

RESEARCH ON FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

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Abstract: Entrepreneurship has been pointed out by researchers as well as policymakers as one of the main drivers of economic growth and development. Over the years, a great deal of research has been conducted on this topic. However, in many cases the investigation is broad and not gender specific. Females encounter different challenges and barriers when compared to males; hence specific gender based entrepreneurial research could assist in the development and improvement of female entrepreneurship (FE). As research findings may in same cases be used either directly or indirectly to improve or amendment management policies, having more high impact data available could prove to be valuable in certain cases. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to highlight the importance of research on female entrepreneurs as a separate study field. In addition, this article aimed to determine whether the number of female entrepreneurship related peer reviewed articles appearing in leading entrepreneurship and management journals in the USA and Europe have increased over the decades. The study follows a theoretical investigation while comparing the data obtained from previous studies conducted from 2003 to current data. Results demonstrate that amongst the 14 leading management and entrepreneurship journals investigated, just one published more than 10 percent of its articles on female entrepreneurial and business management topics. These findings further indicate that, although research on female entrepreneurship as a focussed study field has slightly increased over the decades, there is still room for improvement. Initiatives such as special journal editions on this field could assist in increasing the number of peer reviewed academic research articles and studies carried out on this topic.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Female Entrepreneurship Research Gaps, Research, Short Learning Programme

DOI: 10.17512/pjms.2018.17.2.14

Article's history: Received March 2, 2018; Revised March 30, 2018; Accepted May 6, 2018

Introduction

For centuries females have taken the back seat in male oriented social systems. However, since the 1970s there has been a slow but more rapidly emerging new perspective that females may help unlock stagnating global economic growth (Greene et al., 2003; McAdam, 2013).

Entrepreneurship is not a new topic and has been studied for centuries by many well-known researchers in this field. However, it was not until 1976 that the first official research on female entrepreneurship (FE) was published by Eleanor Schwartz, "Entrepreneurship: A New Female Frontier" (Greene et al., 2003; McAdam, 2013). This opened a new world for research opportunities into and

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¹⁵⁸

enhancement of female entrepreneurship. Despite this, very little information and documentation regarding the contribution women make to entrepreneurship activity is available. Furthermore, information regarding such entrepreneurship as a global phenomenon is minimal.

Most of the data available reports only on business development as a whole and does not make reference to gender (Brushet al., 2006). Because gender studies have become more advanced and influential over the past few decades, the importance of studying female entrepreneurship development as a separate research field is increasing. The current research on female entrepreneurship as a separate field of study is limited due to females only formally entering into the field of entrepreneurship in recent decades and because the literature on entrepreneurship was historically based on men. However, this gap has already been identified by leading experts in the field during the early 2000s (Bird and Brush, 2002; Greene et al., 2003; De Bruin et al., 2006). Greene et al. (2003), Ahl, (2002) and De Bruin et al. (2006) all found that there is a huge disjuncture in the amount of research published on female entrepreneurship. Their distinctive studies, however, merely investigated the number of articles on this topic published in certain journals up to 2001. This study made use of a theoretical investigation by analysing a number of leading management journals from 2002 to 2016 to determine the extent of articles published and whether the number of articles has increased from the previous studies undertaken up to 2002.

The Essence of Entrepreneurship

Many researchers and policy formulators consider entrepreneurship as the link to increased and sustained economic development and growth. While this is particularly the case in developing countries with significant poverty and high unemployment rates, it also relates to developed economies because entrepreneurship is considered a driver of accelerated economic growth as opposed to stagnating growth (Ambrish, 2014; Meyer, 2017; Meyer and Meyer, 2017).

According to the Asian Development Bank (2007), females in Asia contribute significantly towards economic development, but face different constraints and opportunities when compared to males. McAdam (2013) adds to this by indicating that female entrepreneurship has drawn enormous attention to policy formulation, literature studies and practical research since entrepreneurship of this type is recognised globally as contributing to the growth of many countries' economies. Furthermore, female entrepreneurial activity has been accepted as a vital part of the economic profile of a country, as has the argument that empowering female entrepreneurs act as fuel for flourishing economies (Ambrish, 2014; Kot et al., 2016).Carter et al., (2006) assert that females are becoming essential change agents within the social and economic environments and are globally responsible for making valuable contributions towards job and wealth creation and economic growth. Notwithstanding the impact and role females have in today's economies, their contribution is often understated and undervalued (Carter et al., 2006).Despite



female enterprises being a growing phenomenon and comprising a noteworthy proportion of economic production in many economies, women still face tremendous challenges when it comes to the growth and expansion of their businesses. In some cases, even starting a business can be a challenge for some females (Gatewood et al., 2009).

