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## Article

# Socioeconomic Empowerment of Women in Rural Peru: A Cross-Sectional Study of Internal and External Determinants in Chepén

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## Abstract

This study examines the determinant factors of women's empowerment in Chepén, Peru, during 2024, analyzing how socioeconomic status potentially moderates this relationship. Using a quantitative approach with a non-experimental, cross-sectional design, the research surveyed 367 women aged 22–52 years through digital questionnaires employing validated scales. The results revealed that both internal factors (individual and collective psychological competencies) and external factors (economic and cultural conditions) significantly influence female empowerment ( $\beta = 0.57, p = 0.049$  and  $\beta = 0.87, p = 0.039$ , respectively). Contrary to our hypothesis, socioeconomic status did not significantly moderate these relationships (internal factors  $\times$  socioeconomic level:  $\beta = 0.02, p = 0.323$ ; external factors  $\times$  socioeconomic level:  $\beta = -0.02, p = 0.584$ ). The models demonstrated strong explanatory power, with internal factors explaining 84.3% and external factors explaining 58.5% of the variance in women's empowerment. The study found moderate levels of autonomy and decision-making (44.8%) and cultural dimensions (43.3%). While 76.1% of participants had higher education, 41.8% earned below PEN 1500, highlighting a significant education–income gap. These findings suggest that psychological competencies and sociocultural environment enhancement are more critical than initial economic conditions for promoting women's empowerment across all socioeconomic strata. The study recommends implementing targeted public policies to improve cultural and economic conditions, establish flexible educational programs, and promote dignified employment opportunities that recognize women's capabilities regardless of socioeconomic background.

**Keywords:** determining factors; female empowerment; socioeconomic status; rural development; gender equality; psychological competencies; cultural conditions



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## 1. Introduction

In the past, women had to overcome many obstacles to access economic, educational, and leadership opportunities. There is now much evidence that women have great potential to participate in and make significant contributions to conflict resolution and group leadership through their unique humanistic leadership. Female empowerment is not reduced to participating in decision-making (Cornwall, 2016) but is a process that requires self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-evaluation skills, confidence, initiative, adaptability, flexibility, motivation, intuition, and empathy (Llanos, 2021). Therefore, female empowerment is a topic that has transcended in recent years and is treated with greater concern

globally. For this reason, this research seeks to identify and analyze the determinants that influenced female empowerment in Chepén in 2024, where the moderating role played by socioeconomic status in this dynamic will be explored, recognizing that economic and social conditions can shape the opportunities and challenges faced by women on their path to empowerment. By understanding these factors and their interaction with socioeconomic status, effective strategies that promote female empowerment in Chepén can be designed and implemented (Deere & León, 2019). By addressing the barriers and taking advantage of the factors identified, it will be possible to generate positive changes in women's lives, strengthening their capacity to make decisions, access resources, and actively participate in the social, economic, and political development processes of the community. According to the United Nations (2020), gender inequality still persists. On average, only 47% of older women participate in the labor market compared to 74% of men. This issue takes on significant relevance in the context of Chepén, a Peruvian locality, where gender inequality and socioeconomic gaps can influence the degree of women's empowerment. Women's empowerment helps achieve gender equality, reduce the poverty rate, and promote sustainable development. This process is influenced by a variety of individual and contextual factors that can facilitate or hinder progress towards greater autonomy and participation of many women in different spheres. Therefore, the findings of this study can contribute to the formulation of public policies and programs aimed at promoting gender equality and female empowerment in Chepén and other regions with similar characteristics. By understanding the determinants and their relationship with socioeconomic status, more effective and targeted interventions can be designed to address the particular needs and challenges of women in different socioeconomic contexts. In Peru, gender gaps are also evident and pose an obstacle to women's empowerment. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática [INEI] (2021), 64.1% of the population corresponds to the economically active population; of this, 54.8% (2,795,600) corresponds to the metropolitan EAP, of which 45.2% (2,306,900) are women, reflecting a marked difference in labor participation between the two genders. Likewise, the average income compared to the previous year (2020), shows that the male population underemployed by income increased by 62.9% (240,000 people) and by only 6.8% (46,600 people in the case of women). These data reflect inequalities in access to employment and income, which can affect women's empowerment. In Chepén, as in other provinces, these problems persist. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática [INEI] (2022), the estimated number of poor people is 9,184,000, which is an increase of 628,000 people over the previous year. These figures show the existence of barriers to female empowerment in this rural region. It is known that female empowerment in Peru faces multidimensional challenges, ranging from gaps in labor participation and income to limited access to basic services and education, especially in rural areas. One of the determinants of female empowerment in Chepén in 2024 is the moderating role of socioeconomic status, which represents a valuable contribution to the field of human development and gender equality. By exploring the determinants of female empowerment and their interaction with socioeconomic status, essential knowledge can be generated to promote transformative change and create more equitable and inclusive societies.

Building on this global perspective, the structural barriers faced by many women become obstacles to their development as empowered women in society (Chant & McIlwaine, 2022). Faced with this problem, the aim is to reduce inequality in order to promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all people. Therefore, this research is relevant to analyze how socioeconomic levels can influence the process of female empowerment. The present research is guided by the University Social Responsibility line of action, which considers gender approach, social inclusion, and cultural diversity. Also, it is framed in the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically in gender equality. In this context, female

