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ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

# **Empowering Entrepreneurial Success Through the Development of Interpersonal Skills and Business Plans in Women Entrepreneurs**



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## **ABSTRACT**

*Women's entrepreneurial success can be achieved through the development of soft skills and the development of business plans to enhance business management skills. The study evaluated the impact of an entrepreneurial program focused on soft skills and business plan development through a pre-experimental methodology; a pre-and post-test was conducted on 28 women participants of the "Emprende Mujer" group over eight sessions. The main findings revealed a significant improvement in the soft skills of the women, as well as overcoming the lack of knowledge about the structure of a business plan, with a value of ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). In conclusion, the business program proved to be effective for women*

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*entrepreneurs in search of business sustainability. This study highlights the importance of acquiring soft skills through experience. At the same time, the creation and development of business plans require educational intervention by specialists, as a lack of knowledge in key areas such as marketing and operations can hinder the growth of ventures.*

**KEYWORDS:** *women, educational intervention, business plan, soft skills*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, entrepreneurship has become a key driver for the promotion of economic growth in different countries (Batz Liñeiro et al., 2024; Pécot et al., 2024), acting as a dynamic agent that creates and transforms opportunities by generating employment and contributing to economic progress (Ávila, 2021). Also, entrepreneurship has proven to be a force capable of offering innovative solutions to challenging social problems (Apostu & Gigauri, 2023; Morante et al., 2024). It is not limited by age, gender, origin, or level of education. What truly matters for those who have an entrepreneurial initiative is their ability to identify opportunities, take risks, and make strategic decisions to carry them out (Clark et al., 2023).

Women entrepreneurs face a variety of challenges in their business ventures; these challenges include limited access to financial resources, lack of entrepreneurial skills, social stereotypes, gender-based discrimination, geographic isolation from support networks, and specific obstacles related to family responsibilities and property rights (Abd & Hashim, 2023; Gashi et al., 2022; Hayati & Arini, 2023; Beulah, 2023). These challenges hinder women's ability to start and expand their businesses, limiting their economic well-being and contribution to society (Singh & Britto, 2022). However, women entrepreneurs also demonstrate resilience and find ways to overcome these challenges (Shiralashetti & Poojari, 2022).

The success of women-led ventures is significantly influenced by interpersonal skills and effective business planning (Umar et al., 2023). Studies indicate that improving interpersonal capabilities fosters collaboration, which is crucial for women's business performance (Tatasari, 2023), while interpersonal communication competence is vital for building effective business networks (Ajieh, 2023). Strategic planning provides greater performance benefits for women entrepreneurs, helping them overcome initial disadvantages (Prakash et al., 2023). Furthermore, women

who adopt connective leadership styles and focus on organizational design are more likely to succeed (Astuti et al., 2024), it is important to recognize that systemic barriers hinder women entrepreneurs, which may require external support and resources to overcome and achieve success.

Women entrepreneurs in Latin America face several challenges. These challenges include social and gender inequalities in the online environment, lack of digital skills, limited access to digital devices and infrastructure, dependence on support staff and family members, and concerns around security, safety, and work-life balance (Khoo et al., 2023). In addition, women in Latin America face exclusion from male spheres, job discrimination, lack of support, and family responsibilities, which limit their ability to start and grow businesses (Bátiz-Lazo & González-Correa, 2022; Flores-Novelo et al., 2021). In some countries, women may experience barriers related to family responsibilities, property ownership, and contracting (Anandhi, 2022). The social structure, influenced by the patriarchal and macho culture, shapes and determines gender relations in entrepreneurial activities carried out by women in Latin America (Rezaei & França, 2021). Uneven progress has been observed in different countries in terms of factors such as access to credit and financial services, institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks, and the promotion of entrepreneurship (Alecchi, 2020; Roper et al., 2020).

According to Ipsos Global Adviso (2022), Peru stands out globally as the fourth country with the highest number of entrepreneurs. However, the challenges are evident, since according to the report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2023) 25% of enterprises fail in the first year and 50% do not exceed four years in the market. This situation is mainly attributed to the lack of entrepreneurial training focused on skill-building and motivation (Rutti et al., 2021). Despite these challenges, there is a remarkable growth in women's participation in the entrepreneurial field, with approximately 8 out of 10 women participating in comprehensive training programs (Cámara de Comercio de Lima, 2020). However, it is concerning that only 14.4% of them receive adequate training in business management.

