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Women entrepreneurship in South Africa: Motivations, challenges and ways to improve conditions

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A research article submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

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Protocol number: (Ethics clearance number)

DECLARATION

I, Tsireledzo Mushoma, declare that this research article is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Tsireledzo Mushoma

Signed at ……

On the …….. day of …… 2018

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I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr Mkhululi Ncube, for his guidance and invaluable insight. I appreciate the assurance that it could be done.

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship has been highlighted as one of the leading contributors to economic growth through job creation and increase in innovation. However, entrepreneurs must overcome barriers such as the lack of finance which usually threaten the survival of their ventures. Previous studies have shown that women entrepreneurs are the worst-affected. They face additional barriers such as cultural values that discourage women entrepreneurship and gender discrimination.

The purpose of this research is therefore to explore the motivating factors and challenges of South African women entrepreneurs, and how the nuanced understanding of motivating factors and challenges can be used to improve the state of women entrepreneurship in South Africa, and consequently engender women to actively venture into entrepreneurship. Interviews with women entrepreneurs were conducted to get an in-depth understanding of the entrepreneurial conditions, primarily focusing on barriers women face, factors motivating women to venture into entrepreneurship, and ways to improve conditions for women.

The results of the study show that women entrepreneurs in South Africa are motivated by job dissatisfaction, unemployment, the need for independence, need to increase income, entrepreneurial inclination and the pursuit of a hobby. Challenges that women entrepreneurs face are related to lack of access to networking opportunities, markets, funding and knowledge. Other barriers include gender discrimination and corruption.

The study contributes to the field of women entrepreneurship by making recommendations about how an understanding of entrepreneurial motivation can be a useful indicator of the kind of support women entrepreneurs need. This knowledge can help improve conditions for women entrepreneurs.

In the context of limited resources, efforts aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs should be effective if there is an awareness of their actual needs.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, female entrepreneurship, motivational factors, challenges, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the study

Entrepreneurship has been highlighted as one of the leading contributors to economic growth through job creation and innovation (Herrington, Kew, & Kew, 2010). In developing countries such as South Africa, entrepreneurship can go a long way towards poverty alleviation. In recent years, South Africa has seen rising unemployment, with the unemployment rate at 27.7% as at September 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2017b).

The development of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa can be an invaluable tool to create employment and help with poverty alleviation (Davies, 2001).

Despite government initiatives to grow the small business sector, Herrington, Kew, and Nwanga (2017) purport that South African entrepreneurs face barriers such as lack of access to finance, bureaucracy, inadequate levels of human capital, and lack of market access. Women entrepreneurs are the worst-affected, facing additional barriers such as lack of support from their families, cultural values that discourage women from becoming entrepreneurs and gender discrimination when seeking finance (Akhalwaya & Havenga, 2012).

The purpose of this research is therefore to explore the motivation behind South African women entrepreneurs, and how the state of women entrepreneurship in South Africa can be improved.

Context of the study

South Africa has in recent years been weighed down by the double burden of low economic growth and high unemployment, with a five-year economic growth average that stays below 1% and double-digit unemployment rate. The Bureau for Economic Research (2006) reported that the development of small businesses is a means of creating employment in South Africa. Notwithstanding this, the Bureau for Economic Research (2006) states that early-stage entrepreneurship levels remain low compared to other emerging economies.

As reported by Herrington et al. (2017), South African SMMEs contribute 36% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employ 47% of the workforce (Bureau for Economic Research, 2006). This disparity shows that there is still capacity to grow the contribution of the sector to the growth of the economy. Notwithstanding this potential, Cant and Wiid (2013) point out that challenges such as elevated crime levels, onerous government legislation, high unemployment, high inflation and high interest rates, low demand and lack of business management expertise have burdened the SMME sector.

While Statistics South Africa (2017a) reports that women comprise 51% of the population and make an invaluable contribution towards the economic growth of the country, South African women have historically been marginalised (Wing & De Carvalho, 1995). This marginalisation persists despite legislative efforts to elevate women to be on equal footing with men.

Problem statement

Kelley et al. (2017) claim that women entrepreneurs have a potential to contribute significantly to growing economies. Audretsch (2007) has articulated mechanisms through which entrepreneurship leads to economic growth, which is through knowledge transfer by way of creation of a new venture, increased competition and diversification. While women entrepreneurs can undoubtedly contribute towards knowledge transfer and increased competition, they have a more significant potential of bringing diversity to a historically male-dominated

field of entrepreneurship. For this to happen, the creation of an environment that is responsive to the needs of women entrepreneurs is essential.

The reality in South Africa is that while previous studies such as Akhalwaya and Havenga (2012) and Valla (2001) have highlighted the challenges facing South African entrepreneurs, women are believed to suffer higher barriers than men (Herrington et al., 2017). Kelley et al. (2017) confirmed this when they found that even though there is no difference between entrepreneurial intentions between the genders, the female Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate is lower than the male TEA rate.

A report by SBP (2013) noted that the average woman-owned entrepreneurial venture turns over approximately 40% less than an average man-owned enterprise, with the most significant differences in the tourism sector. The report also states that women entrepreneurs on average employ six people fewer than male entrepreneurs (SBP, 2013). As supported by Minniti and Arenius (2003), this may be attributed to the reality that women-owned ventures are smaller and show less growth compared to men-owned businesses.

Kelley et al. (2017) also reported that women often become entrepreneurs out of necessity, experience lower business growth and experience higher business failure rates compared to their male counterparts. These findings reveal the magnitude of the plight of women entrepreneurs.

Although since the inception of democracy there has been significant progress made, conditions for women entrepreneurship are still discriminatory and riddled with challenges. We are unaware of research that explores ways of improving participation of women in venturing into entrepreneurship through an understanding of their entrepreneurial motivation factors.

Thus, in response to this problem, this study explores how conditions for women entrepreneurs in South Africa can be improved through (1) nuanced understanding of factors that motivate women to become entrepreneurs, and (2) understanding of challenges women face in entrepreneurship. While critical factors for the development of women entrepreneurship has been the focus of a

variety of studies, few have explored how knowledge of motivation factors can be used to improve conditions for women entrepreneurs.

One such study by Moses and Amalu (2010) found that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurial motivation and the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. However, the study did not explore how conditions for women entrepreneurship could be improved using this relationship.

Policies that consider the different contexts under which women operate, including understanding entrepreneurial motivation should assist the government in its efforts to increase the participation of women in entrepreneurship.

Significance of the study

The field of women entrepreneurship globally has received growing interest from researchers in line with growth in the number of women entrepreneurs (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). However, the Bureau for Economic Research (2006) reported that there is little understanding of women entrepreneurs in developing economies due to limited research. A lack of research on women entrepreneurs means that the field is not well-understood (Brush & Cooper, 2012), which weakens efforts by the government to offer support to women entrepreneurs (Department of Trade and Industry, 2007).

This research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on women entrepreneurship by identifying the motivating factors behind women entrepreneurs in South Africa. An understanding of the woman entrepreneur, including her entrepreneurial motivation, should be the starting point for policies aimed at increasing women's participation in entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial motivation of women can be used to understand the goals of the entrepreneur, thereby allowing better initiatives to support women entrepreneurs to succeed, inherently reducing rampant poverty levels, reducing unemployment levels, and improving economic growth.

