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## **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TOURISM: THE CASE OF THE BUFFALO CITY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The number of women in entrepreneurial areas is increasing around the world as the world strives for a more gender-equal society. Despite the fact that numerous countries have legislation allowing women to start and run their own enterprises, women still encounter gender-specific obstacles on their entrepreneurial journey. According to research, the tourist business is predominantly controlled by women, owing to the presence of vocations associated with femininity, particularly in the hospitality sector. Despite this, women are primarily employed by male-owned and managed tourism businesses, and there is still a need to promote women-owned tourism businesses. The importance of women in the tourist entrepreneurial area in South Africa is examined in this article. The difficulties that women entrepreneurs encounter in the tourism business will be assessed. The researchers examine into the perks that society bestows on males from birth, as well as the consequences of socialisation on women who aspire to be business owners. The experiences of male and female tourism entrepreneurs are examined in order to determine whether the adage "It's a man's world" still holds true in the twenty-first century tourist boardroom.

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### **INTRODUCTION.**

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 (SDG) argues that businesses need to incorporate gender because it touches on issues that are economic, social, and environmental. It is specifically addressed in 10 other Goals and has its own Goal, SDG 5, which has the objective of attaining gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The report further says that in the business, in politics, and in the home, gender-based discrimination has long held women and girls in inferior positions to men. Women are legally prohibited from specific occupations in some nations due to this prejudice, while in other nations, economic obstacles such as the gender pay gap prevent women from enjoying full equality. It will take laws and frameworks that support, uphold, and monitor gender equality in all spheres of life to abolish gender-based discrimination. This entails equal access to employment and financial advantages, as well as policies in place to deal with infractions of laws prohibiting workplace discrimination. It refers to laws against violence against women, such as those that expressly target sexual harassment or make rape committed during a marriage illegal. It

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includes equal protections and rights inside marriage and the family, including the ability to file for divorce or be recognized as the head of the home, as well as family courts specifically designed to uphold these rights. Additionally, it encompasses the equal right to run for and occupy public office as well as equality in overarching legal structures like constitutions. The masculine stereotype is entwined with the definition of entrepreneurship, and the expected behaviors for entrepreneurs are 'man in nature' (Bruni, 2004: 256). While the private sphere is absent from male entrepreneur images, family and the reproductive life cycle are always present in female entrepreneur representations. Scholars have mostly ignored female entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, and those who have looked into it have generally focused on women entrepreneurs in positions that did not question or even reinforce their traditional household responsibilities. Following the pandemic, Mahlalela (2021) argues that the tourist sector is one of the major intervention areas indicated in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, as tourism is a significant driver of the country's economic recovery. It supports a large value chain that is dominated by women. Mahlalela goes on to say that the Department of Tourism, in collaboration with its partners, has developed a robust Tourism Sector Recovery Plan. Protecting and regenerating supply, reigniting demand, and developing enabling capabilities for long-term sustainability are the three pillars or strategic themes that this Plan is built on. Recovery is essential to the new normal and to the expression of a reinvented industry coexisting with a virus with stop/start cycles. Small firms are critical to the economy's growth because they allow for an inclusive talent pipeline into the industry while also transferring skills and creating jobs.

According to Serafimova and Petrevska (2018), the situation of gender equality in the labor market is becoming increasingly important in the hospitality and tourism sector, as well as in South Africa at large as noted by Maleka, Ntanjana, Ndivhuwo, and Du Plessis (2018). Gender mainstreaming, or the equal involvement of men and women in the job market, is a critical indicator for future action and policy initiatives that can benefit society. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) guarantees gender equality as a fundamental human right and one of the country's most important aims and priorities. At the same time, work in South Africa is marked by an unfavorable gender structure, insecure economic and social conditions, and a mismatch between available and needed labor market characteristics. The purpose of this research is to evaluate women's present participation in entrepreneurship in the tourist sector in South Africa. In particular, the article aims to investigate and identify the specific issues that women encounter when attempting to become entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. The focus is on identifying the primary deep barriers to increasing women's entrepreneurship, beginning with an assessment of managers' and employees' perceptions of travel agencies and catering facilities in selected South African destinations. The study's contribution is that it adds to the limited academic work that has been done in South Africa on this topic.

The paper is divided into numerous interrelated sections. Following the introduction of this paper, the remainder is organized as follows: In the second section, a literature review is an attempt to give background information on women's entrepreneurship from a global and national viewpoint. The methodological framework is presented in Section three, while the analysis, results, and discussion of the research are presented in Section four. The final portion contains closing thoughts, future difficulties, and recommendations.

