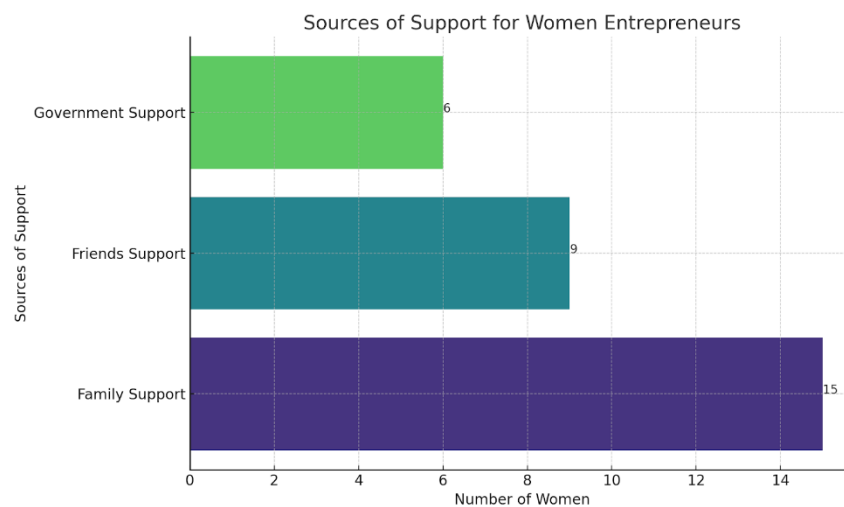
### Sources of Support

The sources of support for women entrepreneurs were varied:

*Table 4.3 Sources of Support*

Sources of Support	Number of Women	Percentage
Family	15	50%
Friends	9	30%
Government Support	6	20%

*Figure 4.3 Sources of Support*



The majority of women received support from their families, highlighting the importance of family connections and their role in the development of women's entrepreneurship. **Family Support (50%):** Family plays a crucial role in supporting women entrepreneurs. Emotional and financial support from family members can significantly ease the entrepreneurial journey. One participant explained, "My family has been my biggest support system. My husband helps with household chores, and my parents look after my children when I'm busy with work."

**Friends and Networks (30%):** Friends and professional networks provide valuable resources and advice. Networking helps women entrepreneurs gain insights, find mentors, and access new opportunities. Another respondent mentioned, "Networking events and business groups have been instrumental in my success. I have met mentors and gained invaluable advice that helped me grow my business."

**Government and Institutional Support (20%):** Some women entrepreneurs benefit from government programs and institutional support designed to promote women's entrepreneurship. These programs provide financial aid, training, and mentorship.

A participant noted, "I received a grant from a government program aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs. The funding and training sessions were incredibly helpful in getting my business off the ground."

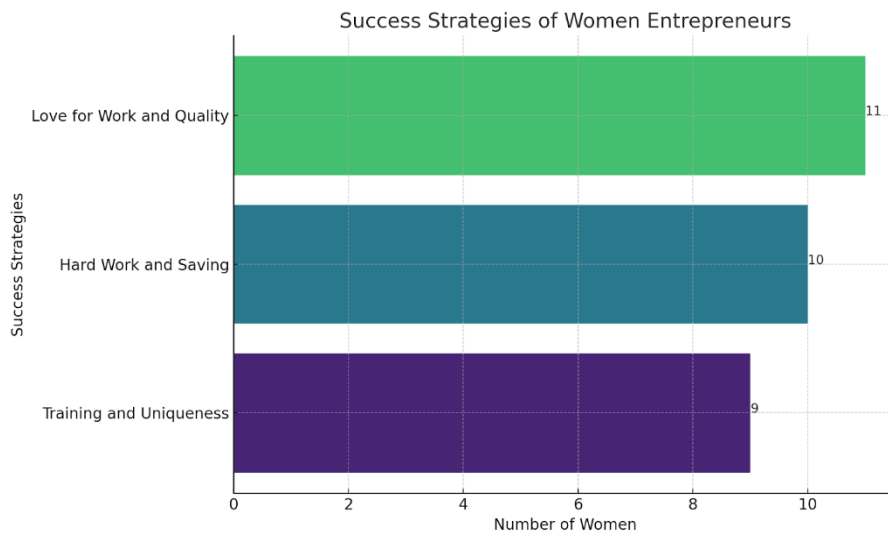
## Strategies for Success

Women entrepreneurs employed various strategies for achieving success:

*Table 4.4 Strategies for Success*

Strategies for Success	Number of Women	Percentage
Training and Uniqueness	9	30%
Hard Work and Saving	10	33.3%
Love for Work and Quality	11	36.7%

Figure 4.4 Strategies for Success



Most women emphasized the importance of quality work and love for their business, which is a key factor in their success.

