



The impact of women's economic empowerment on the rise of female entrepreneurship and human capital in Botswana

Vito Bobek*, Andrea Schachl**,
Tatjana Horvat***

Abstract: Studies revealed that women are less likely to be entrepreneurs and face more disadvantages starting businesses than men, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the authors investigated the importance of women's economic empowerment and its impact on the rise of female entrepreneurship and human capital in Botswana.

Objectives: The paper aims to get an in-depth insight into the issue and to recognize the most relevant factors and how they influence female entrepreneurship in the selected country. The findings should underline the importance of policies and initiatives for female entrepreneurs and the consequential positive effect on the country's progress in achieving gender equality and economic growth.

Methods/ approach: The research included a case study analysis with four in-depth expert interviews. Data triangulation ensured the study's validity, and the case was examined through pattern matching.

Keywords: women's economic empowerment; women entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurs in Botswana, human capital

JEL: E2, H5, I2, I3

Vpliv gospodarskega opolnomočenja žensk na porast ženskega podjetništva in človeškega kapitala v Bocvani

Povzetek: Avtorji so raziskovali pomen ekonomskega opolnomočenja žensk in njegov vpliv na porast ženskega podjetništva in človeškega kapitala v Bocvani. Raziskava je vključevala analizo študije primera s štirimi poglobljenimi strokovnimi intervjuji. Triangulacija podatkov je zagotovila veljavnost študije, primer pa je bil pregledan z ujemanjem vzorcev. Rezultati kažejo, da se podjetnice soočajo z izzivi, kot so dostop do virov in izobraževanja, družbeno-kulturne norme, pomanjkanje socialne zaščite ter velik in nezaščiten neformalni sektor. Vlada in institucije spodbujajo omogočenost žensk z neposrednim posredovanjem na trgu dela, podporo neformalnemu sektorju, ustavnim, pravnim in institucionalnim okvirom, ki upošteva enakost spolov, uveljavljanjem in nadzorom zakonov in politik, ki upoštevajo enakost spolov, ter dostopom do virov in izobraževanje. Poleg tega ženske potrebujejo digitalno vključenost, podjetniške mreže, socialno zaščito in reformirane družbeno-kulturne norme. Če bodo podjetnice ustrezno opolnomočene, bodo prispevale k človeškemu kapitalu, gospodarski rasti in razvoju držav.

Ključne besede: ekonomsko opolnomočenje žensk, žensko podjetništvo, podjetnice v Bocvani, človeški kapital

*Prof.,
University of Applied Sciences FH
Joanneum
Alte Poststraße 149, 8020 Graz, Austria
vito.bobek@fh-joanneum.at

**M.A., University of Applied Sciences FH
Joanneum, Graz, Austria
Alte Poststraße 149, 8020 Graz, Austria
andrea.schachl@edu.fh-joanneum.at

***Prof.,
University of Primorska, Faculty of
Management
Cankarjeva 5, 6000 Koper, Slovenia,
tatjana.horvat@fm-kp.si

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1. Introduction

The relevance of emerging markets, which show considerable economic potential, has become evident over the past decades. They are said to become an economic powerhouse soon, confronting industrialized Western economies. In this regard, the enhancement of human capital is vital. Botswana has been mentioned as one emerging country (Magnus, 2010, pp. 5-6, 8, 10, 52). This paper focuses on women's economic empowerment and female entrepreneurship in Botswana. The country is in the stage of low-middle development and is dynamic in terms of growth. The GDP per capita at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is USD 15,458.48 (The World Bank, 2020a). The nation's growth rates have fluctuated over the last years (The World Bank, 2020b).

Studies revealed that "women are less likely to be entrepreneurs and face more disadvantages starting businesses than men" (UN WOMEN, 2018). In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), however, women tend to have fewer alternatives to entrepreneurship than in other regions, which is why self-employment is prevalent in many countries. Nevertheless, reports indicate that women in SSA face significant challenges. These include inequality in education and property rights, economic rights, and access to finance. Thus, enabling women to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities (Hallward-Driemeier, 2011, pp. 2-3) is critical. In SSA, the labor force participation rate of females aged 15 years or older amounted to 59.6 percent in 2020. Compared to other regions in the world, such as Latin America, East Asia, the Pacific region, North America, and the European Union, more females are economically active in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, Botswana (56.4 percent) reported lower rates than the overall SSA (The World Bank, 2022a).

