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# Feminist theory and its influence on female entrepreneur's growth intentions

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## Abstract:

Existing results suggest that entrepreneurs vary considerably in their intentions to grow their businesses; that men have more success in pursuing growth than women. Prior investigations on entrepreneurship also suggest female business owners might deliberately choose to keep their business from growing. However, these studies have been conducted in developed countries. Diversity in context and theories could vary by gender, business sectors and regions of the world. Scholars maintain that feminist perspectives theories are necessary to provide some insights in understanding the phenomena. The goal of this paper is to analyse research findings on the growth aspirations of the female entrepreneurs and offer alternative views of understanding, by employing feminist theories, in explaining why women behave differently in their adaptation of reduced growth intentions. In an attempt to understand the tendencies that might lead to reduced growth intentions in female entrepreneurship, literature was extensively reviewed on female entrepreneurship and growth intentions. The study uses a desk-based approach to data collection. An overview of the main issues concerning female entrepreneurs growth intentions is presented. The conclusions drawn from the literature provide foundations for policy measures assisting women to overcome their low growth aspirations and measures required to encourage women to grow their businesses. The paper identifies research gaps that continue to exist in female entrepreneurs growth intentions research with the aim of encouraging further research in this field.

**Keywords:** female entrepreneurs; growth intentions; feminist theories

**JEL codes:** D24, J7, J24, O1, L26

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research in OECD countries consistently shows that job growth in the entrepreneurial sector is higher than for established (corporate) organizations. Implicitly, women play a significant part of this activity; recent business statistics identify women as the drivers of economic growth in many of the world's economies (Minniti *et al.*, 2005). It is undisputable that when more women work, economies grow; women's economic activity, managerial and entrepreneurial activity have a signif-

ificant impact on economic growth and prosperity (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004). Countries with high total entrepreneurial activity rates are associated with high female entrepreneurial activity rates (Verheul & Thurik, 2004).

Since the 1970s and 1980s, there has been growing interest in studying women entrepreneurs mostly from United States and Canada as a result of the high growth in the number of enterprises created by women (Neider, 1987). The Center for Women's Business Research (2006) of the United States offers some insights on the estimates of the impact of women enterprises on the economy of the United States. Women's enterprises contribute 1.9 million dollars in annual sales and hire 12.8 million people. Majority of women-owned firms employ 9.2 million workers and generates 1.2 trillion dollars in sales revenues (National Women's Business Council, 2004). Estimates of the total cost of salaries and wages in women's enterprises was 546 billion dollars in 2006. Between 1997 and 2006 women's enterprises grew twice as fast as other enterprises (42.2% versus 23.3%) in United States. Interestingly, in a more recent statistics self-employed females in Canada increased from 513 300 to 953 000 between 1987-2011. That is an increase of 85 %. In a similar manner, in the U.S. female owned firms were estimated to have reached 7.8 million in 2007, representing 28% of the total number of companies across the nation.

Some investigations show the prevalence rates of female entrepreneurship tend to be relatively higher in developing than in developed countries (Minniti & Naùde, 2010). For instance studies in female entrepreneurship in Latin America and Caribbean countries found very high rates of female entrepreneurship in the poorest region estimated to be up to 35% in Peru. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2010) established that Ghana is the only economy with more female than male in entrepreneurship, where women conduct 55% of entrepreneurial activity. This broad observation simply implies that women are important for growth and entrepreneurship. However, in other areas of the world few female entrepreneurs have indicated their aspiration to grow even when they have the abilities and knowledge (Minniti & Naùde, 2010). Taking into account the potential role of women entrepreneurs in generating economic growth, investigating the relationship between female entrepreneurs and growth intentions seems to be highly recommended.

