

PROMOTION OF THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

Purpose – to examine the characteristics of female employees and female entrepreneurs in the context of women entrepreneurship, analyze, what factors encourage and promote women entrepreneurship and give recommendations on the improvement of public policy for the promotion of women entrepreneurship.

Design/methodology/approach – there had been used scientific literature deduction (drawing conclusions from the available information), analysis (obtained data analyzed separately), analogy (comparison of data with each other), generalization (the main features complex generalization), induction (from individual elements went to a general conclusion), comparison methods. Quantitative research method had been applied by questioning female employees and female entrepreneurs in various cities of Lithuania. Research was carried out using questionnaire, which was filled by 258 female employees and female entrepreneurs.

Findings – after analyzing the theoretical aspects of female employees and female entrepreneurs in the context of women entrepreneurship, there were introduced the factors, that encourage and promote women entrepreneurship. As the results of qualitative research showed, those factors differ between female employees and female entrepreneurs.

Research limitations/implications – the research is limited to questioning female employees and female entrepreneurs in Lithuania, nevertheless it is sufficient for satisfying the purpose of the research and producing the recommendations on the improvement of public policy for the promotion of women entrepreneurship.

Practical implications – women entrepreneurship is a new area for scientific research. The differences between female employees and female entrepreneurs in the context of the factors, that encourage and promote women entrepreneurship are not analyzed. Quantitative research of Lithuanian female employees and female entrepreneurs and recommendations on the

improvement of public policy for the promotion of women entrepreneurship reflect the practical implications.

Originality/Value –this research suggests instrument recommendations for facilitating the promotion of women entrepreneurship through public policy.

Keywords: female employee, female entrepreneur, women entrepreneurship.

Research type: research paper.

Introduction

In the past decade particular attention is devoted to women’s entrepreneurship not only from the point of view of public education, but also in the scientific literature, where the factors and state measures stimulating women’s entrepreneurship are widely discussed. As a consequence, it has been understood that women’s entrepreneurship is a contribution to the country’s economic growth, solutions of social problems and employment. Entrepreneurship is characterized as personal ability to turn ideas into actions, which includes creativity, implementation of innovative solutions, assumption of risk and responsibility and realization of self-expression. Need in entrepreneurship is emphasized in all stages of life, both in professional activities, at work, in a society, where personal skills can be displayed, and in the possibility to create an even higher added value by contributing to certain activities and processes. Lithuanian entrepreneurship stimulation policy comprises various initiatives, such as financial opportunities, extension of capital accessibility, measures improving the business environment and dispersion of educational and learning measures without distinguishing between men and women. The main actions of the stimulation policy are concentrated on the youth group, socially vulnerable group or stimulation of entrepreneurship at an older age.

Scientific issue. The number of women involved in business is different than that of men involved in business due to the accepted social position of women such as family and children. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze what stimulates female employees to take on a business, and which factors stop them, because business creates possibilities to combine working hours with family responsibilities and children. It was interesting to analyze how women, who already have own business understand the factors stimulating (or preventing obstacles) to start own business. This will help to expand the viewpoint towards the entrepreneurship stimulation policy and integrate additional stimulating measures into women’s entrepreneurship.

In the scientific sources the difference between the main factors stimulating female employees and business women to start own business is analyzed fragmentally.

The main *purpose* of this article is to examine the characteristics of female employees and female entrepreneurs in the context of women entrepreneurship, analyze, what factors encourage and promote women entrepreneurship and give recommendations on the improvement of public policy for the promotion of women entrepreneurship.

The research *object* is the viewpoint of female employees and female entrepreneurs towards the factors stimulating entrepreneurship.

Aims:

1. To analyze scientific literature, which discusses the viewpoint towards the concept of entrepreneurship.
2. To present factors stimulating women’s entrepreneurship.
3. To carry out a survey of the factors stimulating women’s entrepreneurship by focusing on female entrepreneurs and female employees willing to start a business.
4. To provide suggestions and recommendations on how to improve the ecosystem of women’s entrepreneurship in Lithuania.

