

# Feminism and Entrepreneurship in Prestigious Management Journals: A Critical Analysis

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**Abstract:** This study explores the intersection of feminism and entrepreneurship within prominent management studies, emphasizing the vital role women entrepreneurs play in economic growth. Despite feminism's societal impact, a significant gap exists in leading management studies, potentially reinforcing a male-centric perspective. To investigate this gap, we conducted a systematic literature review focusing on the top 50 journals in "Business Management and Accounting" and "Strategy and Management." Our review, utilizing the SPAR-4-SLR method, revealed only 11 documents on feminism and entrepreneurship, highlighting limited coverage in top academic journals. We propose addressing this gap through special journal issues and global data collection efforts to advance gender equality in entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Feminist, Women, Awareness, Entrepreneurship, Management.

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## 1. Introduction

Various strains of feminism have been recognized in previous research (Donelson, 1999; Matlin, 2012). Within feminist discourse, there has been ongoing deliberation regarding the question of whether women possess inherent, fundamental, and intrinsic distinctions from men on a biological level (Ogletree et al., 2019). While liberal feminism stresses equal rights and the parity between men and women, cultural feminism has been characterized as an essentialist viewpoint. Cultural feminism asserts that there exist fundamental disparities between women and men, where qualities traditionally associated with women, such as nurturing, empathy, and a commitment to caring for others, have been marginalized within our societal framework (Ferraro, 2009). Entrepreneurship has firmly established itself as a recognized and respected academic field, being increasingly acknowledged as a source of both economic growth and social development (Markman et al., 2016; Thiel and Masters, 2014; Zhang and Li, 2010). In order for entrepreneurship to have an impact on how management is practiced and on the development of public policies (Zahra and Wright, 2011). Women entrepreneurs play a significant role as drivers of economic growth and development in business, serving as both visible and behind-the-scenes leaders within their communities, especially in emerging economies (Bullough et al., 2015). Do to this research into the variances in entrepreneurial characteristics and performance based on sex and gender has garnered significant attention and continues to do so (Belcourt et al., 1991; Becker-Blease and Sohl, 2007; Jennings and Brush, 2013).

Most of the studies in management journals thus involve generalizations of studies done on men that are mistakenly assumed to be applicable to women as well. What emerges is that the new waves of feminism seem to have limited impact on the literature found in the most prestigious management studies (Wilson, 2003; Bell et al., 2019). Over time, studies concerning feminism and entrepreneurship have evolved from the more common quantitative methods to qualitative or mixed methodologies. Databases focused on women entrepreneurs have been created for documenting the evolution of their experiences (Moore, 1990). At the same time, authors adopt theoretical frameworks related more with feminist theory (Bird and Brush, 2002).

Feminist theories underlying entrepreneurship studies are typically divided into: Liberal Feminist Theory and social feminist theory.

In Liberal feminist theory women and men advocate equality of opportunity because they are similar (Calás and Smircich, 1999). Limited access to finance, exclusion from male networks, and the concept of the "glass ceiling" are the structural barriers that affect the growth of women's businesses and contrary to successful male entrepreneurs. According to these studies if a woman has the same opportunities, she behaves similarly to men. These studies do not investigate the impact of social structure on discrimination and stereotypical images (Calás et al., 2009).

The second strand of study is represented by Social Feminist Theory. It assumes that biological differences determine roles in society, including those related to the economy (Elizabeth and Baines, 1998). The success of women entrepreneurs is related to the different management style compared with men, and these differences

are celebrated. The scope of these studies is circumscribed, as the female component continues to be underestimated in entrepreneurship (Calás et al., 2009).

The deficiency in the treatment of the topic of feminism and entrepreneurship in the articles published in the most prestigious management and organization studies leads to a prevalence of the male perspective and experience. To understand the reasons concerning the low publication on the topic of feminism and entrepreneurship, raise awareness and propose new research insights, we used "Scimago Journal & Country Rank" to identify the top 50 journals in the fields of "Business Management and Accounting" and "Strategy and Management" to conduct a systematic literature review.

