

## Motivations and challenges of women business owners in Mexico City and the metropolitan area

Motivaciones y desafíos de mujeres propietarias de negocio de la Ciudad de México y zona conurbada

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### Abstract

The objective of this article is to analyze the perceptions of women entrepreneurs in relation to their motivations for starting the business, their challenges, their strategies to face the challenges, the importance of training, and advice to women; the above to offer valuable perspectives and recommendations to support future generations of businesswomen. It is a qualitative study; eight female micro-business owners from Mexico City and the metropolitan area were interviewed. The study found that the lack of work or being left without it motivated them to start their businesses. Their way of facing challenges is not to doubt their ability and be resilient, recognizing that they need business education. It is concluded that the development of training programs and access to mentoring that facilitates the development of business skills is imperative.

**Keywords:** Women, female entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial spirit, motivations, entrepreneurial challenges.

### Resumen

El objetivo del artículo es analizar las percepciones de mujeres empresarias con relación a sus motivaciones para iniciar el negocio, sus desafíos, sus estrategias para enfrentar los retos, la importancia de la capacitación y los consejos hacia mujeres emprendedoras. Es un estudio cualitativo, en el cual se entrevistaron a ocho microempresarias de la Ciudad de México y área conurbada. Se encontró que la falta de trabajo o quedarse sin éste las motivó a iniciar sus negocios; sus desafíos fueron decidir arrancar las ideas de negocio, el machismo, y la falta de conocimiento y confianza. Se concluye que es imperante el desarrollo de programas de capacitación y acceso a mentoría que coadyuve al desarrollo de habilidades empresariales.

**Palabras claves:** Mujeres, emprendimiento femenino, espíritu empresarial, motivaciones, desafíos del emprendimiento.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (2023), in its gender norms index, two in five people consider that men are better business executives than women, in addition to approximately nine in ten People in the world—whether women or men—are prejudiced against women.

Today, women often leave their workplaces due to frustration generated by glass ceilings and limited opportunities for growth; As a result, some women decide to start a business, which is a grueling process in a society that is dominated by men (Jacob et al., 2023). It is evident that business discourse privileges men as business actors (Marlow & Martinez-Dy, 2018). In this way, women continue to be underrepresented in the generation of new companies: women have fewer possibilities than men to develop a business and even become entrepreneurs (Rocha & Van Praag, 2020). Likewise, many women start their businesses out of necessity, due to the lack of job opportunities, and the poor quality of the employment to which they have access. In addition to insecurity, especially in those businesses that are informal. It is recognized that women are driven to create self-employment derived from economic crises and high unemployment rates (Ferrín, 2023).

Scientific literature indicates that women's entrepreneurial intention is affected by historically present structural gender inequalities. Perceptions about gender depend on variations depending on the cultural context, family background, and all of a woman's professional competencies (Karim, et al., 2023). Inequalities in access to financing are recognized, derived from the possible prejudices that some financial institutions have and the lack of contact networks that help them obtain capital (Brush, et al., 2018). Likewise, there are inequalities in education and training, which means that women have limited skills and knowledge to start and manage successful businesses (Kelley et al., 2013). Likewise, they are limiting the time that women can dedicate to their businesses so that they can dedicate themselves to their business (Jennings & Brush, 2013). Gender stereotypes and discrimination cause them to perceive themselves as less competent or suitable for leadership, which causes them to have fewer possibilities of entrepreneurship (Ahl & Marlow, 2012).

In the complex framework of female entrepreneurship, some of the problems that women entrepreneurs face are lack of confidence, aggressive competition, scarcity of government and non-government programs, insufficient

training programs, little or no interaction with women. successful businesswomen, lack of awareness about women's health issues, the perception that financial institutions have of them, and the difficult balance between work and family life. Despite the difficulties imposed by the patriarchy in which many women have lived, they have had to move forward and gain recognition; however, they face gender stereotypes in society that undermine their opportunities to become their own boss (Agarwal et al., 2018; Agarwal et al., 2020; Amrita et al., 2018).

