

**Deanship of Graduate Studies
Al-Quds University**



**The Role of Social Networks in The Success of
Palestinian Female Entrepreneurs' Businesses**

Amani Hamzah Abuillan

M.Sc. Thesis

Jerusalem- Palestine

2023- 1444

The Role of Social Networks in The Success of Palestinian Female Entrepreneurs' Businesses

Prepared By:

Amani Hamzah Abuillan

B.Sc.: Applied Science University – Amman, Jordan

Supervisor: Dr. Nidal Darwish

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of requirements for the
degree of Master of Business Administration/ Al-Quds
University

2023-1444



Thesis Approval

**The Role of Social Networks in The Success of Palestinian Female
Entrepreneurs' Businesses**

Prepared by: Amani Hamzah Abuillan

Student's ID: 1910113

Supervisors: Dr. Nidal Darwish

Master Thesis submitted and accepted, Date: 04-06-2023

The names and signatures of examining committee members are follows:

1. Head of committee Dr. Nidal Darwish :

2. Internal examiner Dr. Mohammad Abdalrahman:

3. External examiner Dr. Abeer Istanbouli :

Jerusalem- Palestine

2023- 1444

Declaration

I certify that this thesis is submitted for the degree of Master, in the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this study (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed: 

Name: Amani Abuillan

Date: 04/06/2023

Dedication

To my beloved parents, who did not hesitate for a moment to support and encourage me towards education and development. The encouragement they provided is unmatched!

To my professors who taught me throughout my master's journey, especially my supervisor Dr. Nidal Darwish, who supported me and provided valuable advice and guidance that had the greatest impact on completing this master's thesis.

Acknowledgment

First, I would like to thank the female entrepreneurs who participated in the study and found the time for sharing their stories with us. We found every story inspiring. Furthermore, we hope that more female entrepreneurs would share their stories to inspire other future entrepreneurs.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Nidal Darwish for his support, constructive criticism, and suggestions which guided me throughout this study. His wisdom and suggestions have played a big part to the accomplishment of this Thesis.

Last, but not least, I am thankful to my family for their support and love.

List Of Definitions:

Entrepreneurship: the formation of new businesses, creation of self-employment and the discovery of opportunities, such as intrapreneurship, corporate, sustainable, and social entrepreneurship (Fayolle & Klandt, 2006; Lans, Biemans, Mulder, & Verstegen, 2010).

Networks: are groups of people with a main character and all the other individuals with whom the main character has direct and indirect connections (Aldrich, Zimmer 1986).

Strong-ties Networks: group of people whom an entrepreneur has a close informal relationship with, particularly family members and friends (Greve & Salaff, 2003; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Jack, 2005). These ties are usually made of regular frequent and lengthy interactions, and constant unexpressed reciprocity between members (Aldrich & Sakano, 1995; Jack, 2005).

Weak-ties Networks: people with whom the entrepreneur does not have a strong personal relationship with and those characterized of short-lived duration and formal contacts, such as people who belong to a similar group as the entrepreneur, friends of friends, or acquaintances (Granovetter, 1982; Aldrich & Sakano, 1995).

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of social networks in the of projects managed by Palestinian women entrepreneurs by shedding light on the role of social relations and their impact on the projects owned by Palestinian female entrepreneurs, and by understanding the nature of the strong and weak social ties of Palestinian entrepreneurs and how they affect the entrepreneurial activities of female entrepreneurs activities of female entrepreneurs, in addition to exploring the obstacles and difficulties faced by Palestinian women entrepreneurs in taking advantages from their social networks and the challenges in expanding these networks.

This research used a qualitative approach and is based on the semi-structured interviews, allowing for a deeper insight into the study area through a deep analysis of a group of eight Palestinian women entrepreneurs selected according to the geographical distribution of the West Bank. After conducting interviews with them, it was concluded that the social relations of the Palestinian entrepreneur have a clear impact on the management and success of female entrepreneurs' projects, and this impact was represented first by strong social relations (parents, sibling, close friends, relatives) that in most cases had a positive role by providing psychological, emotional and financial support, In addition to sharing experiences and knowledge, often as business partners, secondly, weak social relations (professionals, acquaintances, customers), which the results indicated that these relationships contributed to the success of entrepreneurial projects through the promotion and feedback of products, create new opportunists, in addition to the provision of various services.

The most significant obstacles facing female entrepreneurs in Palestine are male dominance, society judgment, and customs and tradition. In addition to obtaining funds to finance their business as a second-place obstacle.

Upon those findings the study recommended that institutions (incubators, financial, etc.) should play a role in providing counselling and training services for women, encouraging a positive organizational culture for entrepreneurs, create events for women entrepreneurs to help the exchange of information and experience and expanding their network. In another hand Policy makers in Palestine should pay more attention toward women economic and social empowerment, aactivating the participation of women in decision-making related to entrepreneurship and supporting women's projects, and not limiting their participation to participation only. urged Palestinian educational institutions to adopt the process of enriching the Palestinian curriculum and implements actions to raise awareness among women entrepreneurs, particularly those located in the districts and rural areas, on the key policies and laws related to land, inheritance and succession.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Networks, Strong-ties Networks, Weak-ties Networks.

دور الشبكات الاجتماعية في نجاح مشاريع رائدات الأعمال الفلسطينيات

اعداد: امانى ابوعلان

اشراف: الدكتور نضال درويش

ملخص:

استخدم هذا العمل البحثي نهجا نوعيا يستند إلى المقابلات شبه المنظمة، مما يتيح نظرة أعمق على منطقة الدراسة من خلال تحليل عميق لمجموعة من الرياديات الفلسطينيات والبالغ عددهم ثمانية تم اختيارهم وفقا لتوزيع المناطق الجغرافية في الضفة الغربية. وبعد اجراء المقابلات معهم تم التوصل إلى أن العلاقات الاجتماعية للريادية الفلسطينية لها تأثير واضح على إدارة مشاريع الرياديات ونجاحها، وتمثل هذا التأثير اولا بالعلاقات الاجتماعية القوية (الوالدين، الاخوة، الاصدقاء المقربون، الأقارب) التي في معظم الحالات كان لها دورا إيجابي من خلال تقديم الدعم النفسي والعاطفي والمالي، بالإضافة الى مشاركة الخبرات والمعرفة وفي كثير من الأحيان كشركاء في العمل، ثانياً العلاقات الاجتماعية الضعيفة (المحترفون، المعارف، الزبائن) والتي اشارت النتائج إلى أن هذه العلاقات ساهمت في نجاح المشاريع رياديات من خلال الترويج والتقييم للمنتجات بالإضافة الى تقديم الخدمات المختلفة

وأشارت النتائج ان أهم العقبات التي تواجه رائدات الأعمال في فلسطين وتحد من استغلال روابطهم الاجتماعية هي هيمنة الذكور، واحكام المجتمع، والعادات والتقاليد، بالإضافة إلى صعوبة الحصول على الأموال لتمويل مشاريعهم كعقبة اضافي

بناء على هذه النتائج، أوصت الدراسة بضرورة تقوية دور مختلف المؤسسات في تقديم المشورة والتدريب والخدمات اللازمة للنساء، تشجيع وتسهيل إقامة المنتديات وتنسيق اللقاءات بين الرياديات للمساعدة في تبادل المعلومات والخبرات وتوسيع شبكتهن. من ناحية أخرى، يجب على صانعي القرار في فلسطين اعطاء المزيد من الاهتمام نحو تمكين المرأة اقتصاديا واجتماعيا، وتفعيل مشاركة المرأة في صنع القرار المتعلق بريادة الأعمال ودعم المشاريع النسائية، وعدم حصر مشاركتها في المشاركة فقط. حث المؤسسات التعليمية الفلسطينية على تبني عملية إثراء المناهج الفلسطينية وتنفيذ إجراءات لزيادة الوعي بين رائدات الأعمال، ولا سيما في المناطق والمناطق الريفية، بشأن السياسات والقوانين الرئيسية المتعلقة بالأرض والميراث والإرث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الريادة، الروابط الاجتماعية، الروابط الضعيفة، الروابط القوية

Table of contents		
	Dedication	III
	Acknowledgment	VI
	Abstract	VII
	Arabic Abstract	VIII
1	CHAPTER 1 Background	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Problem statement	3
1.3	The Purpose of Research	4
1.4	Research Questions	4
1.5	Research Variables	5
1.6	Research Model	5
1.7	Research Importance:	6
2	CHAPTER 2 Literature Review	7
2.1	Introduction	7
2.2	Entrepreneurship	8
2.2.1	Female Entrepreneurship	9
2.2.2	Women Entrepreneurs in Palestine	11
2.2.3	Female Entrepreneurs' Challenges in Palestine	13
2.3	Role of Social Networks	17
2.3.1	Role of Social Networks among Entrepreneurs	23
2.3.2	Entrepreneurial Social Networks in Palestine	26
2.4	Previous Studies	27
2.4.1	Supporting Literature sources on social networks and Entrepreneurship	27
2.4.2	Other Researcher's Views on social networks and female entrepreneurship	31
2.4.3	previous studies review	33
2.4.4	The extent to which the researcher benefited from previous studies	33
3	chapter 3: Methodology	34
3.1	Introduction	34
3.2	Research Approach	34
3.3	Research Design	35
3.4	Research Instrument	35
3.5	:Research Population and Sample	36
3.6	Research Participant Profiles	38
4	CHAPTER 4 Research Findings	40
4.1	Introduction	40
4.2	Answering the research questions	41
5	CHAPTER 5 Conclusion and Implications	54
5.1	Conclusion	54

5.2	Limitations of the Study	56
5.3	Implications	56
	References	58
	APPENDICES	69

CHAPTER 1

Background

1.1 Introduction:

The Palestine entrepreneurial ecosystem comprises a number of factors including; organizations' funding, government support, moral support, legal frameworks, media, and research organizations among others. It is thus possible for a number of valid breakthroughs to be ensured bearing in mind the political difficulties and among the startups and technology sectors. The Palestinian entrepreneurship ecosystem is a quickly evolving and dynamic environment that is categorized by a range of trials and occasions. The region has a rich past of entrepreneurship, and in current years, there has remained a growing interest in endorsing and supporting entrepreneurship as a means of generating economic growth and development. One of the key encounters facing Palestinian businesspersons is the political and economic unpredictability in the region. The constant conflict with Israel and the lack of admission to resources and markets have shaped a challenging environment for entrepreneurs to function in. Despite these mishaps, however, there is a rising community of entrepreneurs who are working to overcome these problems and build fruitful businesses. (Cesaroni, et al., 2016).

The Palestinian entrepreneurship ecosystem has encompassed a range of actors, counting entrepreneurs, stockholders, incubators, accelerators, and sustenance organizations. These actors work collectively to support the growth of new businesses and to deliver entrepreneurs the incomes and support they necessary to succeed. One of the key assets of the Palestinian entrepreneurship ecosystem is the robust sense of community and teamwork that exists among entrepreneurs. There is a rising network of support administrations and incubators that are occupied to provide entrepreneurs with admission to training, mentorship, and funding opportunities. These governments include accelerators such as Gaza Sky Geeks and the Ramallah-based Palestinian Women's Business Forum, which have been fruitful in helping to incubate and promote new startups. In addition to these sustenance governments, there is also a rising network of angel investors and undertaking capitalists who are absorbed in capitalizing in Palestinian startups. These investors are involved in the region's young

and highly cultured population, as well as its rising reputation as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship. Despite these encouraging developments, however, there are still important challenges facing Palestinian entrepreneurs. Access to capital remains a major barrier for numerous entrepreneurs, and the absence of a formal supervisory environment can make it problematic for startups to entice investors. In addition, the continuing battle and political randomness in the region can create doubt and make it problematic for industries to operate. (Istanbuli, 2016).

Social networks play a key role in the accomplishment of women entrepreneurs in Palestine. These networks offer a range of aids, including admittance to resources, knowledge distribution, and emotional support. One of the main aids of social networks for women entrepreneurs in Palestine is admission to capital. Many women entrepreneurs in Palestine deficiency the financial resources and provider networks that are essential to introducing and growing a fruitful business. By linking with other entrepreneurs and members of their public through social networks, they can tap into a variety of resources, including funding, mentorship, and business guidance. Social networks can aid entrepreneurs contact funding by linking them with investors, lenders, and other bases of capital. By leveraging their connections and building relations with members of their network, entrepreneurs can surge their odds of securing the funding they need to promote or grow their businesses (Salem & Beduk, 2021).

Networks are made up of nodes or ties and the connections that connect them. In the social sciences, networks are represented by social topics (individuals, groups, organizations, etc.) that are connected by some form of relationship (Leyden and Link, 2015). Ties, according to Fayolle et al. (2016), can be strong or weak. Strong links exist within a limited group of people who have long-term relationships, they are defined by a high level of commitment to the connection, frequent contact, and an implied sense of reciprocity. In the short term, weak bonds exist, contact is less regular, there is less trust, and the relationship is more ambiguous. Entrepreneurial social networks are described as the ties and contacts that an entrepreneur has with other people. These interactions enable the identification of opportunities and facilitate the utilization of resources, both of which can be sources of competitive

(Barnir and Smith, 2002). According to Fayolle et al. (2016), the entrepreneurial process is based on a fluid network of ongoing social contacts that facilitate and establish connections between prospective entrepreneurs, resources, and opportunities. According to these authors, networks facilitate the development and growth of businesses by giving access to information, guidance, and financing, as well as vital relationships.

In terms of social network scope, Teixeira et al. (2018), discovered that female networks were very homogeneous, which limited access to other platforms. A probable explanation for this could be related to these women's time availability since they often struggle to interact outside of their work and family situations, which consume the majority of their time. Another explanation offered by Rutashobya, Allan and Nilsson (2009) for the lack of diversity in women's networks is the historical social background reflected in the image of the man as the provider. Men establish networks with mostly weak ties outside the family, whereas women, who have stronger bonds to their families, form networks with predominantly strong ties. The issue that arises from this aspect of women's networks is that the less dispersed a woman's network is, the less ability she has to collect information valuable for establishing a competitive edge.

Finally, scholars have suggested that entrepreneurship is a social process continuously interacting with the surrounding society, which makes it vital to study the phenomenon in a specific context (Bourne, 2010). Since there are a large number of researchers and writers interested in studying social networks and their positive impact on women entrepreneurs outside Palestine, this study comes to address the relationship between social networks and the success of women entrepreneurs in Palestine.

1.2 Problem statement:

Social influence is exerted via a social network, which is made up of individuals and interpersonal ties that link the network's members. Weak ties are the most crucial source of fresh information or innovations reaching far-flung sections of the network. Social media and online social networks are playing critical roles in the

building of social networks in the information era (Wang, Hoi, Ester, Bu, & Chen, 2017).

Normative limitations and social views, which may be influenced by cultural or religious beliefs, might make it difficult for women to find work or establish their businesses. Few women can build their professional life on networks in the same way that men do, leaving them at a disadvantage in terms of backup and support, particularly at the start-up stage (Jamali, 2009).