empowerment plays a crucial role, since, by strengthening the capabilities and autonomy of women, they are given greater opportunities to participate in the world of work in an equitable manner. In addition, socioeconomic level modulates the effectiveness of these factors, which allows the design of more effective strategies adapted to the diverse realities of women in Chepén (Moser, 1989). The findings of this study can contribute significantly to the achievement of the SDG, as they will provide valuable information to strengthen women's capacities and eliminate the barriers they face due to gender inequality, which will encourage their participation in the labor force. Therefore, the general problem of this research is to unveil the determinants that influenced female empowerment in Chepén in 2024 and how socioeconomic status moderated this relationship. In addition, it has three specific problems: What were the personal, family, and socio-cultural factors that influenced female empowerment in Chepén in 2024; what impact did educational level and employment status have on female empowerment in Chepén in 2024; how did socioeconomic level and employment status affect female empowerment in Chepén in 2024; and in what way did socioeconomic level influence the relationship between the determinants and female empowerment in Chepén in 2024? The research will be relevantly justified because of the need to understand the determinants of female empowerment in rural contexts such as Chepén. By identifying these factors and examining the moderating role of socioeconomic status, it will be possible to validate or reformulate existing theories and models of women's empowerment. Likewise, the results will allow us to identify new lines of research and areas of study for future research. Thus, in the practical justification of this research, valuable information will be provided to local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and other actors involved in the design and implementation of women's empowerment programs and projects in Chepén. By taking into account the determinants and influence of socioeconomic status, it will be possible to develop more effective strategies and practical actions to address the barriers and enhance women's empowerment in these communities. In addition, this research will be methodologically justified, which will allow the establishment of rigorous and reliable methods for future research related to female empowerment in rural areas of Peru. It will also contribute to validating and refining the research instruments and methods used to measure the data. Finally, the results of this research will have a significant social impact by providing key information for designing and implementing public policies and programs aimed at promoting female empowerment in Chepén and other rural communities. Solving this problem will improve the quality of life of women and their families as well as the economic, social, and cultural development of Chepén. In addition, women's empowerment is essential to achieve gender equality in Peru. The general objectives of the research are to determine the factors that influenced female empowerment in Chepén in 2024 and to analyze the moderating role of socioeconomic level in this relationship.

Conceptually, empowerment leads people through changes and strategies in business contexts (Rodríguez, 2017). Female empowerment specifically refers to a woman's ability to lead and manage projects that impact her life and family. Through empowerment, women gain financial solvency and equal opportunities. It is a women-centered process where they gain control over their lives through resource access and decision-making opportunities (World Bank, 2024).

Furthermore, according to Martínez (2017), female empowerment promotes gender equality and human development by creating equal opportunities across all life domains. The key dimensions are education, culture, and economic status. Education provides knowledge for informed decisions, culture influences norms that can limit autonomy, and economic status determines job opportunities and independence. Female empowerment

equips women with capabilities and freedoms to build valuable lives and contribute to their communities.

Given these considerations, the three specific objectives are as follows: to identify the personal, family, and sociocultural factors that influenced female empowerment in Chepén in 2024, to examine the impact of educational level and employment status on female empowerment in Chepén in 2024, and to analyze how socioeconomic level moderated the relationship between the determinants and female empowerment in Chepén in 2024. [García et al. \(2022\)](#) conducted a study to discern the relationships that exist among the numerous factors that shape women's empowerment, whether motivating or constraining, using a structural network analysis. In their methodology, they used a network analysis method based on theoretical information from 42 papers related to women's empowerment at work and gender expectations. The results of the study show that beneficent structures continue to limit and differentiate women's decision-making rights at the family and community levels, leading to gender inequality. However, the integration of women into the workforce has proven to be a progressive option that, in many cases, has overcome gender discrimination and paved the way for women's empowerment.

Additionally, the most frequently highlighted factors influence research on topics such as investment capacity, financial management, unpaid work, and linkage with family businesses. [Restrepo-Quintero and Cuadra-Palma \(2022\)](#) explored the relationship between women entrepreneurs, which is critical to closing the gender gap. Based on a program for women entrepreneurs in Valparaíso (Chile), the authors sought to build collaborative networks to recognize role models and promote the professional and business developments of the participants. Their results show that these processes allow women entrepreneurs to share their experiences, which creates situations of trust, solidarity, empathy, and empowerment. In this way, the creation of networks and their mutual connections helps reduce the gender gap among women entrepreneurs in the region.

For example, [Verzosi and Carvajal \(2023\)](#) conducted a study in Ecuador, analyzing women's empowerment from multiple perspectives in relation to the popular and solidarity economy. Using descriptive, documentary, and literature review methods, they examined the evolution of empowerment across different contexts and analyzed data from the Superintendence of Popular and Solidarity Economy. Their findings revealed that Ecuador's constitution recognizes the popular and solidarity economy as integral to the national economic system, promoting equality principles that enable women's active participation in various business models. The authors concluded that this economic model allows women to integrate into the exclusionary labor market, access resources that create social change, and exercise their right to choose and lead despite gender discrimination.

In the Mexican context, [Sosa-García \(2023\)](#) examined the role of Mexican women in the empowerment process and their transformation into demonstrative leaders across various social spheres. Through a comprehensive literature review on women's empowerment concepts, origins, and relationship with gender equality, she identified empowerment as a valuable, continuous process where women gain mastery over their lives and make strategic decisions that promote equality. She emphasizes education's importance in promoting female empowerment through activities and school programs that reduce gender gaps and foster inclusion.

Similarly, [Morante et al. \(2023\)](#) identified determining factors in female entrepreneurship network management in Colombia and Peru. Their qualitative methodology used semi-structured surveys to analyze 69 female entrepreneurs (30 in Colombia, 39 in Peru). The results showed that female entrepreneurship is linked to women leaders' characteristics, while the main financial service barriers include lack of collateral and high interest rates.



The study highlights entrepreneurship networks' importance as collaboration mechanisms that facilitate women's economic empowerment and business sustainability.

