



WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN TOURISM: AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THEIR ROLES, CHALLENGES, AND CONTRIBUTIONS BEYOND BORDERS

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Despite increasing recognition of women in entrepreneurship, their contributions and challenges in the dynamic and demanding tourism industry remain understudied. This review bridges this gap by delving into the roles, barriers, and contributions of women entrepreneurs venturing beyond borders in tourism.

Objectives: To uncover the multifaceted roles women play in global tourism, identify the barriers they face, and showcase their impactful contributions, particularly across international frontiers.

Methods: A systematic literature review methodology was employed, encompassing academic journals, industry reports, and white papers. Selection criteria focused on relevance, recency, and diversity of perspectives. The synthesis of findings involved thematic categorization, shedding light on key patterns and insights.

Findings: Women lead diverse ventures, from tour operators and eco-lodges to cultural experiences and social enterprises, fostering economic growth, community development, and cultural exchange. However, they encounter pervasive gender-based obstacles, including access to finance, discriminatory practices, and societal biases.

Discussion: The review highlights the need for proactive interventions like targeted funding initiatives, mentorship programs, and policy reforms to empower women entrepreneurs to navigate international tourism landscapes.

Recommendations: Collaborative efforts are crucial, involving governments, travel agencies, and educational institutions to promote gender equality and dismantle barriers in tourism entrepreneurship.

Future Action: Further research exploring cross-cultural contexts, collaborative networks, and sustainable practices is imperative to support women entrepreneurs in shaping a more inclusive and equitable global tourism future.

Conclusion: Women entrepreneurs are not merely navigating tourism, they are reshaping it. By acknowledging their multifaceted roles, overcoming barriers, and fostering their contributions, we can unlock the boundless potential of women in creating a thriving and responsible global tourism industry.

KEYWORDS:

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, TOURISM, GLOBAL, ROLES, CHALLENGES, CONTRIBUTIONS, BARRIERS, CROSS-CULTURAL, SUSTAINABLE, POLICY, EMPOWERMENT, COLLABORATION.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the vibrant tapestry of global tourism, women entrepreneurs emerge as pivotal architects of change, influencing and shaping the industry in profound ways. This review, seeks to unravel the rich narratives of women entrepreneurs, transcending traditional boundaries and redefining the discourse surrounding their roles in the global tourism landscape. The alluring canvases of postcards and travel brochures rarely reveal the diverse hands that paint the vibrant picture of global tourism. While established narratives often focus on towering corporate figures and seasoned travel moguls, a silent

revolution is brewing beneath the surface, led by a force often overlooked – women entrepreneurs. This review ventures beyond the glossy veneer of statistics and celebratory headlines to delve into the under-explored realm of **women entrepreneurs venturing beyond borders in global tourism.**

A. REFRAMING THE LANDSCAPE:

Traditionally, entrepreneurial narratives in the tourism sector have predominantly centred on economic indicators and quantitative metrics. However, this review contends that the true essence of women's entrepreneurial

contributions in tourism extends far beyond numerical representations. Drawing inspiration from Hjorth and Johnson's (2003) call to question the politics of community in the age of 'global' networks, our aim is to reframe the landscape, shifting the focus from sheer economic impact to a more nuanced exploration of the multifaceted roles played by women entrepreneurs in shaping global tourism networks.

B. BEYOND NUMBERS:

While numerical figures offer a glimpse into the economic aspects of women's entrepreneurship in tourism, they fail to capture the depth and diversity of their contributions. Building on Gretzel et al.'s (2015) exploration of smart tourism, we argue that understanding the intricate roles, challenges, and contributions of women entrepreneurs requires a qualitative approach. By delving into their lived experiences, we aim to highlight the need for a more profound understanding of the multifaceted dimensions that define the influence of women entrepreneurs in global tourism.

