

Research on the Effects of Media on Women's Entrepreneurship

Zijia Wang^{1,a,*}

¹*Point Grey Secondary School, Vancouver, v6n3h8, Canada*
a. cheriewang3677@gmail.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: The media is a powerful tool for shaping public opinion and can significantly influence women's entrepreneurial decisions. By portraying women entrepreneurs in a positive and egalitarian light, the media can help eliminate the negative effects of gender bias, thereby enhancing society's perception and evaluation of women entrepreneurs. Therefore, examining the impact of modern media on women entrepreneurs in contemporary society is a complex and significant issue. Focusing on the growing importance of this topic, the paper aims to explore the impact of media coverage on the image and status of women entrepreneurs. The impact is identified through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and media content analysis. It conducts an online questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews with 300 women entrepreneurs and 20 women entrepreneurs from different industries. The results shows that over 65% of the respondents believed that media bias had a negative impact on their entrepreneurial spirit, and almost 70% felt that their businesses did not receive fair coverage. The findings confirm that the media's gendered portrayal of women entrepreneurs affects not only public perceptions of their capabilities and potential but also challenges their confidence and willingness to start their own businesses.

Keywords: Female Entrepreneurship, Media Influence, Stereotyping, Entrepreneurial Aspirations, Media Strategies

1. Introduction

Female entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important contributor to economic growth and social development around the world. However, with increasing numbers of female entrepreneurs, the concerns arising in the process for them are far more complex, especially related to the issues of resource accessibility and social acceptance. Media as a means of propaganda of social ideologies and values has a great impact on the conformation of public opinion, and the formation of public attitudes toward women entrepreneurs.

This paper aims to explore the influence of media on female entrepreneurship, specifically the impact of media coverage on the image and status of female entrepreneurs. And it also investigates gender bias in media reports and its potential effect on the self-perception of female entrepreneurs. Media coverage can express gender bias through stereotypes and exposure, which may limit the opportunities available to women entrepreneurs. This can negatively impact their self-confidence and intentions to pursue entrepreneurship. Ntibane highlights the societal expectations and gender stigmatization that hinder women's economic activities and suggests implementing policy reforms to

promote female entrepreneurship [1]. Hazudin and colleagues explore the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation faced by women entrepreneurs. This includes the role of digital business solutions and social media, as well as their relevance in addressing traditional gender issues and new digital pressures [2]. This complex phenomenon was examined using a mixed-methods research design, with extensive data collected through quantitative questionnaires and qualitative in-depth interviews. This approach bridges the media-related dimensions of the literature and portrays new perspectives related to media and female entrepreneurship.

This paper sheds light on the impact of the media on women's entrepreneurship and provides a solid foundation for further supporting women entrepreneurs and promoting gender equality and economic diversification. Further guidance is provided on the specific needs of the media industry and the right mix of reporting strategies to project a more positive and inspiring public image of women entrepreneurs.

2. Literature Review

It is Nguyen who critically scrutinizes media representation, illustrating that female entrepreneurs were exposed to a skewed and stereotyped representation as compared with their male equivalents. Analysis through computational text analysis unveils marked differences in language and coverage, which suggests that this sort of representation can be misleading to women when it comes to entrepreneurial aspirations[3]. Besides, Raman has identified gender discrimination and stereotyping as two of the key challenges that women entrepreneurs in Malaysia face. It is against this background that the role of the media in driving these barriers is being sought, considering that it has an influence on the growth of female entrepreneurship[4].

2.1. Theoretical Underpinnings and Media Influence

In modern society, the media not only informs public awareness and social culture but also serves as a key force in the channel of information. Previous research results have put forward the fact that media has a significant influence on how people perceive varying social groups, including gender roles. Specifically for female entrepreneurship, media influence equals two things at a time: it raises the visibility and the social status for female entrepreneurs, and at the same time, it limits their development space for gender bias. Gender theory and entrepreneurship psychology provide us with the theoretical basis for understanding this phenomenon.

Theoretical underpinnings discuss the gender theory in providing mechanisms of gender bias within the media, with expectations and evaluation criteria towards female entrepreneurs shaped through the use of stereotypes and gender role norms. Entrepreneurial psychology, on the other hand, focuses on the individual level of motives, processes, and behaviors, further emphasizing the influence of environmental factors, specifically social cognition, on entrepreneurial intentions. These theories suggest that media, as part of the social environment, has a non-negligible influence over the formation and development of female entrepreneurship.

For example, in their study, Gupta and Turban noted that gender stereotypes play the part in evaluation of new business ideas, where the position of cultural definitions and widely held beliefs concerning differences between genders contribute to perceptions regarding male- and female-typed occupations and, hence, entrepreneurship [5]. This research underlines the impact of gender stereotypes on the perception and evaluation of women entrepreneurs and corresponds to gender theory, which has always highlighted the media's effects on gender biases [5].