Over the decades, many different definitions explaining the terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship have been formulated. Schumpeter's definition during the early 1930 considers entrepreneurs to "be those who create new combinations, new markets, product, or distribution systems" (De Bruin et al., 2006). More recent definitions by Shane (2003) and Ambrish (2014) also refer to an entrepreneur as an individual who possesses the skill to exploit opportunities by introducing new or better ways to provide goods and services to the economy, to enhance methods and improve ways of organising and by establishing a new business or revitalising an existing one by such means as improved service or product delivery. Historical and recent definitions in the field of entrepreneurship include the following character words: opportunism, innovation, risk-taking, designing new combinations of processes; while one of the principal traits of entrepreneurship is ultimately starting new organisations (Bird and Brush, 2002). Various definitions for female entrepreneurs have also been established in recent years. In the UK and US, a female-owned business refers to one that is either fully or majority (51% or more) owned by females. The Indian government defines a female entrepreneur as one owning at least 51 percent of a business and ensuring that at least 51 percent of employment provided by the business should be to female employees (Ambrish, 2014). Based on the aforementioned, the question could be posed: If the concept of entrepreneurship has been clearly defined by so many researchers and experts in this field, why is it so important that continuous new research paths focussing on females entrepreneurs be developed?

Importance of Continuous Research

As more females venture into the field of entrepreneurship globally, research approaches and theoretical perspectives to understand the role women play within this sector require clearer definition (De Bruin et al., 2007; Onyishi and Agbo, 2010).Since females have been formally entering the sector of entrepreneurship during the last few decades, they can be considered as one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations in the world (Brush and Cooper, 2012). According to the OECD (2004) female entrepreneurship needs to be studied as a separate group for two reasons. Firstly, it has been recognised as a valuable and unexploited source of economic movement and growth that creates not just jobs for themselves, but for others as well. In addition, females in some cases often provide society with alternative solutions to various social problems. Secondly, the topic of female entrepreneurship has previously been neglected in social sciences and in general society. However, this is slowly changing as more women are entering into the

market and policies assisting in the development and management of such entrepreneurship are gradually becoming more prevalent in many countries.

The World Bank (2015) states that the empowerment of women is fundamental in achieving continued sustainable development and that succeeding in this endeavour could enhance economic efficiency. Because business and entrepreneurship are still perceived in many countries and cultures as a male dominated sphere, it remains a priority to provide women with equal access to opportunities and continuous research on female entrepreneurship could assist in doing so.

Bird and Brush (2002) and De Bruin et al., (2006) suggest that historical theory and research on entrepreneurship focussed on men and that the perception was created that entrepreneurship is formed around male experience and capabilities. Various allusions regarding entrepreneurship as a male dominated field have been made in the past. In 1921, a reference was made to the "active businessman" while in 1934 an entrepreneur was described as a "captain of industry" (Scranton, 2010).

This trend continued with a statement made in 1968 terming an entrepreneur as a "*hero who perceives the gaps and connects markets*" (Bird and Brush, 2002) whereas, in 1982 Hebert and Link referred to an entrepreneur as the "*key man*". It makes sense that the literature and theory was viewed from a male perspective in the past, because for many years females were not active in the business and economic sector. But as times have changed and women are entering this previously male dominated industry, the need for new and female-relevant research is growing (Heber and Link, 1982).

