

# Guest editorial: Gender, entrepreneurship and family business

## 1. Introduction

In developing and developed economies, family business plays an important financial role. Its stability, continuity and decision-making and innovation have emphasized sustainable social and national growth. Their development draws researchers, academics and policy makers' attention and they seek an in-depth understanding of this area with three views. First, understanding family business entrepreneurial strategies; second, role of human capital and social capital in the family business, and third, female participation as entrepreneurs, i.e. femtrepreneurs (Ogunyemi, 2015; Seaman, 2015) in the family business (Barrett and Moores, 2009; Ratten *et al.*, 2017b). A thorough study of family business literature reveals that management and strategy, followed by succession, distinctiveness, leadership, social capital and female, etc. are the most researched fields (Ratten *et al.*, 2017a, b; Ramadani *et al.*, 2017a). The participation of female in the family business, in which the leading men (e.g. father, husband and brother) lead the family, creates curiosity among entrepreneurship researchers and academicians. The gender-based studies strengthen entrepreneurship and familial business studies, as they focus on the individual's attitudes, skills and behaviors (Sonfield and Lussier, 2012). The understanding of family business is still elusive as it consists of family and business identity. The previous studies focused on the involvement of family members in the business and the role of entrepreneurial parents to nurture and develop the business talent in their children (Chang *et al.*, 2021; Dyer and Handler, 1994). In family businesses, females are often seen as being marginalized at the expenses of males. This stereotype perception toward the involvement of women in family businesses are changing due to various reasons such as government and non-government policies, involvement in the workforce, structure of family-one child in one family, importance to female at national level etc. This special issue will be inviting the different viewpoints on various dimensions related to the women, entrepreneurship and family business, including entrepreneurial behavior, attitudes, competencies, management style etc.

## 2. Gender and family businesses

In comparison to male counterparts, fewer studies have pointed to the importance of women in the business as family business considered as the traditional and vital pillar of the world of business. Female involvement in economic development of any country is significant. The less participation of women is due in large part to the gender-stereotyping perception of society. The feminist business theories suggest that more work is needed on gender-based studies in the family business (Agarwal and Lenka, 2018; Bjursell and Bäckvall, 2011). This means that more research in female and family businesses is needed because female entrepreneurs have faced various problems due to a gender comparison and mostly questioning on their capabilities and skills since their business activities are based on emotional, empathic and soft relationships than economic reasons favored by males. Enterprise is the product of the environment and the entrepreneurs have been described as heroic individuals with risks, innovation and opportunities alertness. Family enterprises in this digital world work in an innovative way and act as entrepreneurs, by adapting entrepreneurial innovative mindset to grow and develop their family businesses



(Nordqvist and Melin, 2010). The family members are in charge of business activities in connection with family business. With the structure of the family, the ideological principles of business family are changing with the daughter's involvement in the business-related activities. Equal to males, females strengthen their human and social capital with the support of family and actively participating in exploring the innovative opportunities related to entrepreneurial activities of family business. Now it's a time to get explore more research on different perspectives to encourage the participation female in family business and strengthen the societal and national conditional of the country.

Thus, this special issue aims to:

- (1) Identification of various perspectives for the development of gender studies in family business;
- (2) Formulate the related models for the advancement of research that considers gender, entrepreneurship and family business;
- (3) To research the methodologies, arrangements and bearings for the study related to gender, entrepreneurship in the context of family business and
- (4) Review studies on related themes.

### 3. The new research agendas for family business literature

Many papers were submitted for the special issue, but after a thorough review procedure, eight outstanding pieces centered on the “gender, entrepreneurship, and family business” were chosen. They address emerging gaps in research debates, making an essential addition to the discipline in the context of gender, entrepreneurship and family business.