On the other hand, Marlow and McAdam (2013) state that it is often said that women-owned businesses tend to be classified as underperforming, since most are small in size and, in many cases, are labeled as marginal. Another worrying situation is that women's companies are considered to have inferior performance, since their measurement is based on expectations of female weakness and in a world dominated by male superiority. Likewise, Radović-Marković and Achakpa (2018) mention that women own and manage fewer companies than men, in addition to facing inequalities and discrimination. Another factor that puts them at a disadvantage is their lower level of education compared to men. In this regard, Love et al. (2024) found that female entrepreneurs with lower educational levels, children, and risk aversion are more likely to report lower well-being.

In the case of Mexico, it is reported that the participation of women in the labor market during the first quarter of 2023 was 46.8%, while that of men was 77%. In addition, an inequality index of 0.309 is presented. Likewise, the estimated gross national income per capita for women was \$12,456, while that of men was \$23,600 (World Bank Gender Data Portal, 2024).

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2022) report, the Entrepreneurial Activity Rate (TEA) in Mexico is 23.8%. Within this percentage, 13.1% correspond to women who are starting businesses, while men represent 24.3%. Additionally, women are seen to be less likely to have established businesses, at 5.2% compared to 9.8% for men, highlighting a notable gender disparity in entrepreneurship in the country (GEM, 2022).

Likewise, the Asociación de Emprendedores de México (ASEM) recognizes that it takes longer for female entrepreneurs to achieve profitability in their businesses, in addition to the fact that companies founded by women are the main employers of women. However, companies founded by women fail due to a

lack of market knowledge, limited access to financing, limited time availability and fear of failure, a factor that affects women 55% more than men.

The objective of this article is to analyze the perceptions of women entrepreneurs in relation to their motivations for starting a business, the challenges they face, strategies to overcome challenges, the importance of training and advice for other women entrepreneurs. All of this in order to identify the elements that drive women to become entrepreneurs, recognize the factors that generate and maintain motivation, and discover the difficulties that women face in the business world. In addition, it seeks to offer valuable insight into how to address obstacles by developing coping strategies, as well as identifying the relevance of training and providing advice to women who want to become entrepreneurs.

## 1. WOMEN AND THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SPIRIT

It is interesting to recognize that entrepreneurship has evolved since its beginnings in classical economics, where the relevance of entrepreneurs as agents of change and innovation was observed. Schumpeter (1934) pointed out the entrepreneur as a driving force in the creative destruction of the market, originating innovations that contribute to the revolution of industries. In recent decades, entrepreneurship research has focused attention on the inclusion of women, recognizing the complexities of gender dynamics that influence entrepreneurship. In this way, starting in the 80s and 90s, with the increase in the presence of women in the labor market, interest arose in investigating the specific barriers and motivations faced by women entrepreneurs (Brush, 1992). Subsequently, research progressed by considering social and psychological aspects, which made it possible to analyze the experiences of female entrepreneurs (Baumol, 1992).

Entrepreneurship has strong associations with masculine characteristics that bring success, leading women to invalidate themselves as successful businesswomen. That is, the way they perceive themselves as entrepreneurs can intentionally limit the growth of their businesses, they suffer from the impostor phenomenon, and they doubt their successes and abilities (Duncan et al., 2023; Jones, 2023; Ladge et al., 2019). In this regard, Civera and Meoli (2023) and Veckalniec and Tambovceva (2023) affirm that, in entrepreneurship, women and men seem to be similar, but there are differences: in the case of women they are restricted to factors such as: human capital, education,

previous experience, social capital, access to networks, economic capital and technology, as well as gender biases and inequality that hinder entrepreneurial ecosystems and hold back women in its ability to innovate and create value. These constraints, coupled with limited connection to networks and technology, as well as deeply entrenched gender systems, inhibit their potential to innovate and create value within a largely male-dominated business environment. Therefore, it is crucial to make these obstacles visible in order to develop strategies that promote a more inclusive ecosystem and reinforce the participation of women in entrepreneurship.