1. Viewpoint towards Entrepreneurship

All countries wishing to increase their competitive ability devote a lot of attention towards entrepreneurship and stimulating factors. However, they face different viewpoints towards entrepreneurship, which can often pose problems during the analysis of entrepreneurship and implementation of the simulation policy. Entrepreneurship is one of the central phenomena in the modern economic theory and practice (Stefanović, Stošić, 2012). Entrepreneurship is interpreted as creation of a new business, or renewal of a current business depending on the presence of new opportunities. This means that the entrepreneurs form the economy by creating new working places and inventing new products and services. However, in reality the purpose of this point of view is to create something new and undertake operations, which create value to the entire social ecosystem.

Here one encounters rapidly developing processes, especially technological changes, which alter people’s thinking, needs and actions. Today’s viewpoint of the scientists towards entrepreneurship changes according to the changes of the process of business creation, monetization or development, and factors determining success of this process. Human capital remains an inseparable part of this process, which is able to adapt to the changes, alter the thinking, adjust to the novelties, and manage new available technological and social instrument.

One of the founders, J. Schumpeter (1934), expressed an opinion that entrepreneurship includes untried technologies, which create opportunities to produce new goods or to manufacture an existing product in a new way by revealing a source of supply of new materials or new markets for realization. Entrepreneurship opportunities are presented as unevaluated economic possibilities, which arise from the difference of human understanding in evaluation of the environment and available resources (Pauliukevičius, 2014). Entrepreneurship is presented as a way of thinking, personal qualities, technical and business management skills (Strazdienė, 2009; Župerka, 2010; Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2013) allowing to duly plan the available resources and knowledge creating added value through introducing something new or filling certain niches by seeking profit or social purposes (Xaviera, 2012). This is a viewpoint related to

the growth and development of innovations, which create both changes and contribute to creation of the wellbeing and advancement (Ahl, 2004).

Meanwhile, the scientists analyzing women’s entrepreneurship single out additional aspects and provide a purposeful viewpoint towards the problems related to women’s entrepreneurship or characterizing it. Sweida, Reichard (2013) understand women’s entrepreneurship as a search for recognition or strive for manliness. Entrepreneurship is interpreted as an activity, in which women are able to reveal their abilities and potential, to assume risk, adopt decisions and control the process, this way ensuring recognition and bringing their status to a higher level (Yilmaz et al., 2012). Women’s entrepreneurship is also described as a process with a rather important role in the growth of national and global economy accentuating important personal qualities such as continuous search to create by using own efforts, innovations and creativity (Torbehbaret al., 2014). Women’s entrepreneurship is presented as an opening of opportunities to work in an independent and flexible manner by creating synergy and harmony between family and work (Klyver et al., 2013), while combining work and family, supporting a family and a husband are interpreted as obstacles affecting women’s entrepreneurship (Vadnjal and Vadnjal, 2012; Nissan et al., 2012). Women’s entrepreneurship is affected by the cultural aspects and is analyzed based on Hofstede’s taxonomy in relation to four dimensions, i.e. power-distance (public recognition involving power and authority), individualism (ability to be independent of social groups and stand out), uncertainty avoidance (society’s level of tolerance) and manliness. (Tlaiss, 2014).

Female entrepreneurs can be characterized as a woman or group of women, who initiate, organize and manage business companies (Ambrish, 2014). Jennings and Brush (2013) states that entrepreneurship is a gender-related phenomenon, while rudiments of entrepreneurship are imparted from a family, and can arise as a necessity or an opportunity, and that entrepreneurs often set aims and create business without hoping for economic benefits. During the analysis of the concept of women’s entrepreneurship, attention often is directed towards the role of women in growth and creation of new companies and independent sources of income and property, which determines better empowerment of women (Fontana, 2003).

With regards to different opinions of the scholars, the authors adopt a viewpoint that the foundation of women’s entrepreneur encompasses personal traits of character, ability to implement innovative creative solutions, which contribute to creation of business and are able to create synergy between a family and the undertaken operations.

2. Factors Stimulating Entrepreneurship

A number of authors analyze measures and factors in their articles, which could stimulate women’s entrepreneurship. It is always emphasized that elimination of obstacles preventing women’s entrepreneurship requires great changes in the traditional standpoint and the entire society, and that creating certain opportunities for women’s entrepreneurship does not suffice. This mean that this process requires measures, which

would change the viewpoint of the women’s entrepreneurship and would offer training and services. The total structural skills training package can pave the road towards development of women’s entrepreneurship. Such programmes can provide knowledge, motivation and help women to achieve their final goals. Programmes funded by the World Bank can be used for these purposes (Ambrish, 2014).

