BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg
BG PULSE JOURNAL

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND TRADITIONAL VALUES ON THE FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF A BUSINESSWOMAN

Uzakova Gulmira Xalmurzaevna
Family and Gender Research Institute
1st year PhD student
gulmira19129@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20422401

Abstract. The image of a businesswoman is shaped not only by education, talent, and market opportunities, but also by the family environment in which a woman lives and works. Family relationships influence access to emotional support, time, finance, networks, and legitimacy, while traditional values define what kinds of female behavior are considered acceptable, respectable, or desirable in society. As a result, the image of a businesswoman is formed at the intersection of economic agency and socio-cultural expectations. Recent international research and policy analysis show that women's entrepreneurship is still strongly affected by care responsibilities, gender stereotypes, institutional barriers, and social norms, even where formal legal equality has expanded.

Keywords: businesswoman image, women's entrepreneurship, family environment, gender stereotypes, social norms, socio-cultural expectations, economic agency, care responsibilities, institutional barriers, social legitimacy.

Аннотация. Образ деловой женщины формируется не только под влиянием образования, таланта и рыночных возможностей, но и под воздействием семейной среды, в которой женщина живёт и работает. Семейные отношения влияют на доступ к эмоциональной поддержке, времени, финансам, социальным связям и общественной легитимности, тогда как традиционные ценности определяют, какие формы женского поведения считаются в обществе приемлемыми, уважаемыми и желательными. В результате образ деловой женщины складывается на пересечении экономической субъектности и социокультурных ожиданий. Современные международные исследования и аналитические материалы показывают, что женское предпринимательство по-прежнему в значительной степени зависит от обязанностей по уходу, гендерных стереотипов, институциональных барьеров и социальных норм, даже в условиях расширения формального правового равенства.

Ключевые слова: образ деловой женщины, женское предпринимательство, семейная среда, гендерные стереотипы, социальные нормы, социокультурные ожидания, экономическая субъектность, обязанности по уходу, институциональные барьеры, социальная легитимность.

Annotatsiya. Ishbilarmon ayol obrazi nafaqat ta'lim, iste'dod va bozor imkoniyatlari, balki ayol yashab va faoliyat yuritayotgan oilaviy muhit ta'sirida ham shakllanadi. Oilaviy munosabatlar hissiy qo'llab-quvvatlash, vaqt, moliyaviy resurslar, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar va ijtimoiy legitimlikka kirish imkoniyatiga ta'sir ko'rsatadi, an'anaviy qadriyatlar esa jamiyatda ayollarning qanday xulq-atvori maqbul, hurmatli va ma'qul deb baholanishini belgilaydi. Natijada ishbilarmon ayol obrazi iqtisodiy faollik va sotsiokultural kutilmalar kesishgan nuqtada shakllanadi. So'nggi xalqaro tadqiqotlar va siyosiy-tahliliy materiallar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ayollar tadbirkorligi, hatto formal

huquqiy tenglik kengaygan sharoitda ham, parvarish majburiyatlari, gender stereotiplari, institutsional to‘siqlar va ijtimoiy me’yorlar ta’sirida qolmoqda.

Kalit so‘zlar: ishbilarmon ayol obrazi, ayollar tadbirkorligi, oilaviy muhit, gender stereotiplari, ijtimoiy me’yorlar, sotsiokultural kutilmalar, iqtisodiy faollik, parvarish majburiyatlari, institutsional to‘siqlar, ijtimoiy legitimlik.

Introduction

In modern society, the businesswoman is increasingly seen as a symbol of initiative, leadership, resilience, and economic independence. Yet this image does not emerge in a social vacuum. It develops within a specific cultural setting where family ties, moral expectations, and inherited norms continue to shape women’s choices and public reputation. For many women, entrepreneurship is not simply a market activity; it is also a social negotiation between professional ambition and expectations related to marriage, motherhood, caregiving, modesty, and family honor. International policy and research sources consistently show that women’s business participation is influenced by a mix of structural and cultural factors, including unpaid care work, access to finance, safety, legal protections, and the broader gender climate of society[1].