These data reflect an increasingly empowered society, with women capable of creating businesses, as pointed out by the Cámara de Comercio de Lima (2023). Despite this progress, the lack of training in business issues remains a barrier to launching and sustaining ventures over time. Therefore,

it is important to promote the creation of business programs that apply practical methodologies (Cirilo & Merino, 2019).

Given this situation, entrepreneurship education presents itself as a viable solution, because it is a comprehensive process that provides people with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives necessary to understand and meet the challenges of the business environment (Robbins & Mary, 2017). In addition, it fosters a continuous learning mentality, preparing individuals to face and learn from challenges (Senge, 2006). On the other hand, its practical application is very advantageous in the long term, as it allows companies to evolve, innovate, and adapt to the market (Bezgin et al., 2022). Therefore, for correct business training, it is essential to deal with related topics such as marketing, strategic management, decision-making, and leadership (García et al., 2023).

It is important to note that, despite the relevance of female entrepreneurship, there is an important gap in studies on entrepreneurship education. Many studies focus on entrepreneurial intention, limiting factors, and proposals to improve government policies. For this reason, this study aims to evaluate the impact of an entrepreneurship program focused on soft skills and business plans. In this way, it is expected to contribute to existing knowledge and develop effective strategies to promote female entrepreneurship and its sustainability, addressing a significant gap in research on entrepreneurship education. The study aims to provide crucial tools for women to overcome systemic barriers such as limited access to financial resources and gender discrimination. Evaluating the effectiveness of these programs can inform the design of more effective policies to support women's entrepreneurship, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem, and promoting the long-term sustainability and success of women-led businesses.

## **Basic Concepts and Related Literature**

Women's entrepreneurial success can be achieved through the development of soft skills and business plans as alternatives to the obstacles mentioned above (Efendi et al., 2024). Soft skills, such as communication, leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving, are crucial to improving entrepreneurship and enhancing competitiveness and productivity (Bhandari et al., 2024; Feranita et al., 2024). In addition, training and education play a vital role in the development of women entrepreneurs by increasing their

competence, efficiency, creativity, innovation, morale, confidence, skills, and knowledge (Efendi et al., 2024). It also highlights the importance of soft skills in female entrepreneurship programs, as they strengthen agency, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, leading to economic empowerment (Ognjenović, 2023). However, it is important to note that limited entrepreneurship training programs focused solely on technical skills may have limited success in improving the performance of women-led businesses (Sharma et al., 2023; Taskin et al., 2023).

Boosting the business success of women entrepreneurs can be achieved through the development of soft skills and business plans. Soft skills, such as self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, play a crucial role in enhancing the agency and economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs (Sayeed, 2023; Sawale & Karpe, 2019). Training and education are important in the development of women entrepreneurs, as they help increase competence, efficiency, creativity, innovation, and confidence (Ault et al., 2022; Bekbolat et al., 2022). In addition, business plans are essential for ideation development, baseline analysis, and business formalization, among other stages of business establishment and growth (Fetahu & Lekli, 2023). Subsequently, the development of soft skills and business plans can lead to better business results, including the adoption of effective business practices (Nade, 2022; Setiadi et al., 2021). However, it is important to keep in mind that the impact of training and education does not always align with expected performance levels, and the effects of soft skills training may vary between different groups, such as male and female entrepreneurs (Tem et al., 2020; Ubfal et al., 2020).

Women entrepreneurs can benefit from leveraging their social capital, acquiring new skills, building networks, and seeking support from policies and programs designed to address their specific needs (Anandhi, 2022; Venotha & Mariadoss, 2022). Policymakers and governments can play a crucial role in supporting these efforts by implementing targeted policy interventions, improving infrastructure, and creating investment opportunities in rural areas (Pantaleón et al., 2023, 2024; Theunissen, 2022). Company-wide involvement and a strong commitment from top management are necessary to achieve gender equality in organizations and leverage the talent of women entrepreneurs as a competitive advantage (Ntibane, 2022).

