

Ontological And Axiological Foundations Of Economic Thinking In Women's Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the ontological and axiological foundations of economic thinking in women's entrepreneurship within the context of contemporary social transformation. The research analyzes women's entrepreneurship not merely as an economic activity but as a complex socio-philosophical phenomenon associated with human dignity, self-realization, value formation, social responsibility, and sustainable development. Employing ontological, axiological, dialectical, and comparative approaches, the study investigates the evolution of economic thinking among women entrepreneurs under conditions of globalization, digitalization, and social modernization. Particular attention is devoted to the experience of Uzbekistan, where support for women's entrepreneurship has become one of the strategic priorities of socio-economic reforms. The findings demonstrate that women's economic thinking is shaped by the interaction of individual aspirations, social values, cultural traditions, and institutional opportunities. The article develops a socio-philosophical model explaining the relationship between economic thinking, entrepreneurial activity, and value transformation.

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Introduction. The twenty-first century has brought profound changes to economic systems, social structures, and cultural values. Among these transformations, the increasing participation of women in entrepreneurship represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary society. Women's entrepreneurship is no longer viewed solely as a mechanism for income generation; rather, it has become an important factor in social modernization, innovation, and sustainable development.

In recent decades, international organizations and national governments have increasingly recognized women's entrepreneurial activity as a strategic resource for economic growth and social stability. According to the United Nations, empowering women economically contributes not only to poverty reduction but also to broader processes of social inclusion and human development [1, p. 24].

The growing significance of women's entrepreneurship necessitates a deeper philosophical understanding of the foundations of economic thinking that motivate entrepreneurial behavior. Traditional economic theories often focus on rational choice and profit maximization. However, contemporary social philosophy suggests that economic behavior is also shaped by values, cultural norms, social identities, and existential aspirations.

From this perspective, economic thinking should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing both ontological and axiological dimensions. Ontologically, it reflects individuals' understanding of their place within economic reality. Axiologically, it embodies the values, priorities, and moral principles guiding economic activity.

Within the framework of New Uzbekistan, women's entrepreneurship occupies a prominent place in state development strategies. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasizes that supporting women's economic initiatives is essential for ensuring human dignity, social justice, and inclusive development [2, pp. 85–87].

Despite growing scholarly interest in entrepreneurship, insufficient attention has been devoted to the socio-philosophical foundations of women's economic thinking. Most studies focus on economic indicators while overlooking deeper ontological and axiological dimensions.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the ontological and axiological foundations of economic thinking in women's entrepreneurship and to identify their role in contemporary social development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs an interdisciplinary methodological framework integrating social philosophy, sociology, economics, and gender studies.

The following methods were used:

- Ontological analysis;
- Axiological approach;
- Dialectical method;
- Comparative analysis;
- Systems approach;
- Hermeneutic interpretation.

The theoretical basis includes the works of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbek scholars B.Ganiyev, M.Bekmurodov, A.Erkayev, and international researchers such as Max Weber, Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Joseph Schumpeter, and Pierre Bourdieu.

The legal and institutional framework includes:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023);
- The Law “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”;
- The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan;
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The methodological premise of the study is that economic thinking cannot be reduced to economic rationality alone; rather, it emerges from the interaction between material interests, social values, and human aspirations.

RESULTS

Ontological Foundations of Economic Thinking. Ontology concerns the nature of existence and reality. Applied to economic thinking, it seeks to answer the question: what is the fundamental meaning of economic activity for human existence?

In classical economic theory, economic activity is often interpreted as a means of satisfying material needs. However, contemporary social philosophy expands this understanding by recognizing entrepreneurship as a form of self-realization and social participation.

For women entrepreneurs, economic activity frequently acquires existential significance. It becomes a mechanism through which individuals express creativity, achieve independence, and construct social identity.

According to Max Weber, economic behavior is deeply influenced by cultural meanings and social values rather than purely material interests [3, p. 41].

The findings of this study indicate that women's economic thinking is shaped by several ontological factors:

- aspiration for self-realization;
- pursuit of independence;
- desire for social recognition;

- responsibility toward family and community;
- commitment to personal development.

