

Women Entrepreneur - How to Reconcile Professional Life and Private Life

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Abstract:

This research tends to shed light on the role of family in the creation of businesses by women, within the Algerian context. After a review of the literature, the results of an empirical study, conducted with a sample of thirty (30) women entrepreneurs, practicing in different sectors in the Province (Wilaya) of Tlemcen (northwestern Algeria), are presented. It was found that the situation of the family, the family circle and children have an impact on the creation of a company. Furthermore, research has shown that the type of family and the involvement of its members in housework have no significant influence.

Keywords : Women's entrepreneurship- Family- Business creation-Socio-cultural factors.

ملخص:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على دور الأسرة في إنشاء الأعمال المقاولاتية من قبل النساء في السياق الجزائري. بعد استعراض الأدبيات، نقدم نتائج الدراسة التجريبية التي أجريت على عينة من ثلاثين سيدات أعمال يمارسن في مختلف قطاعات النشاط في ولاية تلمسان (الجزائر). وتؤكد النتائج أن الوضع العائلي، والأسرة، والأطفال، تؤثر على خلق الأعمال التجارية. كما أظهرت النتائج أيضا أن نوع الأسرة والمشاركة في الأعمال المنزلية لا يكون لهما تأثير كبير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ريادة الأعمال النسائية - خلق الأسرة - الأعمال - العوامل الاجتماعية - الثقافة

Introduction

In recent decades, entrepreneurship has become an important lever for economic and social development. Despite an abundance of literature on the subject of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs (Schumpeter, 1942; Bruyat, 1993; Marion, 1999; Senicourt et al. 2000; Verstraete, 2001; Fayolle, 2002) it is quite clear that real academic work on women's entrepreneurship remains rare, though women represent an essential economic and social force in today's society (Richer et al., 2007). Indeed, the woman entrepreneur, which is the topic of our research, is a recent phenomenon that has been continuously growing and expanding in recent years. In fact, the proportion of women entrepreneurs is increasing quite rapidly. In developed countries (Canada, United States, France, etc.), research on women's entrepreneurship has significantly increased since the early 1980s (Carter et al., 2003; Constantinidis et al., 2006; Borges Candido et al., 2008; Brush and Welter, 2009). In addition, much research has focused on women entrepreneurs' motivation, their personal characteristics, their management and performance styles, and their modes of financing. However, few researchers have investigated the reconciliation of women's professional life and their family life, particularly in the Algerian context. Such studies are unfortunately almost non-existent in Algeria, despite the fact that the country's socio-economic situation is pushing more and more women to be active in order to meet the needs for their families. The main objective of the present research is to fill this gap in order to enrich our knowledge on that subject. An attempt is thus made to answer the following question :

How can a woman entrepreneur reconcile her family life and her work?

The present study allows us to first clarify the theoretical and conceptual foundations of female entrepreneurship, and then to better understand the socio-cultural environment. Next, the results of an empirical study are presented. This study aims to:

- Identify the profile of women entrepreneurs in Algeria,
- Describe some businesses created by women,
- Determine the motivations of women entrepreneurs,
- Assess the impact of family life on business creation by women entrepreneurs.

1. Literature review

1.1. Female entrepreneurship

Nowadays, women entrepreneurs represent a vast untapped source of economic growth, job creation, innovation and wealth (Arasti, 2008). According to Onana (2009), most of *the pioneers* in the now-popular field of entrepreneurship come from the United States and Canada (Sheila Brown et al., 1990; Brush, 1992; Carrier et al., 2006; Constantinidis, 2006). According to Brush (1992), female entrepreneurship is a research area that has not been sufficiently explored so far, despite the growing involvement of women in the entrepreneurial activity. This has contributed to slowing down the success of the programs previously set up by state authorities to support women entrepreneurs. It is worth noting that if we want to increase the number of women entrepreneurs and build on their skills, it is required to know them first. There is no clear definition of the concept of female entrepreneurship (Lambrecht, 2003). The definition given by Dina Lavoie (1988) seems to encompass the essence of the term "*Female entrepreneur*", also called *owner-manager*, *owner-business executive* or *woman entrepreneur*. Indeed, she defines the woman entrepreneur as "*the woman who, alone or with one or more partners, has founded, purchased or inherited a business, who bears the financial, administrative and social risks and responsibilities and who participates in its day-to-day management*". In general, women's entrepreneurship is defined as the creation and development of businesses by women. But "*in order to be able to undertake, one has to combine qualities, skills, motivations, initiatives, and resources of sufficient quality and quantity to overcome a whole series of obstacles. The reason why fewer women than men are capable to go to the end is probably because the relationship between the positive factors*

