

Why Aren't Women Interested in Entrepreneurship? Exploring the Impact of Social Support and Perceived Entrepreneurship Competence

Sanna Joensuu-Salo, Anmari Viljamaa, Emilia Kangas and Elina Varamäki
Seinäjäki University of Applied Sciences, Seinäjoki, Finland

sanna.joensuu-salo@seamk.fi
anmari.viljamaa@seamk.fi
emilia.kangas@seamk.fi
elina.varamaki@seamk.fi

Abstract: Previous research has demonstrated that female students exhibit lower entrepreneurial intentions compared to their male counterparts, with these intentions also developing less significantly over the course of their studies (Joensuu et al, 2013). However, the precise reasons for this disparity remain unclear. This study examines the issue from two perspectives: entrepreneurship competence and support from one's immediate social circle. The aim of the research is to investigate gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship competence, and the perception of social support. Additionally, the study explores the influence of gender, entrepreneurship competence, and social support (subjective norm) on entrepreneurial intentions. The data for this study were collected in Finland over four different years (2019, 2020, 2021, and 2023) from first-year higher education students. The dataset includes a total of 2,795 respondents, with 1,430 men and 1,339 women. The results indicate that women consistently have lower entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship competence, and subjective norm scores than men in every year of data collection. Moreover, linear regression analysis reveals that gender, entrepreneurial competence, and subjective norm explain 51% of the variance in entrepreneurial intentions, with subjective norm being the most significant factor in explaining these intentions. Furthermore, the regression analysis shows that gender moderates the effect of entrepreneurship competence—this effect is stronger for men than for women. For women, subjective norm is particularly significant. The experience of support for entrepreneurship is lower among women, which negatively impacts their entrepreneurial intentions. The findings suggest that societal support for entrepreneurship still favours men, which in turn influences entrepreneurial outcomes. It is possible that families continue to raise children differently based on gender, with entrepreneurship being perceived as more masculine and therefore more suitable for men than for women.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intentions, Gender, Entrepreneurship Competence, Social Support

1. Introduction

Previous research has demonstrated that female students exhibit lower entrepreneurial intentions compared to their male counterparts, with these intentions also developing less significantly over the course of their studies (Joensuu et al, 2013). However, the precise reasons for this disparity remain unclear. This study examines the issue from two perspectives: entrepreneurship competence and support from one's immediate social circle. The aim is to investigate gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship competence, and the perception of social support among first-year higher education students. Additionally, the study explores the influence of gender, entrepreneurship competence, and social support on entrepreneurial intentions.

Prior studies have examined the network connections between individuals within social networks, highlighting their importance in establishing businesses (e.g., Ostgaard and Birley, 1996; Jenssen and Koenig, 2002; Klyver and Hindle, 2007). Socio-psychological theories—including social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), social networks (Granovetter, 1985; Burt, 1992), the social capital approach (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), and network learning (Lane and Lubatkin, 1998; Knight, 2002)—indicate that an individual's immediate network (such as parents, spouse, partner, friends, and colleagues) can significantly influence the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. Oussama et al (2023) indicated that, for example, family support plays a critical role in explaining entrepreneurial intentions. It is possible that men perceive greater support from their social circle for potential entrepreneurial endeavours than women do. In this study, social support is analysed through the framework of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, in which beliefs about support from significant others explain an individual's entrepreneurial intentions (referred to as the subjective norm).

Another factor is the individual's perception of their own entrepreneurship competence. In this study, entrepreneurship competence is examined using the EntreComp Framework developed by the European Commission, which comprises three competence areas: Ideas and Opportunities; Resources; and Into Action (Bagicalupo et al, 2016). Within this framework, entrepreneurship is defined as the ability to transform value-

generating ideas into action, and it is considered a key transversal competence essential for every citizen's personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment in the knowledge society (Bagicalupo et al, 2016). In this study, entrepreneurship competence is understood as the capability to create value for others and to implement ideas using the necessary resources. Consequently, the concept of entrepreneurship competence encompasses the entrepreneurial skills required for this value creation process. Prior research has shown that women score lower on entrepreneurial self-efficacy than their male counterparts (Kickul, Wilson and Marlino, 2008). Hence, this may also reflect on women's evaluation of their entrepreneurship competence as well, which in turn affect their entrepreneurial intentions.