This makes the study of family relationships and traditional values especially important. Family may act as a platform of encouragement, trust, and resource sharing, but it may also operate as a mechanism of restriction when women’s independence is perceived as a challenge to established gender roles. In the same way, traditional values may preserve discipline, responsibility, and social solidarity, yet they can also reproduce stereotypes that define business leadership as a masculine domain. A systematic review of women’s entrepreneurship research identifies cultural expectations, social barriers, and family-related constraints as persistent themes across countries and contexts[2].

Family Relationships as a Factor in the Formation of a Businesswoman’s Image. Family relationships are one of the earliest and most influential social environments in which a woman’s self-perception, aspirations, and public role are formed. Before she becomes visible in the market, she is already being positioned within a network of expectations about care, obedience, responsibility, and achievement. For this reason, the image of a businesswoman is not shaped only by education, income, or managerial ability. It is also shaped by whether the family recognizes entrepreneurship as a legitimate form of women’s self-realization. Recent OECD analysis shows that women remain less likely than men to engage in entrepreneurial activity and are more likely to report barriers linked to perceived capability and fear of failure, which indicates that confidence and social validation remain central to women’s entry into business.

When family relationships are supportive, they do far more than “help” in a general sense. They provide emotional encouragement, stabilize risk-taking, reduce social anxiety, and create a sense that business activity is morally acceptable rather than socially questionable. A supportive family may also contribute practical resources such as childcare, help with household tasks, informal labor, start-up financing, customer referrals, and access to trusted social networks. In such cases, the woman’s entrepreneurial role is not seen as a disruption of family order but as an extension of family advancement, dignity, and collective mobility. Evidence reviewed by the World Bank shows that support programs for women entrepreneurs are more effective when they

[1] https://www.facebook.com/worldbank/posts/the-women-business-and-the-law-2024-report-analyzes-not-only-the-pace-of-legal-r/1003919525109024
[2] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08985626.2023.2189314

integrate household constraints and include wraparound services such as childcare support or even joint sessions with spouses around enterprise and domestic responsibilities[3].

At the symbolic level, support within the family strengthens the public image of the businesswoman. It allows her to appear not merely as a woman who earns income, but as a competent, reliable, and socially respected actor. This matters especially in communities where entrepreneurship is judged through moral and relational standards as much as through profit. Family approval can function as a mechanism of legitimacy: it protects a woman from stigma, reduces reputational risk, and makes her business role more acceptable to relatives, neighbors, clients, and local institutions. In this sense, the family acts as a bridge between the private and public spheres, translating entrepreneurial activity into a socially recognized identity. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that family emotional support has a significant positive relationship with women's entrepreneurial success.

However, family relationships can also restrict the formation of a strong entrepreneurial image. In households governed by rigid gender norms, women are often expected to prioritize unpaid domestic labor, caregiving, and relational harmony above business development. Under such conditions, entrepreneurship may be tolerated only if it does not challenge male authority, disturb household routines, or require high public visibility. As a result, women may confine their activities to small-scale, home-based, or informal sectors that are socially acceptable but economically limited. The World Bank's review of support for growth-oriented women entrepreneurs notes that household constraints are often insufficiently addressed and that wider community acceptance can matter for whether women's entrepreneurship gains legitimacy[4].

This restrictive environment affects not only business performance but also image formation. A woman may possess the skills, ambition, and discipline needed for entrepreneurship, yet still be perceived as "too ambitious," "neglectful," or "improperly independent" if her family and community interpret economic autonomy as a threat to traditional care roles. In that situation, her entrepreneurial identity becomes fragile: she may be economically active but socially under-recognized. OECD findings on women's lower entrepreneurial participation and greater fear of failure can be read, in part, through this social lens, because confidence is not formed in isolation but within a structure of approval, judgment, and expectation(table-1).