The goal of this research is to gain a better knowledge on the importance of female entrepreneurship and the experiences of male and female tourism entrepreneurs in order to see if the old adage "It's a man's world" still holds true in the twenty-first century in the tourist and hospitality business sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW.**

Naturally according to Serafimova and Petrevska (2018), view entrepreneurship as the most powerful expression of men's individual freedom to reach their full potential through the free and sovereign expression of their ideas (Stein et al, 2013). The number of managers and professionals who can be classified as entrepreneurs within existing enterprises and companies is steadily increasing. These are individuals who possess entrepreneurial traits and are capable of implementing creative ventures in larger organizations. Women run a small percentage of firms, and women managers work primarily in women-owned businesses. They also claim that their research, which is based on a World Bank survey that looked at small, medium, and big businesses, showed that women own 36 percent of examined businesses and manage 18 percent of them. In this approach, women-owned firms are those

in which at least one of the owners is a woman, while women-run enterprises are those managed by women. As a result, women manage 10% of firms owned by men and 33% of businesses owned by women. In this regard, Minniti (2010) and Van der Zwan et al. (2011) argue that women's business ownership lags behind men's, which is why they are an underutilized "source of entrepreneurial vitality." Women entrepreneurs are more concentrated in particular areas, such as retail and hospitality, according to Bardasi et al. (2011), whereas men are present in all sectors of the economy. Finally, the informal sector's concentration explains the gender disparity in company productivity, resulting in productivity in various sectors (Minniti & Naudé, 2010).

Entrepreneurship, according to Zapalska and Brozik (2014), is one of the most essential aspects contributing to the initiation and maintenance of economic development in society. Entrepreneurs seek out new sources of supplies, markets, and technology, as well as new and more efficient organizational structures. They also generate new possibilities and take them with the determination and energy required to overcome the obstacles offered by the social, cultural, political, and economic settings (Morrison et al., 2003). And according to Acs, Szerb, Lafuente, and Márkus (2019), entrepreneurship generates a variety of social-economic benefits, including job creation, economic growth, household incomes, products and services, and other aspects of a stable, civil, and wealthy society. Many nations, particularly those with low-income economies, lack suitable conditions and facilitation for the establishment and expansion of productive and developmental entrepreneurs, according to Acs, Szerb, Lafuente, and Márkus (2019). As vital as entrepreneurship is for promoting economic development through employment, innovation, and welfare, it is not manna from heaven as a country progresses through the stages of development as argued by Acs, Szerb, Lafuente, and Márkus (2019). While all countries benefit from thriving entrepreneurs because of the social and economic benefits they bring, not all countries, particularly low-income economies, have favorable entrepreneurial environments, according to Kimmitt, Muoz, and Newbery (2020). A country must have the finest entrepreneurs, not necessarily the most, in order to be entrepreneurial. What the "best and brightest" do matters, and a country's entrepreneurial ecosystem must support their efforts, according to Acs, Szerb, Lafuente, and Márkus (2019). The quality of an entrepreneurial ecosystem is determined by how the following pillars shape and influence entrepreneurial attitudes, abilities, and aspirations in a country, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Institute (GEDI): opportunity perception, start-up skills, risk acceptance, networking, cultural support, opportunity start-up, technology absorption, human capital, competition, product innovation, process innovation, high-growth businesses, internationalization and is also supported by Acs, Szerb, Lafuente, and Márkus (2019).

Whilst a study by Paul and Sarma (2013) in the context of ECO (Europe and Central Asia) explores the gender gap, which accounts for 6.5 percent of self-employment and is defined by numerous factors. Companies founded on the Balkan Peninsula are thought to have the greatest gender gap. Self-employed women in middle-income nations on the Balkans and the CIS (Community Innovation Surveys) are more prone to pay bribes in order to succeed in business than women in other regions, as Paul and Sarma (2013) found out. Gamberoni and Posadas (2012) found that the income disparity between men and women is 26 percent in favor of men in Russia, where there are several databases on the subject. According to an article written by Serafimova and Petrevska in 2018, they both conclude that women-run businesses sell less than men-run businesses, despite having more value generated per worker.