Also, according to [Vizcaíno et al. \(2021\)](#), the participation of rural women in the Andes has evolved towards greater representation in their communities, contributing both to family needs and the preservation of ancestral knowledge and collective identity. However, their economic contribution in the family and community spheres continues to be undervalued, and traditional roles that limit them mainly to the functions of mother and wife persist. The authors point out that, if this situation persists, it will be difficult to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. However, they have been highlighting the growing importance of the concept of women's empowerment since The Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women (1995), which emphasized women's participation in decision-making. They also mention the existence of international programs and projects that seek to empower rural Andean women through the cultivation and use of cereals such as quinoa, and emphasize the importance of support from NGOs and state agencies to provide the necessary economic and technical resources to sustain these enterprises and promote ecological agricultural and food systems. [Romero \(2020\)](#) explores the educational, economic, social, and political empowerment of women in her research, arguing that an empowered person should achieve balance, autonomy, and the ability to act on her own life plan. The method used was a review of the literature on women's empowerment at various levels. The results obtained by the author show that female empowerment can reduce violence against family members and achieve a more dignified society. In the area of education, emphasis was placed on the state policy that guarantees equal opportunities, although there are still economic differences that hinder education. Regarding economic empowerment, the growing role of women in the family and national economy was highlighted, which contributes to economic and inclusive growth. In the social sphere, emphasis was placed on the need to empower women in soft skills, promoting security, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, assertive communication, and resilience. Finally, strategies for empowerment were proposed based on the pillars of the ethics of care proposed by Carol Gilligan: caring for oneself, caring for others, and inclusion of self and others in society. [Varona-Castillo and Gonzales-Castillo \(2021\)](#) analyzed the factors of income distribution in Peru between 1985 and 2017 in their research. Their main objective was to examine the impact of economic growth and human capital on national income inequality. The data came from authoritative sources such as the Central Reserve Bank of Peru (BCRP), the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI), and the World Bank. In their results, they suggested that per capita gross domestic product and slow and unsustainable economic growth had exacerbated the worsening income distribution rather than changing it in a sustainable way. It reflects a dual economy with differentiated productivity, low levels of human capital, and weak institutions. They also concluded that investments in education and human capital tend to reduce inequality in income distribution, while changes in natural resources, production structures, and development strategies (from import substitution to neoliberalism) increase it. As for the theoretical bases, the following variables are presented: determinants, female empowerment, and socioeconomic level as a moderating variable. In addition, it shows the respective concepts, their importance, dimensions, and indicators that support this research. According to [Panduro and Pérez \(2019\)](#), determinants are defined as traits and characteristics that determine a person's aptitudes and abilities to pursue a dream without giving up, take risks in situations of uncertainty, and reflect their decisions in investment, strategies, leadership, and business growth. These factors are crucial to an entrepreneur's success, as they shape their ability to identify and seize opportunities, overcome obstacles, and achieve sustainable growth of an organization. The importance of these factors lies in their direct influence on en-

entrepreneurial behavior and on the economic and social development of a region or country. An environment conducive to entrepreneurship, with favorable determinants, can foster innovation, the creation of new jobs, and economic growth (Rivera, 2016). Conversely, the presence of adverse factors can hinder entrepreneurship and limit development potential. Rivera (2016) proposed two main dimensions to analyze determinants, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to the individual characteristics and skills inherent to the entrepreneur. Among the indicators are individual psychological competencies, which include characteristics such as risk-taking, commitment, autonomy, innovation, internal control, achievement motivation, and opportunity orientation. Collective psychological competencies are also taken into account, which include interpersonal skills such as negotiation skills, communication skills, leadership, teamwork, and planning. External factors that influence empowerment include economic, political, legal, technological, cultural, and social environments. Economic indicators include economic conditions, access to financing, and income, while cultural factors encompass values, beliefs, and social norms. The determining factors incorporate both personal characteristics and environmental elements affecting women's lives.

Turning to the moderator variable, socioeconomic level is a fundamental variable in market research that classifies households based on household head characteristics and housing materials (Sánchez, 2023). It comprises five levels (A–E), with level A representing the highest stratum. According to Informe de Opinión (2024), 31.7% of Peruvians belong to level E, 26.2% to level D, 30.3% to level C, 10.6% to level B, and only 1.2% to level A, based on IPSOS projections from Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática [INEI]'s (2022) surveys.

Complementing this, research by Agualongo and Garcés (2020) shows that insufficient household income often drives children into the informal sector after secondary education. The socioeconomic variable has financial dimensions (minimum wage, income sources) and cultural dimensions (education level, cultural attainment). Peru's 2023 APEIM formula considers household head education and private health insurance affiliation, having evolved to exclude less significant variables (Sánchez, 2023). Agualongo and Garcés (2020) relate socioeconomic level to education and health, emphasizing that it encompasses education, occupation, status, and prestige beyond just income.

Consequently, the study hypothesizes that determinants influence female empowerment with socioeconomic level as a moderator in Chepén (2024). Specifically, HE1 proposes that personal, family, and socio-cultural factors significantly influence female empowerment; HE2 suggests that educational level and employment status have significant positive impacts; and HE3 posits that socioeconomic level moderates the relationship between determinants and female empowerment.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The methodology proposed for this research is a basic modality that focuses on expanding scientific and theoretical knowledge about a given area without taking into account its immediate practical application (Heinbokel, 2024). Consistent with that purpose, the study adopts a quantitative approach, which—according to Leavy (2022)—centers on the collection and analysis of numerical data and the use of statistical tools to test previously established hypotheses. At an explanatory level and within a non-experimental cross-sectional design, the research seeks to reveal the causes of a phenomenon and the conditions under which it manifests itself, as well as to understand why two or more variables are related (Hernández et al., 2014). Non-experimental designs are those in which no situation is constructed; instead, they observe situations that already exist (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). Specifically, cross-sectional designs collect data at a single moment in time with the purpose of describing variables and analyzing their incidence

and interrelation at that point (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Moreover, such designs allow researchers to obtain a snapshot of reality that is appropriate when the objective is to examine the prevalence of a condition and its possible causes in a representative sample of a defined population (McHugh, 2020).

For this purpose, the study population was considered infinite, composed of women living in Chepén in the year 2024. Because access to the total population was limited, non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used. In this research, no variables were manipulated; instead, the female empowerment variables, their determinants, and the moderating role of socioeconomic level at a given time point in Chepén during 2024 were simply observed and described. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, as suggested by the cited authors. The investigation followed a moderation-model design in which socioeconomic level (M) was examined as a moderating variable in the relationship between determining factors (V1), the independent variable, and female empowerment (V2), the dependent variable. This design enabled analysis of how socioeconomic status influenced the strength or direction of the relationship between the determinants and women's empowerment in Chepén.

All study variables were operationally defined on an ordinal measurement scale comprising 27 items. Female empowerment (dependent variable Y) captured the dimensions of education, culture, and economic situation. Determining factors (independent variable X) encompassed internal and external dimensions, while socioeconomic level (moderator) comprised financial and cultural dimensions. Because the exact number of empowered women was unknown, the population remained infinite; the corresponding sample-size formula yielded 367 women aged between 22 and 52 years—students or entrepreneurs—who shared a desire for self-improvement. The questionnaires were digitized in Google Forms and distributed via WhatsApp to women residing in Chepén in 2024. Completing the questionnaire required approximately 15 min. Each questionnaire item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree” (see Appendix A). The collected data were analyzed in SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 25.0; IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA), where descriptive statistics, normality tests, multiple linear regressions, and multigroup analyses were performed to assess the moderating role of socioeconomic status. Ethical safeguards were observed throughout: Confidentiality and anonymity were protected, the data were encrypted and stored securely with restricted research-only access, and no personally identifiable information was gathered without the written consent of the participants.

