



Asian Journal of Management and Commerce

E-ISSN: 2708-4523

P-ISSN: 2708-4515

AJMC 2025; 6(2): 1134-1145

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www.allcommercejournal.com

Received: 03-07-2025

Accepted: 07-08-2025

Neha Nain

IMSAR, Maharshi Dayanand
University, Rohtak, Haryana,
India

Dr. Divya Malhan

Professor, IMSAR, Maharshi
Dayanand University, Rohtak,
Haryana, India

Charting the nexus: Gender, empowerment, and entrepreneurship through bibliometric analysis

Neha Nain and Divya Malhan

Abstract

Purpose: This research investigates the evolving landscape of women entrepreneurship through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis. By examining global trends and identifying future research directions, the study offers insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Using the Scopus database, 296 articles published between 2008 and 2024 were analyzed with tools like R Studio and VOSviewer. Key themes, influential contributors, and geographical trends were identified through keyword analysis, citation metrics, and co-authorship networks.

Findings: Prominent keywords include “women entrepreneurs”, “female entrepreneurship”, “education”, “empowerment”, and “challenges”. Leading contributors are Bal R, Akhmadi S, Shastri S., Ahl H., Marlow S., and Welsh D., with the United States, United Kingdom, Netherlands, India, Sweden, and Spain emerging as the most prolific research countries. The International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship leads in publications, supported by significant contributions from the International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business and the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research.

Originality/Value: This study highlights the persistent gender disparities and sociocultural dynamics shaping women entrepreneurship. It provides a strategic roadmap for academics and policymakers to address research gaps, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and promote gender equity in entrepreneurship through targeted interventions.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, gender, empowerment, bibliometric analysis, research trends, scopus database

Introduction

Historically, entrepreneurship research has predominantly focused on men, with ‘entrepreneur’ and ‘entrepreneurship’ framed within a masculine context both culturally and linguistically (Ahl, 2002; Baron *et al.*, 2001; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bruni *et al.*, 2004) ^[1, 6, 2, 12-13]. This male-centric perspective has often overlooked the unique experiences and contributions of female entrepreneurs. Recently, however, new models and frameworks have emerged, driven by efforts to support female entrepreneurship through public programs, volunteer organizations, and policies led by entities such as the European Union, World Bank, and United Nations (HALAÇ & MEŞE, 2021) ^[32]. These initiatives have significantly contributed to the global growth and visibility of women entrepreneurs.

In India, progress is evident, but uneven. According to *Forbes India* (2021), women hold almost 30% of the senior corporate management roles, surpassing the global average of 24%. However, the country ranks 113th out of 135 nations in terms of workforce gender equality, highlighting a persistent gap in opportunities for women. Entrepreneurship offers an appealing alternative, providing greater autonomy and flexibility than traditional employment (Kirkwood & Powell, 2012; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008) ^[25, 41]. By starting their own businesses, women can exercise control over their time and decisions, enabling them to manage their personal and professional responsibilities better.

The drive to create and lead their own businesses is often fuelled by passion for independence and self-direction (Holmén *et al.*, 2012) ^[36]. However, balancing this autonomy with the challenges of business ownership is challenging. Excessive workloads and societal expectations surrounding household responsibilities frequently intensify strain (Bunk *et al.*, 2012; Prottas & Thompson, 2006). Researches by Haar (2013) ^[31] and Hobfoll (2001) ^[35] suggests that the sense of control entrepreneurship offers can provide women with ‘residual energy’ by liberating them from restrictive schedules or external pressures.

Corresponding Author:

Neha Nain

IMSAR, Maharshi Dayanand
University, Rohtak, Haryana,
India

This energy, in turn, enhances their ability to achieve work-life balance, a key factor in sustaining long-term entrepreneurial success (Ke *et al.*, 2019; Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005) ^[40, 62].

The stories of women such as Falguni Nayar, founder of Nykaa, a prominent Indian cosmetics retailer, illustrate the transformative potential of female entrepreneurship. Nayar launched Nykaa at the age of 50, a stage in life when many consider retirement, redefine norms, and empower women to prioritize their aspirations. As she remarked, 'I wanted to stand for those women who want to be beautiful for themselves, not for men or other women' (*top 10 Famous Women Entrepreneurs in India*, 2021). The sentiment resonates with the profound words of former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who believed, "Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation; when women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and values lead to the development of a good family, good society, and ultimately a good nation" (*Women Empowerment - The Womb*). These examples underscore the crucial role of women's entrepreneurship not only as an economic force, but also as a vehicle for societal advancement and empowerment.

2. Literature Review

An increasing number of professional women are transitioning from salaried positions to self-employment, driven by a desire for autonomy, and often disillusionment with corporate career progression (Bennett & Dann, 2000; Terjesen, 2005; Cabrera, 2007; Walker *et al.*, 2011) ^[7, 65, 15, 74]. Despite higher participation in business and professional fields, women frequently encounter barriers to reaching executive levels in corporate organizations. Consequently, many senior women opt to leave the corporate sphere to establish their own business (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004; Terjesen, 2005) ^[63, 65].

The field of entrepreneurship itself remains highly gendered, with longstanding stereotypes positioning masculinity as the norm and femininity as the secondary (Ogbor, 2000) ^[53]. Business ethics literature documents persistent gender discrimination, which affects women's performance evaluations, access to credit, and career progression (Maas & Torres-González, 2011; Cozarenco & Szafarz, 2018; Lane & Piercy, 2003) ^[63, 19, 44].