Women entrepreneurs have been identified as new engines of growth and economies in developing countries, contributing to the prosperity and well-being of their communities. They've been dubbed a key "untapped source" of economic development and growth (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). At their annual meeting in 2012, the World Economic Forum for Women Entrepreneurs dubbed them "the way forward." Others have referred to them as a "new social movement," claiming that they should "...forget about aid and instead focus on women entrepreneurs as major drivers of growth and development" (Forbes, 2011). Hanson (2009), women will always have the same entrepreneurial potential as males and can contribute to wealth creation, self-employment, and the establishment and growth of their own firms. Unfortunately, according to him all that is a hindrance is simply due to institutional barriers that women entrepreneurs confront, their potential is not completely realized and exploited (Hanson, 2009). Women who opt to start their own businesses face a lack of representation in the construction industry around the world, limiting their ability to contribute to economic progress (Verwey, 2005; Worrall et al, 2008).

According to Hatfield (2015), if one examines the gender gap in entrepreneurship in the EU as a whole, following patterns in the rest of the developed world, including the United States, female entrepreneurship has grown significantly in recent decades. In the EU, women's employment rates are mostly untouched by the recession, whereas the number of male entrepreneurs fell by 17% between 2008 and 2010. (EC, 2010) as quoted by Serafimova and Petrevska (2018). According to research, the number of self-employed women in France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom has gradually increased over the last decade (Hatfield, 2015). While this is a positive development, women account for only 29 percent of the EU's 40 million entrepreneurs in 2012, which is in line with the rest of the industrialized world, where women own and manage around one-third of all businesses (McClelland et al, 2005). It also reveals that in each EU country, female self-employment lags behind male self-employment, with the highest differences in Ireland, Sweden, and Denmark, and the smallest differences in Luxembourg and Portugal (Hatfield, 2021).

According to Maleka, Ntanjana, Ndivhuwo, and Du Plessis, previous research indicates that there is limited available evidence on gender disparities in tourism labor, mainly to the detriment of women (2018). However there is a substantial body of literature that discusses the relevance of female entrepreneurship. Several methodologies have been used to explore this topic and uncover the fundamental pattern that motivates women to start their own business, which is often a successful one (Birley, 1989; Cromie & Hays, 1988; Scott, 1986; Star & Yudkin, 1996; Zapalska & Brozik, 2014). Noneconomic goals, such as personal fulfillment and independence, are even said to motivate women more than males (Burke et al, 2002; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Schindehutte et al, 2003). Following the historical significance of female oppression in South Africa, according to Snyman (2013), the South African constitution (1996) made provisions to address the unintended consequences of gender discrimination, as discussed by Hansen (2012). Despite regulations such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and triple BEE (Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment), gender discrimination against women in many fields continues to obstruct women's advancement, according to Hansen (2012). Despite the fact that the number of women working in the economy continues to rise, Martin and Barnard (2013) determined that progress in gender transition remains inadequate. While Derera, Chitakunye, and O'Neill (2014) point out that there is a scarcity of research on women entrepreneurs in South Africa, particularly in the tourist business. As highlighted by Pinar, McCuddy, Birkan, and Kozak, the situation of women in the tourist business has been a source of concern among both management practitioners and academics (2011). Whilst according to Botha, entrepreneurship is considered as a crucial instrument for reducing unemployment and poverty around the world (2006). According to Rogerson (2005), the tourist industry in particular has been regarded as one of the important economic drivers for post-apartheid South Africa. Alternative economic methods, such as tourism, are required in light of the country's deteriorating economic situation, according to Pettersson, K., and Heldt Cassel, (2014). According to Sharpley, & Vass, (2006) and Kuslivan, & Kuslivan, (2006), tourism is unquestionably a significant job creator (2000). Across its numerous sub sectors and levels, the tourism industry offers a highly fragmented economic activity, a variety of direct and indirect employment options, as well as entrepreneurship potential as seen by Ntanjana and Mangwane, (2020).

More than half of South Africa's population is female. Despite this, their engagement in the corporate sector is still very limited. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2016/2017, which was cited by African Association Entrepreneurs, the highest female rates in South Africa are found among women aged 45 to 54, indicating that entrepreneurship is usually conducted in later stages of life. The relative absence of participation among the two youngest age groups—those 18-24 and those 25-34—explains the low total female entrepreneurship rate. Women are the most vulnerable population category in the country due to their high unemployment rate, which is currently over 32% of the entire labor force. For most women in South Africa, who are the primary breadwinners, particularly in rural regions, entrepreneurship offers a safe professional route. The value of female entrepreneurship has been well-documented in the literature. Several methodologies have been used to explore this topic and uncover the fundamental pattern that motivates women to start their own business, which is often a successful one (Birley, 1989; Cromie & Hays, 1988; Scott, 1986; Star & Yudkin, 1996; Zapalska & Brozik, 2014). Noneconomic goals, such as personal fulfillment and independence, are even said to motivate women more than males (Burke et al, 2002; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Schindehutte et al, 2003). Furthermore, Hisrich and Brush (1983) argue that age, marital status, education, career, past experience, ethnic identity, work-family conflicts, and reasons for starting a