The first paper titled “Female entrepreneurship in family business: bibliographic analysis” by Cristina Marin-Palacios emphasizes that the role of women entrepreneurs in family enterprises is increasingly crucial as supported by the scientific literature. The objective of this research is to identify relevant research areas addressing this issue. To achieve this, a bibliometric analysis was conducted to gain insights into the current state of research in this subject and identify significant research areas in recent years. The analysis in this study utilizes literature review and bibliometric analysis approaches, with the assistance of VOSviewer for analysis purposes. According to the study's conclusions, the bibliometric analysis explores the evolutionary trend of publications on gender, entrepreneurship and family businesses while also identifying current research trends. It also highlights the most influential authors, publications and nations to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing. The second paper titled “The presence of women in family SMEs' succession process: a conceptual framework guided by gender perspective” by Mario Franco, Mayara Nagilla and Margarida Rodrigues state that the purpose of this study is to examine how successors perceive the presence of women in the succession process of small and medium-sized family enterprises (SMEs). The study employed a multiple case study method, utilizing a qualitative approach. Five Brazilian SMEs and three Portuguese SMEs participated, and data were collected through online interviews and documentation analysis. NVivo software was used for content analysis of the collected data. The empirical evidence from this study led to the conclusion that the natural succession process is predominant in the family SMEs examined. While some firms have informal succession plans, these plans lack strict timelines and do not outline specific stages and responsibilities typically associated with planned successions. The third paper titled “Empowerment of women's entrepreneurship in family business through Twitter” by Cristina Blanco-Gonzalez-Tejero and Enrique Cano-Marin examine that the primary objective is to promote global awareness of women's roles in entrepreneurship and family companies and assess the impact and sentiment surrounding their positions. To achieve this, the study evaluates the

empowerment and presence of businesswomen on Twitter through user-generated content (UGC). The research adopts both quantitative and qualitative approaches by analyzing UGC from the social platform Twitter. A total of 37,852 tweets pertaining to the role of entrepreneurial women were collected and assessed. For this purpose, a set of supervised machine learning algorithms for sentiment analysis was developed using natural language processing (NLP) techniques, with random forest emerging as the most accurate method. Furthermore, social network analysis (SNA) techniques and graph theory were applied to create a text-to-network, facilitating the identification of the most relevant subjects in the discussion. The findings demonstrated a positive correlation between the sentiment of the generated content and female entrepreneurs and leaders. The number of published tweets, as well as the identified topics, exhibited a growing trend, with the most frequently discussed themes being the requirements and challenges faced by women in the workplace. The fourth paper titled "Family dynamics and relationships in female entrepreneurship: an exploratory study" by Sunita Dewitt, Vahid Jafari-Sadeghi, Arun Sukumar, Roopa Aruvanahalli Nagaraju, Razieh Sadraei and Fujia Li focus that given China's recent emergence as a dominant economy and internal changes that have fostered entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial initiatives, this study investigates whether family dynamics and relationships continue to play a significant role in women's decision to become entrepreneurs. The study aims to determine if there has been a shift in family dynamics and decision-making that promotes female entrepreneurship. Considering the study's objective of understanding the role of relationships and family dynamics in career choices, a qualitative approach was adopted. A total of 15 Chinese female entrepreneurs were interviewed to gain insights into the influence of relationships and family dynamics on their career choices. The findings suggest that while improvements in family relations positively impact female entrepreneurship, women still face challenges when pursuing entrepreneurship as a career. They encounter unfair expectations that cause unnecessary stress, directly affecting their ability to perform professional tasks. The research highlights the need for government agencies and local authorities to expand access to family support services, facilitating women's empowerment and nurturing entrepreneurial thinking without feeling guilty about family commitments or being burdened by unfair expectations. The fifth paper titled "Challenges of rural women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh to survive their family entrepreneurship: a narrative inquiry through storytelling" by Md. Mizanur Rahman, Leo-Paul Dana, Iqbal Hossain Moral, Nishath Anjum and Md. Saidur Rahaman discuss that women benefit from engaging in family businesses as it aligns with their economic, family and social needs. However, rural women often face difficulties in effectively managing their family businesses. Hence, the purpose of their research is to investigate the key challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh in sustaining their family businesses. This qualitative research adopts a story inquiry approach. Purposive sampling was used as a non-probability sampling method to collect data from rural women entrepreneurs in three districts of Bangladesh (Khulna, Satkhira and Sylhet) who are actively involved in family entrepreneurship. After gathering data from seven respondents, no new information emerged, leading to the selection of these respondents as the final sample size. The findings reveal that rural women entrepreneurs encounter various challenges, including social and cultural barriers, financial constraints and skill-related issues, as they strive to maintain their family businesses. Additionally, they face additional hurdles in ensuring the survival of their entrepreneurial endeavors. Social and cultural obstacles stem from societal attitudes and perceptions towards women and their roles. The research also highlights the significant impact of financial difficulties on rural women entrepreneurs, along with other challenges they face. The sixth paper titled "Examining the role of gender on family business entrepreneurial intention: influence of government support and technology usage" by Sumana Chaudhuri, Amit Kumar Agrawal, Sheshadri Chatterjee and Zahid Hussain examine the influence of government assistance and technology utilization on entrepreneurial intentions in family businesses. The study further explores the moderating role of gender in the relationship between family business entrepreneurial