Research question

The primary research question is:

i. How do challenges faced by women affect entrepreneurial motivation?

The sub-questions are:

ii. What factors affect entrepreneurial motivations of women in South Africa?

iii. What barriers do women entrepreneurs in South Africa face?

iv. What policies and/or initiatives are needed to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs in South Africa? In the same vein, how can these policies and initiatives be improved through understanding factors that motivate women, as well as challenges that women entrepreneurs face?

As detailed in the third chapter, a qualitative, social constructivist study will be used to answer these questions.

Delimitations of the study

- The study does not make a comparison of motivations between men and women entrepreneurs.
- The study excludes entrepreneurship that happens within existing organisations (corporate entrepreneurship).

Assumptions

- The respondents' views reflect standard perspectives and experiences of women entrepreneurs in South Africa. This assumption is optimistic considering women entrepreneurs are not a homogeneous group and will have different realities depending on various internal and external factors.

- The women surveyed were open and honest about their experiences as any distortion of the facts would lead to incorrect conclusions drawn from the study.

Organisation of the study

The structure of this research article is as follows:

The first chapter sets out the introduction, background to the research and research problem. The second chapter presents the literature review, including a definition of entrepreneurship. Also, this chapter provides the theoretical framework underpinning this research.

The third chapter discusses the research methodology adopted for the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study. The final chapter discusses the findings, theoretical and practical implications, limitations and presents the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter covers the literature review on women entrepreneurship. It starts off by defining entrepreneurship, then discusses women entrepreneurship in South Africa. Further, it examines the theory of motivation and how it relates to women's entrepreneurial motivations.

The existence of different schools of thought makes the subject of entrepreneurship a complex one with many different definitions. Interpretations of what is entrepreneurship have been based on the perceived personal qualities of an entrepreneur, opportunity-recognition, managing an enterprise, and innovativeness within existing organisations (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991).

The current research is anchored on entrepreneurial motivation, which is pertinent to the early stages of a new venture. Therefore, a definition based on opportunity-recognition is favoured.

Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) define entrepreneurship as identification and exploitation of opportunities independently of the resources controlled. In the same vein, Venkataraman (1997, p. 119) state that entrepreneurship “seeks to understand how opportunities to bring into existence "future" goods and services are discovered, created, and exploited, by whom, and with what consequences”.

In other words, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) define entrepreneurship as the study of how people recognise and exploit opportunities, and an entrepreneur is a person that identifies those opportunities.

All these definitions are considered valid for purposes of this study.

Shane and Venkataraman (2000) point out the implication of these definitions to be that there must be an existence of an opportunity and an individual who takes advantage of it. Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) define an opportunity as a desired future state.

As proposed by Dejardin (2000), entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth through an increase in innovation. In South Africa, entrepreneurship is often synonymous with enterprise development (Department of Trade and Industry, 2011). The importance of SMMEs in dealing with poverty, unemployment and low economic growth led to initiatives such as the establishment of the Ministry of Small Business Development (Dludla, 2014).

Crucial other policy frameworks established by the government to improve enterprise development in recent years include the integrated strategy on the promotion of entrepreneurship and small enterprises of 2005 and the New Growth Path of 2010 (Department of Trade and Industry, 2011). However, Muzondi (2014) points out that most government initiatives to support entrepreneurs are not meeting the needs of those they are meant to serve. This ineffectiveness happens either through entrepreneurs not being aware of the

support available, how to access it or through inefficiencies in the support structures (Muzondi, 2014).

Barriers to female entrepreneurship

According to Kelley et al. (2017), it is estimated that globally, 163 million women were running a new business in 2016, with an increase in entrepreneurial intentions from 2014 and a narrowing gender gap.

Studies on women entrepreneurs in Western countries have shown that women in entrepreneurship face barriers with accessing financial capital, socio-cultural structures that aim to restrict women to family roles and exclusion from business networks (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004).

In a study of women entrepreneurs in Oman, McElwee and Al-Riyami (2003) concluded that most women entrepreneurs were concentrated in the service industry and faced barriers including lack of networking opportunities for women in a patriarchal society, and lack of skills. Roomi and Parrott (2008) also summarised the challenges women entrepreneurs face in Pakistan to be related to lack of access to resources such as finance and land and the burdens of a patriarchal society. While Kelley et al. (2017) found no gender difference in entrepreneurial activity in Sub-Saharan Africa, women-owned businesses in this region tend to be smaller and underperform men-owned businesses.

In South Africa, women make up 51% of the adult population (Statistics South Africa, 2017a), but their contribution to the GDP is estimated to be only 35%-45% (Department of Women, 2015). However, according to the Women Empowerment and Gender Equity Bill, a 50% of women representation is targeted in various spheres of society (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Consortium (2017) also noted that in general, women start new businesses at a lower rate than men.

Barriers women entrepreneurs in South Africa face include access to finance, family responsibilities, lack of skills and gender bias.

Access to finance

One of the most significant barriers women face in starting their entrepreneurial ventures is lack of financial capital (Mathapo, 2011; Muzondi, 2014; Viljoen & O'Neill, 2001). Valla (2001) concluded that more than two-thirds of the women studied had bootstrapped their businesses. Valla (2001)'s findings were confirmed by Chiloane-Tsoka (2013), whose study of black women in Tshwane found that 54% of the women had self-funded their businesses. Lack of access to finance is detrimental to the success of women entrepreneurs as they struggle to get working capital for their ventures (Mandipaka, 2014).

Work-family responsibilities

Balancing their business and family responsibilities poses a challenge for women entrepreneurs (Mathapo, 2011; Valla, 2001). Mandipaka (2014) reported that women balance family and work by closing early and not working on weekends and public holidays, but they still face challenges such as the inability to oversee their business when they go on maternity leave. According to Valla (2001), women receive help with domestic chores from other people in their households. However, Mandipaka (2014) and Viljoen and O'Neill (2001) concluded that the support that women entrepreneurs get from their families was limited.

Gender bias

Gender bias remains at the centre of challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, with Mandipaka (2014) reporting that 69% of the women surveyed had experienced gender discrimination when running their business. Mandipaka (2014) also stated that it was difficult for women entrepreneurs to get finance from banking institutions without their husband's consent. Both Mandipaka (2014) and Valla (2001) indicated that women entrepreneurs feel they are not taken seriously and are not treated with the same respect as their male counterparts. This discrimination on the basis of gender tends to be prevalent in male-dominated industries as reported by Martin (2013).

Education and training

More than two-thirds of the women surveyed by Mandipaka (2014) had limited knowledge pertaining to the industry they operated in and their target market. Women entrepreneurs lack financial and networking skills, and they were likely to seek business advice from people they know rather than specialised institutions (Valla, 2001).

In addition to inaccessible training, Mandipaka (2014) also reported disabling legislation and lack of networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs as barriers to their success.

In summary, the literature has revealed below-target economic activity and low rates in the entrepreneurial activity of South African women, which may be due to lack of finance, inadequate skills, gender bias and household responsibilities.

Entrepreneurial motivation

Besides external factors such as the state of the economy, personal motivation plays an important role when an individual decides to start a new entrepreneurial venture (Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). Entrepreneurial intention seeks to explain the objectives that someone aims to achieve by pursuing entrepreneurship (Robichaud, McGraw, & Alain, 2001).