Previous studies, including Ahl and Jönköping (2002) ^[1] and Bruni *et al.* (2004) ^[12-13], identify two persistent issues. First, women are often portrayed as "others" who must adapt to male-centric systems. Second, the research lacks diversity in perspectives on female entrepreneurship. Carter and Shaw (2006) ^[17] noted that women represent a smaller proportion of self-employed individuals, typically leading to smaller-scale enterprises. For many, dissatisfaction with corporate environments leads to entrepreneurship as a means of avoiding organizational politics and subordination. However, women-owned businesses report lower rates of success and profitability than male-owned firms, with higher failure rates and lower levels of revenue, employment, and growth potential (Robb & Wolken, 2002) ^[60]. Growing awareness of these challenges has led researchers to study gender identity in an entrepreneurial context. Robb (2000) ^[59] discovered that gender disparities

in working hours and the motivations behind starting a business contribute to the lower survival rates of women-led firms. Even as global gender equality progresses, cultural expectations still place a larger share of household responsibilities on women, resulting in added pressure on female entrepreneurs (Eddleston & McDougald, 2007; Eddleston & Powell, 2012; Wood & Ridgeway, 2010) ^[39, 25, 79].

Studies on women's entrepreneurship reveal that many women-led businesses are created out of necessity and often align with traditionally "female" roles, resulting in limited financial returns (Arum & Müller, 2004) ^[5]. These gendered norms are reinforced in business practices, limiting the potential benefits of entrepreneurship for women (Gurley-Calvez 2009; Marlow and McAdam 2012) ^[30, 47]. Such findings prompt a critical examination of public policies, challenging the view that entrepreneurship is inherently beneficial for women's economic and social standing (Ahl and Nelson, 2015) ^[3].

Despite these challenges, female entrepreneurs have contributed significantly to the economy. However, men continue to be more likely than women to engage in entrepreneurial activities across all countries studied in the 2004 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Reynolds *et al.*, 2002; Minniti *et al.*, 2005) ^[58, 28]. Substantial research has explored gender differences in entrepreneurial behavior, with findings suggesting that men are often more active in pursuing business opportunities (Gupta *et al.*, 2017; Gupta *et al.*, 2013; Marlow & McAdam, 2013) ^[29, 48]. However, as Bennett and Dann (2000) ^[7] indicate, women who own businesses often exhibit risk tolerance and an independent work style, qualities that contribute to job creation and economic growth. Many governments recognize these benefits and have initiated policies that encourage entrepreneurship to foster innovation and economic prosperity (Henrekson & Stenkula, 2010) ^[34].

Balancing work and personal life remain a primary challenge for female entrepreneurs, as existing research acknowledges (O'Neil, 2008; Phipps & Prieto, 2016) ^[51, 54]. This challenge is particularly pronounced among female business owners, who often struggle to meet both professional and household expectations (Ufuk & Özgen, 2001; Carrington, 2006; Singh *et al.*, 2010; Forson, 2013; De Vita *et al.*, 2014; Cuberes & Teignier, 2016) ^[70, 16, 63, 27, 21, 20]. Governments worldwide are investing in infrastructure and policy measures to support business creation, viewing entrepreneurship as a path to sustainable economic growth (Ahl & Nelson, 2015) ^[3].

From a broader perspective, women's entrepreneurship is constrained by three primary factors: limited freedom from discrimination, inadequate structural support to guarantee this freedom, and social pressures that reduce women's motivation to pursue it (Brieger *et al.*, 2019; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Welzel, 2012) ^[11, 37, 77]. The insights gained from this study deepen our theoretical understanding of women's entrepreneurship, highlighting both key contributors and areas where future research could enrich the field.

Literature review of most relevant articles

Table 1: Literature review of most relevant articles.

Author Name (Year)	Region	No. of Publications	Method/ tools	Research Gap
(Koch & Kuckertz, 2024) [42]	Global	741	Bibliometric analysis, performance analysis, science mapping techniques, Sankey diagram	Evolution of thematic directions in women entrepreneurship research, need for diversity and inclusion, focus on emerging economies and sustainability
(Raman <i>et al.</i> , 2022) ^[57]	Global	3157 publications (843 aligned with SDGs, 80 related to COVID-19)	Bibliometric indicators, systematic literature review, Dimensions database, altmetrics	Limited interdisciplinary perspective, lack of technology-facilitated analysis, need to assess long-term pandemic impacts and gender-moderated policies.
(Anggadwita & Indarti, 2023) ^[4]	Global	62 papers (from 3,016 collected)	Bibliometric analysis, content analysis, AMO framework (antecedents, mediators, moderators, outcomes)	Lack of integrated analysis of gender in international business and SME entrepreneurship.
(Slavinski <i>et al.</i> , 2020) [64]	Global	330	Descriptive bibliometric analysis using Scopus, BibExcel, and Wordcloud tools for graphical presentation	Limited systematization of research on ‘women’, ‘entrepreneurship’, and ‘education’; need for further bibliometric studies.
(Deng <i>et al.</i> , 2020) ^[22]	Global	2849	Bibliometric analysis via science mapping using CiteSpace, VOSviewer, and foam tree graph processed by Carrot	Limited cooperation networks among countries, institutions, and researchers; lack of interdisciplinary integration.
(Rodrigues <i>et al.</i> , 2022) [61]	Global	256	Bibliometric analysis, scientific mapping, performance analysis, VosViewer software	Lack of systematic literature review (SLR) on mumpreneurs; fragmented research on entrepreneurship and motherhood.
(Kumari & Kumar, 2024) [43]	Global	329 publications (2012-2023)	Bibliometric analysis, R-package, VOSviewer, analysis of trends, documents, topics, and collaboration networks	Overreliance on business, management, and entrepreneurship disciplines; need for broader interdisciplinary integration.
(Vuciterna <i>et al.</i> , 2024) [73]	Developed and Developing Countries	728 papers (1992-2022)	Bibliometric analysis, performance analysis, science mapping, thematic evolution mapping	The research on women in agricultural entrepreneurship, especially in developing regions, and the need for more focus on digital agriculture, sustainability, and gender dynamics.

Source: Author’s own development

The Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the most frequently cited research articles on women entrepreneurs.
2. To identify the leading journals publishing research on women entrepreneurs.
3. To examine the countries contributing the largest volume of research on women entrepreneurs.