The journals included in these rankings serve as a foundation for comprehending the accepted and valued theories, methodologies, and empirical contexts within the field. Rankings such as this offer time-bound indicators of socio-historical and geo-political power dynamics that influence assessments regarding what qualifies as 'outstanding' knowledge and its level of theoretical and practical utility (Mañana-Rodríguez, 2015; Murugan and Ravi, 2016). They, therefore, assume a significant role in shaping conventional standards of knowledge creation in the most prestigious management studies, while labeling efforts that diverge from these usual procedures as unconventional, exceptional or marginal-in fact, the topic of feminism and entrepreneurship is not very common in these journals. During our research, we came across three distinct reviews, including one systematic review and two non-systematic ones. In the review conducted by Calás et al. (2009), the primary focus revolves around the necessity for the development of new theoretical frameworks to better understand the various avenues through which entrepreneurship can instigate social change. In Morgan and Pritchard (2019) study, the principal objective is to formulate hypotheses concerning the future of gender-related research within the hospitality industry. Their study delves into the employment prospects for women working within this particular sector. The sole systematic review, conducted by Dean et al. (2019), brings to light the concept of the "underperformance hypothesis." This hypothesis suggests that female entrepreneurs, when assessed using conventional economic metrics, tend to achieve lower levels of success. Importantly, this belief in women's underperformance is deeply ingrained within the industry and is rarely questioned. The study argues that this narrative surrounding women's underperformance is intricately linked with the broader narrative of economic growth. It's worth noting that these reviews did not primarily focus on leading journals in the fields of "Business Management and Accounting" and "Strategy and Management." Consequently, the scope of their reviews and the outcomes they obtained differ from those of our study.

## **2. Methodology and Data**

In the ever-expanding world of research, where millions of articles are published annually, the synthesis and systematic organization of previous research findings emerge as a pivotal task for advancing the field (Zupic and Čater, 2015). Review papers serve as comprehensive assessments of previously published studies (Bem, 1995). They encompass various types, including systematic reviews and meta-analytical reviews that delve into quantitative effects (Paul and Criado, 2020). Bibliometric techniques have found application in charting the landscapes of various academic domains, including entrepreneurship (e.g., Bhupatiraju et al., 2012; Landström et al., 2012; Schildt et al., 2006; Sreenivasan and Suresh, 2023), no one has addressed the topic of entrepreneurship and feminism analysing the top 50 journals in "Business Management and Accounting" and "Strategy and Management."

The data utilized in this research were obtained from the Scopus database, which contains a vast repository of scholarly articles and bibliographic details encompassing authors, affiliations, and citations. Prior studies have demonstrated that simultaneously using additional relevant databases does not yield an increase in the number of pertinent documents due to database duplication (Harzing and Alakangas, 2016). Consequently, for the purpose of conducting the literature review in this study, we exclusively relied on the Scopus database.

Articles were searched on September 11, 2023 and in total, 11 documents were found for this literature review. To extract these articles, we employed the following search criteria: TITLE-ABS-KEY (feminis\*) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (entrepren\*). We used "Scimago Journal & Country Rank" to identify the top 50 journals in the fields of "Business management, and accounting" and "Strategy and management" and limit our study to these journals.

Here is the list of journals with the number of articles relevant to the review:

- Academy of Management Review: 1 article.
- Organization Studies: 1 article.
- Human Relations: 3 articles.

- International Journal of Hospitality Management: 1 article.
- International Journal of Management Reviews: 1 article.
- Organization: 4 articles.

The final dataset spans from 2009 to 2022 and draws from six different sources, resulting in a total of 11 documents. Notably, the dataset exhibits a stable growth rate with no annual change. In terms of document characteristics, the average age of the documents is relatively recent, standing at 5.27 years. What's particularly impressive is the average number of citations per document, which amounts to a substantial 107.8 citations. This indicates the significance and influence of the research contained within these documents. Moreover, the dataset includes a substantial number of references, 1081. Delving into the content of the documents, we find that there are 17 Keywords Plus identifiers and 51 author-provided keywords, reflecting the diversity and richness of the topics covered. Examining authorship, we have contributions from 24 different authors, with one document being single authored. Collaboration among authors is evident, with an average of 2.36 co-authors per document. What's interesting is that a significant portion of these collaborations involve international co-authorships, accounting for 27.27% of the total. Lastly, when considering document types, the majority (8 out of 11) fall into the category of articles, while 3 are review. This distribution provides insight into the composition of the dataset and the types of research contributions it contains.