The problems that female entrepreneurs confront in Palestine are similar to those that others encounter across the globe. Some of these hurdles are tied to entrepreneurial business issues, while others are social and personal issues. One of the most significant challenges for Palestinian female entrepreneurs is the lack of networks and connections that men have, making it difficult for them to succeed in any business.

The role of women in society is very strong and needs to be supported by all parties. Women are considered as a meaningful power besides men. So, it is necessary to improve the legal environment, create a business opportunities environment, and create a positive social environment. While the idea that social networks may help people start businesses isn't new, there hasn't been much research done on how social networks might help women start businesses, particularly in Palestine.

1.3 The Purpose of Research:

The purpose of the current study is to understand the role of social networks (strong and weak ties) on entrepreneurs' female success, and attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. Understand the impact of social networks on the success of female entrepreneurs' business.
2. address the obstacles that Palestinian entrepreneurs face in in taking advantage of their social networks

1.4 Research Questions:

Based on the problem statement, the following main question has been formulated:

1. How and to what extent Palestinian female entrepreneur’s success rely on social networks?

Following the main research question, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

a. How and to what extent strong ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs’ business?

b. How and to what extent weak ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs’ business?

2. What are the obstacles that Palestinian entrepreneurs face in in taking advantage of their social networks?

1.5 Research Variables:

Independent variables: social networks (strong ties network and weak ties network)

Dependent variable: the success of female entrepreneurs.

1.6 Research Model:



Figure 1: Study Model

1.7 Research Importance:

1.7.1 The Applied importance:

The continuity of female entrepreneurship and their business vital for all economies, especially the Palestinian economy. In order to fully understand the experiences of female entrepreneurs and female business respectively, the social context surrounding them needs to be understood as well, so it is hoped that the results and recommendations of the current study will benefit the female entrepreneurs and to policy makers, government and public institutions that seek to develop and support this type of companies.

1.7.2 The scientific importance:

As for the scientific importance, it is a new topic that has not been studied sufficiently, especially in the Middle East and the Arab countries, where this study contributes mainly to the literature of female entrepreneurship on the one hand and will be considered as an important reference in the entrepreneurship of Palestinian female on the other. we hope that this study will be a scientific addition to the Arab library and a reference for all those interested and researchers in this topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:

Women are important contributors to a country's economic growth and development. Women's entrepreneurship has emerged as a prominent tool for increasing economic and social wellbeing, especially in developing countries. Because no economy can function without the involvement of all qualified working individuals, the topic of female entrepreneurship is gaining traction across the world. Women's engagement is increasingly seen as one of the most important factors to economic progress. Women's empowerment via entrepreneurship is essential for a contemporary developed economy since it improves their capacities and raises their standing in the family and community. ([Cesaroni, et al., 2016](#)).

Typically, the man is the breadwinner in Palestinian culture, not the female, and families adjust accordingly. As a result, when circumstances force them to care for their families, women in Palestinian Territories encounter difficulties ([Istanbuli, 2016](#)). One of the key contests facing female businesspersons in Palestine is the communal and societal attitudes on women in business. Women are frequently viewed as existence less capable than men when it originates to starting and operating a business, and they may face important confrontation from family memberships and others in their public who do not support their entrepreneurial ambitions. In addition to these cultural norms, female entrepreneurs similarly face a range of applied challenges, such as incomplete access to funding, training, and mentorship. Many women lack the financial resources and sustenance networks that are necessary to launch and grow a fruitful business, and they may struggle to find the data and guidance they need to navigate the multifaceted entrepreneurial landscape ([Qozat, 2018](#)).

Despite these challenges, however, there are a rising number of female entrepreneurs in Palestine who are trying to overcome these difficulties and build fruitful businesses. These women are frequently driven by a sturdy sense of drive and a desire to generate positive change in their societies. One of the key assets of female entrepreneurship in Palestine is the rising network of sustenance organizations and

creativities that are absorbed on supporting women in business. These governments deliver a range of services, such as exercise, mentorship, networking chances, and access to capital. For instance, the Ramallah-based Palestinian Women's Business Forum delivers a range of providing facilities to female businesspersons, including mentorship, training, and admission to funding. Furthermore, to these support governments, there are also a rising number of role models and achievement stories that are serving to motivate and motivate the next generation of female entrepreneurs. Women such as Mariam Abuhaideri, the creator of the social enterprise Sindyanna of Galilee, and Nisreen Musleh, the founder of the tech startup EonTech, are leading the way in representing what is possible for female businesspersons in Palestine (Abu-Saifan, 2012).

The main advantages of women's participation in entrepreneurial activities include poverty reduction for women in countries where job alternatives are restricted, effective labor utilization and improved self-sufficiency of women, and eventually an improvement in the quality of life. Women's entrepreneurship is a growing issue that has piqued the interest of policymakers, subject matter experts, and academics due to these advantages. Nonetheless, research on women's entrepreneurial efforts in impoverished countries, such as Palestine, is sparse. Female entrepreneurship research in the private sector is equally scarce. (Qozat, 2018).

2.2 Entrepreneurship:

The process of entrepreneurship may be considered as a procedure that addresses significant social requirements while also igniting social change, rather than concentrating just on immediate financial benefit for the entrepreneurs. Despite the increasing focus on "opportunity," no broadly agreed definition of entrepreneurial skill exists. According to the European Crucial Competence Framework, the ability to put ideas into action is a key competence of entrepreneurship. This broad viewpoint entails being open to new chances, exercising creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve objectives. The dynamic process of recognizing and/or generating possibilities is a social construct that exists only inside people's minds. Regardless of the constraints, entrepreneurship is the process of

bringing innovative ideas to market or substantially applying them inside organizations. Entrepreneurs are not born; they are individuals who have grown to be imaginative, risk-averse and proactive, and who do things no matter what prevailing conditions exist (Salem & Beduk, 2021).

Entrepreneurship is a very recent academic discipline. Despite decades of academic research, defining an entrepreneur remains challenging. It's a contentious term with several interpretations (O'Hara, 2014). Entrepreneurship is widely agreed to include not just the traditional emphasis on the formation of new businesses, but also the creation of self-employment and the discovery of opportunities, such as intrapreneurship, corporate, sustainable, and social entrepreneurship (Fayolle & Klandt, 2006; Lans, Biemans, Mulder, & Versteegen, 2010). Individuals may work as entrepreneurs independently or as part of a corporate structure, establishing new firms or starting renewal or innovation within existing ones, producing economic, social, and cultural value (Hoogendoorn, Pennings, & Thurik, 2010; Shane, 2012).

A significant difference exists between a typical businessperson and an entrepreneur who relies on insight and initiative. Microbusinesses that operate on a perfectly reputable patterns, as well as polished work, are not considered entrepreneurship. The observations and initiatives of the businessman and the entrepreneur are what distinguish them. The entrepreneur notices market gaps that other people don't and acts before others do. Entrepreneurship is neither a quality nor a personality trait. Relatively, it is a methodical examination for ways to alter and exploit the situation. It looks to the existing market, dismissing what was already there and focusing on what the market lacks to meet its wants.

Entrepreneurship is a donor-driven industry, with the biggest levels of funding coming from bilateral, multilateral, and corporate donors. However, stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem will probably work together, in the long run, to ensure that this sector can function and expand independently and sustainably. To accomplish this, attempts have been made to cultivate a long-term entrepreneurial culture among Palestinian youth and institutions, especially via the formation of the government-run Higher Council for Excellence and Innovation. Entrepreneurship is regarded as an "active" industry in Palestine. In Palestine's tiny economy, this is owing to a large number of competing businesses in the same sector. The nation, which has faced several

obstacles to economic progress, expects that entrepreneurship can aid in the improvement of economic and social conditions ([Qozat, 2018](#)).

2.2.1 Female Entrepreneurship:

In international development, the lack of acceptable labor possibilities for women is a serious obstacle. When viewed through the lens of gender equality, SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) No. 8 on “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”, is especially important: women and young women have fewer labor market opportunities than men and face more structural barriers to decent work. SDG 5 has been designated as gender equality and women's empowerment, emphasizing the significance of women's access to economic resources and involvement in economic, political, and social areas of life. Women's employment is especially important in the Middle East, which has not only the highest female unemployment rate among regional averages but also huge gender differences in employment and labor force participation ([International Labour Office, 2017](#)).

Women's business development is a critical component of closing gender disparities in the labor market and promoting female empowerment. Women's economic empowerment and participation in the work market have a wide range of beneficial effects on family and community well-being. Indeed, an increasing amount of research suggests that greater gender equality boosts economic development. In the Middle East, boosting female labor force participation rates is expected to boost family wages and have a substantial influence on poverty reduction as well as household spending in education and health. Given the scarcity of wage jobs, particularly in the formal sector, women's entrepreneurship growth will be critical in closing gender disparities, particularly as women-led small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) have a great potential to generate new jobs for other women ([Kühn, et al., 2017](#)).

Women's entrepreneurship promotion programs must address the multiple barriers that women confront while beginning and running a firm. Gender-related conventions, attitudes, and prejudices are among them. The concept of creating job prospects for women, as well as adolescents and other disadvantaged groups, via the growth of entrepreneurship has grown in popularity among international development organizations. Many initiatives have been developed in recent years to help women

overcome the various barriers that hinder them from beginning a company. Typically, these interventions attempt to provide entrepreneurial skills via training programs and/or financial assistance in the form of grants and loans. Their objectives include assisting budding entrepreneurs in running their enterprises and organizations sustainably and profitably. However, more recent research has underlined the significance of changing less tangible input variables that disempower women as entrepreneurs, such as associated views, goals, and societal conventions (Patel, 2014).

2.2.2 Women Entrepreneurs in Palestine:

Researchers are studying the impact of women entrepreneurship on job generation and creativity throughout the globe. Since a variety of factors impact a general societal economic growth and development, including entrepreneurship, women's engagement in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial efforts is regarded as one of the most essential factors that may help communities flourish and flourish.

Palestinian culture, like other male-dominated, patriarchal Middle Eastern countries, is recognized for gender injustice and inequality, but owing to its historical backdrop, the reality for Palestinian women differs significantly from that of its geographically and culturally nearest neighbors. They confront caste-based social and economic disadvantages, as well as the unique obstacles of Israeli occupation, prompting many foreign relief groups to concentrate on Palestinian women's needs to relieve their suffering via education and development initiatives (Istanbuli, 2016).

Although there is less literature on female entrepreneurship in Palestine, the country's economy is unusual in that it is under occupation. Israeli restrictions have the greatest impact on Palestinian male employment in Israel, raising male unemployment rates. To sustain the family, this may encourage women to take up part-time jobs or engage in necessity-driven entrepreneurial activity. Thousands of people have been killed in Gaza's battles. Women's safety and well-being are jeopardized by this death toll (Sultan, 2016).

Because of Palestine's political context, female entrepreneurs may face more challenges. The occupation of Palestine by Israel is a major factor in company failure; employment losses are prevalent, particularly in women-run firms. Many of them are

unable to obtain raw materials due to Israeli locomotive limits inside a governorate or between governorates, as well as interstate barriers that result in higher transportation costs due to the use of alternative routes and the impediment to marketing their products, particularly for women who rely on others to market their products. Women who own grocery stores face unfair competition from black market sales of low-cost Israeli items. In other cases, restrictions have a particularly negative impact on women working in the crafts industry, particularly in tourist regions like Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Women will be discouraged from pursuing entrepreneurship as a result of the limitations on available options without risk or danger to them.([Sultan, 2016](#)).

Because of various political and social developments, as well as the necessity for family support to better economic living circumstances, the position of Palestinian women has evolved. Women are increasingly pursuing advanced, professional, and technical education throughout time. In addition, their share of the entire workforce is growing. Women, on the other hand, have several challenges when it comes to joining and running a company. Women encounter extra hurdles and roadblocks as a result of their gender. Working moms have additional time, resources, and energy constraints. Women entrepreneurs' rising success demonstrates that, despite the odds, they are resourceful and capable of achieving success. Women often possess talents and natural abilities that are beneficial in the workplace. Women are more likely to be good networkers, barterers, and multitaskers. Mothers are frequently adept at allocating and planning, skills they depend on to maintain their households in check. Developing a strong business network, discovering new work-life balancing techniques, and taking inspiration from other powerful women entrepreneurs may help women entrepreneurs attain new levels of success. Palestinian women entrepreneurs play an important role in the growth and development of their communities and countries. Unemployment, low income, a lack of career opportunities, and community needs may all be alleviated by female entrepreneurs ([Khalili, et al.,2018](#)).

2.2.3 Female Entrepreneurs' Challenges in Palestine:

There is no rule in the Arab world that forbids women from working or owning a company. The corporate world, on the other hand, is skewed heavily in favor of women. As a result, women entrepreneurs confront a slew of obstacles and limitations that prevent them from exploiting their economic engagement, and, consequently, their contribution rates lag below men's. Nonetheless, many developments have occurred in the position of Palestinian women, all aimed towards enhancing women's overall standing. More women are choosing entrepreneurship as a professional path, therefore contributing to their country's development and progress. External challenges to Palestinian women entrepreneurs, like those experienced by other Arab women entrepreneurs, include an absence of funding, segregation from a masculine domain of informal networks, and the societal insight that owning a company is a masculine action. Cultural norms, values, and practices are the most common informal obstacles (Sultan, 2016).

Due to the political and economic situation in Palestine, small businesses are considered the backbone of the economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Female entrepreneurship is critical for prospective job generation and economic growth throughout the world. Women, on the other hand, encounter several obstacles at all stages when it comes to starting a business.

The most significant problems confronting female entrepreneurs, not just in Palestine but throughout the globe, including starting a firm, getting funds and securing loans, finding mentors, and finding business partners. Although the number of financial services for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has increased, it is more difficult for women than males to get the requisite guarantees for obtaining funds or loans. Many commercial banks and financing organizations need a high degree of guarantees to make the loan. Unfortunately, most Palestinian women do not have access to assurances such as immovable properties. Another issue is that most modest loans tailored for women are applied for by the husband and other male members of the family in the names of their wives. As a result, the loans do not directly benefit women (Qazzaz, et al., 2005).

Micro and small enterprises in Palestine have experienced a number of obstacles to their growth and ability to create jobs. Political and economic factors stifle women's entrepreneurial activities and make it difficult for their firms to expand or survive. Furthermore, they operate in a poor legal environment with unproductive sources of funding, limited resources for up-scaling, limited marketing capabilities, and limited access to markets and technology due to the lack of a law that recognizes or defines their existence, as well as the absence of a legal framework for operations ([Atyan, et al., 2009](#)).

The problems that female entrepreneurs confront in Palestine are similar to those that others encounter across the globe. Some of these hurdles are tied to entrepreneurial/business issues, while others are related to social and personal issues. One of the most significant challenges for Palestinian businesses in general, and particularly female entrepreneurs, is the present unpredictable political and economic situation. The Israeli occupation's restrictions on people's mobility have prevented many Palestinian entrepreneurs from traveling and attending entrepreneurship events and training not just overseas, but also in areas between the West Bank and Gaza. This issue has a greater impact on female entrepreneurs since it is far more difficult for women to travel. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation has hampered the development of numerous agricultural and industrial initiatives by refusing to provide licenses to investors seeking to create productive firms. Licenses were only issued to companies that do not constitute a danger to Israeli manufacturers or rivals([Qozat, 2018](#)).