Table-1

How family relationships shape the image of a businesswoman

Dimension of family relationships	Supportive form	Restrictive form	Effect on the image of a businesswoman
Emotional climate	Encouragement, trust, respect for ambition	Criticism, doubt, fear of social judgment	Builds or weakens confidence and public self-presentation
Division of domestic labor	Shared household and childcare responsibilities	Woman carries the main unpaid care burden	Expands or limits time, mobility, and business visibility
Financial attitude	Family accepts investment and risk-	Business spending seen as unsafe or	Strengthens or undermines entrepreneurial legitimacy

[3] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/301891468327585460/pdf/92210-REPLACEMENT-Supporting-Growth-Oriented-Women-Entrepreneurs-A-Review-of-the-Evidence-and-Key-Challenge.pdf
[4] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-missing-entrepreneurs-2021_71b7a9bb-en.html

	taking	unnecessary	
Moral interpretation of women's work	Business viewed as contribution to family welfare	Business viewed as neglect of "proper" female duties	Produces either social respectability or reputational vulnerability
Spousal relationship	Negotiation, cooperation, joint planning	Control, permission-based decision making	Affects autonomy, decision speed, and leadership image
Social capital and networks	Access to relatives, mentors, customers, referrals	Social isolation or limited external interaction	Shapes market entry and public recognition
Visibility of enterprise	Woman encouraged to lead publicly	Woman pushed toward low-visibility or home-based work	Determines whether she is seen as a real entrepreneur or only a supplementary earner
Intergenerational norms	Family supports education, initiative, and innovation	Family reproduces rigid traditional role expectations	Influences long-term entrepreneurial identity formation

Therefore, family relationships should be understood not simply as a background variable but as a constitutive factor in the formation of a businesswoman's image. They shape how enterprise is interpreted: as contribution or rebellion, as responsibility or self-centeredness, as dignity or deviance. Where the family frames women's entrepreneurship as a valuable social and economic contribution, the image of the businesswoman becomes stable, respectable, and publicly legitimate. Where the family frames it as a deviation from traditional femininity, that image remains contested even when the business itself performs well. The image of a businesswoman is thus socially constructed through everyday interaction among family norms, emotional support, care obligations, and community recognition.

Traditional Values and Their Dual Influence. Traditional values have a dual effect on the formation of the businesswoman's image. On one hand, they may strengthen important entrepreneurial qualities such as diligence, self-discipline, intergenerational responsibility, thrift, and commitment to family welfare. In many societies, women enter business not only for self-realization but also to support household stability, children's education, or family continuity. In this sense, traditional values can become a motivational resource that gives entrepreneurship moral legitimacy. Global entrepreneurship research has repeatedly shown that women's enterprise is closely tied to household realities and social context, rather than to purely individual market calculation.

On the other hand, traditional values can narrow the acceptable image of a businesswoman. A woman may be expected to be productive but not too visible, competent but not too assertive, financially active but still primarily responsible for unpaid care. In this model, society may welcome women's entrepreneurship only when it does not disturb the symbolic hierarchy of gender roles. This tension is reflected in current international policy debates, where women remain disadvantaged in business creation because of intertwined barriers related to norms, self-confidence, finance, and institutional support[5].

For this reason, traditional values should not be treated as either wholly negative or wholly positive. Their real impact depends on interpretation. When values are reinterpreted in ways that

[5] https://scholarworks.smith.edu/conway_research/4/

recognize women's leadership, intellect, and economic contribution, they can reinforce a dignified and socially rooted image of the businesswoman. When they are interpreted rigidly, they can confine women to symbolic respectability without granting full professional authority. The central issue is therefore not tradition itself, but whether tradition is used to expand women's recognized social roles or to restrict them[6].

Unpaid Care Work and Public Entrepreneurial Identity. One of the strongest mechanisms linking family life to women's entrepreneurial image is unpaid care work. International evidence continues to show that women and girls perform a disproportionate share of unpaid care work globally, which directly affects the time, energy, flexibility, and public visibility needed for business development. UN Women and the ILO both emphasize that care work is not a private issue alone; it is a structural condition that shapes women's economic opportunities and long-term empowerment[7].

