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*REACHING NEW HEIGHTS THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP: FACTORS
INFLUENCING WOMEN FROM PIRIPIRI TO ENGAGE IN
ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES¹*

**ALÇANDO VOOS À LUZ DO EMPREENDEDORISMO: FATORES QUE
INFLUENCIAM AS MULHERES PIRIPIRIENSES A EMPREENDER**

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship as an agent of economic change is indeed important for the development of society and a country. Thus, it becomes necessary to examine the role of women in the emergence of new businesses today. In this context, the purpose of this research is to identify the factors that influence women to become entrepreneurs, providing an overview of how these women sustain themselves and perceive their roles as entrepreneurs, as well as their limitations and advantages as women in the labor market. This is a qualitative, descriptive study. An intentional sampling approach was used, with a total of seven participating establishments. Data collection was carried out through scheduled interviews, which were recorded and transcribed for better data analysis. The interview script used was developed by Anggadwita and Dhewanto (2016), and its version was adapted and validated in Brazil by Gonçalves (2018), with further adaptations to suit the present study. Conceptual Quantitative Content Analysis was used for

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data analysis. The study identified three main entrepreneurial motivations: negative experiences both outside and within the beauty sector, and positive experiences in the industry. For future research, it is recommended to study other sectors, such as those predominantly led by men.

Keywords: female entrepreneurship, factors, beauty sector.

RESUMO

O empreendedorismo como agente de mudanças econômicas é de fato importante para o desenvolvimento de uma sociedade e de um país. Dessa forma, surge a necessidade de se verificar a participação feminina no surgimento de novas empresas na atualidade. Nesse contexto, tem-se como propósito da pesquisa identificar quais os fatores que influenciam as mulheres a empreender, sendo possível ter um panorama de como essas mulheres se mantêm e se sentem como empreendedoras bem como suas limitações e vantagens como mulher no mercado de trabalho. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa de caráter descritivo. Utilizou-se a técnica de abordagem intencional, sendo o total de sete estabelecimentos participantes. A coleta dos dados se deu através de entrevista, estas devidamente agendadas, gravadas e transcritas para que se tenha uma melhor análise dos dados. O roteiro de entrevista utilizado foi elaborado por Anggadwita e Dhewanto (2016), e teve sua versão adaptada e validada no Brasil por Gonçalves (2018), devidamente adaptada para se adequar ao presente trabalho. Utilizou-se a Análise de Conteúdo Quantitativa Conceitual para a análise dos dados. O estudo identificou três principais motivações empreendedoras: experiências negativas fora e dentro da área de estética, e experiências positivas no setor. Para pesquisas futuras recomenda-se o estudo de outros setores de atuação, como por exemplo em áreas que majoritariamente homens estão à frente.

Palavras-chave: empreendedorismo feminino, fatores, estética.



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INTRODUCTION

Schumpeter (2017) argues that the act of entrepreneurship is important for the development of society, since the entrepreneur is an agent of economic change. On the one hand, Brazil has great entrepreneurial potential. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2019), an organization that monitors entrepreneurship worldwide, in 2019 there were 38.7 million Brazilians running their own businesses.

Given this, the research problem arises: What factors influence women from Piripiri to become entrepreneurs? To answer this question, the general objective of the study was defined as: identifying which variables influence women from Piripiri to undertake entrepreneurial activities in the beauty industry. The specific objectives were: to characterize the profile of women entrepreneurs in this sector, as well as to explore the entrepreneurial intentions of women who decided to open their own businesses.

For conducting the research, the theoretical model developed by Anggadwita and Dhewanto (2016) and adapted by Gonçalves (2018) was used as a basis. Both sought to develop a structural model that demonstrated the interrelationship of key factors influencing women's entrepreneurial intentions. This model was chosen because it includes constructs that have been tested and validated in Brazil.

Initially, Piripiri, a municipality located in the north of Piauí, was chosen for the research due to its significant growth in the number of new businesses established in recent years. The beauty sector was selected because it is among the main fields of economic activity led by women, standing out in the context of local female entrepreneurship.