## 2.1 SPAR-4-SLR

It is essential to establish a structured approach for conducting a comprehensive review of existing literature. Such an approach not only encourages careful planning and consistent execution but also fosters transparency, allowing for the replication of the research. In simpler terms, having a predefined procedure helps researchers anticipate challenges, reduce ambiguity, emphasize accountability, and maintain the integrity of their study. We opted for the SPAR-4-SLR review method over the PRISMA protocol, typically used in pure scientific research, due to its rigorous nature. The SPAR-4-SLR process comprises three main stages (Raman et al., 2022; Sreenivasan and Suresh, 2023; Paul et al., 2021) (Figure 1):

- 1- assembly (involving "identification" and "acquisition");
- 2- organization (involving "arrangement" and "purification");
- 3- evaluation (involving "assessment" and "reporting").

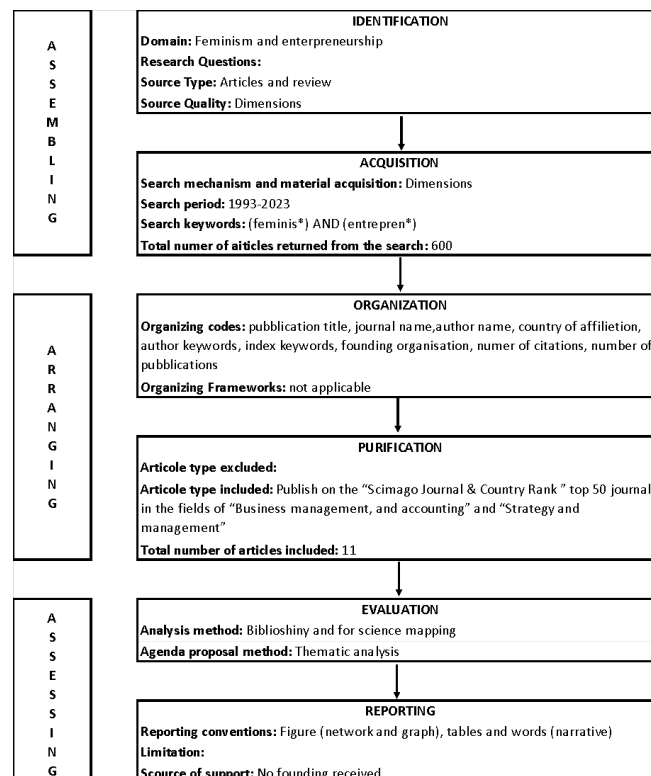


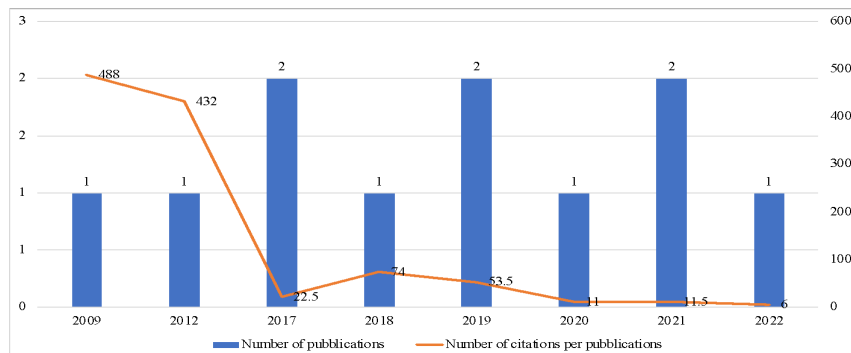
Figure 1: SPAR-4-SLR review method. Source: personal elaboration.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Evolution on Publication and Citation

The Graph 1 represent the number of citations per publications and the number of publications published in different years. In 2009, there was one publication that received a significant number of citations, 488. However, it's important to note that it was the only publication released that year. In 2012, we find another single publication with a high number of citations, amounting to 432. In the subsequent years from 2017 to 2022, we observe a diversification in both the number of publications and the number of citations per publication. In 2017, two publications were released, but the number of citations per publication is significantly lower at 22.5. In 2018, there is a single publication with 74 citations, while in 2019, there are two publications with an average of 53.5 citations per publication. In 2020, a single publication with 11 citations, and in 2021, two publications with an average of 11.5 citations per publication. Finally, in 2022, one publication was released with 6 citations.