### 2.1. Research Design and Analytical Model

The study used a non-experimental, cross-sectional research design with a quantitative approach. To examine the relationships between variables and test the moderating effect of socioeconomic level, a regression model with interaction effects was implemented. The conceptual model was expressed by the following equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 (X \times M) + \varepsilon$$

where

Y represents female empowerment (dependent variable);

X represents the determining factors (independent variable);

M represents the socioeconomic level (moderator variable);

$X \times M$  represents the interaction term between the determinants and the socioeconomic level;

$\beta_0$  is the constant;



$\beta_1$  is the direct effect of the determining factors;  
 $\beta_2$  is the direct effect of socioeconomic level;  
 $\beta_3$  is the interaction effect (moderation);  
 $\varepsilon$  is the error term.

To specifically evaluate the effects of internal and external factors, two regression models were developed:

Model 1 (Internal Factors):  $YEF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 XFI + \beta_2 MNSE + \beta_3 (XFI \times MNSE) + \varepsilon$ ,

Model 2 (External Factors):  $YEF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 XFE + \beta_2 MNSE + \beta_3 (XFE \times MNSE) + \varepsilon$ ,

where

YEF = female empowerment;

XFI = internal factors;

XFE = external factors;

MNSE = socioeconomic level.

## 2.2. Sample Size Calculation

The sample size was determined using the formula for infinite population:

$$n = (Z^2 \times p \times q) / e^2,$$

where

$n$  = required sample size;

$Z$  = Z-value for 95% confidence level (1.96);

$p$  = estimated proportion of the population with the characteristics of interest (0.5);

$q = 1 - p$  (0.5);

$e$  = accepted margin of error (5% = 0.05).

Substituting the values gives  $n = (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 / (0.05)^2 = 3.8416 \times 0.25 / 0.0025 = 0.9604 / 0.0025 = 384.16$ .

It was adjusted to 367 participants for the final sample.

## 2.3. Reliability and Validity Assessment

The reliability of the instruments was assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ), calculated as

$$\alpha = [k / (k - 1)] \times [1 - (\sum \sigma_i^2 / \sigma T^2)],$$

where

$k$  = number of items;

$\sigma_i^2$  = variance of each item;

$\sigma T^2$  = total variance of the instrument.

Alpha values above 0.7 were considered acceptable, following the recommendations of Nunnally (1978).

## 2.4. Moderation Analysis

To assess moderation effects, we used the Johnson–Neyman approach to identify regions of significance in the conditional association between determinants and female empowerment. The significance transition point was calculated as

$$MJN = [t_{crit} \times SE(\beta_1 + \beta_3 M)] / \beta_3,$$

where

MJN = value of the moderator at the transition point;

tcrit = critical value of t for a  $\alpha = 0.05$ ;

SE ( $\beta_1 + \beta_3 M$ ) = standard error of the conditional effect;

$\beta_3$  = interaction coefficient.

### 2.5. Hypothesis Test Model Specification

The hypotheses were evaluated using *t*-tests for the individual regression coefficients, with a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . For the moderation hypothesis (HE3), the test focused on the interaction coefficient ( $\beta_3$ ), where a *p*-value < 0.05 would indicate a significant moderating effect.

The statistical significance of the complete models was evaluated by the F-test, calculated as

$$F = [R^2/k]/[(1 - R^2)/(n - k - 1)],$$

where

$R^2$  = coefficient of determination;

k = number of predictors;

n = sample size.

### 2.6. Measurement Scales

The study variables were measured using validated scales. Female empowerment (dependent variable Y) was assessed using the Women's Empowerment Scale (WES) developed by Alkire et al. (2013), which evaluates three dimensions: education, culture, and economic situation on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale has been validated in Latin American contexts with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. The determining factors (independent variable X) were measured using the Empowerment Determinants Scale (EDS) proposed by Malhotra and Schuler (2022), which assesses internal and external factors through 10 items on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale was adapted to the Peruvian context by Díaz and Jáimez (2022) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. The socioeconomic level (moderator variable) was evaluated using the APEIM Socioeconomic Scale (Asociación Peruana de Empresas de Investigación de Mercados [APEIM], 2024), which is the standard instrument for measuring socioeconomic levels in Peru. This scale categorizes participants into five levels (A, B, C, D, and E) according to financial and cultural dimensions. All scales were subjected to a content validation process through expert judgment (5 specialists in gender studies and rural development) and a pilot test with 30 women with characteristics similar to those in the final sample. Linguistic adjustments were made to adapt them to the sociocultural context of Chepén while maintaining conceptual equivalence with the original scales.

### 2.7. Description of Study Variables

The Determining Factors (independent variable): variable was divided into two main dimensions. (a) The internal factors encompassed the individual psychological and personal characteristics that influence women's empowerment. This dimension included the following points. – Individual psychological competencies were measured through items related to self-confidence, risk-taking propensity, autonomy, innovation capacity, and achievement motivation. Our sample questions included "I feel confident making important decisions on my own" and "I am willing to take risks to achieve my goals". Collective psychological competencies were assessed through items focused on interpersonal skills, including communication abilities, leadership capacity, negotiation skills, and teamwork capabilities. Our example items were "I can effectively express my opinions in

group settings” and “I can influence others to support my initiatives”. (b) The external factors related to environmental and contextual elements that affect women’s empowerment. This dimension included the following points. The Economic conditions were measured through items about access to financial resources, employment opportunities, and income stability. Our example questions were “I have adequate access to financial resources for my needs” and “There are sufficient employment opportunities for women in my community”. Cultural factors were assessed through items about social norms, cultural beliefs, and community attitudes toward women’s roles. Our sample items included “In my community, women are respected as decision-makers” and “Traditional beliefs in my area support women’s professional development”.

The Female Empowerment (dependent variable) variable was assessed through three dimensions. (a) Education and Objectives measured women’s access to educational opportunities and their ability to set and pursue personal and professional goals. Our example items included “I have had sufficient opportunities to advance my education” and “I can establish and work toward my own life objectives”. (b) Autonomy and Decisions evaluated women’s ability to make independent choices and exercise control over their lives. Our sample questions were “I make my own decisions about household expenditures” and “I can freely choose how to spend my personal time”. (c) Current situation assessed women’s perception of their present economic, social, and personal status. Our example items included “My current economic situation allows me to meet my basic needs” and “I am satisfied with my current role in my community”.

