

Empowering Malaysian Women Entrepreneurs: Analyzing the Role of Socio-Cultural Factors and Support Systems in Emerging Markets.

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a review of the literature on the integral role of socio-cultural factors and support systems that can enable success for women entrepreneurs in emerging markets. It also emphasizes different barriers that women face because of socio-cultural attitudes and the importance of family and community influences. The study also delves into the role of governmental policies and NGO support in shaping the small business landscape, highlighting its influence on access to funding and training programs. Comparative studies concerning several other countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh reveal that varied cultural contexts are important for accessing women's entrepreneurship. Among continuing challenges, such as financial access, the opportunities enabled by digital transformation are being harnessed. The paper ends with best practices and policy recommendations to cultivate the ecosystems to support women entrepreneurs and proposes future research directions highlighting digital literacy and cross-cultural studies.

INTRODUCTION

The economic globalization of recent years has also focused attention on the need for women entrepreneurship in emerging markets. Women entrepreneurs are increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic development and job creation. One of the many examples is, for instance, women represent a high proportion of the entrepreneurial population in Malaysia proving the juggernaut's role of women in economic resilience and growth (Mustafa & Treanor, 2022). However, the reality is that

women's entrepreneurship has been bottlenecked by socio-cultural, funding accessibility, and limited support system hurdles that restrict their potential to succeed (Mahmad et al., 2021).

Socio-cultural factors influencing women entrepreneurs vary from conventional gender roles to cultural mentalities that restrict their business initiative. Research shows that women in developing countries are often challenged by societal norms that suggest sacrificing career ambitions for family (Taleb et al., 2023). This cultural backdrop restricts not only their entrepreneurial participation but their access to resource mobilization as well. For instance, Khalid et al. (2022) highlight the impact of family dynamics on women's aspirations towards entrepreneurship and show that families that support female entrepreneurs result in better business outcomes.

In addition, close relationships within communities can enable or discourage entrepreneurship. In economic and social settings where community bonds are strong, women-owned businesses are often able to collaborate and support each other. According to Au and Beigi (2021), cultural perceptions that celebrate female entrepreneurs have a positive impact on women's empowerment and confidence. Similarly, if communities do not support women's ambition in business, the psychological barriers can result in decreased economic activity. This dichotomy underscores the need for a deeper exploration of how socio-cultural factors can be more favorable to women entrepreneurs in India and Malaysia.

Equally important in maximizing the success of women entrepreneurs is understanding the role of support systems. There is much that governments can do to create a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurs. For example, Yusoff et al. (2021), show that the existence of government financial support programs significantly increases the likelihood of women starting and maintaining businesses. However, these initiatives have not solved the problem of adversity that prevents women entrepreneurs from accessing resources to scale their businesses. These stats connote fundamental questions about the sufficiency of existing support programs and ways to tailor them to truly address the challenges that women burgeoning entrepreneur's encounter.

The role of NGOs and community organizations is also significant at the institutional level. Kamarudin et al. (2021), the importance of customized training programs that address aspects of women's entrepreneurship needs. These efforts build not only skills and capacity but also a peer network of friendly support critical to resilience. Research has shown that community-driven training initiatives will significantly enhance business efficiency among female entrepreneurs thus encouraging their involvement in the work force and encouraging innovation (Hameed et al. 2020).

Overall, the study highlights the need for more longitudinal research on women entrepreneurship as both these aspects have implications for entrepreneurship development policy and practice in EMs, but at present, they are largely absent from the literature. For example, studies such as Noor et al. (2020) highlight interconnections and barriers where women are faced with both caregiver responsibilities and entrepreneurship and recognize the need for intersectional academic research on the topic. However, the influence of crisis events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, represents an essential research pathway due to the important changes the pandemic has made to women entrepreneurs and recovery processes (Taleb & Hashim, 2023).

In conclusion, the influence of socio-cultural context, family support & extended family structures in determining the potential of women's entrepreneurship are critically emphasized based on the review; making inclusive research on women's entrepreneurship in emerging markets a broader field within which we need to collaborate to create agenda for action (Adam et al., 2024). These pathways will require policy shifts as well as a cultural shift that recognizes and nurtures the contributions of women entrepreneurs to driving sustainable economic growth in emerging economies.

Analytical Method

The review was conducted through the Scopus database, accessed on 26 December 2024. The search strategy was developed ardently for relevance and specificity; the query was set to search all the fields with the terms: ALL ("women entrepreneur" AND "Malaysia"). The research was conducted solely for the years 2020–2024 and was to be limited by journal subject areas: Social Sciences (SOCI), and Business (BUSI). We did include only English-language journal articles. This was then filtered with a keyword search exactly with keywords like "Entrepreneurship", "Women Entrepreneurs", "Malaysia" and "Entrepreneur". For source type and affiliation country, only journals and only Malaysia was retained. In total, we found 79 articles specifically relating to recent developments and trends of women entrepreneurship in Malaysia as a starting point for an analysis of the topic.

