

Women as Entrepreneurship in Algeria



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ABSTRACT

Algerian society is undergoing social, economic and cultural changes that have led to the improvement of women's conditions and their opening on work. At the university, young women are getting to fields of studies, used to be a monopoly for men, such as mechanical engineering, agronomy, civil engineering, etc.

In spite of the environmental socio-cultural constraints and as result of unemployment crisis, young women choose the entrepreneurial jobs. Women's entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon in the Algerian society that needs to be highlighted.

Within this perspective, a study was carried out and visits to 30 enterprises led by women, and interviews were carried out with them. That helped to shed light on the characteristics of women entrepreneurs in Algeria, as well as activities and profile of their enterprises.

It was concluded that most women entrepreneurs are young, with university degrees. They are constraint to start their own businesses as self-employed or set up micro enterprises, employing between 1 and 5 employees, mainly from their families and working informally

KEY WORDS: *Women entrepreneurship, socio-cultural environment, social change, working women*

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Introduction

The Algerian state gave importance to education and development of human resources without any distinction between genders. That encouraged young women to access to the universities, aspiring for better occupational and social positions.

The traditional jobs of Algerian women were limited to some female jobs in catering, education and health. But by the end of the twentieth century, educated women accessed different occupational domains, mainly in civil services, education, nursing including higher positions such as doctors and lectures in higher education.

Algerian society begins to see women in positions of responsibility, as supervisors and managers. Many of them chose to be entrepreneurs, which indicate that the country is experiencing profound social and cultural changes.

Beside the different environmental and socio-cultural inhibitors, several factors pushed women towards entrepreneurship, which can be considered as catalysers, made available by the families and the state as encouragement (Ghiat, 2016).

Entrepreneurship is new in Algeria, as she went through a period of socialism where entrepreneurship was the business of the state, before opening on the market economy.

Men entrepreneurs encounter several clerical and economic barriers. It is a difficult task for men to venture into entrepreneurial activity in an environment full of challenges and constraints. In this difficult environment, women face challenges to venture into an entrepreneurial activity in a male society.

The profile of women's entrepreneurship can be studied from two points of view:

- The women entrepreneurs, their ages, their level of instruction, their occupational experiences and their occupational training.
- The women's enterprises, their sizes, their necessity or opportunity, their familial relations with employees and their formality.
- The objective of this paper is the study profiles of entrepreneurship in Algeria, with special attention to women entrepreneurs and their socio-cultural constraints. Strategies developed by women entre-

preneurs to confront the constraints of a male society will be examined. The profiles of female's enterprises are highlighted.

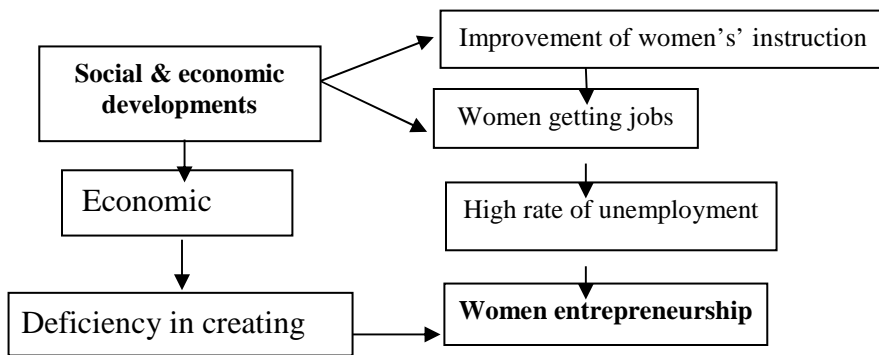
Women's Educational and Economic Developments

Algerian women are highly motivated to study in order to improve their social and occupational positions. That was encouraged by the spread of education, including higher education. The girls became the majority of students in Algerian universities, even in scientific fields of study, known as masculine fields. As a result of these improvements, it became obvious for women to hold social, occupational and political situations.

The employment strategy of the state pushed for the inclusion of women in the working market through employment structures. Women are also motivated by the will to get rid of their traditional marginal position, tending to get empowered through entrepreneurship (Adema, William et al., 2014; Dwivedi, N. T., 2013). The availability of education and a reform of education programs according to the needs of this population group affect a decrease in discrimination directly (Radović-Marković, 2016).

Several educational, economic and environmental factors helped the propagation of women entrepreneurship, as presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Factors motivating women towards entrepreneurship



After the opening of the market economy in the late 20th century, the majority of entrepreneurs were males. But with the increasing number of female graduated from Algerian universities, and because of rampant unem-

ployment, girls begin to move more and more towards the business entrepreneurship.

The business of entrepreneurship needs entrepreneurial psychological characteristics and an emancipative behaviour, which collide with local traditional culture.