The aim of the paper is to explore female entrepreneurship and in particular to understand the complexities that are related to reduced growth intentions of female entrepreneurs. The research is exploratory in nature and has used a desk-based approach to data collection. Initially an overview of the issues concerning gender, entrepreneurship and female growth intentions was reviewed mostly from developed countries. However to have a more rounded perspective, research regarding developing countries was also reviewed. The feminist liberal and social theories were employed to provide an alternative perspective on why women behave differently in their adaptation of growth objectives. The paper further provides directions for further research, identifying the research gaps and provides recommendations for policy making.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

Growth of enterprises is generally perceived as a significant measure of success and a key driver to the creation of wealth, employment and economic development in every country (Bosma *et al.*, 2000). Dobbs and Hamilton (2007) asserted that growth is closely related to the creation of jobs and that rapidly growing small enterprises create employment opportunities in society, which is vital for the success of the economy. Women entrepreneurs make a substantial contribution to national economic growth by their participation in entrepreneurship especially in high growth business, which boost the economies of most nations. Previous studies on growth of entrepreneurial firms have mostly focused on the entrepreneur's motives towards growth (Davidsson *et al.*, 2010) and literature on entrepreneur's growth intention mostly directed on individuals and graduate students intent to start businesses (Fatoki, 2013). This study includes feminist theory in this academic debate.

### 2.1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND GENDER

Ahl (2006) identifies that financial growth with its inferred and expected contribution is the single most common rationale of entrepreneurship, and that entrepreneurship research is thus legitimized in the business and economic literatures. However the enactment of entrepreneurship as growth-oriented behaviour is culturally masculine specifically tied to particular forms of masculinity (Galloway *et al.*, 2015). Different authors have identified masculinized approach most often taken in studies of entrepreneurship (Petterson, 2004). If entrepreneurship requires the pursuit of growth then, successful entrepreneurship must be defined as business activity that has resulted in growth (Galloway *et al.*, 2015). However, this overwhelming direction on firm growth does not reflect most business activity as it occurs in reality. Not only it ignores the diversity of business in the real world (Hamilton, 2006; Morris *et al.*, 2006), but it also does not correspond with the majority of business experience, as most businesses are not growth oriented (Ahl, 2006).

Furthermore, entrepreneurship understood as an individualized, growth-oriented activity marginalizes other ways in which entrepreneurship is enacted (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Petterson, 2004). It also limits entrepreneurship as a concept by limiting constructions of the entrepreneur despite the fact that most businesses are created and operated by partners or teams, and in fact in most countries the most common business model is family owned enterprise (Drucker, 1995). In spite of this, the "Entrepreneur" prevails as a construction, and has become normalized as male, he is the man who creates growth firm or what leads an organization to financial growth (Franco & Matos, 2013).

### 2.2. FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR'S CHARACTERISTICS

Given the important role of female entrepreneurs and their enterprises, it is noteworthy to understand female entrepreneurs characteristics as well as the motiva-

tions behind their entrepreneurial activity, for as much as it has been emphasized the success of an enterprise depends on the person's initiatives to create a viable business (Mitchell, 2004). Hisrich and Brush (1986) established that women-owned enterprises are more dissimilar than similar to those owned by men. They showed that women and men entrepreneurs have similar personalities and background, except for the fact that most women are older when they get involved in an entrepreneurial venture: 35 to 45 years old instead of 25-35 years old in the case of men. There are differences, however, in their motivations, the process of starting their enterprises, their administrative and entrepreneurial skills and professional background as well as the problems they face.

Brush (1992) observed that differences between male and female business owners have been found in educational and occupational background motivations for business ownership, business goals, business growth and approaches to business creation. Other researchers have noted fundamental similarities between male and female entrepreneurs, most notably in terms of key motives, such as the desire for independence or self-achievement or the tendency to have an internal locus of control (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). The most noteworthy difference is that female entrepreneurs may tend to face different domestic parallel to their entrepreneurial activity. Despite their role as business owners and entrepreneurs, they are more likely to be "the primary parent, emotional nurturer and house keeper" (Unger and Crawford, 1992, p. 474). Thus in most cultures being an entrepreneur is not an excuse for being relieved of her domestic responsibilities (Goffee & Scase, 1985). Maybe that is why women business tends to be smaller, with less capital, has lower revenues and fewer employees and resides in lower profit industries (Bird, 1989).