private business or similar are the most common features that are considered to create an overview of the profile of women entrepreneurs. Women in their early twenties, on the other hand, have more growth-oriented businesses than women in their forties (Mitra, 2002). They chose self-employment because it allows them to strike a balance between family and work commitments (Ufuk & Ozgen, 2001).

#### **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FRAME.**

This paper describes a study that collected and analyzed data using a qualitative data analysis technique. As part of a conceptual framework, the author evaluated the literature and connected tourism with partnerships amongst women entrepreneurs. To gather literature on the topics of tourism, women entrepreneurs, business management, and local economic development in local government, a variety of publications from reputable journals and books were evaluated. The author employed his expertise in the areas where these ideas may be most effectively applied. The author obtained information on municipal Local Economic Development unit, tourism, municipal internationalization, collaborative management, and service delivery from 50 published and forthcoming articles, working papers, PhD theses, and conference proceedings. The literature on the fields of tourism, public and municipal finance, public management, economics, public policy, political science, urban studies, and business management was also reviewed. The author created new knowledge by further filtering, analyzing, re-examining, and reusing data from earlier investigations. These included EBSCOhost, Emerald, Science Direct, Google Scholar, Sabinet, and Summon, among other electronic databases. This study preferred a qualitative document analysis since it could be applied to previous studies to provide new information (Bryman & Bell 2016:267). This study aims to provide an answer to the question of how district municipalities in the South Africa especially in the Eastern Cape Province can collaborate with other sister municipalities to promote women in tourism with the intention of enhancing women entrepreneurship. Tourism and women entrepreneurship need to be promoted as key elements for job creation in local government sphere.

#### **VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.**

Babbie and Mouton (2001) assert that reliability and validity are two technical aspects that must be given specific attention in order to assure the measurement of qualitative research. According to Veal (2006), validity is the degree to which the facts actually reflect the phenomenon under study or investigation. He continues by pointing out that this area of tourist research is problematic in part because questionnaire-based interviews are the primary source of information for researchers seeking information on people's attitudes and behavior, which are the core topics of empirical study. Validity is the degree to which research findings would hold true if it were conducted again later or with a new sample of individuals (Veal, 2006). He continues by saying that validity might be viewed as a model borrowed from the natural sciences, according to which identical results should be obtained from repeated experiments under adequately controlled settings. The questionnaire was used as the main technique for gathering data for this particular study. Some of the questionnaire's questions, such as those about women in the tourism industry, were taken from earlier studies on women and tourism conducted in South Africa. The constructions and contents of the questions in the questionnaire survey, as well as the validity and reliability of data collection, had been taken into account from prior research studies. To reduce unreliability factors in the study, field workers were taught and questions in questionnaires and surveys were explained before the event. The researcher contacted the female entrepreneurs in the month of April in order to gather data. Due of the Easter weekend and a marked pick-up period following the disastrous covid-19 scourge, the time chosen presented a wonderful opportunity. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, and the themes that emerged from the in-person interviews with the women business owners and entrepreneurs were classified according to several themes.

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.**

Wellman, Kruger and Mitchell, (2005:201) argue that participants in any study should be "thoroughly and genuinely informed" about the study's objective before deciding whether or not to participate. As a result, informed consent refers to the process of telling potential participants about the study and assuring them that participation is optional, as was done in this study. The managers of the establishments were also sent the questionnaire to confirm that it met the study's ethical

requirements, and it was discovered that it was fair, ethical, and in line with the research aims. When asked if their companies' names may be used in the study, 100% of the respondents said yes. The respondents were informed that their responses would have no bearing on their connection with their consumers, and that the study was being undertaken solely to aid policymakers in developing future service offerings. However, in terms of the final findings, the plan is to show them to various establishments first before making the paper available to the general public and responses. In addition, the Border Kei Chamber of Business passed and approved the research questionnaire and techniques utilized in this study, and the respondents filled out and signed the researcher's informed permission form, which explained what it meant to engage in such a study.

