




Estudio de factibilidad de programas de capacitación para mujeres de Fundación Avanzar en Cuenca, Ecuador.

*Feasibility study of training programs for women of Fundación Avanzar in
Cuenca, Ecuador.*

- ¹ Daniela Angelica Tepan Cochancela  <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0407-4920>
Catholic University of Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador.
daniela.tepan.77@est.ucacue.edu.ec
- ² Edwin Joselito Vasquez Erazo  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9817-6773>
Catholic University of Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador.
Evasqueze@ucacue.edu.ec
- ³ Jorge Edwin Ormaza Andrade  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5449-1042>
Catholic University of Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador.
jormaza@ucacue.edu.ec



Scientific and Technological Research Article

Sent: 03/13/2024

Revised: 11/04/2024

Accepted: 05/08/2024

Published: 05/06/2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33262/concienciadigital.v7i2.1.3035>

Please
quote:

Tepan Cochancela, DA, Vasquez Erazo, EJ, & Ormaza Andrade, JE (2024). Feasibility study of training programs for women of the Avanzar Foundation in Cuenca, Ecuador. *ConcienciaDigital*, 7(2.1), 26-47. <https://doi.org/10.33262/concienciadigital.v7i2.1.3035>



DIGITAL CONSCIOUSNESS, and It is a multidisciplinary, quarterly journal, which will be published electronically. Its mission is to contribute to the training of competent professionals with a humanistic and critical vision who are capable of presenting their research and scientific results to the same extent that their intervention promotes positive changes in society. <https://concienciadigital.org>

The journal is published by Editorial Ciencia Digital (a prestigious publisher registered with the Ecuadorian Book Chamber with membership number 663). www.celibro.org.ec

This journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. Copy of the license: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Palabras claves:

Programas de capacitación, estudio de factibilidad, Educación de la mujer, Capacitación, Empoderamiento, Desarrollo socioeconómico

Keywords:

Training Programs, Feasibility Study, Women's Education, Training,

Resumen

Introducción: La evaluación de la efectividad de los programas de capacitación para mujeres, como los de la Fundación Avanzar es crucial para empoderar a las beneficiarias y garantizar el éxito de sus emprendimientos. Este estudio busca establecer la eficacia de estos programas, abordando una variedad amplia de temas de importancia para los emprendimientos femeninos y asegurando una toma de decisiones adecuada. **Objetivo:** Evaluar la viabilidad de los programas de capacitación para mujeres de la Fundación Avanzar en Cuenca, Ecuador, con el fin de mejorar sus habilidades, competencias y oportunidades en el desarrollo personal y profesional. **Metodología:** Se empleó un diseño de investigación no experimental de naturaleza transversal y descriptiva, combinando técnicas cualitativas y cuantitativas. Se analizó una muestra de 70 mujeres emprendedoras beneficiarias del periodo 2023, evaluando la satisfacción, el impacto en los emprendimientos y las preferencias de capacitación. **Resultados:** Los programas recibieron altas calificaciones de satisfacción, especialmente en áreas como Comercialización y Patronaje. La capacitación demostró un impacto significativo en el mejoramiento de los emprendimientos, con una reducción notable en la tasa de fracasos en los emprendimientos entre las participantes capacitadas. La preferencia de las mujeres se inclina hacia cursos mixtos que abarcan habilidades técnicas, desarrollo personal y gestión de emprendimientos. **Conclusiones:** Los programas de capacitación implementados son efectivos para mejorar las habilidades y el éxito de los emprendimientos femeninos. Sin embargo, se identificaron obstáculos como la falta de apoyo y el temor al fracaso. Se recomienda adaptar los programas para satisfacer las necesidades cambiantes de las emprendedoras. **Área de estudio general:** Economía. **Área de estudio específica:** Evaluación de Proyectos

Abstract

Introduction: The evaluation of the effectiveness of training programs for women, such as those of the Fundación Avanza, is crucial to empower beneficiaries and ensure the success of their enterprises. This study seeks to establish the effectiveness

Empowerment,
Socio-Economic
Development

of these programs, addressing a wide variety of issues of importance for women's entrepreneurship and ensuring adequate decision-making. Objective: To evaluate the viability of the training programs for women of the Fundación Avanzar in Cuenca, Ecuador, in order to improve their skills, competencies and opportunities in personal and professional development. Methodology: We used a nonexperimental research design of transversal and descriptive nature, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. A sample of 70 female entrepreneurs benefiting from the 2023 period was analyzed, evaluating satisfaction, impact on entrepreneurship and training preferences. Results: The programs received high satisfaction ratings, especially in areas such as Marketing and Patronage. The training demonstrated a significant impact on the improvement of the enterprises, with a notable reduction in the rate of failures in the enterprises among the trained participants. The preference for women is for mixed courses covering technical skills, personal development and entrepreneurship management. Conclusions: The training programs implemented are effective in improving the skills and success of women's enterprises. However, obstacles such as lack of support and fear of failure were identified. It is recommended that programs be adapted to meet the changing needs of women entrepreneurs.