This study addresses two research questions: 1) Are there consistent differences between women and men in their ratings regarding entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship competence, and social support for entrepreneurship? and 2) What is the role of social support and entrepreneurship competence in explaining the entrepreneurial intentions of women and of men? Hence, we try to understand which factors contribute to the fact that women are not as interested in entrepreneurship as men.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Gendered Entrepreneurship

Earlier research indicated that women-owned businesses were smaller or less profitable than those owned by men, leading scholars to conclude that women "underperform" as business owners (Hisrich and Brush, 1987; Kalleberg and Leicht, 1991; Tillmar et al 2022). The "underperformance hypothesis" attributed the disparity to a lack of entrepreneurial skills in women, leading to repeated efforts to "fix" them rather than addressing the industries in which they operated (Ahl, 2006; Marlow and Swail, 2014; Tillmar et al 2022). Consequently, research on women's entrepreneurship often compared women's businesses to those of men, with minimal attention to the gender order and its impact (Tillmar et al., 2021). Gender is a social construct that defines masculinity and femininity, along with the relationship between them, referred to as the gender order (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 2004). This gender order is shaped by the principles of hierarchization and segregation (Gherardi and Poggio, 2001). Hierarchization values what is considered male as the norm, while segregation separates male and female roles based on these gender distinctions (Tillmar et al 2022). The underperformance hypothesis has been strongly refuted in numerous studies (e.g., Durietz and Henrekson, 2000; Watson, 2002; Robb and Watson, 2012). Researchers argue that women's entrepreneurial performance is often constrained by gendered norms both within and across industries (Tillmar et al., 2022). What is commonly perceived as characteristic of entrepreneurship closely aligns with traits considered masculine (Ahl, 2004; Calas and Smircich, 2006).

However, the debate on gender and entrepreneurship continues in the literature (Tillmar et al, 2022), with some research portraying women as an untapped entrepreneurial resource (Ramadani, Hisrich and Gërguri-Rashiti, 2015) and suggesting that women are less inclined to take risks compared to men (Demartini, 2018). Some studies indicate that family support is essential for the success of women entrepreneurs' business ventures, particularly in fostering entrepreneurial behavior (e.g., Anwar & Rashid, 2012; Maziku et al., 2014). Additionally, studies indicate that a lack of family support negatively impacts self-image, self-confidence, and motivation to start or sustain a business venture (Itani et al., 2011; Jamali, 2009; Majenga & Mashenene, 2015). Overall, women entrepreneurs are still seen as a marginal presence in entrepreneurship, primarily because of the dominance of male entrepreneurs (Ramadani, Hisrich and Gërguri-Rashiti, 2015; Sowmya et al, 2010) and the prevalent perception of entrepreneurship as a predominantly masculine field (Marlow and Martinez Dy, 2018). Thus, we assert that:

H1: Women students rate their entrepreneurial intentions consistently lower than their male counterparts.

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior and Social Support

One of the most used theories in the context of entrepreneurial intention research is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991). The TPB suggests that intention is the immediate antecedent of behavior. Consequently, the stronger the intention to engage in a specific behavior, the more likely is its actual implementation (Ajzen, 1991). Many researchers have confirmed the validity of the TPB as a predictor of human behavior (e.g., Chu, Chen and Sung, 2016; Yang, Choi and Lee, 2018). The TPB has three conceptually independent antecedents of intentions: attitudes, the subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

The present study concentrates on the impact of the subjective norm, which refers to social support. The subjective norm is based on beliefs concerning whether important referent individuals or groups approve or disapprove of an individual establishing a business and to what extent that approval or disapproval matters to the individual (Ajzen, 1991, p. 195). There are mixed findings relating to the impact of subjective norm on entrepreneurial intentions (see Maheshwari, Kha and Arokiasamy, 2023). For example, Zhang et al (2015) showed a positive and significant effect of social norms on entrepreneurial intentions, while Maresch et al (2016) found a negative relationship. Iakovleva, Kolvereid and Stephan (2011) showed that subjective norm had a significant effect on entrepreneurial intentions of students in developing countries. Gonzalez-Tamayo et al (2024) found that the effect of subjective norm on entrepreneurial intentions was mediated through entrepreneurial self-efficacy and parental role models. Despite the mixed findings of prior research, we base our hypothesis on Ajzen's (1991) original model as it has proven to be valid in different contexts, and suggest that:

H2a: Subjective norm (social support) positively influences entrepreneurial intentions.

