



Entrepreneurship & Innovativeness among women - Results of qualitative study

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Three case studies on successful women entrepreneurs
 - Sweden
 - Poland
 - Estonia
- Future research direction
- Introduction to the discussion





Introduction

The Aim

To present three case studies on female entrepreneurship and innovativeness in chosen partner countries



Justification for the choice of topic



- The role of women in contemporary society is significant.
- It is necessary to conduct various kinds of studies based on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to understand the reality of women and their socio-economic contribution.
- WCE[®] conducted a qualitative and quantitative study as a part of the European Baltic Sea Region Forum for Gender Equality and Growth, 3.0 project.

Methodology



Methodological aspects

- We collected primary data from the selected women entrepreneur from:
 - the Republic of Estonia,
 - the Republic of Poland,
 - the Kingdom of Sweden.
- When selecting a women entrepreneur, we chose three qualitative parameters that the selected women entrepreneur should fulfill:
 - The selected woman should have her business venture.
 - She should be a focal point of organizational decision-making.
 - The business model should be innovative.



Methodological aspects

- The main primary data collection tool - the structured questionnaire
 - open-ended questions
- Three interviews with the selected women entrepreneurs
 - Language barrier
 - Partners involved
 - Timeframe
- The structured questionnaire covered up four key areas:
 - general questions about the interviewee and her company
 - questions on entrepreneurship
 - questions on innovativeness
 - satisfaction and plans



Hanna Bruce and Växbo Lin

The case of Sweden

Hanna Bruce

- 45 years old, major in Human Resources
- Married and has three children, a dog and a cat
- Spends a lot of time in the mountains – snowboarding, skiing and doing excursions
- Renovation of houses
- Related to different factories since childhood
- Hanna and her husband bought a textile factory Våxbo Lin in 2006 - Hanna's dream since she was 15 years old and had a summer job there
- Strongest driving force - the full responsibility and full authority to do what she wants



Växbo Lin

- The aim of the company - to build further on and preserve and renew the flax tradition while contributing to the development of the countryside
- Crucial for the development – to combine tourism and hospitality industry together with flax industry, manufacturing industry.
- Consequently, a customer may visit not only the factory, but also factory shop
- www.vaxbolin.se



Entrepreneurship

- Focuses on pushing forward
- Relates with societal commitment, where helping and developing society really matters
- Capacity for multitasking, energy and naivety (as an advantage)
 - courage, taking risk, passion, having a vision and believing in it
- The biggest obstacle – financial resources (also for innovativeness)
 - inadequate support and time



Innovativeness

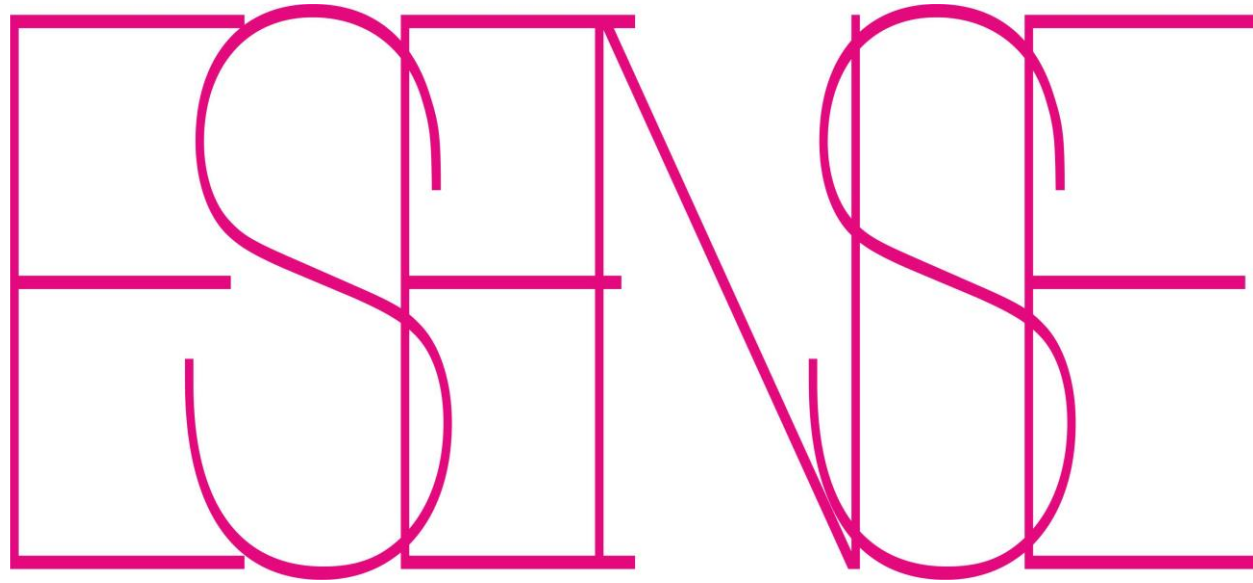
- 99% of ordinary entrepreneurs are not part of innovative word, if one takes into consideration innovativeness related to cutting-edge tech companies
- A company can be considered as innovative when the owner is proud but never satisfied with what is achieved
- The innovation strategy for Våxbo Lin can be formulated as mission: “we have a drive in the company to make the best of what we have”
- Continuous development and improvements
- Example - the usage of the customer response to make alterations in the factory shop (weekly meetings)



