



## WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT:

Female entrepreneurs have unique challenges in balancing their business and personal lives, and work-life balance remains a core determinant to condition their entrepreneurial experience and business performance. Recent studies of female entrepreneurs' work-life balance are taken into account here, outlining the various challenges they face, the coping strategies they utilize, and the broader implications for entrepreneurial ecosystem development. The research suggests that entrepreneurship can be given space for work-life balance but that women entrepreneurs are faced with social norms, economic pressure, and double burden of family and business work. It is critical to have this knowledge to better policy and interventions supporting women's entrepreneurial success.

### KEYWORDS:

**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, GENDER, BUSINESS MANAGEMENT.**

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### INTRODUCTION:

The entrepreneurial scene has been transformed in the recent decades with growing numbers of women joining the ranks of entrepreneurs. Still, their journey towards business sophistication is still entangled with the ever-existing challenge of work-life balance, a problem which appears more relevant for women than men. Where gender roles, societal perceptions, and entrepreneurial requirements meet, a complex matrix is created which women entrepreneurs have to navigate on a daily basis.

In a surprising turn of events, recent research indicates that 39 per cent of female entrepreneurs started up as a means of increasing their work-life balance, so it seems that the quest for greater life integration is an ultimate drive for women entrepreneurialism. But is entrepreneurship actually fulfilling that vision of a higher work-life balance, or merely offering up one more challenge?

This analysis synthesizes current literature to examine the feelings and work-life balance coping strategies of women entrepreneurs both from the issues they face and the solutions they establish. Analysis has been grounded in various theoretical frameworks and empirical studies for the sake of offering an in-depth understanding into this complex phenomenon.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance as a theory has evolved well beyond simple time management to more advanced role integration and boundary awareness. For women entrepreneurs, this is also more complicated since they lack the work-like system support structures of employees. The home-work boundary confusion so exacerbated in entrepreneurial work presents particular issues to be imaginatively solved.

Conventional work-life balance theory takes with it narrow boundaries between work and personal life—boundaries that are too limited when considering the entrepreneurial career of women. Work-life balance (WLB) is a problem in modern society, and that problem is exacerbated for women who must reconcile entrepreneurial demands against social needs of caregiving and domestic labor. Motivations and Expectations

This work-life balance connection with entrepreneurship begins with motivation. The majority of women venture into entrepreneurship with the strong determination to gain control over their time and create more flexible working arrangements. It has been found through research

that 25 per cent entered entrepreneurship following a redefinition of their career after giving birth, and 30 per cent initiated entrepreneurship for other life-adjustment purposes.

This stimulus is one whereby women see entrepreneurship as a potentially effective solution to work-life problems with which they are confronted when working. But matters are more complicated than such initial expectations suggest. The autonomy with which entrepreneurship postulates in theory is accompanied by its own set of demands and uncertainties which ultimately complicate work-life integration more than they facilitate it.

## **DIFFICULTIES IN BALANCING**

### **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESTRAINTS**

Female entrepreneurs are faced with inherent challenges founded in cultural beliefs and societal norms. Six themes dominated: societal constraints and stereotyping, economic difficulties, work-life balance between work and family, psychosocial processes, social networks and network dynamics and strategic interventions. Results present that problems of work-life balance by women entrepreneurs cannot be accounted for independently of broader social processes.

The persistence of traditional gender roles means that women often bear disproportionate amounts of family care and childcare responsibilities even if they are paid workers. Double burden takes a severe toll on entrepreneurs, who lose the institutional support systems and regular schedules that are a part of traditional job arrangements.

### **FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS**

Financial constraints add a new level of complexity to work-life balance issues. Financing and capital shortage is experienced by women business owners, and this may put extra pressure and time demands upon them as they struggle to establish and maintain their business enterprises. Female entrepreneurs are discouraged from accessing capital and loans by the absence of regulatory incentives, in addition to gender bias and stereotyping that restricts their progress and creates a strengthened effect that further reduces their possibilities for achieving work-life convergence in a sustainable manner.

The economic insecurity of entrepreneurship can keep women from making investments in support structures—such as child care or domestic help—that might enable them to manage work and life more effectively. This creates the challenging circle in which the very flexibility which had rendered their entrepreneurial aspiration attractive is difficult to come by due to resource constraints.