(qualities, skills, etc.) and the negative factors (obstacles) is not the same for females and their male counterparts. The first factors would act more weakly and the latter more strongly; the balance is therefore distorted and skewed" (Le Marois, 1985). It should be noted that most of the factors that lead to divergence between men and women come from the entrepreneurial environment.

1.2. The woman entrepreneur between her family life and professional life Environmental influence

The success of an entrepreneur depends on several factors which can favor the emergence and development of the characteristics related to the entrepreneur herself, as well as to her motivations and her personality traits. These factors are mainly related to her environment which plays a decisive role in her professional career.

The environment is defined by the dictionary *Le Robert* as "all the natural and cultural conditions that can affect the living organisms and human activities". It is a key parameter in business strategy. In fact, the reliability of a company's strategy depends on the coherence between three intrinsically linked elements (Daval Hervé, 1999), namely:

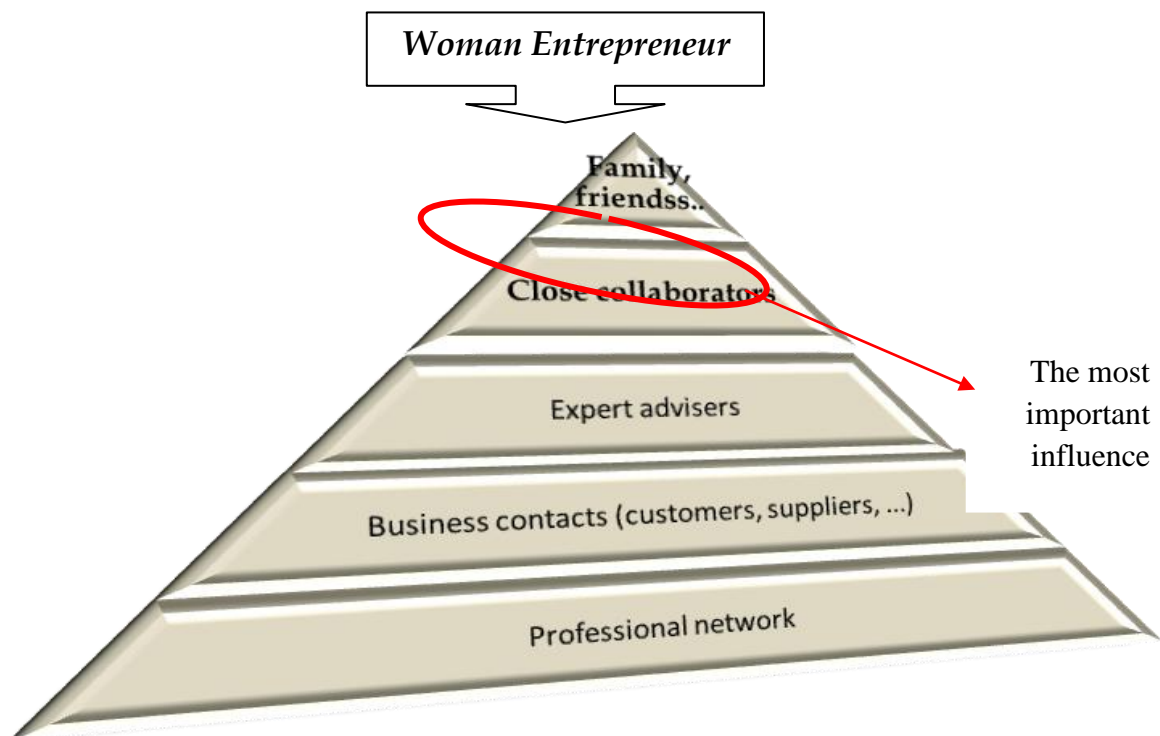
- *The environment* - Analysis of the threats and opportunities present at a given moment in the global environment in general, as well as in our own environment,
- *The entrepreneur* - Reflections on the aspirations, expectations, intentions and objectives that were set by the company's managers, or may be the objectives of the project to be presented,
- *The business* - Study the assets of the company and its possible handicaps in order to carry out its mission successfully.