McClelland's need for achievement theory

McClelland's theory states that all individuals are motivated by either a need for achievement (*n* Achievement), a need for power (*n* Power) or a need for affiliation (*n* Affiliation) (McClelland, 1961). McClelland's theory applies to entrepreneurial motivation as it draws a correlation between the need for achievement and entrepreneurial motivation explicitly (Collins, Hanges, & Locke, 2004). Thus, this study is theoretically underpinned by motivation theory.

McClelland (1961) describes individuals with a high *n* Achievement as those who strive to reach the highest level of recognition in what they do, are likely to find innovative ways to do things and are less motivated by financial rewards.

Being in positions of authority and having control motivates high *n* Power individuals, while the achievement of a higher level of fellowship and collaboration with others motivates high *n* Affiliation individuals (McClelland, 1961).

While a combination of *n* Achievement, *n* Power and *n* Affiliation motivates all individuals, Collins et al. (2004) confirm that entrepreneurial intention and success are linked to high levels of need for achievement. We are unaware which of these three factors motivate South African women to become entrepreneurs. This research seeks to add to the literature by investigating factors driving women to become entrepreneurs, and how policies and initiatives can be refined to engender women to venture into entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurial motivation of women

Hughes (2006) state that motivation varies from one entrepreneur to the next, but can broadly be categorised into pull and push factors, which in the 1980s were first described (Kirkwood, 2009). Push factors are external or personal factors that induce someone to start an entrepreneurial venture to escape an undesirable situation (forced entrepreneur) and pull factors work to draw people towards starting an entrepreneurial venture because of desired rewards (opportunity entrepreneur) (Taormina & Kin-Mei Lao, 2007).

The motivation from pull factors outweighs that from push factors (Staniewski & Awruk, 2015). However, most of the research was done in developed countries. We expect that the situation is likely to be different in a developing country such as South Africa, with most women likely to be pushed into entrepreneurship.

Buttner and Moore (1997)'s study of women who had left employment to become entrepreneurs concluded that pull factors were more prevalent as motivation for entrepreneurship. This finding is not surprising as a woman who is employed is more likely to only leave her job after having identified an opportunity that she believes she can explore. The most significant pull factors for women entrepreneurs from the literature are the need for independence (Hughes, 2006; Kirkwood, 2009) and the need to be challenged (Buttner &

Moore, 1997). However, Kirkwood (2009) found that the need for a challenge was less frequent and that a stronger motivation was perceived financial gain.

Buttner and Moore (1997) further stated that dissatisfaction with their progression at work sometimes forces women into entrepreneurship. This statement was supported by Kirkwood (2009), who conceded that the most significant push factors for women were dissatisfaction with their current job and changes at work including being retrenched. We expect that women are more likely to experience what has been termed the “glass ceiling” at work, where they feel stuck in one position with no opportunity of progressing further. Therefore, entrepreneurship becomes their only option to further their aspirations.

Women are also more likely to be affected by family hardships such as the death of a husband as identified by Islam (2012), thereby forcing them to choose entrepreneurship to make ends meet. Family hardships could be a significant factor in a developing country context where there is a significant proportion of married women who are likely not to be involved in paid employment but entirely dependent on their spouse for financial support.

The need to achieve a desired work-life balance is another significant motivator for women entrepreneurs with a family as identified by Buttner and Moore (1997) and Hughes (2006). However, Kirkwood (2009) found lifestyle considerations to be less frequent.

This research explores which of these three factors motivate South African women to become entrepreneurs, and how their knowledge can be used to improve more participation of women in entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The literature has revealed different schools of thought regarding who is an entrepreneur and what the motivating factors for women to become entrepreneurs are. In this research, we argue that the potential of South African women to contribute towards economic development, which also includes

participation in entrepreneurial ventures, has not been fully realised. This unrealised potential is due, in part, to women facing numerous challenges if they choose to become entrepreneurs. While the literature shows that motivation for entrepreneurship can either be opportunity-based, forced or desire for a better work-life balance, the reality in a developing economy could potentially be different.

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

This chapter describes the methodology followed to answer the research questions formulated in the introduction. It starts by discussing the details of the research methodology and design; then explains procedures for data collection, analysis and interpretation. It closes by addressing issues around the validity and reliability of the study.

Research methodology/paradigm

For this study, a qualitative research methodology and a socially constructed paradigm were chosen. In line with (Sofaer, 1999), the choice of a qualitative research method for this study was informed by its ability to bring to life the experiences of individuals through their interpretations, thereby giving a voice to those that have not been given a chance to tell their stories. Women, through their historical marginalisation, were not encouraged to speak about challenges they faced in their daily lives. Therefore, in this research, I provided a platform on which women entrepreneurs can voice their views. Rich descriptions of women experiences as entrepreneurs in South Africa was captured and used in understanding the entrepreneurial conditions women operate in. This research uses social constructivism as a research tool, which (Flick, von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004) assert that it is an appropriate tool to examine the life histories of women entrepreneurs, as the women needed to construct a series of events as they have experienced them. Social constructivism assumes that individuals create their meanings as they engage with their environment, where those meanings are sometimes historically or socially-motivated (Crotty, 1998).

Creswell (2003, p. 18) defined qualitative research methodology as:

> *… one in which the enquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change-oriented) or both.*

This definition implies a more subjective approach to drawing a realistic picture of the subject under study (Flick et al., 2004).

Research Design

Data was collected through 14 telephonic and one face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the women entrepreneurs. Telephonic conversations offered more flexibility to the women to be interviewed at their convenience and eliminated travelling costs. The disadvantage is that the researcher might have missed out on being able to observe the non-verbal behaviour of the interviewee, even though audio cues were used as a proxy as proposed by Opdenakker (2006). One woman was interviewed face-to-face at her request for a face-to-face interview.

Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to formulate questions based on the literature beforehand, but still have the flexibility to adapt the enquiry as the conversation unfolded (Longhurst, 2003). The section “data analysis and interpretation” below details how data was analysed.

Population and sample

The sample for this study was drawn from a population of women entrepreneurs from Gauteng, North-West and the Western Cape provinces of South Africa. Using Stevenson and Jarillo (1990)’s definition of entrepreneurship, an entrepreneur was defined as someone who has identified and exploited an opportunity independently of resources controlled.

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants. Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) define purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique which chooses participants for a study based on special attributes that they possess which are deemed useful to the researcher. For this study women entrepreneurs were chosen based on their knowledge and experience as entrepreneurs, their availability and willingness to participate in the study and their ability to articulate their experiences as entrepreneurs in South Africa.

The adequacy of the sample used for this study was based on 'theme saturation', which was the approached used by Hyde (2003). Hyde (2003) defined theme saturation to be the sample that adequately explains all the categories. For this study, 15 interviews were conducted with theme saturation reached after 12 interviews. After this point, no new insights could be derived from the data. Theme saturation was tested by analysing each interview successively and comparing information arising within each theme with previous interviews.

The research instrument

The research instrument comprises an interview guide which is included in Appendix A. The purpose of the research was explained to the interviewees, including their rights concerning participation in the study. The main questions were aimed at finding out about the women's entrepreneurial motivation and challenges they face, which was derived from the research question.

Procedure for data collection

A total of 15 interviews were conducted, both telephonically and face to face. These were semi-structured interviews which aimed to get in-depth information from the respondents. Telephonic conversations offered more flexibility to the women to be interviewed at their convenience and eliminated travelling costs. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher flexibility to inductively adapt the enquiry as the conversation unfolded as recommended by Longhurst (2003). Interviews were recorded to facilitate data analysis.