Socio-Cultural Influences on Women Entrepreneurs

This paper aims to investigate the sociocultural contexts of women entrepreneurs in emerging markets. Such barriers emerge from historical gender norms, social constructs, and domestic relations impacting women's means of business access. A key barrier is a socio-cultural perception that continues to associate entrepreneurship with male behavior only, said Karen Tso, chief executive officer for Asia Pacific at pan Asia investment firm, South China Morning Post in a report. Mahmud et al. (2021) emphasize that women face discrimination and stereotypes that make them unable to conduct business and affect their self-confidence to do business. This cultural bias influences how women view themselves and how they are recognized formally in entrepreneurial settings.

Additionally, Ramli and Razak (2023) discuss the impact of cultural norms on perceptions of suitable female roles, which often limit women to caregiving or support functions rather than equality in the economy. This duality of traditional and entrepreneurial roles can cause internal flux within women wanting to follow their ambition in business. Such entrenched societal expectations result in reduced female entrepreneurial intentions as it creates pressure to conform to traditional gender norms that prevent women from pursuing entrepreneurial activities.

Beyond direct socio-cultural obstacles, cultural views of women in business also play a major role in shaping their experience. Au and Beigi (2021), theorized that Malaysian circumstances women's entrepreneurial efforts are usually perceived through some suspicious glasses, mostly for traditional male-prevalent trades. This skepticism translates to less networking, less access to finance, and a lack of role models, making it difficult for women to envisage themselves succeeding in the fields they opt to work in.

Delving deeper into familial effects, Khalid et al. (2022) underscore the positive family support that can help a woman's initiative or the negative family involvement that can curtail it from an entrepreneurial standpoint. Family can help through emotional and financial support and a safety net that allows them to take their entrepreneurial leap. On the other hand, families that strictly follow the conventional norms are more likely to act as barriers for women from engaging in entrepreneurial activities leading to the continuation of the problems.

Another consideration in the realm of community support systems and cultural norms. As previously discussed in works by Noor et al. (2020) the perception of women entrepreneurs regarding the community is significantly influential on their success. These communities influence presumptions around women in business while supplementing means by which women can share assets, information, and groups, subsequently increasing the entrepreneurial atmosphere.

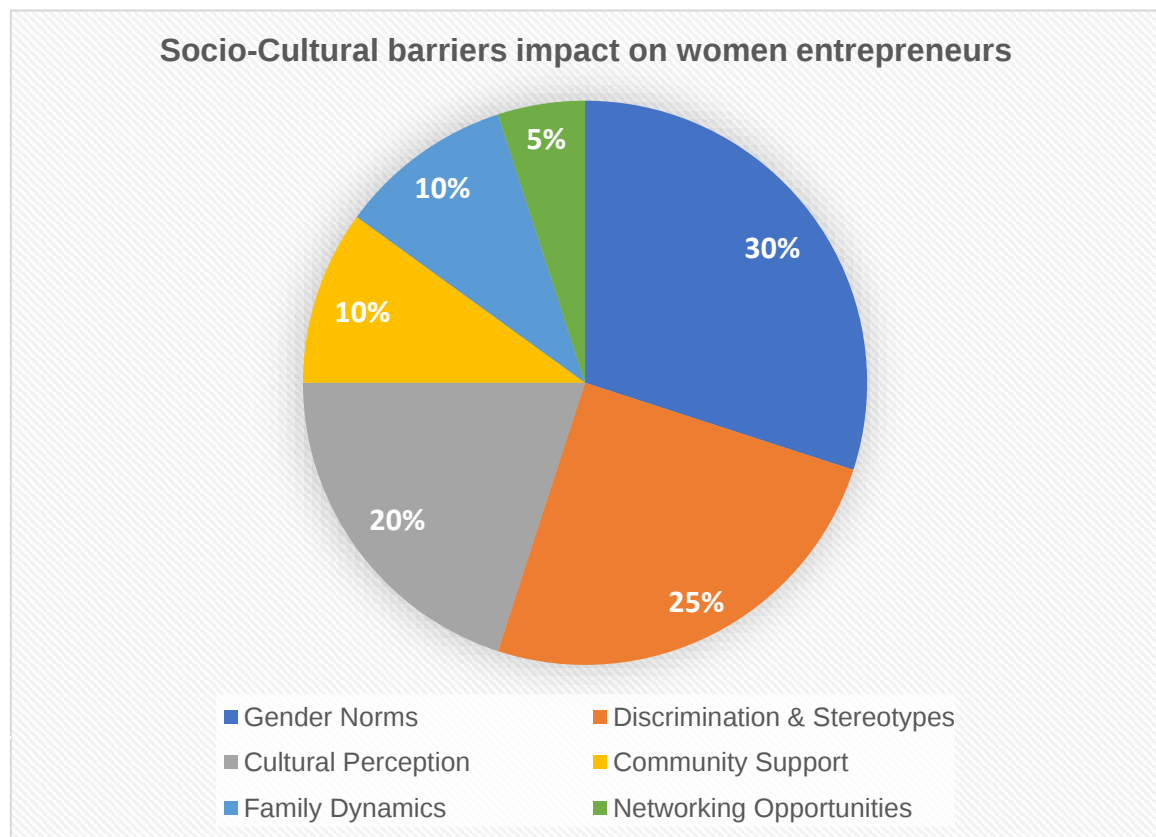
The other aspect that should be added is part of traditional practices that might hinder or suggest ways towards entrepreneurship. According to research, cultural dynamics regarding the search for entrepreneurial knowledge and experience can help or hinder. For instance, Keling et al. (2023) discuss how cultural