A business can therefore be considered as the combination of personal efforts and the existence of an opportunity with a favorable environment. The influence of social environment on business creation has been a subject of great attention. Indeed, this topic has attracted plenty of researchers in the area of entrepreneurship. Saint P. G. and al. (2006) stated that "Starting a business is not done in isolation. A company, whether it is in the study phase or already operational, evolves in an environment which, on the one hand, influences it and, on the other hand, is influenced by it". As a result, the business environment is a general concept, though its content remains largely broad and therefore unclear (Calay and al, 2005). As for Perrouy (1992), he indicated that the entrepreneur is the product of his environment. Individual actions occur in a social and economic context, which is itself an essential element in understanding the roles played by individuals. According to Yvon Gasse's model (2003), the environment exerts various types of influences on the decision to create a new company; such a decision is taken at three different levels, namely the *desirability level*, the *feasibility level*, and the *creation level*.

Hence, according to this model, there is an interaction between the factors that create climates that are more or less favorable to the creation of a company. This research focuses on the "Family" factor.

1.3. The influence of family life on business creation by women

Despite the rich literature on the subject of entrepreneurship, it is important to note that academic research addressing the theme of family life remains rare and scarce. The woman entrepreneur is the fruit of her environment (family, school, companies, social groups, etc.); she evolves in social conditions that are considerably influenced by the surrounding environment. Parents, brothers, spouse, family, friends and association with other entrepreneurs, local or national, are all determining factors for the creation and development of the originative spirit in women. Referring to Gibb's theory (1998), one can clearly note that the different influences of the support network are hierarchized according to a logic that depends on the proximity of the relationship with the owner-manager (Figure 1).



Source: A. Gibb (1988) in Bridge et al. (1998).

Figure 1: Gibb's layer theory

According to the above diagram, the family is the most influential factor on women's entrepreneurship. For a long time, the family has been the school in which the entrepreneur learns the first teachings in creating a business. Torres and al. (2006) indicate that family, friends and social circle are strategic resources when the manager decides to use them as primary sources in his/her work. The family is a trigger for the entrepreneur because having a family member entrepreneur can give access to a great deal of information and financial networks (Lachachi, 2006). It is worth noting that the entrepreneur is also influenced by the cultural values and beliefs shared by family members. Entrepreneurs are not isolated "atomistic" actors; they are well integrated into their households and their family context whose impact turns out to be greater on women than on their male counterparts in the entrepreneurial process (Brush and al, 2009). Women entrepreneurs seek to improve their living conditions and those of their families; this allows them to assert themselves, improve their social status, limit their financial dependence (acquire a certain autonomy) and fulfill their family and social obligations (Ondogo, 2009). In addition, the family remains one of the most important factors for the implementation and success of a project. It is the first element to be mobilized when one of its members decides to start a business. The family also provides financial support and helps to minimize the costs of creating the company. This represents an assistance of significant importance in supporting young entrepreneurs. Anderson and Miller (2003) investigated the role of the family in business creation, considering two types of capital, namely *social capital* and *human capital*. These two assets affect an entrepreneur's ability to recognize and seize business opportunities. Family relationships for a young entrepreneur can therefore be very useful in starting a new business. The initial capital usually

comes from personal income and family own finances, namely social capital, human capital, financial capital and survival capital (Baccari and Maoufoud, 2008).

