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Impact of family moral support on female entrepreneurs involved in craft tourism

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined how family moral support influenced the performance of women entrepreneurs involved in craft tourism in Southern Africa. Relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology were adopted to understand the rural women entrepreneurs' experiences and perspectives. The stakeholder theory was applied to disaggregate the family system and identify how each member impacts women entrepreneurs' performance. The family's structure and composition helped to explain women entrepreneurs' resilience. Thematic content analysis was used to present rural women entrepreneurs' narratives. Evidence from the study indicated that spouses and children's moral support boosted women entrepreneurs' confidence and ability to collaborate with other entrepreneurs. The research analysed the social context (family) and explained the role played by the family in sustaining rural women-owned craft tourism ventures. Apart from localising the tourism perspectives from rural women entrepreneurs' perspective, the ensuing discussion puts into perspective the emotional support mechanisms that enable women entrepreneurs to balance family-venture commitments. This paper contributes to the literature by examining how individual family members' moral support impacts women entrepreneurs' performance. It also makes a theoretical contribution by analysing craft tourism entrepreneurship from a sociological dimension and disaggregating the family system to identify and explain each family member's contribution to the informal economy.

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Introduction

Globally, women entrepreneurs play a critical role in rural economic growth and development, especially in developing countries (Bosworth & Wilson-Youlden, 2019; Çakmak et al., 2018). The rural economies in developing countries are driven by informal activities, making it difficult to ascertain the economic contributions of rural women entrepreneurs (Guan et al., 2019; Shehab, 2011). Nonetheless, Matandare et al. (2018) acknowledge the importance of women entrepreneurs in improving living standards in rural communities.

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For instance, prolonged economic downturns in Zimbabwe resulted in company closures and massive job losses, and rural women entrepreneurs' earnings provide social safety nets for their families (Mungwini, 2018). The importance of rural women entrepreneurs highlights the need to understand the issues that influence their performance (Beedle et al., 2013; Çakmak et al., 2018; Dias et al., 2021).

Previous research overlooked women's involvement in craft tourism, and the focus has been on farm tourism, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, women empowerment, and tourism in general (Arroyo et al., 2019; Darc & Pereira, 2018; Panta & Thapa, 2018; Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). Craft tourism can diversify tourism products and improve destination competitiveness (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2015). The craft tourism sector's small nature, low financial requirements, and the application of traditional knowledge systems favour the involvement of rural women as entrepreneurs (Makandwa et al., 2023). The participation of rural women in craft tourism enables them to supplement agricultural earnings in the face of adverse climatic conditions, enhance the sustainability of crafts, and contribute towards positive tourist experiences through the sale of souvenirs (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012; Hieu & Rasovska, 2017).

Jain and Thakkar (2019) further point out that craft tourism creates new entrepreneurial roles for women in marginalised rural communities that border major tourist attractions. Therefore, understanding the family system helps improve craft tourism's contributions toward the quality of tourism products and the overall growth of rural economies. This is premised on asserting that rural women entrepreneurs are embedded within the family system. Thus, family members' moral support influences rural women entrepreneurs' performance in terms of growth, quality of service, and transition over time. This paper considers a sociological dimension to probe how family moral support influences the performance of rural women entrepreneurs involved in craft tourism. Jaskiewicz et al. (2017) revealed that family's impact on entrepreneurs has been understudied. Wijewardena et al. (2020) examined whether family-to-business support assisted in reducing the stress and fatigue of women micro-entrepreneurs in the informal sector. This research unravels the nature of support (family moral support) given by female entrepreneurs from family members.

This paper examines how family members support women entrepreneurs in managing craft tourism ventures. This article contributes towards; (1) extending the female tourism literature by applying the stakeholder theory in determining the heterogeneity of family systems, and (2) understanding family-enterprise enrichment (Neneh, 2017) by discussing how individual family members' moral support impacts women-managed ventures.

Literature review

Craft tourism entrepreneurship

Hieu and Rasovska (2017) define craft tourism as a kind of rural tourism that is concentrated in craft villages. It is a subcomponent of cultural tourism that explains the tourists being attracted to a particular destination to experience production and purchase handicrafts. Crafts are an essential cultural tool that tangibilises a community's heritage. It is imperative to focus on crafts tourism entrepreneurship to further the contributions of craft-making towards alleviating poverty in rural contexts (Malema & Naidoo, 2017).