C. OBJECTIVES:

The primary objectives of this review are threefold. Firstly, we aim to investigate the diverse roles that women entrepreneurs assume within the global tourism industry, spanning a spectrum of endeavours from tour operations to cultural experiences. Second, our focus is on identifying and analysing the barriers those women entrepreneurs encounter, including but not limited to access to finance, discriminatory practices, and societal biases. Third, we strive to showcase the impactful contributions made by these women entrepreneurs, emphasizing their roles as key drivers of economic growth, promoters of community development, and agents of cultural exchange. Crucially, this review endeavours to transcend geographical boundaries, emphasizing the contributions of women entrepreneurs across international frontiers.

As we embark on this comprehensive review, we anticipate shedding light on the untapped potential and remarkable resilience of women entrepreneurs in the global tourism industry. Through this exploration, we seek to foster a deeper appreciation for their invaluable contributions, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable understanding of their roles beyond borders.

II. METHODOLOGY:

A. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW:

In undertaking a systematic literature review for the research titled "Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism: An In-depth Review of their Roles, Challenges, and Contributions beyond borders," a rigorous and structured approach was employed to ensure comprehensive coverage and depth of analysis.

1. **Database Selection:** The review encompassed key academic databases, including but not limited to PubMed, Scopus, JSTOR, and ProQuest. These databases were chosen for their extensive coverage of multidisciplinary literature relevant to

women's entrepreneurship in the tourism sector.

2. **Search Terms:** A systematic and iterative process of search term development was conducted to capture the breadth of literature on women entrepreneurs in tourism. Terms included variations of "women entrepreneurs," "tourism industry," "roles," "challenges," and "contributions." Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were strategically employed to refine searches and narrow down relevant articles.
3. **Screening Criteria:** The inclusion criteria encompassed scholarly articles, industry reports, and white papers published in the last two decades. Emphasis was placed on the relevance of the content to the roles, challenges, and contributions of women entrepreneurs in the global tourism industry. Exclusion criteria were applied to filter out duplications, non-English publications, and studies lacking a clear focus on women entrepreneurs in the tourism context.
4. **Data Synthesis Techniques:** The synthesis of findings involved a thematic categorization approach. Relevant information from selected articles was systematically organized into key themes such as roles, challenges, and contributions. This approach allowed for the identification of patterns, emerging trends, and gaps in the existing literature on women entrepreneurs in global tourism.

B. DATA SOURCES:

The review drew from a diverse range of sources to capture a holistic understanding of women's entrepreneurship in tourism.

1. **Academic Journals:** Academic journals provided in-depth insights into theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and conceptual discussions related to women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. Recognizing the scholarly contributions in this domain, journals such as *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management*, and *Gender, Work & Organization* were systematically searched for relevant content.
2. **Industry Reports:** Industry reports from reputable organizations such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), International Labour Organization (ILO), and various national tourism boards were included. These reports provided valuable empirical data, industry trends, and policy perspectives related to women entrepreneurs in tourism.
3. **White Papers:** White papers, often released by NGOs, advocacy groups, and industry associations, offered practical insights and recommendations. These non-academic publications provided a bridge between academic research and practical implications for women entrepreneurs in tourism.

III. FINDINGS:

A. UNVEILING THE DIVERSIFIED CANVAS:

The landscape of women entrepreneurs in global tourism explodes with vibrant hues, extending far beyond traditional notions of tour operators and hoteliers. Our review reveals a multifaceted tapestry of roles, showcasing their remarkable adaptability and innovation. They are:

1. **Eco-Warriors:** Pioneering sustainable tourism practices through eco-lodges, responsible travel packages, and community-based conservation initiatives (Honeyman & Smith, 2017).
2. **Cultural Champions:** Preserving and promoting local traditions through immersive experiences, artisan workshops, and heritage tours, fostering cultural understanding and exchange (Cohen & Ryan, 2018).
3. **Tech-Savvy Trailblazers:** Embracing technology to create innovative platforms, online travel agencies, and digital marketing strategies, disrupting traditional tourism models and reaching new markets (Nyman & Antilla, 2019).
4. **Social Entrepreneurs:** Building bridges between tourism and social good through initiatives that empower local communities, promote education, and address social inequalities (Fontenla & Cabezas, 2019).

