

## Women Managing Men Subordinates in a Males' society the Case of Female Entrepreneurs in Algeria

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### ABSTRACT

*The social, cultural and economic environment is experiencing major changes in Algeria. Among the aspects affected are women's work and their attraction to entrepreneurial functions.*

*The study of the entrepreneurial work of women is increasingly attracting the attention of researchers and academicians. Personality characteristics necessary for the success of women entrepreneurs, socio-cultural constraints affect entrepreneurial performances. To investigate these aspects, a questionnaire was developed for this purpose. 30 questionnaires were completed by women entrepreneurs. The results have shown that they have strong personalities, marked by the Spirit of adventure and initiative, which are necessary for the success of the undertaking.*

*Most women entrepreneurs in Algerian society complain about society's social and cultural constraints. However, they often develop intervention strategies adapted to environmental conditions.*

*The aim of this research is to study the gender aspect socio-cultural constraints in organizations managed by women. The strategies developed by women entrepreneurs in order to confront the constraints of a society to the will of these women to invest a domain reserved hitherto to the men.*

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Culture, Gender, Entrepreneurial Abilities.

### INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship is well studied in developed countries, in Europe and North America, while it is poorly studied in developing countries, especially socio-cultural constraints, and the management styles of women entrepreneurs in a masculine environment.

Several factors have pushed the state to encourage unemployed young people to start their own businesses. These factors include the state's inability to create jobs for thousands of young university graduates.

The fact that the creation of companies is a new culture in Algerian society, it knows several financial, cultural and bureaucratic obstacles. These factors are real obstacles for men, and in order to overcome them, associations and state structures are created.

With social, economic and educational developments, the status of women has clearly improved, allowing girls to complete their university studies, which has pushed them, increasingly towards entrepreneurship. They are

pushed by the economic crisis and the job deficit, and the failure of the state to create more, encouraged them to set up their own businesses.

If men, in a males' society, face insurmountable difficulties, to create businesses, the case is more complex for women, in a traditional environment, hostile to the work of women outside their homes.

Social culture influences the managers' behaviors, as well as groups of workers. "Culture is a social heritage that the group values and wishes to bequeath" (Doron and Parot, 2011, p 176).

Managers and employees are influenced part the culture of their environments. Arab-Muslim culture and cultural traditions are well nestled, in Algeria as in all Arab countries. Entrepreneurs and human resource management methods are influenced by environmental culture. Cultural aspects include women's work outside their homes, men's work under the supervision of women managers or entrepreneurs, male/female relationships at work, and formal/informal relationships...

This paper sheds light on the management practices in Algeria, and the managerial practices of women entrepreneurs, and their socio-cultural barriers.

### Culture and Women Entrepreneurship in Algeria

Work in Algeria is linked to the traditional culture. To understand the reality of the concept of work and female entrepreneurship in Algeria, it is necessary to clarify the changes experienced by Algeria in the cultural, historical, economic, educational, political aspects, and their impact on culture of paid work for both genders.

The dictionary of psychology "The culture is then a variously integrated configuration of meanings acquired, persistent and shared as members of a group, by their membership in the group are brought on the one hand to distribute them prevalent on the stimuli from their environment and themselves, leading to their attitudes towards, and valued representations common behaviors; on the other hand to be included in the product of their activities, and they tend to ensure the transmission" (Doron and Parot, 2011, p 176).

Entrepreneurship is well developed in the industrialized countries as a result of the existence of an entrepreneurial culture in these societies. This led to the creation of enterprises and economic development. The lack of an entrepreneurial culture leads to economic stagnation and underdevelopment. This demonstrates the importance of entrepreneurial culture and its impact on socio-economic development.

In Europe and in industrialized countries in general, the profession of a woman entrepreneur is a business like any other occupational activity. In Algeria, about 3 decades ago, the work of women with stranger men was not culturally allowed. To have women as managers, on the head of men as subordinates was inconceivable. That is why the profession of woman entrepreneur is new in Algeria.

Socio-economic organizations are dynamic systems that maintain an ongoing relationship with their environment.

According to Léger-Jarniou the entrepreneurial culture "promotes personal characteristics associated with entrepreneurship are individualism, marginality, the need for personal achievement, risk-taking, self-confidence and social skills; who also value personal success while forgiving failure; and encourages diversity

and not uniformity and encourages change and not stability" (Léger - Jarniou, 2008, p. 162).