These data indicate fluctuations in research productivity and impact during those specific years.



**Figure 2: Number of publication and number of citations per publications over the years. Source: personal elaboration.**

#### 3.2 Top Contributing Countries

The United Kingdom (UK) has the highest frequency with 13 publications, indicating a substantial contribution to the research represented in the dataset. The United States (USA) follows with 6 publications, highlighting a notable research presence as well. Israel and Sweden both have 3 publications each, signifying significant research contributions from these countries. New Zealand is represented with 1 publication in the dataset.

These data showcase the geographical distribution of publications, indicating that the UK and the USA have the most extensive research representation, while Israel and Sweden also make significant contributions. It's important to note that the dataset's composition may reflect specific research interests or collaborations among these countries in the field under study.

#### 3.3 Authors and Affiliation

Table 1 gives the number of articles for each author and how much he or she made of each article.

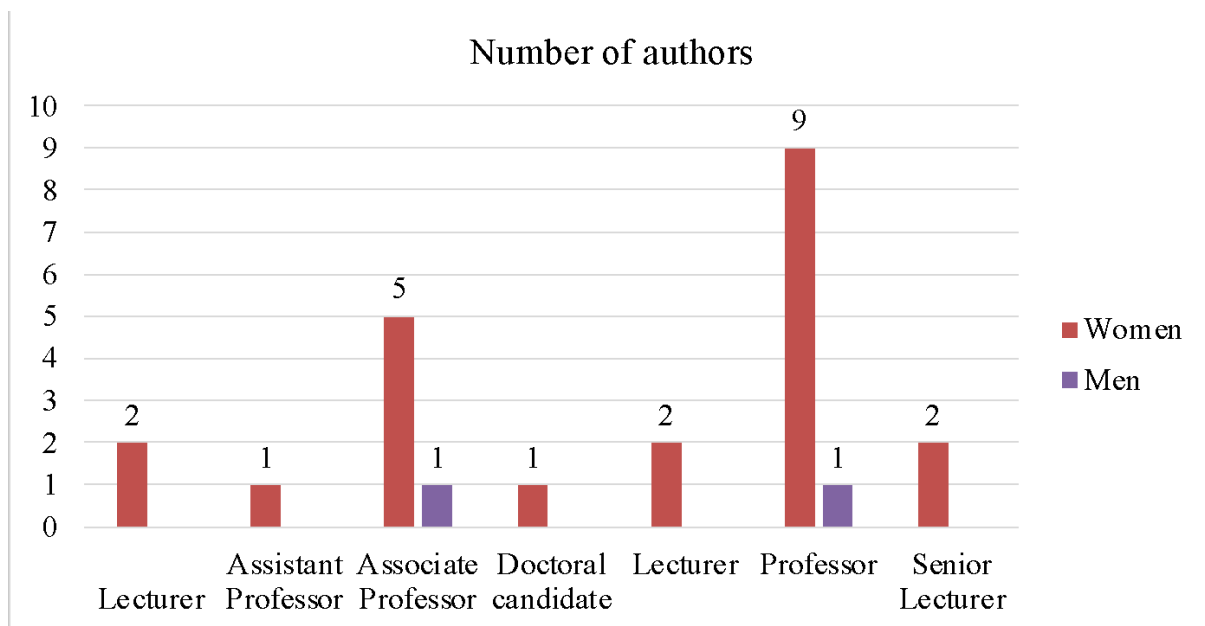
**Table 1: number of articles for each author and how much he or she made of each article. Source: personal elaboration.**