Zapalska (1997) studied women entrepreneurs in Poland and found that they are significantly different to men in important dimensions; therefore they require assistance, plans especially developed for their specific needs. She found that there are significant differences in obstacles they face, the reasons they have to start a business, their goals and the factors they consider important for success.

Findings regarding to three countries (in Africa), Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia, noted that majority of the female entrepreneurs were pushed into business as a 'no choice' option for escaping from poverty (Zwede & Associates, 2002). This category of entrepreneurs is also referred as lifestyle entrepreneurs (OECD, 1998). Much of the evidence supports the view that the majority of women in business are seen to be engaged as micro entrepreneurs and consequently have become the stereotype women entrepreneurs as observed in regions of Africa (Richardson *et al.*, 2004). Mitchell (2004) studied the motivation of women entrepreneurs in South Africa and established that starting an enterprise involves a significant amount of risk and effort for an entrepreneur. For women, however, the risk is higher because they have problems related to the enterprises, but they also have to solve the problems of being a woman in society dominated by men. He concludes and suggests that modern research studies indicate that women face different problems to men entrepreneurs and that it is an imperative that a better understanding of women entrepreneurs and the specific constraints they face in starting and operating a business

is made, so as to develop appropriate assistance programs and policies. It is however argued that most of the knowledge on entrepreneurial activity is based on studies about men entrepreneurs (Hisrich & Brush, 1983). That theories on creation of organizations have been generalized and tested on men entrepreneurs, for men, these approaches do not necessarily reflect women's processes and organizational styles because women and men manage their enterprises in different ways, they use different strategies and organizational structures.

### 3. THE FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS GROWTH INTENTIONS

Growth of a business is widely recognized as a choice and most business owners choose not to grow (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Conversely, the intentions of the entrepreneur have been identified as "being the entrepreneur's goals or aspirations for growth trajectory, he/she would like the venture to follow" (Dutta & Thornhill, 2008). The distinction between the actual growth of a business and growth intentions according to Toivonen *et al.* (2006) are that intentions are only one of the fundamentals for small business growth. Given the significance of growth intention in entrepreneurship and small businesses, the pursuit of growth is a deliberate individual decision of the entrepreneur, which depends upon his/her perceived opportunities, skills and the entrepreneur's willingness to do so (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). So, it is possible to describe growth intention as a combination of what entrepreneur wants with what is possible given the critical resources and skills of the entrepreneur and available opportunities (Terjesen & Szerb, 2008).

However, while some entrepreneurs are determined to grow their business into larger businesses and attain substantial growth (Neneh & Vanzyl, 2014), some small business-owners don't aspire to grow or they deliberately refrain from pursuing growth (Gundry & Welsch, 2001; Wiklund, Davidsson, & Delmer, 2003). Sexton (1989) was of the view that growth of a new venture does not occur naturally but instead is determined by the owner of the business. Those in control of the firm may initiate, foster, nurture or prune growth in accordance with their own prosperity for growth as the degree to which he/she can obtain resources and develop the organization. Sexton (1989) further defines propensity for growth as an entrepreneur's intent to expand the organization, and the ability to manage growth as the degree to which he/she can obtain resources and develop the organization. Many studies indicated that men are assumed to have success in this regards (Lerner *et al.*, 1997; Still & Timms, 2000).