The fact that Organizations are open system has made the woman within organizations the company keep the same social status, as defined in the community. While in the industrialized and more developed countries in the West, gender theory has emerged to give women at work more rights and equality.

The gender approach in business aims to see more equality between men and women in enterprises, in terms of wages and promotions in positions of responsibility without discrimination between genders. According to Caron (2004), "The concept of gender refers to the social organization that divides humanity into two sex groups with different and hierarchical functions, it extends to all areas of life in society".

There is growing interest in the status of women in the workplace and gender became a pivotal area of study. "This concept allows us to conceive the observable differences between men and women in all dimensions of social life as a result of a social and cultural process that is consistent with the imperatives of a particular sociopolitical order" (Caron, 2004).

The economic and socio-cultural environment makes the task of women entrepreneurs more difficult (Geddes, 2015). for women's entrepreneurship in the Maghreb countries has similar cultural constraints, as result of the same socio-cultural environment. According to Salman et al. (2012, p. 5): "Problems related mainly to cultural values and social norms, and remain extremely important (the mentality of people, difficulties as a woman, etc.)". (Salman et al. 2012, p.5).

Algerian and Arab women in general are linked to their culture and cannot dissociate themselves from their Arab-Muslim identity.

### Women Entrepreneurs and the Human Resources Management

The majority of businesses created and run by women are small, have no employees, a family business, or with one or two employees, young people, and often their first jobs in general, and work in the informal.

That's why women, having these small businesses, don't need advanced HRM knowledge. The majority of small businesses work in the informal sector in hiding.

Being a woman entrepreneur in Arab-Muslim countries requires intelligence, competence and patience. Methods for managing human

resources must be adapted to the socio-cultural environment. "gender roles are shaped more by socio-cultural norms and stereotypes than by law" (ILO, 2018, 14).

Entrepreneurship activities require mobility and open communication. As pointed out by McIntosh and Islam (2010, 3), "conservative Islamic culture tends to place restriction on female mobility and women's ability to interact with men outside the home. These restrictions place significant constraints on women's activities as entrepreneurs".

Algerian society has experienced an important cultural change, and women are increasingly accepted as managers and business leaders.

### Gender and Socio-Cultural Difficulties

Women entrepreneurs in Algeria and in developing countries in general, face several cultural constraints. "According to an ILO report, women in MENA region face numerous constraints when starting and growing a business; these include gender-related norms, attitudes and stereotypes" (ILO, 2018, 5).

Venturing into an entrepreneurial activity that involves an environment full of challenges and constraints, is not an easy business even for men. Before the opening on the market economy, Algeria experienced a period of socialism where the creation of enterprises was the business of the state. After the opening of the market economy by the end of the 20th century, the majority of the entrepreneurs were males. But with the progression of the number of girls graduating from Algerian universities, and because of endemic unemployment, young girls are beginning to orient themselves increasingly towards the entrepreneurial trades.

It is a challenge for a woman to venture into an entrepreneurial activity in a hostile socio-cultural environment. According to Arasti "environmental factors such as social norms and customs are different from one country to another or from one region to another" (Arasti, 2008, 10).

There is a great similarity between socio-cultural environments in Muslim countries. Saber, (2002) concluded that "the negative view of the society on Women entrepreneurship and social insecurity is traditional beliefs in Iranian society" (Arasti, 2008, 11), Women are influenced by the cultural negative attitudes and the type of women's socialization and the ways

they are brought up in their families. Rachdi pointed out that "The socialization of girls does not contribute to the development of their self-confidence, their autonomy, their sense of risk and their taste for innovation: the skills needed by any individual who wants to develop and manage their own business" (Rachdi, 2006).

According to the words of a woman entrepreneur in Morocco, "there are now people who speak to you by refusing to look at you in the eye or sometimes they go to one of my salaried men instead of talking to me Boss" (Salman et al 2012, P13).

What draws attention to the profession of female entrepreneurship is that "entrepreneurship is not – only-an economic and social phenomenon but also socio-cultural." Entrepreneurial action cannot be conceived outside the company to which the entrepreneur belongs (Berreziga et Mezian., 2012, p. 8).

The influence or borrowing of the socio-cultural environment is such "that Moroccan woman, even educated, meets obstacles to engage in an activity outside her home" (Salman, N., El Depouti, M., and Hanson, S. (2012).)

It is for this reason that entrepreneurs in Algeria follow a strategy of self-censorship. Tahir-Metaiche concluded that "with regard to self-censorship linked to the socio-cultural context, it would seem that the business environment and the Algerian social climate are much less discriminatory than we tend to believe" (Tahir-Metaiche, F., 2013, p. 20).