**Continuous Learning (33.3%):** Successful women entrepreneurs emphasize continuous learning and adaptation. They stay updated with market trends and continuously improve their skills. One entrepreneur shared, "I constantly attend workshops and training sessions to stay ahead. Learning new skills and adapting to market changes are crucial for staying competitive."

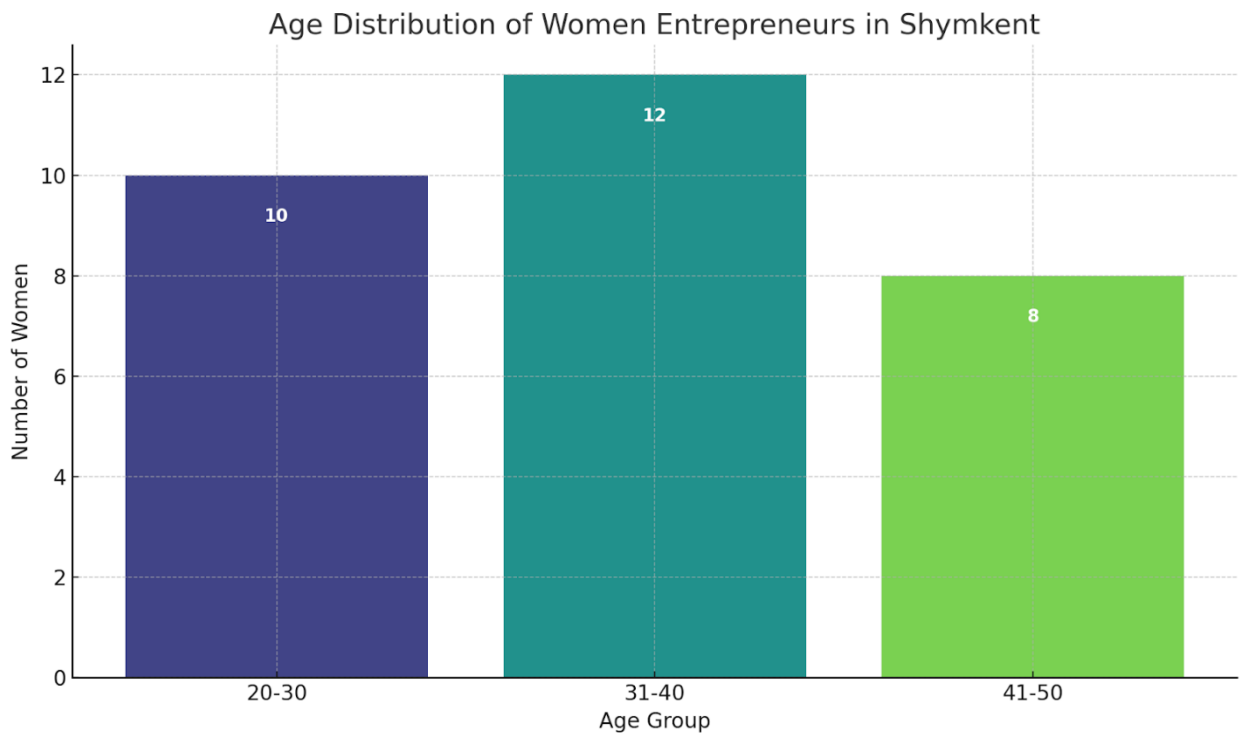
**Networking (30%):** Building strong professional networks and collaborating with other entrepreneurs are key strategies. Networking provides access to resources, advice, and opportunities. A respondent mentioned, "Collaboration with other business owners has opened up new opportunities for me. We share ideas, resources, and support each other through challenges."

**Innovation (36.7%):** Innovating and differentiating their businesses help women stand out in the market. They focus on offering unique products or services that meet customer needs. One participant explained, "I focused on creating a unique product that wasn't available locally. This differentiation helped me attract a loyal customer base and grow my business."

*Table 4.5 Age Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs in Shymkent*

Age Group	Number of Women	Percentage	Characteristics
20-30	10	33.3%	High ambition, strong drive for self-realization, starting businesses early in their careers or right after education.
31-40	12	40.0%	Significant professional and life experience, balancing professional ambitions with personal goals, such as family stability.
41-50	8	26.7%	Substantial professional experience, stable family and social connections, maintaining and expanding businesses, passing on experience.