In addition, women's work has brought about tremendous transformations in societies that have challenged the traditional roles of men and women; this has produced qualitative changes in the relationships within households. In some cases, this has created an important antagonism between the professional role and family role. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) described this antagonism and defined it as "a form of conflict between the different roles played by the same person. This conflict comes in three forms, namely, a time conflict, a conflict due tension between roles and a conflict of behavior". Thus, people have a certain amount of time and energy that they spend in the different roles they have to assume (Goode, 1960). Women are the most affected and find it difficult to reconcile, essentially, family life and professional life. Other authors state that "The evolution of the labor market has led many women to create their own jobs, particularly in order to reconcile work and family life, but also to satisfy their personal ambitions or to find a project that makes sense". Entrepreneurship makes it possible for some women, unlike female employees, to be available to their families and to have more flexibility in working hours. At the end of the literature review, with respect to the different variables of our research that deals with the impact of family life on the creation of businesses by women in the Algerian context, it was decided to propose the fundamental hypothesis of our study as follows: "**The family life of Algerian women entrepreneurs influences business creation**".

The sub-hypotheses considered are:

H1: The family situation of women entrepreneurs influences the creation of a business.

H2: Responsibility for housework influences women's ability to create a business.

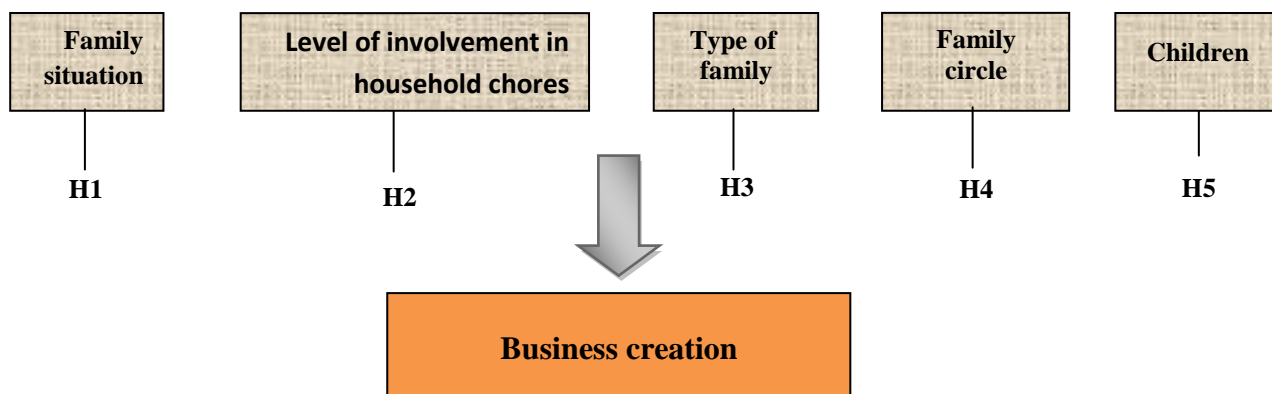
H3: Family type influences business creation by women.

H4: The family circle influences the creation of businesses by women.

H5: Having children influences business creation by women.

The conceptual framework, presented in the figure below, summarizes the body of our five research sub-hypotheses. Each arrow bears the number of the hypothesis it is associated with.

Figure 2: Conceptual model



Source: Elaborated by authors

II. Impirical study

2.1 Research methodology

Our empirical study is based on quantitative research that relies on the use of a questionnaire as a tool for data collection.

2.1.1 Population and sampling

The present study is interested only in women entrepreneurs, active in the formal sector, and practicing in the Wilaya (Province) of Tlemcen (northwestern Algeria). Special attention was given to sampling our exploratory research. However, the non-random method was employed, where each individual in the population considered has a known probability (different from 0) of belonging to the sample (Evrard and al., 2003, p 206).

Of the 60 questionnaires distributed, only 35 of them were returned, due to the following reasons:

- These women were too busy and had no time to respond,
- Many of the companies contacted do not really exist. Many women often lend their names to family members to facilitate the creation of their own businesses (business creation through woman),
- Some of them are suspicious because they perceive the questionnaire as a kind of "control".

2.1.2 Business sectors of the companies contacted

The women contacted work in the following sectors:

- Hairdressing and aesthetics,
- Health (dentist, medical doctor),
- Dressmaking,
- Industry (milk production, production of chocolate products),
- Agencies (car rental, travel agency, real estate agency),
- Design office (architecture, landscaping),
- Services (phone, laundry, pharmacy),
- Laboratories (laboratory for medical analyses, food analysis).