The gender role congruity theory is also applied in order to explain how informal political-cultural institutions shape male versus female entrepreneurs' venture performance, through industry selection and participation in after-work social activities [6]. Their findings lend institutional support to the

knowledge of how gender biases reflect through media into society at large and how these bias perceptions can influence female entrepreneurial decisions and their outcomes, thus offering practical application under the scope of entrepreneurship psychology [6].

Together, they show how media representations of women's entrepreneurship are linked to gender theory and entrepreneurship psychology. They underscore the role of media in providing either support or encumbrances in the development of women's entrepreneurship through the sustained or resurfacing of stereotypes and gender biases.

2.2. Research Gaps and Future Directions

On the whole, bearing in mind the current state of research, studies address various matters, considering the perspective of the media in shaping female entrepreneurship; however, there are clear gaps in the literature. First, most of the studies focus on a few individual countries and a few industries, with comprehensive cross-cultural and cross-industry analysis relatively lacking. Second, there is a gap because there is not enough study of the effect of media reports regarding gender bias against women entrepreneurs to create an impact on self-perception and improve the environment for women entrepreneurs through media strategies. Moreover, most of the studies deal with the negative effects of media on females, while there are not so many investigations into how media may act positively in the promotion of female entrepreneurship.

In terms of theoretical linkages, hence, this research tries to cover these research gaps by establishing theoretical linkages between media influence and female entrepreneurship and by conducting an in-depth investigation of how media influences female entrepreneurs' social and self-perceptions through different mechanisms. The study will particularly focus on analyzing the concrete manifestations of gender bias and exploring ways of employing media strategies in the direction of not only promoting gender equality but also creating an equal and supporting environment for female entrepreneurs. This paper integrates the perspectives of gender theory and entrepreneurship psychology to deepen and broaden the understanding of the media impact on female entrepreneurship.

For instance, Wu et al. trace the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the attainment of gender equality in the workplace through media image and representation, marking the importance of media representation and corporate initiatives in the formation of attitudes of society on gender equality measures implemented by organizations. The research indicates the potential of media strategies in developing a supportive environment for initiatives targeting gender equality, as well as corporate image formation. It can assist in the promotion of female entrepreneurship [7].

The significance of raising consciousness about the gender roles through cross-cultural analysis, especially given Japan's major sociocultural shift in gender roles, is also discussed in Smirles. This piece of research provides an insight into how the media and education could build perceptions and expectations towards female entrepreneurship, giving another cultural context an opportunity to apply similar strategies to also bring female entrepreneurs to the leading position[8].

Taken together, these studies present the case for deep cross-cultural and cross-industry analysis, the impact of media reports on self-perception by women entrepreneurs, and the strategies for using media to better the environment for women's entrepreneurship and gender equality promotion. They, thus, serve as an important base for all further research in these areas and provide theoretical underpinnings to any related policy-making and practice.

3. Analysis

The research problem identified in this study revolves around the biases present in mass media coverage of female entrepreneurship, which adversely affect public perception and women entrepreneurs' confidence. This section presents the researcher's question, followed by a detailed

presentation of the study results. The reasons for the results are then explained, and some recommendations are provided.

3.1. Research problem

The mass media plays a great role in the formation of public opinion about female entrepreneurship. But there are biases in the mass media that have been discovered by research and that adversely influence women entrepreneurs. For instance, the success of female entrepreneurs is often attributed to their male partners or luck, rather than their own abilities or hard work. Additionally, media reports tend to magnify the hardships and difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs, while portraying male entrepreneurs as heroic for overcoming similar challenges. This bias impacts the perception of the public with regard to women's abilities to be entrepreneurs and may also influence their confidence in women's possibilities for being entrepreneurs themselves.

3.2. Findings

To support these arguments, this study collected data through online questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire survey included 300 female entrepreneurs, while the interviews were conducted with 20 female entrepreneurs from different industries. The study found that more than 65% of the respondents indicated that gender bias in media reports had a negative impact on their entrepreneurial spirit, and about 70% of the women felt that the media did not report their business fairly. Through interviews, most of the female entrepreneurs shared how they personally experienced and perceived gender bias in media coverage and its impact.

3.3. Explanation of reasons

There are deep-rooted reasons for the development of gender bias in media coverage. First, it is related to gender inequality within the media industry. Female journalists and editors are still at a disadvantage in terms of numbers and power, which affects the perspective and content of reporting. Secondly, stereotypes and traditional gender role perceptions are deeply rooted in society and culture, and these perceptions are reflected and disseminated through the media. Finally, the persistence of gender bias in media coverage can also be attributed to a lack of awareness and training on gender sensitivity.

