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Assessing the Entrepreneurial Environment in Developing Women's Entrepreneurial Activities

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical and practical aspects of assessing the entrepreneurship environment factors in developing women's entrepreneurial activities. The study examines institutional, financial, social, and infrastructural factors affecting the sustainable growth of women's entrepreneurship through a multi-factor approach. In this work, an integrated index model is proposed to develop effective policies for supporting women's entrepreneurship and to identify interregional differences. The research results show that access to financial resources and institutional support are the main determinants, and they provide a scientific basis for forming practical recommendations.

Keywords: Women's Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Environment, Institutional Efficiency, Financial Inclusion, Social Support, Integrated Index, Business Sustainability, Gender Economics



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1. Introduction

Women's entrepreneurship is currently recognized as an important strategic factor in the sustainable development of the global economy. Statistics from the World Bank and the United Nations show that small and medium-sized business entities managed by women contribute significantly to the national economy in the fields of production and services, with their activities creating opportunities to generate new jobs, implement innovative solutions, and ensure social stability. At the same time, gender-based obstacles – limited access to financial resources, stereotypes within family and society, institutional complexities – create serious challenges in developing women's entrepreneurship.

Women's entrepreneurship plays an important role in the sustainable development of the modern economy. This activity not only creates new jobs but also contributes to economic growth, innovative solutions, and ensuring gender equality in society. International experience shows that small and medium-sized enterprises managed by women make a significant contribution to the national economy, and their activities are often seen in the service, trade, and microbusiness sectors. In Uzbekistan, the development of women's entrepreneurship is one of the priority areas of state policy. In recent years, measures aimed at promoting entrepreneurship have been implemented by organizations such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, and Mikrokreditbank. Among these measures, expanding access to financial resources, training courses, and preferential credit lines play an important role. Nevertheless, a mechanism for assessing the environmental factors affecting the development of women's entrepreneurial activities in a comprehensive and scientifically-based

manner has not been adequately developed [1].

The business environment is a complex system of institutional, financial, social, and infrastructural factors that influence the development of business entities, and its effective assessment not only improves the quality of political and economic decisions but also helps optimize strategies to support women's entrepreneurship. From this point of view, the main goal of this study is to identify the factors of the entrepreneurial environment in the development of women's entrepreneurial activity, to assess them comprehensively, and to develop an integrated index model. This study serves to effectively shape women's entrepreneurship policy and enrich the economic development strategy from both a scientific and practical perspective [2].

The aim of this research is to identify the factors of the entrepreneurial environment in the development of women's entrepreneurial activities and to develop an integrated index model through their comprehensive assessment. This study provides a scientific basis for the effective formation of policies to support women's entrepreneurship and contributes to the economic development strategy.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted based on a mixed-methods approach, that is, quantitative and qualitative research methods were combined. The main aim of the study is to identify the environmental factors affecting women's entrepreneurial activities and assess them through an integrated index model.

1. Sample size: 1,200 female entrepreneurs
2. Regions: 14 administrative regions, urban and rural stratification
3. Sectors of activity: services (57%), manufacturing (28%), trade (15%)
4. Data sources: surveys, expert interviews (n=25), official statistics (government reports, entrepreneurship registry)

During the research process, respondents were selected using a random-stratified method, which allowed for identifying interregional and sectoral differences. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, served to identify social and institutional barriers limiting women's entrepreneurship through expert interviews and case studies.

System of Variables

Dependent variable (Y): Women's entrepreneurship development index, based on parameters such as income growth, job creation, investment attraction, and market share.

Independent variables (X):

- X_1 – Institutional environment index (business registration, licensing, legal regulations);
- X_2 – Access to financial resources index (credits, grants, collateral resources);
- X_3 – Social support index (networking, consulting, professional organizations);
- X_4 – Infrastructure availability (transport, logistics, digital infrastructure).

2.3. Research Methodology

Quantitative analysis: The causal relationship between variables was determined using descriptive statistics (mean, median, variance) and a multiple regression model.

Qualitative analysis: Institutional and social barriers were studied in depth through expert interviews, case studies, and analysis of contextual factors.

Econometric model:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

This model allows evaluating the impact of each independent variable on women's entrepreneurial activity at a 95% confidence level. At the same time, based on the R^2 indicator, the explanatory power and predictive efficiency of the study are assessed [3].

2.4. Scientific and practical significance of the research

This methodology serves to identify interregional differences in the development of women's entrepreneurship, optimize political decisions, and efficiently allocate financial resources. The integrated index (IEEI -W) allows for a comprehensive assessment of a business-friendly environment for women and the development of strategic recommendations [4].