The methodology and software used in this review, including systematic review and bibliometric analysis, play a crucial role in achieving these objectives. Such an approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the literature and serves as a foundation for guiding future research in this field (Boloy *et al.*, 2021)^[10].

Research Design

This bibliometric study involved an extensive search across various academic databases and publishers to compile research studies on women entrepreneurs. Data were collected primarily from ten English-language databases, including Elsevier, Springer, Routledge, Emerald, Sage,

Taylor & Francis, John Wiley & Sons, among others. The search terms used were combinations of keywords such as (“Entrepreneurs” OR “Entrepreneur” OR “Entrepreneurship” OR “Female Entrepreneurs” OR “Female led Business” OR “Woman led Business” OR “Women Entrepreneurs”) AND (“Gender” OR “Gender Role” OR “Gender Relations” OR “Gender Disparity” OR “Gender Issues” OR “Gender Identity” OR “Gender Inequality”). This search covered the period from 2008 to 2024, focusing exclusively on articles published in reputable academic journals.

To manage the extensive number of articles initially identified, the scope was narrowed to relevant fields such as management, business, and accounting, yielding an initial set of 1,101 articles. Despite applying several filters, many unrelated articles remained in the dataset. Consequently, a detailed review of each article’s title and abstract was conducted to determine its relevance to the study’s focus on women’s entrepreneurship and related challenges. Based on these criteria, 580 articles were excluded, resulting in a final dataset of 296 articles selected for detailed analysis.

TOPIC	•Charting the Nexus: Gender, Empowerment, and Entrepreneurship Through Bibliometric Analysis
SCOPE	•Database : Scopus •Search Field : Business, Management And Accounting, Economics, Econometrics And Finance, Social Sciences •Time Frame : 2008-2024 •Language : English •Source Type : Journal •Document Type =Articles
KEYWORDS	•Title ((“Entrepreneurs” OR “Entrepreneur” OR “Entrepreneurship” OR “Female Entrepreneurs” OR “Female led Business” OR “Woman led Business” OR “Women Entrepreneurs”) AND (“Gender” OR “Gender Role” OR “Gender Relations” OR “Gender Disparity” OR “Gender Issues” OR “Gender Identity” OR “Gender Inequality”))
RECORD RECEIVED	•N=580
RECORD ELIMINATED	•N=284
RECORD USED FOR BIBLIOMETRIX	•N=296

Source: Author’s own development

Fig 1: Article Filtration Process

3. Discussion and Analysis

3.1 Authors' Production over Time

This data highlights research trends on women entrepreneurs, particularly focusing on family dynamics, motivations, and challenges in patriarchal societies. Key authors like Bal R, Akhmadi S, Welsh, Kaciak, and Shastri are prominent, with influential publications exploring the business-family interface and entrepreneurial challenges.

Highly cited works, especially from 2024 and 2019, show foundational contributions, particularly on how family support and economic environments impact women entrepreneurs. Main journals include International Journal of Emerging Markets and Journal of Enterprising Communities, underscoring the importance of socioeconomic and cultural factors in female entrepreneurship research.

Table 2: Authors' Production over Time

Author	Year	Title	Source	DOI	TC	TCPY
Bal R	2024	“Impact of microfinance on socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs in developing countries: a sentiment analysis”	International journal of business and globalization	10.1504/IJBG.2024.142231	0	0
Birau R	2024	“Exploring women entrepreneurs' push-pull motives and challenges: empirical evidence in an emerging economy”	International journal of sociology and social policy	10.1108/IJSSP-09-2023-0210	4	4
Arvind T	2024	“Women entrepreneurs vs. Women employees: a comparative study of personality traits and success factors of women in India”	International journal of entrepreneurship and small business	10.1504/IJESB.2024.142440	0	0
Amigot-Leache P	2023	“The limits of “no limits”: young women's entrepreneurial performance and the gendered conquest of the self”	Ethos	10.1111/etho.12398	5	2.5
Akhmadi S	2023	“Exploring gender imbalances in innovation and entrepreneurship: evidence from a global south country”	International journal of gender and entrepreneurship	10.1108/IJGE-08-2022-0145	2	1
Breschi S	2023	“Gender bias in entrepreneurship: what is the role of the founders' entrepreneurial background?”	Journal of business ethics	10.1007/s10551-022-05275-y	9	4.5
Shastri S	2022	“Exploring Women Entrepreneurs' Motivations and	Journal Of Enterprising	10.1108/Jec-09-2020-0163	7	2.333