Women entrepreneurs in Palestine are defined by the fact that they are primarily motivated by need, their economic condition, and extreme poverty, and they are more inclined to contemplate establishing conventional ventures. According to most surveys, women would need financial aid if they wanted to establish a company. This shows that access to financing is likely to be a substantial barrier to female entrepreneurship in the Palestinian Territories ([Qazz, 2005](#)). Financial and familial support are the most important requirements for women who want to start a company. One of the most pressing issues confronting Palestinian businesswomen is the social concerns and traditional role of women related to the structure of Palestinian society. It, to create and operate a successful company, women want a supportive sociocultural environment, a legal environment, and the know-how to do so ([Sadeq, et al., 2011](#)).

Challenges are especially tough to overcome for female entrepreneurs in Palestine, and numerous hurdles exist due to the unique character of the Palestinian predicament. Financing issues, gender discrimination, and exclusion, and societal attitudes toward company owners are just a few examples. Surprisingly, these issues are informal and founded on socio-cultural perspectives, societal norms, and conventions (Sultan, 2016).

Although the Palestinian Authority's persistent attempts to promote women entrepreneurship, Palestinian successful entrepreneurs in Palestine face a range of challenges, both specific to their situation (business training, marketing guidance, and access to capital) and at the level of business legislation. The main constraints confronting women entrepreneurs in Palestine are a lack of self-confidence, access to capital and markets, deeply ingrained cultural attitudes, economic challenges, regional barriers, and a lack of product development support, business training and networks (including discounted marketing, packaging, and branding advice from consultants), technical support, coaching, and mentoring. Women need significant help to become essential players in the Palestinian economy, providing financial support to their families and investing in their communities while working efficiently in a very unpredictable political and economic climate. They must have self-assurance, a positive view on life, and a realization that nothing can stop them from achieving their goals. Foundations should be established to assist Palestinian female entrepreneurs in achieving their aims (Khalili et al., 2018).

When it comes to social issues, many female entrepreneurs face prejudice and limitations due to conventional gender stereotypes. When it comes to working or launching a new company in Palestine, women still confront typical cultural perspectives, especially in professions dominated by men, such as construction. According to a poll performed by the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) in 2014, around 67% of female respondents believe that cultural constraints in Palestine are the major cause for the low rates of female entrepreneurship. According to a recent study, cultural barriers are the biggest limiting issue for female entrepreneurs. When it comes to launching a firm, almost 28% of women business owners said that acquiring credibility and trust from others was a major concern. Women are also less likely to be promoted to higher positions and positions of economic decision-making in the workplace. Women are disproportionately concentrated in industries with lower

earnings, such as secretarial and administrative support employment. The typical perception of women's roles, particularly in rural regions and villages, is that they should concentrate on raising children and completing home chores. Women also lack the strong networks and connections that men do, making it difficult for them to succeed in any business. Mentorship is a vital support mechanism for women who are starting and running a company for the first time, especially given the business and societal hurdles discussed in the preceding sections. According to recent research on the challenges and possibilities that female entrepreneurs face in Gaza, there is a scarcity of professional mentors in this area who can assist female entrepreneurs in the early phases of their businesses and handle specific challenges later on. Furthermore, mentors may be able to assist female entrepreneurs in acquiring the skills required to do every day administrative work ([Althalathini, 2015](#)).

Building a strong entrepreneurial environment inside Palestine is serious to achieving the goals of enhancing economic advancement, innovation, and employment. All-important stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, policymakers, and support groups, must contribute and work together to achieve this. The Palestinian entrepreneurial ecosystem was regarded to be developing in 2016 compared to the previous five years, although it was still in its teenage era. This advancement is the outcome of the combined efforts of local and foreign companies in creating a comprehensive value chain environment for new business investment. This ecosystem offers entrepreneurs training programs for incubating start-ups and linking recent graduates to the private sector, allowing them to progress the phases of investment in their businesses and bring them to the next level of their development ([Qozat, 2018](#)).

According to studies, despite the hurdles, 65% of Palestinian women want to start a company. This propensity rises for those with certain demographic features, such as divorcees and those with low income, who are more prone to establish their firms. However, in general, Palestinian women are more inclined to establish a company in areas of the economy that are similar to their traditional occupations. The majority of the women reported creating and operating their enterprises in order to improve their living situations ([Qazzaz et al., 2005](#)).

The role of women in society is very strong and needs to be supported by all parties. Women are considered as a meaningful power besides men. So, it is necessary to

improve the legal environment, create a business opportunities environment, and create a positive social environment. These recommendations will be facilitating the environment in order to make women more efficient and effective. On other hand, the development of female entrepreneurs' capacities should be in the plan by improving professional and technical training, improving the educational system, supplying the best information and advice, and strengthening the entry of female entrepreneurs to markets. By doing all of these recommendations in Palestine women can take a breath in her life and go-ahead to gain positive values in order to make themselves the strong number which can't be changed.

2.3 Role of Social Networks among Entrepreneurs:

Networking is defined as a collection of interconnected connections that benefit all parties involved through sharing and distributing information and data, resources, and personal recommendations (Nziku & Struthers, 2017). Once the first cash has been obtained, this allows for the possibility of leveraging further resources. Social capital, institutional capital, and network capital are all terms that are often used in entrepreneurial literature. A social network is made up of a series of official and informal linkages between the primary actor and other players in a circle of connections and serves as a gateway for entrepreneurs to acquire access to the resources they need for company start-up, development, and success (D. M. Nziku & Struthers, 2017).

There are three distinct kinds of networks: Personal networks, for starters, are made up of individuals who are connected via family or sympathy (friends and acquaintances), mutual support, and information sharing. Social support, which is characterized by high degrees of intimacy and trust, is common in such networks. Second, instrumental networks rely on instrumental relationships like supply and sales connections, as well as public relations. Third, symbolic networks are a kind of organization in which members have shared goals or attitudes toward a common purpose, such as religious, political, ethnic, mentor, or moral goals. Symbolic networks may develop over time and eventually turn into a kind of mutual insurance (Drakopoulou Dodd, 2012).

Several studies have shown that networks are necessary for small firms to survive. In comparison to their male Counterparts, women entrepreneurs utilize their networks in quite different ways. This is true not just for launching a new firm, but also for growing and extending it. Access to cash was as critical as creating social networks for women entrepreneurs to increase their self-confidence. The amount of formal and informal networks that an entrepreneur has is the most prevalent metric of social capital employed in such research. This includes the number of individuals that are a part of such networks as well as the resources that they supply (Khayesi, George, & Antonakis, 2014; Kyalo & Kiganane, 2014).

The number of workers, profit, turnover, working capital, capacity utilization, and the number of years a firm has been in existence is all indicators of a company's business success. Through social networks, a business owner may get critical resources for his or her venture. Contacts with members of an entrepreneur's religious group, friends, co-ethnics, old classmates, and so on may assist supply resources (for example, information, financial capital, labor, equipment, and machinery). An entrepreneur's social networks may be both a hindrance and a boon to commercial success. First, since social networks incorporate social duties and responsibilities, resources from the business may be deducted to pay an owner's private commitments. Common instances include requests for money from members of the entrepreneur's family, previous classmates, neighbors, or pals. As a result, social media may stifle corporate development or even contribute to its demise. Second, social networks may stymie the progress of even successful enterprises. The key thing is that the extended family is mentioned. It is commonly understood that an entrepreneur's extended family not only has a beneficial impact on the business by supplying inputs (knowledge, labor, and cash), but it is also a burden. Particularly if an entrepreneur utilizes the company's financial resources to meet the requirements of his or her extended family, this resource depletion might stifle corporate development (Egbert, 2009).

Relationships allow businesses to provide value. Relationships with the environment are, in reality, a means of maturation as well as an opportunity to add long-term value and improve cash flow and resource stock. The purpose of a women's network is to provide a vital link between work, family, and community. Because of their flexibility and qualities, social media may provide new chances for female entrepreneurs and support the start-up of new firms. Furthermore, social media may help women succeed

in business by allowing them to showcase their networking skills and create virtual communities. Finally, it may be considered as caring for personal connections, which is important for businesswomen who, in most situations, must balance personal and professional obligations (Cesaroni, Demartini, & Paoloni, 2017).

Based on a vast body of literature and empirical results on the impact of social networks on entrepreneurial activity and success, we hypothesize that the four traits listed below have a major impact on the formation of resources for entrepreneurial effort (Kristiansen, 2004):

Number of Relations:

When it comes to the influence on the growth of social capital and entrepreneurial resources, the number of social relationships or network size is an evident determinant. Although the observed impact varies, the variable has been employed in various theoretical debates and empirical assessments. The most essential network attribute is the number of relationships, whether whole or partial. In the entrepreneurial process, increasing the number of connections gives you an edge since it increases the likelihood of reaching a certain resource.

Strength of Ties:

Strength and density can be used interchangeably, and they both have a big impact on business interactions. A number of factors can be used to evaluate the strength of connections, including the quantity of time actors devote together, the concentration of their emotions when they are together, the degree of trust and understanding among family members, the occurrence of contact, and the distance of time the assembly has existed. Connection power is related to the idea of "network intensity". In China, there is a link between the frequency of connections inside a network and the expansion of the entrepreneurs' businesses. Strong connections, also known as thick ties, are formed by family members or close friends and are marked by emotional content and time-consuming upkeep. They may be crucial, particularly for aspiring businesses. Because weak relationships provide access to a range of information resources, the quantity of weak links is crucial.

Variety or Diversity of Networks:

Different types of links in a social network provide diversity, and complementary ties with a lot of variation are seen in more effective networks than

those with overlapping connections. Contacts with a variety of social positions are referred to as diversity of connections. Diversity is crucial because it allows for fresh knowledge to be accessed from a variety of sources. As a result, entrepreneurs with more diverse personal networks get more unique information than those with more limited networks. A person with various high-status and rich persons in his or her network is thought to have access to numerous resources. We propose that network diversity includes a measure of social relationships' geographical extent; the larger the network, the greater the odds of picking up fresh ideas and information useful for company success.

Network Dynamics:

If ties develop and dissolve often, social networks are flexible and dynamic. Entrepreneurship including the commercial use of new information necessitates certain network structure dynamism and adaptability. The word dynamics also refers to how often new ideas or business-related challenges develop in current network relationships. Few other studies have looked at the impact of network dynamics on company success, although this is an area where tremendous insight into socioeconomic processes might be gained.

Strong-ties vs Weak-ties Networks:

Even though social networks include a wide range of characteristics, most writers differentiate between two kinds of network structures: "weak ties" and "strong ties." Weak ties are acquaintances (e.g., a friend of a friend) that act as bridges to larger groups of individuals, providing more unique information, resources, and viewpoints. Strong ties, on the other hand, are made up of people's close relationships, such as family and close friends, who may have overlapping knowledge but may give emotional support, trust, mutual respect, and idea reinforcement (Baybeck & Huckfeldt, 2002; Somma, 2009). Information dissemination and political interaction are more efficient via more distant networks. While weak ties aren't always heterogeneous, data shows that bigger networks are more diversified, connecting individuals to a variety of contacts and information sources (Eveland Jr & Hively, 2009). They share more unique information, chances, and options to engage, recruit and be recruited, all of which may spread quickly among individuals who may not know each other personally but are

linked by weaker links. People become aware of new political mobilization potential as a consequence (Gil de Zúñiga & Bachmann, 2013).

Strong ties an entrepreneur's network is made up of individuals with whom he or she has a deep personal connection, such as family members and friends. Deep, regular, and long exchanges, as well as implicit reciprocity between members, are typical of these ties. Ties that are weak Networks are made up of individuals with whom the entrepreneur does not have a direct personal connection and who have a shorter length and fewer interactions, such as members of a similar group, friends of friends, or acquaintances (Jack, 2005).

Strong ties proponents argue that solid links are formed as a result of ongoing communication between the parties and that sharing of resources, particularly tacit knowledge, gets simpler and even thrives as a result. In agreement, a long-term connection fosters trust, allowing the parties to talk freely while reducing opportunism and ambiguity. Family and friends can provide both emotional and practical assistance to the entrepreneur. Economically, support from family and friends is preferred since it is less expensive, has more information and accuracy, and stems from a long-term connection. Cohesive networks with deep ties provide both commitment and solidarity. Since of all of the above, strong ties are considered to be the first thing an entrepreneur arranges to secure resources because, in principle, the significant risks involved in beginning a firm make it feasible to get early funding only from reliable sources (Arregle et al., 2015; Fayolle, Jack, Lamine, & Chabaud, 2016; Martinez & Aldrich, 2011).

Weak ties, on the other hand, are made up of persons with whom the entrepreneur does not have a deep personal relationship or those with whom the entrepreneur has only short and infrequent interactions, such as members of a similar group, friends of friends, or acquaintances. Parties with weak ties may simply communicate rarely to share information when it is required, unlike strong ties, which need continual engagement. These ties were shown to be varied and heterogeneous. Later, other factors such as geography, employment, ethnicity, gender, age, and economic position were linked to this variety. Weak ties networks are key aspects of the social system because they allow for the easy flow of a variety of sources of information and opinions into society. Weak ties may also be relied upon to generate new business

ideas and arrange the connections necessary to get initiatives moving. The weaker ties an entrepreneur has in his or her network, the better his or her chances of success in the enterprise. This variety and heterogeneity, on the other hand, may lead to governance challenges, which can have a detrimental influence on entrepreneurial success (Burt, 2005; Lin, 2001; Martinez & Aldrich, 2011).

Individuals with weak ties have less social engagement with each other than close buddies (strong ties). In contrast, a network developed by an individual and his or her close pals would be "densely woven." The individual's self-esteem or uniqueness is crucial. A self-confident person will be able to bring together close pals who are often in contact with one another. They may then weave a closely-knit social system. Because these close friends will have additional acquaintances who can join the network, the network may be enlarged even more. As a result, the social structure that emerges from the whole chain will be very different from the initial social structure that the person with self-esteem began with (Nziku & Struthers, 2017).

Despite all of the benefits associated with strong ties, some argue that depending on personal relationships might lead to a lack of fresh relevant knowledge. Because of the cognitive closeness within the network, information gained from strong ties is redundant and readily foreseeable, making it less useful than information obtained from weak ties. Furthermore, weak ties are more important in providing access to different necessary information because they are market-based and have no personal connection. Likewise, scholars have claimed that weak relationships contribute to enhanced access to a broad circle of knowledge about new goods and market, sources of financing, innovations, possible business sites, and investments. To find enterprise prospects and closely evaluate the proposal throughout the venturing phase, an entrepreneur might depend on people within his or her weak relationships with complementary skills or capabilities. Strong ties, unlike weak ties, take a lot of work to form and maintain, which is why most individuals only have a few strong ties in their group. Many business owners, for example, have just three to ten significant ties in their networks. In light of the above, an entrepreneur's network should include connections from both strong and weak ties to establish robust, long-lasting, and effective social capital. Because research demonstrates that there is no one answer to the challenge of where to spend most of the limited resources that embryonic entrepreneurs often have, the only way to overcome it

is to focus on "something-in-between." (Arregle et al., 2015; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Fayolle et al., 2016; Jack, 2005).

