



ORIGINAL

## The English Proficiency and the Inevitable Resort to Digitalization: A Direction to Follow and Adopt to Guarantee the Success of Women Entrepreneurs in the World of Business and Enterprises

### El Dominio del Inglés y el Inevitable Recurso a la Digitalización: Una Dirección a Seguir y Adoptar para Garantizar el Éxito de las Mujeres Empresarias en el Mundo de los Negocios y las Empresas

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#### ABSTRACT

In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight the importance of the English language and ICT in the entrepreneurial endeavors of Moroccan women. The development of ICT and the rise of English as the major lingua franca of worldwide business have been followed by a considerable increase in academic interest in a variety of topics connected to language choice and usage in the business and professional sectors. In business, it's important for Moroccan women entrepreneurs to be good at ICT and speak English well. The integration of digital technologies into female entrepreneurship has developed a new approach called "digital entrepreneurship." This method offers numerous benefits for Moroccan female entrepreneurs, namely economic development, women's empowerment, and access to worldwide markets. The power of English and new digital paradigms has changed how Moroccan businesswomen work and communicate with each other. This has changed business practices and given Moroccan businesswomen new opportunities.

**Keywords:** ICT; Mastery of English; Digitalization; Female Entrepreneurship; Organizational Change.

#### RESUMEN

En este artículo se intenta destacar la importancia de la lengua inglesa y de las TIC en las iniciativas empresariales de las mujeres marroquíes. El desarrollo de las TIC y el auge del inglés como principal lengua franca de los negocios en todo el mundo han ido seguidos de un considerable aumento del interés académico por diversos temas relacionados con la elección y el uso de la lengua en los sectores empresarial y profesional. En los negocios, es importante que las empresarias marroquíes dominen las TIC y hablen bien inglés. La integración de las tecnologías digitales en el empresariado femenino ha desarrollado un nuevo enfoque llamado "empresariado digital". Este método ofrece numerosos beneficios a las empresarias marroquíes, a saber, desarrollo económico, capacitación de la mujer y acceso a los mercados mundiales. El poder del inglés y los nuevos paradigmas digitales han cambiado la forma en que las empresarias marroquíes trabajan y se comunican entre sí. Esto ha modificado las prácticas empresariales y ha brindado nuevas oportunidades a las empresarias marroquíes.

**Palabras clave:** TIC; Dominio del Inglés; Digitalización; Espíritu Empresarial Femenino; Cambio Organizativo.

## INTRODUCTION

The field of study and investigation devoted to female entrepreneurship has been the subject of several research works by specialists and researchers in entrepreneurship such as Beck and Chaganti (1986), Rivchun and Sexton (1989), Lacasse (1990), Brush (1992), Barrett (1995), Filion (1997) and Paillot (2010) and whose common point was nothing other than to highlight the importance of encouraging business creation initiatives emanating from the female sex, thus putting an end to the supremacy of the male sex hitherto recognized as the only one capable of easily and efficiently managing an entrepreneurial project falling within the framework, for example, of a small and medium-sized enterprise.<sup>(1)</sup>

Indeed, the woman entrepreneur has been able to integrate the field of business and companies through the great door and where she demonstrated that she has great skills, especially at the level of project management and management control, without forgetting of course the great qualities which she was also able to develop and mobilize, particularly with regard to her spirit of responsibility, creativity and innovation, and which quite simply enabled her to take up the challenge of effectively managing an entrepreneurial project like her counterpart in male sex.

In other words, through this article we try to highlight the particularity and the specificity characterizing the female entrepreneur who could be a serious and sizeable competitor in front of the companies directed by the male sex thus putting an end to any previous conviction defending that the entrepreneurial activities was only a domain reserved for men.<sup>(2)</sup>

Through this modest work, we therefore aim to highlight the crucial role that experience, management style, flexibility, professionalism, communication skills, the ability to negotiate and seize business opportunities, the mastery of technical, managerial, IT and also linguistic skills, particularly in English, as well as the impulsive commitment to digitization, play in the success of an entrepreneurial project conducted by female sex.<sup>(2,3)</sup>