Marlow (2020) adds that women's business behavior depends on the diversity of socioeconomic contexts that surround their lives. For their part, Nowiński et al. (2019) point out that women on various occasions have lower entrepreneurial intentions, as well as low levels of business self-efficacy; However, it is recognized that they benefit more than men from business education. Necessity entrepreneurship, characterized by capital constraints and limited economic impact, disproportionately affects women due to the structural inequalities they face. Women often have less access to financing and support networks, limiting their ability to develop sustainable businesses. This lack of resources not only restricts their economic potential, but also perpetuates a cycle of poverty that makes it difficult to improve their living conditions (O'Donnell et al., 2023).

Poverty creates a scarcity mentality that pushes women to make business decisions focused on short-term survival, sacrificing long-term growth. According to De Bruijn and Antonides (2022), this context of uncertainty and risk aversion negatively affects their cognitive abilities, since constant concerns about financial stability limit their ability to concentrate and make strategic decisions. Furthermore, in many cultures, women also take on the majority of unpaid domestic work, exacerbating this situation. by further reducing their available mental capacity, which has a direct impact on their effectiveness as entrepreneurs.

Gupta et al. (2014) state that women are less likely than men to positively evaluate a business opportunity; This often happens because, in most business contexts, masculine traits such as aggressiveness and risk-taking are emphasized. Likewise, the limitation of resources hinders the increase in female entrepreneurship – this phenomenon is called “business DIY” – but, despite the deprived environments, women entrepreneurs rely on their personality traits to be able to get ahead

with diverse situations, through their persistence, self-determination and patience (Mersha and Sriram, 2019; Rahman et al., 2023).

Women entrepreneurs' focus on non-monetary outcomes, such as self-empowerment, schedule flexibility, and work-life balance, reflects a more holistic view of business success (Love et al., 2024). This approach not only allows them to have more balanced control over their lives, but also positively impacts the economy and society at large. As noted by Beloskar et al. (2024), the empowerment of women entrepreneurs facilitates access to decent jobs with regular income, which has direct effects on reducing poverty and improving family nutrition. Furthermore, these economic and social advances have the potential to contribute to the mitigation of climate change and the reduction of gender violence, since women's economic empowerment is linked to their ability to exercise more control over their environments and make decisions. more sustainable and safe for their families.

**METHOD**

This is a qualitative study. According to Pyo et al. (2023), this type of study allows us to take a deeper look at the subjects being investigated, to understand their reality through detailed and information-rich data. In this regard, Bhangu et al. (2023) state that qualitative studies provide an approach to understanding and learning about non-quantifiable phenomena, such as people's experiences, cultures, languages, and histories, facilitating a better understanding of the world.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews with women who had a business in operation. The questions asked focused on the development of the female business career: a) sociodemographic data, b) time of entrepreneurship, c) number of employees, d) start of the business, e) motivations, f) challenges, g) strategies to face the challenges, h) training, i) advice for women.

**Table 1**  
*PARTICIPANT INFORMATION*

Businesswoman details	Company name	Operating time	Number of employees
Adriana Age: 36 years old Marital status: single Children: yes Living: with her children Education: bachelor's degree.	Cahuic A.C, an association that provides psychological support services, support to women with breast cancer.	3 years	15
Carolina Herrera Age: 57 years old Marital status: single Children: yes Living: with her children Education: master's degree	Rock impresos, impressions.	22 years	12
Estefany Age: 31 years old Marital status: common-law marriage Children: no Living: with her partner Education: Bachelor's degree	Isaabina, sale of nutritional products.	2 years	5
Cynthia Age: 40 years old Marital status: single Children: yes Lives with: her daughter Education: Bachelor's degree	Cero fronteras, visa processing advice.	8 years	4
Bertha Age: 56 years old Marital status: single Children: yes Living: alone Education: secondary school	Quesería Manolo, cheese production and sale	28 years	4
Carolina Flores Age: 31 years old Marital status: single Children: no Living: parents Education: Bachelor's degree	Carolina Flores, accounting advisory services.	A year and a half	5
Rocio Age: 42 years old Marital status: married Children: yes Living: family Education: master's degree	Grupo Dios Cacao, chocolate production and sales, specializes in training women from vulnerable sectors in the use and sale of cocoa.	13 years	8
Ariana Age: 50 years old Marital status: married Children: yes Living: family Education: Bachelor's degree	Sami Plástico, retail sale of all types of plastics.	25 years	8