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
MARLOW S.	3	1.333333333
AHL H.	1	0.5
AKRAM M.	1	0.25
BAIKOVICH A.	1	0.333333333
BERGLUND K.	1	0.5
BOURNE K.A.	1	0.333333333
BRYSON A.	1	0.5
CALÁS M.B.	1	0.333333333
CHATTERJEE S.	1	1
DEAN H.	1	0.25
DELANEY H.	1	0.5
DEMPSEY S.E.	1	0.5

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
FORD J.	1	0.25
LARSEN G.	1	0.25
MARTIN L.	1	0.333333333
MARTINEZ D.Y A.	1	0.333333333
MORGAN N.	1	0.5
PECIS L.	1	0.5
PFEFFERMAN T.	1	0.333333333
PRITCHARD A.	1	0.5
SMIRCICH L.	1	0.333333333
SULLIVAN K.R.	1	0.5
TREANOR L.	1	0.5
WASSERMAN V.	1	0.333333333

These data offer a glimpse into the publishing activity of different authors within the dataset, shedding light on both the number of articles they've contributed to and the extent to which their work has been distributed across multiple publications.

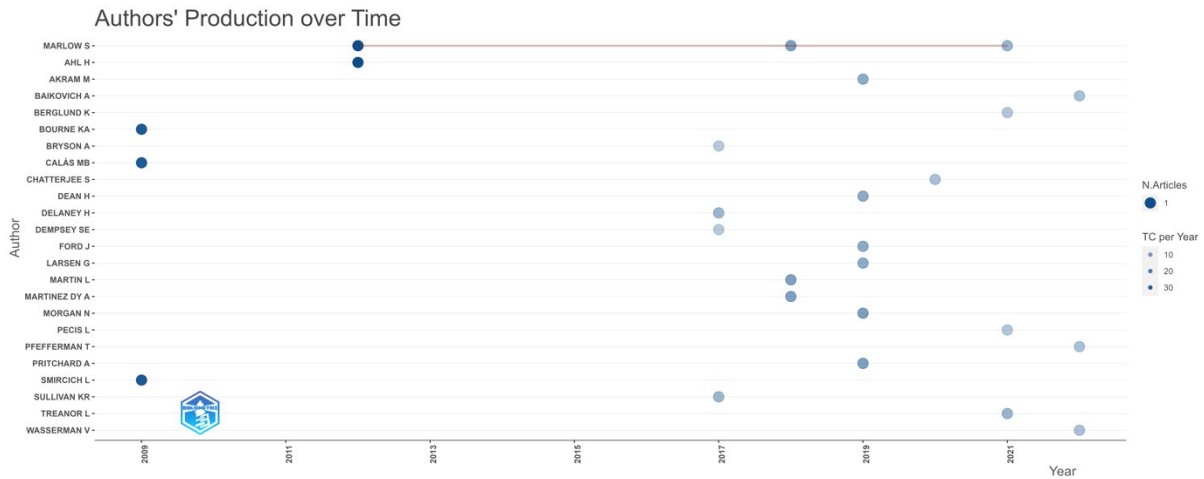
The data in Graph 2 provides a comprehensive view of the number of authors by gender and career stage.



**Figure 3: number of authors by gender and career stage. Source: personal elaboration.**

The Graph 2 provides a breakdown of academic roles based on gender. It highlights the distribution of these roles among women and men, offering insights into gender representation in the author who is doing research on feminism and entrepreneurship. In the comprehensive assessment, there are a total of 22 women and 2 men among the roles specified in the table, resulting in a grand total of 24 individuals. Within the category of "Lecturer," we observe that there are 2 women occupying this academic role, while there are no men in this category. In the role of "Assistant Professor", we find 1 woman, with no men in this category. The category of "Associate Professor" exhibits a more diverse distribution, with 5 women and 1 man. A "Doctoral candidate", serving as a student in an academic context, is represented by 1 woman. Among "Lecturers", we see 2 women, and no men in this category. The category of "Professor", representing the highest academic rank, includes 9 women and 1 man, reflecting a total of 10 individuals. Finally, "Senior Lecturers", similar to Lecturers, have 2 women, and no men in this category, totaling 2 individuals.

The data in Graph 3 provides a comprehensive view of authors' production over time.