Akehursta et al. (2012) carried out a survey of the female entrepreneurs in the Region of Valencia in Spain seeking to determine the factors stimulating entrepreneurship. The survey revealed that the financial support, demographic factors, age, family loans and authorized capital can have a great influence on the success of a business. Financial support provides the best motivation to the businesswomen. As far as demographic factors are concerned, absence of a partner has a positive influence on the women’s ambition to start an enterprise. The age, at which women start a new business project, has an influence on the type of business and can create obstacles. Finally, female entrepreneurs, who launch larger business projects and those, who used a family loan to start a business, most frequently create a successful business. Survey of the women’s entrepreneurship carried out by Srivasta (2012) in Mumbai also emphasized the role of the family loans and capital as an important factor stimulating women’s entrepreneurship. However technical and professional skills are just as important in stimulation of entrepreneurship. Mehta and Parekh (2014) states that financial and personal factors are the best incentives for women to start their own business. It is very important for women to know that combining a business with family responsibilities will not pose much difficulties.

Ismail et al. (2012) evaluated the correlation of women’s intention to start a business with one of the several cultural variables. The results demonstrated that a woman’s personality has a weak correlation with the cultural factors, therefore it is possible to state that both are not considered to be motivational factors for starting a business. However, the same study shows that the women’s choice to start a business is strongly conditioned by cultural factors, while the personality factor has a rather insignificant effect. In a similar study Mani (2011) determined that a woman’s personality has a certain influence from the point of view of entrepreneurship: in decision-making, self-motivation and motivation of employees, choice of a management model, acknowledgement of problems and handling risk-related situations.

McGowana et al. (2012) carried out a survey related to women’s entrepreneurship in the Northern Ireland and established that a number of women were encouraged to start own business by the lack of work and professional development. Entrepreneurship offers a partial solution for both a desire to be flexible in controlling time and professional ambitions. However, the majority of women state that maintaining proper balance between a family and business is a great challenge and a source of stress. All women participating in the study agreed that they enjoyed their step towards creation of an own business, and it was personally and professionally beneficial, and providing a feeling of trust and control. None of the women stated that they started a business because they wanted to earn money. Entrepreneurship was an interesting result in itself, even though all of them wanted to be financially secure or at least have no debts or financial burdens.

In his research of the Indices of Economic Freedom, Chowdhury, Audretsch (2014) determined that economic situation in a country has an influence of stimulation of women’s entrepreneurship. In the counties with high number of women involved in a labour market and having higher education, the level of entrepreneurship is higher than in the countries with an opposite situation. Higher level of entrepreneurship is also obvious in the countries with a lower level of corruption. The authors state that the politicians should create flexible programmes for women’s entrepreneurship, such as child care subsidies, creation of access to women’s mentors/leaders, in order to better prepare the women, if they decided to take on a business.

Manifestation of women’s entrepreneurship can also be found in Lithuania. Guščinskienė and Čiburienė (2009) established that female entrepreneurs maintain an especially positive attitude in applying and using initiatives and training, as well as investments into the labour market. They stated that women in Lithuania perfectly apply the international experience of women entrepreneurs as well. Kartašova, Andriuta (2013) compared women’s entrepreneurship on the basis of case analysis in different countries. It has been established that in the developing countries factors stimulating women to start a business, business development and difficulties coincide. However, in the developed countries they are different. In the developed countries women are encouraged to start an enterprise by the internal factors, while in the developing countries women choose business out of necessity. When women start an enterprise in the developing countries, this does not determine its further development, and the country’s economic level of development has an influence only on starting a business.

Factors stimulating entrepreneurship can differ depending on a country and environment, in which they are analyzed, however a certain consistency is established in the analysis of various scientific literature sources related specifically to the problem of entrepreneurship.