### **TIME MANAGEMENT AND MULTIPLICITY OF ROLES**

Managing multiple roles simultaneously is a long-standing issue of women entrepreneurs. As compared with their working counterparts who are able to have more

structured workplaces, entrepreneurs must constantly switch between running the business, planning, networking, and household responsibilities. Outcomes indicated that once ventures stabilize, maintaining 40 hours or fewer of work per week is relatively within reach, yet once ventures pass through to early stages of growth again, longer hours are invested into developing the business.

This is a time element that shows that women entrepreneurs' work-life balance is flexible in nature and changes significantly with business growth phases. During the phases of urgent development, the entrepreneurial needs can dominate the life facets temporarily, and adjustment mechanisms need to be created to manage these competitive demands on women's part. Work-Life Integration Home-Based Business Models

One of the strategies adopted by the majority of the women entrepreneurs is the initiation of home businesses. Statistically significant relationships between the various dimensions of empowerment and work-life balance were found in the study. Work-life balance acts as the mediating variables of empowerment and entrepreneurial success. Home businesses can provide some advantages in terms of not wasting time on traveling to work and greater freedom to fulfill family obligations.

But home entrepreneurship is not without difficulties, e.g., having difficulty separating work and home life, the risk of disconnection from professional networks, and professional credibility operating out of a home office. Success with this strategy will depend on type of business, family systems, and management skill.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

Social networking becomes essential for women entrepreneurs as a means to attain work-life balance. The research reveals not only the deeply ingrained gender stereotyping but also the limited access to traditional business networks and the need to create alternative support networks. Women entrepreneurs who succeed in balancing work and life build networks which not only provide professional guidance but also emotional sustenance.

These support networks may include other women business owners who understand the technical issues that are predominant, relatives who can provide hands-on help, and professional services businesses that can help with the day-to-day operations of the business. Having these networks of support in place and operational in a similar manner can provide work-life balance success.

### **TECHNOLOGY AND FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

New technology offers tools and platforms that can make it easier to integrate work and personal life for women entrepreneurs. Project management software, automated systems, and communications technology can help make business processes more flexible and more efficient in managing work time and place activities.

But technology can also blur boundaries to establish

perpetual variance expectations that enhance the complexity of work-life balance. Women entrepreneurs should master clever uses of technology to maximize benefits from it while maintaining proper boundaries between work and personal life.

### INDUSTRY AND CONTEXTUAL VARIATIONS

The work-life experience is extremely heterogeneous by industry and culture. For female entrepreneurs, success in the firm is dependent on surmounting many impediments, ranging from capital to facing off with men-saturated industries. Those companies with more formal and hierarchical forms will be more exigent in their receptiveness to women seeking flexible work than those companies with new industries that possess more innovative business models.

Cultural contexts also play a strong role in shaping both women's problems and their potential solutions. In some contexts, there are large support systems present in extended families that can be used to create frameworks for work-life integration, but other places may require women to create more independent solutions. Relation to Broader Business Research

When learning about work-life balance in women entrepreneurs in general, it is useful to tap from ideas in broader disciplines of business studies. Ahmed and Mehta (2023), for instance, authored on how consumer behavior research can be used to teach women entrepreneurs about market trends driving their businesses and how reviews of products shape purchasing behavior online. Empirical observations of the like become all the more significant for women entrepreneurs who are generally working with less resources for conducting market research.

Similarly, organizational change research on change management, such as the research of Mehta and Hiran (2023) on medium-size business organization change management, holds information beneficial to women entrepreneurs in managing work-life balance with business transition. Change management principles are especially relevant at business growth phases when entrepreneurs must align personal management practices with evolving business requirements.

The influence of business cycles on business activity, as studied by Choudhary and Madhwani (2013) in the context of the impact of recession on tourism and hospitality industries, is reflective of how economic forces beyond control subject work-life balance to its test for business entrepreneurs. Women business entrepreneurs, with perhaps a lesser economic cushion during economic downfall, must develop resilience mechanisms that protect both their business and personal fronts.

Consumer perception research, like Dave and Paliwal's (2016) research on malted health food drinks, illustrates the benefits of market intelligence in entrepreneurship success. To women entrepreneurs, sound market research competencies can minimize time away from business building, possibly allowing them improved work-life balance through improved management of limited time

resources.

Financial performance analysis, as reflected from the pandemic shock analysis by Sharma, Dadhich, and Chauhan (2022), shows how the operations of a business are affected because of the external shocks. Women entrepreneurs need shock coping mechanisms so that stability at a personal level is maintained, and hence crisis management is a part of work-life balance planning.