Introduction

Evaluating the effectiveness of training programs aimed at women, such as those implemented by the Avanzar Foundation in Cuenca, is essential to enhance their impact and ensure the empowerment of beneficiaries. Through this study, we seek to establish the effectiveness of the programs implemented in a structured manner, covering a broader variety of topics of need and importance for women's entrepreneurship. In addition, we seek to ensure correct decision-making and accountability to donors. In the social and economic fabric of Cuenca, Ecuador, gender equality and women's empowerment emerge as unavoidable imperatives for sustainable progress. In this context, the Avanzar Foundation stands as a factor of change, committed to strengthening women's capabilities and promoting their active participation in all areas of society. Training, understood as a

continuous process of acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies, is a fundamental tool for the personal and professional development of women. However, in many cases, the training opportunities accessible to this segment of the population are limited or non-existent, thus perpetuating gender inequalities and hindering their full realization.

This article presents an overview of the problem addressed, as well as a detailed description of the proposed methodology to carry out the feasibility study. It also outlines the specific objectives that will guide the research, as well as the importance and possible impacts of implementing training programs for women in Cuenca, Ecuador. Ultimately, this study is expected to constitute a solid starting point for the development of strategies and concrete actions that contribute to the construction of a more equitable and prosperous society for all its members. (Palacios, 2024; Ayala & Méndez, 2021).

In this context, this study aims to explore the viability and relevance of training programs designed specifically for women, with the support and guidance of the Avanzar Foundation. Through an exhaustive analysis of local needs, resources and potential, it seeks to identify priority areas of intervention and design effective strategies that contribute to the empowerment and comprehensive development of women in Cuenca.

This study aims to evaluate the feasibility of implementing training programs aimed at women in order to improve their skills, competencies and opportunities for personal and professional development, which will allow identifying areas of interest and needs, as well as possible improvements, in order to optimize resources and increase the effectiveness of existing programs, especially adapting them to the specific needs of the female population in Cuenca.

The theoretical framework of the study is based on the practical experience of the Avanzar Foundation in the economic empowerment of women, as well as research and theories related to education, entrepreneurship, gender equality and social impact, including contributions from the United Nations (UN). This combination provides a broad context for understanding the needs and challenges of women in their quest for financial independence. In addition, information on market research and data collection techniques is incorporated, offering methodological tools to address the objectives of the study in a well-founded and relevant manner. In accordance with what was explained in previous sections, this research study will answer the following research question: To what extent do the training programs for women of the Avanzar Foundation in Cuenca, Ecuador meet the requirements to significantly increase the level of knowledge acquired by the beneficiaries?

Theoretical foundation

Training programs

The implementation of training programs aimed at women is not only a matter of gender equity, but also an essential strategy to boost economic and social development. These programs not only benefit the trained women, but also generate a positive impact on their entire family. Education is crucial to overcome certain social prejudices because it is a powerful tool to ensure that women have the same educational, labor, political, social and cultural rights as men. However, the characteristics of each society vary and the difficulties in closing gender gaps vary. To understand the importance of education, it is necessary to start from the correct meaning of it. In addition, the importance of education to achieve gender equity and the advancement of women in education is discussed. (Lechuga Montenegro et al., 2018)

By strengthening women's skills, a more prosperous family environment is fostered and contributes to the general well-being of the community. The foundation of the path to female empowerment is based on projects that have demonstrated women's ability to multitask, given their reproductive and productive function at its best. As in any entrepreneurial start-up, such as the launch of a new business, there are motivations that drive these women to decide to embark on the quest for business success, overcoming the challenges inherent in the creation process (Ayala & Méndez, 2021).

Feasibility study

Market research specifically helps in planning strategies and making decisions in a company or project, since, based on the results, the purposes and guidelines for addressing the identified problems are defined. This research can be used in any size and type of company, whether new or with years of experience, since the objective will always be the same: finding a way to optimize resources. (García, 2018).

Quantitative market research and social research focus on examining common variables, measurements, and characteristics of the study population. Qualitative market research and social research, on the other hand, examine perceptions, beliefs, or feelings without attempting to standardize the responses of the study population. Therefore, variables and their measurements are not important in qualitative research. It should be emphasized that the focus of this article is quantitative research. Study variables can be classified in several ways to conduct quantitative research. (Herbas & Rocha, 2018).