These factors demonstrate that women's entrepreneurship represents a complex existential phenomenon rather than a purely economic activity.

Economic Thinking as a Form of Social Existence. The ontological significance of economic thinking lies in its capacity to connect individuals with broader social structures.

Women entrepreneurs simultaneously operate as:

- economic actors;
- social innovators;
- cultural transmitters;
- community leaders.

Their entrepreneurial activity contributes to both personal fulfillment and societal development. Consequently, economic thinking should be interpreted as a form of social existence through which individuals engage with economic reality and transform it.

Axiological Foundations of Economic Thinking in Women's Entrepreneurship

Economic Thinking as a Value-Oriented Phenomenon. The axiological dimension of economic thinking concerns the values, norms, and ethical principles that guide entrepreneurial behavior. Unlike purely utilitarian approaches, socio-philosophical analysis demonstrates that entrepreneurship is embedded within a system of cultural and moral values.

Women's entrepreneurship is particularly influenced by value-oriented motivations. Empirical studies conducted in various societies indicate that women entrepreneurs frequently combine economic objectives with social goals, community development, and family well-being [4, p. 112].

From an axiological perspective, economic thinking reflects the hierarchy of values through which individuals interpret economic opportunities and make decisions. Such values include:

- responsibility;
- justice;
- trust;
- creativity;
- independence;
- social solidarity;
- human dignity.

According to Martha Nussbaum, human development should be evaluated not merely through economic growth but through the expansion of human capabilities and opportunities [5, p. 78].

This perspective is particularly relevant for women's entrepreneurship because entrepreneurial activity often functions as a means of expanding personal capabilities and social participation.

Human Dignity as a Core Value. One of the central findings of this study is the significant role of human dignity in shaping women's economic thinking. Human dignity serves as both a motivational factor and an ethical framework guiding entrepreneurial activity.

The concept of human dignity includes:

- recognition of personal worth;
- equal opportunities;
- freedom of choice;
- economic independence;
- social participation.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev repeatedly emphasizes that ensuring human dignity should remain the primary objective of all socio-economic reforms [2, p. 23].

Within this framework, women's entrepreneurship becomes an important mechanism for strengthening human dignity by enabling women to realize their intellectual, creative, and economic potential.

Social Responsibility and Economic Culture. The findings reveal that women's entrepreneurship is strongly connected with social responsibility.

Unlike purely profit-oriented approaches, many women entrepreneurs demonstrate a greater tendency toward socially responsible economic behavior.

This tendency manifests itself through:

- support for local communities;
- investment in education;
- creation of employment opportunities;
- participation in charitable activities;
- promotion of sustainable business practices.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital helps explain this phenomenon. According to Bourdieu, economic success depends not only on financial resources but also on networks of trust, cooperation, and social relations [6, p. 98].

Women entrepreneurs frequently rely upon social capital and therefore place greater emphasis on relational and ethical dimensions of economic activity.

DISCUSSION

Transformation of Economic Thinking in the Context of Modernization. The modernization of society inevitably transforms economic consciousness and entrepreneurial behavior.

In traditional societies, women's economic roles were often restricted to household activities and informal economic participation. Contemporary modernization processes, however, have expanded opportunities for women's involvement in business, innovation, and leadership.

The research demonstrates that this transformation occurs through several interconnected mechanisms:

Educational Transformation. Access to higher education enhances economic literacy and entrepreneurial competence.

Technological Transformation. Digital technologies create new opportunities for business creation and market participation.

Institutional Transformation. Legal reforms strengthen women's economic rights and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Cultural Transformation. Changing social attitudes promote greater acceptance of women's leadership and economic autonomy.

These factors collectively contribute to the emergence of a new model of economic thinking.

Dialectics of Tradition and Innovation. One of the most important socio-philosophical issues concerns the relationship between traditional values and entrepreneurial modernization.

Some scholars view tradition and innovation as opposing forces. However, the findings suggest a more complex relationship.

From a dialectical perspective, tradition and innovation interact dynamically.

In the case of women's entrepreneurship:

- tradition provides cultural identity and ethical foundations;
- innovation generates opportunities for adaptation and development.

