

# The effect of family support on the success of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho

Maletlatso Motsomotso

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.15.02.2025.p15828  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.15.02.2025.p15828>

Paper Received Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
Paper Acceptance Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
Paper Publication Date: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**Abstract-** This study set out to examine the effect of family support on the success of women entrepreneurs in three districts (Maseru, Mafeteng and Leribe) of Lesotho. The study adopted the interpretive phenomenological qualitative research design. Thirty face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The findings reveal that women entrepreneurs in Lesotho received the following types of family support: financial and non-financial support, emotional support, and instrumental support which helped them in achieving the success of their businesses. These findings highlight the importance of family support to women who own and run their businesses within the Basotho context and culture, which had the greatest impact on the success of their businesses. Therefore, future research should focus on male entrepreneurs to make a comparison of family support between the two genders.

**Index Terms-** Family Support, Lesotho, Success, Women Entrepreneurs

## I. INTRODUCTION

Family helps in the development of businesses, by providing financial, labour as well as physical resources (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Welsh, Kim, Memili & Kaciak, 2014). Family support involves the childcare or advice that family members provide to enable people to easily manage their daily tasks in business and family (Friesen, Brennan & Penn, 2008). As indicated in a study by Abbas, Abrar, Saleem, and Iqbal (2016), 25.9% of women entrepreneurs affirmed that family support helped them in growing their business ventures. Statistics from a study by Imbaya (2012) revealed that 85% of women entrepreneurs affirmed that family support helped to improve the performance of their businesses. A study by Auch (2016) also demonstrated that 71% of women entrepreneurs admitted that having family members who are entrepreneurs helped in the smooth running of their businesses. In the same study, 43% of women entrepreneurs stated that their family members helped in founding their businesses. Mari, Poggesi, and De Vita (2016) further pointed out that 76.2% of women entrepreneurs consider family support to be important in the performance of their businesses.

Furthermore, most women in business succeed because of the support from their families (Imbaya, 2012). The type of support provided by family members greatly enhances the success of women in business (Imbaya, 2012). Karatepe and Bekteshi (2008) also added that family support makes it easier for individuals to succeed in pursuing their work tasks thus leading to the advancement and survival of their businesses. Similarly, family support enables individuals to handle work strains and focus on their work roles thus leading to entrepreneurial growth (Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008). Also, family is considered important for grooming business people (Gundry & Welsh, 1994). It enables entrepreneurs to improve their businesses through family roles such as interpersonal communication and multitasking. Family support also results in trust-building, information sharing, and combined problem-solving in families (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016). Therefore, support from family results in the success of entrepreneurs (Berrone, Gertel, Giuliadori, Bernard & Meiners, 2014).

Moreover, a review of the literature proposed the three types of family support that help business people in their businesses (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016): financial support, emotional support, and instrumental support. Financial support refers to money needed for buying fixed assets and funding preliminary business operations and expenses of the entrepreneur in the earlier phases of the business. Emotional support denotes the support given by family members in the form of inspiration that encourages the entrepreneurs to follow their entrepreneurial goals and to remain persistent and positive in tough business times. Instrumental support signifies the business advice, services, and tangible resources that can help make business decisions. A study by Neneh (2017) showed that the three forms of family support (i.e., emotional, instrumental, and financial support) are positively related to the performance of businesses owned by women. In light of this, a study by Poggesi, Mari and De Vita (2015) has encouraged studies such as one by Neneh (2017) to develop a thorough understanding of entrepreneurship in women.

Furthermore, when there are limited external support systems, women entrepreneurs rely on their family members for support (Welsh, Kim, Memili & Kaciak, 2014; Greve & Salaf, 2003). Family support enables women entrepreneurs to accomplish their

