


Chapter 4

Five Challenges That Women Entrepreneurs Face in Mexico

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores some of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Mexico, based on semi-structured interviews with ten women from diverse industries. Five main obstacles are identified: societal expectations, competitiveness among women, impostor syndrome, authority questioning, and structural limitations. The author aims to offer an updated view on societal support and inspire aspiring entrepreneurs through real-life stories and practical strategies. Ultimately, the author seeks to map some of the cultural, psychological, and institutional barriers women entrepreneurs in Mexico have to face.

INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurs are increasingly recognized as powerful drivers of economic and social transformation in Latin America (Afshar Jahanshahi et al., 2025; Anna et al., 2000; Jahanshahi et al., 2023) and Mexico (Goncalves & Vasquez, 2024; Guerrero-Chaparro et al., 2025; Martha & Vito, 2017). Their contributions go far beyond financial success: by creating jobs, fostering innovation, and diversifying industries, they are strengthening both local communities and the national economy (Cucagna et al., 2020; Rodríguez Gutiérrez et al., 2014). Unlike traditional business models that often prioritize profit alone, women-led enterprises tend to reinvest in

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families, education, and community well-being. This reinvestment creates ripple effects that promote resilience and inclusion, demonstrating that entrepreneurship can be both an engine of growth and a mechanism for social progress. In this sense, women's entrepreneurship bridges two dimensions of development that are often seen as separate—economic performance and social equity (Althalathini et al., 2022; Welter & Smallbone, 2008).

At the same time, the rise of women entrepreneurs reflects deeper cultural shifts in Mexico, where longstanding gender roles have historically limited women's participation in the business world. Their growing presence signals both progress and ongoing struggle (Bechtel et al., 2006; Cucagna et al., 2020; Guerrero-Chaparro et al., 2025; Martha & Vito, 2017). On one hand, more women are stepping into leadership across industries, including technology and digital commerce, redefining the scope of women's economic participation. On the other hand, persistent structural barriers, unequal access to finance, heavy family-care responsibilities, cultural biases, and lack of institutional support, continue to constrain their potential (Goncalves & Vasquez, 2024; Rodríguez Gutiérrez et al., 2014). This dual reality underscores an important truth: women entrepreneurs in Mexico are succeeding not because the path is easy, but because they are navigating and pushing against systemic obstacles. Their stories illustrate the resilience and creativity required to thrive in contexts where support systems are often incomplete, and where societal expectations can still weigh heavily.

Women entrepreneurs play a crucial role in Mexico's economic development by generating employment, stimulating innovation, and contributing to social progress.¹ As of recent data, 58.6% of online shopping websites in Mexico are run by women, highlighting their growing impact in the digital and consumer markets (Informe Ecosistema Pyme 2025). Moreover, according to INEGI, women lead over 36% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country.² While the gender gap in entrepreneurship persists, these numbers reflect a positive trend: more women are feeling empowered and confident in their ability to launch and lead successful businesses.

This chapter aims to inspire women who are considering the path of entrepreneurship by sharing the real-life experiences of ten accomplished businesswomen from various industries, through the qualitative analysis of ten semi-structured interviews conducted from April to early July 2025. Through their testimonies, the author shed light on five main challenges these women commonly face: managing societal expectations, overcoming impostor syndrome, having their authority questioned, experiencing a lack of solidarity from other women, and navigating an unsupportive system structure. Studying these challenges is essential not only to understand the barriers that continue to limit women's full participation in the business world, but also to recognize the structural and cultural transformations still required to ensure

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