Traditional knowledge and ease of entry make crafts tourism lucrative, particularly for rural women with limited financial access (Nyawo & Mubangizi, 2015). Despite these challenges, rural women have managed to sustain their operations (Akinbogun & Ogunduyile, 2009). Wilson-youlden and Bosworth (2019) point out that most craft venture activities are located in marginalised communities that border major tourist attractions and are primarily pursued by women. They revealed that family plays a crucial role in supporting female entrepreneurs.

Much of the literature relating to rural women entrepreneurship in Southern Africa (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015; Chipfuva et al., 2015; Karasi et al., 2017; Mboweni, 2015) has focused on the challenges faced by women at the national and community level while overlooking the family system. Thus the study of the influence family system on the performance of women entrepreneurs in the Southern Africa context needs to be addressed. Zachary (2011) emphasises that the family system creates an environment that facilitates the emergence and sustenance of entrepreneurial behaviour among members. In this study, the family system is defined as a dynamic entity characterised by interdependence and coordination among family members who influence each other directly or indirectly through communication and behaviour (Day, 2007). This research identifies the different actors within the family system and explains how each member's emotional behaviour influences women entrepreneurs' performance. Such a sociological understanding helps explain the nature of family moral support extended to rural women entrepreneurs.

The interactions between women entrepreneurs and their families have positive and negative effects (Hsu et al., 2016). This study focuses on the multiple dimensions, particularly the affective component (family moral support) in venture enrichment resulting from the interactions between women entrepreneurs and their families. This is based on the notion that female entrepreneurs and their families are inextricably intertwined such that there are observable effects on one another (Imbaya, 2012). For instance, women entrepreneurs assume multiple roles in business and entrepreneurial settings and family support influences the development of female-managed enterprises (Neneh, 2017). The family embeddedness perspective adopted in this article helps to explore how moral support provided by family members to female craft entrepreneurs influences venture performance. This is imperative when one considers that women produce most craft products in their own homes, and resources are shared between the family and craft venture domains (Imbaya, 2012; Makhitha, 2016).

Stakeholder management in women-owned ventures

Stakeholders refer to individuals who can benefit or be harmed directly or indirectly by the entrepreneurs' venture activities (Burga & Rezania, 2016). This article identifies family members as stakeholders in the management of female-owned ventures. A family is defined as a social grouping connected by blood, marriage, and/or adoption and maintains emotional ties to one another over time. It relates to a group of people that are attached mentally, spiritually, psychologically, economically, and physically (Otieno, 2017). Bredenkamp et al. (2019) indicate that family types can be either nuclear or extended, and identify family members as children, spouses, friends, and relatives. These family members represent a powerful group of stakeholders that influence

the performance of women-managed ventures (Barakat & Parente, 2015). The family relations in terms of levels of hierarchy, degree of cohesiveness, and commitment are different both within a single-family system and across families (Adjei et al., 2019). Wiklund et al. (2013) conclude that family relationships are different and subsequently the economic behaviours of family members towards female-managed ventures are different. Such differences are a result of power relations and dimensions of identity within a family system that are shaped by age, gender, social class, and civil status (Valdez, 2016).

This paper adopts a reductionist perspective and views the family members as stakeholders that influence the performance of female-managed craft tourism ventures. The family members' social and cognitive proximity to the female entrepreneurs enables them to influence the performance of female-managed ventures (Adjei et al., 2019). The female entrepreneurs interact with their family members more often than with other community members and external agents. These interactions shape the social relationships that either promote or hinder female entrepreneurship activities (Vilakazi & Mkhize, 2020). All the same, the different familial relationships between the entrepreneurs and family members have different impacts on the success of the female-managed ventures.

A stakeholder analysis of the family system examines the family relations within the household economy, and their impact on venture performance. Such family relations are integral in understanding the entrepreneurial processes of female-managed ventures as family systems have different interpersonal dynamics (Danes et al., 2008). Women entrepreneurs' social networks revolve around their families, and their familial interactions lead to certain behavioural patterns that include receiving moral support for their ventures. Barakat and Parente (2015) state that the support offered to female entrepreneurs varies within and among family systems. These disparities arise due to the impact of female-managed ventures on the family's socio-emotional wealth and non-economic objectives. This study aims to establish a correlation between family moral support and the success of female craft tourism entrepreneurs. Family moral support is defined as the emotional care that is provided by family members for one's entrepreneurial activities (Bredenkamp et al., 2019). Cesaroni and Paoloni (2016) acknowledge that family shapes women entrepreneurs' experiences by providing resources and support. This article considers displays of fairness, empathy, and altruism by family members towards female craft entrepreneurs. The physical, economic, and psychological connectedness influence the selfless and emphatic behaviours exhibited by family members (Ellemers et al., 2019).