## FINDINGS

### 3.1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COMPANY

The beginnings of the Fundación Cahuic, created from the SPA, were impressive, as expressed by the interviewee. She comments that they started with a stretcher and a room where the therapies were given; now they have eleven offices and they are invited to give lectures at the Texcoco town hall, and other town halls have requested their services. They have managed to deliver 26 natural hair wigs, 15 breast prostheses and 20 pigmentations; in other words, the growth has been exponential. In the case of the company that works with visa procedures, the pandemic fractured them in a very cruel way. However, after the population was vaccinated, they began to have more work; now the organization can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The cheese company said that they started in a small place, and later they decided to move to the current owner's house. In this place they managed to build a place where they produce, and another where they sell. In this way, today they have managed to place the product in Taxco, and they sell it two days a week in the market and they also have clients in Cuernavaca. For her part, the businesswoman who offers her accounting services said that the most difficult thing was to form a good foundation for the business, in order to have solidity later on; she mentioned that she started everything by setting a main objective for the business, and what is expected to be achieved, since without this it is difficult to survive.

The chocolate company, on the other hand, began as a result of some courses that the owner took on chocolate handling, so that one day she decided to start her own business because she wanted to have a future for her children, who have been a driving force in her lives to date. In the case of the plastics business, it was the father of the current leader who started the organization empirically: he sold his bags, but everything was simple, without structure. A year after the operation, the current owner finished university, but could not find a job, so she decided to get into the core of the organization. There she began to develop strategies, which was an important catalyst for the company to take off, until it became what it is today.

### 3.2. MOTIVATIONS

The women's motivations for starting a business were diverse and reflected a variety of personal and professional reasons. One of them was found to want to apply what she had learned in her career, in addition to

wanting to have a house and take care of her children. She wisely mentioned that “ego is fundamental in the matter of starting a business: it is what allows you to get ahead when things get difficult,” in addition to feeling “the enormous satisfaction of achieving things.” She also expressed that one of her pleasures is going out to travel, and when she managed to do so for the first time, she continued exploring more destinations.

On the other hand, there is a testimony that stated that her motivation to start her own business was losing her job, which led her to take the initiative and, with all her savings, start her business. Likewise, there was the case of another business owner, who decided to become independent because she had a lot of experience in the tourism sector; she never denied that she was very afraid, because her job gave her security in benefits, but, despite these circumstances, she began to work on her own.

Similarly, another of the interviewees said that everything happened in a row. There were situations that allowed things to happen: her brother hired a man to make cheese from the surplus milk, and one day he suggested to the entrepreneur that she help him sell the cheese in a local market. Some time later, he suggested that she stay with the Oaxaca cheese business, and so the decision was made. With a lot of effort and overcoming fears, she continued forward; now she has her house and continues looking for markets to sell the cheese.

In the case of the chocolate business, it was found that the greatest motivation was the immense love she has for chocolate, which led her to start the business. On the other hand, the leader of the plastics company decided to stay to help her father, who is an older person: the inspiration was that he worked in a plastics company and, little by little, he began to assemble a machine, but he needed help. Thus, after looking for work and not finding an opportunity, she decided to support her father and stay in charge of the business.

The analysis of the motivations that drive women to undertake business reveals a wide range of personal and contextual factors. Some women undertake business as a way to apply their acquired knowledge, seeking financial autonomy and personal fulfillment, as in the case of one who mentioned that her motivation included both acquiring a house and the satisfaction of traveling. This suggests that, for many, entrepreneurship is more than a mere economic activity; it is a way to fulfill life goals and personal aspirations, which reflects the interconnection between personal and professional development in female entrepreneurship.

Another key motivation that emerges is the need to adapt to unexpected circumstances, such as unemployment. For one of the interviewees, losing her job was a catalyst to start her business, which highlights how women use entrepreneurship as a response to crisis situations. In this sense, Hasniati et al. (2023) argue that contextual factors, such as job stability and personal experiences, significantly affect entrepreneurial decisions. At the same time, these motivations are aligned with the observations of Vázquez-Pauca et al. (2022), who state that personal growth, interpersonal relationships, and social mission are key drivers in female entrepreneurship, highlighting that companies seek more than economic gains; they value autonomy, empowerment, and impact.