The experience of Uzbekistan demonstrates that entrepreneurial modernization can proceed without abandoning national values.

Instead, traditional values such as family solidarity, mutual assistance, and social responsibility are increasingly integrated into contemporary entrepreneurial practices.

Economic Thinking and Social Development. The study confirms that women's entrepreneurship contributes significantly to broader processes of social development.

According to Amartya Sen's capability approach, development should be understood as the expansion of people's freedoms and opportunities rather than merely economic growth [7, p. 36].

Women's entrepreneurship contributes to development by:

- reducing poverty;
- increasing household welfare;
- promoting social mobility;
- strengthening social inclusion;

- encouraging innovation.

Consequently, women's economic thinking should be regarded not only as an individual characteristic but also as an important resource for societal transformation.

Comparative Philosophical Perspectives

The analysis of major philosophical theories reveals several important insights.

Max Weber. Weber emphasizes the role of cultural values and ethical motivations in economic activity [3, p. 41].

Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter identifies entrepreneurship as a process of innovation and creative transformation [8, p. 74].

Amartya Sen. Sen views economic development as the expansion of human capabilities and freedoms [7, p. 36].

Martha Nussbaum

Nussbaum highlights the importance of human dignity and capability development [5, p.78]. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that women's economic thinking should be interpreted as a multidimensional phenomenon involving economic rationality, ethical values, social responsibility, and human development.

Socio-Philosophical Model of Economic Thinking in Women's Entrepreneurship. Based on the research findings, the following conceptual model is proposed:

Ontological Level

- Self-realization;
- Independence;
- Social identity;
- Human existence through economic activity.

Axiological Level

- Human dignity;
- Responsibility;
- Justice;
- Social solidarity;
- Creativity.

Institutional Level

- Education;
- Legal guarantees;
- Economic opportunities;
- Entrepreneurial infrastructure.

Practical Level

- Business activity;
- Innovation;
- Employment creation;
- Community development.

Social Outcome

- Women's empowerment;
- Social stability;
- Sustainable development;
- Inclusive modernization.

This model demonstrates the interaction between existential motivations, value systems, institutional conditions, and practical outcomes.

Conclusion. The research demonstrates that economic thinking in women's entrepreneurship represents a complex socio-philosophical phenomenon shaped by both ontological and axiological foundations.

From an ontological perspective, entrepreneurial activity functions not merely as a means of economic survival but also as a mechanism of self-realization, social participation, and identity construction. Women's entrepreneurship reflects the aspiration for independence, creativity, and personal development while simultaneously contributing to social progress.

From an axiological perspective, economic thinking is guided by a system of values that includes human dignity, justice, responsibility, social solidarity, and innovation. These values influence entrepreneurial behavior and determine the social significance of economic activity.

The study confirms that women's entrepreneurship contributes to:

- strengthening human dignity;
- expanding economic opportunities;
- promoting social inclusion;
- increasing social mobility;
- supporting sustainable development.

The experience of Uzbekistan demonstrates that effective support for women's entrepreneurship can facilitate the harmonization of economic modernization and cultural continuity. The findings indicate that economic thinking develops through the interaction of individual aspirations, value systems, institutional conditions, and social practices.

Consequently, women's entrepreneurship should be understood not solely as an economic category but as an important socio-philosophical factor of contemporary social transformation.

Scientific Novelty of the Research

The scientific novelty of the study consists of the following:

1. Economic thinking in women's entrepreneurship is interpreted as a socio-philosophical phenomenon based on ontological and axiological foundations.
2. The relationship between human dignity and entrepreneurial activity is analyzed through a philosophical framework.
3. The dialectical interaction between traditional values and entrepreneurial modernization is conceptualized.
4. A socio-philosophical model explaining the formation of economic thinking among women entrepreneurs is developed.
5. The role of women's entrepreneurship as a factor of social stability and sustainable development is theoretically substantiated.

Practical Significance

The findings of the research may be utilized in:

- studies on social philosophy and gender issues;
- development of educational programs in entrepreneurship;
- formulation of policies supporting women entrepreneurs;
- research on economic culture and social modernization;
- implementation of human-centered development strategies.

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