The concept of moral support, in general, has been applied in consumer behaviour (Lowe and Haws, 2014). Saayman et al. (2020) sought to determine whether altruism influences the tourists' price judgement and concluded that altruism positively influences the tourists' price evaluations, and willingness to pay. This article considers the supply side dimension by explaining the impact of family moral support on female craft producers in rural contexts. Welsh et al. (2013) made similar research focusing on Sudanese women entrepreneurs and concluded that family moral support may be a key resource for Sudanese female entrepreneurs when faced with limited external support and political instability. According to Kaciak et al. (2014), female entrepreneurs in North Korea highly value the support they receive from family members, in comparison to government

support. This highlights the significant impact of moral support from family members on women-managed businesses. Welsh et al. (2018) also recognise family moral support as a form of social capital that shapes the experiences of female entrepreneurs. They suggest that it boosts their confidence and enables them to manage both household and enterprise responsibilities. These findings align with Colella et al.'s (2018) conclusions that moral support, such as pep talks and encouraging words, help to build female entrepreneurs' confidence. Families provide emotional support during tough times (Bredenkamp et al., 2019). Female entrepreneurs in craft tourism face challenges like a depressed market and limited financial access (Karasi et al., 2017). However, family expectations motivate them to perform better. Encouragement boosts self-confidence and improves craft production. Family moral support helps entrepreneurs overcome business challenges (Powell & Eddleston, 2017).

According to Jennings and Brush (2013), women entrepreneurs are negatively impacted by their families, especially when family members try to exert control over their activities. Welsh et al. (2018) have also observed this phenomenon. Colella et al. (2018) further argue that family members are not obligated to provide support to female entrepreneurs, and they can choose when and to whom they offer moral support. This study aims to explore the influence of family moral support on female entrepreneurs involved in craft tourism. By examining the various types of families that these entrepreneurs belong to, their family members, and the nature of the moral support they receive within the cultural dynamics of selected case communities, this research contributes to the stakeholder theory. The stakeholder theory identifies family members and their influence on craft ventures led by women in rural communities. The theory has been applied in social entrepreneurship (Burga & Rezanja, 2016) and reviewed for deficiencies (Crane & Ruebottom, 2012). This research uses the theory to identify family members and their moral support for women entrepreneurs.

Case study setting

This study draws on the sub-sample of the different ethnic minority communities that are found in Southern Africa and focuses on the Shangani people. They are found in countries that include Swaziland, Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe (Mabaso, 2007). Previous researches acknowledge that craft tourism has the potential to uplift rural economies (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011; Saarinen, 2016), but overlooked the cultural differences inherent in the different ethnic groupings.

Despite being located in different geo-political contexts, the Shangani people have managed to maintain similar cultural resources (heritage, traditions, dressing, and ceremonies). This study focused on crafts, a niche of cultural tourism. This is because crafts tourism advances sustainability principles through the promotion of indigenous knowledge and techniques by producing crafts using simple hand tools (Yang et al., 2018).

A group of skilled entrepreneurs creates a wide range of handicrafts using materials such as beads, ilala leaves, clay, and reeds. Beadwork is the most popular craft among them, with 90% of the participants specialising in it. Forty percent of the entrepreneurs make use of multiple materials to produce their crafts. Beadwork is especially favoured due to its high market value. Women are the primary artisans involved in beadwork, and they use glass seed beads to create beautiful, intricate pieces such as necklaces,

headbands, and decorations for clothing and containers. In the past, these entrepreneurs sold their products to international tourists during pre-arranged tours and cultural festivals, such as the Great Limpopo Cultural Trade Fair and Machangana Cultural and Arts Festival in Zimbabwe. Today, they rely on intermediaries to sell their crafts in towns and cities, as the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the tourism industry.

Methodology

Qualitative interviews were conducted to examine how family support affects female entrepreneurs in the craft tourism industry. Rural women may be hesitant to share information about their families, so trust was established before gathering data. Limited research exists on this topic. A qualitative dimension facilitates rigorous exploration of the research problem by learning from female entrepreneurs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The family members' actions towards female entrepreneurs are viewed independently, and the focus is on the multiple realities that emanate from interactions between and among family members and the female entrepreneurs. The relationships between the family members influence the exchanges, and belonging to a particular family. As such, each female entrepreneur is treated as a unique case different from others. This is based on the differences that characterise their families (family structure, size, and resource endowment) and individual behaviour. Thus, the results are based on multiple cases, making the results more valid and generalisable (Creswell, 2013).