entrepreneurial success more especially because women entrepreneurs are considered less successful than male entrepreneurs (Ettl & Welter, 2012). Several measures have been used to evaluate entrepreneurial success which include the subjective and objective indicators (Hadjimanolis & Poutzorios, 2011). Subjective indicators include the level of satisfaction with business development, the number of clients, and the outcome of tasks performed by employees, the competitiveness of the company, and the attainment of established business development goals. On the other hand, objective indicators include: showing a profit, having a registered office, having employees, creating job positions, maintaining financial liquidity, offering benefits to employees (e.g., laptop), and maintaining long-term (i.e., longer than one year) cooperation with clients. Cooper and Gimeno-Gascon (1994) also added that entrepreneurial success entails growth in sales and employment as well as growth in profitability and productivity. Therefore, success for women entrepreneurs can be regarded as the reduction of dependence and an increase in self-sufficiency (Walls, Dowler, Cordingly, Orslene & Greer, 2001). Also, successful women in business have the following business competencies: they are persistent, self-confident, take initiative, they identify and use opportunities, seek information, strive to produce high quality work, and commit to their work contract (Sarker & Palit, 2014). In a developing country like Lesotho, despite these advances, women entrepreneurs still encounter numerous challenges in business that influence their choices and lives. This is due to taking part in several work and family tasks (Sullivan & Meek, 2012). Hence an understanding of how family support helps to enhance the success of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho is vital.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of family support on the success of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. DEFINITION OF FAMILY SUPPORT

Family support refers to childcare or advice that family members provide to enable people to handle their daily tasks and operate as productive and responsible employees (Friesen, Brennan & Penn, 2008). Family support involves encouragement, advice, information, and help that can be used to improve a person's performance in the work domain thus reducing family-to-work conflict (Bhargava & Baral, 2009). Researchers (Neneh, 2017; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016; Cesaroni & Paoloni, 2016) indicated that family plays a key role in women's entrepreneurial engagements. It acts as both a source of resources and support and a source of responsibilities, limitations, and duties. Family support enhances the survival and growth of businesses owned by women (Teoh & Chong, 2008). The family also plays an important role in improving the performance of women entrepreneurs (Neneh, 2017; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016; Powell & Eddleston, 2013). Berrone, Gertel, Giuliodori, Bernard, and Meiners (2014) indicated that entrepreneurs who have high levels of family support become more successful. Similarly, people who receive family support are more likely to

redirect their attention towards their work responsibilities and manage work pressures, which ultimately enhances the performance of their businesses (Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008). Family support promotes the chances of business growth and survival through trust-building, information sharing, and joint problem-solving among family members, which also improves the performance of a business (Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016; Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016).

### B. TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT

The family domain has been found to offer diverse forms of support to help the business domain (Welsh, Kaciak, Memili & Minialai, 2018; Neneh, 2018; Neneh, 2017; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016). Family helps in the development of businesses by providing financial, labour, emotional, psychological as well as physical resources (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Welsh, Kim, Memili & Kaciak, 2014; Collins, 2008). As indicated in a study by Abbas, Abrar, Saleem, and Iqbal (2016), 25.9% of women entrepreneurs affirmed that family support helped them in growing their business ventures. Statistics from a study by Imbaya (2012) revealed that 85% of women entrepreneurs affirmed that family support helped to improve the performance of their businesses. A study by Auch (2016) also demonstrated that 71% of women entrepreneurs admitted that having family members who are entrepreneurs helped in the smooth running of their businesses. In the same study, 43% of women entrepreneurs stated that their family members helped in founding their businesses. Mari, Poggesi, and De Vita (2016) further pointed out that 76.2% of women entrepreneurs consider family support to be important in the performance of their businesses. Krause and Fetsch (2019) found that women entrepreneurs who have less support from their spouses experience an increase in the workload and a decrease in the productivity levels of their businesses.

Notwithstanding the general positive effect of family support on the performance of the business, the extreme involvement of family in a woman entrepreneur's matters can have negative outcomes (Welsh, Kaciak, Memili & Minialai, 2018; Welsh, Memili, & Kaciak, 2016). This can be caused by the legitimacy, over interference, and family members' authority in the business despite the fact that such family members provide support (Neneh, 2017). For instance, emotional support from family can raise false expectations where family members may think that they have a legitimate right to interfere with the business, thus reducing the business performance, especially in the less developed countries where family financial support is important (Welsh, Kaciak, Memili & Minialai, 2018). Decisions are often made only with the consent of the male head of the family since women are not considered as powerful figures in the workplace (Sullivan & Meek, 2012). In addition, Jennings and McDougald (2007) indicated that unsupportive family members do not offer any kind of support that can contribute towards the improved success of the business. Instead, they would rather choose to give the business profession a low significance in the family (Neneh, 2017). However, this study will focus on the following types of family support: instrumental support, emotional support, and financial and non-financial support.