The Socioeconomic Level (moderator variable) variable was measured through two dimensions. (a) The Financial dimension was evaluated through items about income level, assets, and economic stability. Our example questions included “What is your approximate monthly household income?” and “Do you own or rent your home?” (b) The Cultural dimension was assessed through items about educational attainment, access to information, and cultural participation. Our sample items were “What is your highest level of education completed?” and “How frequently do you participate in cultural or community events?” Each questionnaire item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree” for attitudinal questions, or appropriate categorical options for demographic items. The complete questionnaire consisted of 27 items distributed across the three main variables (10 items for Determining Factors, 13 items for Female Empowerment, and 4 items for Socioeconomic Level).

### 3. Results

In Chepén, the study that was carried out in 2024 showed important data on a group of 367 women, where most of them were between 33 and 42 years old, an age where they already had experience both in their work and in their daily life. The most interesting thing was that these women were changing the typical customs of the place, as there were more single women than married, and many were studying at universities or technical institutes. This reflects that women in Chepén are looking for new opportunities to grow and make progress; something that is striking is that, although many were studying or already had obtained higher education qualifications, most of them earn less than PEN 1500. We realize that it is not easy for them to find good jobs, even with education; even so, there was a group of women who had achieved better salaries, which shows that sometimes it is difficult but possible to improve the economic situation in Chepén (Table 1).

The study analysis showed that all the questions and sections of the questionnaire worked reliably in measuring what was intended to be investigated. We see that the statistical results, measured through Cronbach’s alpha, show values ranging from 0.742 to 0.893, indicating that the instrument is quite reliable, exceeding the minimum necessary

of 0.7 that is sought to be found. As for the Determining Factors variable, it turned out to be the most solid of the questionnaire, with a value of 0.893; it is interesting to note that when looking at its components separately, the questions on personal and psychological aspects (internal factors) performed better than those related to the environment (external factors), which leads us to understand that the participants responded more consistently when it came to personal issues. In addition, the questions on the Female Empowerment variable were analyzed, and their results were outstanding (0.864), especially in the section that addressed issues of education and personal goals, which stood out with a value of 0.891. Finally, the questions on the moderator Socioeconomic Level variable showed very good results (0.836), both in financial and cultural aspects, albeit with slightly more modest but still reliable values (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 367).

Feature	Category	Percentage (%)	Theoretical Justification
Age	22–30 years (Early career)	22.1	Based on career development stages
	31–40 years (Consolidation)	38.7	Peak productivity period
	41–52 years (Mature career)	39.2	Advanced career and experience
Marital Status	Single	52.2	Standard demographic classification
	Married/Cohabiting	29.9	Combined committed relationships
	Separated/Divorced/Widowed	17.9	Previously in committed relationships
Educational Level	Basic education or less	6.0	According to Peruvian education system
	Secondary education	17.9	Completed secondary school
	Technical education	32.8	Technical certification or diploma
	University education	43.3	Including undergraduate and graduate
Income Level	Less than 1.5 SMV (<PEN 1500)	41.8	Below 1.5 times minimum wage
	1.5–2.5 SMV (PEN 1500–PEN 2500)	29.9	Middle income range
	More than 2.5 SMV (PEN 2500)	28.3	Above 2.5 times minimum wage

Note. SMV = Salario Mínimo Vital (Peruvian Minimum Wage). The distribution by age is based on established career development stages. The educational levels follow the official Peruvian education system structure, and the income ranges are defined in relation to the national minimum wage to provide contextually relevant comparisons.

**Table 2.** Reliability Analysis using Cronbach's Alpha by Variables and Dimensions.

Variable	Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Interpretation	LF	AVE
Determining Factors		0.893	10	Very good	0.793	0.68
	Internal Factors	0.875		Very good	0.775	
	External Factors	0.742		Acceptable	0.742	
Female Empowerment		0.864	13	Very good	0.802	0.72
	Education and Objectives	0.891		Very good	0.771	
	Autonomy and Decisions	0.783		Good	0.705	
	Current Situation	0.812		Very good	0.718	
Socioeconomic Level		0.836		Very good	0.876	0.71
	Financial	0.756	4	Good	0.798	
	Cultural	0.792		Good	0.761	

Note. Values: 0.7–0.79 = acceptable/good reliability; 0.8–0.89 = very good reliability;  $\geq 0.9$  = excellent reliability.

### 3.1. Levels of Variables

The analysis of the levels in the different dimensions of the study conducted in Chapén revealed interesting patterns in the distribution of the evaluated characteristics. Here, the Determining Factors showed particular dynamics, and the internal factors showed a greater concentration in a moderate level (47.7%), which was the highest percentage of the entire study. Meanwhile, the external factors, also dominated by the moderate level (41.8%), presented a more balanced distribution among their levels. With respect to Female Empowerment, although its three dimensions showed a similar tendency towards the moderate level, it is significant that Autonomy and Decisions, along with Current Situation, reached the highest percentages (both with 44.8%); however, the Education and Objectives dimension presented a different behavior, with the lowest percentage at the moderate level (40.3%) and one of the highest at the low level (32.8%), which could indicate specific needs in the educational development and goal planning of the participants. The analysis of Socioeconomic Level revealed important contrasts, since while the Financial dimension registered the highest percentage at the low level (34.3%) of all the dimensions evaluated, the Cultural dimension showed a more favorable tendency towards the moderate level (43.3%), which shows that, despite maintaining a moderate cultural level, the participants face greater challenges in the economic aspect. In general, these findings show a predominance of moderate levels in all dimensions, where there is an inclination towards low levels, especially in the financial and educational aspects, which could be considered as focal points for future interventions aimed at the development of female empowerment in the city of Chapén (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Distribution of Levels by Study Dimensions (N = 367).

Dimensions	Under	Moderate	High
	%	%	%
Determining Factors			
- Internal Factors	26.9%	47.7%	25.4%
- External Factors	29.8%	41.8%	28.4%
Female Empowerment			
- Education and Objectives	32.8%	40.3%	26.9%
- Autonomy and Decisions	29.9%	44.8%	25.3%
- Current Situation	31.3%	44.8%	23.9%
Socioeconomic Level			
- Financial	34.3%	40.3%	25.4%
- Cultural	31.3%	43.3%	25.4%

Note. % = relative frequency; N = total participants. The percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

### 3.2. Conceptual Framework of Variables

Our research examines the complex interrelationships between three key constructs: determining factors, female empowerment, and socioeconomic level. The conceptual framework posits that determining factors—comprising both internal elements (individual and collective psychological competencies) and external elements (economic and cultural conditions)—directly influence female empowerment in Chapén. This relationship is hypothesized to be moderated by socioeconomic levels, which may strengthen or weaken the impact of determining factors on empowerment outcomes.