The alternate path, dubbed "the strength of strong ties," highlights the relevance of homogeneity and reinforcement in spreading and adopting behaviors such as political mobilization in a social network. Information may spread quickly via lesser ties, but influence over behaviors like political action and protest participation is more difficult to achieve. Political participation, which is a vast cry from most people's everyday lives, needs social reinforcement and pressure. Frequent interactions with family members, spouses, and close friends have a dominant social impact on people's political behaviors, according to political socialization studies. This is due to the social weight and contagion that emotional connections among strong ties give for influencing individual behaviors and collective actions (Bond, 2012; Centola, 2011).

2.3.1 The Impact of Strong and Weak Ties on Female Entrepreneurs:

Women entrepreneurs in many underdeveloped nations are forced to join unique, sometimes customized social networks as a result of poverty and the necessity to provide for their children. Women entrepreneurs are well-known in industrialized nations, while their counterparts in poorer countries are less well-known. Women are more likely than males to create close friendships based on personal and symbolic networks rather than institutional networks. This may make it difficult for them to secure financial or non-financial business help (Essers & Benschop, 2009). Women do not put as much weight on "strong-ties networks" as males do, which might influence their beginning firms when seeking bank financing (Marlow, et al., 2003).

Emotional intensity, reciprocal confiding, and closeness are common characteristics of strong networks. One potential disadvantage of this is that family members may put excessive pressure on the success of their enterprises. This might be owing to the influence of kin ties, which are less likely to deliver financial or informational benefits than non-family ties. Weak-tie networks hinder female entrepreneurs seeking financial funding since many banks may not even know the (possible) female entrepreneur personally. Women's loan applications may suffer as a result of this (Marlow et al., 2003).

Weak ties can interconnect disparate social groupings, but they can encourage specialization and interdependency. Weak ties may play a bridging function that isn't

immediately apparent. Fragmented, disconnected, and incoherent social structures may result when weak ties exist. Because people of various races, ethnicities and geographical locations do not have equal access to information, innovations and new ideas will spread slowly. Small cohesive groups, which, although sharing a "culture," are not so closely knit as to prevent non-members from benefitting, allow the dispersion and spread of inventions or new ideas. Weak ties social networking are thought to be more common among lower socioeconomic groups (Jack, 2005).

Less-educated (and poorer) people were more prone than educated people to employ strong ties in their job hunt, particularly inside the labor market. This is because the better-educated somebody is, the less likely he or she is to be entrepreneurial. The majority of entrepreneurs have less formal schooling (Nziku, 2016).

Individuals who are members of weak or strong ties networks have the same goal in mind: to guarantee a minimal degree of economic stability for their members. Such ties, in the context of this research, are analogous to the mechanisms via which kinship and family strengthen economic stability in emerging African nations, not least due to their intrinsic reciprocity. Nonetheless, the poor's widespread usage of weak ties is often a reaction to economic constraints and fear. They think they have no other options, and they may rely too much on the adaptive nature of reciprocity networks (Marlow, 2006).

Strong ties increase the flow of information, trustworthiness, and, most importantly, influence. The majority of power is passed down via strong ties. Furthermore, although weak ties provide bridges through which innovations and new ideas may cross social group boundaries, the decision-making process will continue to be affected primarily by strong-ties networks inside groups.

According to the research, males are frequently better than women in establishing and maintaining professional relationships across many (primarily male) networks, both officially and informally. This is especially true in terms of financial institution access and finance in general. In contrast, since there are few female leaders or company owners, particularly in poor countries, there might be many productive women networks. However, these networks are frequently less visible (Marlow et al., 2003).

Normative limitations and social views, which may be influenced by cultural or religious beliefs, might make it difficult for women to find work or establish their businesses. Few women can build their professional life on networks in the same way that men do, leaving them at a disadvantage in terms of backup and support, particularly at the start-up stage. In Tanzania, for example, the majority of female entrepreneurs were found to be less effective in gaining access to support provided by corporate or governmental agencies charged with fostering small company growth (Jamali, 2009).

Social influence is exerted via a social network, which is made up of individuals and interpersonal ties that link the network's members. Weak ties are the most crucial source of fresh information or innovations reaching far-flung sections of the network. Social media and online social networks are playing critical roles in the building of social networks in the information era. Through the Internet, we may make new acquaintances and develop new relationships/ties without having to meet them in person (Wang, Hoi, Ester, Bu, & Chen, 2017). According to Kavanaugh, Reese, Carroll, and Rosson (2003), the advent of the Internet has aided in the strengthening and expansion of weak ties across social groupings. Though sociologists have highlighted the significance of weak ties, it is not prudent to dismiss the functions that strong ties play in our lives since strong ties should be more trustworthy than weak ties. On the other hand, various people may have a varying relative level of confidence in their strong and weak ties - one person may trust his or her strong ties more than another.

However, studies of social networks have shown that, although strong-ties networks promote solidarity and loyalty and give information at a low cost, they also limit access to varied information and points of view and rely heavily on reciprocity. Furthermore, an entrepreneur's network should have both strong and weak ties, since both have an impact on network function and structure. By merging these two ties, one may gain a greater pool of social capital (Fayolle et al., 2016; Martinez & Aldrich, 2011).

While the idea that social networks may help people start businesses isn't new, there hasn't been much research done on how weak ties might help women start businesses, especially in Sweden. Given its importance to job creation and economic growth, there is a huge need to encourage female entrepreneurship as the global

economy struggles to recover from the consequences of the 2007–2008 financial crisis in the United States (Sequeira, Mueller, & McGee, 2007).

2.3.2 Entrepreneurial Social Networks in Palestine:

Social networks play a key role in the accomplishment of women entrepreneurs in Palestine. These networks offer a range of aids, including admittance to resources, knowledge distribution, and emotional support. One of the main aids of social networks for women entrepreneurs in Palestine is admission to capital. Many women entrepreneurs in Palestine deficiency the financial resources and provider networks that are essential to introducing and growing a fruitful business. By linking with other entrepreneurs and members of their public through social networks, they can tap into a variety of resources, including funding, mentorship, and business guidance. Social networks can aid entrepreneurs contact funding by linking them with investors, lenders, and other bases of capital. By leveraging their connections and building relations with members of their network, entrepreneurs can surge their odds of securing the funding they need to promote or grow their businesses. In addition , by presence events and contributing in online groups, entrepreneurs can enlarge their networks, build brand consciousness, and attach with possible partners or collaborators.(Salem & Beduk, 2021).

In addition to access to capital, social networks also deliver chances for knowledge sharing. Many female entrepreneurs in Palestine lack official business training, and might not have admission to the info and leadership they need to circumnavigate the complex entrepreneurial landscape. By connecting with other entrepreneurs and members of their public through social networks, they can study others who have faced comparable tests and who have advanced successful strategies for overcoming them. Social networks can ease knowledge sharing by linking entrepreneurs with others who have knowledge in their industry or field. Entrepreneurs can study from their peers and mentors, gaining valuable visions and plans for overcoming shared trials and achieving success.(O’Hara, 2014). Emotional support is also the main advantage of social networks for women businesspersons in Palestine. Opening and running a business can be an isolated and demanding experience, mainly for women who might face important cultural and societal barriers to success. By linking with other entrepreneurs and members of their community through social

networks, they can discover a sense of fitting and support that can help them to insist through the tests they face. Social networks Social networks similarly play a significant role in breaking down cultural and societal barriers that can stop women from opening and running businesses. By linking with other women entrepreneurs through social networks, women can discover role models and mentors who have previously overcome similar obstacles. By connecting with mentors and consultants through their networks, entrepreneurs can obtain personalized responses and guidance on their business tactics and strategies. These role models can bring inspiration and leadership to women who are just opening out and can help to examine the dominant social attitudes toward women in business.(Hoogendoorn, Pennings, & Thurik, 2010; Shane, 2012).

2.4 Previous Studies

2.4.1 Supporting Literature sources on social networks and Entrepreneurship:

Several studies have traveled the part of social networks in women entrepreneurship in Palestine, outlining the importance of these networks in easing access to capital, knowledge sharing, and emotional support. One study by Sultan, S., & Sultan, W. 2020 originates that social networks play a critical role in the success of female entrepreneurs in Palestine. The study recognized four types of social networks that are mainly important for women entrepreneurs: family networks, institutional networks, business networks, and community networks. The study originates that these networks deliver women entrepreneurs with admission to resources, knowledge, and expressive support, serving them to overwhelm the unique tests they face in the Palestinian context. In addition, the study outlines the unique challenges faced by women-owned micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) throughout the pandemic, including limited access to finance, information, and technology. The study highlights the importance of the construction of social networks and partnerships as a way for women MSMEs to overwhelm these trials and familiarize with new economic realism. The authors contend that collaboration and cooperation among women MSMEs, as well as with other stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs, and private sector organizations, can aid to build resilience and make new opportunities for growth and innovation.

Another study by Istanbuli, 2016 examined the impact of social capital on the achievement of women-led businesses in Palestine. The study specifies that social capital, as well as social networks, plays a significant part in the achievement of women-led businesses. The study outlines numerous effects that donate to the competence of social networks, including trust, reciprocity, and communal values. The study outlines the relevance of social networks in facilitating admission to resources and knowledge distribution for women entrepreneurs. The author notes that social networks can offer women entrepreneurs admission to financial capital, business information, and emotive support, helping them to overwhelm the barriers they face in starting and rising their businesses. The study classifies family and community networks as mainly important for women entrepreneurs in Palestine, providing them with a sense of fitting and social support. The author also proposes the relevance of government and NGO provisions in generating a supportive setting for women's entrepreneurship, including training programs, financial incentives, and strategic reforms that address the sole challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

A third study by Ahmed, & Marsh-Davies, 2020. exposed the role of social networks in enabling women entrepreneurs in the Palestinian setting. The study originates that social networks can deliver women entrepreneurs with admission to resources, counting financial support and business information. The study likewise highlighted the standing of emotional support and the part that social networks can play as long as women entrepreneurs with the intelligence of belonging and support. The study highlights the relevance of social networks in offering Palestinian women entrepreneurs admission to resources, info, and support needed to start and produce their businesses. The study discovered that social capital, as well as both bridging and bonding social networks, offers a key role in the success of female entrepreneurship in the Gaza Strip. Bridging social networks, such as influences with external stakeholders, offer women entrepreneurs access to resources and occasions beyond their immediate social circles. Bonding social networks, on the other hand, offer women entrepreneurs emotional support, advice, and information sharing within their own communities.

Entrepreneurial social networks are described as the ties and contacts that an entrepreneur has with other people. These interactions enable the identification of opportunities and facilitate the utilization of resources, both of which can be sources of competitive advantage (Barnir and Smith, 2002). According to Fayolle et al. (2016), the

entrepreneurial process is based on a fluid network of ongoing social contacts that facilitate and establish connections between prospective entrepreneurs, resources, and opportunities. According to these authors, networks facilitate the development and growth of businesses by giving access to information, guidance, and financing, as well as vital relationships.

Networks are made up of nodes or ties and the connections that connect them. In the social sciences, networks are represented by social topics (individuals, groups, organizations, etc.) that are connected by some form of relationship (Leyden and Link, 2015). Ties, according to this author, can be strong or weak. Strong links exist within a limited group of people who have long-term relationships, such as family members or a small number of a firm owner's internal advisors. They are defined by a high level of commitment to the connection, frequent contact, and an implied sense of reciprocity. In the short term, weak bonds exist, contact is less regular, there is less trust, and the relationship is more ambiguous.

Song, Dana and Berger (2021) defined a personal network as all the persons with whom an entrepreneur has direct ties or, in some cases, indirect ties through direct contacts. Partners, suppliers, consumers, distributors, trade groups, other creditors, and family members are all examples of this. The most basic sort of social network consists of direct connections between entrepreneurs and the people with whom they interact and get services, advice, and moral support. The authors emphasize the concept of extended personal networks, which emerge within firms and comprise all interactions between owners, managers, and employees, as well as how they are structured by coordination and control patterns.

Song, Dana and Berger (2021) distinguishes between formal and informal networks where they showed that informal networks consist of family, friends, old acquaintances, and employees who may be less knowledgeable about the alternatives and schemes available to entrepreneurs but are prepared to listen and offer advice. Formal or professional networks encompass all of the individuals with whom the entrepreneur interacts regularly, with the primary subject matter being business. They include banks, accountants, consultants, and other institutions that can meet the needs of entrepreneurs; however, they can be time-consuming and costly. Regardless of the typology, entrepreneurs must appreciate the importance of social networks, since the

connections between resources and opportunities formed by an entrepreneur's social network can either hinder or aid entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs succeed by capitalizing on opportunities, and their social networks play a critical role in this process.

According to [Park et al. \(2012\)](#), social capital is defined as everything that supports individual or group activity and is generated through relational networks, reciprocity, trust, and social norms.

Several studies have examined entrepreneurial social networks. [Ducci and Teixeira \(2010\)](#) conducted a pioneering investigation in a travel agency in the state of Paraná's interior. The purpose of this study was to determine how entrepreneurs used social networks to build their social capital during the startup and development phases of a business. The study's most significant findings were that relationships strengthened as trust was developed and that access to social networks enabled access to knowledge and resources and served as a route for learning. As a result, the resources obtained aided in the development of social capital.

[Galina et al. \(2016\)](#) researched rural firms in Brazil and Portugal to assess the social networks used by entrepreneurs, the resources accessed, and critical features of social capital components during the venture's establishment and development phases. The findings indicate that in the aforementioned circumstances, formal and informal networks are critical for mobilizing economic and non-economic resources. By and large, the informal network plays a critical role in mobilizing non-economic resources. Informal networks had an equal role in the mobilization of economic resources in the Brazilian cases.

In the 1990s, there was a surge of interest in exploring social networks with a gender lens ([Neergaard et al., 2005](#)), a topic that has persisted. However, these authors assert that it is critical to keep in mind that when social network analysis is integrated into research on female entrepreneurship, concepts are widened due to the imprecise definitions of entrepreneurship, the complexity and dynamic nature of network relationships, and the unique characteristics inherent or ascribed to women in the business world.

In terms of social network scope, [Teixeira, Andreassi and Bomfim \(2018\)](#) discovered that female networks were very homogeneous, which limited access to other platforms. A probable explanation for this could be related to these women's time availability since they often struggle to interact outside of their work and family situations, which consume the majority of their time. Another explanation offered by [Rutashobya, Allan and Nilsson \(2009\)](#) for the lack of diversity in women's networks is the historical social background reflected in the image of the man as the provider. Men establish networks with mostly weak ties outside the family, whereas women, who have stronger bonds to their families, form networks with predominantly strong ties. The issue that arises from this aspect of women's networks is that the less dispersed a woman's network is, the less ability she has to collect information valuable for establishing a competitive edge.