### *C. INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT*

Instrumental support refers to concrete or material assistance provided by family members in the form of business information, business advice, and help with one's work (Wallace, 2005). In addition, instrumental support signifies the business advice, services, and tangible resources that can help when making business decisions (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016). Family instrumental support is the main resource that has an impact on an individual's life and job satisfaction. Women entrepreneurs can access instrumental support through tangible resources, valuable information, and services by accepting criticism, feedback, and advice which can help to advance their ability to appraise, discover and make use of business opportunities as well as improve their strategic decision making process (Klyver, Honig & Steffens, 2017; Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Kim, Longest, and Aldrich (2013) affirm that instrumental support grants entrepreneurs the assistance and information to use to effectively explain, understand and respond to the tasks and challenges faced during the business start-up phase. This is mainly important for most women as they lack formal training and access to support services before they start their businesses (Henning & Akoob, 2017). Klyver, Honig and Steffens (2017) added that instrumental support is important in the early and late stages of entrepreneurs' business emergence. Studies (Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Powell & Eddleston, 2013) found that instrumental support and firm performance were positively related. Neneh (2017) found that instrumental support is positively related to firm performance. Hence, it becomes important for this study to investigate the experiences of the different types of instrumental support amongst women entrepreneurs in Lesotho and the implications for their success.

### *D. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT*

Emotional support refers to providing people with the feelings of support and being cared for (Wallace, 2005). Furthermore, researchers (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016) contributed by indicating that emotional support denotes the support given by family members in the form of inspiration that encourages the entrepreneurs to follow their entrepreneurial goals and to remain persistent and positive during tough business times. Examples of emotional support include concern for the welfare of each other, emphatic understanding and listening, affirmation of affection and advice (Hamid & Amin, 2014). Emotional support may include providing sympathy, affection and emphatic understanding and listening, advice to manage work family conflict, and concern for the welfare of one another (Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016; Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Wallace, 2005). The understanding and inspiration showed by family members may improve the positive experience of entrepreneurs in managing the work family interface which can, in turn, result in work family balance (Shelton, 2006). Furthermore, emotional support may also create a sense of trust, closeness, and intimacy which eventually promotes a positive self-image for entrepreneurs (Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane & Geller, 1990). Emotional support from family members decreases negative experiences and has a positive impact on the life and job satisfaction of an individual (Hamid & Amin, 2014). Mari, Poggesi, and De Vita (2016) found no

relationship between firm performance and emotional support. Neneh (2017) found that emotional, instrumental, and financial support were positively related to firm performance. Emotional support has been found to play a vital role in the businesses of women entrepreneurs, however, what needs to be further investigated is the possible implications of the presence/absence of emotional support on the success of their businesses in the context of Lesotho. Also, what has to be further examined is how women entrepreneurs in Lesotho experience emotional support and the implications it has on the success of their businesses.

### *E. FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT*

Financial support refers to money needed for buying fixed assets and funding preliminary business operations and expenses of the entrepreneur in the earlier phases of the business (Welsh, Memili & Kaciak, 2016; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016). Financial support is important for the start-up and growth of a business. Because women commonly face financial constraints when starting their businesses compared to their male counterparts, women mostly make use of their savings and financial resources from their family members as start-up capital for their businesses (Su, Atmadja & Sharma, 2015; Powell & Eddleston, 2013). Family financial support may be valuable and indispensable for women entrepreneurs to be able to start and grow their businesses in such difficult conditions (Cetindamar, Gupta, Karadeniz & Egrican, 2012). Most women who receive financial support from their families do not stress about getting funding for their businesses and can therefore adequately dedicate their time and psychological involvement between the business and family business domains and hence reach higher levels of work life balance (Neneh, 2019). Mari, Poggesi and De Vita (2016) found a negative relationship between financial support and firm performance. On the other hand, family members can also offer the non-financial support that can help women entrepreneurs in the founding and operating of their businesses (Neneh, 2017; Mari, Poggesi & De Vita, 2016; Su, Atmadja & Sharma, 2015). Non-financial support can be understood in terms of the unpaid work that women receive from their families either in the business or domestic context (Neneh, 2019). Non-financial support can enable women entrepreneurs, to maintain a work life balance because the energy and time devoted to the business or home responsibilities are equally shared and thus enables the women entrepreneurs to dedicate more time to their family or business duties (Neneh, 2019). As a result, it becomes important for this study to investigate the experiences of financial and non-financial support amongst women entrepreneurs in Lesotho and the implications for their success.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *A. FAMILY EMBEDDEDNESS THEORY*