Data analysis and interpretation

A theoretical thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis seeks to draw patterns in the data, and is suitable where the aim is to gain a low-level understanding of the data (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The reason for using a theoretical thematic analysis was to allow coding focused on the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Themes were developed at a semantic level, which means they were only described and interpreted without intention to find underlying meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Table 1 shows the process that was followed for the thematic analysis:

Table 1: Thematic analysis process

Step	Action
1. Familiarise with the data	The researcher listened to audio recordings after each interview and transcribed them.
2. Generate codes	Coding was done by line or by phrase, whichever was considered appropriate. The process of assigning codes was iterative, with some codes not clear at first but becoming clear in another cycle of coding. Also, coding became easier with later interviews when data started to be repetitive.
3. Assign codes to themes	Codes were put into excel and initial themes were put alongside each code in iterations. Sorting the codes by theme allowed researcher to review the codes that belong to the same theme.
4. Review themes	Extracts under each theme were read for coherence. Some extracts needed to be moved to other themes and initial sub-themes emerged.
5. Define themes	A story for each theme was developed.

6. Produce the report	The final stage was producing the report with consideration of linkages across themes, using example extracts from the data.

Source: (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Validity and reliability

Lincoln and Guba refer to trustworthiness, which in qualitative research involves credibility and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility is a measure of confidence in the truth of the findings and is similar to internal validity in positivist research (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Triangulation of the data was performed as a credibility check. This took the form of member checking during interviews, where the researcher sought confirmation by verbalising her understanding of what has been said. Evidence from the data was also used to create thick descriptions of the findings.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Pandey & Patnaik, 2014) state that enough contextual information should be given to allow for a clear distinction of instances to which the findings of the study can be transferable. While the researcher used thick descriptions, the nature of telephonic interviews limited the extent to which the researcher could use observations from the field to draw detailed accounts of social or cultural context, thereby limiting the transferability of the findings.

A replication of the study with a different sample in a different setting could be useful to test transferability of the findings as suggested by Polit and Beck (2010).

Ethical considerations

The researcher was mindful of ethical standards during the research process. Ethical clearance for the research was received from the University of the Witwatersrand. Interview participants were approached and asked for permission to participate in the study. The purpose of the study was explained to them at the beginning of the interview process, together with their right to withdraw at any point should they wish to do so. Interviews were recorded and files were saved on a password-protected device to maintain confidentiality. In analysing the results, pseudonyms were assigned to participants and care was taken to conceal their identities.

RESULTS

This chapter presents a narrative of the findings from the 15 interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs. Findings are presented on the entrepreneurial motivation of women and the barriers they face. Quotes from the interviews are used to illustrate the themes that emerged from the data.

Entrepreneurial motivation

The factors affecting the entrepreneurial motivation of women entrepreneurs identified were job dissatisfaction, unemployment, need for independence, wanting to earn extra income, considering one as entrepreneurial and pursuing a hobby. These factors are discussed below.

Job dissatisfaction

Women interviewed told of how unhappiness at work led them to leave their jobs behind and become entrepreneurs. Sometimes the feeling of resentment seemed to continually be there no matter how many times the woman changed posts:

I struggled so much to be comfortable in a job. I kept changing jobs, and my CV was very messy. I took a year break and went to study full-time. During that break, people kept asking me to host events for them or do a social media strategy for them. Eventually, I decided to register a business. DD

Sometimes dissatisfaction occurred after a situation at work that negatively affected the woman's ability to do her job:

I was working for Lonmin when the Marikana massacre happened. After the incident, I decided I didn't want to work there anymore. But then I had to find something else to do. I started to think about entrepreneurship. EE

In some instances, dissatisfaction with one's work becomes intertwined with another motivation, such as unemployment after having resigned from a position due to lack of job satisfaction:

What pushed me into entrepreneurship is that I wanted to get out of the work that I was doing. I needed a change, but after resigning from my job, it was taking too long for me to find another job. Therefore, I decided to create my own opportunity. HH

Another woman became an entrepreneur because she was dissatisfied with her progression at work:

Being an entrepreneur allowed me to get ahead faster than what the corporate environment allows. NN

In contrast, another expressed how progressing too quickly early in her career led to dissatisfaction with her job:

I was young and very ambitious. I did well in my job, but it was very stressful. It was too much pressure for a young lady. I started hating the work and decided to start my own business. JJ

These quotes reveal that dissatisfaction is not always due to a woman being unhappy with her employer, but could be due to a woman finding it challenging to find her niche in the world of employment.

Unemployment

Some women had never considered becoming entrepreneurs until they found themselves unemployed. Some of the women realised after becoming unemployed that they didn't want to go back to being employees. Others tried to find alternative employment but after unsuccessful attempts chose to become entrepreneurs. The quotes illustrate this:

> *Overnight I found myself unemployed. I thought I would be able to find another job quickly because I had many years of experience, but time went by, and nothing was coming through. I had debt and bills to pay because my unemployment came unexpectedly, so I started to think about what it is that I could do with my hands. CC*

> *My experience as an employee of a company was not a good one. So, when I was fired from my job, I decided that I didn't want to knock on any other corporate door. FF*

> *I was fired for speaking out against unfair treatment of a colleague. I had no plan to become an entrepreneur, but I was fed up and didn't want to go back to look for a job. It was a survival mode and a fed-up issue. II*

> *After I came to South Africa I was unable to find employment. I started to think about what else I could do. MM*

The inability to secure employment after being made redundant at work reflects the high unemployment levels and low economic growth in South Africa over the last few years. Being able to come out of unemployment and emerge as an entrepreneur illustrates the ability of women to take a negative situation and turn it into a positive one. Women have historically been marginalised, which has made them resilient when faced with tough conditions. One woman illustrates this point:

I have an insatiable desire to succeed, a tenacity of a bulldog that doesn't let go. JJ

Need for independence

The need for autonomy in how they work or when they work motivates women entrepreneurs. In particular, young women feel that they have a role in organisations to challenge how things are done. If they think that they are unable to challenge the status quo because of resistance to change, women choose to become entrepreneurs and use that platform to make an impact in the space in which they operate. Quotes to illustrate this include:

I wanted the freedom to challenge the market as a young black woman. AA

I wanted a sense of independence. BB

I wanted to be in charge of my destiny. NN

The focus on autonomy as a motivation could be a reflection on the state of organisations in South Africa, where women might feel like they are not empowered to think and work independently.

Earn extra income

Some of the women expressed how they were motivated to become entrepreneurs by a desire to earn additional income:

It started because I wanted an extra source of income. But the more I started doing research, the more I realised that there are still gaps in the industry where as a black woman I can make real change. So, after that, my strategy changed to me wanting to leave my corporate job and become a full-time entrepreneur eventually. GG

I had no clear vision of what I wanted to do other than I needed to make money. FF

The last quote illustrates the reality of this motive. Sometimes all a woman knows is that she needs to find a way to make money. She doesn't necessarily understand all the other fundamental details of being an entrepreneur. Therefore, for women to be successful at meeting their entrepreneurial objective, there is a gap that needs to be filled.