*Figure 4.5 Age Distribution of Women Entrepreneurs in Shymkent*



In my study, I interviewed 30 women entrepreneurs from Shymkent, focusing on their personal journeys, motivations, challenges, support systems, and strategies for success. This narrative analysis provides a detailed understanding of how different age groups of women experience and navigate entrepreneurship.

## Young Entrepreneurs (20-30 years)

- Number of Women: 10
- Percentage: 33.3% of the total sample

**Motivations:** Young entrepreneurs are often driven by high ambition and a strong desire for self-realization. They are eager to implement innovative ideas and achieve financial independence. Many of these women started their businesses early in their careers or immediately after completing their education.

One young entrepreneur shared, "I began my business because I wanted to bring my unique ideas to life and ensure financial stability for myself. The initial stages were challenging, but my ambition kept me going."

**Challenges:** Despite their enthusiasm, these women faced significant challenges, particularly in securing funding and gaining credibility. Their lack of experience often made it difficult to convince investors and stakeholders of their potential. A participant noted, "Securing funding was a major hurdle. Many investors were skeptical about my young age and lack of experience. I overcame this by seeking mentorship and continuously improving my business plan."

**Support Systems:** To prepare for their ventures, many of these young women undertook business training and sought mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs. Family and friends also played a crucial role in providing moral and sometimes financial support.

**Success Strategies:** These young entrepreneurs relied heavily on continuous learning and networking to overcome challenges and achieve success. They attended various business workshops and networking events to expand their knowledge and connections.

## Middle-Aged Entrepreneurs (31-40 years)

- Number of Women: 12

- **Percentage:** 40.0% of the total sample

**Motivations:** Middle-aged women entrepreneurs typically have significant professional and life experience, which aids them in managing their businesses effectively. Their motivations often combine professional ambitions with personal goals, such as providing stability for their families.

One entrepreneur in this age group said, "Managing a business while ensuring my family is well-cared-for is a delicate balance, but it's achievable with proper support. My experience in the corporate world has been invaluable in running my own business."

**Challenges:** Balancing family responsibilities with entrepreneurial activities is a common challenge for this group. They often rely on robust support systems, including family and professional networks, to succeed. Another participant mentioned, "Family support has been crucial. My husband helps with household chores, and my parents occasionally take care of the children, allowing me to focus on my business."

**Support Systems:** Their support systems include family, professional networks, and sometimes government programs. These networks provide not only moral and financial support but also practical advice and mentorship.

**Success Strategies:** Middle-aged entrepreneurs often leverage their extensive professional experience and networks to navigate challenges. They emphasize the importance of work-life balance and use their experience to make informed business decisions.

Experienced Entrepreneurs (41-50 years)

- **Number of Women:** 8
- **Percentage:** 26.7% of the total sample

**Motivations:** These experienced entrepreneurs have substantial professional experience and stable family and social connections. Their businesses tend to be stable and long-lasting. Key motivations for this group include maintaining and expanding their existing businesses, as well as passing on their experience to the next generation.

One experienced entrepreneur shared, "I aim to not only grow my business but also mentor younger women entering the entrepreneurial world. My extensive network and experience have been vital in sustaining my business over the years."

**Challenges:** Their primary challenges include adapting to market changes and maintaining business growth. They leverage their experience and networks to overcome these challenges. A participant stated, "Adapting to market changes has been challenging, but my experience helps me navigate these shifts. I also rely on my network for insights and support."

**Support Systems:** They rely on a combination of family, professional networks, and community support. Their extensive experience allows them to access resources and support that might not be available to younger entrepreneurs.

**Success Strategies:** Experienced entrepreneurs focus on sustainability and legacy. They use their well-established networks and accumulated knowledge to maintain and grow their businesses, ensuring they can pass on a successful enterprise to the next generation.

#### **4.4 Reliability and Validity**

To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, the following methods were used:

1. **Data Triangulation:** The use of multiple data sources and methods of analysis to enhance the reliability of the results.

2. **Member Checking:** Participants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations.
3. **Audit Trail:** Detailed documentation of research procedures to ensure the study can be replicated.

### Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in compliance with all ethical standards and principles:

1. **Voluntary Participation:** All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided written consent to participate.
2. **Confidentiality:** Participants' personal data were anonymized to protect their confidentiality.
3. **Ethical Approval:** The study was approved by the ethical committee of the respective educational institution.

### Conducting Interviews

The interview process involved several stages. Initially, I established contact with potential participants, explaining the purpose and significance of the study. After obtaining consent, I arranged the time and place for the interviews, ensuring the most comfortable conditions for the participants.