Internal factors encompass personal attributes such as self-confidence, risk-taking propensity, and achievement motivation, alongside interpersonal skills, including leadership capacity and communication abilities. External factors include contextual elements



like access to financial resources, employment opportunities, and community attitudes toward women's roles. Female empowerment is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct spanning education and personal objectives, autonomy in decision-making, and current socioeconomic situation.

The framework proposes that while the determining factors have direct effects on empowerment outcomes, the strength of these relationships may vary across different socioeconomic levels. This moderation hypothesis suggests that socioeconomic status could serve as either a catalyst or a barrier in women's empowerment processes, potentially amplifying the benefits of positive determinants or mitigating the limitations of negative ones. Through this integrated approach, we aim to capture the nuanced dynamics of women's empowerment in the specific sociocultural context of Chepén, Peru.

### 3.3. Analysis of the Determinant Effects on Women's Empowerment

#### 3.3.1. Internal Factors Model

Statistical analysis revealed significant results on the relationship between internal factors and female empowerment in Chepén. The model showed remarkable robustness, explaining 84.3% of the variability observed in female empowerment ( $R^2 = 0.84$ ), which is a remarkable finding in social studies of this nature. The overall significance of the model ( $F(3,63) = 113.05, p < 0.001$ ) confirms that these relationships are not the product of chance but reflect real patterns in the population studied.

Internal factors proved to have a positive and significant impact on female empowerment ( $\beta = 0.57, p = 0.049, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.00, 1.14]$ ), indicating that when women strengthen their individual and collective psychological competencies, their level of empowerment tends to increase. However, it is noteworthy that socioeconomic level alone did not show significant influence ( $\beta = -0.22, p = 0.570, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.01, 0.56]$ ), and its interaction with internal factors did not reach statistical significance either ( $\beta = 0.02, p = 0.323, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.02, 0.06]$ ).

#### 3.3.2. Model of External Factors

As for external factors, the model explained 58.5% of the variability in female empowerment ( $R^2 = 0.59, F(3,63) = 29.65, p < 0.001$ ), showing a moderate but significant predictive ability, suggesting that external factors play an important role in this social phenomenon.

The results indicate that external factors have a positive and significant impact on female empowerment ( $\beta = 0.87, p = 0.039, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.05, 1.69]$ ), showing that when the economic and cultural conditions of the environment improve, the level of women's empowerment tends to increase. As in the internal factors model, socioeconomic level did not exhibit significant direct influence ( $\beta = 0.52, p = 0.346, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.57, 1.61]$ ), and its interaction with external factors also did not reach statistical significance ( $\beta = -0.02, p = 0.584, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.07, 0.04]$ ).

#### 3.3.3. Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest something very valuable for the city of Chepén: female empowerment is more related to women's internal strengths and environmental conditions than to their initial economic status. This is especially relevant because it indicates that, regardless of socioeconomic status, the development of psychological competencies and the improvement of contextual conditions could be effective ways to strengthen female empowerment. This finding is particularly useful for the design of intervention programs that seek to promote female empowerment, suggesting that it is advisable to focus primarily on strengthening psychological and personal aspects, improving the economic and cultural conditions of the environment, and generating access to opportunities and resources (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Summary of Results: Main and Moderating Effects of the Determinants on Female Empowerment.

Modelo/Variable	$\beta$ Es-tandarizado	$\beta$ No Es-tandarizado	EE	t	IC 95%	p	R <sup>2</sup>	F (gl)	SEE
Modelo 1									
Factores internos									
Factores internos	0.57	0.42	0.11	3.84	0.21–0.63	0.049 *	0.84	113.05 (3, 363)	0.38
Internos $\times$ NSE	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.98	−0.07–0.13	0.323			
Modelo 2									
Factores externos									
Factores externos	0.87	0.51	0.09	5.67	0.33–0.69	0.039 *	0.59	29.65 (3, 363)	0.49
Externos $\times$ NSE	−0.02	−0.02	0.04	−0.55	−0.10–0.06	0.584			
Controles (ambos modelos)									
Edad	0.04	0.02	0.01	1.42	−0.01–0.05	0.160			
Nivel educativo	0.05	0.04	0.02	1.38	−0.02–0.04	0.151			

Note.  $\beta$  values represent standardized regression coefficients. \*  $p < 0.05$ .

In addition, it suggests that socioeconomic status is not necessarily a barrier to the effectiveness of these interventions, which could allow the design of universal empowerment strategies in Chapén.

Although both types of factors (internal and external) have significant influence on female empowerment in Chapén, we found no evidence that socioeconomic status moderates these relationships, which contradicts our original hypothesis HE3. These results suggest that intervention strategies for female empowerment in Chapén could be effective across socioeconomic strata, provided they focus on strengthening psychological capacities and improving contextual conditions.

### 3.3.4. Interpretation of Hypotheses and Additional Considerations

The above finding is particularly significant in the context of a rural community like Chapén, where socioeconomic inequalities are marked and have traditionally been considered determinants of women's personal and professional development opportunities.

The absence of moderation effects suggests a more complex social dynamic than anticipated, where women's empowerment potential transcends initial socioeconomic barriers. This could indicate that the opportunity structures for female empowerment in Chapén are more linked to socio-cultural and psychological factors than to pre-existing economic conditions. From public policy and community development program perspectives, these results suggest that intervention strategies for female empowerment in Chapén could be effective across different socioeconomic strata, as long as they focus on strengthening individual and collective psychological capacities and improving the contextual conditions that facilitate access to resources and opportunities.

This finding has important implications for the design of development programs in the region, as it suggests the following points.

Empowerment initiatives need not be segmented strictly by socioeconomic level, which could facilitate more inclusive and far-reaching interventions.

Community development resources could be more efficiently distributed by focusing on universal factors that benefit women of diverse socioeconomic levels.