celebrations and festivals can serve as networking opportunities for women to meet, share ideas, and potentially find financing.

Figure 1 shows the statistics of Socio-Cultural barriers impact on women entrepreneurs. Instead, certain socio-cultural issues may discourage women from striving for success in their careers where they may be expected to put family commitments ahead of their professional goals, resulting in a lower incidence of entrepreneurship among women (Noor et al., 2022). This duality, she argues, captures the tension women must contend with between aspiration and obligation in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Additionally, overcoming socio-cultural barriers typically requires strategic initiatives from both women and the community at large. On the view expressed by Omni et al. (2024), mentorship programs and skills training can enable women and bolster their confidence in entrepreneurship. The hope is that this sort of data becomes not only an assessment tool but also a means to shift the narrative about women's role in entrepreneurship at both an individual and community level and spark change over time.

To conclude, socio-cultural elements are determinants in the evolution of women entrepreneurs in the context of developing economies, as they bring complex hindrances as well as chances to light (Noor et al., 2022). People in the entrepreneurial world across different organizations need to focus on the unspoken cultural systems within their communities, especially when it comes to women in entrepreneurship, and work towards creating adequate schemes of support that can reshape the ethos across the board for women's entrepreneurship to thrive.



Support Systems for Women Entrepreneurs

Government Support

Government support is critical for Women Entrepreneurs in many emerging economies. Table1 show summarize of key Insights for Government Support. The impact of government financial programs (GFPs) on women's entrepreneurial activity has been profound (Tirumalaisamy et al., 2024). Research by Yusoff et al. (2021) suggests that although facilitation of these programs of GFPs has a positive influence on women's entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of the actual effect produced which is mediated by their access as well as their financial literacy. Those with higher self-confidence and a propensity for risk-taking are particularly well-placed to profit from these programs and, as a result, avoid the financial barriers that typically restrict their ventures.

Furthermore, research highlights the necessity for transformative policies that bolster the effectiveness of current governmental actions. Ahmad et al. (2024) explore pathways for enhanced support systems within the structures of government.' They argue that the application processes for financial aid need to be simplified and targeted outreach programs that inform potential beneficiaries about the resources available that need to be established. Furthermore, along with finance support systems, regular seminars for skill enhancement may be a part of the support systems so that women entrepreneurs are empowered with the required skills to utilize financial resource and to enter the marketplace.

In addition to financial support, governments must introduce mentorship programs which connect new female entrepreneurs with seasoned experts. Help — it was a lot more than we knew what to do with, and again, the kind of structure that helps us with the networking opportunities that are vital to entrepreneurship.

Table 1: summarize of key Insights for Government Support

Aspect	Key Insights	Key References
Government Financial Programs (GFPs)	• Women's entrepreneurial practices positively impacted. • Mediated by financial access and literacy. • Women with greater self-confidence and a high propensity to take risks, fare better.	Yusoff et al., (2021)
Challenges Identified	• Women entrepreneurs face financial barriers • Application processes are often bureaucratically complex	Yusoff et al., (2021)
Transformative Policies	• Streamline processes for applying for financial aid. • Implement outreach programs specifically to increase awareness of services. • Organize skill-upgradation lectures to effectively make use of monetary resources.	Ahmad et al., (2024)
Non-Financial Support	• Provide mentorship programs that connect first-time entrepreneurs with seasoned mentors. • You can offer to create networking opportunities to help businesses grow.	Ahmad et al., (2024)