Some studies, mentioned women to be less effective in growing sales turnover and profitability and with deliberate reduced growth intentions (Cliff, 1998; Fasci & Valdez, 1998), and that "women start and operate ventures that grow at a lower rate than those of men" (Hisrich and Brush, 1984). Investigations on women-owned enterprises suggest that female business owners deliberately choose to keep their businesses small (Goffee & Scase, 1985; Lee-Gosselin, 1990) or have conservative growth expectations (Chaganti, 1986; Lee-Gosselin, 1990). Some studies suggest that expansion is at least partially determined by entrepreneur's motivations and

intentions (Bird, 1989; Sexton, 1989; Kolvereid, 1992; Cooper, 1993). Some scholars established that women are less likely to desire to grow their business since expansion may interfere with other aspects of their lives (Cliff, 1998), while others argued that women in running their business would not wish the interest of their immediate family conflict with the interest of their business (Carter & Cannon, 1992).

Some of these views are considered as negative misconceptions concerning women entrepreneurs (Brush *et al.*, 2004) as some women entrepreneurs are portrayed as favouring life-style businesses, balancing work and family or seeking opportunities to supplement household income. While other researchers asserted that female entrepreneurs tend to be sole owners and have less managerial experience, lack self-confidence in their enterprises (Hisrich & Brush, 1983; Birley, 1989), and their businesses are smaller on average, both in terms of sales, revenues, number of employees and resides in lower-profit industries (Loscocco *et al.*, 1991; Bird, 1989). What is more, women-owned enterprises are also described to be especially affected by conflicts between the home and family demands which may advertently have implications on the growth of their business (Stoner *et al.*, 1990).

Several authors observed that differences also exist between male and female business owners in educational and occupational background, motivations for business ownership, business goals, business growth and approaches to business creation (Brush, 1992; Welter, Smallbone & Isakova, 2006). These differing observations and misconceptions concerning women entrepreneurs may lead to tendencies in ventures that might reduce their growth prospects. However, studies comparing the performance of male and female owned firms have noted some obstacles that are specifically experienced by females. Some of these hindrances are attributable to the complexity of small business itself rather than the gender-based factors women face to enterprise growth and some are specifically self-imposed by culture (Morris *et al.*, 2006). The prominent reasons are associated with difficulties in accessing and obtaining institutional or venture capital due to negative perception. Women are assumed to be less focused and lack the drive for success in business than their male counterparts (Brush, 1992). Such perceptions directed at women-owned ventures as, women are not as good in leadership and management of large-scale ventures, and other generalized gender-based perceptions, can make it difficult for women-owned ventures to obtain growth capital (Morris *et al.*, 2006). However, Brush *et al.*, (2004), opined that these perceptions are due in theory to the way that data about women-owned ventures is presented and that the fact that women are later entrants to the entrepreneurial game. Hisrich and Brush (1984) and Scott (1986) asserted that gender stereotypes along with limited access to networks and mentoring may create barriers to effectively run a business (Still & Timms, 2000). Some studies also have shown that cultural imposed attitudes regarding gender remain constraining barriers for women in achieving financial rewards and status in business (Calás *et al.*, 1992). Some scholars observed that female entrepreneurs find time with family as primary and ventures were sometimes specifically founded to allow for more quality time with family (Gundry & Welsch, 2001), attempted to

maintain equilibrium between economic goals such as profit and growth and non-economic goals such as personal fulfilment and helping others (Brush, 1992). These are all empirical studies, which offer insights into different situational variations that consistently bother the female entrepreneurs in starting and operating businesses. However, scarcities of other comparative investigations do exist. Although these studies make up a consideration on literatures of female entrepreneurs, it is also important to note that there is virtually no empirical research on women in growth enterprises in Africa, or if any research has in some way assess women enterprises similarity or its difference from that headed by male.

Few perspectives that are known on female business owners in most developing countries like Africa are that most women do not have the same opportunity as men in job acquisitions, business contacts, and opportunities to accumulate savings as men. In spite of all development and organizational activities in favour of women over the past years, gender gap in women's equality has not narrowed very much. The nature and scale of an enterprise growth and development is influenced and shaped by a range of traditional norms that are embedded in social, cultural and economic context (Richardson *et al.*, 2004). The prevailing social norms affect the ability of women-owned enterprises to function and grow bigger like the male-dominated businesses do. These challenges with many others are rooted on the socialization processes for both sexes (Black, 1989) and this one way or the other influences the kind of economic activities that women find themselves. For instance women in Ghana are perceived as homemakers and therefore, cared and reared for home and childcare. This contributes to their low self-esteem. These factors and others tend to diminish the importance of women aspiration economically and socially. Consequently, these impact on women's enterprises negatively in varying degrees.