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing me to ask pre-prepared questions while remaining flexible and following the participants' narratives. This approach provided a deeper understanding of their personal experiences and perceptions. The questions covered various aspects of entrepreneurial activity, including motivation, challenges faced, sources of support, and their vision for the future.

### Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is the central method in my research. After completing the interviews, I began transcribing the recordings, which allowed me to study each story

in detail. During transcription, I aimed to accurately convey the words and intonations of the participants to maintain the authenticity of their stories.

Next, I began coding the data, highlighting key themes and sub-themes. This stage allowed me to systematize a large amount of information and identify the main patterns in the experiences of women entrepreneurs. Data coding was done manually, which allowed me to delve deeper into the material and better understand its structure.

After coding, I proceeded to identify narrative structures. This stage involved analyzing the relationships between different themes and integrating them into common narrative models. I identified typical narrative arcs, such as overcoming difficulties, seeking support, balancing work and family life, and others.

In the final stage, I began interpreting the data obtained. I aimed not only to describe the identified patterns but also to understand their deeper meanings. For this, I referred to theoretical concepts related to women's entrepreneurship, gender studies, and the sociology of work.

The interpretation of the data included analyzing the impact of various factors on the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent, such as the socio-economic context, cultural norms, government support, and the personal motivations of the participants. I also paid attention to individual stories, showing how each woman's personal experience fits into a broader context.

The methodology of this study, based on narrative analysis and semi-structured interviews, allowed for an in-depth and comprehensive examination of the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent. This approach provided rich, detailed data, contributing to a better understanding of the individual and collective aspects of women's entrepreneurial activity in the region. The reliability and validity of the study were ensured through the use of data triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail, while ethical considerations guaranteed confidentiality and voluntary participation. The results obtained not only enriched existing knowledge about

women's entrepreneurship but also offered practical recommendations for its further development.

#### **4.6 Data Interpretation**

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These visual aids and detailed descriptions should provide a comprehensive view of the findings from the study, enhancing the understanding of the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent.

## RECOMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the narrative analysis of women entrepreneurs in Shymkent, several recommendations are proposed to support and enhance the entrepreneurial environment for women in this region.

### Financial Support and Access to Capital

**1. Enhance Access to Financial Resources:** Financial barriers are a significant challenge for many women entrepreneurs. To improve access to financial resources:

- Develop microfinance programs tailored specifically for women entrepreneurs.
- Offer low-interest loans and grants to women starting or expanding their businesses.
- Encourage banks and financial institutions to create women-friendly financial products and services.

**2. Financial Literacy Programs:** Provide financial literacy training to help women entrepreneurs manage their finances effectively. This should include:

- Budgeting and financial planning workshops.
- Training on how to prepare and present business plans to potential investors.

### Cultural and Social Support

**3. Promote Gender Equality in Entrepreneurship:** Address cultural barriers and gender stereotypes by:

- Running awareness campaigns that promote the benefits of women's entrepreneurship.
- Highlighting successful women entrepreneurs as role models through media and public events.

**4. Encourage Family and Community Support:** Encourage family and community support for women entrepreneurs by:

- Creating programs that educate families about the importance of supporting women's entrepreneurial endeavors.
- Developing community support networks where women entrepreneurs can share experiences and resources.

### Balancing Family and Business Responsibilities

**5. Provide Childcare and Family Support Services:** Help women balance family responsibilities with their business activities by:

- Establishing affordable and accessible childcare facilities.
- Offering flexible work schedules and remote working options to accommodate family needs.

### Networking and Mentorship

**6. Develop Networking Opportunities:** Strengthen networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs by:

- Organizing regular networking events, workshops, and conferences.
- Creating online platforms and forums where women can connect, share experiences, and collaborate.

**7. Establish Mentorship Programs:** Implement mentorship programs that pair experienced entrepreneurs with newcomers. This can help women gain valuable insights and advice to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship.

### Continuous Learning and Skill Development

**8. Offer Training and Development Programs:** Provide continuous learning opportunities to help women entrepreneurs stay competitive by:

- Offering courses and workshops on business management, marketing, and technology.

- Providing access to online learning resources and professional development programs.

**9. Encourage Innovation and Creativity:** Promote innovation and creativity in women's businesses by:

- Supporting research and development initiatives.
- Offering grants and incentives for innovative business ideas and projects.

Government and Institutional Support

**10. Strengthen Government Support Programs:** Enhance government support for women entrepreneurs by:

- Increasing funding for programs specifically designed to support women-owned businesses.
- Simplifying application processes for grants and financial aid.