Organizational and Institutional Support

Additionally, NGOs and community organizations play an essential role in supporting women entrepreneurs by filling the gaps that government initiatives may leave out. Khalid et al. As highlighted by Martschuk et al. (2022), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) serve a crucial function of establishing customized support systems that address the unique requirements of women in the commercial sphere. Those navigating male-dominated industries may benefit particularly from workshops, mentorship, and access to networking opportunities offered by these types of orgs. Table 2 shows summarize of key Aspect for discuss Organizational and Institutional Support

Aiding the NGOs, the field to take their portion goes beyond providing women with the basic NEC authorization, but comes a step further in developing their potential, with skill-building programs that upskill them through technical courses. Noor et al. (2020) promote the idea of such training for women, enhancing specific entrepreneurial skills for women such as business management, digital marketing, and financial literacy. These platforms not only provide women with essential resources to thrive but also create an environment to share experiences and foster collaboration and success among women entrepreneurs.

Moreover, there are various platforms for women to pitch their business ideas provided by many community organizations. This has importance in terms of developing space for innovation and providing access to high-quality funding sources that can accelerate new ventures. Their reach reserves as a direct connection that extends the reach and potential sales channels for women entrepreneurs, both locally and internationally.

Furthermore, the integration of technology in communication offers new avenues for support. Digital platforms also allow female entrepreneurs to network and build relationships with peers and mentors around the globe, leveraging resources and expertise that might not be accessible locally. Now, NGOs not only deliver vocational training programs but also use technology for training and encourage women to use e-commerce and online marketing to make their businesses more viable in an increasingly digital marketplace (Mohsin et al., 2023).

Another important factor is the support offered by formal networks and associations that promote women's entrepreneurship. They typically offer certification programs, which can increase the credibility of women-owned businesses in competitive markets. Additionally, initiatives that directly address family support systems bolster the success of the entrepreneurial ecosystems — relied upon based on the familial connections of many women, as well as formalizing businesses.

To conclude, the extensive support systems presented to women entrepreneurs—including both government and organizational support—create a layered system that plays a crucial role in supporting women's involvement in entrepreneurship across emerging markets. The ongoing improvement of these support systems, based on inputs and modification strategies, can go a long way in developing a healthy ecosystem for the continuous development of women entrepreneurs.

Table 2: Summarize of key Aspect for discuss Organizational and Institutional Support

Aspect	Key Findings	Key References
Customized Support Systems by NGOs	NGOs relate more to specific programs such as mentorship and networking venues for women in predominantly male professions.	Khalid et al., Martschuk et al. (2022)
Skill-Building Programs	The training programs aim to enhance necessary abilities like dealing with business,	Noor et al. (2020)

	advanced showcasing, and budgetary proficiency to enable women to deal with and develop their businesses.	
Platforms for Business Innovation	Community organizations provide women with opportunities to present business ideas, find funding, and develop sales channels in their local community and around the world.	Khalid et al., Martschuk et al. (2022)
Integration of Technology	NGOs leverage digital platforms to train women on e-commerce and online marketing and help businesses compete in the digital market.	Mohsin et al. (2023)
Formal Networks and Certifications	Certification programs enhance credibility, which can give women-owned businesses more clout in competitive markets.	Khalid et al., Martschuk et al. (2022)
E-commerce and Online Marketing	Women can reach more customers and markets more effectively through the means of digital tools to sell products and services online.	Mohsin et al. (2023)

Comparative Analysis of Emerging Markets

In emerging markets, women entrepreneurs encounter different struggles and opportunities. When we study cases in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, we can learn much about the factors of sticking power that affect their entrepreneurial treks. In Malaysia, Taleb et al. (2023) argue, that community-based support networks and flexible adjustment features have helped to develop resilience amidst changing market needs especially during crises. They say that it is easier for female entrepreneurs to thrive when they are supported by a network of moral encouragement and business advice. In such networks, women under difficult circumstances may at least put their skills to use effectively with the help of others encouraging them to do so and providing resources and time.

In addition, women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh face obstacles, as Islam and Ahmad (2020) pointed out. This country's socio-cultural traditions are resolutely friendly to the establishment of enterprises owned by men. Drawing on their study of women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, Pretty and Bryceson (1994) found how traditional gender roles severely restrict women's money- and network-making opportunities; they also highlight these barriers. Therefore, women in Bangladesh face a society in which family roles are encouraged over business, which acts as a hurdle to the initiation of business. This cultural backdrop influences their entrepreneurial intentions and success rates, presenting a stark contrast to counterparts in Malaysia where policy frameworks provide better support for women entrepreneurs.

Moreover, while Keeling et al. (2023) shed light on cultural perceptions towards Indigenous Dayak women entrepreneurs in Sarawak, Tehseen et al. (2024) provide comparative insights into how diverse ethnic backgrounds impact entrepreneurial competencies in Malaysia and implications for sustainable micro-business growth. Their findings indicate that the supportive Malaysian environment fosters better female performance across ethnic groups, suggesting intersectional understanding of culture and gender critically shapes effective policy. This nuanced examination reveals how women leverage ethnic identities and cultural knowledge as a competitive advantage less recognized in countries like Indonesia and Bangladesh where such competencies may not be nurtured.