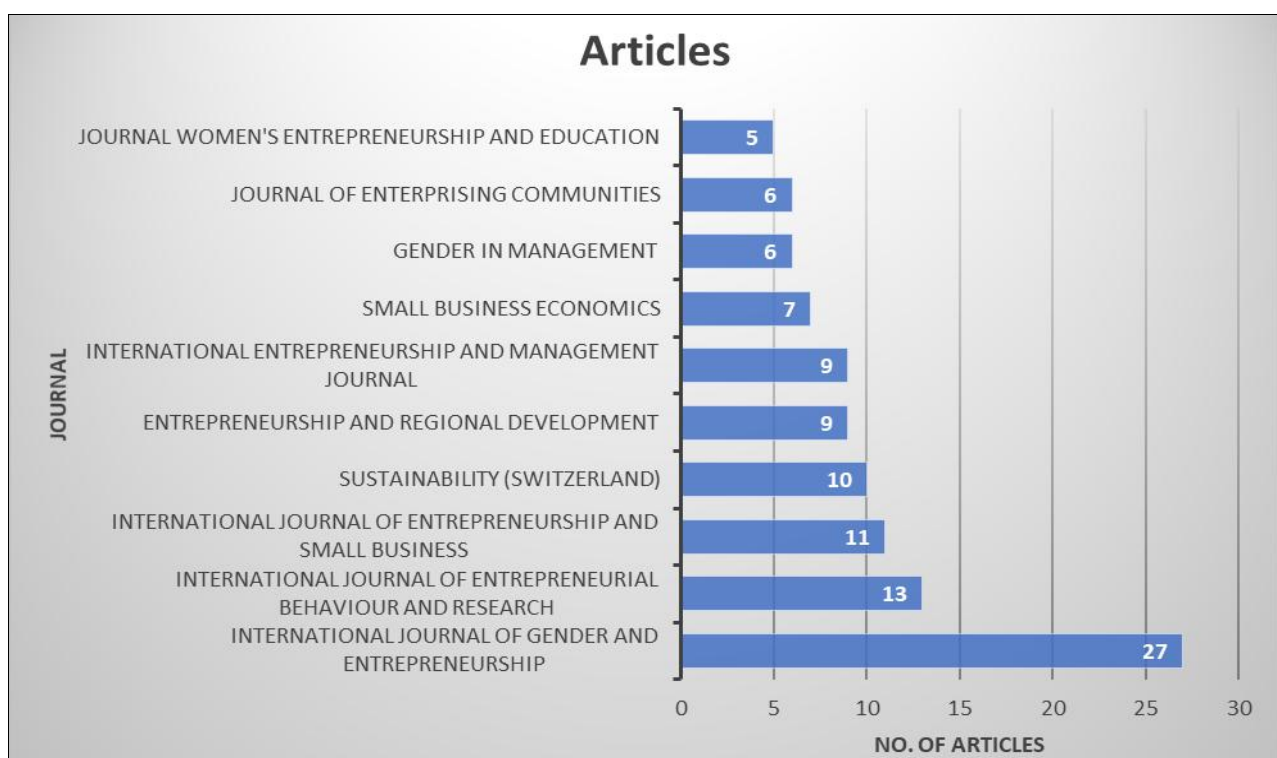
		Challenges from An Institutional Perspective: Evidences from A Patriarchal State in India”	Communities			
Shastri S	2022	“Exploring Women Entrepreneurs’ Motivations and Challenges from An Institutional Perspective: Evidences from A Patriarchal State in India”	Journal Of Enterprising Communities	10.1108/Jec-09-2020-0163	7	2.333
Welsh Dhb	2019	“Family Enrichment and Women Entrepreneurial Success: The Mediating Effect of Family Interference	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	10.1007/S11365-019-00587-4	26	4.333
Kaciak E	2019	Family Enrichment and Women Entrepreneurial Success: The Mediating Effect of Family Interference”	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	10.1007/S11365-019-00587-4	26	4.333
Shastri S	2019	“Motivations And Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs: Experiences of Small Businesses in Jaipur City of Rajasthan”	International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy	10.1108/Ijssp-09-2018-0146	32	5.333
Shastri S	2019	“Motivations And Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs: Experiences of Small Businesses in Jaipur City of Rajasthan”	International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy	10.1108/Ijssp-09-2018-0146	32	5.333
Welsh Dhb	2018	“Business-Family Interface and The Performance of Women Entrepreneurs: The Moderating Effect of Economic Development”	International Journal of Emerging Markets	10.1108/Ijoem-03-2017-0095	37	5.286
Kaciak E	2018	“Business-Family Interface and The Performance of Women Entrepreneurs: The Moderating Effect of Economic Development”	International Journal of Emerging Markets	10.1108/Ijoem-03-2017-0095	37	5.286
Welsh Dhb	2018	“Women Entrepreneurs and Family Firm Heterogeneity: Evidence from An Emerging Economy”	Group Decision and Negotiation	10.1007/S10726-017-9544-8	28	4
Kaciak E	2018	“Women Entrepreneurs and Family Firm Heterogeneity: Evidence from An Emerging Economy”	Group Decision and Negotiation	10.1007/S10726-017-9544-8	28	4

Source: Author’s own development

Most Relevant Sources

The bibliometric data highlights key journals in gender and entrepreneurship, with the International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship leading in publications. Other significant journals include International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business and International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research. The

data indicates a growing focus on gender, sustainability, and regional development in entrepreneurship. Journals like Gender in Management and Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education reflect the increasing importance of gender studies. The diversity of journals suggests an interdisciplinary approach, with emerging trends and potential research gaps in underexplored areas.



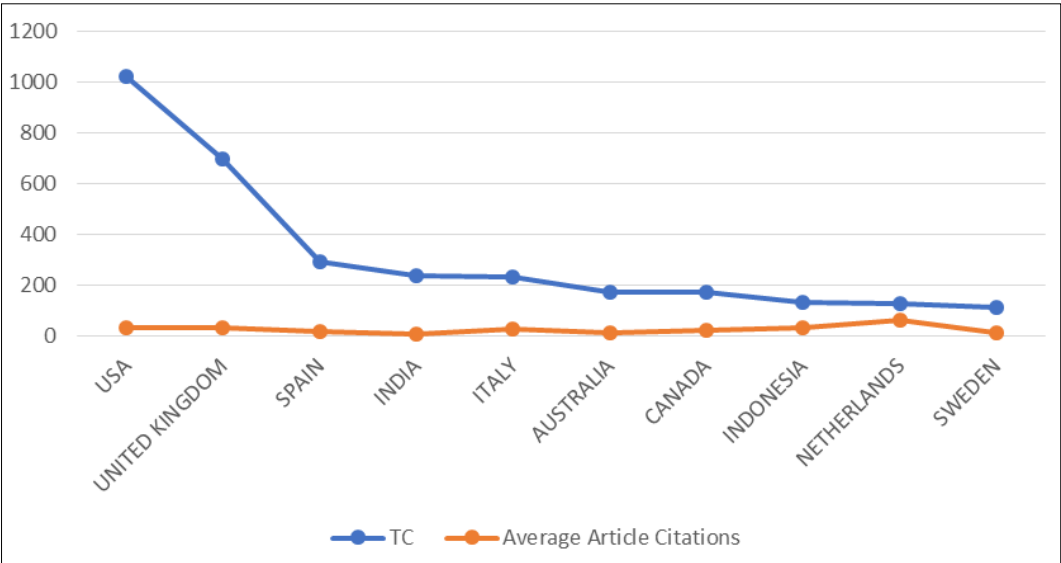
Source: Author’s own development

Fig 2: Most Relevant Sources

Most Cited Countries

The analysis of both total citations and average citations reveals key insights into global research impact. The USA leads in total citations (1019), indicating extensive research output, but its average citations (30.90) are moderate compared to the United Kingdom (33.20), which, despite fewer total citations, has more impactful research. The Netherlands stands out with the highest average citations

(64.50), suggesting highly influential work, even though its total citations are lower (129). India (235 total citations, 9.40 average) and Australia (172 total citations, 12.30 average) show moderate contributions but lower citation impact. Overall, countries like the USA and UK demonstrate strong research output and influence, while others, such as India, may benefit from increasing global visibility to enhance citation rates.