Entrepreneurial

For some women, being an entrepreneur is something they felt was always part of who they are, it is just an extension of what they have been doing growing up. They always looked for opportunities to meet a need that would also bring them an income as illustrated by the following quote:

> *I've always been entrepreneurial. From the time I was in my teens, I was always selling stuff. When I left school, I would buy things for my sister to sell for me at school. KK*

> *I've always wanted to be an entrepreneur but my parents wanted me to study and get a job, so I did. I was miserable and ultimately resigned and started my business. OO*

Others believe that being raised in a family where one or both parents was an entrepreneur made it natural for them to also go into entrepreneurship. This quote supports this notion:

> *I come from a family of entrepreneurs. My parents were entrepreneurs, and my grandparents were entrepreneurs. So, entrepreneurship was always encouraged. DD*

These quotes demonstrate the importance of introducing entrepreneurial thinking at a young age and about raising awareness around entrepreneurship as a career.

Hobby/passion

Women are sometimes motivated into entrepreneurship because they are good at a craft and they believe they can turn it into a business, or because they are passionate about something. Some examples that illustrate this include:

> *It was something that I enjoyed, something that I could do. And it was easy for me because it was something that I enjoyed as a consumer. BB*

> *I am very high on fashion myself, and I like to wear items that nobody has seen. CC*

> *A business must never be about money. A business must always be about something that you believe in, something that you are passionate about. GG*

In this instance, most women pointed out that they were not motivated by money, which could illustrate that these entrepreneurs are so passionate about what they do that they rarely focus on the monetary rewards. As one woman put it:

> *It's not money; it's passion that kept me going. AA*

Challenges faced by woman entrepreneurs

There was a consensus that challenges were burdening women entrepreneurs in South Africa. Some of the problems identified are gender discrimination, lack of networks, difficulty in accessing market, lack of funding, lack of knowledge, corruption, and work-life role conflict.

Gender discrimination

Most women interviewed reported having experienced some form of gender discrimination as entrepreneurs. Women feel like to be taken seriously, they must work harder than a comparable male entrepreneur. There are some

experiences where women felt like their ability to execute tasks is deemed secondary to that of men:

> *Being a woman in a man's world… people think we cannot think like them. I am the managing director and sole owner of my business, but people always assume that I have a male partner. AA*

> *My industry is still male-dominated. 99% of my customers are men. So, I still feel like I always have to prove my intelligence, I always have to prove that … you know I have to get people to snap out of the fact that I am a woman before I can sell my product. I have to work ten times better before we can even get to sell the product. EE*

> *People think that just because I'm a woman, I must be restricted to certain sectors or industries such as catering. AA*

> *When people started to see that I was pregnant, they stopped taking me seriously. The deals that I was working on fell through. I had to start from scratch when I came back. NN*

As a mechanism to cope with this discrimination, women sometimes adopt a confident persona, but then they are criticised and seen as aggressive:

> *For a woman to be heard, she needs to be more assertive than she probably should. And even then, people start asking, why is she so angry? But it's because we have to fight all the time. NN*

Some women reported that being young and being black made things even harder for them. They felt that there was a lack of trust from customers in their ability to deliver a service, and to earn this trust they needed to go above and beyond expectations to prove their worth:

> *As a black female, I must run faster than anyone else. Whatever I do, I have to be ten times better than anyone else to prove my worth. OO*

> *Transformation is a problem. 1 in 100 clients is willing to transform when it comes to race and gender. AA*

Few people want to give business to a black female. People pay lip service at networking events. They ask you to provide them with your details. Once you've sent your details, they duck and dive. People say they want to empower women, but they don't implement. II

Other women explained how other companies seek to exploit women by using them in their disguise to look as if they are compliant with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) legislation:

I've had contact with majority white male companies who tell me they want me on-board, but not to do the work. They only want my details. II

I find myself competing with men whose businesses are also BEE level 1. Many businesses are run by men but they put a woman as the main shareholder, and yet that person is not involved in the business. I find that to be very unfair. LL

Other women expressed that gender bias depends on the industry:

I feel discrimination is industry-specific. There is one industry that I'm involved in that is dominated by women. I feel like people are very receptive to me there. The other sector I'm involved in is male-dominated where it was previously white male-dominated. Black males are received well, but as a black woman, they are still very non-receptive. You have to work three times harder before they acknowledge your ability to deliver. GG

In my business, I've never had a scenario where a man has looked at me differently. Gender doesn't come into play in my business at all. But I've had a case with a supplier. I felt I was not being taken seriously as an authority in the business. I handled it when it happened and made it clear that I am the owner of the company and I was the one paying his salary. JJ

The sentiment above also illustrates the point that women entrepreneurs need to be even more assertive than required for them to be respected as figures of authority.

The fact that almost all women interviewed had experienced some form of gender discrimination as entrepreneurs makes it one of the barriers that need immediate attention. If women experience higher levels of gender discrimination in some industries but not in others, it reflects a tendency to profile women and the jobs they should be doing. When they choose to venture into something that is not considered for women, they are treated as outsiders.

Difficulty accessing markets

Access to market for start-up women entrepreneurs presents a challenge, with the most significant barrier being able to prove the legitimacy of their businesses without a track record as these quotes show:

> *I had no track record, no reputation. I begged people for jobs just to get a reference. AA*
>
> *People are very loyal to brands that they are already familiar. It's difficult to get customers on board. GG*
>
> *Access to market is my biggest challenge. I would like to be given an opportunity to prove myself, but it's a challenge to get clients. DD*
>
> *People who had said to me should I ever decide to go on my own they would support me, were now reluctant. Saying that the risk was too high because they didn't know if I could deliver. FF*

Women felt that overall, they were not being afforded an opportunity to participate in markets as entrepreneurs actively.

Lack of networks

Women felt that being an entrepreneur was challenging because they mostly work in isolation. They felt the lack of support and encouragement made entrepreneurship a tough undertaking as these quotes show:

> *Being an entrepreneur is a very lonely road. You're not working amongst people. Nobody sees your tears, and nobody sees your struggles. CC*

> *Being an entrepreneur is a lonely journey. You have no one to guide you. On those days when things are not going the way you planned, there is no one to encourage you. It's easy to start asking yourself why you're doing this. HH*

One woman expressed the challenges of trying to build a network as a woman as long as there is an unwillingness by some men to keep things strictly professional:

> *For me as a woman to build relationships from scratch, especially with men, is tricky. Some men are not willing to build a professional relationship with me if he's attracted to me, but I have made it clear that I have no interest in him. To him, there is nothing to be gained from the relationship. FF*

Lack of networks means that women entrepreneurs have a lessened ability to access the market, as connections can be invaluable in finding customers:

> *Access to markets has been a challenge. Even when I go to networking sessions, I find I'm marginalised. LL*

> *I also find people are more comfortable awarding contracts to people they know, people they already have relationships with, people they trust. FF*

Women also experience exclusion regarding access to resources by established businesses:

The industry has key players who like to keep things to themselves. They shut us off in terms of access to information or resources. Especially as a female. I find it much harder because the industry is male-dominated. GG

For these women entrepreneurs, inability to connect with other entrepreneurs, men or women, deprives them of support and encouragement when faced with tough situations. It also denies them information that they need to succeed in their ventures.