Additionally, Khalid et al. (2022) emphasizes the influence of familial support and community networks throughout Southeast Asia, including Malaysia and Indonesia. Their results underscore that strong familial ties regularly encourage women to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, thereby significantly enhancing resilience. However, community dynamics differ significantly; while some uplift women entrepreneurs, others may perpetuate restrictive social norms.

Furthermore, studies indicate digital transformation uniquely empowers Malaysian women entrepreneurs to bypass traditional barriers through improved access to information and resources. In contrast, Bangladeshi women entrepreneurs regularly face limitations in digital literacy restricting e-commerce and wider market engagement, stifling ability to compete effectively. The findings suggest cultural support enhances entrepreneurial performance for women with high enterprising tendencies in Malaysia, exemplifying how sociocultural factors foster success.

The socio-cultural context in Indonesia also influences women entrepreneurs significantly. Research indicates that women in this region face various challenges tied to both legal frameworks and societal attitudes toward female business ownership. Like in Bangladesh, the normalization of traditional gender roles often limits women's entrepreneurial engagement. However, emerging grassroots movements are beginning to challenge these norms, fostering an environment more conducive to women-led enterprises.

The case studies taken together reveal that in addition to shaping women's business environment, socio-cultural context also sheds light on not uniform degrees of support and fightback available to women entrepreneurs. This analysis implies that to establish policies and support infrastructure that really do promote entrepreneurship for women in different cultural environments, we must grasp these intricacies. Ultimately it should translate into long-term economic development for emerging markets. Table 3 shows paper summary of Comparative Analysis of Emerging Markets.

Table 3: Summary of Comparative Analysis of Emerging Markets

Author (Year)	Key Finding	Method	Country
Taleb et al. (2023)	In crisis situations, strong community support systems and adaptive capabilities foster resilience in Malaysia.	Case Studies	Malaysia
Islam and Ahmad (2020)	In Bangladesh, socio-cultural norms hinder women entrepreneurs, as they are often expected to prioritize domestic roles over pursuing business ambitions, which can restrict access to resources and networks	Case Studies	Bangladesh
Keling et al. (2023)	These factors are further supported by a favorable socioeconomic environment	Qualitative Analysis	Malaysia
Tehseen et al. (2024)	The intersection of culture and gender, which permeate every aspect of life in Malaysia, enables female entrepreneurs across an array of ethnic backgrounds to thrive competitively in the marketplace.	Comparative Study	Malaysia
Khalid et al. (2022)	Relational and community support are essential to strengthening the resilience of women entrepreneurs across Southeast Asia, but the dynamics vary considerably.	Cross-country Analysis	Malaysia, Indonesia
Mohsin et al. (2023)	For instance, digital technologies enable Malaysian women entrepreneurs to overcome traditional barriers;	Mixed Methods	Malaysia, Bangladesh

in contrast, women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh face limited digital literacy that prevents them from developing similar opportunities.

Table 4 shows summarize the Comparative Analysis of Emerging Markets based on aspect discussion and country.

Table 4: summarize the Comparative Analysis of Emerging Markets based on aspect discussion and country

Aspect	Malaysia	Bangladesh	Indonesia
Support Networks	Strong community and familial support	Minimal, male-dominated systems	Emerging grassroots movements
Cultural Barriers	Policies reduce gender bias Recognized	Rigid traditional roles	Restrictive social attitudes
Ethnic Integration	Intersectional benefits	Negligible	Limited recognition
Digital Access	Complete literacy, digital inclusion	Low digital literacy	Moderate digital adoption/literacy
Resilience	Flexible over the long term in responding to crises	Restricted because of traditional limitations	Slowly getting better with community support

Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs

Among the most critical barriers for women entrepreneurs to pursue their business ventures is access to finance. Kamarudin et al. (2021), demonstrate that women are less likely than men to have access to financial resources. Traditional lending ecosystems often overlook women-owned businesses, especially when they are also members of minority groups, contributing to the challenge of accessing financing. Women entrepreneurs, for example, often do not have the collateral or credit history deemed necessary to access banks, making it very difficult for them to acquire capital. This problem is especially pronounced in rural settings where women encounter several socio-cultural barriers, restricting their involvement in income-generating practices (Hazudin et al., 2023).