3.4. Recommendation

Based on the above analysis, the following strategies and recommendations are proposed to improve the current situation. Firstly, it is necessary to enhance gender equality within the media industry. Encourage and support women's career development in the media industry and ensure that more women's voices are heard in editorial offices and news reporting teams. Secondly, providing gender sensitivity training can be helpful. Media practitioners should be made aware of the presence of gender biases through this training and work to avoid reproducing them in their reporting. Thirdly, implementing actions to promote positive stories of female entrepreneurship, such as seeking proactively success stories of female entrepreneurs, especially those who break away from traditional roles and rigidity on gender expectations, so as to reshape the mindsets and public perception on how to be a successful female entrepreneur. Fourthly, encourage the media to adopt diversified reporting metrics in the coverage of entrepreneurs of varied gender, age, and cultural backgrounds to establish a more balanced approach. This can enrich the reporting by offering a more comprehensive and balanced perspective.

By implementing these strategies, the problem of gender bias in media coverage can be gradually improved, and society's perception of women entrepreneurs can be more fair and positive, thus supporting and encouraging more women to participate in entrepreneurial activities.

4. Discussion

The study analyzed the impact of media on women's entrepreneurship using data. It has been confirmed that there is indeed gender bias in media coverage and these biases in media indeed affect the environment in which women entrepreneurship is taking place. Based on the findings of our study, we try to provide some suggestions to the media industry and policy makers to make an effort to improve the entrepreneurial opportunities for women. For media professionals, they can collaborate with Women's organizations because partnering with women's organizations allows media professionals to access diverse perspectives and sources for stories about entrepreneurship. Collaboration demonstrates a commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women in business, while also strengthening relationships with diverse communities. Besides, creating platforms for women entrepreneurs to share their stories amplifies their voices and experiences, helping to counteract the underrepresentation of women in media coverage. It provides an opportunity for women to showcase their achievements and contribute to discussions about entrepreneurship. For policy makers, they had better implement gender-inclusive policies, which can create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs to thrive by addressing systemic barriers and promoting equal opportunities. These policies support economic growth, innovation, and social development by harnessing the full potential of women in entrepreneurship. Additionally, monitoring progress towards gender equality in entrepreneurship is necessary for them. This work allows policymakers to track the impact of policies and identify areas for improvement. Data-driven decision-making ensures that resources are allocated effectively and interventions are tailored to address specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the influence of media on female entrepreneurship through questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, and media content analysis. The study reveals gender bias in media reports and its negative impact on female entrepreneurs. The results confirm that gender portrayals in the media not only affect public perceptions of women entrepreneurs' abilities and potential but also challenge their confidence and willingness to start a business. This paper provides recommendations for enhancing female entrepreneurship by addressing positive perceptions of female entrepreneurs in the media and society. It aims to answer the research question posed in the introduction section and develop a deeper understanding of how the media can shape public perceptions of female entrepreneurs. It aims to answer the research question posed in the introduction section and develop a deeper understanding of how the media can shape public perceptions of female entrepreneurs. It aims to answer the research question posed in the introduction section and develop a deeper understanding of how the media can shape public perceptions of female entrepreneurs. Additionally, it highlights the impact of gender bias in media coverage on female entrepreneurs, and showcases the power and potential of women in business, creating opportunities not only for women entrepreneurs but also for the promotion of socio-economic development.

Nonetheless, there are some limitations, such as the sample size used in the study and limitations in the scope of the study, that may affect the current study, which aims to understand the impact of the media on female entrepreneurship in developing economies. The sample size could be increased in future studies to include female entrepreneurs from different countries and cultural backgrounds to enhance the generalizability and depth of the study. The impact of positive gender representations in

the media could also be further explored and how media strategies could be more favorable and effective in encouraging female entrepreneurship.

References

- [1] Ntibane, Ignatia N. *Exploring challenges that affect female informal entrepreneurs in the central business district of Richards Bay and Empangeni*[J]. 2021.
- [2] Hazudin, Fahazarina S, Sabri, et al. *Empowering women-owned businesses in the era of digital transformation: a review of the opportunities and challenges*[J]. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2021,11(19):1-13.
- [3] Nguyen, My. *Women Representation in The Media: Gender Bias and Status Implications*[J]. 2020.
- [4] Raman, Arasu. *Predicaments in business ventures encountered by women entrepreneurs in Malaysia*[J]. *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, 2021,2:464-473.
- [5] Gupta, K V, Turban, et al. *Evaluation of new business ideas: do gender stereotypes play a role?*[J]. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 2012:140-156.
- [6] Zhao, Yanfei E, Yang, et al. *Women hold up half the sky? Informal institutions, entrepreneurial decisions, and gender gap in venture performance*[J]. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2021,45(6):1431-1462.
- [7] Wu, Xiaodi, Yin, et al. *Exploring How Corporate Social Responsibility Achieves Gender Equality in the Workplace from the Perspective of Media Image*[J]. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2023,23:700-707.
- [8] Smirles, Eretzian K. *Raising consciousness of gender roles through cross-cultural analysis: a course on women and leadership for Japanese women*[J]. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 2017,41(3):389-392.