According to Aldrich and Cliff (2003), the family embeddedness theory clarifies how the family systems characteristics of entrepreneurs (i.e., transitions, resources, norms, attitudes, values) affect the business creation processes (i.e., opportunity recognition, launch decision, resource mobilisation, and implementation of founding strategies, processes, and structures). Aldrich and Cliff (2003) further explained that these business creation processes subsequently affect diverse business outcomes

(i.e., survival, objective performance, and subjective perceptions of business success) that may change the entrepreneurial resources from the family, possibly activate some changes in the family and eventually change the norms, attitudes, and values of family members. In addition, this theory indicates that businesses and family domains are significantly entwined and that family dimensions have to be included in conceptualising, modeling, analysis as well as the interpretation of the entrepreneurial processes (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

This theory considers family transitions and family resources as factors that significantly contribute towards the achievement and success of business creation processes. In the same way, this theory regards business outcomes particularly disruptive ones, as key contributing factors to the changes and outcomes in a family (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Building on this theory, women entrepreneurs in Lesotho can depend on support from family in undertaking business activities (Rogoff & Heck, 2003). This is because family creates chances to exchange business opinions as well as create a high socio-emotional attachment between business and family. This leads to improved performance of the business (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Hence, it is important to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho to unearth the type of family support they make use of and the implications it has on the success of their businesses.

#### IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used the interpretive phenomenological qualitative research design to assess and interpret the meaning of the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho from their standpoint. Women entrepreneurs in Lesotho described their experiences as “women” and their experience of living as “women entrepreneurs in Lesotho” (Sharkey, 2001). The researcher unearthed how family support helps to enhance the success of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho.

To get access to women entrepreneurs, the researcher obtained a list from the Basotho Enterprises Development Corporation (BEDCO) that had the telephone and email contacts of women-owned businesses. These women entrepreneurs were members of the most important women entrepreneurship associations in the three districts of Lesotho. The researcher used women entrepreneurs from different associations to reach a high number of women entrepreneurs and to also avoid the single source bias. After that, the purposive sampling method was used to select women entrepreneurs from different business sectors and sizes in the districts of Leribe, Maseru, and Mafeteng.

Furthermore, a sample of 30 women entrepreneurs was used which included 14 women entrepreneurs from the district of Maseru, 5 women entrepreneurs from the district of Leribe and 11 women entrepreneurs from the district of Mafeteng. All interviews were conducted in Sesotho, which is the participants’ home language, then translated to English. Each interview lasted for about 1 to 2 hours and also depended on how much each participant was willing to share. In this study, interviews were conducted in the business premises of women entrepreneurs in the three districts (Leribe, Maseru, and Mafeteng). Since the businesses of women entrepreneurs were in urban, semi-urban,

and rural locations, this was done to allow the participants to take part in the study in the comfort of their businesses.

Moreover, the data was analysed using the well-known interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith & Osborn, 2015; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This enabled the researcher to carefully pay attention to participants’ words. It also created an opportunity for descriptions of experiences from the perspective of participants to be naturally revealed (Quest, 2014). In exploring data sources (transcripts), the transcripts were read several times to ensure that the researcher captured participants’ most significant information without misreading it (Silverman, 2013). To ensure accuracy during the interpretation of the interviews, the researcher paid attention to the interview audio while reading the transcriptions (Silverman, 2013). The non-verbal language data collected in the memo was also included in the data transcripts to add more richness to the transcripts. After the transcription process was completed, the transcripts were then imported into NVivo 12 and Nvivo Plus for coding. When refining software-generated themes, the transcripts were imported into Nvivo 12 and Nvivo Plus, to conduct auto coding where the themes were identified by the software. Using the themes identified by the software, more meaning was given to the themes. During this process, notes were made of themes mostly relevant to the study. When reviewing software-generated themes, the researcher looked at the software-produced themes and came up with themes aligned with the conceptual framework of the study. The themes were stored in nodes. After the themes were created, subthemes were also created for each main theme. Thereafter, the researcher manually coded the study-related themes. For each main theme, the subtheme was created by reading the software-produced themes and manually aligned them to the context of the current study.