Gender aspects

- Women are often more responsible for families
- There might be a feeling that family security is jeopardized
- To overcome such feeling women needs to have a very strong will
- As a successful female entrepreneur she needs a husband who takes more responsibility for home
 - According to her, if she wouldn't have had him, it wouldn't have been possible for her to spend so much time running the company.





Katarzyna Gielarowska and E-sense

The case of Poland

Katarzyna Gielarowska

- She is 48-year-old *E-sense* marketing agency owner.
- Katarzyna is a mother, bringing up her 14-year-old son on her own.
- She comes from an entrepreneurial family.
- In her free time she enjoys sports and cooking and meeting friends, but
- Work is also her passion.
- She is a person who is not afraid of a challenge.



E-sense



- The agency offers advertising, plans and strategies for promotional activities.
- The company has been operating on the market for 20 years.
- She cooperates with her prime client more than 18 years.
- 4 years ago she extended the company and started new business - online shop with ladders.

Entrepreneurship

- Katarzyna believes in *“taking matters into her own hands”*.
- She values her independence ->be *“her own boss”*.
- Entrepreneurial individual involves *“courage, ability to make independent decisions, striving to reach a goal”*, but also
- *“indomitability, not giving up, willingness to learn, seeking new solutions, resourcefulness”*.
- Commitment and adaptability are keys to success.
- First finding the solutions for client then thinking of profits.



Innovativeness

- ... is a basis -> company is operating online since 15 years.
- ... is based on relationship with business partners and customers.
- Advertising sector is strongly connected with innovativeness i.e., product.
- Sector is changing day by day.
- The company is operating on the outsourcing principle.
- New inspirations are coming from conversations with clients, business partners and people around but also observation of the market.
- The biggest obstacle is financial issues.



Gender aspects



- As a single mother, she has more barriers.
- Pregnancy and care over small baby constituted a strong limitation-> time of “lost” opportunities and possibilities.
- As a female she had a good start in business or in running her company.
- She does not feel any pressure or limitations in business contacts with men either.



Ülle Vahtra and Lõhka Liisu OÜ

The case of Estonia

Ülle Vahtra

- Ülle Vahtra is 58 years old, a zoo technician by profession.
- She is married and has two adult children and three grandchildren.
- In her free time, she takes care of her grandchildren, family, house, and garden.
- She is the founder of Lõnga Liisu OÜ, a handicraft company in 2000 in Lääne-Viru County, Estonia.



Lõnga Liisu OÜ

- Lõnga Liisu OÜ is a handicraft business founded in 2000.
- The company was fomed in 2004.
- The legal company name Lõnga Liisu OÜ in 2004.
- Currently, Lõnga Liisu OÜ has 5 employees at work.



Entrepreneurship



- The basis of entrepreneurship is running an own company.
- Entrepreneurial person should take responsibility, make decisions, and fulfill personal wants.
- The entrepreneurial person can also be a non-entrepreneur and they have the same qualities.
- The business philosophy, quality is the most significant factor for any business.

Innovativeness



- Due to the sustainability concern, not to use plastic bags.
- Lõnga Liisu OÜ's business model is based on the Marketing approach combined with the e-commerce practices.
- Lõnga Liisu OÜ's innovation primarily focused on improving the total productivity of the manufacturing process.
- Lõnga Liisu OÜ steps onto the cyber marketplace with the concept of e-shop. Continuous web development with a customer-centric approach, launching marketing campaigns via social media elements can be identified as Lõnga Liisu OÜ's grand innovation strategy.

Gender aspects

- The biggest obstacle for starting up a new business is financial resources.
- The fact that she is a woman was also a challenge.
- She does not perceive any gender barriers.





Future research direction

Next steps

- Full case studies description
- Comparisons – similarities and differences
 - Literature review
 - Other research results
- Winnet Centre of Excellence® Series No. 5
 - Innovation and Entrepreneurship towards the Sustainability
 - Invitation to submit papers
 - Deadline: 28.02.2022
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Introduction to the discussion

To be discussed

- The future of qualitative study in upcoming projects
- +&-
- Further development of the questionnaire
- Partners involvement
 - Swedenc, Poland & Estonia
 - Was it interesting? Why? Any problems?
 - Armenia & Finland
 - Why not? What was missing? Finance? Money? Time? People? Motivation?





Thank you