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Women, Entrepreneurship and Tourism: A Systematic Review

Cristina Figueroa-Domecq
University of Surrey

Anna de Jong
University of Surrey

Allan Williams
University of Surrey

Albert Kimbu
University of Surrey

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Authors:

Cristina Figuerola-Domecq
University of Surrey

Anna de Jong
University of Surrey

Allan Williams
University of Surrey

Albert Kimbu
University of Surrey

Abstract:

Despite tourism having been a fertile field for entrepreneurship, there is relatively little research on this topic in the tourism journals, the numbers of papers are relatively static, and theoretical work remains at a consistently low level (Li, 2008). Gender issues are also under-theorised and little researched empirically despite the growing importance of women entrepreneurs (de Bruin et al., 2006, 2007; Brush, et al. 2009), and updated studies are needed.

Consequently, the aim of this study is to provide a critical map examining Women, Tourism and Entrepreneurship (WomEnt) research. Through a bibliometric analysis and a systematic review, 102 articles have been identified in this area. Three main findings/observations emerge from the analysis. There are distinctive but inter-related geographies of the performed fieldwork and the intellectual origin of the investigations. The location of universities researching in WomEnt are concentrated in Spain (26 contributions, 12.5%), Greece (25 contributions, 12%), United States (23 contributions, 11.1%), Australia (21 contributions, 10.1%), Portugal (19 contributions, 9.1%), United Kingdom (19 contributions, 9.1%), New Zealand (8 contributions, 3.8%), Sweden (8 contributions, 3.8%). Meanwhile, fieldwork shows an interest in developed countries in Europe (53.4%), North America (13.5%) and Oceania (13.9%), but also an important participation of Asia (11.1%), Africa (6.3%), and Central and South America (1.9%), covering a broader area than the intellectual origin of the research actions. It is both a case of who studies whom, and who studies where, being indicative of underlying power relationships.

Another important research finding is the stereotyping of the role of women as entrepreneurs: concentrating on rural tourism (Brandth & Haugen, 2010; Pettersson & Cassel, 2014; Raditloaneng & Chawawa, 2015), hand-crafting (Kwaramba et al., 2012; Bakas, 2017) and accommodation (Hikido, 2017; Dieguez-Castrillon et al., 2012). That is a focus that potentially overlooks the role women undertake in innovative, entrepreneurial areas such as technology. Finally, this specific research area seems disarticulated from feminist and gender-aware scholarship, with a low integration of feminist theory around the empirical research, and

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important insights that can be gained from this approach (Chambers, Munar, Khoo-Lattimore & Biran, 2017); these results are aligned with the lack of usage of a feminist epistemology in the tourism industry (Tribe, 2006; Pritchard & Morgan, 2017; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). The review reveals a number of important research gaps (territories, topics or industries) in the midst of the highly selective literature in this area, gaps that inhibit understanding of the gendered dimensions of entrepreneurship.

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