In addition to financial access, women entrepreneurs are also challenged by social and cultural norms that impact business practices. The research conducted by Noor et. (2021) sheds light on the impact of cultural views on women's confidence to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities for innovation and growth, which can suppress them from traversing up the value chain. These norms may prevent women from taking risks and entering male-dominated sectors, thus limiting the potential of their business to grow. As noted by Khalid et al. (2022) Family systems that provide encouragement and networking opportunities can help alleviate these challenges. But not all women have such family support, which is why rates of entrepreneurship vary dramatically.

Compared to these huge challenges, there are enormous possibilities offered through digital transformations. Mohsin et al. However, (2023) point out that technology has facilitated female entrepreneurs to provide services to customers beyond the geographical borders. For women-led businesses, the Internet is opening the opportunity to diversify clients and eliminate the stigma or geographical barriers that come from traditional face-to-face selling. Women can thus seek

entrepreneurship in different sectors, from e-commerce retailers to online service providers — to digital platforms with varying degrees of entrepreneurship (Ramli & Razak, 2023).

Complimenting this, the proliferation of digital financial technologies has opened new channels for funding. Fintech services, as discussed by Hossain (2023), helped in closing the funding gap that was otherwise available with banks, and this enabled women entrepreneurs to raise funds with an expanded option of accessing respective economic resources. Digital financial providers allow for quick loan approvals with less documentation, which is closer to what cash-strapped businesses can afford as most entrepreneurs are very busy milling their way through family and business. By doing so, financial inclusion may be one mechanism by which gender financing gaps can help create a more equitable entrepreneurial stage (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Women entrepreneurs in rural areas have been especially telling in this respect. Research by Othman et al. (2022) shows how rural women adopted digital tools to reach out and engage with potential customers, accessing markets and the business community, which is an example of resilience in the face of structural disadvantage. Such a technological adoption rate also shows an increasing trend of digital literacy among women entrepreneurs, which can make them more efficient in business management and help them with financial literacy making them a fundamental part of sustainability for the entrepreneurship journey.

To add to this, new educational efforts are also crucial for changing the paradigm of women entrepreneurs. Noor et al. (2020) have further highlighted the role that training programs aimed at improving women's digital marketing and e-commerce skills can play in their entrepreneurial development. These programs can mitigate barriers to entry and empower the next generation of women with the skills to leverage digital tools for business success through targeted support and resources. Therefore, educational institutions are crucial in building the entrepreneurial competencies necessary to succeed in the digital economy.

Table 5 shows summarize of Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs. In conclusion, despite facing unique challenges including issues such as financial access and socio-cultural restraints, women entrepreneurs also face potential avenues for success fueled by digital transformation. Certainly, such duality must be kept in mind—identifying the limits while providing opportunities to women through either the vehicle of education, supportive policies or innovative solutions is the way to go for building an inclusive and evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Table 5: Summarize of Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs

Aspect	Challenges	Opportunities	Key References
Access to Finance	- Insufficient financial resources due to insufficient collateral and lack of credit history. - Women-owned businesses must overcome hurdles with traditional lending systems.	- Fintech services mean faster approval and far less documentation, helping bridge financial gaps. - The power of digital financial tools for financial inclusion	Kamarudin et al. (2021), Hossain (2023)
Socio-Cultural Norms	Cultural norms stifle confidence and restrict risk-taking.	Networking and encouragement from supportive family systems.	Noor et al. (2021), Khalid et al. (2022)

	• Growth and innovation are inhibited by male-dominated sectors and a lack of family support.	• Support and training programs communities to assist women in overcoming sociocultural challenges.	
Digital Transformation	Some Rural Areas Still Lack Access to Necessary Digital Tools due to Structural Issues	• The use of technology allows you to reach customers worldwide. • Women broaden clients via e-commerce. • Digital literacy facilitates access to markets and resources.	Mohsin et al. (2023), Othman et al. (2022)
Educational Initiatives	No training in entrepreneurship particularly in digital marketing and e-commerce.	• Training programs focused on skills-enhancing entrepreneurship. • Women need to be educated to use their digital kits wisely.	Noor et al. (2020)
Rural Entrepreneurship	Structural disadvantages and lack of market access.	• Digital tools allow connecting them to wider markets. • New energy through enhanced digitalization for business management and financial literacy.	Othman et al. (2022)
General Trends	• duality of barriers and opportunities pathways. • Ongoing obstacles prevent equal access to entrepreneurship.	• Integrating education and technology creates meaning for diversity. • Enabling policies can facilitate entrepreneurial ecosystems.	Multiple studies cited in the analysis

Best Practices and Policy Recommendations

To understand the most effective policies and practices to empower women in the emerging market surrounding a specific country, one must look at other countries that are pushing for an inclusive culture and adopted characteristics that allowed them to be so. Hossain (2023) found that successful interventions often require collaboration between governments, NGOs, and community organizations to create an integrated support structure that meets the specific demands of women entrepreneurs.