Research has highlighted significant gender differences in how social support and subjective norms influence entrepreneurial intentions – for example, Tian et al (2022) showed that perceived entrepreneurial support mediates the association between proactive personality and entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, they revealed that the positive relationship between perceived entrepreneurial support and entrepreneurial intentions is more pronounced for female students, suggesting that women may rely more heavily on social support when considering entrepreneurship. Similarly, Molino et al (2018) indicated that while both men and women benefit from social support, the impact of support from family and friends on entrepreneurial intentions is stronger for women. Additionally, Chin, Mustafa and Nungsari (2024) found in their research on Malaysian students that females perceive subjective norms and entrepreneurial self-efficacy differently than males, underscoring the importance of gender-specific social contexts in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations. Based on prior findings, we suggest the following hypotheses:

H2b: Women students perceive less support from their social networks for a potential entrepreneurial career compared to men.

H2c: Social support is more important factor explaining entrepreneurial intentions of women than of men.

2.3 Entrepreneurship Competence

Entrepreneurial competencies can be described as a constellation of characteristics, encompassing personality traits, specific knowledge, and skills, which are associated with successful business development (Gustomo et al, 2017; Bird, 2019). Kakkonen (2012) characterizes entrepreneurial competences simply as the knowledge and skills needed in setting up a business. In this study we apply the EntreComp framework, which refers to the ability to transform value-generating ideas into action (Bagicalupo et al, 2016), hence not necessarily associating entrepreneurship competence with starting a business. Regarding the influence of self-perceived entrepreneurial competence on entrepreneurial intentions, most studies report positive impact (Lorz, Mueller and Volery, 2013; Daliman, Sulandari and Rosyana, 2019; Ignacio, Pilar and Enrique, 2024). Further, Joensuu-Salo, Viljamaa and Varamäki (2022) demonstrate a connection between entrepreneurship competences and start-up behavior. Based on prior studies we suggest the hypothesis:

H3a: Entrepreneurship competence positively influences entrepreneurial intentions.

Women are influenced in entrepreneurial contexts by societal norms and gendered expectations (Kirkwood, 2009; Shinnar, Giacomini and Janssen, 2012). Prior literature strongly suggests that men tend to estimate their entrepreneurial competences on a higher level than women (Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Somiá, Pittaway and Benedict, 2024). Even established women entrepreneurs may feel the effect of stereotypes (Martiarena, 2022; Zhang et al, 2023). Based on prior studies, gender-based differences in self-perceptions of entrepreneurial competencies are likely. We suggest the hypothesis:

H3b: Women students rate their entrepreneurship competence consistently lower than their male counterparts.

3. Data and Method

The data for this study were collected in Finland over four different years (2019 (n=501), 2020 (n=872), 2021 (n=832), and 2023 (n=590) from first-year higher education students. The dataset includes a total of 2,795 respondents, with 1,430 men and 1,339 women. The mean age of the respondents is 25 years. Students represent different study fields (Table 1). 39 percent of the respondents study in the field of Technology,

Communications and Transport, 26 percent in the field of Business and Administration, 19 percent in Social services, Health and Sports, 7 percent in Natural Sources and the Environment, 5 percent in Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services, 5 percent in Culture, and 0,2 percent in the field of Natural Sciences.

Table 1: Respondents' study fields.

Study Field	N	Percent
Culture	143	5,1
Natural Sciences	6	0,2
Natural Sources and the Environment	183	6,5
Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services	142	5,1
Social services, Health and Sports	516	18,5
Technology, Communications and Transport	1082	38,7
Business and Administration	723	25,9
Total	2795	100,0

Entrepreneurial intentions were measured using three items based on Linan and Chen (2009), with good reliability (AVE 0.76, Cronbach's alpha 0.90). Entrepreneurship competence was measured using 15 items based on Joensuu-Salo et al. (2022), who developed the measurement instrument based on the EntreComp Framework, also demonstrating good reliability (AVE 0.52, Cronbach's alpha 0.94). Subjective norm was measured following Ajzen (1991) with good reliability (AVE 0.66, Cronbach's alpha 0.85).

First, the differences between women and men in entrepreneurial intentions, subjective norms, and entrepreneurship competence were tested using t-tests. Second, linear regression analysis was used to examine the effects of gender, subjective norms, and entrepreneurship competence on entrepreneurial intentions. Third, the linear regression analysis was conducted separately for women and men to determine the importance of different factors in explaining entrepreneurial intentions between genders.