**Figure 4: authors' production over time. Source: personal elaboration.**

Firstly, let's highlight Marlow S., whose work spans across multiple years. In 2021, they received a noteworthy 19 citations, followed by 74 citations in 2018 and an impressive 432 citations in 2012. This suggests a consistent impact and recognition of their contributions.

Moving to 2022, authors like Baikovich A., Wasserman V., and Pfefferman T. each made contributions, receiving 6 citations for their respective works. The year 2021 saw contributions from authors like Treanor L., Pecis L., and Berglund K., with 19, 4, and 4 citations, respectively, signifying their active engagement in research. In 2020, Chatterjee S. published a paper that received 11 citations, showcasing the impact of their work. Authors Morgan N., Pritchard A., Dean H., Larsen G., Ford J., and Akram M. all published in 2019, with their contributions collectively receiving significant citations ranging from 45 to 62. In 2018, Martinez Dy A. and Martin L. made noteworthy contributions, each accumulating 74 citations, underscoring the significance of their work. Authors Sullivan K.R. and Delaney H., who published in 2017, received 42 citations each, demonstrating their research influence. Furthermore, Bryson A. and Dempsey S.E. also published in 2017, with their papers receiving 3 citations each. Finally, Ahl H., who published in 2012, received a substantial 432 citations, reflecting the lasting impact of their work. In 2009, authors like Calás M.B., Smircich L., and Bourne K.A. contributed publications that each received an impressive 488 citations, indicating the enduring relevance of their research. In summary, these data offer insights into the diverse contributions of authors and the varying levels of impact they've had over different years. Some authors have consistently garnered high citation counts, while others have made notable contributions in specific years.

The data show an interesting glimpse into the affiliations of authors who have made contributions to the dataset, along with the corresponding number of articles associated with each affiliation.

Durham University Business School emerges as a significant presence, with authors affiliated to this institution contributing to a total of three articles. This indicates a robust research activity and engagement from Durham University Business School. Following closely are several institutions, including Tel Aviv University, The University of North Carolina, University of Birmingham, and University of Massachusetts, each with authors who have contributed to two articles. This suggests active research participation from these universities as well.

The dataset also encompasses a wide range of diverse affiliations. These include affiliations like Independent Scholar and Consultant, Jönköping University, Lancaster University Management School, Loughborough University London, Lund University, Northumbria University, Stockholm University, Swansea University, The Open University of Israel, University of Auckland, University of Nottingham, University of Nottingham Business School, University of Warwick, University of Wisconsin, and Xavier University, each associated with a single article. In essence, these data underscore the varied affiliations of authors who have contributed to the dataset. While some institutions have made multiple contributions, others represent a diverse spectrum of academic and research backgrounds. This diversity of affiliations enriches the dataset, reflecting collaborative research efforts and contributions from a global array of institutions.

### 3.4 Documents

The Graph 4 reveals the prevalence of certain keywords and sheds light on their temporal distribution, offering valuable insights into research trends and themes.