Government Policies

A great example of how this can be effective is through targeted financial programs for the specific target group, in this case women entrepreneurs. Malaysia has implemented specific financial assistance

programs, including low-interest loans and grants, that are focused on women-run businesses. These programs have resulted in increased access to capital for women entrepreneurs and have proven effective for business growth (Yusoff et al., 2021). Furthermore, the effectiveness of these programs shows that embedding educational features like financial literacy training can considerably improve the effectiveness of financial assistance, empowering candidates with both the aptitude and the readiness for financial decision-making as entrepreneurial (Hazudin et al., 2023).

Studies show that business regulations that are gender-equal can also create a more favorable business environment for female entrepreneurs. In addition, legal frameworks that seek to promote women's rights in business can also serve as an important safety net to protect women entrepreneurs from gender-based discrimination, as seen in countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia. Such lawmaking does not just promote a fair business environment but also inspires a larger number of women to join the venture ecosystem (Ali & Adubasim, 2023).

Community and Institutional Support

By supporting different women's organizations, women can enjoy the benefits of self-employment and become entrepreneurs. Khalid et al. (2022) highlight a similar finding when it comes to NGOs in Malaysia, where they found that NGOs are fundamental in providing women with entrepreneurship training, mentorship, and networks. Connecting women entrepreneurs with experienced mentors not only elevates confidence among women business owners but also enables the gap between learning and unlearning valuable information and resources that are necessary for success. For instance, the establishment of women's cooperatives has proven particularly helpful in mobilizing them for collective business and market competing purposes (Khalid et al., 2022).

In addition, educational programs that meet the conditions of entrepreneurial skills development are even more important on the grounds of these community initiatives. According to research, women who participate in training interventions geared towards business plan formation, marketing, and utilization of technology in their business processes perform better in their entrepreneurship (Zulkifle & Aziz, 2023). In Bangladesh for example, a country where targeted capacity-building workshops in digital marketing have been offered to women entrepreneurs, participants even reported increased sales and customer numbers, further highlighting the tangible outcomes of focused educational programs.

Recommendations for Supportive Ecosystems

In addressing these barriers to creating a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs it is important to tackle the socio-cultural and gender perceptions (Poon & Leeves, 2022). In various regions, community awareness camps that challenge traditionally defined gender roles, focusing on women entrepreneurship's potential, have become mainstream. These campaigns also contribute to changing society's mindset towards women in business and creating a more enabling environment for women entrepreneurs (Tirumalaisamy et al., 2024).

Additionally, the importance of adopting technology and digital platforms of support for entrepreneurship has become more relevant in the current business landscape. Digital financial technologies offer women entrepreneurs more access to markets and information as well as new ways to run their businesses. Mohsin (2023) on the other hand focuses on how access to technology can help women micro-enterprises perform sustainably and can better adapt to the changes that are actively taking place in the market.

Overall, building a strong foundation for women entrepreneurs is a comprehensive process that includes financial, educational, and community-focused initiatives. Emerging markets can foster an environment that empowers women entrepreneurs by introducing effective government policies, promoting

partnerships, and encouraging the rise of technology and digital literacy. It is this holistic field of activity that strengthens the entrepreneurs as well as the socio-economic development of the region.

Future Research Directions

Despite women entrepreneurship, there are an increasing number of studies that present challenges in the field of women entrepreneurship, particularly in emerging and developing markets, where sociocultural environments play an important role in shaping women's business practices, the demand of the market is shifting (Taleb et al., 2024). Perhaps one of the areas identified as important in the study which is a primary area of the prospectus for research work in the future relates to the concentration of work on the digital literacy of women entrepreneurs in as much as the interrelations with training, access to resources, and performance of businesses. Hazudin et al. (2023) that in Asia, such components play a significant role in the competitive advantage of women-owned micro-enterprises and businesses even and that women with digital skills show more potential to gain from e-marketing and marketing via social channels of communication. Hence, further research must consider the scope of digital literacy programs and their direct impact on women entrepreneurs' success especially in developing regions with stagnant access to technology.

Moreover, based on the study by Noor et al. (2020) highlights that an institutional support mechanism is an important factor for women's entrepreneurship. Though previous research has recognized the importance of supportive conditions, we note the absence of empirical evidence capable of addressing how support systems can be designed in ways that respond to the specific barriers that women entrepreneurs face in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Thus, there is a need for researchers to examine how such initiatives can be designed by community organizations and NGOs through training and mentorship that addresses the difference between self-confidence as compared with men and the liquidity constraints in accessing capital and market visibility that women entrepreneurs face.