Source: Author’s own development

Fig 3: Most Cited Countries

Word cloud

The word cloud effectively captures the core themes in women’s entrepreneurship research. It highlights the focus on women’s empowerment, economic development, and gender disparities. Terms such as ‘entrepreneur’, ‘women’s status’, and ‘gender’ emphasise the central role of women in the field. The prominence of ‘economic development’ and

‘socioeconomic status’ suggests an interest in the broader context of women’s entrepreneurship. Geographical references to ‘India’ and ‘United States’ indicate a potential focus on regional variations. Additionally, terms such as ‘sustainability’, ‘technology adoption’, and ‘innovation’ point to the exploration of contemporary challenges and opportunities in women’s entrepreneurship.



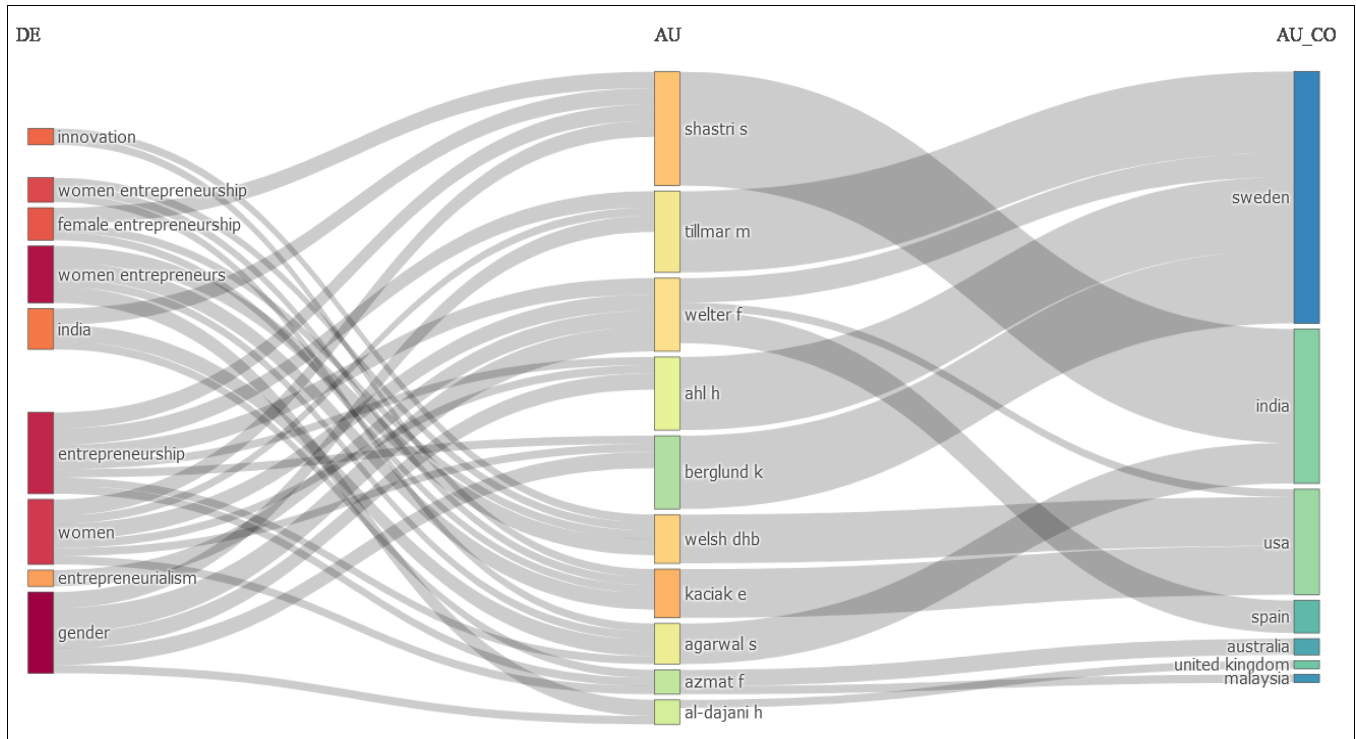
Source: Author’s own development

Fig 4: Word cloud of most prominent keywords

Thematical Analysis of Keywords Authors and Countries

The analysis reveals a growing global interest in women's entrepreneurship research. Core themes like women's entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurship, and gender are central to the field. Emerging trends, such as innovation and regional variations, highlight the evolving nature of the research. Key researchers, like Shasthi S., Bilmar M.,

Walter F., Ab H., and Berglund K., are driving the field forward. The presence of international collaborations, particularly between researchers from Australia, India, USA, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom, and Malaysia, suggests a global research community working together to address the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs.