Lack of funding

Another challenge women entrepreneurs face is lack of funding. This challenge was mostly experienced in the early stages of their venture when they needed money for securing business or fulfilling orders. Some quotes to illustrate include:

I started with a zero balance. Without funding, I didn't have money for marketing, and I didn't have money to place orders. AA

After I managed to get my first order, I didn't have money to fund it. And when I approached people for funding they didn't want to take the risk. FF

I was doing everything. I couldn't afford to employ a person. I couldn't even afford to pay myself a salary. I was the researcher, the marketer, the business developer. II

However, these entrepreneurs didn't let lack of funding stand in their way. As one woman put it:

Funding is what you need to grow your business, but it doesn't stop women to become entrepreneurs. OO

Funding is critical to these entrepreneurs because it becomes difficult to run a business without it, especially when they start to grow and there is a need to

employ people. Business growth is likely to lead to increased expenses and additional need for funding.

Lack of knowledge

The entrepreneurs expressed awareness about the skills they lack for them to run their businesses efficiently. Some lack education due to their background, but some expressed not knowing how to apply the skills they have to help their businesses to grow:

> *I lacked education relating to entrepreneurship and didn't even know what an entrepreneur is. AA*

> *Most of us have the skill, but we don't know how to use it. How do you take your skill and make it into something meaningful in your business? You need to find out who your competitor is, how are you going to differentiate yourself, how are you going to pay your employees and your suppliers, how are you going to get clients? CC*

Poor education also highlights the legacy of an unequal education system that some of the women went through, whose effects they still live with even when they are trying to be successful entrepreneurs:

> *Not all of us have been privileged to study business-related courses. Some of us come from real hard-core, difficult circumstances. But it is a learning process. School never ends for an entrepreneur, and you must never think that you've made it. CC*

The lack of education made the woman entrepreneurs feel unprepared as entrepreneurs. The reality as they experienced it was much more different to their expectations:

> *I got into business with expectations but once I started the reality was very different. I struggled initially because I still didn't know what I stand for as an entrepreneur or what my business stands for EE*

The reality compared to what you think it is going to be is two completely different things. Things are much harder than what you expect them to be CC

These entrepreneurs realise that learning is a life-long process and not necessarily classroom-based or formal, which can only be positive for their ventures. Some women had been unhappy in their jobs for long periods of time, then they resigned and took some time figuring out their next move. For these women, entrepreneurship didn't present itself as an option immediately. Sometimes, they only thought of it after they realised they needed to start earning an income. This disconnect highlights the lack of awareness about opportunities for women in entrepreneurship.

Corruption

Corruption in government is considered a barrier by women entrepreneurs. As a result, they avoid the public sector and aim to only work in the private sector. Quotes related to this issue are:

I get 100% of my business from the private sector, and the reason is corruption is still very rife in government. You have to negotiate bribes. It's worse when you're a woman. There's an expectation that you must even sleep with people to get business. EE

With government, you are told this is how things work; this is how people get business. You either have relationships with old men who hold the contracts and are either asking for kickbacks or for you to kiss them as frogs to get ahead. FF

One woman sees this as a problem that is perpetuated by black officials on black businesses, resulting in companies failing because they are left with very little money to carry their costs or profit.

In public enterprises, our black people want black companies to pay a bribe to get business. For example, if you propose an offering that cost

R1 million, a person will want 40% of that million. How do I survive and grow? II

An effort by women entrepreneurs to avoid exploitation in the public sector can mean that they are forgoing income that they could potentially earn from the public sector, which is a sentiment shared by this woman entrepreneur:

It's an even bigger challenge because I am aware of how many opportunities we are missing out on, just because I am not open to that kind of lifestyle. EE

Work-life conflict

Women have many roles that they play outside of being an entrepreneur. Some women expressed the challenges of being the primary caregiver at home, of being a wife and of building working relationships with men:

As an entrepreneur, you have to make sacrifices. It is not possible to balance. Some days I focus my energy on being a mother, some days I focus my energy on being a wife, some days I focus my energy on being an entrepreneur. You need to make peace with someone else raising your child while you pursue your entrepreneurial ambitions HH

But another woman felt that there are negative connotations attached to women entrepreneurs who seek help with raising their kids:

Then you have a helper in the house who judges you for not being around, treats you like you're lesser of a woman for not being around all the time FF

One woman expressed how being a married woman presents challenges regarding expectations about how a married woman should conduct herself:

The biggest challenge is being a married woman, not so much being a mom. As a married woman, there's an expectation that I can't be entertaining men. I can't build relationships with men FF

These issues warrant a reconsideration of gender roles and how they impact on the motivation and success of women entrepreneurs. Women who are motivated by the need to earn additional income sometimes run their entrepreneurial ventures while they are employed. They usually do so because they can't afford to leave their paying jobs and are most likely to have a challenge with their work-life balance.

Conclusion

The findings show that women are motivated into entrepreneurship by a variety of factors, including job dissatisfaction, unemployment, need for independence, need for extra income, being entrepreneurial and pursuing a hobby. Women who were exposed to entrepreneurship from a young age considered themselves as entrepreneurial and had a more natural transition into entrepreneurship as adults.

Besides these motivations, women entrepreneurs face many barriers which include gender discrimination, lack of networks, difficulty accessing markets, lack of funding, lack of knowledge, corruption and conflict of their home and work roles. These issues require a transformation of society where women can be accepted whatever position they choose to adopt, and where women entrepreneurs can maintain professional relationships with men without fear of exploitation.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study aimed to investigate the motives of women to become entrepreneurs, the barriers they face and how these factors can be used to improve conditions for women entrepreneurs in South Africa. We found that women entrepreneurs were motivated by a desire to leave an unsatisfying work environment, unemployment, wanting to be independent, desire to increase income, having an entrepreneurial mind-set and pursuit of a hobby.

The findings also showed that women entrepreneurs lack access to networks, market, funding and knowledge. They also face other barriers including gender discrimination, corruption and work-life role conflict.

This chapter discusses the findings and their theoretical and practical implications, suggestions for future studies, limitations of the research and conclusion.

Entrepreneurial motivation

Job dissatisfaction

Unhappiness at work was found to be an entrepreneurial motivator similar to the findings of Buttner and Moore (1997) and Kirkwood (2009). The cause of the job dissatisfaction varied, showing the different experiences of the women and their various work contexts. One woman interviewed for this study expressed displeasure with how she was progressing at work, which is supported by the findings of Buttner and Moore (1997).

In contrast, another woman had an opposite experience, with her dissatisfaction linked to progressing too early in her career.

Unemployment

The push factor of unemployment is consistent with findings by Kirkwood (2009). Unemployment motivation is likely to be more prevalent in times of low economic growth, due to fewer job opportunities and a rise in retrenchments. In line with this sentiment, our findings revealed the difficulty of finding employment in the current economic climate. This difficulty was experienced even by women with many years of experience. Unemployment can also occur in conjunction with other factors, such as when a woman chooses not to go back into the job market due to previous job dissatisfaction.

Need for independence

Motivation based on the need for autonomy is consistent with findings by Buttner and Moore (1997) and Hughes (2006). Younger women were most likely to express the need for freedom, and they also felt that it was up to them to challenge an environment that might be too slow to adapt to their needs. Younger women are likely to have more freedom in what they choose to do because few will have the responsibilities that come with having children. They are also not worried about retirement yet. Therefore, they can take the risk of entrepreneurship in pursuit of independence.