Women entrepreneurship is used as a way for women empowerment. "Women's entrepreneurship development is a crucial in reducing gender gaps in the labor market and fostering women's empowerment" (ILO, 2018, 5).

Despite socio-economic changes, women always find socio-cultural constraints and barriers in their quest to undertake.

### METHODOLOGY

In order to study the phenomenon of female entrepreneurship in Algeria in an objective way, it should be studied through a quantitative approach, using a questionnaire developed for this purpose. The questionnaire was carried out and used for the investigation of the socio-cultural constraints of women entrepreneurs, their skills and managerial practices, and the impact of the entrepreneurial activity of women on their statutes Social.

**Problematic**

Women entrepreneurs in Algeria work in a difficult environment, in the material, economic and social aspects. Local culture, religious practices and attitudes towards female work in a male environment are factors that affect women entrepreneurs' practices in Algeria and the Arab-Muslim countries.

In dealing with the subject of work and human resources management in Algeria, it is inevitable to discuss the status and position of women in a male society. The fact that the woman works in a business or administration has been a matter that attracts attention. Being a female manager who manages men, or being an entrepreneur who employs men and gives them orders was inconceivable a few years before, and needs more attention and field researches.

**Research Questions**

Several questions about the reaction of men subordinates managed by women entrepreneurs need to be answered.

Do women entrepreneurs control communication skills?

- What are the qualities of Algerian women entrepreneurs in managing gender in organizations
- What are the socio-cultural constraints women entrepreneurs in Algeria?
- What are the reactions of men subordinates managed by women?
- What are the reactions of women subordinates managed by women?

In order to answer these questions, a questionnaire was developed.

**Questionnaire and Data Collection Procedure**

A questionnaire "character indices and management practices for women

**Table2.** Levels of education

	Middle school	Secondary	University	Total
<b>Instruction level</b>	02	11	17	30
<b>Percentage</b>	6.7 %	36.70 %	56.70 %	100 %

According to table 4, the majority of women entrepreneurs (63%) have a university level.

**RESULTS**

The analysis of the data of 30 questionnaires, filled by women entrepreneurs, helped to draw the following conclusions:

**Table3.** Constraints of women entrepreneurs in dealing with men subordinates

Quest Nr.	Leadership capabilities	Yes	%	Some-times	%	No	%
1	My employees are receptive to my instructions.	19	63.3	7	23.3	4	13.3
2	workers readily agree to be ordered by a woman	15	50	10	33.3	5	16.7

entrepreneurs" was developed to provide data on the following aspects:

- Personal information.
- Socio-cultural constraints
- Communication practices
- Management of gender relationship.
- The social attitudes towards woman entrepreneur.

The questionnaire was developed from interviews with women entrepreneurs and women of liberal functions.

The Data collection tool is then passed through several methodological steps, its use in a preliminary study on a sample of women entrepreneurs.

The Data collection tool is then passed through several methodological steps, its use in a preliminary study on a sample of 07 women entrepreneurs. The tool was then presented to 04 lecturers of methodology from Oran-2 University, to evaluate its validity. All the comments were taken into consideration.

The questionnaires were given directly to women entrepreneurs, who had to choose between: "Yes", "sometimes" or "no".

The percentages were calculated, the results are presented in tables (5-8).

**Population**

30 questionnaires were filled by women entrepreneurs from the Oran region. 12 of them are married with children, and 17 of them have a university level.

**Table1.** Ages of study sample.

Age	Frequency	
20-30	06	20.0 %
31-40	13	43.3 %
41-50	06	20.0 %
51 et plus	05	16.7 %
Total	30	100 %

3	The fact that I am a woman poses problems in the management of my business.	9	30.0	10	33.3	11	36.7
4	My success is due to the fact that I am a woman	8	16.7	7	23.3	15	50
5	I have difficulty communicating with my subordinate women.	4	13.3	7	23.3	19	63.3
6	I find communication difficulties with my subordinates-Men	3	10	10	33.3	17	56.7
6	The perception of male entrepreneurs towards women entrepreneurs is significantly negative.	8	26.7	14	46.7	8	26.7
8	I am often harassed by men.	7	23.3	5	16.7	18	60.0
9	The success of women entrepreneurs requires a radical change in mindsets.	16	53.3	7	23.3	4	13.3
10	The Algerian society perceives positively the position of the woman entrepreneur.	11	36.7	12	40	7	23.3

According to table 3, the majority of employees in female enterprises are receptive to the orders and directives of women entrepreneurs. They find little communication problems with their employees, (13.3%) with women subordinate and (10.0%) with male subordinates.