The study involved interviews that were conducted between January and April 2019. Data for the analysis was obtained from female entrepreneurs producing crafts in the Sengwe community (Masvingo province, Zimbabwe) and the Makuleke community (Limpopo province, South Africa). The case communities were selected because of their involvement in the Great Limpopo Trans-frontier Park (GLTP) (Muzeza, 2013) and their proximity to wildlife attractions (Gonarezhou and Kruger National Parks, respectively) of global repute that enables them to earn tourism income. The research purposively selected female entrepreneurs producing and selling their crafts to tourists and residing in the case communities. The time and spatial requirements were necessary because entrepreneurship is a social process that evolves (characterised by entrepreneurship stages) (Mamabolo & Myres, 2020), and human behaviour is also influenced by attachment to a particular community.

Fifteen female entrepreneurs were identified with snowball sampling. Research assistants suggested the first participants who then suggested others. Interviews and observations were used for data collection, aided by female assistants from the case communities. The first author positioned as a student, lacking cultural knowledge and unable to speak Shangaan. Participants were willing to share experiences due to their perceived knowledge and familiarity with the female assistants.

The first author obtained the participants' consent and arranged interviews at their preferred time and location. All participants were interviewed for an average of 45 min, with assistance from research assistants in the Shangaan language. The author stayed within the case communities to observe the behaviours of family members and how they supported women entrepreneurs. Observations were recorded and used to determine the nature of moral support received by female entrepreneurs. The author's extended stay also allowed for informal interactions with female entrepreneurs and their families to

clarify any observed phenomena. Data analysis began during the fieldwork by translating gathered data from Shangaan to English, compiling notes, interpreting behavioural traits of family members, and identifying key concepts from the entrepreneurs' narratives. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the gathered data.

Findings and discussions

Description of family characteristics

Evidence from the study revealed that the female entrepreneurs belong to extended family systems whose family members consist of parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, daughters-in-law, friends, and relatives. For instance, one participant indicated that her family members consist of six children (four of them are staying in the city), a husband, a mother-in-law, and five grandchildren. Another participant added,

We are one big family comprising nine children, husband, and eight grandchildren. I have four sons, all of them are married, and I stay with my daughters-in-law. My sister's husband died a few years ago, and we decided that she resides here and assist me with household duties.

The above narrative supports Cheteni et al.'s (2019) observations that extended family systems dominate most rural communities in Southern Africa.

Three percent of the participants revealed that they also stay with their grandparents. Other family members include maternal relatives, friends, and those with whom they share similar totems. This supports the assertion that the Shangani people are a closely-knit social unit (Maluleke, 2018). The civil status of the participants includes 85%-married (95% of them in monogamous married and 5% in polygamous marriages), 12%-widowed, and 3%-single (never married and/or divorced). All the married participants concur that their husbands assume household head positions in their families. Essentially, the family's eldest male is the household head and makes significant family decisions. In addition, 80% of the participants allege that they lead their families in the absence of their husbands either through death or working away from home. This brings another dimension of the power dynamics with the family system whereby the older women that are, grandmother or mother-in-law, influence the family decision-making. This is aptly summarised by one participant's assertion that,

My mother-in-law decides the allocation of resources and my husband together with his brothers obeys her instructions.

The degree of closeness, power structure, and societal expectations demarcate boundaries that define sub-systems within a family and the roles of each family member. The researchers observed that women are supposed to be submissive to their husbands. This in turn influences the nature of relationships between the husband and the wife, and the resultant moral support. The patriarchal nature of the case communities is in sync with the cultural norms of other rural communities in Southern Africa (Mazonde & Carmichael, 2016). Family size, family composition, family structure, nature of relationships, and age of the female entrepreneur are family characteristics that influence the nature and extent of moral support (Valdez, 2016; Zachary, 2011). This refers to the family's membership, a set of rules that govern the interactions within the family

system, and duties and responsibilities that are fulfilled by a particular family member. These aspects influence the nature of family moral support received by a female entrepreneur belonging to the family system.

Impact of family moral support on female entrepreneur performance

Evidence from the study revealed that family moral support influences the performance of craft female entrepreneurs by boosting entrepreneur confidence, facilitating entrepreneur collaborations, enabling entrepreneurs to overcome challenges, and balancing family-venture commitments.