Factors stimulating women’s entrepreneurship can be divided into individual and social – demographic factors (Klyver et al., 2013), or external and internal factors. Person’s internal (individual) factors of entrepreneurship can include personal characteristics, business initiative, skills and experience, while the external factors can include economic, social, political and legal factors (Župerka, 2010; Vadnjal and Vadnjal, 2012). In the scientific literature, social demographic factors such as age, marital status, education, employment, place of residence and income are less often referred to as factors affecting women’s entrepreneurship. The singled out internal and external factors have influence on women’s entrepreneurship, however the most often emphasized factors in the scientific literature are combining business and family, and support of a partner or husband. These internal factors are the determining factors in women’s decision to whether or not start a business. In the developing countries the effect of discrimination towards women is especially obvious, which has direct consequences on women’s entrepreneurship.

Yilmaz et al. (2012) has distinguishes and analyzed the factors stimulating entrepreneurship, which are grouped in 4 main groups of factors: training related to the field of work/business and confidence (including expansion of social environment),

economic independence and dignity, family and business compatibility and acceptance of challenges of a business life (including family support in business, women experience more difficulties in accepting a business life than men). In their survey of women entrepreneurs, the authors have established that female entrepreneurs started their business at their own efforts, however with the support of a spouse and family, and have singled out such qualities characteristic of businesswomen such as hardworking and determination, willingness to assume risks, problem solvers, innovative and good observers.

Obstacles in women’s entrepreneurship are also widely discussed. Attitude towards obstacles differed depending on the level of development of a country. For example, in the developing countries Torbehbar et al. (2014) determined the following obstacles in women’s entrepreneurship; 1) physical obstacles (lack of proper facilities, equipment and materials), 2) legal obstacles (hotel stay of single women (requirement to have a man’s permission), even when travelling for business affairs), 3) financial obstacles (lack of capital, problems with getting a loan), 4) family obstacles (lack of material and moral support of a family of those who take care of a family, household, children and their education), 5) scientific and academic obstacles (lack of managerial, marketing, legal, technical, financial and accounting knowledge and skills), 6) educational obstacles (discrimination of girls in education, lack of independence and self-expression, which suppresses creativity), 7) personal obstacles (lack of self-respect, vulnerability in solving business problems), 8) cultural and social obstacles (stereotypical believes of male dominance, negative attitude to women being entrepreneurs, ignoring women and exclusion of women from various work groups). Similar obstacles were also established by Kumbhar (2013) in the analysis of the obstacles in women’s entrepreneurship, in addition emphasizing lack of cooperation with successful entrepreneurs, while Teoh, Chong (2014) singled out weak existence of social and business networks as well.

Meanwhile, in the developing countries the authors distinguished the factor stimulating entrepreneurship such as satisfaction, realization of operations, satisfaction in employee relationship (Powell et al., 2013), and opportunity think creatively (Xaviera et al., 2012). They also name obstacles preventing women’s entrepreneurship such as accessibility of financial capital, lack of self-confidence (Tlaiss, 2014), combining family and business (Xaviera et al., 2012), and support of a partner (or husband) (Vadnjaj and Vadnjaj, 2012). The importance of the balance between a family and career responsibilities were emphasised by the majority of the researchers (Kumbhar, 2013; Xaviera et al., 2012; Torbehbar et al., 2014). In the analysis of women’s entrepreneurship Sweida and Reichard (2013) emphasized that women are faced with double stereotypes, that only men can become established in certain areas and that only men are able to maintain a business. Such stereotypes lower the women’s initiative to undertake an own business.

According to the presented empirical studies, the internal factors have a significant influence on women’s decision to take on an own business. Meanwhile, external factors, such as accessibility of capital, or business conditions and environment can have

influence as well, however they are not as significant in making a decision to start an enterprise.

3. Research of Female Employees and Female Entrepreneurs

The research was conducted using quantitative research methodology. It was carried out by questioning female entrepreneurs and female employees. Required sample was calculated using <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm> website. In calculating the sample it was indicated that confidence level is equivalent to 95 percent, confidence interval is 6 percent, population - 8000 website <http://www.bznstart.lt/> subscribers, sample size needed is 258. The selected population is all website <http://www.bznstart.lt/> subscribers, because this website subscribers are willing to start or already have their own business. In this case it is the targeted audience.