#### V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the types of family support that women entrepreneurs experienced included: financial and non-financial support, emotional support and instrumental support.

##### A. FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Finance/startup capital is one way through which participants received financial and non-financial support from their families. Participants shared their stories as follows:

Participant 1 who sells fruits said

*When I started this business, my mom gave me the money to help me because she told me that I am good with business and she saw that I progress with it.*

*I own a salon, I make and sell sun hats and I’m also into tailoring. I move around to sell what I’ve tailored to people. I started this business before I was married and my parents gave me capital to start my business (Participant 5).*

*My sister bought me a machine and I looked for a place to work from and started sewing. And people would come and ask “Oh so you have tailoring here?” Or others would come to ask me if I could make a certain pattern and I was able to do it. Then with time, I ended up having a heavy workload and I had to find*

*someone that I trained and hired so that they could help me....*  
(Participant 11).

The results above show the importance of family in providing financial and non-financial resources in the startup and growth phases of the business. In this instance, participant 5 received financial support from her family while participant 11 received non-financial support from her family to start the business. From these results, it is clear that family plays a major role in the startup and growth phases of the business by providing resources (financial and non-financial) to the businesses of their family members (Leung, Mukerjee & Thurik, 2020). Financial resources from family members are important to entrepreneurs because they have low transaction costs, low interest, and payback requirements, and availability when other sources are unavailable (Sieger & Minola, 2015). Non-financial support in the form of childcare and household work enables women entrepreneurs to maintain a work life balance because it gives them more time to focus on their businesses (Neneh, 2019). Family provides a vital resource (financial and non-financial) which entrepreneurs can tap into, to enhance the success of their businesses as illustrated in the family embeddedness theory.

### **B. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

Participants also received emotional support through sharing their daily experiences with their families. They presented their narratives as follows:

#### **Participant 1**

*My mom and sister are very supportive people and we get along so well. So it is easier for me to talk to them when I need to. They listen to me and they are able to help me with anything that bothers me in business. I am able to get ideas on how to better manage my business.*

*I talk to my son because I work with him in this farming business. We manage to sit and discuss ways to solve the problems that we face. My son is always willing to listen to me whenever I need to talk to him and that makes me feel good because he's working very hard so I also feel motivated to at least know that one of my children understands the farming language that I talk and also does the farming job (Participant 9).*

The results above show the importance of emotional support that family members provide to women entrepreneurs. Participant 9 felt motivated after her son listened to the problems she was facing in her business. These results show that support from family (children) can motivate women entrepreneurs to perform better in their businesses. However, Labaki, Michael-Tsabari, and Zachary (2013) also explained that the lack of emotional support in families can result in negative effects such as hatred, mistrust, and guilt which can extremely complicate family relationships.

Looking at the family embeddedness theory, research has always pointed out that the family provides entrepreneurs with resources for their businesses as well as resources that can be used at home. However, in this study, participant 2 mentioned that the hug she gets from her son helps her to detach from the work stressors.

Being able to detach from work stressors can lead to the improved well-being of the entrepreneur. Also, participant 9 explained that the fact that her son listens to her makes her feel better and motivated to perform better in her business. As a result, the families of both participants helped to improve the overall well-being of participants. The improved overall wellbeing can in turn lead to improved performance of participants in their businesses thus enhancing the success of their businesses.

### **5.3 INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT**

*My husband is my business partner it's just that he's not active in the running of the business. He's only active on admin issues, like when we have to renew a business license, etc. Also, I have 2 employees. At the moment they are both female but at times I still get male employees as well I don't just work with females. It differs from time to time. As you can see in the queue there (pointing to people queuing), people have come for Mpesa services; others have come to deposit while others have come to withdraw. So my employees handle such. At times when I need change if say a customer pays with a R100 note and I don't have change, one of my employees goes out to get change so that we can give the customer their change. They also help with cleaning the pharmacy, packing the stock on shelves, and also selling to customers if I happen to have gone out or I'm busy helping another customer. So they help to also avoid having long queues. Even when I have to be somewhere and have to leave the business for some hours, I don't need to close the pharmacy because they are there to handle things when I'm out (Participant 3).*