However, and despite the revolution induced by the arrival of female entrepreneurship and which has upset the business and corporate world which is constantly changing and also despite the various regulatory measures undertaken and which fall within the framework of several reforms aiming above all to grant for women the crucial place they deserve in this entrepreneurial field like the male sex, we unfortunately still note the persistence of several handicaps such as those relating to the constraints of access to bank loans (unlike the male sex) which prevent them from carrying out and rationally conducting their business efficiently and therefore from remaining in the race for the rapid, fruitful and profitable satisfaction of the needs and expectations of demanding customers and from continuing to demonstrate of increasing productivity but also of resistance to the strong unequal competition exerted by the other competitors.<sup>(4)</sup>

Admittedly, such obstacles and brakes only call into question the ability of the business run by women to remain permanently innovative and to continue to offer high quality products and/or services, the only ones capable of enabling her to avoid a dissipation and therefore to survive in the long run in the fiercely competitive market. In this same context and taking into account the flagrant mortality rate today of small and medium-sized enterprises in Morocco, aggravated even more by the arrival and development of the COVID-19 pandemic, without forgetting also the still predominance of the male sex in the world of business and companies, we can therefore define the problematic object of this article and which consists in answering the following main question: To what extent can we be convinced that digitalization is this effective solution capable of guaranteeing the success and continuity of existence of an entrepreneurial project led by the female sex and this for as long as possible?

To answer this question, we have established the following three hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* digitalization promotes and demonstrates the success and effectiveness of the management style adopted by the female entrepreneurial project manager.

*Hypothesis 2:* the sustainability of a female entrepreneurial project based on digitalization depends on the prior strategic and operational planning of the organizational change and the technological change to be implemented within the organization.

*Hypothesis 3:* having human resources mastering the English language will help the female entrepreneur to establish new fruitful commercial business relationships and to adapt in a turbulent environment and where investment in digitalization is considered an indisputable condition for continuing to grow and to exist as long as possible in the business and corporate world.

## Literature review on female entrepreneurship

Female entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial model whose appearance for the first time dates back to the

1970s before gradually gaining momentum at first in developed countries for finally manages to emerge later in developing countries where it has experienced unprecedented development. It is important to emphasize in this context that we cannot talk about women's entrepreneurship without talking about the militant movements for the protection of women's rights and the recognition of their potential and their ability to contribute seriously, like men to regional and national socio-economic development and which have been integrated into the framework of approaches that have marked the world of business and enterprise, in particular the approach to women and development (FED), the approach to integrating women in the Development (IFD) and finally the Gender and Development (GED) approach.<sup>(3)</sup>

Indeed, the first current which is considered as founder of the approach woman and development "FED" and although it defended the interests and the rights of the female sex which lived at that time (which went back especially to the year 1970) a deprived situation and of discrimination especially compared to that characterizing the male sex, reproached the woman that she had only a reproductive mission: wife, mother who deserves to change even to evolve towards the best and this thanks to the flexibility complex and repetitive activities that were assigned to her and that she used to perform daily at home without forgetting also the need to lighten the tasks that fall within the framework of her social roles. In this same context, it is also strong to note that according to the supporters of this approach, woman was seen as a passive person benefiting from aid and that she was not yet considered as a real partner and actor of development.<sup>(4)</sup>

Subsequently, the period which extends from 1975 to 1995 and which was marked by two events of great importance, notably the Mexico conference (1975) and the world conference in Beijing (1995) gave birth to a new approach known as the integration of women in development (IFD) according to which the woman hitherto known only by her role of reproduction has finally begun to be accepted as an actor participating in socio-economic development to such an extent that the major decision-makers have no not hesitate to encourage its integration into innovative development projects and this by working for the launch of programs for the benefit of women such as those intended to facilitate women's access to micro-credit, the objective always being to improve their living conditions.<sup>(4,5)</sup>

Finally, we note that the gender and development approach (GED) which appeared in 1990 had an orientation towards the establishment of more egalitarian social relations between men and women aimed above all at demonstrating that women are like men and that woman is not a beneficiary of entrepreneurial and innovative projects but on the contrary that she is an actor and a partner in sustainable human development.