Accordingly, data provided by the Municipal Department of Administration (SEAD) indicate that 14 beauty businesses are registered in Piripiri, with 93% of them founded by women. In 2022, the department recorded



the registration of six new companies, highlighting that 83% of these new establishments were opened by women entrepreneurs.

In this context, the social and economic justification for this study lies in the fact that in the past, the business world was largely perceived as male dominated. However, today, women increasingly play a leading role in the market, becoming protagonists of their own stories, exercising autonomy in decision-making, enjoying flexibility to balance personal and professional life, and generating jobs for themselves and for other women (BANDEIRA et al., 2021; KAI; QUEIROZ, 2022).

The academic justification, on the other hand, arises from FelInhofer's (2019) perspective. The author states that entrepreneurship is currently a widely discussed topic, but there is a lack of interdisciplinarity and of studies addressing concepts beyond the economic dimension. Based on this view, this research proposes an interdisciplinary approach linking entrepreneurship and gender. Therefore, this study will contribute to a better understanding of the factors that influence local female entrepreneurship.

In summary, this paper will be structured into: theoretical framework, which presents the main authors, concepts, and previous discussions on the subject; then the presentation and characterization of the research methods adopted; results and discussions, in which the main findings of the study will be presented and debated; and finally, the authors' concluding remarks.



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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Entrepreneurship

The interest in entrepreneurship has been awakening in many people the emergence of a new work possibility and the vision of different ways to seek success in the professional market, especially when there is a shortage of jobs. In this context, entrepreneurship is perceived as a strategic way to recognize opportunities for employability and, consequently, income generation (BANDEIRA; AMORIM; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

Thus, it is also characterized as a broad phenomenon, occupying a prominent place in the political, social, and economic spheres, gaining wide repercussion in debates on the subject, based on research and scientific studies that seek to investigate the profile of entrepreneurs, who they are, and what expectations led to the creation of a business (SANTOS; SILVA, 2022).

When discussing entrepreneurship, one notes the existence of a direct relationship between growth, economic development, and society. It is seen as the ability to identify problems as well as opportunities to develop solutions through resource investment and the creation of something positive for the business environment (FIUZA et al., 2023; KELLER, 2019; NAKANO et al., 2022; PAREDES, 2022).

In this way, it is clear that entrepreneurship is not configured merely as another conceptual term within the field of management and business. Rather, it is a factor that generates innovation, gaining prominence, strength, and driving market evolution, even while requiring the assumption of risks that result in learning through successes and failures (FAUSTINO et al., 2020).

When entrepreneurship is mentioned from its beginnings, no female participation is observed, as the subject almost exclusively encompassed men (STROBINO; TEIXEIRA, 2014). However, in more recent decades, several



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authors have sought to study female entrepreneurship and its particularities, such as personality traits, motivations, challenges, and managerial behavior (MACHADO, 1999; SCHWARTZ, 2006).

Currently, Brazil ranks among the countries with the highest number of women entrepreneurs, as it, like many other nations, has invested in professional training for potential entrepreneurs, since the level of knowledge can influence the emergence of new ventures (DORNELAS, 2021).

According to research by the Rede Mulher Empreendedora Institute (IRME) (2019), women with higher levels of education make up a significant percentage - 68% of them have completed secondary or higher education. However, they are mostly engaged in ventures with little innovation, which can result in more vulnerable businesses with lower revenues.

The growing debate around female entrepreneurship has brought several positive consequences for women's development in the labor market. They gain more autonomy, leadership, independence, and control over their own lives, helping to prevent situations of submission and violence (SANTOS; SILVA, 2022).

Factors that influence female entrepreneurship

According to Bandeira, Amorim, and Oliveira (2020), the perception of growth considering women's presence in entrepreneurship suggests reflection on the factors that lead them to undertake. Studies reveal that motivations for this initiative are related to the desire for achievement, necessity, opportunity, and gender discrimination, as well as the possibility of being closer to family.