Female entrepreneurs are recognized to be a source of economic growth and development that is, however, constrained by many factors (Etim & Iwu, 2019, p. 2). Generally, women's economic empowerment (WEE) is crucial to achieving gender equality according to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations (U.N.) and boosting economic growth (UN WOMEN, 2018).

The concept of WEE implies that females can succeed and advance economically while they are capable of making economic decisions and controlling both resources and earnings (Golla et al., 2011, p. 4). They can engage in and profit from development processes (Eyben et al., 2008, pp. 9-10). WEE consists of economic advancement (economic gain and success), power (control over resources), and agency (ability to define and make decisions) (Golla et al., 2011, p. 4).

Recent literature (Mandipaka, 2014, pp. 1190-1192; Semente, 2019, pp. 12-13; Hunt & Samman, 2016, p. 11; World Bank Group, 2019, pp. 134-135) suggests factors promoting women's economic empowerment such as entrepreneur networks, collective action, education, training, and mentoring programs. Besides, capital support from institutions, a balance of paid and unpaid work, and access to property, assets, and financial services are crucial factors. Furthermore, social protection, labor market policies, fiscal policies, and a gender-responsive legal and institutional framework may empower women.

It is vital to assess how WEE can influence the rise of female entrepreneurship in SSA. There is an urgency to evaluate existing measures and their contribution to the success of female entrepreneurs. Besides, effects on the countries' economic development and growth need to be considered. The authors recommend the most promising gender-responsive policies and initiatives that could best support female entrepreneurs in Botswana.

This paper should emphasize the significance of WEE in Botswana to promote female entrepreneurship. Factors that contribute to WEE and impact the rise of female entrepreneurship are evaluated.

This paper aims to get an in-depth insight into the issue and to recognize the most relevant factors and how they influence female entrepreneurship in the selected countries. The findings should underline the importance of policies and initiatives for female entrepreneurs and the consequential positive effect on the country's progress in achieving gender equality and economic growth.

A comprehensive literature review demonstrates that there is growing attention to WEE and female entrepreneurship, as well as the effects on economic growth and development in various countries (Mukorera, 2020; Phillips et al., 2014; BSR & William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2017; Bothale, 2017; World Bank Group, 2019). Most studies addressed WEE or female entrepreneurship in Africa, South

Africa, and some of its provinces, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Ghana, and Botswana. However, limited research provides a profound understanding of the relationship between WEE and the rise of female entrepreneurship (Mukorera, 2020; Phillips et al., 2014; World Bank Group, 2019). Besides, no recent literature compared the relationship between WEE and the rise of female entrepreneurship in Botswana.

Based on the problem statement, the authors have defined the following research questions:

1. How does women's economic empowerment influence the rise of female entrepreneurship in Botswana?
2. How can specific gender-specific policies and initiatives contribute to the success of female entrepreneurs in Botswana?

The extensive body of previous literature on women's economic empowerment and female entrepreneurship observed interrelationships between the two concepts. It further contains recommendations to support female entrepreneurs, including several helpful policies and initiatives. Specific literature focuses on the positive impact of empowered women on a nation's economy. Therefore, the authors defined the subsequent assumptions that are investigated in this study:

- Women's economic empowerment impacts the emergence of female entrepreneurship in Botswana.
- The success of female entrepreneurs is influenced by certain factors like gender-specific policies and initiatives.
- The promotion of female entrepreneurship has a positive effect on general economic progress in Botswana.

The authors aimed to answer the research questions through qualitative analysis. Hence, the authors performed a qualitative and explanatory research method known as case study analysis for Botswana. This method allows for a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to be examined qualitatively.

2. Methodology and Research Design

The research aims to get an in-depth insight into women's economic empowerment and to recognize the most relevant factors and how they influence female entrepreneurship in Botswana. Hence, the excellent research approach is exploratory. Due to the complexity of the topic, the authors chose exploratory over conclusive research, which provides a profound understanding of a research problem (Malhotra, 2020, p. 92). Besides, qualitative research is suitable for examining complex phenomena. Participants may find it challenging to provide sufficient information by answering structured questions, which are more common in conclusive research (Malhotra et al., 2017, p. 154; Malhotra, 2020, p. 93).

