



## Research article

# Elements that contribute to boost female entrepreneurship: A prospective analysis



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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify what environmental modulators elements favor and contribute to enhance female entrepreneurship from a gender perspective. The qualitative study draws on 10 interviews in depth after being tested on their contents, from a relational perspective, allow a set of conclusions and recommendations that contribute to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs figure. The results highlight the importance of social support and comprehensive training in creating a culture that promotes and makes visible the role of women entrepreneurs.

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## Elementos que contribuyen a potenciar la capacidad empresarial femenina: un análisis prospectivo

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo tiene como propósito identificar qué elementos moduladores del entorno favorecerían y contribuirían a potenciar la capacidad empresarial femenina desde una perspectiva de género. El estudio cualitativo toma como referencia 10 entrevistas en profundidad que, tras ser analizadas en sus contenidos, desde una perspectiva relacional, permitirán establecer un conjunto de conclusiones y recomendaciones que contribuyan a un empoderamiento de la figura de la mujer emprendedora. Los resultados destacan la importancia del apoyo social y la formación integral en la creación de una cultura que promueva y visibilice el papel de la mujer emprendedora.

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## Introduction

The complexity of the entrepreneur has led to investigations, from various perspectives, tried to investigate the moderating factors of the action that results in the formation of a company. The current success of the discourse on entrepreneurship in economic fields is determined by the confidence placed in entrepreneurial activity as a generator of innovation, creativity, growth and employment.

The conditions in which “creativity” occur, which accompanies the entrepreneurial spirit, however, must be contextualized in the cycle and economic structure of the stage in which they occur. Therefore, while it is appropriate to observe the characteristics of the subjects of entrepreneurship, not least important is to consider the environmental conditions, conditions in which they exercise their influence not only tangible elements and objectives, such as economic resources or training to undertake, but also other intangibles elements as the social status of this activity or roles associated with the entrepreneur. Gender belongs to this last type of factors.

If we limit ourselves to the geographical area covered by this study, Spain, it appears that gender differences have a translation in the lower propensity for entrepreneurship in the case of women, confirming a trend that indicates that the rate of male entrepreneurship has been traditionally higher than women (Guemes, Coduras, Rachida, & Pampillon, 2011). According to the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)* for Spain, in the period between 2003 and 2011 men led 63.0% of entrepreneurial initiatives and women did in the remaining 36.9%. This translates into a rate of entrepreneurial activity (TEA) in this period of 4.4% in women and 7.7% in men. The situation of economic crisis that the country has experienced in this period has resulted, on the one hand, which has not diminished the distance between the two rates and, on the other – not least –, that entrepreneurial initiatives do not have successfully accomplished consolidation. According to the same source, which itself has been equated was the percentage of business closures in both sexes (1.8% vs. 1.7%), due to a growth of 260% in the last nine years, separations of business carried out by women. Lack of profitability, funding problems and other reasons of a personal nature are among the reasons given by the entrepreneurs for such a high rate of growth in business closures.

These data and research on the subject suggests that female entrepreneurship is conditioned by various aspects that should be establish categorizing “formal” (that is to say, objectives and infrastructure) and “informal” (subjective character, linked to the entrepreneurial personality or socio-cultural factors, including gender). In the first line there are numerous studies that identify institutional aspects, such as access to funding or the existence or not of social collaboration networks as adjuvants elements in entrepreneurship (Carter, Shaw, Lam, & Wilson, 2007; Gatewood, Brush, Carter, Greene, & Hart, 2009).

In the second, the research focuses on the influence of socio-cultural factors (Álvarez & Urbano, 2011) or other informal aspects (perception of competencies and skills) that are relevant as differential components of entrepreneurship by

gender (Álvarez, Noguera, & Urbano, 2012), and are reflected in the greater or lesser impulse of entrepreneurship of women.

Therefore, it is appropriate to continue investigating on the moderating factors of female entrepreneurship and the necessary actions for their empowerment.

## Analytical perspectives in research on the conditionings of entrepreneurship

Making a brief summary of research on the factors that influence – whether positively or negatively – the entrepreneurial action, you can set three analytical perspectives. The first is economic and has its origin in the Schumpeterian theory of innovation and entrepreneurship. From *Schumpeter's thesis (1957)* research has been based on models that combine general economic conditions and the functioning of markets as determinant variables of entrepreneurial action. As a current exponent of this line, the theory of institutional economics (North, 1990) indicates that human behavior is conditioned by the institutional environment, that can encourage or limit the decisions of individuals and specifically the decision to create or not a company (Álvarez et al., 2012: 44).

Secondly, there is the psychological perspective, which has focused on studying the importance of the individual factors in determining entrepreneurship. These studies are a precursor to *McClelland (1961)*. The author defines the psychological profile of the entrepreneur from the accompanying attributes: originality and innovation; moderate risk aversion; acceptance of responsibility; knowledge of the results of their actions and planning based on the long term. In the same line, other more recent studies have explored the psychological profile of the entrepreneur (Boydston, Hopper, & Wright, 2000) emphasizing variables such as attitude, motivation, behavior or skills as differentiating factors of such profile (Capelleras & Kantis, 2009), up to define the existence of a true “human capital” – in union with the “social capital” –, would collect the special conditions of the entrepreneur (Federico, Kantis, & Rabetino, 2009). However, there are no conclusive studies in charting the personality of the entrepreneur.

While these perspectives addressed key issues in determining the moderating factors of entrepreneurship, it can be inferred that entrepreneurial activity could be given at any time, given certain conditions of the personality of individuals, regardless of conditions of social character (Pereira, 2007: 19). As shown in sociological perspective, this premise is far from reality.

Since the eighties some studies collect the determination exercised by the contextual factors in the development of entrepreneurial activity; factors such as working conditions, the need for improvement in the workplace and gaining social recognition (Evans & Lighton, 1989; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). Also, from a contextual analysis, other studies influence which could join the “social capital” of the entrepreneur, defined as both the availability of resources, whether economic and personal, as is the existence of social networks, both for its intensity, for the opportunity of their relationships, they can have an influence on the propensity to innovate and undertake entrepreneurial initiatives (Ajzen, 1988; Burt, 2000). In this line, studies like the one of *Giraudeau (2007)* relativize the

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