2.4.2 Other Researcher's Views on social networks and female entrepreneurship:

The research by Bouzari et al. (2021) discovers the role of online social networks in the achievement of female entrepreneurs in Iran and Hungary. The study uses a comparative approach to inspect the similarities and differences in the use of online social networks by female entrepreneurs in the two republics. The study discovers that female entrepreneurs in both Iran and Hungary use online social networks to shape relationships, seek business chances, and access capitals, including finance and information. The study also discovers that social networks can assist to overcome the trials and constraints faced by female entrepreneurs, particularly those connected to gender discrimination and incomplete access to resources. However, the study also recognizes some changes in the use of online social networks by female entrepreneurs in Iran and Hungary. For example, female entrepreneurs in Hungary are more likely to use social networks for advertising and promotion purposes, while those in Iran are more likely to use social networks to structure relationships and access resources.

Kuada's (2009) study stresses the vital role of social networks in the attainment of female entrepreneurs in Ghana. The study reveals how social networks can help women entrepreneurs access capital, information, and provision, and overcome the

challenges they face in the male-dominated business situation. The research likewise highlights the importance of trust and reciprocity in social networks for female entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs depend on their social networks for loans, commercial advice, and other methods of support, and in turn, they donate to the network by providing support to others.

The research on Upton, Broming, and Upton's (2015) report for the National Women's Business Council provides an overview of current research on women entrepreneurs' social networks. The report generates findings from studies that took place in the United States and additional countries, with an stress on the purpose of social networks in women's entrepreneurship. The research highlights the position of social networks for women entrepreneurs, detecting that they can transport admission to key resources, such as capital, information, and commercial contacts. Women entrepreneurs often face better tests than men in retrieving these resources, and social networks can assistance to overwhelmed some of these barriers.

Upton, Broming, and Upton's (2015) report for the National Women's Business Council provide an overview of existing research on women entrepreneurs' social networks. The report synthesizes findings from studies conducted in the United States and other countries, with a focus on the role of social networks in women's entrepreneurship. The report highlights the importance of social networks for women entrepreneurs, noting that they can provide access to critical resources, such as capital, knowledge, and business contacts. Women entrepreneurs often face greater challenges than men in accessing these resources, and social networks can help to overcome some of these barriers. The report also confers the dissimilar types of social networks that are significant for women entrepreneurs, counting personal networks (e.g., family, friends), business networks (e.g., suppliers, customers, competitors), and support networks (e.g., mentors, advisors, business associations). The report notes that women frequently rely more profoundly on personal and support networks than men, as they might have less admission to business networks. The report recognizes several key factors that inspire the efficiency of social networks for women entrepreneurs, counting the size and variety of the network, the asset of ties inside the network, and the level of belief and reciprocity among members. The report notes that women entrepreneurs might need to mature multiple networks to encounter their diverse needs and overcome the trials they face. The report also outlines the potential drawbacks of social networks, such as the

danger of being excluded from male-dominated networks and the possible of conflicts of interest or competition among members.

2.4.3 previous studies review:

Through the researcher's review of previous studies, the following can be concluded:

1. Most studies have confirmed that women participation of the entrepreneurial activities has been increased significantly.
2. Most of the previous studies agree on the need to give women an equal opportunity to men to be able to realize their potential within the business world.
3. Most previous studies have shown that society still shows a clear bias on the side of men, which leads to the emergence of obstacles in the work of women entrepreneurs.
4. Most previous studies have agreed on the importance and role of social networks in entrepreneurial business.
5. According to previous studies, lack of funding, societal issues and gender discrimination are amongst the most important problems facing women, especially in developing nations

2.4.4 The extent to which the researcher benefited from previous studies:

Previous studies and the findings of the researchers have helped to identify and clarify the problem of the study. These studies also helped to better define the theoretical framework, as many Previous studies in drawing up and clarifying the structure of the theoretical framework and reviewing important topics related to the study. The results of these studies have also helped the researcher to determine how to obtain the initial data and to visualize main axes of the education.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction:

This current study aims to understand the role of social networks in the success of women entrepreneurs and identify the most significant challenges they face. To achieve this goal, this chapter outlines the methodology and procedures of the study, including the study design and tools, the study population, and the sample. Additionally, this chapter provides a description of the analytical techniques applied to the data analysis. The aim of this chapter is to provide a clear understanding of the methods and approaches used in the study to examine the impact of social relationships on the success of women entrepreneurs and the challenges they face in Palestine.

3.2 Research Approach:

For this study, the researcher employed a qualitative approach to understanding the experiences of entrepreneurial women in Palestine. This approach was chosen because it allows for the collection of data through interviews with a sample from the study population and for the classification, analysis, and interpretation of this data to identify key themes and reach a conclusion about the determinants and challenges faced by Palestinian women entrepreneurs. The qualitative approach is well-suited to this study as it allows for a deep understanding of the women entrepreneurs' perspectives and experiences.

In this study, the researcher used interviews as the primary tool for collecting qualitative data. The interview questions were developed by reviewing previous research on similar topics and were designed to address the objectives of the current study. Using interviews as a data collection method is consistent with other studies that have employed qualitative methods to examine the role of social networks in entrepreneurship, particularly among women (Shaikh, 2017). This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the life experiences and perspectives of the participants, providing a rich and nuanced understanding of the subject being studied (Malende & Väisänen, 2017).

3.3 Research Design:

This research adopts the multiple-case study design. By using the multiple-case study design, researchers can explore the connections between personal factors, social influences, behavioral tendencies, psychological states, organizational culture, and environmental factors in order to better understand the processes of organizational and leadership development. Such research design is essential for the in-depth study of participants' perspectives on the phenomenon within its natural context (Halkias et al., 2022).

Therefore, the multiple case study design, which is based on multiple individual cases with women entrepreneurs, was chosen as an appropriate research design for the current research for several reasons:

1. Multiple case studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of theoretical evolution and research questions. According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), this type of case study can also produce a more convincing theory when the findings are strongly grounded in various empirical evidence (Gustafsson, 2017).
2. The multiple-case design allows for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding, according to Zainal (2007). Moreover, this approach enables the researcher to go beyond quantitative statistical results and to explore the behavioral conditions from the perspective of participants who are directly involved in the research phenomena (Brink, 2018).

3.4 Research Instrument:

This research employs a qualitative approach and the multiple-cases design depending on semi-structured interviews as a research instrument to collect the data and information needed to provide answers to the research questions.

The semi-structured interview is one of the key investigation instruments in qualitative study as it enables many qualitative researchers to track their studies while being flexible and adaptable to ask questions to their interviewees (Ruslin et al., 2022). In addition to that, and from the current research experience the semi-structured interview helps the researchers to reach more participants through each other. However, the current research interview focuses on the main following four dimensions:

First dimension, general information about the participant such as age, marital status, experience, work, and other demographic characteristics.

The second dimension examines the impact of social networks, including strong and weak ties, on the entrepreneurship journey of the entrepreneur Palestinian women, focusing on how these networks may have helped or hindered their ability to establish their businesses.

The third dimension is specifically interested in exploring how the strong and weak ties within the participants' social networks may have evolved and changed throughout their entrepreneurship journey, from the beginning of the process to the current point in time. Through this dimension, the researcher seeks to understand the role that these ties may have played in supporting or hindering the progression of the participants' businesses. That is meant to shed light on how social networks can influence the success or failure of entrepreneurial ventures.

The fourth dimension aims to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding the overall situation of entrepreneurial women in Palestine and the challenges they face during their entrepreneurship journey. From the participants' perspectives, the research aims to identify common themes and issues that impact the success and progress of women entrepreneurs in this specific context. This information may help identify areas for improvement or support that could benefit future women entrepreneurs in Palestine.

3.5 Research Population and Sample:

The research population for this study consists of all Palestinian woman entrepreneurs who reside in West Bank-Palestine and are accessible to the researcher. This group of individuals is the focus of the study and the source of data for the research. However, the researcher was unable to locate an official list of female entrepreneurs in Palestine, and therefore, did not have a sampling frame from which to select participants for the study.

There are various reasons why the researcher was unable to locate an official list of female entrepreneurs in Palestine, resulting in the absence of a sampling frame for participant selection. Some possible explanations could include:

- Lack of comprehensive data: The availability of official data or a centralized list specifically focusing on female entrepreneurs in Palestine is limited and nonexistent.
- Informal entrepreneurial activities: In Palestine, there is a prevalence of informal or unregistered businesses, making it challenging to identify and document female entrepreneurs. Such businesses often operate without formal registrations or official recognition, making it difficult to create an exhaustive list.
- Access or communication barriers: The researcher has encountered difficulties in conducting interviews due to traditional hurdles, lack of transparency, and limited communication channels.

As a result, the researcher employs the snowball sampling technique, a nonprobability sampling method that involves recruiting study subjects through the connections and recommendations of existing participants. This technique is often used when researching hard-to-reach populations or when the sampling frame is unavailable. It also allows the researcher to build a sample through the social networks of the initial participants, and the sample is said to grow like a rolling snowball as more participants are recruited through the recommendations of existing participants (Leo A. Goodman, 1961).

The process began by interviewing the head of the Palestinian Women Entrepreneurs Forum, who provided contact information for other female entrepreneurs. From there, the researcher relied on recommendations from these initial participants to identify additional individuals to include in the sample. After several months of contacting potential participants and collecting data, [in addition to the forementioned reasons](#), the researcher [was able to](#) gather information from only 8 Palestinian female entrepreneurs.

3.6 Research Participant Profiles:

Table 1 presents the general characteristics of the study's participants. The ages of the entrepreneurs ranged from 22 to 53 years old, with an average age of 34 years. Four of the participants were married, three were single, and one was divorced. The married participants had an average of 4 children, and the number of their children ranged from 1 to 8 children. In terms of residence, two participants lived in **Ramallah**,

two lived in **Nablus**, two lived in **Hebron**, one lived in **Bethlehem**, and one lived in **Tulkarm**.

The participants in this study had diverse career backgrounds, including Media, Jewelry, Ecommerce, and others. They had experience ranging from 4 to 30 years, with an average of 12 years. In terms of education, four of the participants had business administration backgrounds, one had a finance background, one had a media background, one had a graphic design background, and one did not continue her education due to focusing on her business. These characteristics highlight the varied experiences and backgrounds of the participants in this study.

Table 1: The General Characteristics of the Research's Participants

Interviewee	Interview date	Age	Marital status	Children	Residence	Career	Years of experience	Educational Background
A	24/04/2022	53	Married	3	Ramallah	Marketing and Media	30	Media
B	08/05/2022	30	Married	1	Ramallah	Jewelry	7	Business Administration
C	25/05/2022	25	Single	0	Nablus	E-commerce (Accessories, clothes, cosmetics)	4	Business Administration
D	12/06/2022	28	Divorced	1	Tulkarm	Photography	4	Finance
E	29/06/2022	48	Married	8	Hebron	Resorts and Sports	20	English, and educational administration
F	15/07/2022	22	Single	0	Nablus	cosmetics and Skincare	8	Not mentioned
G	10/08/2022	28	Single	0	Bethlehem	Investment and Real Estate	6	Graphic Design
H	01/09/2022	36	Married	5	Hebron	Plastic Industries	15	Business Administration

Chapter 4

Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter grants the findings of the study, which aims to understand the role played by social networks in the success of Palestinian women entrepreneurs' businesses, as well as the impact of strong and weak ties on this success. Additionally, this chapter highlights the most significant determinants and challenges faced by these entrepreneurs. To achieve these goals, the study employed a deductive qualitative analysis approach, which involved analyzing the data collected through the study's research tools, interpreting and discussing these results in depth, and relating them to relevant previous research. This process allowed the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of Palestinian women entrepreneurs and the factors that impact their success.

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study in two main sections. The first section focuses on the social networks of Palestinian women entrepreneurs and is divided into two subsections. The first subsection examines the role of strong ties in contributing to the success of these entrepreneurs, while the second subsection explores the impact of weak ties on their success. The second main section of the chapter analyzes the experiences and challenges faced by Palestinian women entrepreneurs in Palestine, highlighting the most significant determinants and obstacles they encounter in their entrepreneurial careers. This analysis provides insight into the reality of these entrepreneurs and the factors that shape their experiences and success.

By conducting an analytical review of the interviews, the researcher accumulated a considerable amount of information pertaining to the sources of strong and weak ties, as well as the nature of support and its impact on the success of Palestinian women entrepreneurs. Consequently, the researcher classified similar types of support into main clusters. For instance, all forms of financial and fund-related support were categorized as financial support, while types of encouragement, belief, solidarity, active listening, and psychological assistance were grouped under psychological and emotional support.

4.2 Answering the research questions:

First main question: ‘How and to what extent Palestinian female entrepreneur’s success rely on social networks?’.

In order to answer the first main question, two sub questions need to be addressed.

4.2.1 First sub-question: ‘How and to what extent strong ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs’ business?’.

An analysis of data collected from interviews with Palestinian female entrepreneurs revealed that the majority of the interviewed women identified eight individuals as their strong ties: fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, husbands, children, uncles, and close friends. Additionally, the results indicated that these strong ties provided various forms of support including psychological and emotional, financial, knowledge and experience, working, networking, and marketing support (**Figure 2**).

Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the strong ties of each participant, including the type of support they provided and the effect it had on the entrepreneur's success with their ventures. Moreover, **Table 4.2** summarizes the impact of strong ties for all participants, including the frequency of each type of support provided by each strong tie. This table highlights the importance of each strong tie and type of support, which will be discussed in further sections.

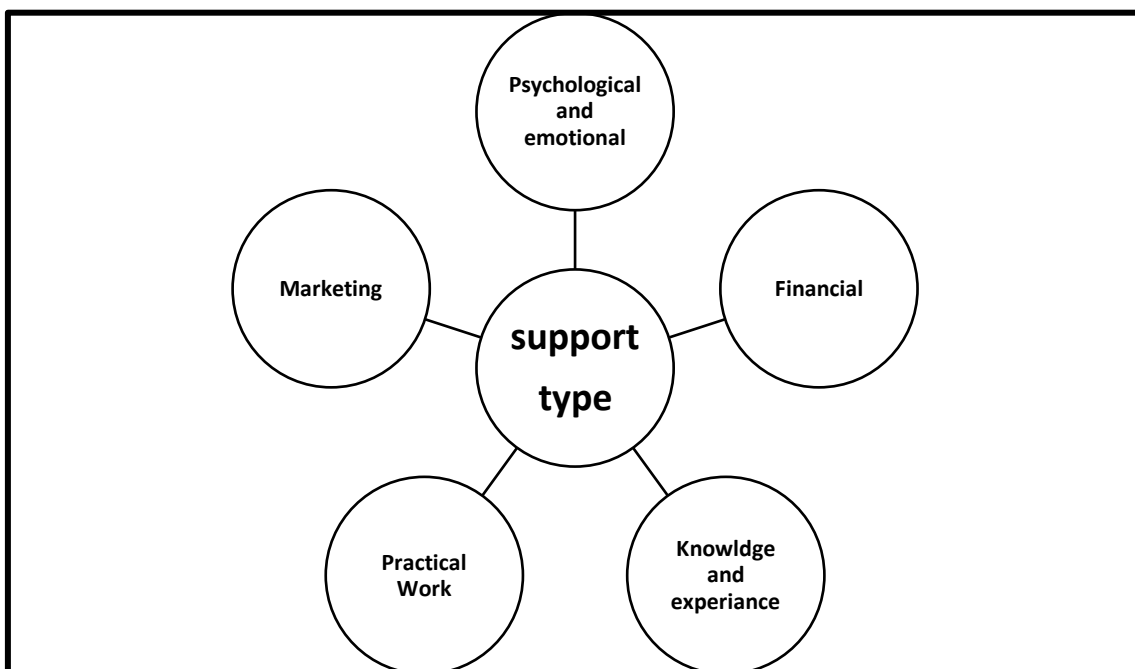


Figure 2: Shows the type of support that the interviewed Palestinian female entrepreneurs got from their strong ties.