In view of the fact that, findings and theories might not be totally applicable to all varied contexts, distinct differences exist between developed and developing countries regarding female entrepreneurs and their growth intentions. Studies have found that the rate at which women are forming and operating indigenous, micro and small businesses has increased in developing countries (Richardson *et al.*, 2004; Minniti & Naude, 2010). The few studies that were recorded from developing countries like Africa, these studies apply small sample and there is no way of knowing to what extent their findings reflect the overall pattern of women's entrepreneurship. Given the important role of women as owners of various micro- and small business enterprises in developing countries (Richardson *et al.*, 2004) an attempt to identify their varying growth needs and its constraints will be particularly important.

#### 4. FEMINISM THEORIES

In explaining the systematic differences why female entrepreneurs adopt a reduced growth intention and the smaller size of their businesses we employ two theoretical perspectives, consistent with Holmquist and Sundin (2002). These are the liberal

and social feminism to explain why women behave differently in adaptation of the varying degree of growth aspirations. First, some scholars maintain that gender theory and feminist perspectives are necessary to understand this phenomena. Secondly, others argued that differences and similarities between men and women should be considered within the conventional theories relating to entrepreneurship research field. Holmquist and Sundin (2002) conclude that contributions from both perspectives are needed to provide insights behind these imbalances of gender and entrepreneurship. Feminist theoretical perspective address the questions of women's subordination to men, how it arose, how and why it is perpetuated, how it might be changed and what life would be like without it. Each perspective of the theories (social and liberal) offers differing views.

The liberal feminist theory according to Fischer *et al.* (1993), asserted that the liberal feminist tradition goes back to feminism's earliest days (the first wave of feminism) and argues for the necessity of social reform in order to give women the same status and opportunities as men. The fundamental basis of the liberal theory assumes that men and women are equal and that rationality not sex is the basis for individual rights. It emphasizes the existence of discriminatory barriers and systematic biases facing women (for example restricted access to resources, education, business experience), which must be eliminated. Liberal feminism is outgrown of political views of equality, entitlement, and individual rights, the liberal feminist perspective has been the basis for many legal changes that have been used to bring about greater equality for women. Liberal feminist theory in the articulation of this theory in the context of women's entrepreneurship posits that if women had equal access to the opportunities available to men such as education, work experience and other resources, they would behave similarly (Unger & Crawford, 1992).

Social Feminism theory- assumes that men and women are seen to be or have become different (Ahl, 2006), social feminism emphasizes that there are differences between male and female experiences through the deliberate socialization methods from the earliest moments of life that results in fundamentally different ways of viewing the world (Fischer *et al.*, 1993). Female's socialization creates different perspectives, goals and choices for women (Brush, 2006) and they choose their business field accordingly. The relationship between family and work has been stronger for women, rather than seeing their business as a separate economic unit in a social world. Brush (1992) adds that women view their business as an interconnected system of relations (family, community and business). These differences do not imply that women will be less effective in business than men, but only that they may adopt different approaches which may not be equally as effective as the approaches adopted by men (Watson & Robinson, 2003).

While the outcome of past findings is relevant to the question of if and how female and male entrepreneurs differ, there are still large gaps in knowledge. Some scholars (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991; Cliff, 1998), have systematically explored whether or not potential differences related to discrimination or socialization affect business performance or growth intention. Notwithstanding, the notion that differ-

ences do exist between male and female entrepreneurs, researchers fail to investigate uniquely female entrepreneur's growth intentions of their enterprises. Liberal and socialist theories provide socio-cultural reasons for expected gender differences. Sexton (1989) argued that there are no psychological reasons to believe that female entrepreneurs will have lower propensity for business expansion. Accordingly, there is suggestive evidence that factors associated with growth intention, may vary by gender. Even if intent to grow does not vary by gender the process that leads to the decision may vary (Orser & Hogarth-Scott, 2002).