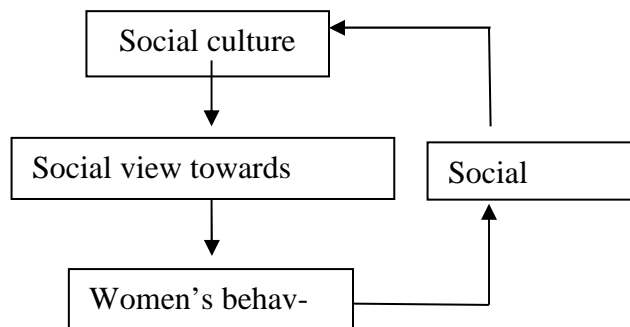
Culture and Entrepreneurship

Women’s attitudes and behaviours are heavily influenced by the local culture linked with Islam and Arabian traditions that limit women’s freedom mainly in relation with males (Kilani, 1998).

Being an entrepreneur requires a strong personality and capacity to manage the behaviours and attitudes of people in a complex and often hostile socio-cultural environment. Psychological qualities such as patience, perseverance, communication abilities, decision-making, confrontation of administrative, human, technical and material problems, as well as adaption to unforeseen changes are badly needed for women entrepreneurs.

This may be contrary to the nature of women in Arab- Muslim environments. In Algeria, women are known for their sentimental characteristics, are often influenced by others, and find difficulties to confront difficulties which are usually left for men. The fact that women became entrepreneurs in Algerian society, explain that there is a change in the personality of modern Algerian women.

Figure 2: Factors affecting attitudes and women’s behaviours



The negative attitudes, cultures and the type of socialisation affect the personality of Algerian women. As pointed out by Rachdi, "The socialisation of girls does not help to develop their confidence, their autonomy, their sense of risk and taste of innovation: skills which are necessary in any individual who wants to develop and manage their own business " (Rachdi, 2006).

In spite of the persisting constraints, the fact of the expanding of women entrepreneurship, prove that fact a change in mentality, culture and behaviour of modern Algerian woman, and explains the entry of women into various occupations, including entrepreneurship.

Environmental Constraints and Entrepreneurship of Necessity

The absence of a healthy socio-cultural environment and a culture of entrepreneurship resulted in many complex obstacles facing women entrepreneurs. Women are aware of this fact, and are obliged to set up enterprises to face unemployment and financial needs.

A conceptual distinction is made between entrepreneurship of necessity or forced and entrepreneurship of opportunity or voluntary (Giacomin, et al., 2010 p. 213). According to Giacomin, "We need to talk about entrepreneurship or coerced when an individual creates his company, among others, the lack of alternative employment and / or family stress, and opportunity entrepreneurship or voluntary when an individual creates his enterprise in particular following the discovery of an opportunity and / or to the desire for independence "(Giacomin, et al., 2010 p. 213).

The lack of experience, resources and entrepreneurial culture, has made the majority of businesses created by young people in Algeria was by necessity, to avoid unemployment, not results of enthusiasm and motivation. Berreziga and Meziane have concluded that "Entrepreneurship in Algeria is qualified as a "survival entrepreneurship" where the entrepreneur creates his company by social constraint, he creates it by necessity and not for purpose of exploiting an opportunity." (Berreziga and Meziane, 2012, p.1). Despite the importance of female entrepreneurship, most of them are forced by necessity.

Algerian women, like other Arab women entrepreneurs, suffer from: "Traditional and cultural practices, religion's involvement, gender inequalities, lack of networking and training, absence of entrepreneurial culture, family responsibility" (Bouguerra; 2015, 95).

That is why most female entrepreneurs activate informally, in order to avoid paying the different taxes, except those benefiting from the state's financial assistance through (ANSEJ) who are obliged to have a "commerce register".

Female entrepreneurship in Algeria is not studied enough, in particular its socio-cultural constraints, and management styles of women entrepreneurs in a male environment.

Research Methodology

In order to understand the reality of women entrepreneurship, interviews were carried out with 30 women self-employed and entrepreneurs. Questions about personal information and profiles of their enterprises were asked. Doctoral students in organisational psychology participated in the collection of data.

Research questions:

The objective of this research is to answer several questions about the profiles of women entrepreneurs and their enterprises, as follows:

1. Profile of women entrepreneurs
 - What are their ages?
 - What are their levels of instruction?
 - Have they followed a training program related to their activity?
 - Have they any occupational experience?
2. Profile of women's enterprises
 - How big are their enterprises?
 - Are they a result of necessity or opportunity?
 - What are the kinship relations with employees within the enterprise?
 - Are they formal or informal?

Results from the collected data, gave the following results.