Table 4.1: The impact of strong ties on Palestinian female entrepreneurs.

case	Support	Parents	Husband	Siblings	Relative	Close friends
A	Psychological and emotional		+		+	+
	Financial		+			
	knowledge and experience				+	
	Practical Work		+		+	+
	Marketing		+			+
B	Psychological and emotional				+	+
	Financial				+	
	knowledge and experience		+			+
	Practical Work					+
	Marketing		+		+	
C	Psychological and emotional	+		+		+
	Financial	+		+		
	knowledge and experience	+				
	Practical Work			+		
	Marketing					
D	Psychological and emotional		-	+		
	Financial			+		
	knowledge and experience				+	
	Practical Work					
	Marketing					
E	Psychological and emotional	+	+			+
	Financial		+			
	knowledge and experience	+	+			
	Practical Work		+			
	Marketing					
F	Psychological and emotional	+		-		
	Financial	+				
	knowledge and experience	+				
	Practical Work	+		-		
	Marketing	+				+
G	Psychological and emotional	+				
	Financial					
	knowledge and experience	+		+		
	Practical Work			+		
	Marketing					
H	Psychological and emotional	+	+			
	Financial	+	+			
	knowledge and experience	+		+		
	Practical Work	+	+	+		
	Marketing					

Scores were calculated by giving the positive impact 1, and negative impact -1 and then add them up to have the final score.

Table 4.2 Summary of the impact of strong ties on success of the Palestinian female entrepreneurs.

Support	Parents	Husband	Siblings	Relatives	Close friends	Total
Psychological and emotional	5	2	1	1	3	13
Financial	3	3	2	1	0	9
knowledge and experience	5	2	2	2	1	12
Practical Work	2	3	2	1	2	10
Marketing	1	2	0	1	2	6
Total	16	12	7	7	8	--

Strong ties and its impact on the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs:

- **Husbands:** according to the results, the strong tie that provided the most support and significantly impacted Palestinian female entrepreneurs' success was from female entrepreneurs` husbands. Table 4.1 shows that husbands scored 12 points for female entrepreneurs' support in all the different types of support mentioned by the interviewees (Psychological, emotional, Financial, knowledge, experience, Working, Networking, and marketing).
-

Interviewee A stated an impact from her husband’s side on her success by saying: *‘Woman entrepreneurs require emotional and financial support, which I received from my husband, who assisted me in marketing my business and later became a business partner’.*

Interviewee E stated an impact from her husband’s side on her success by saying: *‘My husband encouraged me to pursue a master's degree and assisted in making my dream a reality. When I decided to start my own business, he provided me with financial and emotional support in addition to his knowledge and experience’*

Interviewee H stated an impact from her husband’s side on her success by saying: *‘My husband played a crucial role in my success. He was supportive and understanding of*

my busy schedule and gave me the space I needed. By working on and financing my business, he eventually became a business partner.'

It's worth mentioning that Interviewee D stated an impact from her husband's side on her success by saying that: *'The lack of emotional and psychological support of my ex-husband during our marriage, had a detrimental effect on my success'.*

- **Parents:** according to the results, parents came in the second place as strong ties that had the great positive impact on the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs. Table 4.1 shows that **parents** had a score of 16 provided support in all the different types for their entrepreneurs' daughters.

Interviewee E stated an impact from her father's side on her success by saying: *'I attribute my entrepreneurial nature to my strong relationships, particularly with my father.'*

Interviewee G stated an impact from her father's side on her success by saying: *'My father's trust and support, especially at the start of my business venture despite facing negativity from others, greatly contributed to the development of my entrepreneurial spirit. He consistently encouraged and believed in my dreams and passions.'*

Interviewee H stated an impact from her father's side on her success by saying: *'My father not only supported me financially but also became a business partner. His belief in my ideas, along with his connections, greatly contributed to the success of my business.'*

Interviewee C stated an impact from her mother's side on her success by saying: *'My family, particularly my siblings and mother, are a major source of support for me. They are my strong ties, and I frequently turn to them for help and guidance by discussing my projects and ideas with them.'*

Interviewee F stated a **positive** impact from her mother's side on her success by saying: *'My passion for cosmetics and skincare was ignited by my mother, who worked in the field and shared her knowledge and experience with me. Her support also played a major role in my decision to open my own beauty center.'*

- **Siblings:** according to the results, brothers and sisters came in the third place as strong ties that have positive impact on the success of Palestinian female

entrepreneurs. Table 4.1 shows that siblings had a score of 7 provided psychological and emotional support, financial support, knowledge, and experiences, working support, and networking support.

-

Interviewee C stated an impact from her sister's side on her success by saying: 'My sister assists me with processing orders and ensuring that they are properly prepared for shipment to customers.'

Interviewee G stated an impact from her sister's side on her success by saying: 'My sister, who possesses knowledge and experience in business administration, joined me as a business partner to improve our company's administration and expand our business network.'

Interviewee D stated an impact from her brother's side on her success by saying: '*My brother motivated me to start my own business and provided financial support by purchasing the necessary equipment for my work.*'

Interviewee D stated an impact from her brother sides on her success by saying: '*My brothers had initial reservations about my use of social media at the beginning of my business.*

Interviewee H stated an impact from her brothers' side on her success by saying: '*My brother, who specializes in quality control, joined our team, which greatly improved the quality of our products and helped our factory to meet international standards.*'

- **Children:** Based on the results of the interviews, the role of children in the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs was reported by one of the eight participants interviewed. They provided support through sharing knowledge and experience, working alongside their mothers, and offering emotional support.

Interviewee A stated an impact from her daughters' side on her success by saying: '*My daughters joined me in my business, and we eventually established a new company together.*'

- **Uncles:** Based on the results of the interviews, the role of uncles in the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs was reported by two of the eight participants interviewed. They were uncles from the mothers' side.

-

Interviewee B stated an impact from her uncle's side on her success by saying: *'My uncle provided financial support to purchase the necessary equipment for my business, and he helped with marketing by showcasing my designs. He also offered emotional support and encouragement throughout my entrepreneurship journey.'*

Interviewee D stated an impact from her uncle's side on her success by saying: *'My uncle gave me a job working for him, where I was able to gain experience and learn valuable skills.'*

- **Close friends:** Based on the results of the interviews, the role of close friends in the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs was reported by five of the eight participants interviewed.

The results indicated that close friends always have positive impact on the success of their Palestinian female entrepreneurs. They provided emotional, knowledge and experience, working, networking, and marketing support.

Example:

Interviewee B stated an impact from her close friend's side on her success by saying: *'My close friend, who has expertise in social media, provided valuable recommendations and information to help me make my business more professional.'*

In conclusion, strong ties generally have an impact on the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs. They offer support in various ways, including emotional, financial, and professional support. However, in few cases, strong ties, such as husbands and brothers, can have an impact on the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs by preventing them from working or having their own business. That was noticed even with many of the research participants at the beginning, but some of them managed to communicate with their partners and convincing them to change their minds in believe in their dreams, and after that they became more supportive, some others counted more on the supportive of other strong ties such as fathers and mothers, and the only one who could not succeed in convincing her husband found divorce was the only way to succeed in her business.

4.2.2 Second sub-question: ‘How and to what extent weak ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs’ business?’.

An analysis of data collected from interviews with Palestinian female entrepreneurs revealed that the majority of the interviewed women identified four sources as their weak ties: friends, customers, network, and classmates. Additionally, the results indicated that these weak ties affect the success of the female entrepreneurs via various forms such as marketing, feedback and recommendations knowledge and experience, new opportunity, and encouragement (Figure 3).

Table 4.3 provides a breakdown of the weak ties of each participant, including the type of effect it had on the entrepreneur’s success. Table 4.4, on the other hand, summarizes the effect of weak ties for all participants, including the frequency of each type of effect by each weak tie. This table highlights the importance of each week’s tie and its impact, which will be discussed in further sections.

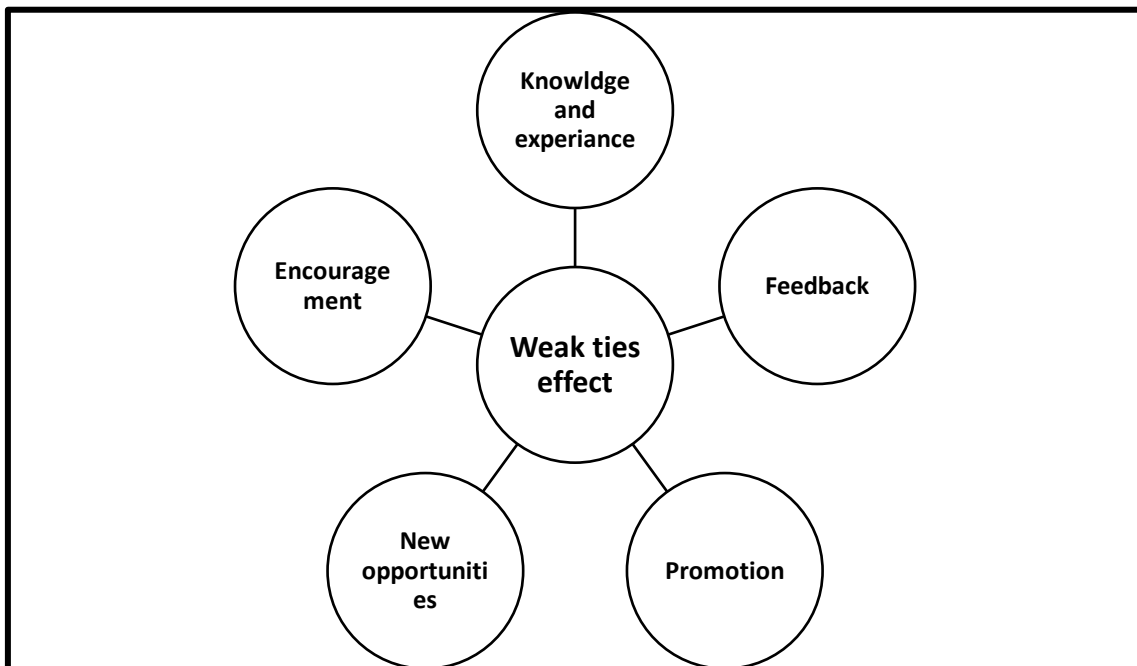


Figure 3: Shows the type of impact that the interviewed Palestinian woman entrepreneurs get from their weak ties.

Table 4.3: The impact of weak ties on Palestinian female entrepreneurs.

case	Support	Customers	Professionals	Acquaintances
A	Promotion			
	Feedback		+	
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities		+	
	Encouragement			
B	Promotion		+	+
	Feedback			
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities			
	Encouragement			+
C	Promotion		+	+
	Feedback	+		+
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities			
	Encouragement			+
D	Promotion			+
	Feedback	+		+
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities		+	
	Encouragement			+
E	Promotion		+	
	Feedback		+	
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities		+	
	Encouragement			
F	Promotion		+	
	Feedback			
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities		+	
	Encouragement			
G	Promotion			
	Feedback		+	
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities		+	
	Encouragement			
H	Promotion	+		
	Feedback	+		
	knowledge and experience		+	
	New opportunities			
	Encouragement			

Scores were calculated by giving the positive impact 1, and negative impact -1 and then add them up to have the final score.

Table 4.4 Summary of the impact of weak ties on success of the Palestinian female entrepreneurs.

Effect	Customers	Professionals	Acquaintances	Total
Promotion	1	4	3	8
Feedback	3	3	2	8
knowledge and experience	0	8	0	8
New opportunities	0	5	0	5
Encouragement	0	0	2	2
Total	4	20	7	--

Weak ties and its impact on the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs:

- **Network:** according to the results, the weak tie that had the greatest positive impact on the success of Palestinian female entrepreneurs was their network which consist of co-worker, former co-worker, professional peers, and people who work in the same field. **Table 4.4** shows that network had a score of 20 affecting the success of the female entrepreneurs with mutual marketing, providing recommendation and feedback to improve the business, sharing their knowledge and experience, and create new opportunities.

- Interviewee A stated an impact from her networks side on her success by saying: ‘My weak ties which consist of friends, professionals, and network are important in providing knowledge, feedback, and creating new networks and opportunities.’

Interviewee E stated an impact from her networks side on her success by saying: ‘*my weak ties have an important role in my success, especially professionals who work in the same filed where I benefitted a lot from their experiences, in addition to market my business and getting more customers.*’

Interviewee G stated an impact from her network side on her success by saying: *'I have diverse weak ties, but the ones who helped me most are former coworkers and professionals who I worked with before starting my business, they taught me the skills of negotiation in real state, and transparency is very important to gain customers' trust.'*

- **acquaintanceships:** according to the results, acquaintanceships as weak ties had positive impact on the success of Palestinian woman entrepreneurs. **Table 4.4** shows that acquaintances had a score of 7 affecting the success of the woman entrepreneurs with marketing and encouragement from friends' sides, and promotion and feedback from other acquaintances.

Interviewee B stated that an impact from her friends and classmates' side on her success by saying: *'Some of my acquaintanceships were my first clients who marketed my business through social media platforms'.*

Interviewee C stated that an impact from her friends and classmates' side on her success by saying: *'My friends and classmates had a great role in marketing my business and encouraging me to establish my own physical store'.*

Interviewee D stated that an impact from her friends and classmates' side on her success by saying: *'My weak ties that consist of my friends, classmates, and some of my customers helped me in marketing my business and provided insightful feedback to improve the business'.*

- **Customers:** according to the results, customers as weak ties had positive impact on the success of Palestinian woman entrepreneurs. However, that impact just appeared in three participant stories. **Table 4.2** shows that customers had a score of 4 affecting the success of the woman entrepreneurs marketing the business and providing feedback.

-

Interviewee H stated that a **positive** impact from her customers on her success by saying: *'gradually I network expanded and my customers increased, therefore they became part of my weak ties where they helped in marketing my products and giving feedback to improve the quality of productions'.*

In conclusion, weak ties generally have an impact on the success of Palestinian entrepreneur women. They affect success in various ways, such as marketing, feedback, knowledge and experience, new opportunities, and encouragement.

Second main question: ‘What are the obstacles that Palestinian entrepreneur women face in taking advantage of their social networks?’.

By analyzing the interviews with Palestinian woman entrepreneurs with respect to the obstacles that they face in their entrepreneurship journey, the results revealed that all the interviewed women have encountered obstacles. Table 4.3 shows the list of the most obstacles that they have stated during the interviews.