This has important implications for image formation. A businesswoman's public image is often judged through visibility, networking, travel, leadership, and consistency. Yet care burdens may reduce participation in trainings, meetings, professional associations, and expansion opportunities. As a result, many women are active economically but remain under-recognized as entrepreneurs. Their work is often interpreted as "supplementary" rather than strategic, even when it sustains households and communities. Recent World Bank work also underscores that formal legal progress must be matched by supportive measures and implementation conditions if women are to participate fully in economic life(table-2).

Table.-2

Unpaid care work and public entrepreneurial identity

Analytical dimension	How unpaid care work operates	Effect on a woman's entrepreneurial activity	Effect on public entrepreneurial identity	Broader sociological implication
Time poverty	Daily caregiving, domestic labor, and household coordination consume hours that could otherwise be used for business planning, training, travel, or client relations	Slower business entry, weaker expansion capacity, and limited participation in formal support programs	The businesswoman appears less visible, less available, and less "fully committed," even when she is productive	Entrepreneurial success becomes evaluated through male-coded standards of uninterrupted availability
Restricted mobility	Care obligations reduce freedom to attend meetings, fairs, networking events, and institutional	Fewer market connections, weaker partnerships, and lower access to mentors or	Her enterprise may remain socially invisible because recognition often depends on	Social recognition is structured not only by merit but by access to public space

[6] https://www.oecd.org/en/events/2024/01/womens-entrepreneurship-policy-recent-innovations-and-future-directions-for-oecd-governments.html

[7] https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/07/a-toolkit-on-paid-and-unpaid-care-work

	programs	investors	public presence	
Interrupted continuity	Unpaid care work creates fragmented work rhythms and frequent interruptions	Business operations may remain small-scale, irregular, or concentrated in low-growth sectors	The entrepreneur may be perceived as "part-time" or "supplementary," not strategic	Informal judgments about seriousness are shaped by gendered household expectations
Home-based concentration	Women often choose or are pushed into home-based or near-home business models to reconcile care and income generation	This can preserve income generation but may limit scale, branding, and formalization	The entrepreneur is seen as an extension of the household rather than an independent economic actor	The boundary between domestic femininity and market participation remains blurred
Symbolic downgrading of women's work	Because care work is unpaid and normalized, women's paid enterprise may also be culturally undervalued	Profitable or resilient businesses may still be treated as "helping the family" rather than leading an enterprise	Public identity shifts from "business leader" to "supportive woman" or "family helper"	Economic contribution is filtered through gender norms before it becomes public status
Reduced institutional access	Care burdens limit time for licensing, finance applications, training, incubators, and formal registration processes	Women may stay in informal or low-support business environments	Informality reduces legitimacy, visibility, and recognition by institutions and markets	Policy access is socially stratified by caregiving burdens, not only by legal eligibility
Emotional and cognitive overload	Constant responsibility for dependents produces stress, fatigue, and role conflict	Decision-making, risk-taking, and long-term strategic planning may weaken	Public confidence may be underestimated because exhaustion is misread as lack of leadership capacity	"Confidence" is often socially produced, not merely individual psychology
Dependence on family support arrangements	Access to childcare, eldercare, transport help, or emotional support shapes whether	With support, women can pursue growth; without it, business remains fragile and defensive	Supportive arrangements normalize the image of the businesswoman; absence of	Entrepreneurial identity is relationally produced within family and community

	entrepreneurship can be sustained		support makes her image appear exceptional or unstable	structures
Public/private role conflict	Women are often expected to excel in business without appearing to neglect care roles	They may self-limit ambition to avoid moral criticism or family tension	A successful entrepreneur may still be judged as "too ambitious" or insufficiently family-oriented	Public image is negotiated through moral expectations, not only market outcomes
Need for enabling care infrastructure	Childcare, flexible services, safe transport, and responsive institutions reduce the burden-care conflict	Greater continuity, stronger market participation, and higher chances of growth and formalization	Businesswomen become more visible, legitimate, and socially normalized rather than treated as rare exceptions	A strong entrepreneurial image depends on social infrastructure, not motivation alone

Therefore, the formation of a strong businesswoman image requires more than motivational discourse. It requires social arrangements that reduce the conflict between entrepreneurship and caregiving. Where childcare, flexible support systems, safety, and fair institutional access are weak, the image of the businesswoman remains individualized and exceptional. Where such supports exist, women's entrepreneurship becomes normalized, visible, and socially legitimate[8].