Furthermore, cases of female entrepreneurs who take over a family business or start a company motivated by a passion for a product, such as chocolate, reflect a strong emotional and cultural connection to work. These cases demonstrate that, in many cases, entrepreneurship arises from a deeply rooted personal identity, which, according to Murnieks et al. (2020), strengthens the emotional commitment, innovation and perseverance of female entrepreneurs. This emotional bond, coupled with family support, reinforces their determination to continue despite challenges.

Finally, the analysis also highlights how positive psychology, cited by Su et al. (2020), plays a crucial role in the sustainability of entrepreneurial motivation, even in the face of scenarios of uncertainty or failure. The interviewees show remarkable resilience, being able to see beyond obstacles and focusing on personal and professional achievements, which not only drives their own growth, but also has the potential to influence their communities by generating employment.

### 3.3 CHALLENGES

Regarding the main challenges they had faced during their business venture, the women said that it was at the beginning of the business idea. However, having had previous experiences in previous jobs allowed them to think about executing their business ideas. In the case of the SPA, one of the participants stated that there was a time when she had worked and was sent to train in the subject of massages. When she met a friend with a degree in nursing, with experience of having worked in a SPA, they decided to open one. However, the beginning was complicated, since they barely managed to collect five hundred pesos a week for each one, in addition to the fact that they had to do all the activities, from cleaning and reception, so they began to advertise

to attract more clients. Currently, they have merged the SPA with an association that supports women who suffer from cancer.

Likewise, it is recognized that machismo is one of the barriers present in entrepreneurship; According to the testimonies, "men do not want to deal with women," and they close the doors to them because they do not believe in their abilities until they demonstrate, with persistence and stubbornness, that they are capable of overcoming obstacles. In addition, workers who are older than women do not feel comfortable if a younger woman commands them, and even more so if she is the owner of the business, in addition to the fact that people do not trust them when they start hiring them. On the other hand, one of the participants emphasized that many of the women are not supportive, in addition to the fact that other people are ambitious and tend to "put their foot down" for enterprising women. In addition, another of the challenges is the complaints from their children about their absences.

One of the testimonies stated that one of the difficulties she has had to face is the shortage of raw materials to make her product - which means not being able to supply the market according to the demand - in addition to the fact that costs have quadrupled, which imposes difficult barriers to compete with rivals, and has an unfavorable impact on profits. One of the difficulties was access to social networks to reach more customers, since it involved working with competencies that were not available in that field, but which are necessary to present the products.

Another of the interviewees mentioned that one of the main barriers was that "no-body knew her," but she was solving this through the recommendation that people make of her work; in addition, she put up banners in the markets, handed out flyers in the central supply center for visa processing, and also stood outside schools to give out brochures for the travel packages they manage. On the other hand, it was found that the entrepreneurs have had many complicated situations that have led them to start a business, such as losing their husbands and being left alone with their children. Events like these have forced them to move in order to support their family.

Also, the challenges they expressed are maintaining composure and good emotional management, and it is also necessary to have an established business objective and be willing to work on it. In addition, it is recognized that frustration is one of the constant issues for women.

Another challenge is the breach of trust, which can cause people to want to “throw in the towel”; the entrepreneurs recognize that there has been a breach of trust by some clients who do not pay and that this puts the business out of balance, since with that money they could pay their payroll. However, it is clear that they are resilient and that these failures have allowed them to be more cautious. Likewise, it is important to know that entrepreneurship is not for everyone. Finally, it was discovered that another of the complex goals is the lack of knowledge of the various areas that make up the company - such as finance, marketing, product development - and the way to compensate for these deficiencies is through training or interaction with other experts.