### **THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS.**

A theoretical framework is a framework which provides both the structure and boundaries within which the study which is being undertaken. Theoretical framework is an essential component of social science research. This aids the researcher in maintaining concentration on the phenomenon under investigation rather than any haphazard investigation. A theory is defined as an ordered set of assertions about a general behavior or structure that are assumed to remain true across a large number of different situations. It can also be defined as a statement of empirically observed or approximated relationships between units. As opposed to a conceptual framework, a theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide the research or hypothesis and the application of such a theory or sets of concepts drawn from one theory to offer an explanation for a phenomena or research problem (Imenda, 2014:189). This paper adopts the Schneider and Ingram theory to understand the relevance of the women entrepreneurship in tourism in the 21st century, using the value of female entrepreneurship as units of analysis. Having adopted the Schneider and Ingram theory as a theoretical framework to guide the argument of the paper, it is interesting to learn that the theory has not been applied in the study of good governance and political stability in general and specifically in the context of the African continent. Schneider and Ingram's (1993) study laid the foundation for the theory. The theory has traditionally been applied to the study of national policy development with the goal of better understanding policy and decision-making processes under ambiguous situations. Many variables that were formerly considered irrelevant or the domain of another discipline are now considered significant political phenomena by contemporary political scientists. Examples include the role of money and the media in politics, as well as the importance of gender in understanding political behavior. Although political science has always been interested in the topic of who wins or loses from policy, most other aspects of policy formulation have been deemed the domain of economists, lawyers, and other specialists. However, with the emergence of public policy as a major subfield of political science, attention has shifted to new aspects of the policy process, such as agenda setting, formulation, implementation, and consequences (Arnold 1990; Ingram and Schneider 1991; Kingdon 1984; Lipsky and Smith 1989; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983; Rose 1991; Smith and Stone 1988; Pressman and Wildavsky 1973), as well as additional elements of policy design, such as goals, tools, rules, and tar (Ingram and Schneider 1992; Linder and Peters 1985; Ostrom 1990; Schneider and Ingram 1990a, 1990b; Stone 1988). We suggest that the social construction of target groups is a significant, albeit understudied, political phenomena that deserves to be included in political scientists' research on public policy.

The social construction of target populations has a tremendous influence on public officials, according to this idea, and shapes both the policy agenda and the actual formulation of policy. Public authorities are under intense pressure to give advantageous policies to powerful, positively created target populations while devising punitive, punishment-oriented policies for negatively constructed groups. The theory is essential because it explains why some groups benefit more than others, regardless of traditional concepts of political power, and how policy designs can reinforce or change these advantages. Furthermore, the theory overcomes certain long-standing conundrums that political scientists have faced in trying to answer Lasswell's question, "Who gets what, when, and how?" (Lasswell,1936). This theory then tries to reintroduce public policy to the foreground of political analysis, providing an alternative to both pluralist and microeconomic viewpoints.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.**

The study of female entrepreneurs is becoming more popular. 2848 papers on female entrepreneurship were found in the systematic review by Cardella et al. (2020), the majority of which were published within the previous ten years. The requirement for academics to assist national and international political agendas on promoting female entrepreneurship is said to be the cause of the increase in research (Gherardi, 2015). By enhancing knowledge of what motivates women to engage in business and how this motivation may be sustained, research might help design more successful policymaking interventions (Cavada et al., 2017). In the end, research on sustainable entrepreneurship and gender can support social policies at different decision-making levels (Foss et al., 2019). Social policies, as used in this study, are those that promote social and economic engagement among groups that are either underrepresented or perceived as vulnerable in local communities (Diekmann & McCabe, 2011). The labor market participation of women is still difficult, particularly in terms of equal opportunities, pay, and work-life balance (European Commission, 2022). These issues are particularly severe in some regions of the world, such as Central Asia, where female labor force participation rates have been shown to be extremely low (Khitarihvilli, 2016). As a result, research on gender and sustainable entrepreneurship can help social policies that aim to increase the participation of women in local labor markets and encourage them to take an active part in their communities. Despite the positive expansion of academic research on female entrepreneurs, there are still some significant information gaps. First, research on female entrepreneurship in emerging economies is scarce (Tajeddini et al., 2017). In their systematic assessment, Correa et al. (2021) found 77 papers that specifically targeted female entrepreneurs in underdeveloped nations. According to Cardella et al.'s assessment, this represents just 3% of all publications on female entrepreneurship (2020). The reasons why women choose to start their own businesses are determined locally, and this has an impact on their success (Xheneti et al., 2019). The findings of "western" research on women entrepreneurs, according to Ribeiro et al. (2021), cannot be directly transferred to other contexts due to differences in resource availability and governance structures. This necessitates a steady supply of complex studies on female entrepreneurs in developing nations.