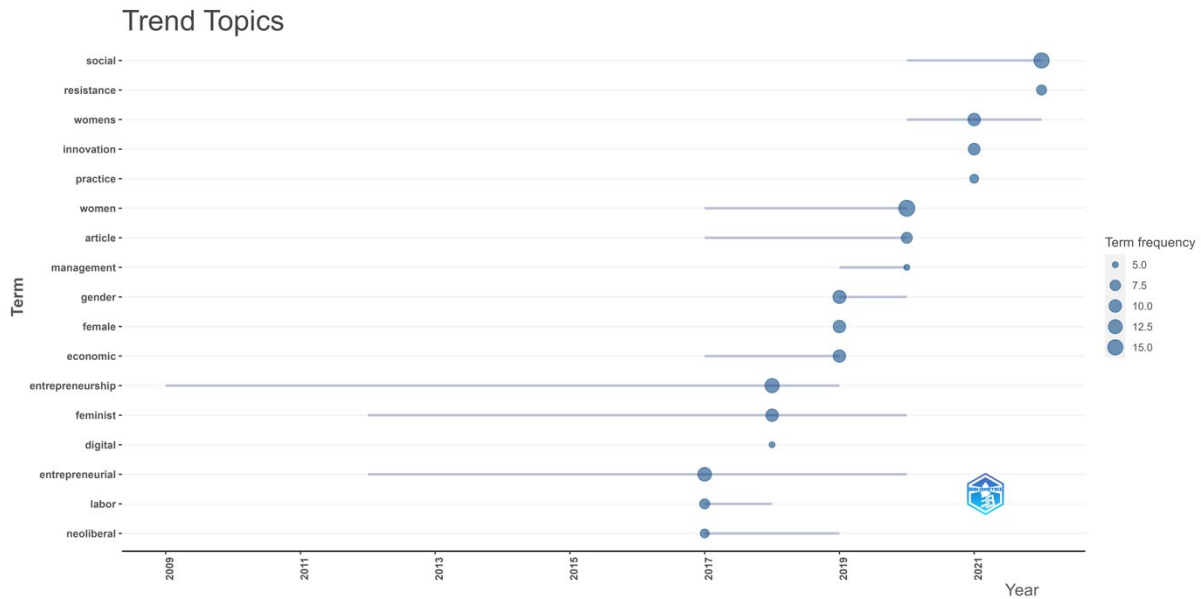


Figure 5: trend topic by keywords. Source: personal elaboration.

Firstly, the term "Entrepreneurial" stands out with 12 mentions, indicating its enduring relevance over time. This keyword has been consistently utilized in various contexts from 2012 to 2020, showcasing its enduring significance in research discussions. Similarly, "Entrepreneurship" appears 13 times and has maintained a presence since 2009. It reached its peak in 2018 and 2019, underscoring its continued importance as a research focus. "Gender" is another keyword that has garnered attention, with 11 mentions primarily concentrated from 2019 to 2020. This suggests sustained interest and research in gender-related discussions during this period. "Women" emerges prominently with 17 mentions, most notably in 2020. This indicates a substantial focus on topics related to women, possibly reflecting a surge in research on gender equality and women's issues during that year. The term "Social" is featured 15 times, with significant usage in 2020 and 2022. This implies ongoing discussions related to social aspects within the field, reflecting its importance in contemporary research. "Neoliberal" is mentioned 6 times, primarily in 2017 and 2019. This term reflects discussions related to neoliberalism, which gained attention and generated research interest during these years. Furthermore, "Innovation" appears 9 times, predominantly in 2021, suggesting a concentrated exploration of innovation-related topics during that year. "Resistance" is featured 7 times, mainly in 2022, indicating a specific focus on resistance-related themes during that particular year. These findings collectively demonstrate the ebb and flow of research themes within the dataset. Some keywords maintain their relevance throughout the years, while others experience peaks in specific periods, reflecting evolving research interests and priorities within the field.

A network analysis (Graph 5) using VOSVIEWER was conducted on the authors' keyword usage, revealing the emergence of seven primary topics. These include one related to neoliberalism, one focused on feminism, another on gender and careers, a topic concerning inclusion conditions, another centered around feminist theories and epistemology, one on entrepreneurship and barriers, and a topic related to women and artificial intelligence. A total of 51 keywords were examined.

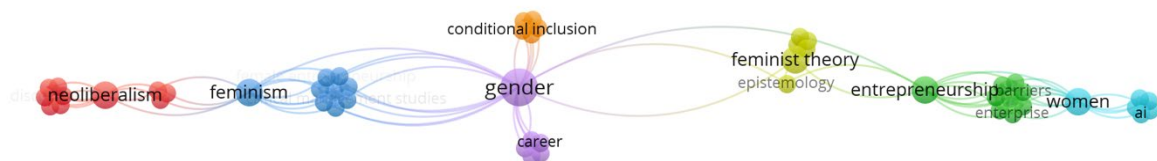


Figure 6: keywords network. Source: personal elaboration.

### 3.5 Topic Modelling

Table 2 provides a structured and informative overview of the main topics derived from the paper. The results were obtained through topic modelling specifically in the Latent Dirichlet Allocation method (Blei et al., 2003). It offers titles and associated keywords for each topic, facilitating a deeper understanding of the core themes explored. The inclusion of the "Number of Publications" column also provides insights into the extent to which each topic is represented.