In this context, it is therefore interesting to specify that each time we try to attribute a precise definition to this concept, we realize that it is always difficult to agree that there is a universal definition of female entrepreneurship and this can be seen from specialists in entrepreneurship such as Cooper and Dunkerbelg (1984) according to whom the female entrepreneur is nothing other than a person who has decided to start her own business, or who inherited it, or who bought it, or finally who affiliated and associated with a group of other women with whom she shares the same entrepreneurial intentions and convictions.<sup>(6)</sup>

In addition and based on the model of Arocena *et al.* (1983), we can also deduce that women can be guided and motivated by the idea of embarking on the business world if they believe they already have the conditions for success in entrepreneurship such as mastery of management techniques, accumulation of years of experience, learning and know-how, the disposition of intrinsic personal characteristics and which refer for example to her motivations, her projects and her education and finally we also find its relational skills which allow her to build her network of partners and professionals.<sup>(7)</sup>

On the other hand, and thanks to an in-depth analysis of the work of Pleitner (1986), we can conclude that the main reason encouraging women to undertake is undoubtedly their professional dissatisfaction since even when they manage to get a decent job, they fail to satisfy all his needs and desires.

In other words, the woman who has had a professional experience realizes at a precise moment that the position she managed to obtain with difficulty is insufficient to achieve all her main objectives, which pushes her to begin to seriously seek other alternatives more interesting and better, which therefore amounts to saying that at this moment the woman should make a decisive decision, namely to resist and continue to work in this position even if she is deep down inside herself dissatisfied with this context because she for her there are no better alternatives or to embark on the entrepreneurial field and thus assume the risks that this can generate.<sup>(8)</sup>

We also add in this context that Pleitner (1986) also emphasized another motive triggering the desire for entrepreneurship in the female sex, namely the probability of encountering profitable business opportunities.<sup>(9)</sup>

In addition and by continuing our readings and consultations of several research works by authors specialized in the entrepreneurial field, we can therefore notice that Shapero (1975) was also interested in the analysis of intentions stimulating the decision to undertake among women and which allowed him to propose us four variables which are as follows:

1) the situational variable through which the woman wishing to engage in the entrepreneurial field finds herself faced with an embarrassing, unstable situation which destabilizes her and pushes her to hesitate before making decisions and which arise, for example, from the sequence of displacement or discontinuity;

2) the difficulty in accepting authority;

3) the credibility of the action which simply means the need to find examples of credible people in an environment close to the future entrepreneur such as that of her family and who have embarked on the business field where they have succeeded and who can serve as sources of inspiration for women who want to embark on the field of entrepreneurship because these reference models also have qualities and profiles that resemble them;

4) the availability of human, financial and material resources.

Thus and from the foregoing, we can therefore retain that we can attribute to female entrepreneurship several definitions, the main ones being as follows:

Cantillon (1755) emphasizes the importance of taking risks and being able to face the constraints secreted by the competitive environment and which are fatal without forgetting also the aptitude of the entrepreneur to identify and to seize successful business opportunities. Thus, he defines the female entrepreneur as: "one who has a spirit of adventure and risk-taking in an uncertain universe and who engages in a closed way vis-à-vis a third party without guarantee of what she can expect it".<sup>(10)</sup>

Then and according to Belcourt et al. (1991): "women's entrepreneurship is a medium and long-term process that will allow a woman to get started in the field of business and enterprise and to be able to manage her own business rationally. The objective being to allow her to obtain financial independence, personal fulfilment, control of her fate, her present and his future and therefore to continue to exist in a competitive market always in constant motion".<sup>(11)</sup>

The female entrepreneur, however, is defined by Ouédraogo and Lent (1993) as "any individual carrying out commercial operations for profit beyond her household (including those which are outside the market) and which permits her to maintain or develop her business".<sup>(12)</sup>

Finally and according to Paturel (2006): "it is rather a natural person who alone or in a team and in order to be able to get out of a situation of dissatisfaction marked by inactivity, unemployment or total subordination and blind to an employer therefore decides to engage in a liberal activity within the framework of an independent business, taking care to assume her managerial responsibilities as well as the risks which are linked to the production of the envisaged wealth"

### **Proficiency in English: a successful tool for Moroccan women entrepreneurs**

In the last 20 years, English has become the most important lingua franca in international business. Indeed English has been the predominant language used in business, and most companies only communicate in English. Nearly all of their business documents, faxes, phone calls, videos, and business resources in print and online are in English.

Therefore, Good mastery and fluency of English for Moroccan female entrepreneurs are crucial for many sectors of business life, from working in significant businesses to communicating with clients and establishing reliable business relations worldwide.

The mastery of English is critical to a Moroccan woman's success in today's highly competitive business environment. In fact, most of the English conversation in business circles throughout the globe takes place among non-native speakers. When businesses employ English, a language widely spoken by well over 1.5 billion people around the globe, they may expand their operations to a global scale.<sup>(13,14)</sup>

In the same vein, English has become not just a necessity for modern-day worldwide collaboration but also a critical component of international commerce.