3. Results

Descriptive statistical results

As a result of the survey and data analysis, the following key indicators were identified:

Difficulty in accessing financial resources: 51% of respondents faced difficulties in accessing financial means; Lack of collateral: 43% of women reported that collateral requirements were insufficient; Use of digital services: 62% of women actively use digital platforms in business processes; Awareness of government support programs: 39% of respondents do not have complete information about these programs.

The general state of business development:

Situation	Percentage (%)
Stable growth	47%
Stagnation	33%
Decline	20%

These results show that financial and institutional barriers are significant in women's entrepreneurial activities. The multivariate regression model provided the following results:

Variable	β	p-value
X ₁ Institutional environment	0,34	0,023
X ₂ Financial resources	0,39	0,001
X ₃ Social support	0,18	0,089
X ₄ Infrastructure provision	0,27	0,041

$$R^2 = 0,64$$

According to the results, access to financial resources and institutional support have the greatest impact on the development of women's entrepreneurship. Social support has a statistically significantly lower effect, but qualitative analysis shows that family responsibilities and gender stereotypes remain limiting factors for entrepreneurship.

3.3. Integrated Entrepreneurship Environment Index (IEEI-W)

To comprehensively assess the environment for women's entrepreneurship, the following integral index was developed:

$$ITMI-W = 0.35X_1 + 0.40X_2 + 0.15X_3 + 0.10X_4$$

Average national indicator: 0.59 (scale 0–1); Regional difference: 0.46 – 0.72.

This index indicates interregional differences in the development of women's entrepreneurship and serves as an important indicator in policy-making.

3.4. Analysis of Results

In regions with higher access to financial resources, business development indicators are on average 18–22% higher. Institutional efficiency (the simplicity of business registration and licensing processes) has a significant positive impact on the development of entrepreneurship. Although social support has a lesser effect, gender stereotypes and family obligations are shown to be significant obstacles at the initial stage of entrepreneurship [5].

4. Discussion

The results of this research made it possible to comprehensively analyze the main factors affecting the development of women's entrepreneurship. The obtained empirical results show that the sustainable development of business entities managed by women largely depends on the institutional, financial, and infrastructural conditions of the entrepreneurial environment.

4.1. The Role of Financial Resources in the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship

Research results show that one of the factors having the greatest impact on the development of women's entrepreneurship is access to financial resources. According to the results of the regression model, the access to financial resources index has the highest coefficient, which indicates that financial capital is a decisive factor in the sustainable development of entrepreneurial activities. Practical analyses show that women entrepreneurs often face problems in the process of obtaining credit, such as lack of collateral, absence of a credit history, or insufficient financial literacy. These factors limit their opportunities to expand their business.

From this perspective, in order to support women's entrepreneurship, it is important to develop preferential credit lines, grant programs, and microfinancing mechanisms. Such mechanisms can significantly increase women's opportunities to start and grow a business.

4.2. Importance of the Institutional Environment and Government Support

The institutional environment is considered one of the important factors in the development of entrepreneurial activities. According to research findings, the processes of business registration, the licensing system, tax regulations, and the effectiveness of support mechanisms provided by the government significantly affect the development of women's entrepreneurship. In recent years, a number of institutional reforms aimed at supporting entrepreneurial activities have been implemented in Uzbekistan. In particular, the simplification of business registration processes, tax benefits, and government grants are creating new opportunities for the development of women's entrepreneurship.

However, research results show that in some regions, institutional mechanisms are not working effectively enough. This leads to interregional disparities. Therefore, improving the institutional system and strengthening regional governance mechanisms is considered one of the important tasks [6].

4.3. The Influence of Social Factors and Gender Stereotypes

Social factors also play an important role in the development of women's entrepreneurship. According to research results, many female entrepreneurs face problems related to social stereotypes and family obligations during the process of starting entrepreneurial activities. In particular, traditional social views can sometimes restrict women's economic activities. This situation also negatively affects women's motivation to start a business.

For this reason, the policy on the development of women's entrepreneurship must take into account not only economic, but also social aspects. In particular, ensuring gender equality in society, supporting women's economic activity, and encouraging their business initiatives are of significant importance [7].

4.4. The Role of Digital Technologies and Infrastructure

In the context of the modern economy, digital technologies are considered an important tool for developing entrepreneurial activity. Research results show that the business efficiency of female entrepreneurs who use digital platforms is higher. E-commerce platforms, online marketing tools, and digital payment systems create new market opportunities for female entrepreneurs. Especially for small business entities, digital technologies allow reducing costs and expanding the customer base.

Therefore, in supporting the development of women's entrepreneurship, it is of great importance to develop digital infrastructure and increase digital literacy.