Research on educational interventions has explored areas such as emotional well-being, entrepreneurial traits, and attributes that influence

entrepreneurship. For example, a study by Chatterjee et al., (2022), evaluated the well-being of marginalized women participating in an entrepreneurial training program. The study highlighted that, while entrepreneurial programs are valuable, they are not guaranteed to succeed unless they focus on participants' well-being. Castro and Zermeño (2023) analyzed the entrepreneurial experiences of two women entrepreneurs, showing that business training programs should be oriented to publicize methodologies to scale a business and tools that facilitate the management of income, expenses, and profits. Similarly, Bhatti et al., (2021), in their study on the role of entrepreneurial education and training programs for university students, managed to identify psychological attributes such as self-confidence, tolerance, innovation, and motivation, which are essential for successful entrepreneurship.

Avnimelech and Rechter (2023) and Dams et al. (2022) conducted a study on business accelerators for female entrepreneurship, showing that low levels of entrepreneurial human capital, limited networks, low levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, low legitimacy in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and limited access to capital are the main barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Similarly, Mashapure et al. (2023) and Biney (2023) conducted a study showing that inadequate support of government plans, lack of business management knowledge, and role conflicts due to family pressures hinder the sustainability of female entrepreneurship.

### **Soft Skills Development**

The development of soft skills is an important aspect of higher education institutions and is being recognized by organizations and experts around the world (Rahate & Azmi, 2023). Institutions such as universities play a role in the development of soft skills through various initiatives such as clubs, associations, leadership roles, self-development books, videos, and training. (Mwita et al., 2023; Otache et al., 2024). Soft skills are considered essential for the professional development and socialization of people in socio-economic professions (Glazunova et al., 2022; Varhata et al., 2023). This training is crucial to meet the requirements of the labor market and the changing dynamics of the educational system (Nyiazova et al., 2023; Shvedova et al., 2022). In addition, soft skills, which include emotional intelligence, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and leadership, are important for students, workers, and managerial positions (Korniienko & Barchi, 2023). Soft skills also serve as a basis for developing higher-order

skills or meta-skills, which are necessary for lifelong learning and personal and professional growth (Rovenska et al., 2023; Zubenko & Ishchuk, 2022). In general, the development of soft skills is considered a key factor in improving entrepreneurial capabilities.

Soft skills are important for women's success in business (Tem et al., 2020) and studies have confirmed that career success is determined by soft skills (Allen, 2022; Bekbolat et al., 2022; Fetahu & Lekli, 2023; Suan-Chin, 2021). The development of soft skills, such as communication and management skills, is equally necessary for everyday life and work (Tripathy, 2021; Shvedova et al., 2022). Furthermore, in the context of female entrepreneurship, the development of interpersonal skills has been found to strengthen the capacity for action and have an impact on the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries (Ault et al., 2022; Zubenko & Ishchuk, 2022). Literature and lessons learned from the Mozambique-based social incubator MUVA have highlighted the importance of soft skills in female entrepreneurship programs to improve self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, which in turn strengthens agency (Rahim, 2023). Therefore, it can be concluded that soft skills development plays a crucial role in helping women succeed in business.

### **Business Management Through Business Plans**

Business plans are an integral part of women's business management strategy, where proper planning and well-grounded business plans reduce the risk of failure and vulnerability in business organizations (Gashi, 2015; Parvin, 2018). Women's economic power and purchasing power make them an important market segment for businesses to focus on (Bett & Gakobo, 2018). Successful women-owned small businesses in various industries, such as construction, rely on business planning strategies for sustainability and growth (Almira Syfa, 2023; Botezat, 2010). In addition, developing a successful business model for women's health also requires strategies, marketing approaches, and financial tools, which can be described in a business plan (Fay-Spina, 2017; Peake et al., 2018). Overall, business plans play a crucial role in guiding women entrepreneurs and organizations toward long-term success and achievement of their goals (Jones et al., 2002).

Business planning strategies are effective for women's entrepreneurial management (Ahmad et al., 2022; Mutabazi, 2023; Oyervides et al., 2021).

These strategies help women entrepreneurs in various ways, such as improving performance in small and medium enterprises (Yuniarto et al., 2022), prioritizing actions and decision-making (Biar & Akok, 2022), achieving sustainable development, and ensuring the longevity and growth of enterprises (Gashi, 2015). The use of business planning strategies involves elements such as setting clear goals and objectives, effective communication and teamwork, reliance on expertise, networking, and continuing education (Peake et al., 2018). By implementing these strategies, women-owned businesses can improve their performance, contribute to the local economy, promote job development, and foster positive community relations (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013).

