

Entrepreneurship: Difficult jobs for women with an attrition entrepreneurship theory approach of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

Thus, the role of entrepreneurship emerges as an essential factor in the promotion of economic growth, innovation potential, and sustainable development. Nevertheless, the rate of venture discontinuation or failure among female entrepreneurs remains significantly high due to a variety of socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors. Therefore, using the concept of Attrition Entrepreneurship Theory, the current review aims to explore the structural and contextual hurdles faced by female entrepreneurs in the context of the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), particularly Sustainable Development Goal 5 Gender Equality, Sustainable Development Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Sustainable Development Goal 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. Using both theoretical and conceptual studies, the paper attempts to identify the major hurdles that result in high levels of venture discontinuation or failure among female entrepreneurs, including financial capital, institutional and regulatory hurdles, socio-cultural factors, gender factors, lack of market linkages, and professional linkages. Moreover, the paper also attempts to assess the role of sustainable entrepreneurship, innovative approaches, and policy measures in overcoming these hurdles and strengthening the survival potential of female entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship; entrepreneurial attrition; gender inequality; sustainable development; Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 9)

I. Introduction

The application and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are still inconsistent and in many instances insufficient in different industries and scientific fields. Even though the SDGs are universally acknowledged and recognized as the foundation for creating a socially equitable society, a conducive environment for environmental sustainability, and an economically thriving nation, the application and implementation of the SDGs in different industries and scientific fields are still wanting. In many industries and fields, the SDGs are just a rhetorical device instead of a real application and implementation tool in the creation of policies and in the conduct of research. Therefore, despite the importance of the SDGs in the creation of a socially equitable society, a conducive environment for environmental sustainability, and an economically thriving nation, the application and implementation of the SDGs are still wanting in many industries and scientific fields. The concept of entrepreneurship has a vital role to play in economic transformation and societal development. The significance of entrepreneurship becomes more critical when we consider frameworks such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs recognize women's inclusion in economic activity as a cornerstone for sustainable development. The 5th goal is dedicated to achieving gender equality by empowering women through economic participation. The 8th and 9th goals are dedicated to decent work and innovation for sustainable economic growth and development, as well as infrastructure development.

Although there has been evident improvement in women's entrepreneurial activity globally, the problem of attrition, which is defined as women's high rates of disengaging from entrepreneurial activity relative to men, has not been solved. The problem of women disengaging from entrepreneurial activity is not only a matter of women's personal choice but is also linked to systemic issues such as access, socio-cultural issues, and gender-based economic policies. The application of the attrition entrepreneurship theory will enable us to comprehend women's disengagement from entrepreneurial activity and how it affects the achievement of the SDGs.

Theoretical Framework: Attrition Entrepreneurship and Gender

However, it should be noted that conventional entrepreneurship theories mainly focus on entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, and entrepreneurial success. In this regard, it should be noted that attrition entrepreneurship theory attempts to address issues that conventional entrepreneurship theories seem to ignore, including those that affect women or other underrepresented groups.

In a gender context, it should be noted that attrition entrepreneurship among women is affected by a number of factors, including:

- Female entrepreneurs' lack of access to financial resources.
- The role of socio-cultural factors, including norms such as caregiving.
- The role of institutional factors, including government regulations.
- The role of network factors.

All these factors contribute to attrition entrepreneurship, which affects women in particular.

It should also be noted that this perspective is essential in understanding how entrepreneurship relates to the achievement of some of the goals set out in the SDGs, including goal 5, which addresses issues related to women's economic empowerment.

Barriers Contributing to Women's Entrepreneurial Attrition

Access to Finance

One of the most mentioned hindrances to women's sustained entrepreneurship is their lack of access to finance. This is a major challenge for women compared to their male counterparts in accessing start-up capital or financing their businesses, which affects their business sustainability. Various studies have demonstrated that women face a significant challenge in accessing formal credit, venture

capital, as well as other forms of investment, which has pushed many women to operate in niches that are less sustainable in terms of revenues.

