

Book review

H. Ramkissoon and F. Mavondo (eds), *Gender and Entrepreneurship in Tourism* (Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA 2023) 228 pp.

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In the last decade, the importance of tourism research, planning, and strategy-reaching sustainable development objectives, as outlined by the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) implemented by UNWTO to strive to achieve greater sustainability by 2030, is undeniable (Hall, 2021). Applying these 17 SDGs to a cross-cutting industry like tourism is beneficial, considering how tourism impacts our world in many ways, including social, economic, and environmental ways. Gender equality (SDG5), in particular, needs to be focused on as the increasing digitalization of the sector where technology has replaced or enhanced traditional forms of oppression and control makes women to be at greater risk from precarity and economic inequalities. Gender in tourism labor research has moved past the empowerment discourse to more nuanced understandings of how gender roles and economic roles interact in the tourism arena (Cole, 2018). However, there are limited studies analyzing gender and sustainable tourism entrepreneurship (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2023).

The book *Gender and Entrepreneurship in Tourism*, edited by Haywantee Ramkissoon and Felix Mavondo, consists of 12 conceptual and practical chapters written by a mix of early career and established tourism scholars from various disciplines. Its main focus is on revealing how gender and tourism entrepreneurship intersect, contributing to the body of knowledge on how tourism may help achieve the SDG5. This book's value also resides in the impressive geographical span of perspectives and case studies with research from China, Bangladesh, South Africa, Arctic Norway, Scotland, Oman, Puerto Rico, and Mauritius.

In the first chapter, the editors present extant research addressing why gender and tourism entrepreneurship research at this point is valuable, introduce this book, and set forth a research agenda, particularly on understanding how entrepreneurs identifying as any gender can work together to support their community and achieve SDGs.

Chapter 2 by Butler gives us a historical perspective of tourism, discussing the evolution of tourism and tourism entrepreneurship through the ages. Within this text, the role of women within entrepreneurship is explored to some extent, concluding that women in tourism used to be perceived as 'helpers' to male productive work, mainly by playing a role in dissemination of information on tourist attractions and destinations. An example is Mariana Starke whose letters formed the basis of the first two-volume guidebook, a predecessor to Lonely Planet and Coco Channel who made the suntan fashionable.

In Chapter 3, Chan and Law draw on a systematic literature review to understand gender in tourism entrepreneurship focusing on entrepreneurial motivations and desires, decision-making behaviors, management strategies, and success. They rely on a small number of articles (17) for this analysis, reflecting on contemporary issues

raised by these articles and avenues for future research. With a better-defined analytical theoretical angle to this interesting snapshot of the state-of-art in gender and tourism entrepreneurship, this chapter could have been more insightful.

Puerto Rico is the location of the empirical research on eight female entrepreneurs in Chapter 4 by Casado-Claro, Soares, and Cembranel. This chapter is a collection of female entrepreneurs' descriptions in terms of occupation, how they identify, and their COVID-19 resilience strategies. This chapter also uses policy documents and past literature to explore how government policies and private sectors' support in Puerto Rico have fostered a female entrepreneurial activity, but the connection between the entrepreneur stories and policy is not visible.

In Chapter 5, Derwnarain and Gungah take us to Mauritius, a small island-developing state, for a critical discussion of the challenges faced by female tourism entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter analyzes factors driving individual entrepreneurial orientation of female entrepreneurs using the concept of femininity, a characteristic of which is the state of 'being different from others' (p. 60), to elaborate on the role of *passion* in feminine drive for entrepreneurship engagement. The authors suggest a conceptual model of female entrepreneurs' individual entrepreneurship orientation based on a literature analysis. This chapter attempts to make a valiant attempt to make a strong theoretical contribution to the role of femininity in gender and tourism entrepreneurship knowledge and move away from 'masculinist framings' (p. 64) of entrepreneurship but lacks the voices of female entrepreneurs.

Chapters 6 and 7 present case studies and interviews with female entrepreneurs in North Scotland and China, respectively. Both chapters have limitations in addressing the structural gendered constraints faced by these women. Still, they highlight the importance of passion and community-minded goals in women's entrepreneurial experiences.

Chapter 8 explores the economic growth in Bangladesh and the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, as authors Hassan and Ramkissoon draw on past studies. They describe the female entrepreneur landscape, concluding that, as Bangladesh is one of the hardest countries for a woman to start a business, female entrepreneurs' growth is hampered by 'external and traditional hurdles' (p. 117). This chapter provides excellent background information on women tourism entrepreneurs in the specific context on which empirical research could be founded and suggests policy avenues.

Chapter 9 by Mathisen and Soreng presents an intriguing analysis of emotional capital's role in women tourism entrepreneurship. Viewing emotional capital as 'co-creating the entrepreneurial space' (p. 126) and related to gender capital, the authors investigate the nexus of context, emotional capital, and entrepreneurship experience in rural Arctic Norway. Methods used include narrative and thematic analysis on the authors' lived experiences as community members, stories from three tourism entrepreneurs, and industry actors' discussions. Conclusions indicate the importance of emotion in co-creating a creative space crucial for entrepreneurship and that while emotional capital is not per se gendered, its activation is context dependent. They end by stressing emotional capital's importance in developing an entrepreneurial culture that benefits tourism in rural areas.

Chapter 10 by Elbaz, Salem, Alkathiri, and Alshanfiri draws on empirical research conducted in Oman to explore how personality traits impact entrepreneur success. This is a robust study on entrepreneurship in Oman, but there is limited focus on female entrepreneurs and the reasons behind personality differences between men and women, while analysis is based on a 74% male sample. It ends by discussing policy implications for Oman tourism.

Chapter 11 by Smakange, Chipumuro, Chipfuva, and Ramkissoon draws on research gender and power in South African tourism entrepreneurship. Their research in this country where, from an indigenous viewpoint, ‘men are born as leaders’ (p. 169) and the educational level for women is low reflects on women’s limited access to financial resources and technical support. It makes policy and strategy recommendations which the authors stress should be context specific as ‘the circumstances of gender equity are different’ (p. 173). This chapter concludes its analysis by saying what needs to be done but lacks the empirical evidence to back this up.

This book closes with Chapter 12 by Sharma, Quadri-Felitti, and Huang who develop a theoretical argument on the differences experienced by female and male entrepreneurs, using the theory of transactional costs. Positing that higher transactional costs for women than men may impact women’s entrepreneurial experience and success, this chapter focuses on the classical entrepreneurial theory and connects to tourism through a case study on foodservice entrepreneurs. Drawing on stereotypical connections of femininity to caring, this chapter acknowledges some of the structural gendered barriers women workers face, such as accessing finance and restricted professional experiences, without probing deeper into the gendered reasons for this.

Past research into gendered labor relations in tourism, taking a feminist political economy approach, has revealed that gender roles influence entrepreneurial roles significantly (Bakas, 2017). While progress has been made on studying female tourism entrepreneurs’ experience and acknowledging the socio-economic structural challenges that mold their experiences, limited research addresses these challenges through a gender lens leaving the stereotypical connection of masculinity to entrepreneurial discourse untouched. Instead of uncovering the often-hidden workings of gendered discourse with tourism entrepreneurship, much research ends up reproducing stereotypes by researching female entrepreneurs using the masculinized measures of entrepreneurial and managerial success. To some extent, parts of this book *Gender and Entrepreneurship in Tourism* are guilty of this, but overall, this book still presents a very global perspective of female tourism entrepreneurship today.

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