The authors' chosen methodology is a case study analysis, a qualitative and exploratory research method (Dul & Hak, 2008, pp. 4-6, 24). When research questions are formulated as "how" or "why" questions, the case study is explanatory (Yin, 2018, pp. 43-44). The authors applied the case study approach due to the complexity and broadness of the topic of women's economic empowerment and its impact on the rise of female entrepreneurship.

For Botswana's country case, the authors selected participants that are key informants or knowledgeable people, by reputation, who can give great insight into an issue (Patton, 2015, p. 406). The researcher defined four experts based on the following criteria: An expert is an active participant who has acquired special knowledge on a specific problem by exercising an activity targeting, analyzing, or solving the problem, irrespective of their formal position (Bogner et al., 2009, pp. 24-25). Besides, an expert may be any person in charge of or with restricted access to the expertise of specific communities. Aside from groups of people, the same criteria may also apply to decision-making processes. Hence, such knowledge is organized and accessible, practical, and action-oriented (Bogner et al., 2009, p. 100).

A case study can provide an in-depth insight into a research problem while considering its context, which requires the scrutiny of various data. A method called "data triangulation" is helpful in this context, as it can improve the construct validity of the study. It refers to collecting information from several sources to develop overlapping evidence. Therefore, the following indices were regarded as the most suitable to provide valuable insights into the investigated issues:

- FLFP (Female Labour Force Participation) rate by The World Bank
- Self-employment rate by The World Bank
- Women, Business and the Law Index by The World Bank
- Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum
- Gender Development Index by the UNDP
- UNDP Women's Empowerment Data
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Data
- Doing Business Index (Starting a Business) by The World Bank

After the desk research, primary data was collected. The authors performed four online semi-structured in-depth expert interviews. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews to enable participants' flexibility while maintaining structured interviews with comparable outcomes. The participants had to meet the conditions that define an expert and therefore possess expert knowledge on women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship in Botswana.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the chosen participants whose personal data was omitted for data protection. In chapter 4, interviewees received numbers based on the sequence of interviews, which shall make a distinction between interview responses possible.

Table 1. Participants in in-depth expert interviews

	Botswana
<i>Female Entrepreneurs</i>	1. Managing Director Consulting Firm, Investor
<i>Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Organizations/Institutions</i>	2. Business Lecturer at the University of Botswana, Gender Activist, Youth Development Coach
	3. Economics Lecturer at the University of Botswana, Expert on Gender Issues
	4. Botswanian Fashion Entrepreneur; Head of the African Women Empowerment Forum

Source: Own illustration of the authors.

The authors' strategy was to rely on theoretical propositions relating to the assumptions made. This strategy implies the study's goal and design-build on theoretical propositions, involving research questions and a literature review. It supports structuring the analysis, highlighting the context and concepts proposed by existing literature that needs to be investigated. It further helps assess if the study's assumptions are valid (Yin, 2018, p. 243).

For this study, the time-series analysis covered the timeframe between 2000 and 2020 for the indicators of GDP per capita at PPP and the FLFP rate. Those two indicators provided sufficient data and promised to deliver beneficial results if analyzed for a specific time interval. In addition, self-employment rates between 1999 and 2019 were examined. The timeframe for this indicator was slightly different due to a lack of data for 2020. The timeframe of 20 years appeared to be adequate, as it considers various economic and regulatory developments while guaranteeing the availability of comprehensive and valid data.

The in-depth expert interviews evaluated contradictory findings from the desk research and literature review and answered open questions. The participants were asked questions related to gender equality, entrepreneurship framework conditions, policies and initiatives of WEE, as well as women and economic development. In the first section, the questions let interviewees assess developments of the FLFP and female self-employment rates, the importance of female entrepreneurship over wage employment, the significance of the informal sector, and the consequences of economic empowerment on gender equality. The second part described entrepreneurial framework conditions and female entrepreneurs' challenges. The third segment aimed to describe the relationship between WEE and female entrepreneurship. In addition, the relevance and implications of specific policies and initiatives to empower female entrepreneurs were evaluated. The fourth part of the interview was intended to explain

the relationship between the FLFP and the economy. The role of female entrepreneurs and the importance of WEE for the promotion of economic growth were questioned.