In discussing motivational factors, for years only the criteria of opportunity and necessity were analyzed. However, it has been found that these alternatives alone are insufficient to explain the drivers of business creation today, since there



are factors directly linked to the individual (BANDEIRA; AMORIM; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

Gonçalves (2018) uses as a theoretical basis the definition of variables considered as factors that could influence women in the entrepreneurial environment. According to the literature, these are: business intention, personal attitude, individual competencies, psychological traits, and difficulties.

According to Martins, Veiga, and Cortez (2020), business intention can be understood as the subjective idea of starting a venture, developing an activity with future projections aimed at one's own business. Some authors affirm that this intention precedes entrepreneurship itself, while acknowledging that expected results do not always align with the construct (FERREIRA, 2019).

Individual attitude is acquired through behaviors and beliefs. In other words, if a person exhibits favorable conduct, they will consequently have a positive attitude, which influences women's entrepreneurial intentions and helps explain this subjective manifestation (GONÇALVES, 2018).

The term competency broadly encompasses the combination of attitudes, knowledge, and skills (CODA, 2016). Thus, competencies are inferred to result from various forms of learning, transfer, and adaptation, providing individuals with a set of knowledge and abilities to address specific situations (SILVA, 2022).

Factors such as action orientation and hope (related to decision-making) emerge as important aspects that positively influence entrepreneurial performance, within the scope of psychological traits (PRZEPIORKA, 2017). Gonçalves (2018) also highlights that these are points that encourage individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities, significantly influencing personal attitudes and contributing to competencies.

Currently, women face significant challenges in entrepreneurship. Family-related issues, financial resources, the pursuit of success, and new



opportunities stand out as factors that hinder business creation. Additionally, challenges such as confronting sexism and managing the overload of responsibilities at home and at work are also noteworthy (VIEIRA; VIEIRA; ENES, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The present research is characterized as qualitative which, according to Marconi and Lakatos (2017), aims to verify and analyze certain aspects, behavioral trends, and possible investigations in greater depth. It is a descriptive study, since data were collected to describe a reality through interviews (Gil, 2002, p. 23). First, a bibliographic review on Entrepreneurial Intention was carried out based on scientific articles. This review helped define the concepts and select the theoretical model.

The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, because the interviewees were chosen through a selection defined by the authors of the study. This resulted in a sample of seven establishments in the beauty sector in the city of Piripiri/PI, whose entrepreneurs were interviewed.

After defining the interview script and selecting the entrepreneurs, appointments were scheduled to establish the best time and availability for recording the entire procedure. The audio recordings were later transcribed in order to guarantee the originality of the responses, which were then coded to contribute to the analysis of results.

The interview script used was based on a study developed by Anggadwita and Dhewanto (2016), with its version adapted and validated in Brazil by Gonçalves (2018). The instrument underwent adjustments, with the dimensions being maintained, but the questions were reduced and adapted for application in the interviews. It was divided into two parts: profile characterization



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and constructs. The characterization contained seven questions, and the instrument comprised five dimensions, totaling 11 questions.

For the analysis of results, the Conceptual Quantitative Content Analysis method was used, in which the categories of analysis are defined a priori, and the researcher simply seeks to examine the presence of words related to the research question. In other words, the occurrence of words indicates the degree of relationship with the constructs (BARDIN, 2016; ROSSI; SERRALVO; JOÃO, 2014). For the description and analysis of the reports, the interviewees were numbered from E1 to E7, according to the order of interview transcription.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented according to the following categories: characterization of the profile of women entrepreneurs in Piripiri and the process of starting their own businesses: business intention; personal attitude; individual competencies; psychological characteristics; and difficulties.

Characterization

According to data from IBGE (2020), the city of Piripiri is located 160 km from Teresina, the capital of Piauí, with its main access through BR-343. It stands out for its strategic location, surrounded by important tourist attractions such as the Sete Cidades National Park, located 18 km from the municipality.