**11. Create an Enabling Policy Environment:** Develop policies that foster a supportive environment for women's entrepreneurship by:

- Ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for women.
- Removing regulatory barriers that disproportionately affect women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

By addressing the key challenges and leveraging the motivations, support systems, and success strategies identified in this study, these recommendations aim to create a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem for women in Shymkent. Implementing these recommendations can help women overcome barriers, achieve their business goals, and contribute significantly to the economic and social development of the region.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This dissertation has explored the development of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, through a comprehensive narrative analysis of 30 women entrepreneurs. The study aimed to understand the motivations, challenges, support systems, and strategies for success that define the entrepreneurial journeys of these women. The findings reveal that women in Shymkent are primarily driven by economic necessity and a desire for independence. These motivations compel them to embark on entrepreneurial ventures despite facing significant barriers. Financial constraints, cultural norms, and family responsibilities emerged as the most prominent challenges hindering their entrepreneurial activities. However, the study also highlights the critical role of support systems, including family, friends, professional networks, and government programs, in helping women navigate these obstacles. The analysis identified continuous learning, networking, and innovation as key strategies employed by successful women entrepreneurs to overcome challenges and achieve business success. These strategies not only enable them to stay competitive but also help them adapt to changing market conditions and customer needs. Based on these insights, several recommendations were proposed to enhance the entrepreneurial environment for women in Shymkent. These include improving access to financial resources, promoting gender equality, providing childcare and family support services, and developing robust networking and mentorship programs. By addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, these recommendations aim to foster a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. In conclusion, this dissertation contributes to the academic understanding of women's entrepreneurship in a specific cultural and economic context. It offers practical solutions for enhancing women's entrepreneurial success and highlights the importance of targeted support and intervention strategies.

## **Limitations**

This discussion highlights the intricate dynamics of women's entrepreneurship in Shymkent, reflecting both the universal and context-specific aspects of their experiences. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the recommended strategies, it is possible to create a more supportive and inclusive entrepreneurial environment for women in Shymkent. This will not only empower individual entrepreneurs but also contribute to the broader economic and social development of the region.

## APPENDIX

### Interview Questions

#### *Personal Information*

1. **Age and Education**
  - How old are you?
  - What is your educational background?
2. **Marital Status**
  - Are you married? Do you have children?
  - How does your marital status affect your entrepreneurial activities?
3. **Professional Experience**
  - What was your professional experience before starting your business?
  - Did you have any previous entrepreneurial projects?

#### *Motivational Factors*

4. **Why did you decide to become an entrepreneur?**
  - What events or circumstances prompted you to start your business?
  - Did you have role models or inspiring stories that influenced your decision?
5. **What goals and dreams did you aim to achieve through entrepreneurship?**
  - What were your main objectives when starting your business?
  - What personal or professional ambitions did you want to fulfill?
6. **How did you prepare for starting your business?**
  - Did you receive any specific education or training?
  - What challenges did you face during the preparation phase?

#### *Barriers and Challenges*

7. **What major challenges did you face on your path to becoming a successful entrepreneur?**
  - Were these financial, cultural, or family barriers?
  - How did these challenges impact your business?
8. **How did cultural and social norms affect your entrepreneurial activities?**
  - Did you encounter any biases because you are a woman?
  - How did you deal with this influence?
9. **How do you balance your entrepreneurial activities with family responsibilities?**
  - Do you have support from your family?
  - How do you organize your time to manage both spheres?

### *Sources of Support*

**10. What types of support have you received throughout your entrepreneurial journey?**

- Did you receive help from family, friends, or professional networks?
- Did you receive government or other external support?

**11. How effective was this support?**

- How did it influence the development of your business?
- Which aspects of the support were most useful, and which were less effective?

### *Strategies for Success*

**12. What strategies have you used to overcome barriers and achieve success in business?**

- What key decisions or approaches helped you deal with challenges?
- Do you have any unique methods or tactics that you consider important for your success?

**13. How do you adapt to market changes and respond to new challenges?**

- What steps do you take to stay competitive?
- What lessons have you learned from previous mistakes or failures?

**14. What advice would you give to other women who want to start their own business?**

- What are the main tips or recommendations you would offer?
- What mistakes do you think should be avoided?

### *Concluding Questions*

**15. How do you evaluate your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

- What do you consider your main achievements?
- What goals do you set for the future?

**16. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as an entrepreneur?**

- Are there any important aspects of your experience that we have not covered?

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