In South Africa, companies are faced with the reality that they need to transform from being mostly white, old and male to be more inclusive and representative of the population. Therefore, some women constructed their reality from not just being a woman but being a black woman who must challenge a lack of transformation in companies where they worked.

Extra income

The rising cost of living, the existence of single-parent households and high levels of poverty can push women into entrepreneurship to supplement their incomes. In South Africa, it is common for working women and men to take care of their extended families and their parents. This additional burden, over and above taking care of their own families, makes it necessary for these women to find other ways to supplement their incomes.

Entrepreneurial

Even when faced with job dissatisfaction, for some of the women the decision to become an entrepreneur was not immediate. Some women had never considered themselves as entrepreneurs, whereas some quickly made the transition into entrepreneurship. Both behaviours can be attributed to the women's experiences growing up and how those experiences shaped their ideas about entrepreneurship. Women that grew up being taught that the only way to make a living was through earning a salary through employment are

likely to continue searching for a job when faced with unemployment. A woman that has always been encouraged to become an entrepreneur will find it easy to make the transition into entrepreneurship.

Hobby/passion

Their passion for a craft also motivated women. For these group of women, it was almost a common theme that they were never motivated by money but by their love for what they do, contradicting Kirkwood (2009)'s conclusion that a stronger entrepreneurial motivation was perceived financial gain.

This contradiction could be due to modesty during interviews although it is likely an indication that the entrepreneurs are so passionate about what they do that the monetary reward is considered immaterial.

Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and ways to improve conditions

Gender discrimination

Almost all the women interviewed had experienced some form of gender discrimination as entrepreneurs. This result is consistent with Mandipaka (2014)'s findings.

Similar to the findings of Valla (2001), women reported feeling like they were not taken seriously as entrepreneurs. Therefore, women are putting a lot of time and effort just to prove that they are worth their weight as entrepreneurs and to be acknowledged as such.

The additional effort women entrepreneurs put into their work could also be linked to the high need for achievement of the women entrepreneurs which makes them want to excel in everything they do.

Historically, black women were the most disadvantaged population group. It is therefore unsurprising that there might be some form of exclusion still being

perpetrated against them, as complete transformation does not happen overnight.

It should also be of concern that women entrepreneurs are considered a tool to comply with B-BBEE legislation and not valued for the contribution they can make to the organisation and the economy. This concept of fronting is familiar, and major companies such as Nokia and MTN have been under investigation in 2017 as reported by Ensor (2017).

Similar to findings by Martin (2013), women in male-dominated industries reported that they experience gender discrimination. This inequity could be because they are considered outsiders who don't have a place in these industries.

The issue of gender discrimination requires urgent attention as women entrepreneurs are not being afforded the same opportunities as men. Women are spending too much energy trying to prove their worth, instead of focusing on what truly matters for their businesses. There is a need to transform the environment in which women entrepreneurs operate, for them not to be made to feel "less than" all the time.

Forced entrepreneurs might especially be more prone to the adverse effects of gender discrimination as they are likely to be desperate to make ends meet and not have the courage to stand up against injustice.

Legislation such as the B-BBEE Act that aim to increase the participation of women in previously male-dominated industries need to be reviewed to ensure that there are no loopholes that can be used to exclude women. There is also a need for more stringent B-BBEE verification to eradicate fronting.

Consideration concerning a mandatory requirement to employ a percentage of all public-sector spending on women-owned businesses should also be made.

Difficulty accessing markets

Entering markets is difficult for women entrepreneurs who first require potential customers to have faith in them. Where a business has no track record, it is likely that decisions are based on the owner of the company and whether they can be trusted to deliver on expectations.

If there are perceptions about women entrepreneurs that they are not capable people, this can make it difficult for them to get their first job because they don't have a track record. But because no one is giving them a chance, they are unable to have a track record. This inability to gain experience becomes a vicious cycle where women entrepreneurs can end up losing hope.

It's even more devastating where people can acknowledge that the offering is better, but cannot look beyond the gender of the person behind the offering. The loss is not just for the woman entrepreneur, but the economy also loses out on increased levels of innovation.

The findings also point to a severe situation where we speak of the need to empower women entrepreneurs, but don't make sure that systems and processes allow for their participation.

Being able to craft a targeted sales message that will appeal to potential customers who might already be loyal to another brand requires marketing skills, and is crucial to enter markets. While there is a need for marketing, strategy and finance courses, business courses tend to be expensive. A more cost-effective model for making them accessible to cash-strapped entrepreneurs should be explored. There is also a need to support women to come up with a mission and vision for their businesses, to help them define by what principles their business will be governed.

Lack of networks

The theme of lack of networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs echoes findings by Mandipaka (2014).

Women entrepreneurs would like an opportunity to connect with other women entrepreneurs for support and encouragement. South African women have always formed social groups such as “stokvels” and “societies”, through which they supported each other.

The need for networking groups by women entrepreneurs can also be explained by their high need for achievement. McClelland (1961) states that people with a high need for achievement regularly need feedback from others to keep track of how they’re doing in meeting their targets.

Not having these networks as a woman entrepreneur can be linked to the lack of access to markets, as affiliations can be an invaluable tool to gain access to markets.

It is natural for established businesses to feel threatened by new entrants to industries, but rather than see it as a threat they should see it as an opportunity to continually reinvent and improve their products through increased competition.

Many women in South Africa find themselves crippled by the devastating effects of unemployment. Some were retrenched due to struggling industries in the face of low economic growth, and some have never had an opportunity of finding employment. These women can find themselves despondent.

There is, therefore, a need for women entrepreneurs that have managed to find entrepreneurial success after unemployment to share their stories with other women. These stories can help ignite ideas in those women that have never thought of entrepreneurship. They can also be a source of motivation to see women that have managed to come out of unemployment and create their livelihoods.

There can be value to be derived as a woman entrepreneur from attending networking events. These can help women entrepreneurs to connect with other like-minded people who can be a source of support and encouragement. Other women expressed the value they get from having a mentor, but not every woman entrepreneur has access to a mentor. Women entrepreneurs should

organise themselves and form communities where they can support and mentor each other.

Lack of funding

The problem of lack of financial capital for South African women entrepreneurs was consistent with findings by Mathapo (2011), Muzondi (2014) and Viljoen and O'Neill (2001). All the women interviewed had financed their businesses with their own money or money from family and friends. This proportion is much higher than the two-thirds of women who had bootstrapped their businesses in Valla (2001)'s study, or the 54% in Chiloane-Tsoka (2013)'s findings.

The difference can be explained by the fact that our sample is smaller and not random. Therefore, there was a higher chance of having a sample of 15 women who had all bootstrapped their businesses. The women expressed how not having money was a double burden, as they sometimes lost much-needed business because they didn't have the money to deliver.

Women who were forced into entrepreneurship were more likely to find themselves without funds to finance their ventures. These are women who find themselves suddenly unemployed, with no income, bills to pay, and without the luxury of time to save money to fund their ventures.

Opportunity entrepreneurs were likely to have had time to plan and to have saved money to fund their businesses. But there was still a likelihood that the funds would later become inadequate as they go for months without income.

While some women acknowledged that they went into entrepreneurship without a plan, it is beneficial to plan to minimise surprises. Women entrepreneurs need to do an analysis when setting up their venture that explores the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Initial planning would also assist women entrepreneurs to assess their financing needs, and start exploring how they will fund their venture. It should also give the woman entrepreneur a realistic picture of how much of her own money she will need to invest before getting to a stage where investors are willing to give

her money. Business development services that take into consideration the challenges that women entrepreneurs face can be a way to meet these needs.