Accordingly, in Chart 1, the aspects considered relevant are observed. From the interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs in Piripiri's beauty sector, it was found that it was initially necessary to present a brief identification of the sociodemographic profile of the respondents.



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Chart 1 – Interviewees profile

ASPECTS	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7
Age	27 years	31 years	39 years	34 years	48 years	27 years	37 years
Formation	Higher Education	Higher Education	High School	Higher Education	Higher Education	Higher Education	High School
Civil status	Single	Married	Married	Married	Casada	Single	Married
Market time	3 years	7 years	13 years	11 years	12 years	1.5 year	13 years
Formalized	2020	2016	2012	2012	2011	2022	2010
Annual turnover	180 k	200 k	78 k	700 k	81 k	60 k	80 k

Fonte: Authors (2023).

Through the interviewed sampling, it became possible to outline a profile of these entrepreneurs in the aesthetics sector, highlighting that they are women who started their entrepreneurial activities at a very young age, with the average being 24 years old. They have either a high school or higher education background, with higher education being more common among the sample. Regarding marital status, most are married, with formalized businesses, an average market presence of 8.64 years, and an average annual revenue of 197 thousand reais.

Entrepreneurial Intention

This dimension contains two questions. The first question relates to the process that led them to become entrepreneurs. The factor most frequently mentioned by the interviewees was the desire to own their own business. Other motivations included financial independence, freedom at work, personal fulfillment, and the pursuit of additional income, as seen in the following excerpts:



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Something that led me to start my business was my dream of having my own company and running processes my way, because I studied a lot, worked hard, and always wanted to work in aesthetics. Working for someone else would have been very difficult, both financially and in setting up protocols my way to achieve the results I wanted.

Feeling like someone who has built something is very rewarding. Working with people is also fulfilling, taking care of them, because I have always enjoyed caring for people. (E6)

It was observed that many interviewees linked their entrepreneurial intention to destiny, desire, or the dream of owning a business. However, this factor was also connected to prior experiences in the sector, as noted by E2:

I always worked for other people, and when you work for others, you realize you work a lot and earn little.

Even if prior contact or experience was not in their current field, some event or factor led them toward entrepreneurship. For many women, the initiative to start a business stems from finding solutions to everyday problems arising from emotional and social vulnerability (HERTA, 2021).

I worked in other companies and realized it wasn't for me. When I opened my salon, I saw that by working for myself, I would have much higher profits. In a small town, working for others obviously means a tiny salary... (E3)

The second question addressed the influence of entrepreneurship on their personal, financial, and professional lives. The main factors highlighted were the desire for independence, having their own money, and feeling recognized and empowered, all of which were achieved after becoming entrepreneurs.

I believe that entrepreneurship brings, especially for today's women, financial independence and empowerment. (E5)

In my personal life, I felt more complete, because when you work, you wake up with ambition. Like: I will work, I will do this, I will help my family; this guides and motivates a person. Financially... (E6)

Another particularity observed in the responses was the mention, beyond changing their own lives, of the desire to make a difference in the lives of other women. Conversely, women still face significant challenges such as wage



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inequality, lack of support, sexism, double work shifts, among many other barriers (STORTI, 2022).

Personal attitude

In the dimension of personal attitude, questions three and four were included. The third question concerned business profitability, asking when the interviewees realized that entrepreneurship would be more profitable than other careers. The most frequently mentioned point was a comparison with their previous jobs, where they indicated greater satisfaction with their current income. One interviewee mentioned the diversification within the sector, having a wide range of options to pursue, unlike other professions.

Another interviewee noted that she had previously worked in beauty and aesthetics, choosing the field due to the need to balance work and studies, which made transitioning to another sector easier since she already had clients and friends and was familiar with their needs. Profitability is therefore viewed in multiple ways, whether related to increased income or the daily conveniences it brings to life and work, as highlighted by E2:

I had a beauty salon and decided to work for myself because it was easier to work and study... I managed to convert these friends into clients.