**Table 2: results of topic modelling**

N°	Title of Topic	Keywords	Number of publications
1	Economic Disparities in the Developing World	poverty, world, third, poor, BOP, article, labor, management, pyramid	1
2	Critical Social Change and Feminist Theory	reframe, social, change, theoretical, feminist, research, theory, entrepreneur, management, critical	1
3	Gender and Hospitality Industry Challenges	gender, hospitality, paper, research, female, future, employment, women, harassment, sexual	1
4	Social Practice and Resistance	social, woman, practice, change, corporate, power, resistance, discourse, traditional, digital	3
5	Innovation and Feminist Frameworks	innovation, margin, woman, race, framework, contribute, change, study, work, feminist	1
6	Female Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth	female, economic, hypothesis, entrepreneur, metanarrative, growth, research, thus, review, male	1
7	Entrepreneurial Discourse and Gender	woman, entrepreneurial, feminist, discourse, assumption, gender, research, context, article, author	2
8	Labor and Economic Practices	labor, alternative, sale, seasonal, consignment, entrepreneurial, reproductive, practice, neoliberal, economic	1

We gain valuable insights into eight distinct topics extracted from a text corpus: we now offer in-depth insights on the thematic content of each topic:

1. **Economic Disparities in the Developing World:** This topic delves into economic disparities and challenges faced by developing countries. It encompasses keywords such as poverty, third world, labour, and management. It is associated with 1 publication.
2. **Critical Social Change and Feminist Theory:** The second topic revolves around critical social change and feminist theory. It explores concepts related to social change, feminism, theory, and critical analysis. It is associated with 1 publication.
3. **Gender and Hospitality Industry Challenges:** In the third topic, the focus is on gender-related issues within the hospitality industry. Keywords include gender, harassment, employment, and women. It is associated with 1 publication.
4. **Social Practice and Resistance:** The fourth topic examines social practices and forms of resistance. It encompasses keywords such as resistance, corporate, power, and digital. It is associated with 3 publications.
5. **Innovation and Feminist Frameworks:** Topic five explores innovation within the context of feminist frameworks. Keywords like innovation, feminist, and framework highlight its central themes. It is associated with 1 publication.
6. **Female Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth:** The sixth topic investigates female entrepreneurship and its impact on economic growth. Keywords include female, economic, growth, and entrepreneurship. It is associated with 1 publication.
7. **Entrepreneurial Discourse and Gender:** Topic seven focuses on entrepreneurial discourse with a particular emphasis on gender-related aspects. It includes keywords such as discourse, gender, and entrepreneurial. It is associated with 2 publications.
8. **Labor and Economic Practices:** Lastly, the eighth topic centres on labour practices and economic methodologies. Keywords such as labour, economic, and neoliberal play a central role in this topic. It is associated with 1 publication.

### 4. Conclusion

The systematic review highlights a notable gap in the discourse surrounding feminism and entrepreneurship within the realm of esteemed journals in the "Business Management and Accounting" and "Strategy and Management" fields as per the "Scimago Journal & Country Rank" top 50 journals. Our analysis underscores the



limited attention given to feminism within the mainstream research of our field, revealing its presence as a partial and peripheral consideration. Particularly striking is the near-total absence of discussions related to feminism and entrepreneurship in the most prestigious journals, where this critical intersection of themes remains conspicuously overlooked.

The limited representation and noticeable scarcity of research explicitly focused on feminism within the entrepreneurship domain in these journals are a matter of considerable concern. This situation implies a deliberate effort to sideline feminism as a valid research approach.

It is crucial that the topics addressed, including feminism and intersectional theories, are also recognized and integrated into mainstream management journals, dispelling the perception that these topics are exclusive to the social sciences. This inclusion could enrich and diversify the academic debate in the field of management

Given that the current system rewards researchers based on the relevance of the journals in which their articles are published, the limited presence of feminist theory related to entrepreneurship in prestigious journals raises significant concerns. As the current system tends to disregard feminism as a valid approach, there is a pressing need to take steps forward in recognizing its potential.

Efforts should be made to integrate these themes into prestigious journals to underscore their significance, encourage further studies on the subject, and raise awareness within the community about these issues.

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