All the participants indicated that family moral support boosts their confidence. One participant explained that,

My sisters marvel at my necklaces, and this motivates me to come up with other designs.

This shows that emotional support rendered by the siblings results in improved innovativeness and necklace designs. In addition, nearly all the married participants acknowledge that their husbands' encouragement propels them to produce more crafts despite the challenges that they face. Although the husbands rarely participate in the craft activities (crafting, selling, and storage), the mere 'daily pep talks' such as, 'you are making beautiful necklaces' motivates female entrepreneurs to produce more, and even try to come up with new designs. The study findings indicate that older family members are sources of strength, and can inspire female entrepreneurs to produce more crafts. The family members include grandmothers, mothers-in-law, husbands, and siblings. All the same, mothers-in-law and the husbands' moral support contribute greatly towards boosting the participants' confidence.

Female entrepreneurs with supportive influential family members can balance family and venture commitments. Spousal support is particularly important, with 90% of married participants indicating its influence. Permission to participate in craft exhibitions and access to resources, such as a maid or auntie to help with household chores, can enable female entrepreneurs to produce more crafts. The study findings support Molina's (2020) conclusions that civil status especially being married positively determines the performance of female entrepreneurs. Nikina and Shelton (2015) in particular, conclude that spousal support enables female entrepreneurs to reduce family-venture conflicts. This is a result of the spousal commitment that diffuses family-venture tension and enables the female entrepreneur to fulfil both family and venture responsibilities (Yang & Danes, 2015).

It is important to acknowledge that not all spouses are committed. For example, one participant shared that her husband is abusive and prevents her from attending festivals. Another participant, who is in a polygamous relationship, expressed that her husband does not support her entrepreneurial pursuits. 'He wants me to prepare the meals on time, and focus on tilling the fields', she further explained. The above narratives indicate that female entrepreneurs' performance is negatively impacted by the withdrawal of emotional support from their spouses.

One participant explained that she regards her entrepreneurial activities as an extension of her gender roles. The craft activities especially beadwork are viewed as feminine (Saayman et al., 2020), and are mostly undertaken at the entrepreneurs' homestead (Makandwa et al., 2021) resulting in the female entrepreneurs viewing their ventures as

family ventures. Despite rural women's engagement in entrepreneurship tasks, they are expected to fulfil their household obligations that include cooking, childcare, and other familial work. The support received, for example, daughters-in-law washing the dishes enable the entrepreneurs to have more time for their venture activities. The family size and characteristics influence the female entrepreneurs' experiences. For example, an entrepreneur with more dependants requires increased moral support. This is supported by Powell and Eddleston's (2017) assertion that family members influence the female entrepreneurs' venture experiences.

All the same, Cesaroni and Paoloni (2016) observed that family-work commitments are influenced by different positions assumed by women within a family. Evidence from the study revealed that daughters-in-law's entrepreneurial activities are constrained by family commitments.

'I tidy the houses, prepare food and send my children to school before making my necklaces', explained one participant. She added that her mother-in-law expects her to complete the household, and most often she misses the opportunity of selling her crafts at the MCC. Thirty per cent of the participants concur that they allocate household responsibilities to their daughters-in-law, enabling them to spend more time on their craft activities. From this perspective, multiple power relations, and social class influence the entrepreneurial experiences of female entrepreneurs within the same family system. This supports Valdez's (2016) conclusions that family members' access to resources, in this case, family moral support result in unequal opportunities for family members. This influences the female entrepreneurs' family-venture commitments.

Rural women entrepreneurs in Southern Africa are faced with an array of challenges that include transport problems, inaccessible markets, lack of funding and domestic violence (Karasi et al., 2017; Malema & Naidoo, 2017), and female entrepreneurs involved in craft tourism in the case communities are no exception. Sengwe entrepreneurs lack capital for their ventures and rely on emotional support from spouses. Husbands' trust and positive relationships help female entrepreneurs access family resources for crafts despite limited external support. Family support is important for the resilience of entrepreneurs, especially female entrepreneurs who are driven by the desire to provide for their families. (Yang & Danes, 2015; Zachary, 2011). The female entrepreneurs in the Maku-leke community highlighted that they record low craft sales during village tours at the Makuleke Cultural Centre (MCC). The village tours are organised by the Outpost and Return Africa, and community members are drawn to the MCC to witness crafts on display and traditional performances. Seventy percent of the female entrepreneurs stated that they continue exhibiting their wares during village tours primarily because they feel encouraged by the presence of their relatives. One participant, in particular, indicated that the presence of her grandchildren among the spectators spurs her to 'serve the guests better' which boosts her sales. All this points that the mere presence of the family members during the village tours helps female entrepreneurs to ease the impact of the economic challenges (depressed market and harsh weather conditions) they face and continue producing crafts in preparation for the next exhibition.