The authors chose to apply an inductive approach to incorporate the variety of newly gathered information. The gathered data were merged into a Microsoft Excel sheet, sorted into four categories and 13 to 14 subsections. The subcategory on women's challenges was split into 6 to 7 dimensions. The subgroup which contained measures was divided into 11 to 12 subsets. The authors applied data triangulation and asked the study participants to elaborate more on ambiguous statements to increase the study's validity.

Privacy and confidentiality of the participants, responsiveness to their requests, and applicable data protection guidelines had to be upheld. The obtained information was only used to conduct this research, and data was saved securely. The authors asked participants prior to the recording of interviews for their approval. The recordings were deleted from all devices after finishing the research. Furthermore, interview transcripts were transmitted if interviewees requested them. Participants were asked for a revision, if necessary, and explicit permission to use the transcripts was obtained. Real names and identifying characteristics of participants were omitted to ensure the anonymity of the respective participants.

3. Results and Discussion

Gender-related indices

Gender-related indices help to show the level of empowerment in Botswana. The following indices are used to describe the current situation: The Women, Business and the Law Index, the Global Gender Gap Index, the Gender Development Index by the UNDP, UNDP Women's Empowerment Data, and data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, as well as the Doing Business Index. Conclusions from the indices were discussed in expert interviews.

The WBL (Women, Business and the Law) Index describes how legal gender discrimination affects female employment, entrepreneurship, and the economy. In 2022, Botswana scored 63.8 out of 100, which is lower than the Sub-Saharan African average of 71.5. Botswana achieved a perfect score regarding marriage and pension. Nevertheless, significant constraints could be identified in terms of mobility, workplace, pay, parenthood, entrepreneurship, and assets. With starting and running a business, no laws prohibited females' discrimination in access to credit. In addition, regarding assets, significant gaps concerning inheritance were found, and no laws regulated the valuation of nonmonetary inputs in marriage (The World Bank, 2022b).

The GGGI (Global Gender Gap Index) helps to compare progress towards gender parity globally and shows gaps in gender and empowerment dimensions (World Economic Forum, 2021, pp. 5, 8). In 2021, Botswana ranked 71st out of 156 countries, with an overall GGGI score of 0.716. In general, Botswana is improving its score slowly towards parity. However, 37 countries have surpassed the nation since 2006. Regarding economic participation and opportunity, the country attained a score of 0.799, which was noticeably higher than the 0.693 in 2006. In terms of educational attainment, health, and survival, data was missing for Botswana. Therefore, the scores for these dimensions were not taken into account. For political empowerment, no sufficient data was provided. The report ranked Botswana with 0.084 points, 135th out of 156 countries. Despite missing data, the document highlighted the vast potential for improvement towards parity in Botswana. Gender gaps have been closing slowly, if not widening, over the past years (World Economic Forum, 2021, pp. 131-132). The country performed better than the average SSA, with a GGGI score of 0.672 (World Economic Forum, 2021, p. 7). According to Interviewee 2, increased women's economic empowerment will raise the country's empowerment overall. She continued by explaining that WEE would help improve gender equality. According to Interviewee 2, business education has an enabling function. Interviewee 3 added that women are more educated than men in Botswana. Interviewee 1 confirmed that girls do better in primary and secondary school than boys. Interviewee 4 claimed that economic resources create female power, and poverty and gender imbalances are reduced.

The GDI (Gender Development Index) is a ratio of female to male HDI (Human Development Index) values. Among other subindices, it covers the HDI, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, and the GNI per capita. A value close to 1.00 indicates parity and a small gender gap. In 2019, Botswana's

HDI rank was 100, and had high human development. The country had a GDI value of 0.998. The HDI value for females in Botswana was 0.734, similar to the 0.735 for males. Females were expected to attend school for 13 years compared to the 12.7 years of men. Women's mean years of schooling amounted to 9.5 years in contrast to males, who attended school an average of 9.7 years. In addition, Botswana's estimated GNI per capita was USD 15,276 for women and 17,677 for men. Based on these statistics, the gender gap appeared minor, and Botswana was moving towards parity. Botswana's GDI was more significant than the SSA average of 0.894. The country also had a higher HDI than the SSA average of 0.516 for females and 0.577 for males. In addition, the expected years of schooling were higher than the SSA average of 9.5 years for women and 10.6 years for men. Likewise, the mean years of schooling were higher than the SSA average, which was 4.9 years for females and 6.7 years for males. The GNI was much above the SSA average of USD 2,937 for females and USD 4,434 for males (UNDP, 2019a).