Market research can reduce uncertainty. Access to accurate, effective, consistent, and up-to-date information makes decision-making easier for company managers and makes it more precise. In this environment, access to and analysis of data that was previously unthinkable becomes real. The greater the amount of information, the lower the risk assumed in decision-making. (Soledispa Rodríguez et al., 2021). To conduct efficient research, the need for information and the problem to be solved must first be clearly identified. Then, specific objectives must be established, appropriate data sources

(internal or external) must be identified and selected, and data collection methods must be designed, including the creation of forms and the definition of the sample. Subsequently, the data is collected, processed, and analyzed, using univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis. Finally, the results are presented in a clear and precise report, adapted to the needs of management. (Uchochoque, 2019)

Women's education

Education is crucial to overcome certain social prejudices because it is a powerful tool to ensure that women have the same educational, labor, political, social and cultural rights as men. However, the characteristics of each society vary and the difficulties in closing gender gaps vary. To understand the importance of education, it is necessary to start with its proper meaning, as shown below. In addition, it discusses how crucial education is to achieve gender equality and the advancement of women in education.

Women have faced restrictions in breaking free from the bubble imposed by an androcentric society, plagued by prejudices and limitations. Although education has progressed by instilling values of gender equality, overcoming sexist and chauvinistic attitudes, the transmission of knowledge has followed discriminatory patterns throughout history. In the 18th century, women were denied access to educational levels equivalent to men, as this meant freeing themselves from domestic responsibilities assigned exclusively to them. (Lechuga Montenegro et al., 2018).

Any human project, including scientific research projects, requires a combination of tangible and intangible resources to be carried out effectively. Feasibility, which refers to the possibility of achieving an objective or goal, is essential in this process. In the field of research, the term "feasibility" is used to describe the availability of necessary resources, ranging from personnel and financing to equipment and infrastructure. Once the researcher has defined his or her idea and the problem to be investigated, as well as the usefulness of the project, he or she must carefully plan each stage of development. This involves analyzing and understanding the basic components that support the feasibility of the project, which can be summarized in five main areas. It is essential that each step is meticulously considered to ensure the success and effectiveness of the research project (Burdiles et al., 2019).

After defining the idea, the problem to be investigated and the usefulness of the project, the researcher must carefully plan each phase of the project. This involves analyzing the feasibility in five areas: operational (identification and training of personnel), technical (technological resources), economic (financing and costs), ethical and legal (compliance with regulations and protection of participants), and temporal (definition of deadlines and schedule of activities). These areas guarantee the viability and success of the project. (Burdiles et al., 2019)

Training

Statistical data support the theory that the level of training and the correction of gender inequalities are correlated. Several measures are proposed to encourage the development of leadership skills for women, such as specific training programs for women in managerial roles, ensuring equality in promotions, establishing support networks, and creating networking spaces for women leaders. The need to provide financial support for training and professional development, the implementation of policies that promote equal opportunities, and the provision of mentoring or personalized advice is emphasized. To achieve a more inclusive and effective work environment, it is essential to address the lack of training, overcome perceived obstacles, and promote diversity and gender equity. (Fajardo Pauta et al., 2023). In a training process aimed at female leaders, various motivations for undertaking commercial or entrepreneurial activities have been observed. These motivations include the search for higher income and the satisfaction of family needs. The activities undertaken by these leaders are often related to industrial sectors such as clothing and trade. In addition, it has been noted that these women use part of their income to help their children and other members of the community who face specific needs. (Vallejos-Saldarriaga et al., 2020)

Empowerment

Women's empowerment refers to the process of providing women with the resources and opportunities necessary to exercise their rights, participate in decision-making, and control their lives. This topic has gained relevance globally, with many organizations and governments recognizing the importance of gender equality for sustainable development. This literature review seeks to provide an overview of the concept of female empowerment, its importance, and the obstacles that hinder its achievement (Irshad Ahmad Reshi and Dr. T. Sudha, 2022). A direct route to gender equality, poverty elimination, and inclusive development is to invest in women's economic empowerment. Lack of equality in the full exercise of economic rights has an impact on access to credit or real estate ownership. In addition, due to double and triple shift work, women have less time to take advantage of economic opportunities. Although Ecuador is among the middle-income countries, gender disparities still exist (UN, 2024). Women's economic empowerment is critical for sustainable development, poverty reduction and the promotion of gender equality. Women's economic empowerment is critical for sustainable development, poverty reduction and the promotion of gender equality. Entrepreneurship programs, which offer training and support to women to start and expand their own businesses, have shown promise in fostering this empowerment. However, women entrepreneurs face significant barriers to accessing markets, finance and other resources, restricting their ability to grow their businesses and contribute to economic growth. Reshi & Sudha (2023)