Results

Statistical data about personal information about the interviewed women entrepreneurs and their enterprises as presented in tables (1-6).

Profile of Women Entrepreneurs*Table 1: Sample distribution according to age*

Ages		
20 - 30 years	06	20.0%
31-40 years	13	43.3%
41-50 years	06	20.0%
51 years and more	05	16.7%
Total	30	100%

The age of the majority of women of the sample is between 20 and 40 years old (63.30%).

Table 2: Sample distribution according to marital status

Marital status		
Single	10	33.33%
Married	17	56.70%
Divorced	01	3.30%
Widow	02	6.70%
Total	30	100%

The sample contains mainly married women (56.70%).

Table 3: Sample distribution according to the level of training.

	Primary	Secondary	University	Total
Level of instruction	02	11	17	30
Percentage	6.7%	36.70%	56.70%	100 %

The majority of surveyed women entrepreneurs have a level of university education (56.70%).

Table 4: Main motivation behind the choice of occupation:

Reason behind the choice of the business activity	Frequency	%
Activity of a family member	09	30.00
Personal tendencies	09	30.00
Specialty study	06	20.00
Husband's activity	04	13.30
Profitability of the business	02	6.70
Total	30	100.0

The majority of firms in the sample (Table 3) are activating in service sector, followed by industry.

Profile of Women’s Enterprises

Table 5: Sample distribution according to the sector of activity

Sector of activity	Frequency	%
Sewing	07	23.31
Catering & Pastry	05	16.65
Nursery	04	13.32
Hair dressing	04	13.32
Crafts	03	9.99
Computing	02	6.66
Commerce	02	6.66
Public Works	02	6.66
Chemistry	01	3.33
Total	30	100.00

Table 5 shows that the majority of activities are in sewing women’s traditional dresses (23.31 %), catering and pastry (16.65 %), Nursery (13.32 %) and hair dressing (13.32 %). A limited number of women entrepreneurs are interested in building and public works (3.33 %).

Table 6: Years of activity:

Years of activity	Frequency	%
Less than 5 years	14	46.7
5 -10	07	23.3
11-15	02	06.7
over 15 years	07	23.3
Total	30	100.0

The majority of businesses touched by this study are small, newly created (less than 5 years), and with a number of workers between (2 and 9).

Discussions

Although there are few women entrepreneurs who manage medium and large companies, there are several women executives and directors of public companies in senior positions. This demonstrates their capacity to manage, and are not less competent compared to men.

The women entrepreneurs in Algeria are young, less than forty years old in their majority, which is on line with the results of an investigation led by Ouadah Rebrab and Cherif, who concluded that women entrepreneurs in Algeria are young (between 25 and 30 years old) (Ouadah Rebrab and Cherif, 2015). The investigated sample showed that (56.00 %) of the studied sample are married, and have family responsibilities. (56.00 %) have university degrees, and their level of education is higher than their male colleagues.

The results, as presented in table 5, show that women activate mainly in services, liberal and craft sectors. The same results are reached by (Ouadah Rebrab and Cherif, 2015).

Most women entrepreneurs are pushed to create their enterprises as a result of unemployment and material needs, they often support financially their families. Most enterprises created by women can be classified as constraints enterprises, and that explains the fact that they are microenterprises, and women entrepreneurs do not think of expanding to small or medium enterprises.

From the different interviews, it is clear to us that women entrepreneurs are highly motivated and have strong personalities, marked by a spirit of adventure and initiative. These qualities are necessary for the success of entrepreneurship.

This proves also that women have personal and professional skills that allow them to overcome the toughest strains. They can even compete with men in fields used to be reserved for them exclusively.

The majority of women entrepreneurs complain of socio-cultural constraints. Management strategies tailored to their situations, are often developed by women entrepreneurs, in order to overcome their difficulties in managing their business, and to overcome their obstacles.

As far as the enterprises created and managed by women, most of them are newly created (less than 5 years), activate in services (46.7 %) and only (13.3 %) activate in public works.

Most interviewed women entrepreneurs reported that they received support and assistance from their friends and family members, and that was a valuable contribution that helped them to overcome the encountered problems. This support is badly needed to overcome these constraints and to succeed in their tasks, in a male society.

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon in Algeria and special attention should be given to it. Algerian women entrepreneurs are constraint to start up their business as a result of complex environmental and socio-cultural constraints.

Several women entrepreneurs have succeeded in their projects as a result of their psychological characteristics and managerial abilities. They have proved themselves as business women, and have a strong will to confront the challenges of a male society.

As a result of the increase of the instruction level in general, the development of the communication technology and the globalisation knowledge, the social and cultural attitudes of society are changing slowly but surely. That will help the concretisation of women aspiration for environment of justice and equal opportunities between genders at work.

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