## **Materials and Methods**

The research was applied, with a pre-experimental design and a mixed approach, allowing for a deeper exploration of the topic.

The study population consisted of 40 women belonging to the "*Emprende mujer*" group in the province of Chachapoyas; however, only 28 of them decided to participate in the business education program. This group is made up of women who are involved in gastronomy, beauty, imports, and other businesses.

A pre-test and post-test were applied with a single group; a survey was applied before and after the program to the participant population. In addition, each of the participants was accompanied during the execution of the program, to ensure compliance with all programmed activities, which were carried out personally. This design presents a weakness in terms of internal validity because it does not have a control group to make comparisons of presence and absence measurements (Campbell & Stanley, 1996). In addition, external variables cannot be controlled, which limits the generalization of the results to the accessible population and the target population (Ñaupas et al., 2018). Therefore, to minimize the risks of internal validity, the proposal of Campbell and Stanley (1996) was considered, as presented in Table 1.



*Table 1: Risk mitigation measures from a single-group pre-experimental study*

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Story	The most relevant events occur between the initial test and the final test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The duration of the program was 4 months, the sections were given every 15 days.</li> <li>• It is unlikely that the content of this program will be included in other educational activities because the group of women entrepreneurs was not part of another program or business incubator.</li> </ul>
Maturation	Participants over time experience the aging process and acquire knowledge and skills quite apart from the educational intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is unlikely that other entrepreneurial education events targeting the "Emprende Mujer" group will occur that could affect the results of this study.</li> </ul>
Instrumentation	There is a change in the instrument used in the study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was no change.</li> </ul>
Tests	The results are affected by the execution of the test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed consent from the women entrepreneurs in this study.</li> </ul>
Regression	The scores obtained by the participants may vary significantly from what was expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants who wished to collaborate in the study were evaluated and no selection was made.</li> </ul>

*Source: Authors' elaboration*

A questionnaire consisting of 30 items was used to collect information, distributed in two thematic areas: soft skills, corresponding to 9 items, and business plan, corresponding to 21 items. In addition, the most relevant sociodemographic data of the participants were collected, such as number of children, educational level, marital status, and others, to better understand and analyze the characteristics of the target population. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field.

## Application Procedure

Initially, a questionnaire was applied to evaluate the soft skills and knowledge about business plans of the women entrepreneurs. Subsequently, an entrepreneurial education program was implemented for 4 months. At the end of the educational intervention, a second application of the initial questionnaire was carried out to evaluate the impact of the program on the participants.

## Educational Intervention

The business education program consisted of 8 sessions, as detailed in Table 2; each session lasted approximately 2 to 3 hours and was taught by a specialist in management and business plan formulation. The sessions were conducted practically through the exemplification of cases to achieve a better understanding and keep the target audience entertained. In addition, they were aligned with the participants' businesses, including a round of questions every hour to clear their doubts.

*Table 2: Sessions of the educational intervention*

N° session	Business education session	Subtopics/Activities
1	Introduction, empower yourself as a woman through band skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness and welcome.</li> <li>• Empowerment and soft skills through dynamic games.</li> </ul>
2	Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canvas model.</li> </ul>
3	Business ideas and cases of successful ventures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork.</li> </ul>
4	Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal and external strategic analysis.</li> </ul>
5	Market analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply analysis and market research.</li> </ul>
6	Marketing Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic marketing, marketing strategies, and marketing mix.</li> </ul>
7	Organizational and human talent plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company formalization, business registration, and organization structure.</li> </ul>
8	Plan of operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service design, quality management, process strategy, location, infrastructure, opening</li> </ul>

N° session	Business education session	Subtopics/Activities
		hours, and equipment. • Survey application - ex-post evaluation. • Closing

*Source: The structure of the sessions was based on the book Practical Guide for the Elaboration of a Business Plan by Bóveda et al. (2015).*

