

The Emerald Handbook of Women and Entrepreneurship in Developing Economies

Since my original work in female entrepreneurship in the United States, one of the first academic articles on the topic, which was followed by numerous articles focusing on female entrepreneurs in various countries throughout the world and one book on the topic, I have concluded that the best outcomes occur when a strong, effective private sector of female entrepreneurs occurs. I commend the contributors of this work on women entrepreneurship in developing economies as they address an area that has not received the attention that has occurred in developed economies. After providing the reader with a conceptual understanding of the topic as well as gender differences and diversity, the book focuses on aspects of women entrepreneurs in specific countries (Latin America, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and Kuwait, China, Kosovo, Modern Persian, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, the MENA and Nordic regions, and Pakistan). I know that as you read this book will appreciate and gain valuable insights on the role that over 163 million women entrepreneurs play in developing economies worldwide.

–Robert D. Hisrich, PhD
Bridgestone Professor of International Business,
Director of the Global Management Center
Kent State University (USA)

This is a definitive contribution to our understanding of gender and entrepreneurship. Rezaei and his collaborators offer the first comprehensive assessment of the role of women in self-employment and business formation in less developed countries. Of special interest is their focus on the relationship between women's economic activity and institutions. The book weaves a rich tapestry in which women come alive as agents of their own destiny, devising survival strategies but also ways to enhance businesses as they interact, often through contestation, with imperfect institutions. This is the best available portrayal of a subject as significant as it is timely.

–Patricia Fernández-Kelly, Professor of Sociology,
Princeton University

This book led by Shahamak Rezaei made an important contribution to the important research field of women entrepreneurship and emerging economies. The wide geographical coverage shows the prevailing issues and challenges that women entrepreneurs encounter in developing and growing their ventures. I highly recommend this book to students of entrepreneurship, international business, public policy, and organization studies.

–Prof. Dr. Yipeng Liu FAcSS
Professor in Management and Organisational Studies
Henley Business School
University of Reading, UK
Founding Director, China Management and Global Business

The Emerald Handbook of Women and Entrepreneurship in Developing Economies provides an insightful and complete review of all important aspects of female entrepreneurship in the setting of a developing country. The book investigates this increasingly important phenomenon from individual and institutional point of view. The reader will be able to grasp the motivation, main challenges, barriers, drivers, and opportunities for female entrepreneurs in certain developing economies of the Middle East and Northern Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Finally, the book provides significant review of the challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic on business activity of women entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the literature in this area gains valuable, multicultural, and contemporary contribution with this title.

–Dr. Vladimir Dzenopoljac
American University of the Middle East, Kuwait

Women's entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon in developing economies. With the endless effort of the authors and editors during the COVID-19 pandemic, this book suggests a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities women entrepreneurs encounter in the process of entrepreneurship and, more importantly, how they emancipate in a dynamic environment full of uncertainties and gender disparities. Indeed, women entrepreneurs, experts, and policymakers can enjoy this research as it provides a foundation for understanding this phenomenon from multiple perspectives. This collection will be a valuable reference for students, educators, policymakers, and entrepreneurs.

–Dr. Ying Chen
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Foreword

This handbook makes a valuable contribution by uniquely combining three exciting and relevant arenas of research: (1) entrepreneurship promotion, (2) gender studies, and (3) emergent economies. It is highly relevant to scholars, policymakers, and practitioners, alike. While considerable work has examined these issues separately, the bulk of existing research focuses on advanced economies, and is often phenomenologically driven. This is problematic because institutional and cultural barriers to entrepreneurship, and particularly to women entrepreneurs, often tend to be more constrained in emergent economies. As well, this work arrives during an important time of transition – as the world experiences a global pandemic, the nature of work, as well as previously well-established cultural norms, expectations, and career trajectories are upturned and revised. These transitions present important opportunities for entrepreneurs, particularly more marginalized persons including women, to adapt to new constraints with ingenious and unexpected innovations.

As the work in this handbook illuminates, cultural variations may play a more extensive role in either facilitating or hampering women entrepreneurs than other factors often examined by entrepreneurship scholars, highlighting an important research gap often overlooked in the literature. As well, much scholarship continues to focus on the economic contributions that entrepreneurs make, frequently overlooking their social contributions, a characteristic that has been associated with gender and offers an important distinction when examining issues of community development.

Professor Rezaei and his colleagues have amassed an important contribution to the literature that firmly anchors their work in a reframing of the “entrepreneurship for economic development” narrative. They span multiple levels (e.g. individual and institutional/national) highlighting the need for contextual understanding of these phenomena. Their focus includes not only life-cycle factors, but also historical, cultural, and regional specificities that provide important generalizable insight when we move outside the heavily researched environments of Europe and North America.

Scholars who have worked in entrepreneurship over the past few decades fully recognize the importance of gender studies, including feminist perspectives on social change and development. From a relatively marginalized perspective, the field has grown with important scholarship, including its own prestigious international annual scholarly conference (the Diana International Research Conference, associated with the Diana Project). Much work continues to focus on

inequality in advanced economies, including gender biases that impact venture capital and other financial support, industry location, leadership, limited growth and/or market capitalization, and a dearth of suitable role models, particularly in STEM or in fortune 500 companies. However, our knowledge of entrepreneurial pursuits in emergent economies is less complete.

I found the work in this handbook to be both unique and valuable, providing important insights into contexts and regions previously overlooked. How, for example, does entrepreneurship innovation intersect with gender roles? Little is known regarding female entrepreneurship in regions such as Iran, China, and Afghanistan, where exceptional cultural and institutional factors are likely to strongly impact entrepreneurial opportunities for women. This handbook provides an important collection of unique insights, handily collated into one significant volume. I'm certain to utilize this handbook in my own scholarly research as well as in the classroom, and I salute professor Rezaei and his colleagues for carefully providing this important addition to my library shelf. I'm sure you'll agree.

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