A set of questions was prepared based on an examination of the various problems related to the theoretical aspects and empirical research survey involving more meaningful indicators. Questionnaire helped to detect, identify and evaluate the relevance of the problem, measure the links, find out attitudes and retained potential differences between two different groups (Tidikis, 2003).

The research included mostly female employees (55%) and entrepreneurs (32%).

The women were asked to indicate, what are the major problems that hinder the development of women entrepreneurship (see Figure 1).

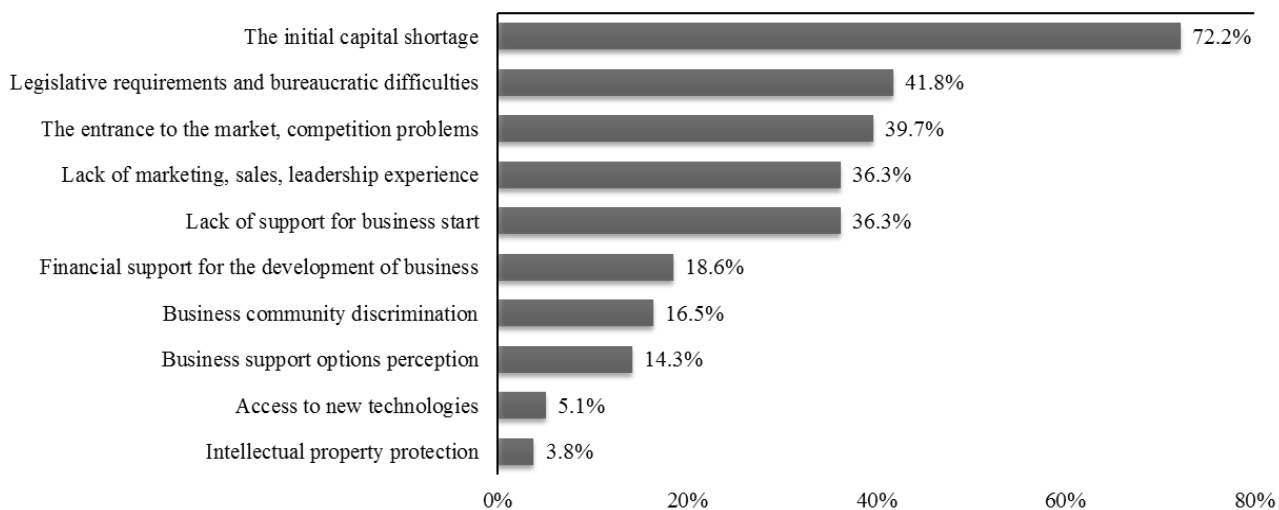


Figure 1. The major problems that hinder the development of women entrepreneurship

Respondents (69% female entrepreneurs and 74% female employees) indicated that the greatest problem, hindering women's entrepreneurship - initial capital shortage. Other issues - legal requirements and bureaucratic difficulties; entrance into the market, the competitive challenges; lack of marketing, sales, management experience, lack of support for business start. There weren't any significant differences between

female entrepreneurs and female employees in indicating the biggest problems hindering women's entrepreneurship.

In the research women were asked to select reasons for which they do not start business (see Figure 2).