4. Results

The results of the t-tests indicate that women have lower levels of entrepreneurial intentions, subjective norm, and entrepreneurship competence than men in every year of data collection. The difference is statistically significant every year regarding entrepreneurial intentions, in 2019 and 2023 regarding subjective norms, and in 2020, 2021, and 2023 regarding entrepreneurship competence.

Table 2: Entrepreneurial intentions, subjective norm and entrepreneurship competence of women and men in years 2019-2021.

Entrepreneurial Intentions			
Year	Women (mean, sd)	Men (mean, sd)	Sig. (t-test)
2019	3,16 (1,51)	3,76 (1,52)	p<0,001
2020	3,44 (1,65)	3,84 (1,53)	p<0,001
2021	3,46 (1,60)	4,02 (1,57)	p<0,001
2023	3,43 (1,82)	4,25 (1,70)	p<0,001
Subjective Norm			
Year	Women (mean, sd)	Men (mean, sd)	Sig. (t-test)
2019	3,79 (1,27)	4,03 (1,22)	p<0,05
2020	4,00 (1,27)	4,08 (1,23)	-
2021	4,06 (1,28)	4,16 (1,24)	-
2023	3,73 (1,57)	4,31 (1,45)	p<0,001
Entrepreneurship Competence			
Year	Women (mean, sd)	Men (mean, sd)	Sig. (t-test)

2019	5,01 (0,88)	5,05 (0,77)	-
2020	4,91 (0,95)	5,06 (0,88)	p<0,05
2021	4,82 (0,92)	4,98 (0,94)	p<0,05
2023	4,55 (1,35)	4,87 (1,16)	p<0,01

The results of the linear regression analysis are presented in Table 3. Results show that among first year higher education students, gender, entrepreneurial competence, and subjective norm explain 51% of the variance in entrepreneurial intentions, with subjective norm being the most significant factor in explaining these intentions. Furthermore, the regression analysis shows that there are gender differences in factors explaining entrepreneurial intentions. For women, subjective norm is particularly significant ($\beta=0,658$), entrepreneurship competence being less significant factor ($\beta=0,099$) compared to men ($\beta=0,202$). The experience of support for entrepreneurship is lower among women, which negatively impacts their entrepreneurial intentions. The model explains 49 of the variance in entrepreneurial intentions among women and 50 percent of variance in entrepreneurial intentions among men. The F statistics of the models are statistically significant ($p<0,001$).

Table 3: Results of the linear regression analysis.

	All data (n=2795)	Women (n=1339)	Men (n=1430)
Constant	B -0,835*** (0,115)	B 0,217 (0,223)	B -0,828*** (0,163)
Subjective norm	B 0,781*** (0,018) β 0,627	B 0,805*** (0,025) β 0,658	B 0,750*** (0,025) β 0,606
Entrepreneurship competence	B 0,241*** (0,024) β 0,146	B 0,158*** (0,033) β 0,099	B 0,338*** (0,034) β 0,202
Gender	B 0,364*** (0,044) β 0,111		
F statistics	952,178***	634,029***	723,595***
Adjusted R ²	0,508	0,486	0,503

Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

*, **, *** indicate significance at the 90 %, 95 %, and 99 % level, respectively.

The results give support for all our hypotheses. Women students rate their entrepreneurial intentions lower than their male counterparts (H1). Subjective norm positively influences entrepreneurial intentions (H2a) as does entrepreneurship competence (H3a). Women students perceive less support from their social networks for a potential entrepreneurial career compared to men (H2b) and rate the entrepreneurship competence lower than their male counterparts (H3b). Social support is a more important factor explaining entrepreneurial intentions of women than of men (H2c).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This research aimed to examine gender differences in entrepreneurial intentions, competence, and social support. It also explored how social support and competence influence these intentions. Results showed that men have higher entrepreneurial intentions and competence, and perceive more social support than women. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Joensuu et al. (2013), which found higher entrepreneurial intentions among male students.

Furthermore, our results indicate that entrepreneurship competence and social support explain entrepreneurial intentions. Since men have higher competence and perceive more social support, their entrepreneurial intentions are also higher. Our study resonates with the findings of Shinnar, Giacomini, and Jansen (2012), which showed that women often display lower self-confidence in entrepreneurial settings compared to men, largely due to societal norms and gender expectations. In our study, women reported lower ratings of entrepreneurship competence. This suggests that their actual competence is not lower, but their self-assessment is, potentially due to lower self-esteem related to entrepreneurship. This lower self-esteem may be influenced by the masculine discourse of entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2004).

