

DO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS
PRACTICE A DIFFERENT KIND OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

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ABSTRACT

While the number of women-owned enterprises has been increasing, they account for only 35% of business ownership. This study examines female entrepreneurs' experiences with the aim of understanding whether their entrepreneurship practices conform to existing models. Because motivation affects how entrepreneurship is undertaken, the concept of whether 'success' has different meanings for them than are suggested by mainstream entrepreneurial theory is also explored.

A qualitative study of women entrepreneurs was undertaken in the United Kingdom, in Devon. Thus, the entrepreneurs studied operate in a rural environment. How this context affected the model of entrepreneurship was also considered.

The research contributes to knowledge by identifying the entrepreneurship model of successful women entrepreneurs. While the model of entrepreneurship practised by women entrepreneurs mainly supported mainstream definitions, the accepted 'start, scale, sell' model is challenged.

As a result, the term 'woman entrepreneur' is suggested to be somewhat problematic, as it seems that women simply practise entrepreneurship. This challenges the preconceptions people may have about businesses run by women.