Second, there is a lack of industry coverage in the studies on female entrepreneurs. Less research has been done on female entrepreneurs in the tourism industry compared to manufacturing, education, and retail (Kakabadse et al., 2018). (Cole, 2018). This is troubling since local economies, particularly those in poorer nations, rely on money from tourism (Thirumalesh Madanaguli et al., 2021). Furthermore, only six studies that concentrate on micro, small, and medium-sized firms are found in the review of female entrepreneurship research in emerging nations conducted by Correa et al. (2021). (MSMEs). This is a significant issue because MSMEs make up the majority of business types in developing nations, particularly in the tourism industry (Kimbu et al., 2021). Last but not least, there is a critical research vacuum in the knowledge of women's entrepreneurial motivations and the techniques they use to maintain this desire in the face of changing external situations (Correa et al., 2021). More precisely, studies have not focused enough on external disruptors that can support female entrepreneurship, such as life event problems (Nakamura & Horimoto, 2020). Despite the fact that investigations have begun examining women business owners during difficult times, these investigations are mostly focused on the COVID-19 pandemic (Manolova et al., 2020). Studies don't take localized but protracted life event issues into account when analyzing female entrepreneurship (Bastian et al., 2018). This is a significant theoretical flaw since crises can inspire creativity even while they are detrimental to established corporate structures and harm local populations (Monllor & Murphy, 2017). Therefore, there is a need for empirical research on female entrepreneurs in areas left damaged by the effects of catastrophic catastrophes (Nakamura & Horimoto, 2020). These studies can shed light on how female entrepreneurship develops and thrives under conditions that are a far cry from the norm (Asgary et al., 2012).

South Africa is one of the most diverse African countries in terms of culture, legacy, and natural resources for the establishment and expansion of small tourism and hospitality businesses. Domestic and international tourists can find regions of cultural history and enjoy nature from the Atlantic coastline in the west to the Indian Ocean in the east, and lowlands, highlands, and mountain ranges in the north to Cape Point in the south. Since the political dispensation of the 1990s, female-owned tourism and hospitality businesses have sprouted up all over South Africa. Those firms grew swiftly and are still small, but they are incredibly successful on their own scales. Bed and breakfasts,



guesthouses and inns, restaurants and cafés, tourist wellness and health services, sports and entertainment training, and rental services are all examples of tourism activities seen in South Africa.

The most common tourist activities provided in South Africa are visiting pilgrimage sites, national parks, and nature experiences, outdoor and recreational activities, arts festivals and cultural events, art and folklore related galleries, and art or cooking seminars, visiting historical sites, wellness and health related seminars, and sports training. These business owners were able to boost their competitiveness, which resulted in regional economic growth and employment creation. The firms are relatively new, with an average operating time of roughly twenty years. The majority of the respondents had not started their businesses until Apartheid was dissolved in the 1990s. However, as stated during the interviewing portion of this work, abilities acquired prior to 1990 were not necessarily applicable in the new economic and political climate. Although the businesses are tiny, it has been noted that most of them have expanded their services to include foreign clients over time. The most successful small tourist and hospitality businesses are often those who created a strong competitive edge by focusing on a certain product, service, or niche market, according to the findings of this paper. The secret to their survival and rapid expansion has been to provide greater quality and better services and goods. Their services were targeted towards travelers who are more educated, cultured, and interested in leading healthy, active lives. In a post-apartheid South Africa, tourism is seen as geared toward tourists who are not only more educated, but also more culturally conscious and attuned to the natural environment, with an interest in a healthy lifestyle and nature-based activities. Clearly according to this paper's respondent it's clear that both Social, Political and Economic changes in the country as a result of the new political dispensation caused major shifts in societal tendencies, which resulted in new travel and tourist demand patterns as well as shifting product requirements. Tourism is a people-oriented industry, and economic growth is impossible without human growth. The pandemic has impacted the majority of women's entrepreneur enterprises, and what is urgently needed is crisis management training for women, which will play a critical role in keeping their businesses running. The creation of market access for women entrepreneurs, even beyond the borders of South Africa, is critical, as some of these entrepreneurial items need to be shown in other areas of the world. This paper notes and appreciates the strides made by South African government for investing in the development of rising female entrepreneurs in the country as revealed in this paper. This effort, in collaboration with the Department of Small Business Development, highlights the excellent socioeconomic benefits that can be realized through partnerships. This government-led entrepreneurship development effort appears to have a good chance of reducing unemployment and boosting small company skills. and it appears that women are pleased of the fact that a considerable proportion of them are given certificates for successfully completing the program. Women make up a major percentage of the tourism workforce, according to the findings of this research, and this program successfully supports the ideal of inclusivity while also developing the pipeline of talent in the tourism value chain. Through job development, women's participation in tourism has the potential to alleviate the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Tourism, in addition to generating cash, provides economic possibilities for women and youth, promotes the development of small and medium-sized businesses, and has the potential to generate social cohesion. This important pillar of South Africa's economy has a long value chain and numerous interconnections with other economic sectors, resulting in large multiplier effects. An enabling environment in which tourism can expand and prosper is required to make it as inclusive as feasible. Such enabling frameworks are in place in the Department of Tourism.