Institutional and Regulatory Constraints

The role of institutions, laws, and policies is significant in the entrepreneurial ecosystems that develop in an economy. Studies indicate that institutional quality can help bridge the gaps between the genders in entrepreneurial activities, such that in environments where the law is more supportive and both genders enjoy equal rights, the differences between the genders in entrepreneurial activities tend to be lower. In environments where institutional quality is low, the dropout rate for females is high because of the compounding effects of the difficulties they face in accessing resources and in enforcing contracts.

Socio-Cultural Norms and Gender Roles

Socio-cultural factors still impact women's entrepreneurial persistence. Women's entrepreneurial persistence is reflected in various studies that show how they tend to adopt gender role norms that emphasize family and home responsibilities over entrepreneurial development, leading to high entrepreneurial exit rates. The researcher's systematic review shows that gender role norms of society greatly impact entrepreneurial development, from motivation to sustainability.

Skill Gaps and Entrepreneurship Education

Although research such as the one above shows that the difference in perceptions of entrepreneurial skills may not be as significant as previously thought, the perceived gap in entrepreneurial skills may still influence women's confidence and success in the business environment. Entrepreneurial intentions and educational programs may also influence the dropout rate by empowering women with the skills needed to manage risks, innovation, and growth.

Networking, Mentorship, and Support Systems

Another invisible driver of entrepreneurial success is the power of networking and mentorship. Women may not have access to powerful networks and mentorship programs that offer business leads, access to capital, and other forms of strategic guidance. Such limitations may result in a high dropout rate in the event of a bottleneck or crisis in the business.

Women's Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development Goals

The women's entrepreneurial activities are closely associated with the attainment of multiple SDGs. Apart from SDG 5, women's entrepreneurial activities are associated with:

- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth through job creation, income generation, and women's economic integration into the formal economy.
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure women's entrepreneurial activities are associated with innovation, especially in the service industry.
- SDG 1: No Poverty women's entrepreneurial activities provide income-earning opportunities for women, which help reduce poverty.

The literature indicates women's roles as change agents in attaining these SDGs. For example, the UNIDO's work on women, SMEs, and sustainable development indicates women's entrepreneurial activities as key agents for the attainment of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, highlighting women's roles in economic transformation and gendered equity planning. Furthermore, the bibliometric analysis indicates that women's entrepreneurial activities are significant contributors to SDG attainment, but they are often hindered by certain factors. Sustainable entrepreneurship is an approach that incorporates sustainability into entrepreneurial activities. It is an approach that aligns entrepreneurial activities with sustainability. Women's entrepreneurial activities are often associated with sustainable approaches, which are significant contributors to SDG attainment. However, women's entrepreneurial activities are often hindered by certain factors.

Addressing Attrition: Policies and Practice

In order to address the issues of attrition among women entrepreneurs and improve their contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, the following strategies can be derived from the literature:

Financial access can be improved through the provision of gender-sensitive credit schemes, microfinance services tailored to the needs of women, and investment schemes focused on women-owned enterprises.

The regulatory environment can also be improved to support the participation of women in entrepreneurship by streamlining business registration, providing support for property rights, and enforcing anti-discrimination regulations to support the participation of women in entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship education is also important in the development of strategic, technological, and sustainability skills, and it should be tailored to support the development of confidence and

resilience in women entrepreneurs, especially in high-growth and technology entrepreneurship. Mentorship can also be used to improve the knowledge and access to opportunities for women entrepreneurs, and networking can be used to improve the survival prospects of women entrepreneurs by providing them with opportunities to connect with other businesspeople, especially investors.

Challenging existing norms that perpetuate gendered segregation of work is crucial. Campaigns, role models, and initiatives that support work-life balance (such as childcare facilities and family support programs) are useful for women to maintain entrepreneurial initiatives.

II. Conclusion

Thus, the entrepreneurship of women is not just an activity, but it is a process that is transformative in nature, matching the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, such as gender equality, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and innovation. Yet, the high rates of attrition for women in entrepreneurship indicate that there are certain issues that act as a barrier for the potential of these entrepreneurs to grow. By applying the theory of entrepreneurship for attrition, the present review will highlight the ways in which these issues act as a barrier for the entrepreneurial participation of women. To address the issues of attrition for the entrepreneurship of women, it is important to develop strategies that will not only help these individuals to grow but also help society to grow, such as the reduction of poverty, innovation, and inclusive growth.

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