2.1.3 Data analysis techniques

The data were first coded and then were subjected to computerized statistical processing, using the software S.P.S.S. 17.

In a first step, simple sorting was done to estimate the general trends of our research and to have a global idea of the distribution of the answers. Then the Chi-Square test was applied to examine and analyze the relationship between family life of women entrepreneurs and business creation.

2.2 Search results

2.2.1. Descriptive study

All the data collected were described using a simple sorting method, and the results obtained allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

Characteristics of the company

As indicated in the literature, most of the companies created by women are new. The majority of these companies (about 76%) created by these women are very small enterprises, employing between 1 and 5 people.

On the other hand, it was found that the most preferred sector for women is commerce. Women's favorite activities are mainly hairdressing and dressmaking, which come in the first and second places, with 20% and 17%, respectively

The profile of the woman entrepreneur

The female entrepreneur in our sample is married, in her thirties, with a fairly high level of education, since 50% of them have had some university education.

The idea of starting a business usually comes from the family of the new entrepreneur (husband, children, brother, sister ...); about 30% of these women had the idea alone, and only 7% had this idea through suggestions made by friends or neighbors. The reasons for starting their own business are diverse. Some of them created their own enterprise for personal

reasons, others did it because they lost their previous jobs; this last reason seems to be the main one for women to set up their own business. Before starting the new company, about 70% of these women had a full-time job, liberal profession, or were enrolled in some kind of training programs; the remaining 30% were unemployed. The principal reason for these women to get into the business world is money; they want to contribute to family expenses. These women may have had some experience during their previous work; they may also have received some training before the start of the project. The training programs that women are involved in are generally in the fields of computer science (33%), dressmaking (20%), hairdressing (7%), trade (10%), agriculture (20%); about 17% of them had no training at all.

The family context of the entrepreneur

About 63% of women surveyed regularly participate in household chores, on a daily basis, compared with 37% who do not. However, 73% of husbands do not participate to household chores and only 27% do. Most of these women live in their own homes and have between one and two children. Their family circle is generally in the business world since the majority of these women have at least one parent who is an entrepreneur.

2.2.2. Exploratory study

The main cross sorting results allowed confirming the impact of family life of women entrepreneurs on the creation of their businesses. The Chi-Square test and the S.P.S.S.17 software were used. This test helped to highlight the relationship linking the different variables. A Chi-Square value is significant if it is greater than 7; the bilateral significance must be less than 0.05.

Our hypotheses are then tested one after the other.

❖ **Family situation**

The results of the Chi-Square test are summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Relationship between family status and business creation

	Value	Ddl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-Square	31.781	16	0.011

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

It is easy to observe that the Chi-Square value is equal to 31.781 with a Ddl = 16 and an asymptotic significance = 0.011. This allows us to say that there is a dependency relationship between the family situation and the creation of the company. As a result, hypothesis H1 can be accepted.

The cross table below shows that:

- 67% of single women consider that their family status is an asset for the creation of their business and 33% think it is a constraint.
- In contrast, the majority of married women (58%) consider their family situation a constraint. Most divorced women (67%) also find that their marital status is a constraint.

Table 2 : Impact of civil status on the creation of a business

		Civil status			Total
		Single	Married	Divorced	
Business creation	Asset	2	10	1	13 (43%)
	Constraint	1	14	2	17 (57%)
Total		3 (10%)	24 (80%)	3(10%)	30

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

❖ **Household chores**

Relationship between female entrepreneur's participation in housework and business creation
The results obtained are presented in the following table

Table 3: Relationship between women's participation in housework and business creation

	Value	Ddl	Asymptotic Significance (bilateral) p
Pearson's Chi-Square	0.034	1	0.853

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

One can note that the Chi-Square test is not significant (Chi-Square = 0.034 and $p = 0.853 > 0.05$), so our hypothesis cannot be accepted.