It's also worth noting that the government, through the Enterprise Development and Transformation Programme, is working hard to bring in new participants to the tourism economy and boost destination competitiveness. To encourage sector change and job development, the Enterprise Development and Transformation Portal will act as an online supplier marketplace for SMMEs. It is widely acknowledged that technology will continue to drive the delivery of government services in the future. Another important enabler is the Women in Tourism Programme, which promotes and supports women's development and empowerment in the tourism industry. Since its start in 2013, the program has provided training, empowerment, and networking opportunities to help women advance their careers in the industry.

The female entrepreneurs who took part in this study demonstrated how they focused and strategized to make their tourism and hospitality enterprises effective in a difficult business

environment. The majority of the business owners interviewed highly support the notion of sustainable firms. Furthermore, the respondents claimed that their enterprises had a significant positive impact on the local environment, community, society, and economy. Their businesses have been a vital source of growth, wealth creation, employment, and respectable labor for their local economy, according to their experience. They believe that collaboration between governments, businesses, labor, and society is critical for promoting sustainable businesses and ensuring high-quality jobs.

Women's career advancement has traditionally been hampered by gender discrepancies in the country: limited access to business opportunities and information, educational gaps, limited skill sets, large wage inequities, lack of capital and assets, low self-esteem and confidence, and limited business networks. On the other hand, in a male-dominated industry, gender bias and preconceptions create the ideal of a flawless businesswoman, creating a very highly competitive standard where women entrepreneurs must deal with multiple hurdles while remaining unfazed. Women's entrepreneurial success is hampered by workplace conflicts and discrimination, imbalances between work and family duties, time pressure, stress, anxiety, and mental exhaustion. It has been shown that women entrepreneurs, who are frequently at the bottom of the tourism economic value chain, suffer a slew of problems. It is also acknowledged that an attempt should be made to define an agenda and identify initiatives that will aid in the achievement of the Women in Tourism goals. This program's key focus areas should include personal development training, assisting women in developing a competitive advantage in their enterprises, and providing capacity building efforts. Women entrepreneurs, women working in the tourism industry, students, and other women from the informal sector who want to join the tourism value chain should all be included in the program. Finally, a Women in Tourism Program with provincial chapters in each of the nine provinces is required to nurture green shoots through to maturity. Women interested in participating in the program should contact the Women in Tourism Provincial Chapters in their respective provinces to register. This thriving support structure should also foster an environment in which women can network, empower, and support one another, as well as share best practices and develop leadership skills. The South African government, through the Department of Tourism, should remain committed to changing the narrative of women in the tourism sector and achieving its mandate of an inclusive and thriving economy through the implementation of these measures.

The Finscope Survey found that 52.1 percent of male-owned firms were banked compared to 43.1 percent of female-owned businesses, that female-owned businesses depended on informal financial services more than males, and that 43.7 percent of female-owned enterprises were financially excluded. It may be concluded that promoting women's company ownership in South Africa should include guidance, training, access to money and networks, gender-balanced mentorship in work affairs, and managing emotional and work–life difficulties. For these reasons, the Isivande Women's Fund (IWF) was established by the Department of Trade and Industry with the goal of accelerating women's economic empowerment by providing more inexpensive, usable, and responsive funding than is now available. The IWF enhances and expands women's access to finance through financing and investing in women's businesses, producing income that can help them improve their living standards. It would also be helpful if South African authorities could focus more on women's entrepreneurial development, particularly through political, economic, and social measures, in order to address high unemployment rates, improve living standards, and reduce poverty in townships and rural areas. Women entrepreneurs need greater chances in the SMME sector, which can only be addressed by a better-designed, gender-oriented policy framework, one that addresses all businesswomen in specific regions of the country holistically and personally.