Lack of knowledge

Mandipaka (2014)'s findings were that most women didn't have enough knowledge of their industry and their target market. In our study, most of the women had previously worked in the industries in which they eventually ventured into as entrepreneurs. Therefore, most understood their industry and their target market. However, women expressed a lack of financial and business knowledge. This gap could reflect a lack of financial literacy in the general population.

Women who were motivated into entrepreneurship due to a passion or hobby showed a disinterest in the financial side of their business. These women saw themselves as creatives. They wanted to focus on what they were good at and disliked being bogged down by business matters.

Women are also going into entrepreneurship with incorrect expectations, which makes them experience a lot of difficulties while they try to adjust to the reality. Therefore, there is a need for women entrepreneurs to get access to information that helps them to have a more realistic picture of entrepreneurship.

Opportunity entrepreneurs were likely to venture out as entrepreneurs because of their previous work experience and because they understood the industry well. Forced entrepreneurs didn't necessarily end up in the industry in which they had previous work experience, therefore were likely to have a more significant challenge.

There is a need for financial literacy education in schools. This requirement would empower women to have the necessary business skills that they can use, especially if they are suddenly forced into entrepreneurship.

Women entrepreneurs should always focus on the finances. It's great to have creative ideas and to be able to bring them to life, but they must consider themselves as a business and not neglect the business side of things. Women

entrepreneurs should aim to empower themselves with knowledge about business matters so that it doesn't become something they would rather avoid. There is a need here to present business courses in a fun and creative way that will appeal to creative entrepreneurs who find general business content boring.

Findings also show that women sometimes struggle with the transition into entrepreneurship, especially forced entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education could assist women to get access to information that prepares them to become entrepreneurs. Given that women who considered themselves as entrepreneurial were likely to transition to entrepreneurship more smoothly, it is essential to encourage young girls to view themselves as entrepreneurs. It is necessary to review the school curriculum so that children are being taught entrepreneurship from an early age. This approach will ensure that children start to think about entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment.

Corruption

South Africa ranks number 71 out of 175 countries regarding the least corrupt nations as ranked by Transparency International (Transparency International, 2017). This ranking might not appear alarming considering we fall within the 50% mark for least corruption, but it is worth noting that South Africa has been on an upward rise in its ranking since 2016. It is therefore not surprising that the women entrepreneurs feel that corruption is a barrier.

There is also a disturbing expectation from some people that for a woman entrepreneur to get business, she must first sleep with someone in power. If women entrepreneurs were treated with respect, such expectations would not exist.

The fact that women have had to avoid some sectors because of corruption also signals to either a lack of avenues where women can report these violations or a lack of adequate measures to deal with perpetrators.

There is a need for more stringent measures to deal with corruption, especially where women entrepreneurs are being exploited. The B-BBEE Act should be

enforced in such a way that women-owned businesses are recognised without the need for women to pay bribes.

The process of how the public sector procures services needs to be reviewed so that businesses are allocated work due to their merits and not through the solicitation of bribes.

Work-life conflict

Women expressed that finding a balance between their work life and home life was a challenge. This was the same finding as Valla (2001) and Mathapo (2011). This is to be expected as women with children need to find a way to allocate their time between the responsibilities of being a mother and that of being an entrepreneur. As Valla (2001) concluded, women sought help to manage their household by employing a domestic worker.

For some women having a domestic worker also posed other challenges such as being considered a lesser woman. This finding is consistent with some societal expectations that the measure of a woman is how well she can take care of her husband, kids and household. Although most South African women work outside the home, those that work long hours or travel far for work might still be seen to be neglecting their responsibilities.

Married women might also be bound by certain cultural norms that limit their interactions with men, which directly impacts on their ability to network.

As a society, we need to confront the way we view the role of a woman. Women shouldn't have to feel guilty for pursuing their entrepreneurial ambitions. The reality is that entrepreneurship sometimes requires the entrepreneur to dedicate a lot of time to their ventures. Society must not ostracise a woman who occasionally misses her children's bath time because she had a client presentation. At the same time, more support systems such as reliable and affordable childcare are needed to assist women entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs who are also employed are likely to be most affected by the conflict in their work and home balance because of the many roles they

have. This might have overreaching considerations for legislation around minimum wage.

Theoretical implications

The study sought to contribute to the field of women entrepreneurship by investigating how an understanding of entrepreneurial motives can help improve conditions for women entrepreneurs. Findings support previous studies about what motivates women entrepreneurs. It also supports previous studies that proposed that women still face gender-related barriers that negatively impact on their ability to become entrepreneurs. The research further suggests that women entrepreneurs are motivated by their hobbies and their perceptions of their entrepreneurial skills, and that corruption is a barrier to women entrepreneurship.

It further suggests that entrepreneurial motivation can be a useful indicator of the kind of support women entrepreneurs need.

Practical implications

Women entrepreneurs are not incapable of creating their success. However, the barriers that they must overcome in everyday life warrant consideration of how those barriers can be minimised.

Policies for the economic empowerment of women need to be critically and continually reviewed, as some people will always find ways to avoid complying with legislation.

Women entrepreneurs also have a role to play in organising themselves to be each other's support system. They can benefit from having a unified voice that will speak out about injustices women entrepreneurs experience.

In an environment with limited resources, government structures aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs should be aware of the actual needs of the

women entrepreneurs. Government will allocate resources where they are needed and provide a higher likelihood of meeting policy objectives.

Women who expressed their initial motivation to be purely monetary realised that they wished to have a more significant impact in their industries. This illustrates that forced entrepreneurs are no less relevant than opportunity entrepreneurs. Forced entrepreneurs need to be supported no matter how small their growth aspirations are at first, as that can change. Someone that set out to feed her family can end up employing 200 people and making a difference to not only her family but to 200 other families. Therefore, whatever their motivation, women need to be supported to reach their full entrepreneurial potential.

Limitations of the study

The study sample was limited to only 15 women entrepreneurs based in urban areas, mostly in Gauteng. Their experiences are likely to be different to other women entrepreneurs, especially those located in rural areas.

14 out of the 15 interviews were telephonic, which didn't afford the researcher an opportunity to observe the women entrepreneurs when the questions were posed. Telephonic conversations might also have added an element of being impersonal. However, the researcher made an introductory call to the women before the interview to establish some context.

Suggestions for future research

A study comparing the motivations of male and female entrepreneurs can be carried out to gain insight on whether support needs are the same or different.

This study did not seek to use race as a factor in the analysis, but the findings show several references to race. A study that investigates the motivations of women entrepreneurs and how they differ by race, and if support needs differ by race can be undertaken.

A similar study can be done with a sample of rural women or a sample of rural and urban women for a comparison study.

A quantitative study can be undertaken to test the relative significance of motivation factors identified in this study.

Conclusion

Social and cultural norms that place unrealistic expectations on women reduce their ability to reach their potential as entrepreneurs. Conversations with women entrepreneurs are needed about their work-life roles, the challenges they face, and the support they require. In trying to increase participation of women in entrepreneurship, practical considerations about their different capacities are needed, and ways to enable them to get to a point where they don’t feel like they need to sacrifice one role for the other.

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