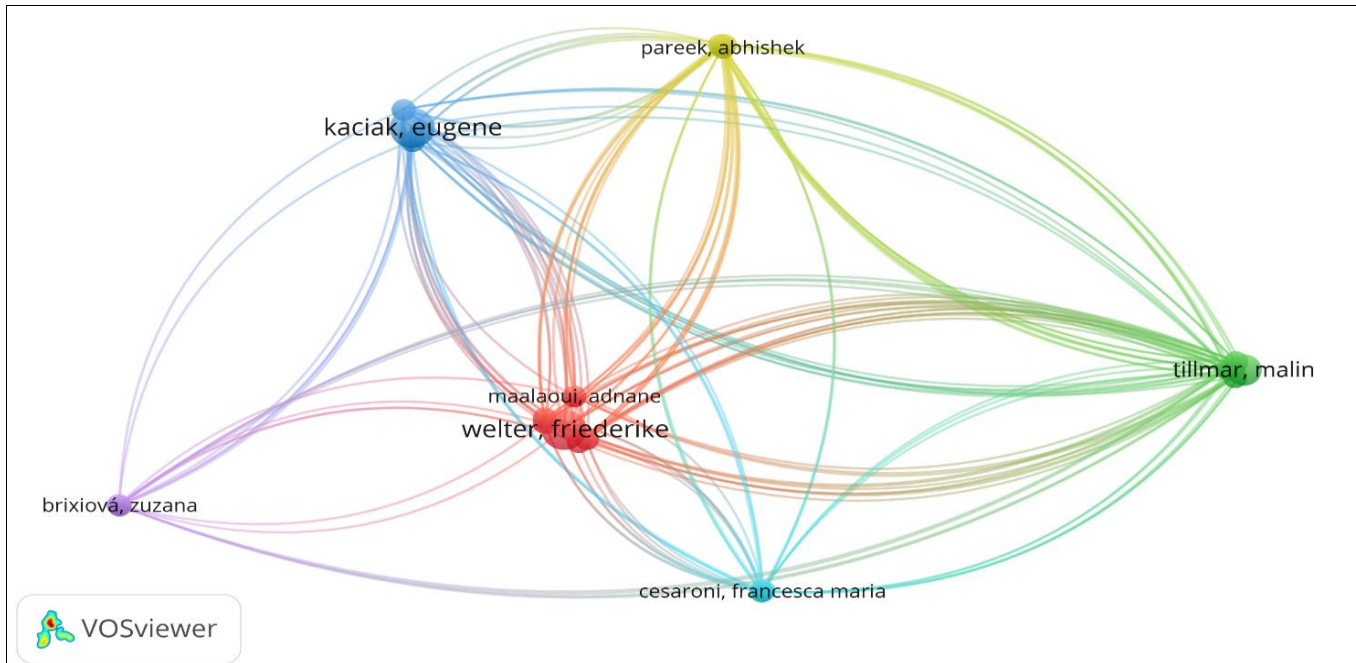
Source: Author’s own development

Fig 5: Thematical Analysis of Keywords Authors and Countries

Bibliography coupling with authors

The image is a bibliographic coupling network of authors, generated using VOSviewer, highlighting the collaborative relationships between 20 authors who met the analysis criteria out of a total dataset of 723 authors. In the network, nodes represent individual authors, while the lines (edges) connecting them indicate the strength of their co-authorship or bibliographic coupling relationships. Larger nodes and labels signify authors with a higher number of collaborations, demonstrating their influence within the dataset. For example, ‘Brush C’ is identified as the most collaborative author, not only having the highest number of

co-authorships but also contributing extensively to the literature on women entrepreneurs. The authors are organized into six distinct clusters, each represented by a unique color, suggesting closely related co-authorship groups. Cluster-1 is the largest, consisting of 6 authors (Brush C., Ettle K., Kuschel K., Maalaoui A., Manolova T., Welter F.), followed by Cluster 2 with 4 authors, Cluster 3 and 4 with 3 authors, Clusters 5 and 6 contain only 2 authors, forming smaller but notable collaborative groups. This network map provides valuable insights into the collaborative structure within the research field, identifying key contributors and the interconnectedness of their work.