## Data Analysis

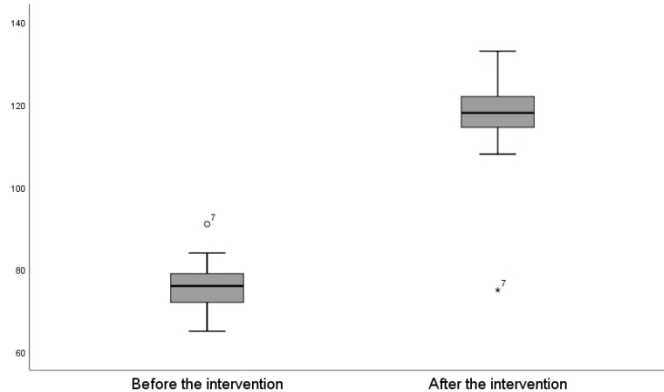
For data analysis, descriptive statistics were used, including the calculation of measures of central tendency and dispersion. Inferential statistics were also used to test the hypothesis and evaluate the significance of the results obtained (Gutiérrez & de la Vara, 2008). This analysis was carried out in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-SPSS 26 software, applying the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality and the Levene test for homogeneity of variances. Based on these results, a parametric analysis using the Student's t-test was used to evaluate the impact of the business program on women entrepreneurs by comparing means.

## Results

The results obtained after the educational intervention with women entrepreneurs are presented, evaluating the effectiveness of the business program.

After performing an analysis using the Student's t-test, it was determined that the entrepreneurship education program has had a highly significant impact on the development of entrepreneurial skills in women entrepreneurs ( $p = 0.02$ ). This finding is supported by the change observed in the measurements before and after the educational intervention. Before the program implementation, the median of entrepreneurial skills was 75.89 with a standard deviation of 28. Subsequently, after the intervention, this median increased significantly to 117, suggesting a substantial improvement in the participants' entrepreneurial skills. This considerable increase in post-intervention measures underscores the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship education program in strengthening the specific entrepreneurial competencies assessed in this study, thus highlighting its relevance in the development and empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

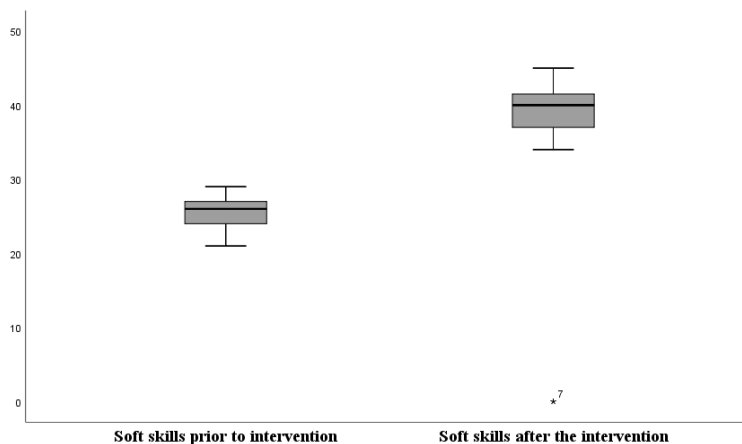
*Figure 1: Impact of the business education program on women entrepreneurs*



*Source: Authors' elaboration*

Increases in the average value of entrepreneurial competencies may reflect a higher level of confidence and capability among participants, which, in turn, could translate into real business success. For example, improved skills in areas such as time management, effective communication, and resilience can facilitate more informed decision-making and the ability to cope with challenges, which could result in increased sustainability and growth of their businesses.

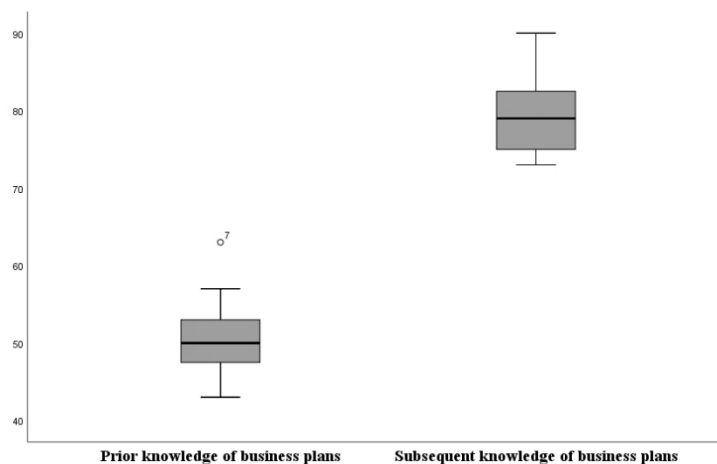
*Figure 2: Impact of the entrepreneurship education program on soft skills*