The UNDP Women's Empowerment Data gives information on socio-economic empowerment. Botswanan females' share of senior and middle management employment amounted to 29.6 percent between 2009 and 2019. In 2017, 46.8 percent of Botswana's female population aged 15 and older had an account at a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider. Hence, Botswana performed better than the overall SSA. These percentages grouped Botswana into the middle third of all examined countries. Regarding the days of mandatory paid maternity leave, Botswana's government and employers granted mothers 84 days. Hence, the country was found in the bottom third of all countries, undershooting the SSA average of 91 days (UNDP, 2019b).

Regarding the effects of economic empowerment on females in management positions, Interviewee 1 explained that an increasing number of women is employed at the managerial level, but she claimed that the participation drops at higher employment levels. Interviewee 2 confirmed that more women become visible in higher positions, but she emphasized that further empowerment is needed. Interviewee 3 claimed that empowerment would give them the required confidence to participate in high positions.

The GEM database lists statistics on entrepreneurial framework conditions (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2021). Due to a lack of data recency, other indicators and expert interviews were considered to make valid assumptions on the entrepreneurial framework conditions in Botswana.

The Ease of Doing Business Index ranks 190 countries based on their performance across several topics that are related to doing business. In 2020, in Botswana, both genders took around 48 days to register a business, which cost them 0.6 percent of income per capita. The total number of procedures for registering a business was 9 for both men and women. Compared to the SSA average, Botswana performed better regarding the cost but worse in terms of procedures and time. In SSA, females needed 36.3 percent of their per capita income and an average of 7.5 procedures to start a business. Sub-Saharan African women's average time to start a business amounted to 21.6 days, less than half of the 48 days in Botswana. As data illustrate, Botswana ranked 159th out of 190 countries regarding starting a business, followed by getting electricity and enforcing contracts. Botswana had the 87th Doing Business Rank, with an overall score of 66.2 (World Bank Group, 2020c). These rankings indicate that the entrepreneurship framework and conditions leave room for improvement.

Female labor force participation

Data show the LFPR (Labour force participation rate) of the female and male Botswanan population aged 15 years and older from 2000 until 2020. The FLFP rate was lower than the LFPR of males. It shows, however, that the gap has narrowed over the past two decades. Compared to a gap of 19 percent in 2000, the difference between the FLFP rate and the LFPR of males only amounted to 9 percent in 2020. The FLFP rate fluctuated slightly over the investigated timeframe and reached 56.4 percent in 2020, compared to a participation rate of males of 65.5 percent (The World Bank, 2022h). The time series by The World Bank is based on ILO estimates and harmonized for better comparability across countries and over time (The World Bank, 2022c). However, the statistics do not include unpaid workers or those employed in the informal sector (The World Bank, 2022c).

Botswana's informal economy contributes more than 26 percent to the national GDP (Economics, 2021). The informal sector plays a critical role for women in Botswana, as confirmed by Interviewees 1, 2, and 3.

Between 1999 and 2019, the share of female self-employment of total female employment was continuously higher than that of males. The gap has started to narrow since 2015. Self-employment peaked in 2009 before it declined again for both genders. Female self-employment in Botswana made up 25.4 percent in 2019, slightly higher than the 24.3 percent in 1999 (The World Bank, 2021d). The time series by The World Bank is based on ILO estimates and harmonized for better comparability across countries and over time (The World Bank, 2021a). In general, Botswanan females' share of total female and male self-employment was 46.44 percent in 2021, while males constituted 53.56 percent (ILO, 2021).

The disparity between genders regarding self-employment in Botswana was shrinking to 2.9 percent in 2019. Interviewee 1 explained that the female self-employment rate is higher than that of men because of their high level of unemployment. Interviewee 2 agreed but argued that self-employment has primarily increased in the informal sector. Interviewee 3 mentioned the issue of high levels of unemployment but also the benefit of flexibility and independence through entrepreneurship. Interviewee 4 added that girls are "groomed" to be in business, and businesswomen become the breadwinners of their families.