Strengthening psychological competencies (such as leadership, effective communication, and decision-making) could generate significant changes regardless of the initial economic context.

Transforming cultural norms and improving environmental conditions could benefit women’s empowerment throughout the community.

These results invite a reconsideration of traditional models of intervention for women’s empowerment, suggesting a more holistic and inclusive approach that recognizes women’s ability to develop their potential despite initial economic constraints, provided that their personal competencies are strengthened and the socio-cultural environment in which they operate is improved.

### 3.4. Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 5 below. Each hypothesis is supported, if plausible, according to the significance of the regression coefficients derived from the proposed models. In this case, the analysis applies to the results of the individual components: the direct effects of internal and external determinants on female empowerment, and the moderating effect of socioeconomic status. Significance is at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

**Table 5.** Summary of the Study’s Hypothesis Tests.

Hypothesis	Statement	$\beta$ Standardized	95% CI	$p$ -Value	Decision
HE1	Personal, family, and sociocultural factors significantly influence female empowerment.	0.57 (internal)	0.12–0.78	0.049 *	Accepted
HE2	Educational level and employment status positively impact female empowerment.	0.87 (external)	0.46–0.93	0.039 *	Accepted
HE3	Socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between determinants and female empowerment.	0.02 (internal $\times$ SES) −0.02 (external $\times$ SES)	−0.11–0.15 −0.10–0.06	0.323 0.584	Rejected

Note.  $\beta$  values represent standardized regression coefficients. \*  $p < 0.05$ .

## 4. Discussion

The present research has provided deeper insights into female empowerment in Chapén in 2024, revealing significant findings that warrant detailed and contextualized analysis. We have developed this discussion to address each research objective systematically. Regarding our general objective, the results show that determinants significantly influenced female empowerment, although socioeconomic level did not exert a significant moderating effect ( $\beta = -0.2242$ ,  $p = 0.570$ ) on this relationship. These findings diverge from [Varona-Castillo and Gonzales-Castillo \(2021\)](#), who argued that economic conditions are decisive in reducing gender inequality. However, our results align with [Verzosi and Carvajal \(2023\)](#), who emphasize women’s capacity to generate development alternatives regardless of initial economic circumstances.

This pattern can be understood, through [Kabeer’s \(1999\)](#) conceptualization of empowerment, as the expansion of people’s ability to make strategic life choices in contexts where this ability was previously denied to them. Kabeer emphasizes resources, agency, and achievements as the three interrelated dimensions of empowerment, suggesting that while economic resources matter, women’s agency—their ability to define goals and act upon them—can develop independently of economic status. In relation to our first specific objective aimed at identifying personal, family, and sociocultural factors influencing female empowerment, the results demonstrate that internal factors exert a positive and significant influence ( $\beta = 0.5697$ ,  $p = 0.049$ ) on the empowerment process. This finding is particularly

relevant in Chepén, where women have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptation despite structural constraints. As noted by [Romero \(2020\)](#), empowerment not only strengthens individual autonomy but also contributes to building a more equitable society. The fact that 47.7% of participants showed moderate levels in internal factors highlights the significant development of both individual and collective psychological competencies.

These findings corroborate [Cornwall's \(2016\)](#) theoretical framework that positions empowerment as both a process and outcome, emphasizing women's ability to exercise choice, access opportunities, and develop capabilities. The moderate rather than high level of psychological competencies suggests that empowerment in Chepén remains an ongoing process rather than a fully achieved state.

When examining our second specific objective related to educational level and employment impact, the data reveal a complex reality. We found that 43.3% of participants are university students and 32.8% have technical training, reflecting significant advancement in access to higher education. However, a worrying discrepancy exists between educational attainment and employment opportunities, with 41.8% earning below PEN 1500. This wage gap aligns with [Vizcaino et al. \(2021\)](#), who identified persistent structural barriers limiting women's professional development in similar contexts.

These findings can be understood through [Sen et al.'s \(2024\)](#) capability approach, which distinguishes between capabilities (what people can do) and functionings (what they actually achieve). The education–income gap in Chepén demonstrates that while education enhances women's capabilities, structural barriers prevent the conversion of these capabilities into economic functionings. This echoes [Malhotra and Schuler's \(2022\)](#) identification of empowerment as contextually specific, with varied manifestations across different economic, social, and cultural contexts. Regarding our third specific objective, which focused on socioeconomic level's moderating role, the results yield a surprising finding: socioeconomic level does not significantly influence ( $\beta = -0.2242$ ,  $p = 0.570$ ) the relationship between determinants and female empowerment. This is especially relevant for Chepén, indicating that female empowerment can develop independently of initial economic conditions. With 40.3% of participants at moderate financial socioeconomic levels and 43.3% at moderate cultural levels, there exists a potential foundation for developing more inclusive empowerment strategies.

This aligns with [Moser's \(1989\)](#) gender planning framework, which distinguishes between practical gender needs (immediate perceived necessities) and strategic gender interests (requirements to overcome women's subordination). Our findings suggest that women in Chepén can pursue strategic gender interests despite various practical need limitations, challenging the conventional assumption that economic advancement must precede psychological empowerment. In our research, 47.8% of participants were aged 33–42, which is a critical stage characterized by professional and personal consolidation. This group faces particular challenges in Chepén, where family responsibilities often intertwine with professional aspirations. The fact that 52.2% of participants were single could indicate transformation in traditional sociocultural patterns and greater openness to female autonomy.

The distribution of empowerment levels across different dimensions is noteworthy. Autonomy and Decisions shows that 44.8% of participants are at moderate levels, which is similar to Current Situation's dimension percentages. These results suggest significant progress in women's autonomous decision-making abilities and personal development management, although improvement opportunities remain. Additionally, our findings reveal that external factors have positive and significant impacts on female empowerment ( $\beta = 0.8683$ ,  $p = 0.039$ ), highlighting the importance of sociocultural contexts in the empowerment process. This result coincides with [García et al. \(2022\)](#), who emphasize women's work integration as fundamental to overcoming gender discrimination.

These research results provide a solid foundation for designing more effective and contextualized interventions in Chepén. The evidence suggests that female empowerment strategies should focus on strengthening individual psychological competencies and creating more favorable environments for women's professional and personal development, regardless of socioeconomic level.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

Looking back at our research journey in Chepén, we faced several challenges that affected what we can claim about women's empowerment in this community.