For instance, if a Moroccan business representative seeks to meet with the General Manager for Sales from Japan, their common language is simply English. So and from there we can say that without good English communication skills, it is difficult for Moroccan female entrepreneurs to keep up in international meetings, and it is much more challenging for them to get desirable business opportunities. In summary, we can then argue that communicating in English is the key to success in today's female entrepreneurship in this competitive business environment.

### **Toward the digitalization of Moroccan female entrepreneurship**

The integration of digital technologies into entrepreneurship has developed a new approach called "digital entrepreneurship".<sup>(15)</sup> Digital entrepreneurship emerged from digital assets such as communications and information technology. In general, digital entrepreneurship refers to any entrepreneurial activity that converts an asset, service, or key element of an enterprise into digital form.<sup>(16)</sup>

The digital entrepreneurship method tends to generate new employment prospects based on digital correlation. Entrepreneurs' appraisal of sectors with expanding possibilities, directing investments, and developing future production plans are critical in terms of maintaining their future growth throughout the digitization process.<sup>(17)</sup>

There are numerous advantages to digital entrepreneurship of Moroccan female entrepreneurship, including

economic development and women empowerment; ensuring welfare; removing intermediaries between producer and customer; increasing the number of entrepreneurs; rapid access to products by customers; timely responses to consumer wants and needs; benefiting from global markets; employing quality workers in operations; and increasing female entrepreneur profits.<sup>(18)</sup>

For these reasons, digital entrepreneurship is critical for Moroccan female entrepreneurs. Thanks to digital entrepreneurship, Moroccan women entrepreneurs don't have to set up a production site or buy physical materials to make products or store products like they do in traditional entrepreneurship. Moreover, the items and services can reach clients cheaply and quickly.

In the same context we notice that technological improvements have enabled many Moroccan women to run their businesses online. Many of them are still attempting to join the digital economy. Nonetheless, they are unable to do so owing to their limited digital competencies, access to hardware, and collective understanding of internet marketing. Briefly, the digital economy is expected to boost Moroccan national economic development.

## **METHODS**

Starting from the fact that research in management sciences and digital technologies covers a very vague and diversified field of study aimed above all at the study of the effects induced by certain decisions taken by hierarchical superiors on the behavior of actors and the functioning of organizations sometimes going so far as to cause transformations and metamorphoses of these and given the very limited number of specialists who have bent to treat a subject similar to that object of this modest work, our study within the framework of this article seeks before everything to establish a new mentality and culture in the minds of the carriers of innovative ideas falling within the framework of business creation and which emphasizes the importance of mastering the English language and unconditional recourse to digitalization which are both considered today as the cornerstone and the decisive factors capable of favoring not only the survival of businesses run by women but also to condition their sustainability in the competitive market which is constantly changing.

For all these reasons, the nature of our research is therefore descriptive and analytical. We also specify that in order to demonstrate the strong link between the mastery of the linguistic factor and the imperative of adoption and appropriation of the technological tool on the continuity of existence as long as possible of women entrepreneurs in the world of business and enterprise, we have also chosen the constructivist approach since in order to be able to reach a conclusion confirming our convictions which are illustrated in the title of this article, we opted for a questionnaire that we distributed to people considered to be pillars working in renowned companies located in the region of Darâa Tafilalet (occupying a recognized strategic place) which are led by the female sex and which have a great successful commercial experience which dates back several years and whose representations expressed via the answers they gave us to the various questions established without us being obliged to influence them and which finally allowed us to achieve our goals. In this same context, we also note that the answers to the various questions asked, allowed us to create a database that was coded and processed by the SPSS software.