This diverse spectrum of roles demonstrates the immense potential of women entrepreneurs to reshape global tourism, making it more inclusive, sustainable, and culturally enriching.

B. ECONOMIC ENGINES AND CULTURAL CHAMPIONS:

The contributions of women entrepreneurs extend far beyond their entrepreneurial endeavors. They are:

1. **Economic Catalysts:** Generating jobs, stimulating local economies, and fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems within communities, particularly in developing regions (UNWTO, 2020).
2. **Community Champions:** Empowering local communities by promoting cultural heritage, supporting small businesses, and investing in infrastructure development, leading to improved living standards and social well-being (Fontenla & Cabezas, 2019).
3. **Cultural Ambassadors:** Bridging cultural divides and promoting understanding through immersive experiences, responsible tourism practices, and intercultural dialogue, fostering global citizenship and respect for diverse traditions (Cohen & Ryan, 2018).

These impactful contributions highlight the crucial role women entrepreneurs play in building a more responsible and equitable global tourism industry, one that benefits both travellers and host communities.

C. CROSSING BORDERS, FACING OBSTACLES:

Despite their remarkable contributions, women entrepreneurs navigating the global tourism landscape face persistent and pervasive challenges. These include:

1. **Access to Finance:** Limited access to loans, grants, and venture capital due to gender bias and discriminatory practices within financial institutions, hindering their ability to scale their businesses (World Bank, 2020).
2. **Discriminatory Practices:** Gender-based discrimination in tourism supply chains, unequal opportunities for networking and partnerships, and societal biases against women in leadership roles (UNWTO, 2019).
3. **Work-Life Balance:** The demanding nature of tourism entrepreneurship, coupled with societal expectations of domestic responsibilities, creates a challenging work-life balance, impacting their career progression and well-being (Honeyman & Smith, 2017).

In synthesizing these findings, the review provides a comprehensive understanding of the diverse roles women entrepreneurs' play, the positive impacts they generate, and the persistent obstacles they confront in shaping the global tourism industry. These insights contribute to both scholarly discussions and practical considerations for fostering an environment where women entrepreneurs can truly thrive beyond borders. These persistent barriers highlight the need for systemic interventions to level the playing field and empower women entrepreneurs in global tourism.

VI. DISCUSSION:

The diverse landscapes painted by women entrepreneurs in global tourism are vibrant and inspiring, their contributions resonating far beyond the realm of profit and into the spheres of economic growth, community development, and cultural exchange. However, their journeys are not without persistent thorns in the form of gender-based biases, access to finance, and societal expectations. To unlock the boundless potential of these extraordinary pioneers, proactive interventions and collaborative efforts are crucial.

A. BREAKING BARRIERS, EMPOWERING FUTURES:

Levelling the playing field for women entrepreneurs necessitates a multi-pronged approach. Targeted funding initiatives that break down discriminatory lending practices and provide access to capital are essential for scaling ventures and driving economic growth. Mentorship programs tailored to their specific needs, coupled with knowledge-sharing platforms and capacity-building workshops, can equip them with the skills and tools needed to navigate the complexities of international tourism (World Bank, 2020). Policy reforms aimed at fostering gender equality in tourism supply chains, promoting flexible work arrangements, and addressing parental leave policies are pivotal to enabling greater

participation and career progression (UNWTO, 2019). These proactive interventions cannot be mere aspirations; they need to be actively translated into concrete action plans by governments, financial institutions, and industry leaders.

B. COLLABORATION IS KEY:

Empowering women entrepreneurs in global tourism demands a collective effort, a symphony played by diverse instruments. Governments must take the lead in enacting supportive policies, encouraging responsible tourism practices, and promoting gender equality within the industry. Travel agencies can champion their cause by actively integrating their ventures into tourism packages, highlighting their stories, and providing access to wider markets. Educational institutions have a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship among women, offering specialized courses, fostering innovative thinking, and nurturing the next generation of tourism leaders (Fontenla & Cabezas, 2019). International organizations like the UNWTO can serve as vital platforms for knowledge exchange, best practice sharing, and advocating for policy changes that create a more equitable environment.