Hechavarria and Ingram (2019) argue that gender norms act as a structural obstacle that limits women's opportunities in the business world, imposing additional barriers that require greater effort to overcome. The participants in the study reflect this phenomenon by describing how they are forced to continually demonstrate their ability in the face of sexist attitudes, which question their competencies until they manage to validate their performance. This context not only perpetuates the underestimation of women in business, but, as Ladge et al. (2019) point out, it can also undermine their self-efficacy. In this sense, entrepreneurship continues to be culturally linked to male success, which generates self-limitations in women that affect both their confidence and their ability to maximize their economic impact.

Kovaleva et al. (2023) complement this analysis by pointing out that female entrepreneurs also face an overload of responsibilities that goes beyond traditional expectations in the work environment. The interviewees mention how they must assume multiple functions within their businesses, from operational tasks to strategic management, which reflects an inequity in the distribution of roles. Furthermore, discrimination is evident in the resistance of some employees to being led by young women, which compromises the operational efficiency of companies and hinders their growth.

On the other hand, Shipman (2023) provides a perspective from psychology, suggesting that the predominant psychological characteristics in women entrepreneurs, such as agreeableness and neuroticism, may limit their ability to negotiate and manage stress effectively. The experiences of the interviewees, who describe situations of frustration and stress arising from the mistrust of clients and the challenges of balancing work and personal life, validate these observations. This set of psychological and social factors directly affects

the sustainability of their businesses.

Lemaire et al. (2023) and Rudhumbu et al. (2020) highlight the crucial role of education and training in the empowerment of women entrepreneurs, providing tools that allow them to improve both their management and emotional management. The interviewees emphasize the need to acquire knowledge in fundamental areas such as finance and marketing, demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous learning, which is indicative of the resilience they exhibit in the face of the barriers they face.

In summary, the perceptions of the participants in the study are aligned with the approaches of Hechavarria and Ingram (2019), who highlight how gender norms limit women's opportunities in the business field. These additional barriers not only require persistence and demonstrated ability, but also require the constant overcoming of obstacles that affect both the professional and personal growth of businesswomen.

### 3.4 STRATEGIES FOR CHALLENGES

The participants were asked about the strategies they have used to face the multiple challenges mentioned. It was found that they recommend not trusting so easily, not doubting themselves, much less their ability, in addition to identifying whether they live to work or work to live.

One of the businesswomen states that “you should not put all your eggs in one basket”: she refers to the fact that you should be careful not to depend on a single source of income or business strategy, since it is essential to diversify to reduce risks. Likewise, it is recognized that it is essential to have self-confidence and resilience, this helps to overcome obstacles without questioning the skills you have. It is also important to recognize that not all people are honest, which implies learning from adversity and overcoming disappointments to move forward; the most valuable thing is to adapt and look for new opportunities.

Likewise, emphasis is placed on putting money in motion, and not just saving, since investing has greater benefits in the long term. It was also found that one of the businesswomen finds it difficult to compete with large companies, and that she is constantly checking prices in various establishments to stay in the market. She also said that another limitation she has is that she can hardly inject more money, since she runs the business alone, and she emphasizes that, in order not to become overwhelmed, it is important for women to learn to delegate tasks and responsibilities.

On the other hand, it was found that it is extremely important that, in order to face challenges, businesswomen have self-knowledge and accept their vulnerability, because many times due to the hectic pace of work they do not take the time to reflect, and even more so when they are going through a crisis: this affects them greatly because it is important to recognize that they are susceptible and this helps them a lot to grow. Another strategy is focused on training, this is because the acquisition of specific knowledge supports facilitating effective decision-making and business management. In relation to the work team, it is suggested to maintain transparent and realistic communication to get more support in the most adverse moments. Another relevant part is that in order to face critical moments it is not necessary to take things personally and in this way their sensitive and emotional side is not affected, but the most relevant key to finding solutions is to never doubt their own capabilities. Likewise, it is recognized that it is necessary to delegate to have the expected results, since it is not prudent to do everything autonomously and certain results need time.

Likewise, emphasis is placed on adapting to market changes, for example, through the use of social networks, and identifying the opportunities that these tools provide and their role in the evolution of the business. Likewise, a businesswoman recognizes that it is extremely valuable to remain optimistic and positive, which contributes to understanding that difficulties are temporary, and that it is important to be aware of market trends. In addition, she promotes that the success of the business benefits all those who collaborate in it, so she invites people to refuse to compete unfairly, and highlights the importance of supporting each other in the business world.