The Businesswoman's Image as a Negotiated Social Identity. The image of a businesswoman should be understood as a negotiated social identity. It is formed through everyday interaction between self-perception, family approval, cultural expectations, and institutional opportunity. A woman does not become publicly recognized as a business leader only because she opens a business. She becomes recognized when her competence is socially interpreted as legitimate, valuable, and compatible with accepted moral frameworks. That is why women entrepreneurs often work not only to build a business, but also to justify their presence in business. This broader pattern is consistent with research showing that women's entrepreneurship is shaped by social barriers and identity-related expectations, not merely by access to capital[9].

In practical terms, a strong and sustainable image of a businesswoman emerges where three conditions are present. First, family relationships provide emotional and practical legitimacy. Second, traditional values are interpreted in a way that recognizes women's agency rather than limiting it. Third, institutions reduce structural barriers tied to care, finance, and opportunity. When these three dimensions align, the businesswoman is no longer viewed as an exception to social norms, but as a normal and valued participant in social and economic development.

Conclusion. The influence of family relationships and traditional values on the formation of the image of a businesswoman is deep and multidimensional. Family may function as a source of confidence, legitimacy, and resources, but it may also reproduce control, dependency, and role limitations. Traditional values may inspire responsibility and social purpose, yet they may also

[8] https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/07/a-toolkit-on-paid-and-unpaid-care-work
[9] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08985626.2023.2189314

confine women within narrow expectations. The image of a businesswoman is therefore not simply an economic category; it is a socio-cultural construction shaped by the interaction of household life, gender norms, and institutional conditions.

A modern understanding of the businesswoman should move beyond the false choice between family and enterprise. The stronger model is one in which entrepreneurial activity is recognized as compatible with dignity, family responsibility, and cultural continuity. For that to happen, societies need not only successful women entrepreneurs, but also supportive families, adaptive interpretations of tradition, and institutions that reduce the unequal burden of care and opportunity. Only then can the image of a businesswoman become stable, respected, and socially inclusive.

References

1. Aldrich, H. E., & Cliff, J. E. (2003). *The pervasive effects of family on entrepreneurship: Toward a family embeddedness perspective*. *Journal of Business Venturing, 18*(5), 573–596.
2. Brush, C. G., de Bruin, A., & Welter, F. (2009). *A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship*. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, 1*(1), 8–24.
3. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. (2024). *Women's Entrepreneurship Report 2023/2024*. London/Boston: GEM.
4. International Labour Organization. (2018). *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*. Geneva: ILO.
5. International Labour Organization. (2022). *Care at Work: Investing in Care Leave and Services for a More Gender Equal World of Work*. Geneva: ILO.
6. Jennings, J. E., & Brush, C. G. (2013). *Research on women entrepreneurs: Challenges to (and from) the broader entrepreneurship literature*. *The Academy of Management Annals, 7*(1), 663–715.
7. Jennings, J. E., & McDougald, M. S. (2007). *Work-family interface and entrepreneurship: An integrated review and research agenda*. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(3), 747–760.
8. OECD. (2023). *The Missing Entrepreneurs 2023: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
9. OECD. (n.d.). *Unpaid Care Work: The Missing Link in the Analysis of Gender Gaps in Labour Outcomes*. Paris: OECD.
10. UN Women. (2019). *Progress of the World's Women 2019–2020: Families in a Changing World*. New York: UN Women.
11. UN Women & United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2024). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024*. New York: UN Women and UN DESA.
12. UNDP. (2023). *2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI): Breaking Down Gender Biases*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
13. UNICEF. (2019). *Family-Friendly Policies: Redesigning the Workplace of the Future*. New York: UNICEF.
14. World Bank. (2026). *Women, Business and the Law 2026*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
15. World Economic Forum. (2025). *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.