Our findings also reveal that entrepreneurship competence and perceived social support for entrepreneurship explain the entrepreneurial intentions of both men and women. Interestingly, the influence of perceived social support is even more significant for women students than for men. Our study supports the findings of Molino et al. (2018), who also showed that support from family and friends is more crucial for women than for men in explaining entrepreneurial intentions. Therefore, our study suggests that societal support for entrepreneurship still favors men, which in turn influences entrepreneurial outcomes. It is possible that families continue to raise children differently based on gender, with entrepreneurship being perceived as more masculine and thus more suitable for men than for women.

This study highlights how societal norms and gender expectations shape entrepreneurial behavior. It emphasizes the importance of social support and entrepreneurship competence, noting their different impacts on men and women. For policymakers and educators, the findings suggest targeted programs to enhance entrepreneurship skills and support, especially for women. Creating supportive networks and mentorship programs can encourage more women to pursue entrepreneurship. Additionally, the study calls for challenging societal norms that lower women's self-esteem and perceived competence. Promoting gender equality through awareness campaigns can foster a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Further research is needed to explore and address these gender differences.

Acknowledgements

We thank the Foundation of Töysän Säästöpankki.

References

- Ahl, H. (2004) *The Scientific Reproduction of Gender Inequality: A Discourse Analysis of Research Texts on Women's Entrepreneurship*, CBS Press, Copenhagen.
- Ahl, H. (2006) "Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 30, pp 595–621.
- Ajzen, I. (1991) "The Theory of Planned Behavior", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol 50, No. 2, pp 179–211.
- Anwar, M. U. and Rashid, A. G. (2012) Female entrepreneurs—a review of the literature and proposed conceptual framework. In *Proceedings of 2nd International Conference on Business Management*.
- Bacigalupo, M., Kamylyis, P., Punie, Y. and van Den Brande, G. (2016) *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*, Luxembourg, Publication Office of the European Union.
- Bird, B. (2019), "Toward a theory of entrepreneurial competency", in Katz, J.A. and Corbett, A.C. (Eds.), *Seminal ideas for the next twenty-five years of advances, Advances in entrepreneurship, firm emergence and growth*, Vol. 21, Emerald Publishing, Bingley, UK, pp 115-131.
- Burt, R. (1992) *Structural Holes: The social structure of competition*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Butler, J. (2004) *Undoing Gender*, New York, Routledge.
- Calas, M.B. and Smircich, L. (2006) From the 'woman's point of view' Ten years later: towards feminist organization studies, in Clegg, S. and Hardy, C. (Eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Organization Studies*, Sage.
- Chin, J.W., Mustafa, M.J. and Nungsari, M. (2024), "Subjective norms towards entrepreneurship and Malaysian students' entrepreneurial intentions: does gender matter?", *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Vol 18 No. 2, pp 195-208. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJIE-09-2023-0180>
- Chu, S.-C., Chen, H.-T. and Sung, Y. (2016) "Following brands on Twitter: An extension of theory of planned behavior", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol 35, No. 3, pp 421–437.
- Daliman, D., Sulandari, S. and Rosyana, I. (2019) "The Achievement of Entrepreneurship Competence and Entrepreneurial Intentions: Gender Role, Attitude and Perception of Entrepreneurship Controls Mediation", *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, Vol 10, No. 4, pp 392–426.
- Demartini, P. (2018) "Innovative female-led startups. Do women in business underperform?", *Administrative Sciences*, Vol 8, No. 4, p 70.
- Durietz, A. and Henrekson, M. (2000) "Testing the female underperformance hypothesis", *Small Business Economics*, Vol 14, pp 1-10.
- Emerson, R.M. (1976) "Social Exchange Theory", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol 2, pp 335-362.
- Gonzalez-Tamayo, L.A., Olarewaju, A.D., Bonomo-Odizzio, A. and Krauss-Delorme, C. (2024) "University student entrepreneurial intentions: the effects of perceived institutional support, parental role models, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol 31, No. 8, pp 205-227. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-09-2022-0408>
- Gherardi, S. and Poggio, B. (2001) "Creating and recreating gender order in organizations", *Journal of World Business*, Vol 36, pp 245-259.
- Granovetter, M. (1985) "Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 91, No. 3, pp 481–510.

