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HOW ARE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS PORTRAYED IN MEDIA? FOCUS ON KENYAN AND OMANI NEWSPAPERS (SUMMARY)

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HOW ARE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS PORTRAYED IN MEDIA? FOCUS ON KENYAN AND OMANI NEWSPAPERS

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Principal Topic

The socio-cultural context within which an entrepreneur operates has an important impact on entrepreneurial outcomes (Welter, 2012). Studies indicate that mass media has an impact on public discourse as well as society’s perceptions (Achtenhagen & Welter, 2011). Media reinforces the female stereotype and subsequently society’s perceptions of the female entrepreneurship phenomenon (Schulz & Achtenhagen, 2013). Additionally, the way in which journalists’ frame their stories in the media has an impact on policy makers. It could be argued that framing may ultimately affect the policies implemented by decision-makers, based on their perceptions of female entrepreneurship (Entman, 2010). However, limited studies have been carried out on the impact of media on the entrepreneurship phenomenon (Hang & Van Weezel, 2005), and those focused on examining the socialization process of women entrepreneurs in developing economies are dearth (De Vita et al., 2013). This study contributes to both streams of knowledge, by analyzing media in diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Method

Content analysis was used to analyze online media articles of the two largest national newspapers in each country. A total of 224 online articles (125 articles from Kenyan newspapers and 99 articles from Omani newspapers) were used. Framing was also used to determine the patterns and characterizations of the articles. Articles were also classified based on overall frames, their focus, and the motivations for venturing into entrepreneurship.

Results and Implications

We find that while the media focuses on promoting women entrepreneurship in both contexts, one country prioritizes articles focused on the portrayal of women entrepreneurs, while the other prioritizes the initiatives aimed at promoting women entrepreneurship. In addition, while the articles on government/institutional initiatives consistently portray women entrepreneurs as in need of assistance, the media portrayal of women entrepreneurs is inconsistent. This contradictory portrayal sends ambiguous messages that could either encourage or dissuade potential women entrepreneurs. We find a need for a more diverse discourse regarding the impact of entrepreneurship, as well as a change in discourse for initiatives promoting women entrepreneurship.

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