*Source: Authors' elaboration*

After performing an analysis using the Student's t-test, it is evident that the business education program has had a significant impact on the strengthening of soft skills in women entrepreneurs ( $p = 0.05$ ). This finding is supported by the change observed in the measurements before and after the educational intervention. Before the implementation of the program, the median of soft skills was 25.43; subsequently, after the intervention, this median increased to 38.07. Although the difference was not considerable, significant improvements were perceived. This suggests that, although the women entrepreneurs already possessed certain soft skills to face the challenges and obstacles presented, the program contributed to enhancing and improving these competencies. It is important to highlight that, despite the prior existence of soft skills, the educational intervention was able to generate additional improvements, which underscores the relevance and positive impact of the business education program on the integral development of women entrepreneurs.

*Figure 3: Impact of the entrepreneurship education program on business plan learning*



*Source: Authors' elaboration.*

After applying the Student's t-test, it was confirmed that the entrepreneurship education program had a highly significant impact on the learning of business plans in women entrepreneurs ( $p = 0.04$ ). This result is based on the change observed in the measurements before and after the educational intervention. Before the implementation of the program, the

median of business plan learning stood at 50.46; however, after the intervention, this median experienced a notable increase, reaching 79.11.

This demonstrates that educational interventions, especially those that employ examples and case studies, can spark interest and motivation for learning in women entrepreneurs committed to the development and success of their businesses. The practical approach of the program enabled participants to acquire solid knowledge directly applicable to their businesses. These results underscore the importance of collaboration between academia and the business sector to design effective educational programs that address the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, thus contributing to their training and empowerment in the business environment. Future research could benefit from larger sample sizes, diverse industry representation, and consideration of diverse socioeconomic contexts to provide more robust and broadly applicable conclusions. In addition, longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term impact of these educational interventions on women's entrepreneurial success and firm sustainability.

## **Discussion**

This study evaluated the impact of an educational intervention in entrepreneurship education designed to improve the entrepreneurial skills of a group of women entrepreneurs, resulting in a significant positive effect. This aligns with the study by Galvão et al. (2020), which supports the positive influence of entrepreneurship education and training programs on the development of entrepreneurial competencies and project creation in entrepreneurs of both genders in Portugal. Likewise, it is in agreement with Núñez-Canal et al. (2023), which also found a significant impact ( $p < 0.05$ ) of the entrepreneurship education program on high school students in Spain, showing improvements in their entrepreneurial potential. On the other hand, differences were found in the work of Vankov and Vankov (2023) who implemented a business education program for young Bulgarians, where a greater significant impact was observed in men compared to women. However, in our study, women showed the motivation needed to overcome challenges by learning business skills.

It also relates to Reyes-Aceves et al. (2023), research that demonstrated a positive impact of entrepreneurial programs on students, improving their entrepreneurial competencies. Also, Olutuase et al. (2023) ensure that the

content of entrepreneurship education in the African context influences entrepreneurial skills ( $p < 0.001$ ) beyond the institutional setting. Those results reinforce the idea that the content of each entrepreneurial program should be tailored to the context and specific needs of each target group. In this case, our study was custom-designed to address the particular needs of the group of women entrepreneurs, which may explain the good results obtained, highlighting the relevance of generating entrepreneurial programs that fit the reality and unique characteristics of entrepreneurs.

There are also similarities with Xu et al. (2023), who state that business education has a significant influence on entrepreneurial intention ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, in our study, we did not observe an improvement in entrepreneurial intention, since the women participants already had an established venture, so our focus was on improving their skills to grow their existing businesses. Finally, we agree with Ouragini and Lakhali (2023), who affirm that an entrepreneurial education program aimed at master's students contributes to entrepreneurial intention, but they have the disadvantage of not having entrepreneurial experience. However, our study focused on women who, while they may not have had the necessary education, did have experience. Therefore, we aimed to address their knowledge gaps in the entrepreneurial field.

Regarding the impact on the soft skills of the women entrepreneurs, a minimal increase was observed as they already had a certain level of strengthening in these skills. It is important to note that soft skills are learned through experience and do not necessarily require the intervention of a specialist. In addition, the participants during the pandemic faced obstacles that allowed them to strengthen their soft skills. These results are similar to those found by Reyes-Aceves et al. (2023), who stated that an entrepreneurship education program aimed at students in Mexico helped strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset, focusing on soft skills such as self-confidence, persuasion, communication, conflict management, and goal setting. We also agree with Estrellado et al. (2023), who found that a business intervention through games had a positive impact on the social skills of workers in Ethiopia.