On the other hand, another of the businesswomen stated that it is important to remain calm in complex situations, that is, she resorts to keeping calm in crisis situations with clients who miss their flights during their trips. In addition, another of the "infallible" strategies she uses is to have knowledge in complex situations, such as immigration procedures, in addition to having a network of contacts with airlines, hotels and tourist services. Likewise, effective communication is essential to keep her clients informed, calm and satisfied. Finally, the businesswoman maintains advance planning to know how to solve problems efficiently.

Similarly, in another of the interviews it was stated that she uses the strategy based on prior knowledge: when she faces similar situations, her brain recognizes the solution that she will use to respond and overcome

the obstacle. Likewise, she recognizes that fear is a warning sign and admits that this emotion supports her to reach better solutions, avoiding paralysis and giving much more proactive responses; It is also a good driver to explore new opportunities, and thus overcome personal and business limits.

The businesswomen emphasize that it is important to take risks, but it is important to recognize that it involves a lot of work, and that sometimes you can lose everything, but that, despite the difficulties, it is possible to rebuild and recover, and even more so if you work for something you want. The above begins with the idea of working on the logo and registering with the Treasury, which implies a responsibility in the business process. It is worth noting that it is important to know how to address the obstacles that arise along the way - such as permits and government regulation situations - in order to be able to face them. The important thing is to take one step at a time; in addition, there is no perfect time to start the business idea: it is not good to wait until the children are grown, "the time is now"; postponing decisions does not allow you to take advantage of the opportunities of the present, the important thing is to try things.

Finally, they suggest not giving up, since women have great vision in business and are good managers, but that skill must be refined so that, in this way, the business grows steadily. It is also important to have knowledge about ways to save and invest.

The interviewed businesswomen share strategies to overcome business challenges, highlighting the importance of self-confidence, resilience and income diversification. They underline the need to invest rather than just save, and the value of delegating tasks to avoid burnout. Continuous training and adaptation to market changes are crucial to maintaining competitiveness. In addition, they emphasize that positivity and teamwork are essential to face adversities and ensure sustainable business growth. In relation to confidence, it has been shown that women exhibit little confidence in themselves to start a business, which is why they agree with Jennings et al. (2023) who mention that women have to work on this problem so that they correct and know how to face uncertainty. Likewise, what is stated by Wulandari and Supeni (2023) is ratified, who affirm that financial education is required to optimize the management of resources and maintain the sustainability of the business.

### 3.5 TRAINING

Training for businesswomen is a valuable topic, and they recognize that it is important to invest time and



money to acquire new knowledge, without forgetting previous learning, which facilitates the transfer of knowledge. Likewise, one of the businesswomen commented that she is constantly taking courses—she has even traveled to the United States to obtain certifications in immigration law. This knowledge has allowed her to offer better guidance to her clients who wish to carry out immigration procedures. Similarly, another of the participants mentioned that in her business they have set the goal of taking at least 24 hours of courses per year; technical courses are considered, such as the development of accounting, tax reforms, tax calculation, payroll, in addition to soft skills, such as leadership, stress management and time management. Another of the participants stated that training is essential to stay up to date; in fact, she shares knowledge with the workers whenever she can.

In this regard, Bhatti et al. (2021) found that entrepreneurial education and training positively improve psychological attributes such as self-confidence, tolerance for ambiguity, innovation, and achievement motivation. In turn, Sayeed (2023) states that education and training allow women to feel valued and committed to the success of their businesses; in addition to working with their creativity, confidence, and innovation, it boosts their capabilities and facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge. Likewise, it corroborates the findings of Khan et al. (2017), Harley et al. (2020), Alsaad et al. (2023), and Bhandari et al. (2024), who state that quality education impacts the empowerment of women entrepreneurs, which facilitates their development and contributes to reducing inequalities between women and men; in addition, psychological empowerment promotes entrepreneurship. On the other hand, women who have an economic activity and financial independence show a greater sense of self-efficacy, which increases autonomy and responsibility, positively influencing life satisfaction and the perception of success.