In addition, the research results also showed that there are interregional differences. The regional indicators of the integrated entrepreneurship environment index ranged from 0.46 to 0.72, indicating that in some regions the entrepreneurial environment is relatively developed, while in

others there are problems in this regard. This situation indicates the necessity of applying a differential approach in regional economic policy.

Overall, the research results confirm the need for a comprehensive approach to developing women's entrepreneurship. In this process, financial resources, institutional support, infrastructure, and social factors should be developed in an interconnected manner [8].

5. Conclusion

This research was aimed at identifying the main determinants of the entrepreneurial environment in developing women's entrepreneurial activity and evaluating them comprehensively. In the course of the study, quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were combined, and institutional, financial, social, and infrastructural factors affecting the development of women's entrepreneurship were studied in depth. The results obtained once again confirm that women's entrepreneurship is one of the important factors stimulating economic growth in the modern economy.

Research results indicate that access to financial resources is crucial for the development of women's entrepreneurship. Limited access to loans, grants, and other financial instruments slows down the growth rates of business entities managed by women. In addition, problems related to collateral in the loan acquisition process also negatively affect the development of entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, improving mechanisms to financially support women entrepreneurs should be one of the priority areas of economic policy.

The efficiency of the institutional environment also has a significant impact on the development of entrepreneurial activity. The simplification of business registration processes, the stability of the tax system, and government-provided support programs positively affect the development of entrepreneurial activity. At the same time, research results showed that there are significant differences in the level of institutional environment development in some regions. This indicates the need to apply a differential approach in regional economic policy.

The Integrated Entrepreneurship Environment Index (ITMI-W) developed during the research process allows for a comprehensive assessment of the development of women's entrepreneurship. Using this index, it is possible to determine the level of the entrepreneurial environment across regions and to use it as an important analytical tool in shaping economic policy. In addition, the index results revealed that there are interregional disparities in the development of women's entrepreneurship.[9]

Research results show that the development of women's entrepreneurship is not limited only to economic factors. Social factors, including gender stereotypes, family responsibilities, and the level of social support, also have a significant impact on entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, policies aimed at developing women's entrepreneurship should be implemented based on a comprehensive approach.

New opportunities are emerging for women's entrepreneurship in the context of the digital economy. E-commerce platforms, digital marketing tools, and online payment systems expand the market opportunities for women entrepreneurs and increase the efficiency of business processes. For this reason, developing digital infrastructure and improving digital literacy are considered one of the important directions for the development of women's entrepreneurship.

Based on the research results, the following practical recommendations can be put forward: Expanding preferential credit and grant programs for women entrepreneurs; further simplifying the business registration and licensing processes; developing the activities of business incubators and advisory centers for women entrepreneurship; improving digital infrastructure and expanding opportunities to use e-commerce platforms; expanding training programs on business management and financial literacy for women entrepreneurs.

Overall, the development of women's entrepreneurship plays an important role in economic growth, increasing employment levels, and ensuring gender equality in society. For this reason,

strategic policies aimed at supporting women's entrepreneurship not only enhance economic efficiency but also serve to strengthen social stability.

In future scientific research, it is considered appropriate to study more deeply the network and regional characteristics of the development of women's entrepreneurship, as well as to analyze the impact of innovative technologies and the startup ecosystem on the development of women's entrepreneurship. At the same time, the research results show that the process of developing women's entrepreneurship requires a multifaceted and systematic approach. The interconnection of entrepreneurial environment factors means that policy measures implemented in only one direction may not yield the expected results. For example, even if access to financial resources is expanded, if the institutional environment is not sufficiently favorable or the infrastructure is underdeveloped, the efficiency of entrepreneurial activity may remain low. Therefore, the strategy for developing women's entrepreneurship needs to be implemented within the framework of a comprehensive economic policy.

In addition, the research results also showed the importance of regional development factors. In some regions, the entrepreneurial environment is relatively developed, while in other regions, institutional and infrastructural constraints have been identified. This implies the need to implement economic policy on a differential approach across regions. In particular, in regions where the entrepreneurial environment is relatively underdeveloped, it is considered appropriate to introduce additional financial and institutional support mechanisms by the state.

Additionally, the role of innovative approaches and the startup ecosystem in the development of women's entrepreneurship is steadily increasing. In the context of the modern economy, innovative technologies, digital platforms, and e-commerce systems create new business opportunities for women. Therefore, involving women in innovative activities, supporting startup initiatives, and increasing the level of utilization of digital economy opportunities are considered important strategic tasks. Developing women's entrepreneurship not only increases economic efficiency but also contributes to ensuring social stability, raising employment levels, and strengthening gender equality in society. Therefore, a comprehensive economic policy aimed at supporting women's entrepreneurship remains an important component of a sustainable development strategy.

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