Given the important role of female business owners and their different structural variations, it follows that women may make decision related to growth of their businesses using different process by weighing the social risk and reward differently from men. In view of these literatures, the liberal and feminist theories provide reasons for expecting gender differences and why female entrepreneurs and female business owners behave differently in their adaptation of low growth intentions. Many studies that were explored (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991; Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990; Cliff, 1998) identified female entrepreneurs to have less experience in managing employees, less industry experience, prior start-up experience in businesses. Furthermore, women's firm also was found to be smaller than men's and have lower growth and income over some years, and to have lower sales per employee (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991). Cliff (1998) speculates that women who lack relevant experience may question their ability to manage quickly growing enterprises and may therefore purposely limit the expansion of their firms and these might contribute to their modest growth expectations (Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990).

Female entrepreneurs growth intention may also differ in terms of attitudes and values. Birley (1989) posit that sources of culture, behavioural norms, professional networks and family relationship all affect the attitudes of women entrepreneurs. Most women held positive attitudes towards achievement and success, self-preservation, self-worth expressiveness, freedom, health and education as well as to economic profits and growth (Jacobson, 1993). Empirical studies indicate that men tend to place a greater value on economic values and non-ambiguous measures of achievement and success such as status and wealth (Unger & Crawford, 1992).

This offers us a compelling argument for anticipating gender differences in growth intentions. As noted further, female entrepreneurs' position should not be generalized, as they are complicated with varied characteristics and motivations (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). Theories of motivation posit that values influence intentions (Locke, 1991). The value placed on business expansion by female business owners will in no doubt contribute to their growth intentions. More specifically, it is expected that women will be less likely to express a desire to grow their enterprises, since expansion may interfere with other equally cherished goals (Orser & Hogarth-Scott, 2002). Female entrepreneurs have so many roles to play in their lives, and tend to face different domestic demands to their male counterparts and therefore may not follow the normal expected growth cycles based on stereotypical male-owned business cycles (Still & Timms, 2000). Managing households may

significantly add to women's capabilities in business (Stevenson, 1986). But can also create demands on their life-styles, which would threaten the pattern of family and conjugal relationships (Goffee & Scase, 1985). Thus, due to the many conflicting demands between female entrepreneurs businesses and their personal lives (Buttner & Rosen, 1992; Stoner *et al.*, 1990; Goffee & Scase, 1985), they may tend to adopt a reduced growth intention (Cliff, 1998) in their businesses, despite the fact that female entrepreneurs are unique, have the skills and competencies to manage business effectively and intentionally (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). Moreover, it is perceived that female entrepreneurs have inadequate resources, specifically in terms of business and managerial experience and access to finance. Lee-Gosselin and Grise (1990) added that female entrepreneurs deliberately adapt to this situational constraints by adopting lower growth expectations (Cliff, 1998).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In summary the paper shed light on gender perspective in entrepreneurship, feminist theories and growth intentions of female entrepreneurs. The findings shows that most women entrepreneurs compared to their male counterpart are dissimilar than similar in their characteristics of their business endeavours. Studies noted differences in their motivations in starting their enterprises, their administrative and entrepreneurial skills, and professional background and the problems they face. Some of these identifiable differences concerning female entrepreneurs in their growth intention were explored in order to find out if they were related to discrimination or socialization process.