Table 4: Relationship between husband's involvement in household chores and business creation

	Value	Ddl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral) p
Pearson's Chi-Square	0.072	1	0.789

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that there is no dependency relationship between participation in household chores and business creation (Chi-square = 0.072, significance = 0.789). So our hypothesis is rejected.

❖ **The type of family**

Table 5: Relationship between family type and business creation

	Value	Ddl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral) p
Pearson's Chi-Square	0.433	1	0.511

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

Here, the Chi-Square value is found equal to 0.433 and $p = 0.511$, and therefore the hypothesis H3 is rejected. This result can be explained by the fact that 17% of women live at home, and 83% of women live independently.

❖ **The family circle**

The Chi-Square test is once again used and the results obtained are summarized in the following table.

Table 6: Relationship between family circle and business creation

	Value	Ddl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral) p
Pearson's Chi-Square	23.110	12	0.027

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

It is found that the Chi-Square value is equal to 23.110 with $p = 0.027$ and a degree of freedom = 12; thus, our hypothesis may be accepted.

Table 7: Impact of family circle on business creation

Business creation	Existence of an entrepreneur within the family	Total
Asset	15 (58%)	16

Constraint	11 (42%)	3 (75%)	14
Total	26 (100%)	4 (100%)	30

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

- 58% of the women surveyed said that having entrepreneurs in the family circle is an asset for starting a company. However, for the remaining 42%, this represents a constraint.
- 75% of women who do not have entrepreneurs in their family circle consider this a constraint; for the remaining 25%, it is an asset.

❖ Children

The Chi-Square test found out that for some women, having children has an influence on starting a business; the Chi-Square value is equal to 11.70 with $p = 0.020$. So our hypothesis can be accepted

The table below indicates that:

- 79% of women with children do not find it difficult to reconcile their professional lives with child care, as already mentioned in the descriptive analyses. Some of these women have children of full age and are autonomous; others are helped by family members (mother, sisters ...) or a nursemaid to care for their young children. Only 21% of them find that working and caring for children is a constraint.
- 67% of women with no children find this situation an asset.

Table 8: Impact of children on starting a business

		No children	With children	Total
Starting a business	Asset	4	19	23
	constraint	2	5	7
Total		6	24	30

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

The present work is a modest contribution to a better understanding of the role of family circle in creating a business by Algerian women. An exploratory study, conducted on a sample of thirty women entrepreneurs in the Province (Wilaya) of Tlemcen, allowed us, on the one hand, to determine the profile of women entrepreneurs in Algeria, describe their businesses and specify their motivations. On the other hand, it helped us to obtain more information on the nature of the influence of family life on business creation by women entrepreneurs, through the examination of five hypotheses. The results obtained are presented in the following table.

Table 9: Summary table

Hypotheses	Results
H₁: <i>The family situation of women entrepreneurs influences the creation of a business</i>	Accepted
H₂: <i>Responsibility for housework influences women's business creation</i>	Rejected
H₃: <i>Family type influences business creation by women</i>	Rejected
H₄: <i>The family circle influences the creation of businesses by women</i>	Accepted
H₅: <i>The family circle influences the creation of businesses by women</i>	Accepted

Source : (réalisé par les chercheurs)

Conclusion

The results of this research provide methodological, theoretical and managerial insight into the field of entrepreneurship research, and particularly the area of women's entrepreneurship. To our knowledge, this study constitutes one of the first researches on this subject in Algeria where the participation of the female gender in economic activity has appreciably improved but is still insufficient. The promotion of women's entrepreneurship is therefore a necessity as part of a project for a progressive society. The major contribution of this research is the empirical validation of the previously assumed relationship between the family life of women entrepreneurs and business creation. It shows the importance of the family circle and the environment in business creation. Moreover, this study also allows having more information on the manipulated variables. This research has also made it possible to determine certain limits, which has opened new avenues of research in an area that is still poorly explored. One of the main limitations of this research cannot take into account some environmental variables (Social Network and Reference group).

The second limitation that came up during the distribution of our questionnaire is related to the small size of the sample used. Therefore, for future research, it would be interesting to extend the exploratory study to a larger sample in order to generalize the results. Such research may also include other variables such as religion, which is a very important element in a Muslim country.

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