Socioeconomic development

Each individual can develop his or her capacities, skills, emotions, and knowledge in a dignified and fulfilling living environment within a social community. This refers to the degree of satisfaction of basic human needs and respect for fundamental human rights that a society has achieved. In other words, it is an indicator of the quality of life of citizens in a specific country or region. Social development prioritizes people in the processes of progress, understanding that poverty is not limited to low income, but also includes vulnerability, exclusion, and lack of transparency in institutions. This development can be achieved through employment opportunities or the creation of businesses that provide a stable economy, thus improving people's subsistence and quality of life. Economic development provides decent jobs for inhabitants, addressing social problems such as unemployment and improving infrastructure. This structure is crucial for the advancement of the country. Spain in Europe and Chile in Latin America were pioneers in promoting productivity, obtaining numerous benefits. (Vera et al., 2022). It is crucial that women actively participate and occupy equal leadership roles in politics and the public sphere to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. However, figures show that women's presence at all levels of decision-making globally is insufficient. Gender equality in politics is therefore still far from being a reality. According to data collected up to 1 January 2023, the five ministerial areas most occupied by women are Women and Gender Equality, Family and Children, Social Inclusion and Development, Social Protection and Social Security, and Indigenous and Minority Affairs (UN Women, 2023).

Methodology

The study was developed following a non-experimental research design of a cross-sectional and descriptive nature, in accordance with the principles established by Álvarez (2020), where the variables are not manipulated and are measured at a single point in time for subsequent analysis. A mixed approach was adopted that combined qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate the viability of training programs for women, using analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive and historical-logical methods for the processing and construction of knowledge. The analysis unit was composed of a sample of 70 women entrepreneurs who were beneficiaries of the Avanzar Foundation in Cuenca, Ecuador, in 2023, who participated in courses, workshops or talks offered by the institution. The inclusion criteria were active participation in the programs during 2023, while those who did not participate in that period were excluded, without considering additional elimination criteria. In terms of ethical aspects, authorization was obtained from the Avanzar Foundation, following the recommendations of the scientific councils and the relevant ethics committee, and informed consent was obtained from all participants, guaranteeing the confidentiality and voluntariness of their participation.

Type of research:

Research methods, techniques and instruments:

Study universe, sample treatment and data analysis:

n=	$\frac{Npq}{(N - 1) \left(\frac{e}{Z}\right)^2 + pq}$	$\frac{1865,25}{(7460)(0,0006507705) + 0.25}$	70
-----------	---	---	----

Where from:

Z= 95% confidence interval with a critical value of Z=1.96

p= 50% probability of success

q= (1-p) 50% probability of failure

N= Finite population

e= acceptable sampling error of 5%

n = 70

Results

The results of this study are consistent with the objectives of the research, which seeks to assess the feasibility of implementing training programs aimed at women in order to improve their skills, competencies, and opportunities in personal and professional development. A diagnosis of their training needs was made, identifying areas of interest and demand, and theories and studies applied in various events were reviewed. Through the tabulation and interpretation of surveys, from a group of 85 women entrepreneurs who participated in activities organized by the foundation in 2023, a sample of 70 women was selected for analysis, focusing on the most relevant results.

The correlation between satisfaction or dissatisfaction according to the area of entrepreneurship of women participating in training programs during the period 2023 as shown in the following table 1.

Table 1

Correlation of satisfaction or dissatisfaction according to the area of entrepreneurship

What is your main area of entrepreneurship?	How would you rate your satisfaction with the training programs offered? (Scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied)					Total
	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neutral	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied	
Beauty, body treatments, massages	0	0	2	1	6	9
Kitchen	0	0	0	3	9	12
Marketing (sale of products)	2	2	1	4	19	28
Crafts	0	0	0	2	8	10
Pattern making and sewing	0	0	0	2	9	11
Total	2	2	3	12	51	70

Note: Table 1 presents the results and the correlation between satisfaction or dissatisfaction according to the area of entrepreneurship of the women participating in the training programs during the period 2023.

The data revealed a mostly positive perception, with a remarkable 73% of participants expressing that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the programs in general. Among these, the Marketing (Product Sales) program stood out with the highest satisfaction rate, with 68% of participants rating it as "very satisfied" or "satisfied." The Beauty, Body Treatments, Massages (67%), Cooking (75%), Crafts (80%), and Pattern Making and Sewing (82%) programs also received high satisfaction ratings. These results reflect a positive reception towards the training programs offered, indicating that they meet the expectations of most participants. However, areas of opportunity for improvement were identified, especially in the Marketing (Product Sales) program, where 32% of participants expressed neutral satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The foundation's training programs are well received, as most beneficiaries consider that they have helped them improve their skills and knowledge, valuing the opportunity to learn and develop professionally. It is recommended that the Avanzar Foundation continue to offer a variety of training programs, periodically assess beneficiary satisfaction to identify areas for improvement, and consider offering incentives to participants. There were no significant differences in satisfaction based on beneficiaries' age or educational level. Overall, these results suggest that the Avanzar Foundation's training programs for women entrepreneurs are a valuable investment that contributes to the professional development of beneficiaries and the success of their ventures.

The impact of training on the improvement of enterprises, differentiated by specific areas, is detailed in Table 2 through the results of a binomial analysis.