First, we struggled with whom we could actually reach. Since we could not talk to every woman in Chepén, we ended up surveying whoever was available and willing to participate. This means that we mostly heard from women who had internet access and knew how to use digital tools. I worry about the women whose voices were not captured, particularly those in remote areas or without technology. These women might have completely different experiences with empowerment than those we surveyed.

Our snapshot approach also limited what we would learn. We only captured women's situations at one moment in 2024, but empowerment is not something that happens overnight—it unfolds over years. Without seeing this process over time, we missed important parts of these women's stories. I have wondered how many of these women might have shown dramatic changes in their empowerment levels if we had followed them for several years instead.

I am also concerned about how candid participants felt they could be. When we asked women about making decisions or standing up for themselves, there was always pressure to appear "strong" or "independent". Some may have painted a rosier picture than their reality, especially on sensitive questions about family dynamics or personal autonomy.

Looking at who actually completed our survey raised some red flags for me. Over three-quarters of our participants had received higher education—which just does not reflect the typical educational profile of women in rural Chepén. This made me question whether we were capturing the experiences of ordinary women or primarily those from more privileged backgrounds.

The digital questionnaire itself created barriers. Every time I think about our distribution method via WhatsApp, I am reminded of the women excluded simply because they did not have smartphones or reliable internet connections. These technological hurdles likely filtered out perspectives from the most economically vulnerable women.

Finally, I wonder if our approach to measuring socioeconomic status was too simplistic for the complex realities of rural Peruvian life. The neat A–E classification system might work for market research, but it probably missed important nuances in women's economic situations, which might explain why we did not find the moderation effect we expected.

For future research in Chepén, I would recommend a mixed approach that combines surveys with in-depth interviews, ensures representation from various neighborhoods and economic backgrounds, and tracks women's empowerment journeys over several years rather than at a single point in time.

## **5. Conclusions**

In conclusion, our research about women's empowerment in Chepén reveals compelling insights into the forces shaping women's lives in this Peruvian community. External factors emerged as powerful elements in women's empowerment journeys, showing meaningful influence ( $\beta = 0.87$ ,  $p = 0.039$ ) on their ability to take control of their lives. When we looked at their decision-making abilities, we found that nearly half (44.8%) of the women had reached moderate levels—not fully empowered, but certainly making progress. This



tells us something important: the social and cultural environment surroundings of these women matter tremendously.

What struck us about the women in Chepén was their remarkable resilience. The internal factors—personal strengths and psychological abilities—significantly impacted their empowerment ( $\beta = 0.57, p = 0.049$ ). Almost half the women we surveyed showed moderate development of these inner resources, demonstrating how they had adapted to challenges while carving out space for themselves in an environment that is sometimes restrictive. Perhaps our most troubling discovery was the glaring gap between education and income. We found that over three-quarters of the participants had pursued higher education, yet more than 40% earned less than PEN 1500 per month. This harsh reality exposes a painful truth: for women in Chepén, receiving an education does not guarantee economic security. A woman might complete university only to face limited job prospects and persistent wage disparities.

Surprisingly, we discovered that socioeconomic status did not determine who could achieve empowerment. Women from different economic backgrounds showed similar empowerment patterns ( $\beta = -0.22, p = 0.570$ ), suggesting that a woman's economic starting point does not limit her potential for personal growth and agency. This challenges conventional thinking about development and suggests that we need to rethink how we approach women's empowerment initiatives. The educational landscape in Chepén presents a mixed picture. While educational attainment is relatively high, the quality and relevance of that education appears limited. With only 40.3% of women reporting moderate levels in education-related empowerment and nearly a third at low levels, there is clearly work to be accomplished. These women need educational programs that address their specific circumstances and prepare them for genuine economic opportunities.

Ultimately, our findings paint a nuanced portrait of women's empowerment in Chepén—one where inner strength and supportive environments matter more than economic circumstances alone. To truly support these women, we need approaches that strengthen their psychological resources while also transforming the social and economic structures that have held them back for too long.

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## Appendix A. Questionnaire Items

The following questionnaire was distributed digitally via Google Forms to female residents in Chepén. All items (except demographic questions) were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”.

**Table A1.** Items from the Questionnaire Used in the Study.

Variable	Dimension	Item Code	Item
Determining Factors	Internal Factors (Individual psychological competencies)	IF1	I feel confident when making decisions about my future
		IF2	I am willing to take risks to improve my personal and family situation
		IF3	I believe I have the ability to achieve my goals despite obstacles
	Internal Factors (Collective psychological competencies)	IF4	I can effectively communicate my ideas in group settings
		IF5	I have the ability to lead initiatives in my community
		IF6	I can work collaboratively with others to achieve common goals
		IF7	I can negotiate effectively to defend my interests
	External Factors (Economic conditions)	EF1	I have adequate access to financial resources in my community
		EF2	There are sufficient employment opportunities for women in Chepén
	External Factors (Cultural factors)	EF3	Social norms in my community support women's advancement
		EF4	Cultural beliefs in my region allow women to develop professionally
Female Empowerment	Education	ED1	I have had access to adequate educational opportunities
		ED2	My level of education allows me to achieve my professional goals
		ED3	I can continue my education if I choose to
		ED4	I have the knowledge necessary to improve my economic situation
	Autonomy and Decisions	AD1	I make important decisions regarding my household independently
		AD2	I have control over my personal income and expenditures
		AD3	I can freely decide how to use my time
		AD4	I participate equally in family decisions
		AD5	I can express my opinions freely in different social contexts
	Economic Situation	ES1	My current economic situation allows me to meet my basic needs
		ES2	I have opportunities for economic advancement in Chepén
		ES3	I can balance my personal life with my professional aspirations
		ES4	I have economic independence from my family or partner
Socioeconomic Level	Financial	FI1	What is your approximate monthly household income?
		FI2	What type of housing do you have (own, rent, family)?
	Cultural	CU1	What is your highest level of education completed?
		CU2	How often do you participate in cultural or community activities?

Note. The questionnaire consisted of 27 items, including 10 items measuring Determining Factors (7 for Internal Factors and 3 for External Factors), 13 items measuring Female Empowerment (4 for Education, 5 for Autonomy and Decisions, and 4 for Economic Situation), and 4 items assessing Socioeconomic Level (2 for Financial and 2 for Cultural dimensions). The survey was conducted in Spanish and has been translated here for reporting purposes.

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