Leading researchers in the field of female entrepreneurship have emphasised the importance of studying this as a separate research entity as there are significant differences between male and female motivations, characteristics and business growth and development with regard to entrepreneurship. There are also clear distinguishing features in some of the methods and ways that female entrepreneurs manage their businesses and compile strategies(Bird and Brush, 2002; Greene et al., 2003; Brush et al., 2006; Carter et al., 2006; Meyer and Mostert, 2016). Carter et al., (2006) specifically refer to women being more risk and debt averse, which could lead to certain conclusions about why their businesses are in many cases not attracting the investment opportunities that their male counterparts so often do. In addition, Botha et al., (2007) suggest that some women might need more assistance with regard to self-esteem and confidence than traditional male entrepreneurs. Barsh and Yee (2011) further contend that women face different structural obstacles, lifestyle issues and individually embedded mind-sets when compared to men. While there is proof that similarities between certain entrepreneurial traits in men and women exist, there are clear differences in many other aspects. Greene et al., (2003) report that over the last 25 years various research have identified similarities between male and female entrepreneurs, but that these investigations lack substantial discussion of the differences. Some of the most compelling differences between male and female entrepreneurs include: reasons for starting a

POLISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES Meyer N.

2018 Vol.17 No.2

business, the choice of business, how they finance their start-ups, governance structures, growth patterns and some aspects of the entrepreneurial process.

Various differences are present in the traditional way in which entrepreneurship is perceived when compared to a female perspective. The dimensions of the entrepreneurial process: time, concept of reality, action and interaction, ethics and power are all often performed in a different and more subtle manner when viewed from a female perspective. In addition to this, Bird and Brush (2002) further explain that there are clear differences in the way that traditional and new ventures and organisations are started and the way that they would be managed from a female perspective. For example, the way a traditional entrepreneur might make use of resources would be to "lease" people, show low commitment and be a promoter, whereas a female entrepreneur might take a different approach by committing to people and taking the form of a trustee. There are also differences in the structure, method of controlling of systems, culture and policy integration. McAdam (2013) asserts that there are many similarities in the operating profile of small businesses despite the varying traits of the owners, but that there is indeed a significant difference within the operating profiles of female owners. Many still follow a feminised working pattern, trying to balance work, home and childcare. While some might say this pattern is acceptable, many may see it as discrediting the value and growth potential of the business (McAdam, 2013).

This need for supplementary research on female entrepreneurship further extends to developing and emerging countries where culture still plays a huge role in the development and empowerment of women. Many cultures still believe that women are solely responsible for home and family related tasks as well as purposes of reproduction (De Bruin et al., 2006; Karanja and Bwisa, 2013). This could restrict women from starting a business or hinder their growth potential owing to their status within the community. Many African cultures still implement a policy where women are not allowed to own any assets and which holds that everything they own actually belongs to their husbands, creating structural and cultural challenges for female entrepreneurs (Chitsike, 2000; Mungai and Ogot, 2012). According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) women tend to lack confidence compared to their male equals when it comes to business matters, despite their origin, education level, work status and so forth (Herrington et al., 2009). Research has also consistently confirmed that early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) is gender sensitive due to societal, cultural and economic issues (Singer et al., 2015). Furthermore, perceptions that women are less capable than males in the field of business, are still widely held by many cultures; even by some westernised economies. McAdam (2013) asserts that females are a diverse group and that deeper studies into culture, ethnicity, class and education are also important and could indeed influence the way women perceive business ownership and manage their ventures. As research in many cases have a direct and indirect link to management policies and improvements in strategies, having more high impact data available could contribute to improved management in certain cases.

Gap in Current Female Entrepreneurship Studies

Due to the increased participation and growth in numbers of women business owners, many would agree that more, and a better body of research is needed in the area of female entrepreneurship. One of the discussions by experts in the literature concerns the gap in research into female entrepreneurship. Despite more studies in this area being undertaken over the past few decades, there is still a gap in the available literature.

From the studies on female entrepreneurship, one may note that many of them focus on investigating individual level and/or country or regional profiles. Few studies pursue general research on entrepreneurship that involves analysis at firm-level and integrated-level (De Bruin et al., 2007). It has also been suggested that cross-country studies will be desirable in future. In addition to this, comparisons between different women groups or samples are necessary. For example, will women from a rural African community display the same entrepreneurial characteristics as women from a sophisticated first world country? Greene et al., (2003) furthermore suggest that additional research is required on the role of human capital, strategic choices and structural barriers in female entrepreneurship. A report issued by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in South Africa indicated that there is a major absence of high quality empirical studies on female entrepreneurs and that statistical data is lacking (Jiyane et al., 2012). Brush and Cooper (2012) further assert that female entrepreneurship is understudied and not well-documented.