Table 2

The Impact of Training on Improving Entrepreneurship

Variable	Level	Counts	Total	Proportion	p
Did your business improve after the training?	I have stopped undertaking.	12	70	0.171	< .001
	NO	4	70	0.057	< .001
	YEAH	54	70	0.771	< .001

Note. Contrasting proportions in relation to the value: 0.5. of the improvement in entrepreneurship after the training provided by the foundation in the period 2023.

The results of Table 2 from the binomial analysis reveal that the entrepreneurship rate showed encouraging results overall. It was found that participants who received training experienced a significantly lower probability of continuing with entrepreneurial activities ($p < 0.001$). The difference in the entrepreneurship rate between those participants who were trained and those who were not was 0.114 (0.771 - 0.657). This implies that women who benefited from training were 11.4% less likely to continue with their entrepreneurial initiatives compared to those who did not receive such training. The findings suggest that training represents an effective tool to mitigate the entrepreneurship rate. This observation is crucial given the inherent risk associated with entrepreneurship, which can sometimes lead to failure. Training can play a critical role in equipping potential entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve success. In order for women to reach their full potential in job creation and economic stability, support programmes and policies are needed. In recent years, initiatives focused on education, access to finance and business networks have been developed, with support from governments and various organisations, achieving significant progress. Bullough et al. (2019).

Table 3 highlights the types of courses preferred by female entrepreneurs in the programs offered.

Table 3

Frequency tables of the types of courses preferred by female entrepreneurs in the programs offered

What type of courses do you prefer: those focused solely on technical skills, those that combine aspects of personal and emotional development, those that focus on management or strengthening entrepreneurship, or those that offer a combination of all these areas?	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Personal and emotional development	1	1.429	1.429	1.429
Management or strengthening of enterprises (Sales, finance, marketing, photography)	8	11.429	11.429	12.857
Technical skills (Practical courses)	18	25.714	25.714	38,571
Mixed	43	61,429	61,429	100,000
Absent	0	0.000		
Total	70	100,000		

Note: Frequency of preferred course types

The survey on course preferences conducted among a group of women shows that the preferred type of course for the majority of women (61.43%) shows preference for courses that integrate technical skills, personal development and entrepreneurship management and, on the other hand, the least preferred type of course is one focused exclusively on technical skills, selected by only 25.71% of the respondents. The results reflect the inclination of women towards comprehensive training, which is not only limited to technical skills, but also encompasses personal development and entrepreneurship management. In addition, a considerable part of the participants prefer personal and emotional development courses, suggesting a growing awareness of mental well-being and emotional intelligence. The relevance of courses related to entrepreneurship management reflects the rise of entrepreneurship as a viable employment alternative. In conclusion, this preference is an indicator of the demands of an increasingly competitive and demanding labour market, where workers must possess a diverse range of skills to adapt and excel; indicate a trend towards training that prepares women entrepreneurs to face the challenges of today's world by acquiring technical,

emotional and business skills. It is recommended to offer a greater variety of mixed courses, strengthen the personal development offer, promote entrepreneurship and stay up to date on labor market trends to adapt their educational offer. These implications are crucial to design educational programs that prepare women entrepreneurs for success in a changing environment.

Table 4

Correlation of preference to participate in training programs

Would you be willing to participate in training programs, lasting:	Would you be willing to pay for programs that combine all the topics?		
	NO	YEAH	Total
3 months	6	22	28
4 months	0	10	10
5 months	0	2	2
6 months	2	28	30
Total	8	62	70

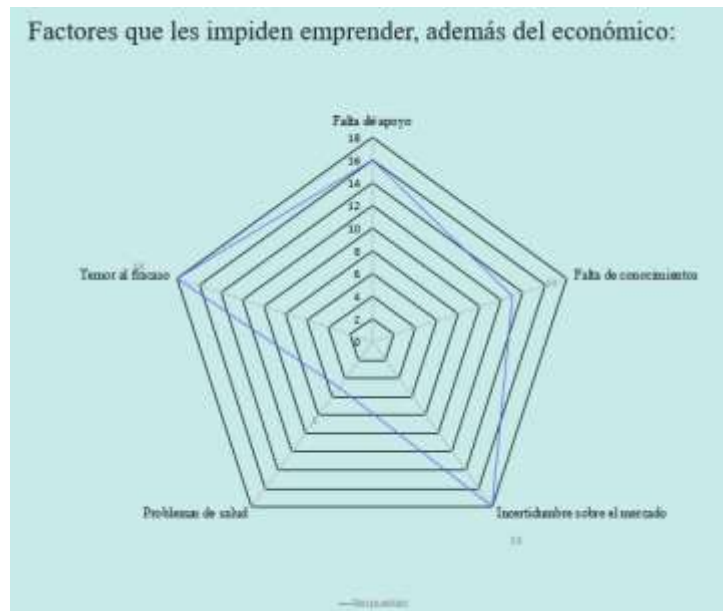
Note Table 4 presents the results and correlation of preference to participate in training programs.