Source: Author’s own development

Fig 6: Bibliography coupling with authors

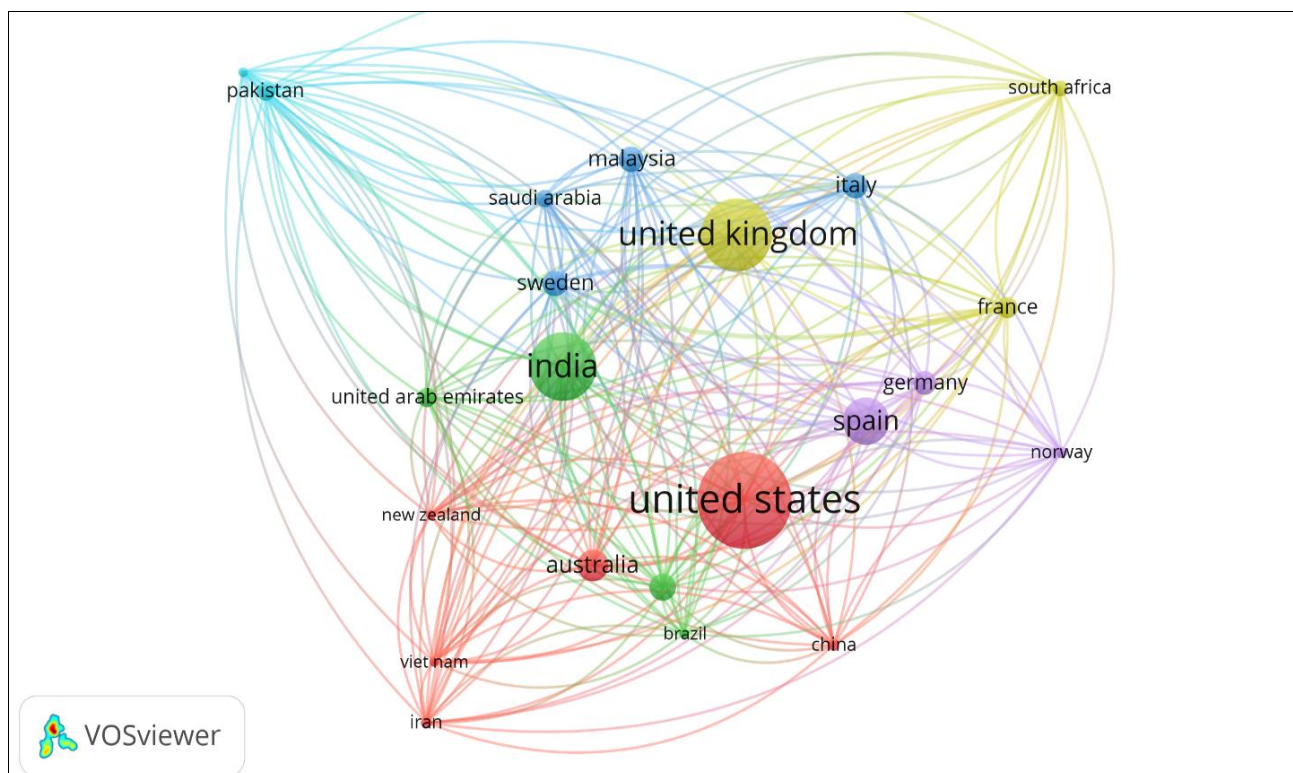
Bibliography Coupling with countries

The image represents a bibliographic coupling network of countries, generated using VOSviewer, which highlights collaborative relationships based on research publications. Each node represents a country, and the edges (lines) indicate the strength of collaboration or bibliographic coupling. Larger nodes and labels signify countries with higher collaboration levels. For instance, the United States is the most collaborative country, with the largest node size and the most extensive connections across the network. The countries are organized into six clusters, each represented by a distinct color, indicating groups of countries with closely related collaborative patterns. These clusters are:

1. **Cluster 1 (Red):** Centered around the United States, including countries such as Australia, China, New Zealand, Vietnam, and Iran, reflecting a strong network of global collaborations.
2. **Cluster 2 (Green):** Focused on India, connected to the United Arab Emirates, Brazil, and Canada, emphasizing regional and international research collaborations.

3. **Cluster 3 (Blue):** Dominated by the Malaysia, with links to countries like Italy, Saudi Arabia and Sweden, showcasing European and global research ties.
4. **Cluster 4 (Yellow):** Includes United Kingdom, South Africa and France, representing another group of strong collaborations.
5. **Cluster 5 (Purple):** Comprising Spain, Norway, and Germany, indicating a smaller but notable network of international collaborations.
6. **Cluster 6 (Light Blue):** Focused on Pakistan and Indonesia, highlighting its unique position in connecting to various other countries in the network.

This network map highlights the geographical diversity and interconnectedness of research collaborations worldwide, with key contributors like the United States, India, and the United Kingdom driving significant global research efforts. Smaller clusters represent localized or regionally focused research collaborations, adding depth to the overall structure.



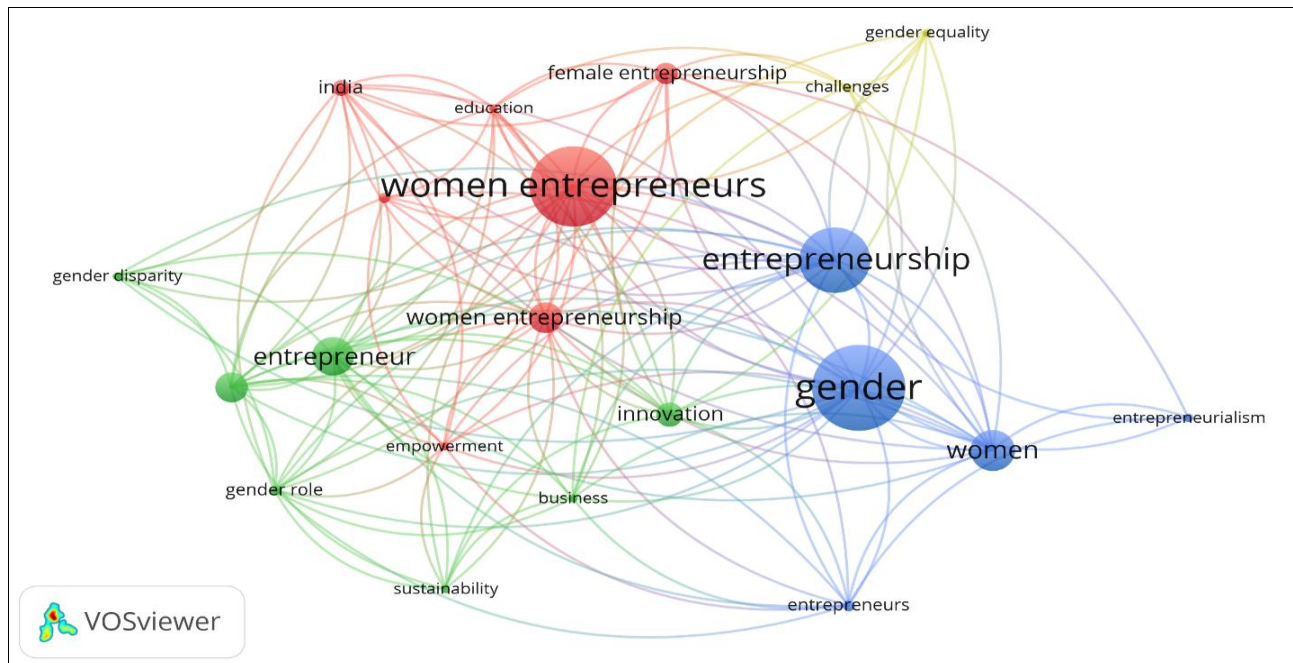
Source: Author's own development

Fig 7: Bibliography coupling with countries

Co-occurrence of all keywords

The image depicts a co-occurrence network of keywords related to women entrepreneurs, generated using VOSviewer. Each node represents a keyword, with its size indicating its frequency of occurrence in the dataset, while the connections (edges) represent the strength of co-occurrence between keywords. The network is divided into distinct clusters, each represented by a unique colour, highlighting thematic groupings. The red cluster is centred around 'women entrepreneurs', the most prominent and frequently occurring keyword, and includes related terms such as 'female entrepreneurship', 'education', 'empowerment', 'challenges', and 'India', emphasising issues, education, and region-specific studies. The green

cluster revolves around 'entrepreneur' and includes keywords such as 'sustainability', 'women's status', 'gender role', 'gender disparity', 'business', and 'innovation', showcasing themes related to sustainable practices and gender roles in entrepreneurship. The blue cluster is dominated by 'gender' and 'entrepreneurship' and includes terms such as 'entrepreneurialism', 'entrepreneurs', and 'women', reflecting a focus on gender studies and equality within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The yellow cluster includes keywords such as 'gender equality', 'challenges', and other related terms, reflecting research on the obstacles faced by women in entrepreneurship and efforts to achieve equality in opportunities and outcomes.