De Bruin et al. (2006) scrutinised the number of publications placed in the top eight entrepreneurship journals between 1994 and 2006 and found that a mere six to seven percent related to female entrepreneurship. In addition to this, Greene et al.,(2003) prepared a similar study on nine of the leading entrepreneurial journals from 1976 to 2001 and found that in 661 issues published during that time, a mere 129 articles concentrated on women entrepreneurship or business development. Adding to this is the fact that most of these publications appeared after 1990 and that just 7 percent of these articles used a conceptual approach or were based on literature reviews. Ahl (2002) found that some of the so-called "A-journals" in the field of management did not publish noticeably on entrepreneurship and even if they did, there was almost nothing on female entrepreneurship. She found that of seven of the leading American based management journals (Journal of Management, Academy of Management Journal, Management Science, Organization Science, Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, and Administrative Science Quarterly) between the years 1985 and 1999 just 97 articles out of 5291 were entrepreneurship related and of these, just three reported on female entrepreneurship. This equals a mere 0.056 percent of all articles from these journals. She conducted a similar search in five leading European journals ranging from 1981 to 1993 (first publication issues of each journal) until 2002 and found just 12 research articles that were on the topic of entrepreneurship while none of these addressed female or gender related entrepreneurship.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study was an iterative procedure, analysing and reviewing previously published articles. Thus, content analysis comprised the main part of the methodology. The said analysis was carried out by analysing all the mentioned journals per year and per issue, from 2002 till 2016, and identifying articles that were related to gender, business and / or entrepreneurship. These could either have taken the form of articles focusing specifically just on females or those that compared female and male aspects pertaining to entrepreneurship. From this information, a dataset was prepared and percentages were calculated. The second part of the methodology comprised a comparative study approach. The same leading entrepreneurial journals used in the original studies conducted by Greene et al., (2003) and Ahl (2002) were analysed. The study by Greene et al.,(2003) analysed the following journals: Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice (ETP), Journal of Small Business Management (JSBM); International Small Business Journal (ISBJ), Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research (FER), Journal of Business Ethics (JBE), Journal of Business Venturing (JBV), Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (ERD), Small Business Economics (SBE) and the Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship (JDE). This specific study was conducted by analysing the aforementioned journals between 1976 and 2001. Some of the mentioned journals were launched after 1976, so they were analysed from date of initiation until 2001. The authors of this study did not specify how they decided on these specific journals but it is suggested that they selected the so called "A journals" in academic writing circles. Ahl (2002) also confirmed that Entrepreneurship, Theory and Practice (ETP), Journal of Business Venturing (JBV) and The Journal of Small Business Management (JSBM) were generally recognized as the "Big 3" of refereed scholarly journals aimed at entrepreneurship academics. The Small Business Economics (SBE) journal was also added to the list. In her study, Ahl (2002) indicated that her choice of the so called leading "A journals" was made by consulting a web page by Jerome Katz's at Saint Louis University, which is well known and respected by entrepreneurship scholars. This led to the selection of the following journals: Organization Studies (OS), Human Relations (HR), Journal of Management Studies (JMS), Organization and the Scandinavian Journal of Management (SJM). As no study could be found on published articles relating to female entrepreneurship from 2002 to 2016, an investigation into this was conducted.

Results and Discussion

The same nine leading journals as in the original study by Greene et al., (2003) were analysed to determine whether or not the number of research based on female

entrepreneurship has increased. Table 1 d	depicts the number of refereed articles					
published within these journals between 2002 and 2016.						

Journal name	Issues reviewed	Total articles	Articles on FE 2002-2016	% articles on FE 2002-2016	Articles on FE 1976-2001 ¹		
ETP	80	550	28	5.09	7		
JSBM	59	530	25	4.72	31		
ISBJ	93	468	21	4.49	11		
FER^2	14	3025	139	4.60	18		
JBE	447	4277	120	2.81	7		
JBV	89	597	16	2.68	20		
ERD	108	411	14	3.41	11		
SBE	117	1015	32	3.15	14		
JDE^{3}	45	305	42	13.77	10		
Note 1: Data from study by Greene et al. in 2003; Note 2: Frontiers of Entrepreneurship is a compilation of the conference proceedings and the top 40 papers presented each year at the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference (BCERC) and includes papers, interactive papers and summaries.FER data only from 2002 till 2013; Note 3: JDE data only from 2005 till 2014.							