The table shows the percentage of people willing to participate in 3-, 4-, 5-, and 6-month training programs, broken down by age range. Overall, 100% of people aged 18-25, 36-45, and 46+ are willing to participate in training programs, while 88.9% of people aged 26-35 show the same willingness. In terms of program length, the most popular is the 3-month program, with 40% of participants interested. This is followed by the 6-month program with 30% take-up, while the 4-month program is the least popular, with only 14.3% of participants willing to enroll in programs of this length. These results indicate a high level of willingness to participate in training programs across all age ranges. It is recommended to offer programs with different lengths to meet the diverse needs of participants, prioritizing 3-month programs due to their greater popularity. It is also suggested to investigate why the 4-month duration is less popular and adjust programs accordingly. It is important to consider that these results are based on a relatively small sample and only reflect willingness to participate, not the completion rate of programs. Despite these limitations, the results provide valuable information about the needs and preferences of people interested in training opportunities, which can help organizations develop more attractive programs for potential participants.

According to the survey, the results on other factors, besides money, that prevent entrepreneurship are detailed in Figure 1:

Figure 1

Other factors, besides money, prevent him from starting a business



Note: The figure presents the results obtained on other factors, besides money, that prevent you from starting a business.

The analysis of the results of the study on factors that prevent entrepreneurship reveals several obstacles faced by women beneficiaries of the Avanzar Foundation programs when starting a business. Among the main impediments, the lack of personal, family or environmental support stands out, mentioned by 22.857% of the respondents. In addition, 25.714% of the participants indicated that the fear of failure and uncertainty about the success of the business are significant factors, underlining the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial culture that values risk and learning from mistakes. The lack of knowledge about the market, finances and business management was identified as an obstacle by 18.571% of the respondents, which highlights the need to improve entrepreneurial education. Physical or mental health problems and uncertainty about market conditions and competition were also mentioned, with 7.143% and 25.714% respectively. These results highlight the need to strengthen comprehensive support for women entrepreneurs, from access to financing to education and personal well-being, in order to overcome obstacles and promote business development.

Discussion

Training programs are shown to have a positive effect on the academic performance and satisfaction of those who participate in them. In the case of Fundación Avanzar programs, a high level of satisfaction is highlighted, with 73% of participants expressing feeling "very satisfied" or "satisfied", especially in areas such as Pattern Making and Sewing, which recorded a satisfaction rate of 82%. This highlights the importance of adapting

training programs to the specific needs of participants, emphasizing regular satisfaction assessment, as suggested in the study by Carchi Arias et al. (2022). In addition, providing additional support for more complex content is recommended as a strategy to maximize the benefits of these training programs. The implementation of flexible teaching methods and ongoing support become essential in this process.

According to the study by Salazar et al. (2019), they show a high degree of satisfaction and perceived usefulness on the part of women trained in the community outreach program. This level of satisfaction reflects an adequate alignment between the content provided and the activities developed by the entrepreneurs. In addition, most of the women rated the training as "excellent" or "good", thus demonstrating its effective contribution to their business activities. On the other hand, the binomial analysis reveals that trained women were significantly less likely to continue with entrepreneurial activities compared to those who did not receive training, with a difference of 11.4%. This finding suggests that training can play a crucial role in reducing the entrepreneurship rate, providing participants with the necessary skills to face the challenges associated with starting a business, thus highlighting the effectiveness of training programs in empowering and developing the skills of women entrepreneurs, as well as their positive impact on reducing the entrepreneurship rate and improving the quality of life.

The analysis of course preferences among a group of women reveals a significant inclination towards comprehensive training. A considerable majority (61.43%) of women prefer courses that combine technical skills, personal development and entrepreneurship management. In contrast, courses focused exclusively on technical skills are the least popular, chosen by only 25.71% of the respondents. These findings indicate a growing demand for holistic training that is not only limited to technical aspects, but also addresses personal and managerial competencies. Both the results of the Avanzar Foundation and the study by Saavedra García and Camarena Adame (2020) underline the relevance of comprehensive training for women entrepreneurs. The preference for courses that merge technical skills, personal development and entrepreneurship management reflects a keen understanding of the demands of the current labor market. To maximize their impact and effectiveness, training programs must adapt to these preferences, equipping participants with the necessary tools to face and overcome the challenges of a dynamic and competitive business environment. This comprehensive training not only meets the expectations of female entrepreneurs, but also contributes to the creation of stronger and more sustainable businesses. By providing an education that includes both practical skills and managerial and personal competencies, they are better prepared to navigate the complexities of the labor market and to effectively lead their ventures. Women's inclination towards training that encompasses multiple dimensions of development is a clear indication of the needs of an ever-evolving labor market. Adapting training

programs to incorporate these elements is crucial to fostering the success and sustainability of female entrepreneurship.