Furthermore, all the female entrepreneurs in the Sengwe community indicated that they exhibit their crafts during festivals. Such festivals as the Great Limpopo Cultural, held annually in the Mhlanguleni community (Chiredzi, Zimbabwe) are characterised by performing arts and exhibitions that draw both regional tourists and local residents

to the event. The tourists' decision to buy the entrepreneurs' crafts thus may be influenced by the partisan crowd. Saayman et al. (2020) observed that most tourists' pro-social behaviour is positively associated with altruism. Tourists may be influenced to purchase crafts from female entrepreneurs based on their concern for others, such as improving the livelihoods of the entrepreneurs, rather than just their own desire for the crafts. The presence of family members, school-aged children, and friends within the community helps the tourists understand the living standards and motivates them to buy the crafts out of empathy for the entrepreneur's family. It is unlikely that the same product would have been purchased if it was sold in a retail shop where family members were not present.

Eighty-five percent of the participants are aged above 55 years and are regarded highly within their families and the community. They view the sale of crafts as a way to preserve their culture in general and dressing in particular. One participant said,

I have to continue making necklaces to teach my daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

Thus the entrepreneurs' status as role models within the family persuades them to continue the trade despite less financial rewards. The ability to continue making crafts is a success in itself. In addition, the young female members of the family also consider beadwork as a pastime activity – being influenced by their role models (grandmothers, mothers, and mothers-in-law).

Evidence from the study also revealed that the participants assisted each other in completing entrepreneurial tasks. The researchers observed that 30% of the entrepreneurs in the Sengwe community pull their financial resources together and send one individual to purchase the glass-size beads in Malamulele, South Africa. One participant added,

My friend cannot travel to Muhlangueni, Zimbabwe, to attend the festival, so I sell the crafts on her behalf at the festival.

Another participant in the Makuleke community shared the same sentiments when she said,

My grandmother does the craft making, and I display them at the cultural center because I can communicate with the tourists very well.

The above narratives depict that the reciprocal behaviour between and among the female entrepreneurs that belong to one family system is a result of the trust that is built by their relationships and interactions. This validates Valdez's (2016) assertion that kinship ties build trust and reciprocal obligations that female entrepreneurs can rely on for the development of their venture activities. The family moral support forms part of the social capital that is capitalised on by female entrepreneurs for their venture success (Barakat & Parente, 2015).

Craft-making is a great way for female entrepreneurs to bond with their families and share skills. This also helps to improve the quality of craft products and sustain their ventures for generations to come.

Conclusions

This article delves into the family system and how it impacts women entrepreneurs' venture performance. By analysing the role of each family member and their moral

support, we aim to shed light on how it affects women entrepreneurs' business activities. The study applies the stakeholder theory to the family system, and the theoretical contribution include that unlike previous research that viewed the host community as a uniform entity in the tourism industry. Through our findings, we show that rural communities are heterogeneous in nature. The research highlights that family systems can either be nuclear or extended, and a woman entrepreneur's position within the family system affects the level of moral support she receives.

On a practical level the research contributes a understanding of how the spouses' and children's emotional support has a great impact on women entrepreneurs' performance when compared to other family members, and siblings have the least impact. The research revealed that family members' moral support boosts the women entrepreneurs' confidence, enables the entrepreneurs to collaborate, and balance family-venture commitments. The results validate the use of the stakeholder theory to understand the impact of the family system on female entrepreneurs' performance.

The type of moral support provided by each family member can vary depending on family structure, size, and composition. For instance, the emotional connection between a female entrepreneur and her husband differs from that with her brother, despite both being male. This difference in relationships can also affect the entrepreneur's performance. Research has found that venture performance is not just about financial success, but also includes the ability to maintain business operations, train family members, and create new products. Family support plays a crucial role in building social capital, establishing trust, and fostering kinship ties that help women entrepreneurs access resources when external support is lacking.

This study sheds light on how the family system contributes to the development of entrepreneurship among rural women and why craft businesses managed by women often do not expand beyond their local communities. Further research could investigate how family members affect female entrepreneurs in various regions and examine women's roles in these communities. The researchers suggest that future studies should focus on the role of mediators in cultural-based tourism entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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