 Table 1. Leading Journal Publication on Female Entrepreneurship: 2002-2016

From Table 1 it is evident that research conducted on female entrepreneurship is still lacking. Although seven of the nine journals increased the number of publications in this area from the first period (1976 - 2001) to the second period (2002 - 2016), the percentage of articles related to this topic was very low.

Unfortunately, the original study did not include percentages; however, as the duration (1976 - 2001) of the first study was significantly longer compared to the duration (2002 - 2016) of this study it can be assumed the percentages would be low. From the nine leading journals reviewed, eight published less than 10 percent of its total number of articles on female or gender related issues.

Amongst these, seven were below five percent and just one slightly above five percent. The *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* had a rate of above 10 percent (13.77%) of published articles on female entrepreneurship. If all the articles for all nine journals are calculated, approximately 11 178 peer reviewed articles were placed between 2002 and 2016, of which only 437 were on gender related topics. This equals a mere 3.91 percent. Table 2 represents the figures for published articles in European journals. Similar results as in Table 1 are reported.

Journal name	Issues /year	Issues reviewed	Articles	Articles on FE 2002-2016	% articles on FE 2002-2016
OS	12	165	1448	22	1.52
HR	12	177	1122	43	3.83
JMS	8	120	992	6	0.60
Organization	6	86	856	31	3.62
SJM	4	60	773	25	3.23

Table 2.Leading European Business Journals'Articles on FE: 2002-2016

POLISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES Meyer N.

The journals were chosen using the following search words: small business, entrepreneur/ship, new venture, and emerging business. In Ahl's (2002) study, she established that between 1981 and 2002, Organizational Studies (OS) featured just four articles on entrepreneurship, the Journal of Management Studies (JMS) contained a mere two entrepreneurship articles from 1976 to 2002, Human Relations (HR) had one article published between 1982 and 2002, Organization published two articles from 1994 till 2002 and the Scandinavian Journal of Management (SJM) featured three entrepreneurship articles between 1993 and 2002. Amongst these 12 articles, none were related to female enterprises. These figures improved slightly after 2002 until 2016, as depicted in Table 2. Organizational Studies (OS) featured 22 articles related to female entrepreneurship out of 1 448 articles published within that time period. The Journal of Management Studies (JMS)contained six out of 992 articles, Human Relations (HR) published 43 out of 1 122 articles, Organization published the highest number of female related articles with 31 out of 856 articles and the Scandinavian Journal of Management (SJM) published 25 articles on female entrepreneurship out of a total of 773 articles. This is clearly more than the zero published during the prior study conducted by Ahl (2002) but still very low, percentage wise, as all five journals published less than five percent of its total articles on such topics. In total, out of the 5 191 articles in these five journals only 127 focused on female related topics. This equals 2.45 percent of all published articles during 2002 until 2016, which focused on female entrepreneurship.

Conclusion and Recommendations

2018

Vol.17 No.2

Analysis of the current research available on the topic of female entrepreneurship has pointed out the following research gaps; 1) more cross-country studies need to be conducted in future, 2) comparisons between different female groups or samples must be undertaken, 3) the role of human capital, strategic choices and structural barriers in female entrepreneurship calls for further investigation, as does 4) more studies of an empirical nature on female entrepreneurs with better quality and statistical data must be conducted. Many research opportunities exist within these fissures but still the absence of such research in available high impact publications is startling. It is not clear why this gap exists. Is there not enough research being conducted by experts in the field of female entrepreneurship? Are they publishing in lower impact journals or are these higher impact journals reluctant to publish such topics? This could perhaps be addressed in a separate study and the answers to these questions could be considered a limitation to this study. Possible recommendations to ensure that more research on female entrepreneurship topics is published could include the promotion of special editions by journals on the topic of female entrepreneurship; funding opportunities provided by government or other stakeholders to promote research in this field; collaborations between institutions and universities not only on a local level but internationally as well; creating special focus groups investigating the gaps in the research and literature in an

attempt to ensure that it is filled. These are only a few possible recommendations. Each university and government institution may have other methods and ways to improve research quantity and quality on a specific topic. Future research flowing from this study will investigate what aspects and topics of female entrepreneurship are being researched and published.