In the fourth question, participants were asked how they feel about their current professions. The most mentioned feelings were gratitude and fulfillment, arising from achieving professional and personal goals. In some cases, these feelings were linked to the growth of their businesses. Despite challenges, they saw increasing profitability, which fostered a sense of overcoming, as seen in E4's statement:

I climbed step by step; I think this makes it more rewarding. In my journey, I had to take some steps back, but I overcame them.



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Another respondent highlighted her relationship with clients as contributing to her sense of fulfillment, as she becomes not just a professional but a true friend to her clients, demonstrating the importance of maintaining positive client relationships, loyalty, and business differentiation, as E3 expressed:

I feel fully accomplished because here I transform; at home, I'm the housewife, and here I am someone else—I am the hairstylist, the psychologist, the friend.

Individual competencies

The fifth question addressed why they chose entrepreneurship in the aesthetics sector. Responses reflected two perspectives: early identification with the field or identification after some specialization. Notable statements include:

It's an area I've always liked, so in aesthetics I can work with facial and body care. Having my own space, being the entrepreneur, I have a range to work with other areas. (E1)

First, I really like this field; second, when I returned to our town, Piripiri, I noticed it was a very underserved area, and people had not yet turned their attention to aesthetics. (E4)

Gender can influence career decisions, but other variables such as cultural context, education, and personal characteristics are also decisive (BANDEIRA; AMORIM; OLIVEIRA, 2020). Therefore, what led these women to the aesthetics sector was more than their gender; it was admiration for the profession, prior knowledge, and recognizing and seizing opportunities. The individual competencies dimension relates to personal attitude, as all responses share a common factor: the desire to act.

The sixth question allowed understanding of business management. All entrepreneurs outlined their financial management profiles, and some still use rough notebook notes to track finances, initially seeking guidance to understand management better. Collaboration was highlighted in the following excerpts:

I had help from several people, including the girl who works with me. We have a notebook where we write everything down. Every week I



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sum up what I did, so I have an idea of what's coming in and going out. (E3)

Thank God I have some friends who guided me because if you open a business without a base for managing it, it doesn't work. (E6)

E7 summarized what she considers necessary for management, also highlighting gender challenges:

You need to understand business, have working capital, manage all accounts and products; this is the hardest part because you have to be aware of everything, work, manage finance and marketing simultaneously, and also be a woman and a mother... being all of that at once is the hardest part. (E7)

Although financial knowledge was evident, two cases revealed difficulty applying theory, causing financial imbalances, requiring personal capital at times. E2 improved her financial management and sales process, moving from notebook tracking to using a system and hiring an accountant. E4 formalized her management through separate accounts and structured employee management, leveraging technology. These results indicate recognition of initial inexperience but a proactive effort to improve (BANDEIRA et al., 2021).

Psychological characteristics

Psychological characteristics are factors that drive entrepreneurial interest. They are divided into three areas: risk-taking and innovation, need for innovation, and locus of control, corresponding to one question each.

The seventh question addressed perceived innovation compared to competitors. Practices focused on client relationship management stood out, as highlighted by the entrepreneurs:

The first would be a differentiated sales process. We look at the client as a whole, understand their needs, and solve the problems they bring. (E2)

I am always attentive to everything happening—not only labor offers but also what I can discuss with my client, what I can exchange. I need to have a keen eye all the time. (E5)



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These tools help retain clients and devise strategies to attract new ones, offering differentiated service tailored to client needs (SILVA et al., 2018).

The eighth question asked how they feel about being entrepreneurs. Patterns indicate they pursue learning to overcome challenges, innovate, feel accomplished for building something tangible, and enjoy flexible hours, helping and inspiring other women, and creating jobs. These results align with Versiani et al. (2019), showing the interviewees as inspiring, motivating, open to dialogue, and valuing employees. Growth reflects personal and professional dedication, allowing them to see future opportunities despite adversity (BOMFIM; TEIXEIRA; MONTENEGRO, 2019).