Entrepreneurship was mentioned to be crucial compared to wage employment. All interviewees agreed that it is essential due to the absence of other job opportunities.

The assessment of indicators suggests that Botswana is only slowly closing gender gaps. Nevertheless, the nation performed better than the average SSA for the GGGI. It has improved in economic participation and opportunity, but the status of educational attainment and political empowerment remained uncertain based on inaccessible data. Some interviewees claimed that women are more educated than men in Botswana, but GDI data did not show a significant gap between genders. According to the interviews, increased political empowerment would be required. Despite growing female participation in Parliament, progress remains slow. Botswana generally has high human and gender development, outperforming the SSA averages. The gender gaps in HDI, schooling, and GNI appeared minor, and Botswana is moving towards parity. Botswana has an average share of females in management and with financial accounts. The interviewees stated that more women would be employed at the managerial level, but their participation decreases at higher levels. Besides, UNDP data revealed that the country performs poorly on maternity leave. Botswanan females benefit from laws on marriage and pension.

Nevertheless, significant constraints could be identified in terms of mobility, workplace, pay, parenthood, entrepreneurship, and assets. Based on GEM data, the nation's administration must enhance entrepreneurial framework conditions regarding entrepreneurial finance, governmental support and policies, entrepreneurship programs, and entrepreneurship education in schools. The interviewees confirmed these recommendations. Also, the Doing Business Index suggested challenging entrepreneurship framework conditions. The most challenging areas were starting a business, getting electricity, and enforcing contracts. However, the interviewees identified some significant challenges:

- education,
- limited access to finance,
- lack of access to resources like productive inputs,
- infrastructure,
- low ICT adoption,
- lack of business networks and information,
- limited access to the market,
- lack of support and protection for the informal sector,
- balancing work and family life,
- socio-cultural norms,
- and lack of safety and social protection.

Subsequently, the level of empowerment, the FLFP, and self-employment rates are reflected. Botswanan females' official LFP rate is lower than the one of males. The number of self-employed women in terms of total female employment is higher than that of men. LFP and self-employment rates do not indicate significant increases, which could indicate the necessity of extended empowerment to raise numbers. The interviewees explained low female participation rates by mentioning a lack of training and job opportunities, the dominance of informal work, discriminatory laws and policies, limited access to funding, social norms, and the gender wage gap as constraining factors. They believed that WEE could increase women's participation rates.

Statistics on self-employment rates and results from interviews could signify that those women work on their accounts out of necessity or due to a lack of attractive employment opportunities. They might also select entrepreneurship of choice. The consistent FLFP and decreasing self-employment rates could be linked to the before described challenging entrepreneurial framework conditions and constrained economic opportunities for females.

Policies and initiatives

Interviewee 1 confirmed that WEE and female entrepreneurship are interrelated. Interviewee 3 believed there is a direct, two-way relationship between the two concepts.

Literature suggested a constitutional, legal, or institutional reform as an empowering measure. Interviewee 1 is opposed to only focusing on women in this regard. Interviewee 2 believed that if policies would be changed to include women - to make them visible and help them to participate - Botswana's economy could benefit.

Extended access to resources, assets, and institutions can empower female business owners, as confirmed by Interviewees 1, 2, and 3.

Another encouraging initiative for women would be digital inclusion, as confirmed by Interviewee 4. Increased expenditure on education, managerial, financial skills development, and work-related training programs can empower women entrepreneurs. Interviewee 1 pointed out that a greater focus on entrepreneurship should start in primary school. Interviewee 4 mentioned the need for leadership training, finance and accounting, and digital and marketing skills but emphasized the need for a holistic WEE approach.

Aside from education, women's collective action and leadership, mentoring programs, entrepreneur networks, and associations can help women. Interviewee 1 highlighted that such initiatives could help to grow entrepreneurship and support female business owners. Interviewee 3 demanded more associations to help with networking, exchange of experiences, and training. Interviewee 4 agreed that networking and exchange would be necessary.

Enabling a balance between paid and unpaid work can be a relevant measure to empower women. In this regard, Interviewee 2 believed that affordable childcare facilities would affect the decision of women to become entrepreneurs. Interviewee 3 claimed that household constraints have already decreased due to the availability of maids and preschools.