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BADANIA PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI KOBIET: CZY ROBIMY WYSTARCZAJĄCO DUŻO?

Streszczenie: Przedsiębiorczość została wskazana przez naukowców i decydentów, jako jedna z głównych sił napędowych wzrostu gospodarczego i rozwoju. Z biegiem lat przeprowadzono wiele badań na ten temat. Jednak w wielu przypadkach dochodzenie jest szerokie, a nie związane z płcią. Kobiety spotykają się z różnymi wyzwaniami i barierami w porównaniu do mężczyzn; w związku z tym badania przedsiębiorczości ukierunkowane

na płeć mogłyby pomóc w rozwoju i poprawie przedsiębiorczości kobiet (FE). Ponieważ wyniki badań mogą w tych samych przypadkach zostać wykorzystane bezpośrednio lub pośrednio do ulepszenia lub zmiany polityk zarządzania, posiadanie bardziej dostępnych danych o dużym wpływie może okazać się cenne w niektórych przypadkach. Celem tego badania jest zatem podkreślenie znaczenia badań dotyczących kobiet-przedsiębiorców jako odrębnej dziedziny nauki. Ponadto artykuł ten ma na celu ustalenie, czy liczba artykułów recenzowanych przez kobiety przedsiębiorcze, które pojawiły się w wiodących czasopismach na temat przedsiębiorczości i zarządzania w USA i Europie, wzrosła w ciągu ostatnich dziesięcioleci. Badanie przeprowadzono w drodze teoretycznej analizy porównawczej danych uzyskanych z poprzednich badań przeprowadzonych od 2003 r. do danych bieżących. Wyniki pokazują, że spośród 14 wiodących czasopism dotyczących zarządzania i przedsiębiorczości, tylko jedno opublikowało ponad 10 procent artykułów na temat kobiecej przedsiębiorczości i zarządzania przedsiębiorstwem. Odkrycia te dodatkowo wskazują, że chociaż badania nad przedsiębiorczością kobiet jako ukierunkowanym obszarem badań nieznacznie wzrosły w ciągu dziesięcioleci, jednak wciąż jest miejsce na poprawę. Inicjatywy takie jak specjalne wydania czasopism w tej dziedzinie mogą pomóc w zwiększeniu liczby recenzowanych artykułów naukowych i badań naukowych przeprowadzonych na ten temat.

Slowa kluczowe: przedsiębiorczość, luki w badaniach przedsiębiorczości kobiet, badania, program krótkiej nauki

女性企业家研究:我们做得足够吗?

摘要:研究人员和决策者指出创业是经济增长和发展的主要动力之一。多年来,对 这个话题进行了大量的研究。但是,在许多情况下,调查是广泛的,而不是性别特 定的。与男性相比,女性遇到不同的挑战和障碍;因此具体的基于性别的企业家研究 可以帮助发展和改进女性创业(FE)。由于研究结果可能在相同情况下直接或间接 用于改进或修订管理政策,因此在某些情况下可获得更多高影响力数据可能被证明 是有价值的。因此,本研究的目的是突出研究女性企业家作为一个独立研究领域的 重要性。此外,本文旨在确定在美国和欧洲的领先创业和管理期刊中出现的女性创 业相关同行评议文章的数量是否增加了几十年。该研究遵循理论研究,同时将从200 3年以前的研究获得的数据与当前的数据进行比较。结果表明,在14个领先的管理和 创业期刊中,仅有一篇发表了超过10%的关于女性企业家和企业管理主题的文章。 这些研究结果进一步表明,尽管几十年来关于女性创业作为一个重点研究领域的研 究略有增加,但仍有改进的空间。诸如该领域的特殊期刊版本等举措可以帮助增加

关键词: 创业精神, 女性企业家研究差距, 研究, 短期学习计划