Source: Author's own development

Fig 8: Co-occurrence of all keywords

Discussion and Conclusion

This study makes significant contributions to understanding women's entrepreneurship, offering both theoretical and practical insights that can inform future research, policy, and practice. Firstly, it offers an in-depth historical analysis of the literature spanning several decades, which captures the field's evolution and highlights shifts in key themes and research priorities. By mapping this trajectory, the study provides valuable context for understanding how scholarly focus on women entrepreneurs has developed and changed in response to both societal trends and emerging challenges. Secondly, this analysis identifies influential authors, productive countries, and prominent journals, which is essential information for researchers seeking to delve deeper into women's entrepreneurship. Knowing the main contributors in this field offers a strategic advantage for researchers, guiding them on where to access leading insights and identifying potential collaborators or publishing avenues. By spotlighting countries with substantial research contributions such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Netherlands. The study also indicates potential cultural and policy-based influences that shape the field of women's entrepreneurship, hinting at varied regional approaches and priorities. Researchers interested in studying women's entrepreneurship from an international perspective can use this information to determine where comparative studies or cross-cultural analyses may be most fruitful.

Thirdly, this study enables researchers to focus their efforts on pertinent, recent publications. Major areas of research interest highlighted include business, management, economics, econometrics, accounting, and finance fields that are central to understanding the mechanisms and outcomes of women's entrepreneurship. Recognizing the main topics within these disciplines allows researchers to identify key themes and recurring challenges, equipping them with a well-rounded perspective as they pursue their own studies.

Beyond academic contributions, the study sheds light on a gap between the optimism of policymakers, who frequently

advocate entrepreneurship as a solution to economic and social challenges, and the real-world outcomes for women entrepreneurs (Ahl & Nelson, 2015) ^[3]. This discrepancy underscores the need for more targeted and realistic policy interventions. Although entrepreneurship is widely advocated as a means of economic empowerment for women, studies have consistently shown that gendered barriers persist, limiting the extent to which women can benefit from entrepreneurship on equal terms with men (Jennings & Brush, 2013) ^[38]. Such findings suggest that achieving gender equality in entrepreneurship requires not only supportive policies but also transformative societal shifts to dismantle ingrained biases.

The literature presents diverse perspectives on women's roles as entrepreneurs, with some researchers positing that women bring unique strengths and resilience to entrepreneurship, potentially even outperforming men in certain areas. Conversely, others highlight that many women leave corporate environments to pursue self-employment as a means to escape gender-based discrimination and the "glass ceiling" within traditional organizational structures. This shift reflects both the barriers women face in corporate contexts and the appeal of entrepreneurship as a path to autonomy and self-determination. Additionally, increased governmental support has been noted, with policies designed to facilitate female entrepreneurship. Such policies can expand employment opportunities, enhance economic resilience, and support women's economic empowerment, ultimately contributing to national growth.

The publication trends reveal fluctuations in research intensity over the years. This variation underscores changing levels of scholarly attention, potentially influenced by broader societal conversations around gender equality and economic inclusion. Among the field's most influential contributors are researchers such as Shastri S, Kaciak E, Welsh D, and Berglund K, whose highly cited works provide foundational insights into women's entrepreneurship and continue to shape ongoing discourse.

Through frequency analysis of keywords from the selected

296 articles, common themes emerged, including 'entrepreneur', 'women's status', 'gender relations', 'feminism', 'empowerment', and 'entrepreneurship'. These keywords point to the core concepts that frame discussions on women's entrepreneurship, indicating a consistent focus on empowerment, gender equality, and the social dynamics that influence entrepreneurial experiences. Among the journals publishing this research, *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* stands out as the most prolific, consistently producing influential studies that contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field. Geographic analysis further highlights the United Kingdom, the United States, Netherlands and as top contributors, reflecting these countries' strong research ecosystems and their emphasis on gender-focused entrepreneurship studies. Other countries such as Spain, India, Italy, and Germany also contribute significantly, suggesting a widespread and growing interest in examining women's entrepreneurship from diverse international perspectives.

While this study provides valuable insights, it also acknowledges certain limitations. By focusing solely on data from the Scopus database, it excludes insights from other potentially valuable sources such as PhD thesis, several unpublished research, master's and doctoral dissertations, and non-indexed researches. This limitation suggests that future studies could expand data sources to include these types of literature, offering a more comprehensive view of women's entrepreneurship and facilitating a broader understanding of how gender impacts entrepreneurial outcomes. Incorporating these additional sources could also enable future researchers to draw comparisons with the current findings, thereby enriching the field with diverse perspectives and uncovering new patterns. Despite its limitations, this study makes a robust contribution by presenting an extensive bibliometric analysis, capturing key trends, authors, and journals within the domain of women's entrepreneurship. The study's identification of relevant keywords and thematic areas serves as a valuable resource for new researchers, providing a structured overview that can support the development of targeted research questions and methodologies. By synthesizing both foundational and recent research, this study offers guidance that can foster continued exploration, promote scholarly collaboration, and ultimately support the advancement of gender equity in entrepreneurship.

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