## **CONCLUSION.**

Given how quickly climate change is developing and how it may exacerbate anthropogenic disasters in various parts of the world, research on female entrepreneurship in the context of life event crises becomes more crucial (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2020). These catastrophes will negatively impact local (environmental and socioeconomic) conditions and resources, impeding residents' opportunities for livelihoods and employment (Grube & Storr, 2018). Understanding how and whether female entrepreneurs can promote the adaptation and revitalization of regional communities that may have undergone or will experience a sustained impact from a catastrophic event is crucial (Khalil et al., 2020). Based on the preceding arguments, this paper believes that empowering female entrepreneurs

in the tourism industry in South Africa as a whole is a distinct possibility. It evaluated the key characteristics of women in management positions in the tourism industry and examined some of the significant challenges they confront. The findings are based on a poll of managers and employees in the tourist and hospitality industry in South Africa who were asked to assess women's roles. Women are underrepresented in entrepreneurial activities in South Africa, according to consensus. This, however, is true of most countries around the world, and is related to a variety of social and cultural traditions and conventions. The social aspect is critical for the development of women's entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of better cooperation and harmonization between kindergartens and institutions to assist women entrepreneurs who are also mothers in directing their efforts toward the development and normal operation of the business world. On the other hand, it is almost certain that there are developed female entrepreneurs in South Africa to some extent. Finally, this study appears to emphasize the significance of ongoing, comprehensive analysis of specific difficulties that women confront in the tourism and hospitality industries in South Africa. This study could be improved by including more significant resources to better contribute to the opportunities for women to progress as entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. Despite the constraints of the research's scope, this article contains useful conclusions on which serious measures and activities for detecting detrimental effects on female entrepreneurship in tourism in South Africa can be implemented.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

According to the study's findings and recommendations, all countries, particularly those with unfavorable entrepreneurial conditions, should work deliberately, diligently, and ardently to improve their respective entrepreneurial environments in order to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship growth as a strategy for poverty reduction. Each country's commitment to set up viable policies and facilitation for the establishment and maintenance of: serenity and tranquility; markets; skilled labor markets; access to appropriate technology; functional infrastructure; specialized technical advice and support; access to ample finance; business premises and inputs; and a supportive regulatory framework that favors entrepreneurs are among the specific and practical measures recommended for improving entrepreneurial ecosystems. To further achieve such a favorable entrepreneurial ecosystem, countries should work tirelessly to facilitate the creation and maintenance of appropriate market structures, basic infrastructure, R&D systems, financial sector, corporate sector, government, and educational systems that support the necessary attitudes, abilities, and aspirations for entrepreneurship growth and prosperity. Based on the above research findings, the following interventions are recommended to over-bridge the gap and go from the current to the vision of change:

- ✓ Interventions aimed at raising career awareness.
- ✓ A media and marketing blitz aimed at promoting tourism as a desirable career option for women.
- ✓ Recruitment interventions.
- ✓ Tourism awareness programs that will help improve the profile of tourism and hospitality as a difficult and lucrative working environment Under the motto "Tourism is a career of choice," a media and marketing blitz emphasizing on women's employment.
- ✓ Promotion of interesting courses and career plans for unemployed women who want to join the tourism industry as new recruits; Interventions to help women get jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry and to empower them.
- ✓ Supporting best-practice tourist management policies from the destination in order to promote and coordinate the establishment of tourism as a preferred employment (also known as performance through people).
- ✓ Dissemination of materials to raise awareness about the importance of putting in place procedures and support mechanisms to encourage and enable women's participation in decision-making.
- ✓ Campaigns on television and radio to promote a good attitude toward women entering the tourist industry, with a focus on aiding women returning to work after pregnancy and maternity leave.
- ✓ Workshops on encouraging a fair and equitable distribution of tourism advantages. Special modules on valuing and compensating women's work.
- ✓ implementing and enforcing equal pay for equal work regulations; ensuring equal access to all resources, and so on.

- ✓ Meetings with experts and the distribution of materials to promote "Women's Voices and Leadership." Information about methods for increasing women's participation in all parts of tourism and hospitality operations. Increasing awareness of the need of ensuring that women's views are heard at the local level.
- ✓ Women's capacity building for running tourism businesses, with a particular focus on funding;
- ✓ Round tables to clarify the value of Tourist Committee membership in terms of enhancing the position of women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. Supporting credit cooperatives or other systems that provide credit, technology, and market connections to groups of women.

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