- Gustomo, A., Herliana, S., Dhewanto, W. and Ghina, A. (2017) "Building a conceptual framework of entrepreneurial competencies: The ontological, epistemological, and methodological view", *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, Vol 15, No. 10, pp 191-201.
- Hisrich, R.D. and Brush, C.G. (1987), "Women entrepreneurs: a longitudinal study", *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Vol 187, pp 566-578.
- Iakovleva, T., Kolvereid, L. and Stephan, U. (2011), "Entrepreneurial intentions in developing and developed countries", *Education + Training*, Vol 53, No. 5, pp 353-370. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400911111147686>
- Ignacio, G. P., Pilar, C. G. M. and Enrique, T. M. (2024) "Impact of the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship competence on the entrepreneurial intention", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol 20, No. 4, pp 2515–2539.
- Itani, H., Sidani, Y.M. and Baalbaki, I. (2011) "United Arab Emirates female entrepreneurs: motivations and frustrations. Equality diversity and inclusion", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol 30, No. 5, pp 409-424.
- Jamali, D. (2009) "Constraints and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries: a relational perspective", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol 24, No. 4, pp 232-251.
- Jenssen, J. and Koenig, H. (2002) "The effect of social networks on resource access and business start-ups", *European Planning Studies*, Vol 10, No. 8, pp 1039–1046.
- Joensuu, S., Viljamaa, A., Varamäki, E. and Tornikoski, E. (2013) "Development of entrepreneurial intention in higher education and the effect of gender – a latent growth curve analysis", *Education + Training*, Vol 55, No. 8/9, pp 781-803. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-06-2013-0084>
- Joensuu-Salo, S., Viljamaa, A. and Varamäki, E. (2022) "Testing the EntreComp framework and its relation to start-up behaviour in seven European countries", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol 29, No. 6, pp 920–939.
- Kakkonen, M.-L. (2012) "The Relationship between Self-Perceived Generic Competences and Entrepreneurial Intention", *Industry and Higher Education*, Vol 26, No. 3, pp 217–227. <https://doi.org/10.5367/ihe.2012.0096>
- Kalleberg, A.L. and Leicht, K.T. (1991) "Gender and organizational performance: determinants of small business survival and success", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol 34, pp 136-161.
- Kickul, J., Wilson, F. and Marlino, D. (2008) "Are misalignments of perceptions and self-efficacy causing gender gaps in entrepreneurial intentions among our nation's teens?", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol 15, No. 2, pp 321–335, 2008.
- Kirkwood, J. (2009) "Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol 24, No. 5, pp 346–364.
- Klyver, K. & Hindle, K. (2007). "The role of social networks at different stages of business formation", *Small Enterprise Research*, Vol 15, No. 1, pp 22–38.
- Knight, L. (2002) "Network learning: Exploring Learning by Interorganizational Networks", *Human Relations*, Vol 55, No. 49, pp 427–454.
- Lane, P. and Lubatkin, M. (1998) "Relative absorptive capacity and interorganizational learning", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol 19, No. 5, pp 461–477.
- Langowitz, N. and Minniti, M. (2007) "The Entrepreneurial Propensity of Women", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 31, No. 3, pp 341–364.
- Liñán, F. and Chen, Y. (2009) "Development and Cross-Cultural Application of a Specific Instrument to Measure Entrepreneurial Intentions", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 33, No. 3, pp 593–617.
- Liñán, F., Nabi, G. and Krueger, N. (2013) "British and Spanish entrepreneurial intentions: A comparative study", *Revista de economía Mundial*, Vol 33, pp 73-103.
- Lorz, M., Mueller, S. and Volery, T. (2013) "Entrepreneurship education: A systematic review of the methods in impact studies", *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, Vol 21, No. 2, pp 123–151.
- Maheshwari, G., Kha, K.L. and Arokiasamy, A.R.A. (2023) "Factors affecting students' entrepreneurial intentions: a systematic review (2005–2022) for future directions in theory and practice", *Management Review Quarterly*, Vol 73, pp 1903–1970. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-022-00289-2>
- Majenga, A. and Mashenene, R.G. (2015) "Socio-cultural factors and financial performance among women small and medium enterprises in Tanzania", *European Journal of Business Management*, Vol 6, No. 32, pp 153-163.
- Maresch, D., Harms, R., Kailer, N. and Wimmer-Wurm, B. (2016) "The impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention of students in science and engineering versus business studies university programs", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol 104, pp 172-179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2015.11.006>.
- Marlow, S. and Martinez Dy, A. (2018) "Annual review article: Is it time to rethink the gender agenda in entrepreneurship research?", *International Small Business Journal*, Vol 36, No. 1, pp 3-22.
- Marlow, S. and Swail, J. (2014) "Gender, risk and finance: why can't a woman be more like a man?", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol 26, pp 80-96.
- Martiarena, A. (2022) "How gender stereotypes shape venture growth expectations", *Small Business Economics*, Vol 58, No. 2, pp 1015–1034.
- Maziku, P., Majenga, A. and Mashenene, G.R. (2014) "The effect of socio-cultural factors on the performance of women small and medium enterprises in Tanzania", *Journal of Economic Sustainable Development*, Vol 5, No. 21, pp 51-62.