Furthermore, more inclusive protection and education on women's rights could be a measure of empowerment, as stated by Interviewee 1. Interviewees 2 and 4 verified an urgent need for social protection. Interviewee 3 added that strict laws to prevent sexual harassment in schools and workplaces could increase women's participation.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of women's economic empowerment and its impact on the rise of female entrepreneurship in Botswana emphasized the importance of WEE. It was found that Botswana has greater equality between genders than SSA overall. Likewise, in Botswana, gender development and human development, schooling, and gross national income were more favorable than, on average, in SSA. Botswana's situation in terms of the gender gap in gross national income was found to be severe. Women's participation in management positions seemed to be on the rise.

The entrepreneurship framework has potential for improvement in Botswana. The interviews confirmed challenging conditions, which, however, seem to improve. The significant barriers were identified as education, finance, and other resources, access to information, low ICT adoption, balancing work and family life, socio-cultural norms, a lack of safety and social protection, and a lack of support for the informal sector.

Based on the research outcome, the authors recommend the implementation and enforcement of the following empowering measures to enable women and female entrepreneurs:

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- The government should directly intervene in the labor market in Botswana, for instance, through tax advantages or female quotas;
 - Policies and more significant support for the informal sector are required to be enhanced, i.e., through better regulation of the sector, mentorship and support facilities, social protection, access to facilities, funding and education, access to business networks and technology;
 - Botswana must enable a constitutional, legal, and institutional reform as well as include more women in policy-making;
 - Botswana should review, adapt, strengthen, and enforce gender-responsive laws and policies;
 - Extended access to resources, assets, and institutions needs to be enabled. Botswanian authorities and institutions should also enhance information dissemination;
 - Botswana's authorities must guarantee female entrepreneurs' access to finance, micro-finance, and private funding institutions; institutions must implement simpler processes and supervise the distribution of funds; education towards financial literacy will be crucial;
 - Botswana must expand ICT adoption, promote digital inclusion, and provide ubiquitous access to electricity;
 - Initiatives and expenditures for targeted education and training programs for females must be implemented;
 - Gender-responsive macroeconomic policies shall be considered as a measure in Botswana;
 - The country must enable more extraordinary women's collective action and leadership, mentoring, entrepreneur networks, and associations;
 - The country's administrations shall help in educating citizens to shape socio-cultural norms and attitudes that benefit and empower women; men must be included in this movement;
 - A balance of paid and unpaid work shall be enabled through affordable and approved childcare facilities, nannies, and flexible work schemes;
 - More inclusive social protection needs to be offered to women.

The results of this research confirmed the authors' assumptions that women's economic empowerment impacts the emergence of female entrepreneurship in emerging markets. It was confirmed that there might be a strong connection between WEE and female entrepreneurship. The two concepts may be interrelated, and entrepreneurship can be a means of empowerment. Women entrepreneurship can elevate women's economic, financial, and social status and lead to gender equality. WEE was identified to be vital to creating successful entrepreneurs. As expected, the research further demonstrated that selected gender-specific policies and initiatives could influence the success of female entrepreneurs. The interviewees saw a significant benefit in previously mentioned empowerment measures.

Finally, it was found that promoting female entrepreneurship can positively affect Botswana's general economic progress. In addition, it was confirmed that women entrepreneurs could drive economic growth and development in Botswana. They create jobs, alleviate poverty, improve welfare, and stimulate innovation. WEE helps female business owners to sustain and grow their companies and contribute more to the country's GDP. Hence, WEE can lead to more wealth in society and foster sustainable growth and development.

The authors recommend further research on how socio-cultural norms can be shaped in the SADC region. In addition, additional research will be required to describe how greater access to finance can be enforced. Due to the significance of the informal sector, the authors suggest that future studies could address initiatives to support informal entrepreneurs explicitly. As a lack of political empowerment was recognized, future studies could address this issue. Furthermore, research on the promotion of greater digital inclusion will be beneficial. Finally, the authors recommend an investigation of the most effective gender-responsive laws and policies. It might be helpful to assess the laws and policies of prosperous nations in this regard.

Based on the findings, the authors believe that if Sub-Saharan African women entrepreneurs are empowered adequately, they transform into successful entrepreneurs and contribute to their nations' economic growth and sustainable development. WEE will be vital to shaping a prosperous future for currently disadvantaged females in Botswana.

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