The results obtained, as described in Table 4, reveal the significant willingness of different age groups to participate in training programs, suggesting a positive influence of entrepreneurial attitudes in promoting the country's business fabric, as noted by Puch Coronado (2023). It is notable that 100% of people aged 18 to 25, 36 to 45, and 46 years or older are willing to participate in these programs, while 88.9% of people aged 26 to 35 show the same willingness. In addition, the preference for 3-month programs stands out, which obtained 40% interest, followed by 6-month programs with 30% acceptance, while 4-month programs turned out to be the least popular, with only 14.3% willingness among participants. According to GEM (2019), women aged 25-34 and 35-44 have the highest rates of participation in entrepreneurship globally. Furthermore, these rates tend to increase as the level of education increases. These findings indicate the importance of offering a variety of programs with different durations to meet the diverse needs of stakeholders. It is recommended to prioritize 3-month programs due to their higher uptake and explore the reasons behind the lower popularity of 4-month programs to adjust accordingly. It is relevant to note that these results are based on a limited sample and only reflect the willingness to participate, not the completion rate of the programs, but they still provide valuable information for the development of more attractive and effective programs.

Both the research by Simón, JD (2023) on the barriers faced by Business Sciences students to entrepreneurship, and the results obtained in relation to the challenges experienced by women participating in Fundación Avanzar programs when starting a business, underline the need to address contextual and personal constraints to effectively foster entrepreneurial intention and business growth. These findings emphasize the importance of adopting a holistic approach that considers socioeconomic, institutional, and personal aspects to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurial development. The urgency of providing not only access to financing, but also entrepreneurial education and emotional support is highlighted. In addition, the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset that values learning through mistakes and that strengthens entrepreneurial skills as a strategy to overcome the identified challenges and promote business success among women entrepreneurs is emphasized. The persistent barriers faced by women in the traditionalist environment of Cuenca, Ecuador, reflect a broad bias towards traditional gender roles rooted in society. These barriers rooted in traditional gender norms represent significant challenges to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Cuenca and require a comprehensive and transformative approach that promotes gender equity and respect for diversity.

Conclusions

- Over time, women have been challenged by a patriarchal culture that assigned them exclusively the role of caregivers of the home and children, hindering their professional development and their ability to achieve economic stability comparable to that of men. Through advances in civil rights, technological innovations, political reforms and ideological changes, new educational and employment opportunities have been created for women. However, a considerable disparity persists in access to formal education and the labor market. Many women have opted for entrepreneurship as a strategy for economic integration, developing businesses that they start from the home or through their own premises. These ventures have facilitated their economic and professional empowerment, demonstrating their potential to generate a significant impact and contribute to social transformation.
- In response to identified needs and with the support of its own financing, the Avanzar Foundation, based in Cuenca, Ecuador, has implemented an innovative intervention model through a non-profit organization. Initially, the training focused on technical areas, such as gastronomy. However, after the pandemic, the institution has developed comprehensive programs that cover not only technical skills, but also modules on mental health, crucial for beneficiaries from contexts of abuse, divorce or violence. These women have demonstrated remarkable adaptation and success in the programs, validating their effectiveness.
- The foundation has expanded its courses to include business management and administration, providing them with comprehensive tools to develop and manage successful businesses, thus ensuring comprehensive and income-generating training. The data reveal that a high percentage of women have participated in the Avanzar Foundation's training programs, indicating an active interest in developing skills and competencies. In addition, participants' preferences for courses that combine aspects of personal development, technical skills and business management reflect the importance of comprehensive training for success in the entrepreneurial field.
- The significant improvement in the entrepreneurs' businesses after receiving the training highlights the effectiveness of the programs in promoting and strengthening female entrepreneurship. These results suggest that adequate training can have a positive impact on the development and growth of businesses led by women. The identification of factors that hinder attendance at classes, such as financial challenges, family commitments and lack of support, provides relevant information for designing strategies that address these barriers and promote greater participation in training programs. Difficulties in the development of training, such as health problems and distance, should also be mentioned. It is crucial to foresee training modalities that cover all needs in terms

of schedules, modality and days, with a clear level of adaptation to participate in longer complex programs.

Conflict of interest

Within the framework of this feasibility study of training programs for women of Fundación Avanzar in Cuenca, Ecuador, it is declared that there are no conflicts of interest that could influence the objectivity, impartiality or interpretation of the results presented. All aspects of the research, from data collection to analysis and writing of conclusions, have been carried out independently and without the influence of personal, financial or institutional interests that could bias the findings obtained.