- Molino, M., Dolce, V., Cortese, C.G., and Gislieri, C. (2018) "Personality and social support as determinants of entrepreneurial intention. Gender differences in Italy", *PLOS ONE*, Vol 13, No. 6, e0199924. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0199924>
- Nahapiet, J. and Ghoshal, S. (1998) "Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol 23, No. 2, pp 242–266.
- Ostgaard, T. and Birley, S. (1996) "New venture growth and personal networks", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol 36, No. 1, pp 37-50.
- Oussama, S., Amjad, S., Ahmad, M.J. and Abid, M.F. (2023) "Do entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial motivation, and family support enhance entrepreneurial intention? The mediating role of entrepreneurial education", *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Vol 17, No. 1, pp 20-45. doi:10.1108/APJIE-06-2022-0055
- Piperopoulos, P. and Dimov, D. (2015) "Burst Bubbles or Build Steam? Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, and Entrepreneurial Intentions", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol 53, No. 4, pp 970–985.
- Ramadani, V., Hisrich, R.D. and Gerguri-Rashiti, S. (2015), "Female entrepreneurs in transition economies: insights from Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo", *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol 11, pp 391-413.
- Robb, A.M. and Watson, J. (2012), "Gender differences in firm performance: evidence from new ventures in the United States", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol 27, pp. 544-558.
- Shinnar, R. S., Giacomini, O. and Janssen, F. (2012) "Entrepreneurial Perceptions and Intentions: The Role of Gender and Culture", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 36, No. 3, pp 465–493.
- Somià, T., Pittaway, L. and Benedict, P. (2024) "Rethinking entrepreneurial competencies: A gender-focused analysis of students' perceived competencies", *The International Journal of Management Education*, Vol 22, No. 3, 101038. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101038>
- Sowmya, D.V., Majumdar, S. and Gallant, M. (2010) "Relevance of education for potential entrepreneurs: an international investigation", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol 17, No. 4, pp 626-640.
- Tian, J., Zhang, M., Wu, Y. and Zhou, H. (2022) "Gender-based differences in the relationships among proactive personality, perceived entrepreneurial support and entrepreneurial intention of Chinese private college students: A moderated mediation model", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol 13, 871343. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.871343
- Tillmar, M., Sköld, B., Ahl, H., Berglund, K. and Pettersson, K. (2022) "Women's rural businesses: for economic viability or gender equality?—a database study from the Swedish context", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol 14, No. 3, pp 323-351.
- Watson, J. (2002) "Comparing the performance of male- and female-controlled businesses: relating outputs to inputs", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 26, pp 91-100.
- West, C. and Zimmerman, D.H. (1987) "Doing gender", *Gender and Society*, Vol 1, pp. 125-151.
- Yang, Y., Choi, J. and Lee, K. (2018) "Theory of Planned Behavior and different forms of organizational change behavior", *Social Behavior and Personality*, Vol 26, No. 10, pp 1657–1672.
- Zhang, Pingying, Wang, Dongyuan D. and Owen, Crystal L. (2015) "A Study of Entrepreneurial Intention of University Students", *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, Vol 5, No. 1, pp 61-82. <https://doi.org/10.1515/erj-2014-0004>
- Zhang, H., Zhou, X., Nielsen, M. S. and Klyver, K. (2023) "The Role of Stereotype Threat, Anxiety, and Emotional Intelligence in Women's Opportunity Evaluation", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol 47, No. 5, pp 1699–1730.