In the ninth question, they discussed factors motivating their business success, including treating clients well, providing results, commitment, dedication, goal setting, friendliness, proper team training, and humanized service. E1 focused on clients, and E4 highlighted team cohesion:

First, honesty—being sincere with the client. Treating clients well and delivering results. (E1)

I believe success is that, and having an engaged team, because alone you go nowhere. With competent people by your side, things only grow. That's success—the team too. (E4)

Entrepreneurship is viable, allowing the achievement of independence, empowerment, and flexible hours. However, the ability to assume constant risks and possess individual traits like organization and interpersonal skills makes these entrepreneurs more competitive, supporting business continuity (COSTA et al., 2023; SANTOS; SILVA, 2022). This demonstrates that these women aim to impact consumers' lives while securing their market presence.



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Difficulties

Several obstacles may arise in starting and maintaining a new business. Chart 2 highlights each woman's responses when asked about the main difficulties encountered during the entrepreneurial process in their business.

Chart 02 – Main female entrepreneurs' difficulties

Interviewees	Difficulties
E1	The first was the financial issue; then came the issue of attracting clients.
E2	Selling, because when selling aesthetics, we often have a select audience. Another thing I found very difficult was hiring qualified professionals and laying off employees.
E3	Lack of capital was very difficult.
E4	It was the financial aspect; and then demonstrating what my service was.
E5	Finding a market price to start, and skilled labor.
E6	Fear. Both financially and fear of starting.
E7	Being a woman, being a mother.

Source: Research data (2023)

Through the studies of Lima et al. (2021), financial difficulties are among the most recurring challenges during the entrepreneurial process. This reinforces the perspectives expressed by entrepreneurs E1, E3, and E4.

Other challenges highlighted by respondents E2, E4, and E5 were related to the offering and selling of services. Since these involve aesthetic procedures, often innovative for the region, they required an approach that clearly conceptualized and presented to potential clients what was being offered. Additionally, they emphasized the lack of qualified labor and the difficult moment of having to dismiss an employee when it was no longer feasible to retain them in the company.

From the perspective of interviewee E6, the fear of starting a business arose from insecurity about being able to cover payments, expenses, and



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necessary investments to maintain the business. However, despite existing difficulties, including fear, Machado, Guedes, and Gazola (2017) highlight in their research that women entrepreneurs stand out positively, dedicating more time to their businesses and demonstrating important traits such as creativity and innovation, always seeking diversification in their offerings of products and services.

In the research by Bandeira et al. (2021), results indicated that there is still an imbalance between housewives and business owners, and that resource acquisition is not directly influenced by gender. Conversely, only interviewee E7 mentioned the challenges of being both a woman and a mother, while the majority highlighted issues directly or indirectly related to financial matters.



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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article successfully met its stated objectives, demonstrating through interviews the variables that influence women from Piripiri to engage in the aesthetics sector, as well as characterizing the profile of these entrepreneurs.

All entrepreneurs in the study opted for formalization and expressed that the main feeling they experience in their work is one of fulfillment - happiness at having realized something that was once only a dream. Accordingly, they highlighted the sector's development potential and the importance of continuing professional development to face inherent business challenges and keep up with emerging trends.

The study identified three main entrepreneurial motivations: negative experiences working for others in the aesthetics field, positive experiences working for others in the aesthetics field, and negative experiences working for others outside the field. In the first and second cases, despite contradictory experiences, both provided knowledge and identification with the sector, leading them to open their own businesses. In the third case, identification with the field occurred after some contact through courses and events, making the idea of having a business in this area viable.

Other factors contributing to the participants' entrepreneurial decisions included the potential for financial leverage, the ability to develop their own processes, and the capacity to transform their own reality and that of other women. Furthermore, associating these variables with the aesthetics sector revealed that it offers entrepreneurs a range of options to pursue. Being a continuous service also encourages repeat business from satisfied clients, ensuring that a well-managed enterprise thrives in the market.

The main limitation in conducting this research was the sample size, constrained by the short timeframe for completing the study. Therefore, it is recommended that future research use a broader sample, including



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entrepreneurs from different cities and states for comparative purposes, as well as the possibility of studying other sectors, such as those predominantly led by men.



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