intentions and the two predictors. To construct the theoretical model, this research incorporates the resource-based perspective, dynamic capacity view theories and relevant literature on family business entrepreneurship. The theoretical model was subsequently validated through the use of structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) with respondents from Indian family business organizations. A planned and convenient sampling strategy was employed for data collection in this study. The findings of this research highlight the significance of leveraging technology and government assistance to enhance the strength of family business enterprises. Moreover, the study reveals that gender moderates the association between government support, technology usage and entrepreneurial intentions within family businesses. The seventh paper titled “Women entrepreneurship in family business: dominant topics and future research trends” by Mehmet Bagis, Liridon Kryeziu, Mehmet Nurullah Kurutkan and Veland Ramadani examine the major research topics that guide the literature on women’s entrepreneurship in family businesses. The researchers utilized bibliometric tools to perform performance and scientific network mapping assessments. Prominent journals, authors, nations, co-citation analysis, multidimensional scaling (MDS), hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) and document analysis were employed to identify prevalent research themes. According to their findings, studies on women’s entrepreneurship in family enterprises can be categorized into three clusters. The first cluster focuses on family succession and women’s roles and responsibilities. The second cluster encompasses themes of succession, gender bias, leadership and entrepreneurship. Finally, the third cluster emphasizes themes of female leaders and identity formation. The eighth paper titled “Exploring women’s initiatives for family business resilience during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic” by Grisna Anggadwita, Anggraeni Permatasari, Dini Turipanam Alamanda and Werda Bagus Profityo discuss that family enterprises have played a significant role in economic development in various countries, including Indonesia. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global economic slowdown and created shocks in multiple business sectors. Women successors in family businesses have faced significant challenges in addressing the concerns of their businesses during the pandemic, particularly in terms of resilience, which is crucial for ensuring sustainability in a turbulent environment. Hence, the objective of their study is to investigate women’s actions and propose a paradigm for family business resilience in Indonesia during the COVID-19 epidemic. This study adopts a qualitative method and a case study approach to examine women’s initiatives in family business resilience during the COVID-19 period. In-depth interviews were conducted with five female family business successors in Indonesia to gather data, and triangulation was used to validate the findings. Data analysis followed the Miles-Huberman technique, including data reduction, data display and drawing/verifying conclusions.

Based on the study’s findings, women have proactively prepared their family businesses for the COVID-19 pandemic by developing and implementing resilience strategies. The research proposes a framework highlighting factors that enhance family business resilience, such as strategic decision-making (adaptive capacity, strategy renewal and appropriation capacity), strategic factors (successor motivation, successor competence and family support) and successor incremental programs. Women demonstrate a long-term perspective on the sustainability of their family enterprises and possess the capability to overcome various conflicts. The traditional perception of women’s leadership in family enterprises has shifted, recognizing aptitude and competence as the most crucial qualities for acknowledging women’s leadership.

Thus, all the eight studies will help advance our mutual understanding of the role of gender in family businesses.

#### 4. Conclusion

This editorial aims to outline research directions for examining the role of gender in family businesses, the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs on their entrepreneurial journey and the various dynamics of family relationships. This special issue holds significant

importance in highlighting the role of gender in female businesses across different economies. We extend our gratitude to the Editor of this journal for providing us with the opportunity to serve as guest editors for this special issue. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the publishing team for their unwavering support, the reviewers who assisted us in the assessment process and all the authors who contributed to this issue. Our goal is to inspire scholars to further enrich or reposition their studies to make valuable contributions to the field of family business.

## 5. Future research

The analysis of all eight papers in this special issue has yielded several potential directions for academics, researchers and businesses. Here are a few recommendations (Bağış *et al.*, 2023; Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2023; Dewitt *et al.*, 2023; Franco *et al.*, 2023; Marín-Palacios, 2023):

- (1) Promoting efforts to reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurial activities within family-owned businesses.
- (2) Presenting a conceptual framework that elucidates the integration of multiple perspectives to better understand the gender dynamics in family business succession.
- (3) Suggesting future studies that explore gender as both a biological and non-binary social construct, thereby assessing the gender perception of successors who do not identify with traditional binary categories.
- (4) While cross-sectional studies provide valuable insights within a specific time frame, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to capture the evolving nature of partner and family relationships. This will help assess the impact on female entrepreneurs in terms of decision-making, business growth and performance.
- (5) These suggestions aim to inspire further exploration and research in the field, offering valuable insights and opportunities for advancement etc.

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