Table 4.3 List of the common obstacles that the Palestinian female entrepreneurs encountered.

No.	Obstacles	Participants
1	Difficulty of obtaining funds.	B, C, D
2	Family authority and male dominance.	B, C, F, G
3	Customs and traditions	C, E, G, H
4	Society judgment.	C, D, E, H

It can be noticed that the most common obstacles that the Palestinian women entrepreneurs encountered those who imposed by the society and the family such as family authority, male dominance, society judgment, and customs and tradition. In addition to obtaining fund to finance their business as a second-place obstacle.

Interviewee C stated that: *‘Women face various obstacles that limit them, including male dominance, fear of societal judgment, and adherence to customs and traditions.’.*

Interviewee E stated that: *‘The situation for women entrepreneurs has improved, but there are still misconceptions and obstacles such as customs and traditions that they face, in addition to negative criticism. For example, I faced negative criticism when I started a sports club for women’. It is true that such business activities might encounter negative criticism at the first*

steps due to the tradition, culture, and lifestyle of the society. In contrast same business activities might be easily accepted in another region or location due the society and their common believes.

Interviewee H stated that: *'Although there has been progress in the position of women entrepreneurs in Palestine, there remains a dearth of women's involvement in entrepreneurial business conferences, which are predominantly attended by men. This can be attributed to various barriers that women encounter, such as societal customs and traditions, challenges in acquiring funding, and gender biases held by society.'*

While there has been noticeable progress in the status of women entrepreneurs in Palestine, there still exists a significant disparity compared to men in several areas. For instance, women continue to face challenges in accessing financial support, have limited mobility, and encounter societal pressures related to familial obligations and expectations. Despite some level of acceptance of women entrepreneurs in Palestinian society, these obstacles hinder their ability to achieve equal opportunities and success in entrepreneurship.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Implications

5.1 Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to, one, understand the role of social networks in the success of female entrepreneurial business, and two, to explore the obstacles that face female entrepreneurs taking advantage of their networks. Based on the results of this study gathered through interviews with female entrepreneurs.

Regarding the answer to the first main question, 'How and to what extent Palestinian female entrepreneur's success rely on social networks?'. We tried to answer the two sub questions:

First: the answer of the first sub question 'How and to what extent strong ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs' business?'

Social support is understood as the resources that people obtain from networks and from their social relationships and use when they face difficulties. The terms social network and social support describe the structure, processes and functions of social relationships. In this research study, the strong ties (parents, siblings, husbands, relatives, and close friends) play a key role in the success of female entrepreneurial projects. The results indicated that these strong ties provided various forms of support including psychological and emotional, financial, knowledge and experience. For example, family support and motivation are, in most cases, the reasons women launch entrepreneurial projects, especially the support they receive from husbands and parents. Family support also assisted female entrepreneurs in balancing their social and professional lives.

Therefore, female entrepreneurs significantly benefited from strong ties, especially in cases where the husband has experience in the field of business management. Strong ties, in addition to providing knowledge and skills, also aid in linking to weak ties, as demonstrated by

the study, which found that strong ties are critical in providing funds both directly and indirectly.

Secondly: the answer of the second sub question How and to what extent weak ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs' business?'.

weak ties (customers, professionals, acquaintances) play a role in the success of female entrepreneurial projects. The results indicated that these weak ties provided various forms of support including Promotion, Feedback, knowledge and experience, new opportunities and Encouragement.

Women are more likely to seek emotional closeness, they have more family members in their businesses as well. weak ties in this study were acquaintances and some friends, as well as classmates, customers, and specialists whom the women entrepreneurs met during their entrepreneurship journey. Some women entrepreneurs have succeeded in benefiting from these ties, especially with clients, with the aim of promoting projects as well as benefiting from their expertise in managing their own projects. Regarding weak ties, the results showed that most of these links were formed through strong ties or work fellowships as well as the knowledge that women entrepreneurs form during social activities and social media.

Regarding the answer to the second main question, How and to what extent weak ties impact the success of female entrepreneurs' business?'.

The most significant obstacles facing female entrepreneurs in Palestine are male dominance, society judgment, and customs and tradition. In addition, obtaining funds to finance their business as a second-place obstacle. According to the study findings, one of the main reasons for the failure of women's businesses is the fear of failure, which is associated with the fear of society and the disappointment of family. The study results revealed that male authority, whether from the husband or father, limits the ability of entrepreneurial women to benefit from their ties, as it limits their ability to expand their ties and limits their freedom of movement as well as access to capital. Furthermore, government support for related events is very limited and insufficient to foster new relationships.

5.2 Limitations of the Study:

First, female entrepreneurs may not see the value of participating in the study. And therefore, the number of participants was limited. Secondly, participating in the study can bring up a lot of privacy and trust issues, finally, participating in the study can be seen as time-consuming, as some entrepreneurs have limited time. 20 female entrepreneurs have been contacted to join the study, 12 of them sent a response and 8 ended up participating in the study.

5.3 Implications for Policy Makers:

in the light of the analysis and results of the study, the researcher proposes a set of recommendations:

Institutions Role:

1. Strengthen the role of institutions (incubators, financial, etc.) working with entrepreneurs' women, particularly as they play an important role in providing counseling and training services, providing appropriate logistics, and networks.
2. Creating an encouraging and positive organizational culture for entrepreneurs, we recommend taking advantage of entrepreneurs in incubators will help and support each other.
3. Create events for women entrepreneurs to facilitate the exchange of information and experience and expanding their networks, including sharing of challenges and strategies for addressing these needs.

Government Role:

1. Policy makers in Palestine should pay more attention toward women economic and social empowerment, to change the society perspectives against women, which will lead to healthy society with equality both genders.
2. Activating the participation of women in decision-making related to entrepreneurship and supporting women's projects, and not limiting their participation to participation only.

3. The need to overcome obstacles (administrative, financial, skills and experience) to activate the role of women. so, you can overcome and through the work of seminars, workshops, offering vital business info, networks, knowledge distribution, training, and mentoring, to empower women theoretically and practically against these obstacles.
4. Palestinian educational institutions are urged to adopt the process of enriching the Palestinian curriculum with both systematic and non-systematic educational means that increase the awareness of the Palestinian girl and her belief in her abilities so that she can help reach her ambitions to reach senior positions, as well as in building a healthy community culture, and raising the awareness and knowledge level in the field of the role of women and its importance.
5. Implement actions to raise awareness among women entrepreneurs, particularly those located in the districts and rural areas, on the key policies and laws related to land, inheritance and succession.

References:

- Ahmed, N., & Marsh-Davies, K. (2020). Female Entrepreneurship in the Gaza Strip: Exploring the Role of Social Capital.
- Aldrich, H. E., & Zimmer, C. (1986). Entrepreneurship Through Social Networks. Pp. 3-23 in *The Art and Science of Entrepreneurship*, edited by D. Sexton and R. Smilor. Ballinger.
- Althalathini, D. (2015). Women entrepreneurs in Gaza strip: obstacles and opportunities. *Int J Econ Commer Manag*, 3(4), 1-16.
- Anderson, A. R., Dodd, S. D., & Jack, S. (2010). Network practices and entrepreneurial growth. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(2), 121-133.
- Araujo, L., & Easton, G. (1996). Networks in socioeconomic systems: A critical review. *Networks in marketing*, 63-107.
- Arregle, J. L., Batjargal, B., Hitt, M. A., Webb, J. W., Miller, T., & Tsui, A. S. (2015). Family ties in entrepreneurs' social networks and new venture growth. *Entrepreneurship theory and Practice*, 39(2), 313-344.
- Arregle, J. L., Batjargal, B., Hitt, M. A., Webb, J. W., Miller, T., & Tsui, A. S. (2015). Family ties in entrepreneurs' social networks and new venture growth. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 39(2), 313-344.
- Atyani, N., & Alhai-Ali, S. (2009). Problems of Micro. *Small and Medium Enterprises in Palestine, Ramallah, Palestine: Institut de recherche des politiques économiques palestiniennes (MAS)*.
- BarNir, A., & Smith, K. A. (2002). Interfirm alliances in the small business: The role of social networks. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 40(3), 219-232.
- Bastian, B. L., Sidani, Y. M., & El Amine, Y. (2018). Women entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa: A review of knowledge areas and research gaps. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*.

- Bastian, B., & Zali, M. R. (2016). The impact of institutional quality on social networks and performance of entrepreneurs. *Small Enterprise Research*, 23(2), 151-171.
- Baybeck, B., & Huckfeldt, R. (2002). Urban contexts, spatially dispersed networks, and the diffusion of political information. *Political Geography*, 21(2), 195-220.
- BCCI (2014). Palestinian Women in Busines. Working Paper. Available at: https://pfesp.ps/uploads/Palestinian_women_in_Business_working_paper_2014.pdf
- Bolton, R. N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Migchels, N., Kabadayi, S., Gruber, T., . . . Solnet, D. (2013). Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: a review and research agenda. *Journal of service management*.
- Bond, R. M. C. J. (2012). Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam DI Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime Settle, James H. Fowler. 2012. A 61-Million-Person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization. *Nature*, 489, 295-298.
- Bouranta, N., Tsampra, M., & Sklavos, G. (2019). Digital Practices of Greek Small Entrepreneurship: Social Media and Self-Employment. In *Economic and Financial Challenges for Eastern Europe* (pp. 297-311): Springer.
- Bourne, K. A. (2010). The paradox of gender equality: an entrepreneurial case study from Sweden. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*. 2(1), 10-6.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brink, R. (2018). A multiple case design for the investigation of information management processes for work-integrated learning.
- Burt, R. S. (2005). *Brokerage and closure: An introduction to social capital*: Oxford university press.
- Caliendo, M., Fossen, F. M., Kritikos, A., & Wetter, M. (2015). The gender gap in entrepreneurship: Not just a matter of personality. *CESifo Economic Studies*, 61(1), 202-238.
- Cassar, G. (2004). The financing of business start-ups. *Journal of business venturing*, 19(2), 261-283.
- Centola, D. (2011). An experimental study of homophily in the adoption of health behavior. *Science*, 334(6060), 1269-1272.

- Cesaroni, F. M., & Consoli, D. (2015). Are small businesses really able to take advantage of social media? *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 13(4), pp257-268-pp257-268.
- Cesaroni, F. M., Demartini, P., & Paoloni, P. (2016). *Women in business and social media: state of the art and research agenda*. Paper presented at the IFKAD 2016 11th International Forum on Knowledge Asset Dynamics.
- Cesaroni, F. M., Demartini, P., & Paoloni, P. (2017). Women in business and social media: Implications for female entrepreneurship in emerging countries. *African Journal of Business Management*, 11(14), 316-326.
- Choi, N., Huang, K.-Y., Palmer, A., & Horowitz, L. (2014). Web 2.0 use and knowledge transfer: how social media technologies can lead to organizational innovation. *The electronic journal of knowledge management*, 12(3), 174.
- Coleman, S. (2000). Access to capital and terms of credit: A comparison of men-and women-owned small businesses. *Journal of small business management*, 38(3), 37.
- Coleman, S., & Robb, A. (2012). Gender-based firm performance differences in the United States: Examining the roles of financial capital and motivations. In *Global Women's Entrepreneurship Research*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Colyvas, J. A., Snellman, K., Bercovitz, J., & Feldman, M. (2012). Disentangling effort and performance: a renewed look at gender differences in commercializing medical school research. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 37(4), 478-489.
- Correa, T., & Pavez, I. (2016). Digital inclusion in rural areas: A qualitative exploration of challenges faced by people from isolated communities. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 21(3), 247-263.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Cromie, S., & Birley, S. (1992). Networking by female business owners in Northern Ireland. *Journal of business Venturing*, 7(3), 237-251.

- Dahl, A., Lawrence, J., & Pierce, J. (2011). Building an innovation community. *Research-Technology Management*, 54(5), 19-27.
- Daoud, Y. S., Sarsour, S., Shanti, R., & Kamal, S. (2020). Risk tolerance, gender, and entrepreneurship: The Palestinian case. *Review of Development Economics*, 24(3), 766-789.
- Davidsson, P., & Honig, B. (2003). The role of social and human capital among nascent entrepreneurs. *Journal of business venturing*, 18(3), 301-331.
- Dimova, R., Elder, S., & Stephan, K. (2016). Labour market transitions of young women and men in the Middle East and North Africa. *Work4Youth Publication Series*, 44.
- Drakopoulou Dodd, S. (2012). Network approaches and embeddedness. *Perspectives on entrepreneurship: A course text*.
- Drine, I., & Grach, M. (2012). Supporting women entrepreneurs in Tunisia. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 24(3), 450-464.
- Ducci, N. P. C., & Teixeira, R. M. (2010). Articulação de Redes Sociais por Empreendedores na Formação do Capital Social: um estudo de caso de uma empresa do setor de turismo do interior do Paraná. *Revista Turismo em Análise*, 21(1), 165-189.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. R. (2015). *Management & Business Research*, 5th Edition. Sage Publications. London, UK.
- Egbert, H. (2009). Business success through social networks? A comment on social networks and business success. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 68(3), 665-677.
- Eveland Jr, W. P., & Hively, M. H. (2009). Political discussion frequency, network size, and “heterogeneity” of discussion as predictors of political knowledge and participation. *Journal of communication*, 59(2), 205-224.
- Farraj, W., Yousafzai, S. Y., & Sheikh, S. (2021). Reciprocal Impact of Family and Business for Internally Displaced Female Entrepreneurs. *Available at SSRN 3889249*.
- Farzanegan, M. R. (2014). *Can oil-rich countries encourage entrepreneurship?'yes', 'no' but not 'perhaps'* (No. 06-2014). MAGKS Joint Discussion Paper Series in Economics.
- Fayolle, A., & Klandt, H. (2006). Issues and newness in the field of entrepreneurship education: new lenses for new practical and academic questions.
- Fayolle, A., Jack, S. L., Lamine, W., & Chabaud, D. (2016). *Entrepreneurial process and social networks: A dynamic perspective*: Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Fayolle, A., Jack, S. L., Lamine, W., & Chabaud, D. (Eds.). (2016). *Entrepreneurial process and social networks: A dynamic perspective*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Field, E., Jayachandran, S., Pande, R., & Rigol, N. (2016). Friendship at work: Can peer effects catalyze female entrepreneurship? *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 8(2), 125-153.
- Fischer, E. M., Reuber, A. R., & Dyke, L. S. (1993). A theoretical overview and extension of research on sex, gender, and entrepreneurship. *Journal of business venturing*, 8(2), 151-168.
- Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. R. (2011). Social interaction via new social media:(How) can interactions on Twitter affect effectual thinking and behavior? *Journal of business venturing*, 26(1), 1-18.
- Fornoni, M., Arribas, I., & Vila, J. E. (2011). Measurement of an individual entrepreneur's social capital: a multidimensional model. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 7(4), 495-507.
- Galina, S., Carvalho, L., & Costa, T. (2016). Innovation management of internationalised IT companies in Brazil and Portugal. *International Journal of Knowledge-Based Development*, 7(4), 317-335.
- Gallup, I. (2017). Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men. *Gallup Inc. and the International Labour Organization, Washington*.
- Gedajlovic, E., Honig, B., Moore, C. B., Payne, G. T., & Wright, M. (2013). Social capital and entrepreneurship: A schema and research agenda. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37(3), 455-478.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., & Bachmann, I. (2013). Expressive vs. consumptive blog use: Implications for interpersonal discussion and political participation.
- Granovetter, M. (1982). The strength of weak ties: a network theory revisited, in Marsden, P. V. and Lin, N. (eds) *Social Structure and Network Analysis* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage).
- Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American journal of sociology*, 91(3), 481-510.
- Greve, A., & Salaff, J. W. (2003). Social networks and entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 28(1), 1-22.
- Gustafsson, J. (2017). Single case studies vs. Multiple case studies: A comparative study.