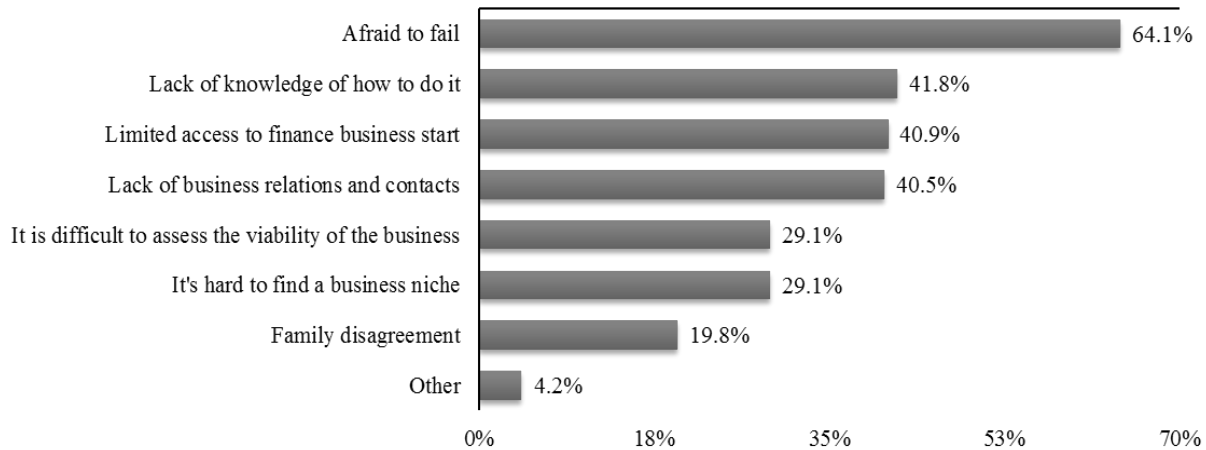


Figure 2. Reasons for which women do not start business

The main reason, which was chosen by female entrepreneurs and female employees - fear to fail (64%). For further analysis there were distinguished reasons why do not start business only showing the greatest difference between female entrepreneurs and female employees (see Figure 3).

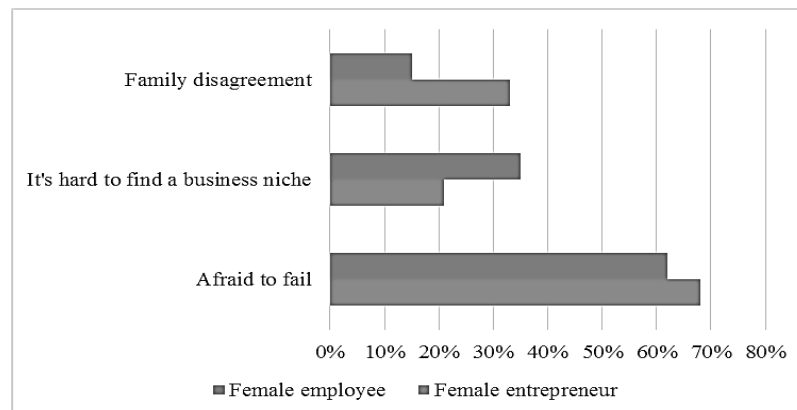


Figure 3. Reasons why do not start business only showing the greatest difference between female entrepreneurs and female employees

Twice as many female entrepreneurs than employees' is important family support - twice as many female entrepreneurs as an important reason why do not start business indicated family disapproval. Meanwhile, much more female employees than entrepreneurs are difficult to find a niche for their business. The most important reason for do not start business – afraid to fail evenly distributed in terms of both: entrepreneurs and employees. According to Pearson Chi-square criteria of compatibility,

it was estimated if there is a connection between the selected statement (do not start a business because they are afraid to fail) and whether the woman is an employee or an entrepreneur.

Pearson chi-square test helps evaluate the compatibility of the statistical connection between the investigated indications. This criteria is based on the calculating expected frequencies. (Bilevičienė and Jonušauskas, 2011).

Pearson chi-square test is calculated by the following formula (Bilevičienė and Jonušauskas, 2011):

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i,j=1}^n \frac{(f_{ij} - q_{ij})^2}{q_{ij}}$$

When calculating the connection there is two hypotheses:

- H0 (null hypothesis) - is a presumption that there is no connection between indications;
- H1 (alternative hypothesis) - hypothesis, which is the opposite of the null hypothesis;

α – significance level.

Statistical relationship is evaluated between the selected statement (do not start a business because women are afraid to fail) and whether the woman is an employee or an entrepreneur.

Selected α = 0,05.

- H0 – selected proposition that women do not start business because they are afraid to fail does not depend on whether the woman is an entrepreneur, or an employee
- H1 – selected proposition that women do not start business because they are afraid to fail depends on whether the woman is an entrepreneur, or an employee

Table 1. Pearson Chi-Square Test

Chi-Square Test					
	Value	df	p-level	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,067 ^a	1	,796		
Continuity Correction ^b	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	,067	1	,796		
Fisher's Exact Test				1,000	,550
Linear-by-Linear Association	,065	1	,799		

From the Table 1 we can see that the observational significance level (p-level) = 0,796. $0,796 > 0,05$. Therefore we accept the hypothesis H0 - selected proposition that women do not start business because they are afraid to fail does not depend on whether the woman is an entrepreneur, or an employee.