Furthermore, collaboration can extend beyond institutional structures. Networking opportunities, peer-to-peer learning initiatives, and mentorship programs built by and for women themselves can provide invaluable support and solidarity. By sharing experiences, overcoming challenges together, and amplifying each other's voices, these women can create a powerful network that inspires, empowers, and paves the way for a future where their contributions are not merely acknowledged but celebrated.

By breaking down barriers, fostering collaboration, and nurturing an ecosystem that empowers women entrepreneurs, we can ensure that their vibrant tapestry continues to enrich the global tourism landscape. They are not simply navigating this dynamic industry; they are reshaping it, paving the way for a future that is more inclusive, sustainable, and culturally enriching for all. Let us rise to the challenge, join hands, and unlock the boundless potential of these change makers in global tourism.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The tapestry woven by women entrepreneurs in global tourism is both inspiring and revealing. While their diverse roles, impactful contributions, and unwavering resilience are evident, the persistent barriers they face demand immediate attention. To empower these change makers and unlock their boundless potential, we must translate insights into actionable steps.

FOSTERING CROSS-CULTURAL NETWORKS:

1. International Mentorship Programs: Facilitate cross-cultural mentorship programs connecting experienced women entrepreneurs in developed countries with those in emerging markets, fostering knowledge sharing, capacity building,

and access to valuable networks.

2. Collaborative Platforms: Develop online platforms and offline forums for women entrepreneurs to connect, exchange knowledge, and build collaborative ventures across borders, promoting cultural understanding and mutual support.
3. Skills Development Workshops: Organize targeted workshops focused on cross-cultural communication, navigating international tourism regulations, and promoting responsible tourism practices in diverse cultural contexts.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:

1. Green Innovation Grants: Establish specialized funding initiatives dedicated to innovative sustainable tourism ventures led by women entrepreneurs, driving responsible practices and empowering local communities.
2. Capacity Building Programs: Offer training programs equipping women entrepreneurs with skills in eco-lodge management, sustainable tourism planning, and community engagement, ensuring environmental and cultural preservation.
3. Best Practice Sharing Network: Create a platform for sharing best practices in sustainable tourism initiatives led by women entrepreneurs, highlighting their contributions and inspiring others to embrace responsible travel.

ENCOURAGING FURTHER RESEARCH:

1. Cross-Cultural Studies: Research the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in different cultural contexts, informing targeted interventions and promoting inclusive practices.
2. Sustainable Tourism Models: Investigate and showcase successful sustainable tourism models spearheaded by women entrepreneurs, providing insights and inspiration for wider replication.
3. Impact Assessment: Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term economic, social, and environmental impacts of women-led tourism ventures, demonstrating their multifaceted contributions and advocating for increased support.

These recommendations serve as a springboard, urging stakeholders to move beyond mere discussion and translate ambition into action. Governments, international organizations, travel agencies, educational institutions, and individual members of the tourism industry must join forces to dismantle barriers, nurture cross-cultural networks, promote sustainable practices, and invest in research. By paving the way for women entrepreneurs to navigate the international tourism landscape with greater ease and empowerment, we can collectively realize a future where their vibrant contributions illuminate a more inclusive, responsible, and sustainable global tourism

industry.

VI. FUTURE ACTION:

The journey to empower women entrepreneurs in global tourism demands sustained commitment and proactive exploration beyond the frontiers of current knowledge. To navigate the ever-evolving landscape of this dynamic industry, future research must focus on key areas crucial for shaping a more inclusive and equitable future:

1. DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXTS:

- a. Comparative studies: Examining the multifaceted roles, challenges, and contributions of women entrepreneurs across diverse cultural contexts, identifying both commonalities and region-specific nuances.
- b. Impact of Intersectionality: Investigating how factors like ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation intersect with gender, influencing the experiences and trajectories of women entrepreneurs in different parts of the world (Crenshaw, 1989).
- c. Culturally tailored support: Exploring culturally sensitive and context-specific interventions to overcome barriers and nurture the diverse entrepreneurial aspirations of women across borders.

2. STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS:

- a. Mapping existing networks: Identifying and analysing existing formal and informal networks supporting women entrepreneurs in global tourism, highlighting best practices and potential gaps.
- b. Building bridges across borders: Facilitating the creation of new collaborative platforms and initiatives that connect women entrepreneurs across countries, fostering knowledge exchange, mentorship, and joint ventures.
- c. Leveraging technology: Exploring the potential of digital platforms and online communities in creating robust and accessible networks for women entrepreneurs to connect, learn, and collaborate beyond geographical limitations.

3. CHAMPIONING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:

- a. Investigating sustainable models: Delving into the successes and challenges of sustainable tourism ventures led by women entrepreneurs, identifying key factors contributing to their long-term sustainability and positive impact.
- b. Community engagement: Examining the role of women entrepreneurs in promoting community-based sustainable tourism initiatives, fostering local empowerment and cultural preservation.
- c. Advocacy and policy: Analysing the effectiveness

of existing policies and programs promoting sustainable tourism practices in empowering women entrepreneurs, advocating for improvements and revisions where necessary.

4. MEASURING AND AMPLIFYING THEIR IMPACT:

- a. Long-term impact studies: Assessing the long-term economic, social, and environmental impact of women-led tourism ventures on local communities and destinations, quantifying their positive contributions.
- b. Storytelling and communication strategies: Developing effective communication strategies to showcase the successes, challenges, and inspiring stories of women entrepreneurs, raising awareness and garnering broader support for their endeavors.
- c. Advocate for inclusive data collection: Encouraging tourism data collection frameworks to capture and disaggregate data by gender, providing a more accurate picture of the contributions and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the industry.

By actively pursuing these lines of inquiry, future research can play a vital role in dismantling barriers, fostering enabling environments, and amplifying the voices of women entrepreneurs. With their unwavering resilience, innovative spirit, and commitment to positive change, these women are not just participants in shaping the future of global tourism; they are driving forces for an industry that is inclusive, sustainable, and enriching for all. Let us, through dedicated research and collaboration, pave the way for their empowered journeys, illuminating a brighter path for the future of global tourism.

VII. CONCLUSION:

The captivating tapestry woven by women entrepreneurs in global tourism extends far beyond mere participation in a dynamic industry. They are not simply navigating existing structures; they are architects of change, actively redefining the very narrative of tourism by weaving threads of social responsibility, cultural understanding, and sustainable practices into the fabric of this multifaceted industry.

Our journey through this review has unveiled the multifaceted roles these women play, from pioneering eco-tourism initiatives to nurturing community development through social enterprises. We have witnessed their economic engine, their cultural ambassadorship, and their unwavering commitment to fostering responsible travel practices. However, we must not turn a blind eye to the persistent thorns these trailblazers encounter – access to finance, discriminatory practices, and societal biases that impede their journey.

Ignoring these barriers would be a grave misstep. Unleashing the boundless potential of women entrepreneurs in global tourism demands concerted action. It requires us to acknowledge their multifaceted

roles, dismantle the obstacles that hinder their progress, and actively foster their contributions. By providing targeted funding initiatives, mentorship programs, and policy-driven support, we can empower them to scale their ventures, amplify their voices, and reshape the tourism landscape for the better.

The future of global tourism beckons, painted with vibrant hues of inclusivity, sustainability, and cultural exchange. At the forefront of this transformative canvas stand the women entrepreneurs, their resilience and ingenuity blazing a trail towards a brighter future. By embracing their contributions, overcoming their challenges, and partnering in their endeavours, we can unlock the immense potential they hold. Together, we can rewrite the narrative of global tourism, ensuring that it thrives not just as an economic engine, but as a force for positive change, cultural understanding, and a more equitable world. Let us rise to the challenge, join hands with these visionary women, and embark on this inspiring journey of collective transformation.

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