Studies on training and development, for example, Patel and Choudhary (2022) on the performance of private bank employees, highlight strategies for competence development. Female entrepreneurs can make these research studies relevant to their professional development using them so that learning strategies are effective and do not add to their already busy schedules.

Customer relationship management studies, like Chaplot et al.'s (2023) study on CRM in the data analytics era, offer tools and techniques which can be applied by women entrepreneurs to manage business relationships more effectively, with some time freed up for personal issues.

Lastly, studies on job satisfaction, such as Chaplot (2017) research on satisfaction in the life insurance sector, offer openings to learn about how job satisfaction translates into life satisfaction. This work gives women entrepreneurs an opportunity to assess if their business is actually portraying their entire life goals or adding more stress that empowers their ill-being.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The findings from the research have important policy implications for business support institutions, policy makers, and for women entrepreneurs themselves. Legislation on work-life balance is lacking, disproportionately affecting women, and this could indicate that existing regulatory systems are inappropriately designed to respond to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs.

Policy interventions may include increased availability of care services, user-friendly lending programs that account for the volatile earnings of entrepreneurship, and business incubation programs whose stated aim is to help correct work-life integration problems. Organizations rendering support can have mentorship programs in which veteran women entrepreneurs are paired with newcomers and provide both business guidance and advice on how to manage competing claims on life.

For the women entrepreneurs themselves, realistic expectation setting, pro-active network building, and adaptive strategy development that can be modified to accommodate dynamic business and personal environments are suggested by the study.

### METHODOLOGY PROBLEMS

Studies on women entrepreneurship and work-life balance use diverse methodology from quantitative questionnaire to thematic qualitative findings. This study uses a quantitative approach based on information from a participant of a 350-questionnaire. In the studies, findings

are that culture, family, and entrepreneurial orientations exert strong influences on self-efficacy, social capital, and firm performance.

But there exist some voids left in longitudinal investigations on the longitudinal dynamics of the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs, cross-cultural comparative research on the ways in which the experiences of women entrepreneurs are constructed by alternative cultural contexts, and mixed-method studies balancing quantitative measurement and rich qualitative familiarity with the lived worlds of women entrepreneurs.

Subsequent research would be enriched by more advanced measures that capture the dynamic and multi-dimensionality of work-life balance, and intervention research to examine the effects of a variety of support interventions and policy initiatives.

### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The coordination of work-life balance and women's entrepreneurship is not so explicit as control and flexibility attributions would suggest. While highly inspirational towards entrepreneurship becomes an outcome of women's desires for greater work-life integration, experience is educated through triumphing over new challenges that are in need of innovative solutions and adaptation responses.

Several significant findings are uncovered through this review. First, the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs is not a location but a process of continuous negotiation and adjustment that changes across business development stages, private lives, and outside situations. Two, women entrepreneurs' barriers to attempting work-life balance are in the very fundamental social, cultural, and economic arrangements that must be transformed by systemic taste and not personal adaptation.

Third, good work-life integration processes typically entail innovative boundary management, using information and support systems, and managing realistic expectations which are attuned to the advantages and constraints of entrepreneurial flexibility. But, in this current research, it is clear that entrepreneurship itself does not facilitate WLB for Trinidad and Tobago citizens and even brings work-life imbalance for others concerning their demographic status.

This intersectional framework requires that any future support given to women entrepreneurs will have to move beyond broad business development initiatives in addressing the specific intersection of gender, entrepreneurship, and integration into life. That support can be in the form of targeted mentoring strategies, departures from policy control, and research into further cementing our knowledge of those intricate intersections.

Women entrepreneurs' work-life balance is finally surfacing in the form of the possibilities and issues that are intrinsic to women's entrepreneurial experience. Entrepreneurship is more a choice of work-life balance not

promised by entrepreneurship but also the reason why entrepreneurship is a choice most women opt for, but it is rather a chance to create innovative solutions of work-life integration that can be adapted by entrepreneurs on an individual basis and also by the entrepreneurial system per se.

As increasingly more women become relevant stakeholders of the entrepreneurial economies worldwide, their work-life balance needs are not only matters of individual well-being but also economic development and social transformation. The policy and program implications from this review provide the basis for more targeted research, policymaking, and enabling program intervention to enable women entrepreneurs to realize business success and personal satisfaction.

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