Chapter 9

Women and Entrepreneurship: An Analysis of the Determinants in the Tourism Sector

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ABSTRACT

This chapter studies the determinants of women in entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry using a sample of individuals participating in the GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Global) project. This is important because of the obvious difference between the rates of male and female entrepreneurship. Specifically, this research arises in the hospitality sector because of its importance in the Spanish economy which can generate relevant results for other economies with an important tourism sector. By means of logistic regression models for entrepreneurs – female and male – this chapter considers demographics, economic variables, social and intellectual capital and perception variables, allowing a comparative analysis of the results. This holistic approach contributes to identifying the determinants that influence the propensity to entrepreneur in men and women and their differences. The findings point the relevant factors to policymakers in order to promote female entrepreneurial intention and consequently favors equal opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is an important source of wealth in many countries, including Spain. Also, Spain is an important in tourism studies because it represents the second largest international tourist reception position. Therefore, a study focusing on the hospitality sector has relevance for its potential contribution to job creation and its economic impact. Furthermore, previous studies suggest that entrepreneurship contributes competition and innovation, promoting economic growth (Acs et al., 2009).

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The study of entrepreneurship in the tourism sector has been addressed in previous literature (Ateljevic & Page, 2009; Mottiar & Ryan, 2007). However, these researches consider entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, despite the differences between the various activities that comprise it. Although significant differences between men and women in entrepreneurship rates are observed, previous studies did not deep in the gender perspective (Kelley et al., 2015). At the same time, previous studies argue that determinants of entrepreneurship do not differ between men and women, and other characteristics could explain the differences observed in entrepreneurship rates (Langowitz & Minniti, 2005). Among others, attitudinal or social aspects are identified as potential causes, so it is important to consider them in the study of entrepreneurship from a gender perspective.

The main goal of this chapter is to analyse the determinants of women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in order to identify its specific drivers and barriers. This study attempts to consider the sectoral and cultural characteristics that could bias the results. To do so, this chapter analyses entrepreneurship activity in the hospitality industry from Spain, using a gender perspective and the conceptual framework of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor project (GEM). The determinants have been chosen according to results of previous studies focussed on other sectors. The results highlight differences in entrepreneurship determinants in the hospitality sector between men and women. These findings may be useful in explaining differences in rates as well as for the design of policies to promote entrepreneurship.

The chapter is divided into seven sections. After this introduction, the review of the literature is presented, highlighting the main determinants of entrepreneurship identified in previous studies. Subsequently, the database is identified together with a descriptive analysis that considers the differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs in the Spanish hotel industry. Then, econometric modelling is exposed to identify the determinants. Afterwards, the results are explained followed by the recommendations that could contribute to women entrepreneurship and future research opportunities are highlighted. Finally, the conclusions are presented.

BACKGROUND

Recent studies argue that differences in entrepreneurship rates between men and women can be related to differences in attitudinal characteristics after considering other factors (Wagner, 2007). From an opposite perspective, previous studies found that the determinants of entrepreneurship do not differ between men and women (Langowitz & Minniti, 2005). This controversy could be explained by considering external aspects. In this sense, previous studies highlight the need for the comparative study of entrepreneurship between men and women considering the same environment and sociocultural factors because it can affect entrepreneurship (Minniti & Nardone, 2007). Therefore, the study of differences in the determinants of female entrepreneurship in the same sector and country could contribute to deep in the existence of differences in gender determinants. Thus, differences could be due to sectoral issues, and therefore the study of the determinants of entrepreneurship in a specific sector involves interest to literature and to the policy-desing process.

Focusing on the tourism sector, there are studies which analyze the determinants of entrepreneurship (Ateljevic & Page, 2009; Ramos-Rodriguez et al, 2012). These researches consider the tourism sector including accommodation or restoration activities. However, there are specific barriers to the hotel firms that do not affect with the same intensity to the restaurant firms, and consequently, the drivers and barriers of hotel entrepreneurship can differ from other tourism activities (Lado-Sestayo et al., 2016).
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