Then we also had recourse to the factorial analysis of the correspondences followed by the analysis in dynamic clusters in two classes that we applied to a set of variables that we defined rationally so as to be able to test the validity of each of the three predefined hypotheses. In other words, to each pre-established hypothesis corresponds to two variables and each variable is determined by indicators which are nothing more than sub-variables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

We were able to gather data from our survey, which we then analyzed to arrive at the major findings that are shown below:

- 92 % of respondents were female and 8 % were male.
- 88 % of female entrepreneurs surveyed emphasized the need to accumulate long years of experience in several organizations to succeed in the entrepreneurial field.
- For 12 % of female business leaders surveyed : to succeed in the field entrepreneurial you just need to be daring, to have good listening and communication skills, to also have a good management style, to be innovative and to take risks.
- With regard to the advantages provided by digitalization to women entrepreneurs, we were able to deduce the following :
  - 25 % of women entrepreneurs surveyed said that digitalization has improved the brand image and reputation of the businesses they run.
  - 15 % of female business leaders surveyed said that digitalization has generated better collaboration between employees.
  - 19 % of female entrepreneurs surveyed told us that digitalization has resulted in perfect coordination

of the hard tasks assigned to employees as well as good careful control of the tasks performed by them.

- 11 % of women business leaders added that the inevitable recourse to digitalisation, which was imposed by the fierce competition exercised by other competing companies, enabled them to create an excellent climate for exchange and fruitful and transparent business. ; to reduce the execution times of the tasks entrusted to each employee and finally to increase their sales.

- 17 % of the women entrepreneurs questioned told us that integration into the digital transformation enabled them to rationally manage their human, financial and material resources.

- 13 % of women entrepreneurs surveyed said that digitalization has enabled them to :

- better quickly and intelligently seize profitable business opportunities ;
- to be instantly informed of the various drastic threats secreted by the competitive environment;
- to be therefore able to prepare the appropriate hedging measures allowing them to protect themselves against these risks;

- to define flexible marketing strategies;
- and to propose good quality individualized offers which are in line with the needs and expectations of customers.

- According to 33,5 % of those surveyed, the female entrepreneur has known to impose herself in the business world because she has people endowed with distinctive relational, managerial and linguistic skills, particularly in English, considered until then as the language of business par excellence.

- 89 % of female business owners surveyed told us that English language proficiency is a key factor in enabling their businesses to: retain customers; to enter into new worthwhile business transactions with new customers; be easily spotted by new customers; better communicate with partners from Anglo-Saxon countries and encourage customers to increase the quantity purchased of products marketed by the companies they run.

## CONCLUSION

Today, in an uncertain business and corporate world marked by the globalization of trade and the development of digital technologies, and also taking into account the pace of regional and national economic growth characterizing developing countries such as In Morocco, initiatives aimed at encouraging women to invest seriously in the entrepreneurial field have become a reality and a priority issue.

In this context and through this modest work, we have underlined that digitalization is currently considered as an inevitable solution capable of creating the added value sought by all organizations led by women insofar as, thanks to the appropriation of applications favoring, for example, the spirit of listening, group, the transparent and fruitful communication between the members of these entities and the good human, financial and material governance, these companies will therefore manage to generate very significant returns on investment which will enable them to create a good business network in the medium and long term and therefore to take up the challenge of their continuity of existence for as long as possible in a constantly changing competitive market.

Always and in the same context and in order to highlight her distinctive skills distinguishing her in the entrepreneurial field in an effective way like her male counterpart - thus coming to an end to the supremacy of the latter recognized until 'there as the only exemplary profile having succeeded in entrepreneurship and which has served for a long time as a reference model - the female entrepreneur has been able to be innovative and creative, especially with regard to the new communication and management techniques that she has introduced and used and which have been characterized much more by the absolute recourse to the current language of business, namely the English language spoken by a large majority of business men but also business women throughout the world and which has enabled her today to establish new fruitful commercial business relationships with several partners and adapt to a turbulent environment marked by competition and fierce.

Indeed, the female business manager is now and more than ever convinced that in order to be able to protect herself against the risks and the drastic constraints secreted by the competitive environment and thus prepare appropriate hedging measures allowing her to avoid dissipate, it is absolutely necessary to engage more in the race for digitization which will certainly enable her to show anticipation and rapid intervention whenever it comes to the need to meet the needs and expectations of its customers and this by always offering them high quality products and/or services without forgetting of course the importance of having the human, financial and technical means but also and above all the specific and distinctive skills capable of creating added value when unexpected competitive situations appear.

It must therefore be admitted that with the help of these two technical and also human factors (which have specific characteristics), the female entrepreneur can thus finally retain her customers, have great visibility concerning lost customers and/or those who begin to take an interest in offers from other competitors, products that are sold the most, employees with high exemplary productivity who can serve as sources of inspiration for other colleagues, easily seize profitable business opportunities and who consequently allow her to generate satisfactory profit margins which will allow it to consolidate its strategic position in the competitive market.

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