Regarding the learning of business plan development, a significant impact was found since, unlike soft skills, the knowledge of business plan development requires the teaching of a specialist. In addition, it is important to note that there is a paucity of studies on educational interventions that have focused on teaching business plans. However, there are studies of

analysis and literature reviews in this regard. One of them is the work of Dal et al. (2023), where they claim that business plans are a tool for the creation of start-ups, based on an analysis of 40 cases that contribute to the understanding of innovation management and entrepreneurship education as a source of knowledge. Some studies emphasize planning as part of the business plan, as is the case of Pyliavets et al. (2023), who identified that effective business planning has a significant impact on the development of a business in Ukraine, and also allows the development of strategic plans to evaluate the necessary resources, such as financial, human, and material resources.

Abidin (2021), analyzed the *PELAKU UMKM DI KECAMATAN* business plan in Indonesia, stating that detailed planning is necessary when starting a business, as it facilitates the assessment of business shortcomings. Another study by Rizal (2021) indicates that entrepreneurship among university students in the UK is influenced by competition in business planning. Finally, Kirik et al. (2022), in their literature see deficiencies in the planning processes and the quality of business plans in Ukraine, emphasizing that high-quality business plans are crucial for effective business operations and attracting investors.

## **Conclusion**

There are several studies focused on business competencies and entrepreneurial intention, directed at students of both genders and very few at entrepreneurs. Therefore, our findings fill a gap in the existing literature focused on women in entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurship education program has proven to be effective in strengthening soft skills and knowledge in business plan development in a group of women entrepreneurs seeking business sustainability. This demonstrates the effectiveness of educational interventions focused on the needs of the study group.

Soft skills are acquired mainly through experience and facing challenges. However, training focused on crisis management, adaptation to adverse situations, effective communication, time management, and resilience are determining factors that allow the creation of spaces for interaction and learning, thus fostering the exchange of experiences among entrepreneurs.



Effective educational programs for women entrepreneurs should incorporate case studies, interactive sessions, and experienced facilitators, along with applied workshops that allow learning to be adapted to a variety of contexts. This hands-on approach has proven to increase interest and motivation, enabling participants to acquire knowledge directly applicable to their businesses. Collaboration between academia and the business sector is crucial to designing programs that address the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, contributing to their empowerment. Future research should consider larger, more diverse samples and incorporate longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of these interventions on the success and sustainability of women's entrepreneurship.

One obstacle for women entrepreneurs is a lack of basic knowledge about the structure of a business plan; they often confuse sales with marketing and are unfamiliar with the ways to position or improve the permanence of their business. Therefore, educational interventions focused on business plan development are essential to support business growth and sustainability.

This study faced several limitations. First, full participation of the "Emprende Mujer" group was not achieved as some participants did not provide consent. Additionally, coordinating session dates represented another challenge, since on several occasions it was necessary to adjust them to ensure the attendance of the 28 women who consented. For this purpose, a vote was conducted in the WhatsApp group to determine the most convenient date for the majority of participants.

The absence of a control group in this study limits the ability to fully evaluate the impact of the educational intervention. If a control group had been included, the results could have shown significant differences, allowing for a clearer comparison between those who received the training and those who did not. For future research, it would be advisable to establish a control group and ensure informed consent from all participants. Additionally, exploring alternative methods to encourage participation could provide a more complete and robust picture of the effectiveness of interventions. These methodological improvements would allow for a more robust analysis and deeper understanding of the specific effects of the program on the skills and knowledge of women entrepreneurs.

It is important to note that the relatively small sample of this study limits the generalizability of these results to a broader population of female entrepreneurs. Therefore, new studies with larger and more diverse samples

are recommended to validate the effectiveness of these interventions in a broader context. Specifically, the implementation of longitudinal studies would be valuable to measure the long-term impact of such programs on the practical application of the knowledge acquired and the real growth of the ventures. These studies could examine indicators such as sales growth, business expansion, job creation, and financial sustainability over time, thus providing a more complete and meaningful assessment of the program's effectiveness on companies' business success and entrepreneurial women.

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