Bibliographic references

- Ayala, LME, & Méndez, G. (2021, April 1). Female Entrepreneurship: A multi-case study of factors that influence entrepreneurial intention. *Ciencia Latina*. https://doi.org/10.37811/cl_rcm.v5i2.374
- Bullough, A., Hechavarr'a, DM, Brush, C., & Edelman, L.F. (2019). Introduction: programs, policies and practices: fostering high-growth womens entrepreneurship. *High-growth Women's Entrepreneurship*. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788118712.00007>
- Burdiles, Castro, & Simian. (2019). Planning and feasibility of a clinical research project. *Las Condes Clinical Medical Journal*. Retrieved March 21, 2024, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0716864019300082#bib0025>
- Carchi Arias, KL, Zambrano Morales, Á.A., Romero Lalangui, M.A., & Uzcátegui Sánchez, C. (2022). Impact of online training in Accounting, Taxation and Excel on the development of potential. *Horizontes. Journal of Research in Educational Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.33996/revistahorizontes.v6i23.354>
- Fajardo Pauta, RN, Cordero González, DM, & Solís Muñoz, JB (2023, October 24). Development of managerial skills in women leaders at the Catholic University of Cuenca-Ecuador. *Runas. Journal of Education and Culture*, 4(8), e230138. <https://doi.org/10.46652/runas.v4i8.138>
- Gamboa, L., & Stiven, K. (2019). Financial feasibility analysis for a non-profit entity (ESAL) of the special district of Buenaventura: Pacific Live Tide Association project 2019.
- García, JIM (2018). Impact of market research on management decision making. *Dialnet*. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6726419>

GEM (2019). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018/2019 Women's Entrepreneurship Report (Vol. 8). London: Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, London Business School.

Herbas Torrico, Boris Christian, & Rocha Gonzales, Erick Ariel. (2018). Scientific methodology for conducting market research and quantitative social research. *Perspectivas Magazine*, (42), 123-160. Retrieved on February 23, 2024, from http://www.scielo.org.bo/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1994-37332018000200006&lng=es&tlng=.

Irshad Ahmad Reshi, & Dr T. Sudha. (2022, December 30). Women Empowerment: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agricultural Management and Sharia Administration (IJEAS)*, 2(6), 1353–1359. <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijeas.v2i6.753>

Lamilla Vera, LP, Álvarez Santana, CL, & Tapia Segarra, JI (2022). Entrepreneurship and its contribution to the socioeconomic development of the women of the Ruku Kawsay Fair in Orellana Ecuador. *ConcienciaDigital*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/reader/9af624d2bc82d9afb5fdb8d2075ef13daab7fc4>

Montenegro, Jesus, Argumosa, Giovanna, & Guerrero Tostado, Maricruz. (2018). Education and gender. The long journey of women towards modernity in Mexico. *UNAM Economics*, 15(43), 110-139. <https://doi.org/10.22201/fe.24488143e.2018.43.387>

Onu (Ed.). (2024). Economic empowerment. *Onu Women*. Retrieved March 21, 2024, from <https://www.unwomen.org/es/what-we-do/economic-empowerment>

Puch Coronado, ME (2023). Entrepreneurial attitudes and their impact. *Management in the Third Millennium*, 26 (51), 397–406. <https://doi.org/10.15381/gtm.v26i51.25535>

Reshi, I.A., & Sudha, T. (2023). Economic empowerment of women: A review of current research. *International Journal of Educational Review, Law And Social Sciences (IJERLAS)*, 3(2), 601-605. <http://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJERLAS/article/view/746>

Rodríguez Salazar, PD, Mantilla Garcés, DM, Zumarraga Marroquin, KE and Cevallos Bravo, MV (2019). Impact evaluation of the community outreach project in the financial accounting training program for women entrepreneurs in the Cayambe canton. *Economía y Negocios*, 10 (2), 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.29019/eyn.v10i2.620>

Saavedra García, ML, & Camarena Adame, ME (2020). Women-led SMEs and training: an exploratory study. *Small Business International Review (SBIR)*, 4(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.26784/sbir.v4i2.270>

Simón, JD (2023). Factors influencing entrepreneurial intention in Business Sciences students, cohort 2015-2020. *IE Educational Research Journal of REDIECH*. https://doi.org/10.33010/ie_rie_rediech.v14i0.1827

Soledispa Rodríguez, a Moran Chilan, & Peña Ponce. (2021, February 8). Market research impact it generates in decision making. *Scientific Journal Dominio De Las Ciencias*. Retrieved March 21, 2024, from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8385908>

Uchochoque, RL (2019). Market Research Process. *Science & Development*.

Vallejos-Saldarriaga, J., Rosales-Llontop, R., & Miranda-Jara, M. (2020, December 30). Entrepreneurship and attitude towards change in women leaders in Lima. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 16(2), 216–234. <https://doi.org/10.18004/riics.2020.diciembre.216>

The article published is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the thinking of the Revista Conciencia Digital.



The article remains the property of the journal and, therefore, its partial and/or total publication in another medium must be authorized by the director of the Conciencia Digital Journal.



Indexaciones