*My husband and I run this business, so the only person that we partner with is the one that has partnered with my husband in helping each other with watering issues. They have joined the water pipes together in such a way that each pipe goes into another person's garden. And when there is a water shortage, they share the water available for watering (Participant 6).*

*My aunt shares her business knowledge with me. Whenever I need something from her, she's always willing to help me. She always tells me that she wants to leave the legacy of this business with me because I have shown interest in it so that when she dies or becomes old at least there must be someone to look after it and make it grow (Participant 30).*

*My friends and family show me support by buying my products and also refer other people to me (Participant 24).*

The results above show that there are different types of instrumental support that entrepreneurs receive in their businesses. In this study, participants showed that they received instrumental support from their spouses, employees, families, friends, and business partners. The narratives of participants 3 and 6 show the benefits of being in a copreneurial business. From these results, it is clear that in a copreneurial business, there is a clear distribution of tasks between partners. For example, participant 3 explained that her husband handles the admin issues in the business such as renewing a business license while she runs the business daily. The time she will have to

travel to renew the business license and stand in long lines, was instead dedicated to the business. Because in Lesotho a lot of things are still done in person as opposed to online, one must always avoid the risk of wasting time. Therefore, the type of support her spouse offers is a unique type of support that the family can provide. Results further show that in copreneurships, it is not always the case that entrepreneurs focus on their networks to enhance the success of their businesses. Instead, entrepreneurs have to borrow resources from other people's networks to enhance the success of their businesses. In this case, participant 6 tapped into her husband's networks to enhance the success of her business. This is a different type of instrumental support that is sometimes not formally documented.

Furthermore, participants in this study also received instrumental support from their family and friends. Participant 30 explained that her aunt shared business knowledge with her and that helped her in managing her business. Knowledge sharing has been found to enhance the competitive advantage of the business which in turn enhances the success of the business (Xu, Quaddus & Gao, 2014). Participant 24 in this study also received support from her family and friends through advertising her products and her business. She explained that word of mouth was used to reach her customers. Family and friends referred people to her business and that attracted more customers to it. Therefore, this is another unique type of instrumental support that participants received from their families and friends. This is especially because most businesses always have to incur some advertising costs to attract customers into their businesses. When more customers buy from her business, the sales of the business will increase thus enhancing the success of her business.

These results contribute to the family embeddedness theory which shows how family provides a vital resource that entrepreneurs can tap into to foster the success of their businesses. Results show that entrepreneurs cannot always focus on their networks to enhance the success of their businesses. Instead, there are times when entrepreneurs have to tap into other people's resources to enhance the success of their businesses. Participant 6 used her husband's networks to address the watering problem she had in her business. This study also found that instead of spending money on marketing, the family can also act as marketing tools for the business. In the case of participant 24, her family and friends bought products she sold and they also referred other people to her business which helped to attract more customers to buy. When more customers buy from her business, the sales will increase and there will be more money made to cover the overall business expenses as well as also provide the family needs. Moreover, results also recognise the role of women in copreneurial businesses which overrules the patriarchal practices that consider the man as the leader and head of the family who is solely responsible for decision making, while women are commonly confined to household tasks. Results show that the success of a copreneurial business depends on clearly defined roles between the copreneurial couples based on their strengths. Just as participant 3 explained, she shared tasks with her husband. She managed the daily operations of the business while the husband handled the business admin work which includes renewing their business license.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study focused on the lived experience of family support from the perspective of women entrepreneurs in Lesotho and explained the types of family support the women received which helped them succeed in their businesses. The findings of the interviews have shed light on the importance of family support to women who own and run their building within the Basotho context and culture, which had the greatest impact on the success of their businesses. The findings of this study dispel the notion that small businesses owned by women are less important to the economic development and growth. Therefore, support has to be offered to women entrepreneurs in Lesotho, such as financial assistance, training, mentoring from successful entrepreneurs, and opportunities for direct observation of successful businesses.

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#### AUTHORS

Maletlatso Motsomotso, (PhD)

Email: [motsomotso.maleh@gmail.com](mailto:motsomotso.maleh@gmail.com)