- Halkias, D., Neubert, M., Thurman, P. W., & Harkiolakis, N. (2022). *The Multiple Case Study Design* (1st Edition). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003244936>
- Hansen, E. L. (1995). Entrepreneurial networks and new organization growth. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 19(4), 7-19.
- Heras-Saizarbitoria, I. (2011). Internalization of ISO 9000: an exploratory study. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*.
- Hite, J. M., & Hesterly, W. S. (2001). The evolution of firm networks: From emergence to early growth of the firm. *Strategic management journal*, 22(3), 275-286.
- Hoogendoorn, B., Pennings, E., & Thurik, R. (2010). What do we know about social entrepreneurship: An analysis of empirical research.
- Hossain, A., Naser, K., Zaman, A., & Nuseibeh, R. (2009). Factors influencing women business development in the developing countries: Evidence from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.
- House, F., Breslin, J., & Kelly, S. (2010). *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Incorporated.
- International Labor Organization. (2016). *Women in business and management: gaining momentum in the Middle East and North Africa: regional report*.
- International Labour Office. (2017). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future*: International Labour Office.
- International Labour Office. (2018). *Constraints and good practice in women's entrepreneurship in MENA - Case study: New evidence on gender attitudes towards women in business*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Isaga, N. (2019). Start-up motives and challenges facing female entrepreneurs in Tanzania. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*.
- Istanbuli, A. D. (2016). *The role of Palestinian women entrepreneurs in business development*. (Doctoral Thesis). University of Granada,
- Jaber, M. A., & Institution, B. (2014). *Breaking through glass doors: A gender analysis of womenomics in the Jordanian national curriculum*: Brookings Institution.
- Jack, S. L. (2005). The role, use and activation of strong and weak network ties: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of management studies*, 42(6), 1233-1259.

- Jack, S. L. (2005). The role, use and activation of strong and weak network ties: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of management studies*, 42(6), 1233-1259.
- Jack, S.L. (2005). The role, use and activation of strong and weak network ties: a qualitative Analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 42, Iss. 6, pp. 1233-59.
- Jamali, D. (2009). Constraints and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries: A relational perspective. *Gender in management: an international journal*.
- Jayawarna, D., Rouse, J., & Kitching, J. (2013). Entrepreneur motivations and life course. *International small business journal*, 31(1), 34-56.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Kavanaugh, A., Reese, D. D., Carroll, J. M., & Rosson, M. B. (2003). *Weak ties in networked communities*. Paper presented at the Communities and technologies.
- Khalili, N., Qassas, N., & Barghouthi, S. (2018). Women Entrepreneurs in Palestine: Motivations, Challenges and Barriers.
- Khayesi, J. N., George, G., & Antonakis, J. (2014). Kinship in entrepreneur networks: Performance effects of resource assembly in Africa. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(6), 1323-1342.
- Knoben, J. (2011). The geographic distance of relocation search: an extended resource-based perspective. *Economic Geography*, 87(4), 371-392.
- Kristiansen, S. (2004). Social networks and business success: The role of subcultures in an African context. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 63(5), 1149-1171.
- Kühn, S., Horne, R., & Yoon, S. (2017). World employment and social outlook: trends for women 2017. *Geneva: ILO*.
- Kyalo, T. N., & Kiganane, L. M. (2014). Challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Africa-a case of Kenyan women entrepreneurs.
- Landstrom, H. (Ed.). (1999). *The Blackwell handbook of entrepreneurship*. Blackwell Business.
- Lans, T., Biemans, H., Mulder, M., & Verstegen, J. (2010). Self-awareness of mastery and improvability of entrepreneurial competence in small businesses in the agrifood sector. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 21(2), 147-168.
- Leo A. Goodman. (1961). Snowball Sampling. *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 32(1), 148–170. <https://doi.org/10.1214/aoms/1177705148>

- Leyden, D. P., & Link, A. N. (2015). Toward a theory of the entrepreneurial process. *Small Business Economics*, 44(3), 475-484.
- Lin, N. (2001). Social capital: A theory of social structure and action. Cambridge: Cambridge University. In.
- Malende, M., & Väisänen, K. (2017). The Role of Networks in Female Entrepreneurship.
- Marlow, S. (2006). A safety net or ties that bind? Women, welfare, and self-employment. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*.
- Marlow, S., Carter, S., & Butler, J. E. (2003). Accounting for change: Professionalism as a challenge to gender disadvantage in entrepreneurship. In *New perspectives on women entrepreneurs* (pp. 181-202).
- Martinez, M. A., & Aldrich, H. E. (2011). Networking strategies for entrepreneurs: balancing cohesion and diversity. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*. 17(1), 7-38.
- Martinez, M. A., & Aldrich, H. E. (2011). Networking strategies for entrepreneurs: balancing cohesion and diversity. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.
- Mason, C. M., Carter, S., & Tagg, S. (2011). Invisible businesses: The characteristics of home-based businesses in the United Kingdom. *Regional Studies*, 45(5), 625-639.
- McAleese, S., & Kilty, J. M. (2019). Stories matter: Reaffirming the value of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(4), 822-845.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). Transcendental phenomenology: Conceptual framework. *Phenomenological research methods*, 25-43.
- Neergaard, H., Shaw, E., & Carter, S. (2005). The impact of gender, social capital and networks on business ownership: a research agenda. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*. 11(5), 338-357.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 16(1), 1609406917733847.
- Nziku, D. (2016). Strategies and policies influencing entrepreneurial start-up decisions: evidence from Tanzanian female entrepreneurs. In *Women's entrepreneurship in global and local contexts*: Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Nziku, D. M., & Struthers, J. J. (2017). Female entrepreneurship in Africa: Strength of weak ties in mitigating principal-agent problems. *Journal of small business and enterprise development*.
- O'Hara, B. (2014). Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship in music business education. *International Journal of Music Business Research*, 3(2), 28-60.
- OECD. (2012). Women in Business: Policies to Support Women's Entrepreneurship Development in the MENA Region. In: OECD Publishing Paris.
- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) 2014, *Policies for Up-Scaling the Female Entrepreneurship in the State of Palestine*. Available at: <http://www.mas.ps/files/server/20142310134323.pdf>
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2018): <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=ar&ItemID=3405>
- Paoloni, P., & Lombardi, R. (2017). *Investigating relational capital and female enterprises in the international context*. Paper presented at the IFKAD.
- Park, D. B., Lee, K. W., Choi, H. S., & Yoon, Y. (2012). Factors influencing social capital in rural tourism communities in South Korea. *Tourism Management*, 33(6), 1511-1520.
- Parrish, B. D. (2010). Sustainability-driven entrepreneurship: Principles of organization design. *Journal of business Venturing*, 25(5), 510-523.
- Patel, P. (2014). Effectiveness of entrepreneurship development interventions for women entrepreneurs: An ILO-WED Issue Brief. *Women's Entrepreneurship Development Programme, International Labour Organization*.
- Qazzaz, H., Mrar, S., & Adwan, Y. (2005). Female Entrepreneurs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Current Situation and Future Prospects. *Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), Ramallah, Palestine*.
- Qozat, M. J. (2018). Women's entrepreneurship in information and communication technology in Gaza Strip.
- Qutoshi, B. (2018). Phenomenology: A philosophy and method of inquiry. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(1), 215-222.
- Rönnerberg, L., & Tingström, C. (2016). Possibilities and obstacles for Palestinian women entrepreneurs in agricultural micro enterprises. In.

- Ruane, L., & Wallace, E. (2013). Generation Y females online: insights from brand narratives. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.
- Ruslin, Mashuri, S., Sarib Abdul Rasak, M., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured Interview: A Methodological Reflection on the Development of a Qualitative Research Instrument in Educational Studies. 12(1). <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.9790/7388-1201052229>
- Rutashobya, L. K., Allan, I. S., & Nilsson, K. (2009). Gender, social networks, and entrepreneurial outcomes in Tanzania. *Journal of African Business*, 10(1), 67-83.
- Sadeq, T., Hamed, M., & Glover, S. (2011). *Policies to promote female entrepreneurship in the Palestinian territory*: MAS Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute.
- Salameh, M. S. (2016). *Palestinian women entrepreneurs: an exploratory study of intentions relatedness to business sustainability*. Birzeit University,
- Salem, S., & Beduk, A. (2021). The Effect of Creativity and Innovation on Entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Academic Management Science Research (IJAMSR)*, 5(8), 1-11.
- Sequeira, J., Mueller, S. L., & McGee, J. E. (2007). The influence of social ties and self-efficacy in forming entrepreneurial intentions and motivating nascent behavior. *Journal of developmental entrepreneurship*, 12(03), 275-293.
- Sequeira, J., Mueller, S. L., & McGee, J. E. (2007). The influence of social ties and self-efficacy in forming entrepreneurial intentions and motivating nascent behavior. *Journal of developmental entrepreneurship*, 12(03), 275-293.
- Shaikh, N. (2017). Role of Strong and Weak Ties.
- Shane, S. (2012). Reflections on the 2010 AMR decade award: Delivering on the promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(1), 10-20.
- Sinclair, J. K., & Vogus, C. E. (2011). Adoption of social networking sites: an exploratory adaptive structuration perspective for global organizations. *Information Technology and Management*, 12(4), 293-314.
- Somma, N. M. (2009). How strong are strong ties? the conditional effectiveness of strong ties in protest recruitment attempts. *Sociological Perspectives*, 52(3), 289-308.
- Song, Y., Dana, L. P., & Berger, R. (2021). The entrepreneurial process and online social networks: forecasting survival rate. *Small Business Economics*, 56(3), 1171-1190.

- Stam, W., Arzlanian, S., & Elfring, T. (2014). Social capital of entrepreneurs and small firm performance: A meta-analysis of contextual and methodological moderators. *Journal of business venturing*, 29(1), 152-173.
- Stam, W., Arzlanian, S., & Elfring, T. (2014). Social capital of entrepreneurs and small firm performance: A meta-analysis of contextual and methodological moderators. *Journal of business venturing*, 29(1), 152-173.
- Sultan, S. S. (2016). Women entrepreneurship working in a conflict region: The case of Palestine. *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management, and Sustainable Development*, 12(2-3), 149-156.
- Taylor, G., Fraser, E., Jacobson, J., & Phillipson, R. (2014). Economic Opportunities and Obstacles for women and girls in Northern Nigeria. *A report was produced for DFID*.
- Teixeira, R. M., Andreassi, T., & Bomfim, L. C. S. (2018). Use of entrepreneurial social networks by women in the travel agencies creation process. *Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo*, 12, 102-132.
- Thaher, L. M., Radieah, N. M., & Wan Norhaniza, W. H. (2021). Factors Affecting Women Micro and Small-Sized Enterprises' Success: A Case Study in Jordan. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics, and Business*, 8(5), 727-739.
- Trainor, K. J. (2012). Relating social media technologies to performance: A capabilities-based perspective. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 32(3), 317-331.
- Tuffour, I. (2017). A critical overview of interpretative phenomenological analysis: A contemporary qualitative research approach. *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, 2(4), 52.
- UNCTAD, (2014). A Survey on Women's Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Available at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/769776/files/UNCTAD_DIAE_ED_2013_1.pdf
- Wang, X., Hoi, S. C., Ester, M., Bu, J., & Chen, C. (2017). *Learning personalized preference of strong and weak ties for a social recommendation*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on World Wide Web.
- Westlund, H., & Adam, F. (2010). Social capital and economic performance: A meta-analysis of 65 studies. *European planning studies*, 18(6), 893-919.

- Yadav, M. S., De Valck, K., Hennig-Thurau, T., Hoffman, D. L., & Spann, M. (2013). Social commerce: a contingency framework for assessing marketing potential. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 27(4), 311-323.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods* (4th ed). Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Zhao, W., Ritchie, J. B., & Echtner, C. M. (2011). Social capital and tourism entrepreneurship. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1570-1593.
- Essers, C., & Benschop, Y. (2009). Enterprising identities: Female entrepreneurs of Moroccan and Turkish origin doing boundary work. *Human Relations*, 62(3), 403-425.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Background

1. Name
2. Age
3. Marital status.
4. Name of organization
5. Working experience.
6. Educational experience.
7. city of work?
10. Do you run the company alone or with other people? If yes, whom they are?
11. Why did you resort to self-employment?
12. Do you work in your business part-time or full-time?
13. Did you have challenges to balance between work and family? How? Explain?
14. How does your family take you being an entrepreneur? Were they supportive for you? Explain with examples.

Social networks

1. To what extent your ties are important to you and your business? How?
2. What kind of network are they? (male\female, professional\non-professional, colleagues\ex-colleagues, family member, friends, friends of friends?)
3. How did these ties come about (did you start it, or recommended to join? How did you establish your network?)
4. What is the primary purpose of being part of this network?
5. What is your role in your networks (? How do you benefit from your ties?)
6. How are you using your networks?

Strong ties networks

1. Who are your strong ties?
2. Do you benefit from your strong ties? How?
3. Does your strong ties help you to get new knowledge?
 - a. Which types of knowledge do you get from strong ties?
 - b. What is the quality of knowledge? Is it reliable?
5. Do you talk about your new ideas with your strong ties?
6. do you think that trust is important in creating strong ties? ?
8. Can you tell how your strong ties have been created?
9. Do you think that your previous career background helps you to create strong ties? How?
10. do you think your strong ties are enough for your business? If not, why? If yes, why?

Weak ties network

1. Who are your weak ties?
2. Do you benefit from your weak ties? How?

3. Does your weak ties help you to get new knowledge?
 - a. Which types of knowledge do you get from weak ties?
 - b. What is the quality of knowledge? Is it reliable?
5. Do you talk about your new ideas with your weak ties?
6. do you think that trust is important in creating weak ties? †
8. Can you tell how your weak ties have been created?
9. Do you think that your previous career background helps you to create weak ties? How?
10. do you think your weak ties are enough for your business? If not, why? If yes, why?

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. what obstacles have you faced during your entrepreneurship journey? Please, explain your answer. And give examples.
2. how did you overcome these obstacles?
3. How do you find your self as an entrepreneur?
4. How do you see women's entrepreneurship in Palestine in general?
5. What are the specific challenges that women entrepreneurs face in comparison with men?
6. how do you see the future for female entrepreneurship in palestine ?
7. Do you have anything you would like to add?