An additional research direction is the comparative research of women entrepreneurs in various cultural contexts. Keling et al. (2023) offer regional insights into Malaysian Indigenous women's entrepreneurial behavior, as shaped by cultural backgrounds and their community practices. Comparative studies on women entrepreneurs of different ethnic origins in Malaysia, as well as comparing countries such as Indonesia and Bangladesh, may provide critical insights into how such factors affect the profile of women entrepreneurs. Such studies can also investigate the efficacy of different support systems and the impact of family and community on female entrepreneurship (Au, W. C. & Beigi, M. 2021; Khalid et al. 2022). This may allow us to highlight practices and strategies that can be adapted or adopted in different contexts.

In addition, what current research lacks is a longitudinal study of women's pursuit of entrepreneurship over time. Previous research tends to offer a static view of women's entrepreneurial behaviors without considering how their experiences change over time. Data for this type of research can help further understand the challenges women face and how well they adapt to dynamic environments involving economic shocks, regulatory changes, and changing market demands. This gap is needed in studies following these changing conditions and the impact on women's entrepreneurial resilience, as posited in work proposed by Taleb et al. (2023), within the context of resilience about Malaysian women's micro-enterprises when faced with challenges.

More significantly, future studies need to have a systematic in-depth exploration of the sociocultural norms and their impact on women's finance accessibility. According to Kamarudin et al. (2021), access to finance continues to be a major obstacle for women entrepreneurs in Malaysia, reaffirming the need for in-depth investigations that study the interaction of social expectations and familial support structures with women's financial literacy and ability to acquire funding. Such explorations may provide insight into gender biases that exist in financial institutions, generating ideas for outreach models that can be used to promote accessibility to finance for women entrepreneurs.

Lastly, adding a social media use consideration with women entrepreneurs might contribute some useful implications. Mokhtar and Hasan (2023) research added that, in Malaysia, the social media presence of micro-enterprises is a double-edged sword, with opportunities and challenges. Exploring how women entrepreneurs can best leverage various platforms and the barriers that prevent them from maximizing their engagement would be a worthwhile contribution to the literature.

Table 6 shows summarize of Future Research Directions for Women Entrepreneurs. Overall, while the forward momentum for women entrepreneurs is unabating, there is ample room for further research to fill in these gaps. Through exploring the multidimensional impact of socio-cultural considerations, the effectiveness of digital literacy initiatives, and the need for cross-cultural comparative research, researchers can aid a holistic comprehension of the nuances of women's entrepreneurship and promote a more equitable entrepreneurial landscape that empowers women internationally.

Table 6: Summarize of Future Research Directions for Women Entrepreneurs

Research Area	Key Focus	Potential Research Questions	Key References
Digital Literacy	- Women entrepreneur business performance: the role of digital skills - Effects of digital literacy on e-marketing and social media utilization.	- What is the impact of digital literacy on women-owned businesses? - Why are the barriers to digital skills acquisition?	Hazudin et al. (2023)
Institutional Support Systems	- Enabling support structures for women entrepreneurs. - Overcoming socio-cultural obstacles and liquidity restrictions.	- What can NGOs and community organizations do to create mentorship for women entrepreneurs? - How well do these programs work?	Noor et al. (2020)
Comparative Cultural Studies	- Women Entrepreneurship in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh: A Cross-Cultural Study - Geographical and traditional patterns in entrepreneurship.	- What cultural norms underlie women's entrepreneurial behavior across regions? - What are best practices in different cultural contexts?	Keling et al. (2023), Au & Beigi (2021)
Longitudinal Studies	- Women's entrepreneurship behavior changes dynamically over time. - How changes in the economy and regulations can affect the resilience of women entrepreneurs.	- How do female entrepreneurs adapt to changing economic and social conditions? - What increases long-term entrepreneurial resilience?	Taleb et al. (2023)
Access to Finance	Role of socio-cultural norms in accessing finances.	What is the influence of familial and social expectations on women's access to finance?	Kamarudin et al. (2021)

	Gender stereotypes in financial institutions.	What outreach models lead to increased financial inclusion for women?	
Social Media Utilization	- How social media can increase visibility and engagement for businesses - Difficulties utilizing of social platforms.	- What needs can women entrepreneurs address through social media? - What social media platforms were used by different demographic groups?	Mokhtar & Hasan (2023)

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that without proper socio-cultural support and institutional support, women enterprises may fail to scale up or emerge, especially in developing markets, and need further research to ascertain the impact of socio-cultural factors and institutionalization of support for homepreneurs. Alongside improved support frameworks by governments and organizations, overcoming social pressures and imbibed gender roles present in the ecosystem must also be worked on. Providing good opportunities for women entrepreneurs, the review also emphasizes the transformative potential of digital tools. To promote sustainable development, policymakers should consider culturally appropriate measures tailored to local contexts. Further investigations likely remain at the crossroads between technology and entrepreneurship and comparative studies, in sociocultural institutional contexts, are more critically important in terms of value-adding literature within the domain.

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