According to analysed studies female entrepreneurs hold small, slow and modest expectations about their businesses and growth prospects are as a result of situational constrains. These were on account of differences in attitudes, different ways of thinking, the values place on growth and the socialization process. While others could be owing to the fact that they lack adequate resources specifically, in terms of business and managerial experience and access to finance (Cliff, 1998), which are prerequisite of a growing entrepreneurial business and lacking such qualities and requirements may limit the expansion of female firms. More so, the desire to expand may interfere with other cherished goals for example family demands and conjugal life.

These observed differences do not imply that women will be less effective in business than men, as affirmed by feminist theories that offer some perspectives to these variations. The liberal feminist view affirms that women entrepreneurs may adopt different approaches due to their lesser access to resources, education, business experience and as discriminatory should be eliminated. The social feminist theory posit that even though gender differences are recognized it should be acknowledged that it stems from the socialization process. In conclusion, women if given equal access to the opportunities available to men such as education, work experience and other resources they would equally grow their businesses. This research also identified that in developing countries there prevails paucity of research

on growth aspirations of women entrepreneurs. It has been identified that they face higher barriers to entry into the labour market. They are forced into entrepreneurship as an only option out of poverty and way out of unemployment. However, majority of the female entrepreneurs fail to express their growth expectations.

To fully understand the importance of growth intentions of women entrepreneurs, and why they deliberately pursue a low growth expectations is critical. Identifying ways and removing those barriers, and negative misconceptions that women face requires initiatives. It is imperative to understand that the essence of entrepreneurship is seeking growth and it must reflect as a business that has achieved growth. Central to these issues is the suggestions by some studies that women entrepreneurs are unique. However, those who aspire to build high growth businesses require unique skills, competencies to manage effectively and intentionally. Policy makers should also acknowledge and consider the growing number of businesses that wish to stay small and respond to both economic and personal motives of the entrepreneurs. The provision of sustainable business support infrastructure which might better meet the needs of these female entrepreneurs and which is appropriate to their needs should be provided. Some of the female entrepreneurs slow growth orientation could change if assistance in coaching, training, experience, support service, information in business is provided.

Another barrier identified by reviewed studies is associated with difficulties in assessing and obtaining institutional finance due to negative perception. The attitude of bankers and business professionals towards these female entrepreneurs has to be positive and should be more cooperative. Some institutions may not take enterprises of women seriously, considering they are not growth oriented. Some constraints that are gender-based factors which women face to enterprise growth are also specifically imposed by culture. Government policy and programs aimed at improving perceptions of aspiring women to grow their enterprises to higher growth and economic prosperity should be encouraged. There should be policies and programs in favour of women's growth enterprises, which remove barriers in start-up and growth, improve access to resources, strengthen social protection and inclusion, foster a supportive culture and conducive environment for business growth.

There should be capacity building of research and knowledge, consideration of the context, comparison of findings of both female entrepreneurs growth intentions in developed and developing countries. This is needed in order to determine, if these results are gender specific, socialization function or just discrimination. This would further benefit our understanding of both male and female entrepreneurship. Growth of women's enterprises is acknowledged to have positive impact on job creation and economic growth.

This research has identified that in case of female entrepreneurs issues on how and why women create and manage their small business is still not well understood. Small and stable business owned by female entrepreneurs is described as 'good and real business' (Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990). Most female entrepreneurs value the loose organization; the proximity to employees, customers, suppliers and obtain

mostly experiences offered by small organizations. These businesses stay small and respond to both economic and personal motive of the female entrepreneur. Research is still not conclusive if intent to grow might vary by gender and why women entrepreneurs don't aspire to grow their firms. However, we need some answers and understanding on women's growth intentions. A greater consideration should be focused on developing economies, as its women entrepreneurs are indispensable for economic development. Research in this direction will contribute and enhance the female entrepreneurship stream of research. In view of the fact that developing countries have limited access to affordable business development services, business management, technical training and operate within cultural environment that reflects stereotypes much work remains to be done both academically and policy wise. Policy makers would benefit from new research results that are focused on eliminating barriers faced by women in their aspirations to grow their enterprise in a more demanding environment.

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