### 3.6 ADVICE TO BUSINESSWOMEN

One of the entrepreneurs recommends changing the perception of fear: she suggests that fear can save you from various situations, so she proposes learning to live with it. She also emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge in order to have confidence in your own abilities and thus be able to face different situations.

Advice was also found related to maintaining discipline and responsibility as the basis of business success; likewise, perseverance and consistency must be developed, which are essential to overcome obstacles

and achieve long-term goals. It is equally important for entrepreneurs to develop strategies to address obstacles and discouragement, especially when there is no immediate profit as desired, which can cause exhaustion and lead them to think about quitting.

On the other hand, it was found that entrepreneurs recommend putting ideas into practice: the most important thing is to start with what you have available. Likewise, it is advised to get rid of the shame of starting to sell whatever, in addition to eliminating preconceived ideas, fostered by social networks, about instant success and, therefore, about profits that quickly accumulate. It is also positive that women start a business in a field that is in line with their values and that they are passionate about, so that they can work in what they really enjoy. Likewise, it is recognized that entrepreneurship is empowering, and it is a unique opportunity for women to make decisions and acquire multiple learnings: success is not measured in monetary terms, but in the ability to live off something they like and work on something of their own.

Empowering women is essential for them to be able to be part of the economy of their countries, as in this way they break the chains that prevent them from living with self-esteem and satisfaction. Empowerment helps women to have control and power over their economic, social, political and cultural resources, which allows them to manage themselves, improve their confidence and develop their self-concept (Singh et al., 2014). In this context, redefining fear is essential, as suggested by Krithiga and Velmurugan (2024); coping strategies play a crucial role in helping women entrepreneurs not to feel alone or isolated. In this way, they propose that entrepreneurs access programs that allow them to acquire and improve skills and knowledge relevant to their businesses, as well as having experts and consultants who provide them with support and guidance.

Likewise, it is necessary to recognize that success in business is not an isolated event, but a process of constant improvement. Al Issa (2020) emphasizes that consistency, interest, perseverance, and effort are essential components that contribute to long-term success. These elements are indispensable to overcome obstacles and achieve goals, reinforcing the importance of maintaining discipline and responsibility in the entrepreneurial path. Similarly, developing strategies to address discouragement and lack of immediate gains is vital to avoid burnout and the temptation to quit.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings found in this study related to female entrepreneurship allow us to account for the prospective implications in the future of women entrepreneurs and gender equality in Mexico. The motivations found that gave rise to women's businesses contribute to reflection regarding the current situation and the future of policies and programs that consider the needs and aspirations of women. This could include the analysis of programs aimed at women and their businesses and analyzing their functionality and effectiveness in the creation and development of businesses. Likewise, the challenges of women entrepreneurs, such as machismo, lack of resources and poor training, support the idea of the existence of key areas for intervention and support, so it is essential to establish training and mentoring programs that allow increasing business skills, confidence and resilience.

Likewise, the findings obtained allow us to realize that it is necessary to strengthen the business ecosystem where women converge, allowing for the economic, social and sustainable development of nations. Another element that came to light is the importance of creating support and collaboration networks between businesswomen. This allows their growth and development and in this way women achieve economic autonomy that allows them to acquire identity and make decisions. This study emphasizes the relevance of continuing to investigate and address the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs and businesswomen.

Businesswomen are an inspiration for other women who want or have a business; it is recognized that education is a crucial element that allows them to take the step forward and start the idea or keep the business in operation. It is concluded that it is essential to make known stories of women who have undertaken and the female empowerment achieved, so that other women decide to work on their business ideas, with the purpose of achieving financial independence and, in this way, being more autonomous in decision making. Likewise, it is important that women find spaces that support them in strengthening their self-esteem and business self-efficacy, through training programs that contribute to creating knowledge spaces in which they acquire learning from the different areas of their businesses and strengthen their digital skills.

Future lines of research are aimed at studying the impact of their relationships and their involvement in the business, in addition to investigating whether the adoption of technologies has a positive impact; in addition to the development of female entrepreneurship networks where the products or services of other entrepreneurs are promoted, shared, consumed and supported.

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