It was very important to find out what factors encourage women to start business (see. Fig. 4).

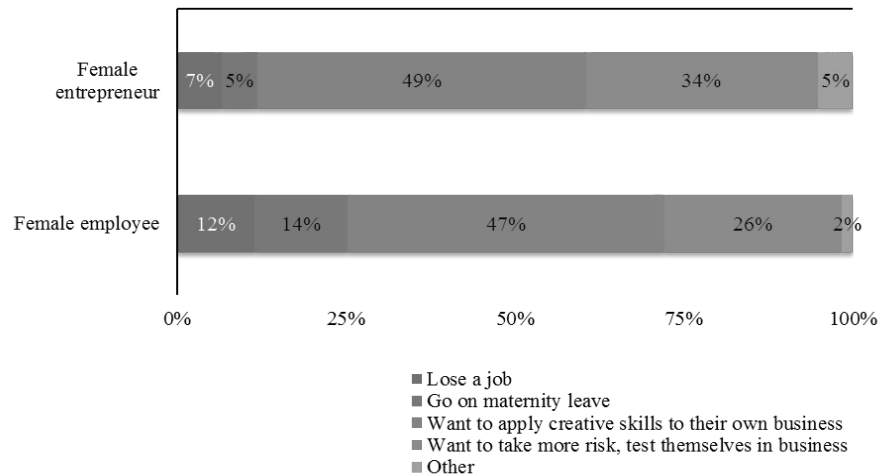


Figure 4. Factors, which encourage female entrepreneurs and female employees to start business

Submitted answers clearly shows that both: female entrepreneurs and employees are mainly driven by internal factors to start a business - 49% of female entrepreneurs and 47% of female employees advocate that the most encouraged fact to start a business is that they want to apply creative skills to their own business. Another important motivating factor - the desire to take on more risk, test themselves in business (this factor was chosen by 34% female entrepreneurs and 26% female employees). The biggest difference between female entrepreneurs and employees is revealed in terms of maternity leave - only 5% female entrepreneurs chose that going out on maternity leave promotes to start a business, meanwhile 14% female employees chose that going out on maternity leave promotes it.

Respondents were asked whether they are aware of entrepreneurship policy in Lithuania. Only 8% of women (in terms of entrepreneurs and employees) said, that they knew about it, meanwhile others did not have heard about it.

Conclusions

1. According to various scientific opinions, the authors take the view that a female entrepreneurial foundation combines the personal character traits, skills to introduce

innovative creative solutions that contribute to business development and is able to create a synergy between the family and business activities.

2. Based on the overview of empirical research, internal factors have a significant impact on women's self-determination to take their own business. Meanwhile, external factors, such as capital accessibility, business conditions and the environment have an impact, but not so significant in taking a decision to start a business.

3. The main reason, why do not start business, chosen by both: female entrepreneurs and female employees is fear to fail. The research showed that twice as many female entrepreneurs than employees' are important family support - twice as many female entrepreneurs as an important reason why do not start business indicated family disapproval. Meanwhile, much more female employees than entrepreneurs are difficult to find a niche for their business. The most important reason for do not start business – afraid to fail evenly distributed in terms of both: entrepreneurs and employees. It has been calculated whether there is a connection between the selected statement (do not start a business because women are afraid to fail) and whether the woman is an employee or an entrepreneur. It was found that there is no statistical connection. Research showed that both: female entrepreneurs and employees are mainly driven by internal factors to start a business: desire to apply creative skills to their own business, take on more risk in business.

4. Initiative from private and public sectors would help to promote women's entrepreneurship ecosystem development in Lithuania. Those initiatives should include education, using tools such as events, publicity about existing female entrepreneurs success stories, sharing experiences. Also, women's social networks (linking women, who intend to become entrepreneurs and those, who already has a business), entrepreneurship training contribute to women's entrepreneurship ecosystem. Meanwhile, the promotion of external factors, such as access to capital, business environment improvement is available, so individual attention exclusion is not so important.

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