### DISCUSSIONS

The majority of women entrepreneurs encounter socio-cultural constraints emanating from the environment. Their major problems stem from the attitudes of the employees within the company and the socio-cultural environment as all. These cultural problems are linked to several aspects of day-to-day business management, as quoted in tables (3).

Women entrepreneurs have leadership qualities, and the majority (19) responded that employees are receptive to their guidelines (63.3%). With regard to being commissioned by a woman, 15 replies (50.0%) showed that employees agreed to be commissioned by women. This demonstrates the changes in cultural attitudes towards women in managerial positions in general, including women entrepreneurs. With regard to gender relations and their successes in entrepreneurial tasks, in response to a question, if their successes are due to the fact that they are women, half of the women entrepreneurs (50.0%) replied that they do not think that the fact to be a woman have an impact on their professional successes. (33.3%) of women entrepreneurs responded that they do not see that the problems of their businesses are due to the fact that they are women.

Based on the lessons learned from the interviews with women entrepreneurs who have succeeded in their business, it has been observed that women entrepreneurs are known by their strong personalities, their seriousness and their quest for perfection. This answers our question that women entrepreneurs have command skills. This confirms the results of Salman et al. (2012).

Arab-Muslim societies are known by the avoidance of diversity, as recommended by religion. We always wonder before greeting people of the other kind if they – if they – agree to do so or refrain from doing so, which leads to embarrassment. Among the socio-cultural problems is the communication between genders. (19) replies mentioned that they do not find communication difficulties with their subordinate women (63.3%), and 17 women entrepreneurs (35.2%) replied that they do not have communication problems with their subordinate men. That is confirmed by McIntosh and Islam (2010, 3), that conservative Islamic culture tends to place restriction on female mobility and women's ability to interact with men outside the home.

Gender separation is widely practiced in Algerian society. Young girls are more influenced by this cultural practice through a process of socialization. That confirms the research results concluded by Rachdi (2006) in Moroccan society.

Relationships between men and women are often flawed. This confirms the results of Salman (2012), that one finds men who do not look at women when they talk to them, even if they are business leaders. The improvement in the level of education in Algerian society has not led to a major change in cultural aspects and gender relations.

This shows that women entrepreneurs encounter little communication problems with their employees of both kinds. They have adapted to the local environment and the socio-cultural requirements.

Concerning the attitudes of men entrepreneurs and their perception towards women entrepreneurs, (26.7%) found that men entrepreneurs have negative attitudes towards them. While (23.0%) of the sample find that they are disturbed by the harassment of men, against (60.0%) who replied that they are not harassed. The different responses demonstrate the fact that women entrepreneurs encounter socio-cultural constraints; as result of the facts of people's attitudes, behaviors and managerial practices in a male society. While the working conditions of Algerian women have undergone a radical change, "the attitudes and perceptions of society have not evolved sufficiently" (Salman et al., 2012, p3). The result showed that 16 women (53.3%) considered that the success of Women entrepreneurs requires a radical change in people's mindsets in Algerian society. But only 11 responses (22.8%) found that the company positively perceives the position of the female entrepreneur. As in any society, successful people earn the respect of their entourage. This applies to women entrepreneurs in Algeria who have seen their social status improve.

### CONCLUSIONS

This research has contributed to the clarification of some cultural factors that affect the management practices of women managers and entrepreneurs, in Algeria and in Arab-Muslim societies in general. Socialization practices in family, society and the educational system have shaped women's attitudes and behaviors in society in general, and women entrepreneurs who have defied the dominant culture in society in particular.

Contrary to the negative social attitudes towards women entrepreneurs, we find that attitudes of male and female employees, towards women running businesses is positive, and does not fit with the widespread culture of the males' society. Among the factors affected by the local culture are the male/female relationships and attitudes of male employees towards women in positions of power and responsibility and who give the orders that must be executed.

With the socio-cultural development in Algeria, as in all Arab countries, we find that women entrepreneurs are competent and attitudes towards them have changed. It has become normal for men to work under the responsibility of women, which has been rare in previous decades. Despite the importance of the results and implications of this research, much remains to be done to better understand the impact of the cultural aspect on gender issues, and human resource management practices by women entrepreneurs in male culture societies.

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