

**MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WOMEN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME, AS A TRAINING
INTERVENTION, ON POTENTIAL, START-UP AND ESTABLISHED
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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SUMMARY

MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME, AS A TRAINING INTERVENTION, ON POTENTIAL, START-UP AND ESTABLISHED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Everywhere in the world, entrepreneurship is seen as one of the most important solution to unemployment, poverty and low economic growth. The creation of new ventures and growth of existing businesses are vital contributing factors to any economy. The lack of training, however, is seen as entrepreneurs' most frequently mentioned weakness. Therefore, this study addresses the training of entrepreneurs and reveals that education and training are crucial for the development and creation of entrepreneurs in South Africa. While research in the area of entrepreneurship education and training is growing, one aspect into which little research has been conducted is that of assessing the effectiveness of educational and training programmes.

The purpose of this study is to measure the effectiveness of the Women Entrepreneurship Programme (WEP), which was introduced to promote and encourage women entrepreneurs in South Africa, and to address their main barrier: the lack of entrepreneurial training and education. Furthermore, the study will provide a framework for and discuss content of future entrepreneurship training

programmes. The literature revealed the need for an entrepreneurship training programme that focuses specifically on the training needs of women. The WEP focuses on areas that are normally neglected in other entrepreneurship programmes and includes topics such as networking and support, the use of role models, confidence-building, and post-care training in the form of mentors and counsellors. It places more emphasis on the marketing and financial aspects of a business, as these aspects are seen as the two topics with which women entrepreneurs struggle the most when operating a business.

The extension of the experimental design by using a control group allowed the effects and benefits of the training intervention (WEP) on the participants to be measured against the control group, hence widening the debate surrounding the rationale for interventions of this nature. The Chi-square test, *t*-test for independent samples, *t*-test for paired samples, Mann-Whitney test, and Wilcoxon matched-pairs test were executed to present the statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups. The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way ANOVA test was also executed to illustrate statistical differences between various groups within the experimental group. The findings of this empirical study have helped to highlight the benefits derived by the WEP delegates and the new entrepreneurial, as well as business skills, and knowledge which they gained. This study has shown that entrepreneurship programmes can help create new businesses, grow existing ones and generate new jobs.

The contribution of this study to the science, as well as its possible limitations, are discussed. Areas for future research are outlined and various recommendations made to guide current and prospective entrepreneurship training programme developers, providers, funders and sponsors. This study demonstrates that the WEP delegates in the study gained new skills and knowledge relevant to running a business; increased their confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities, and improved their employability, turnover, productivity and profit. Furthermore it should be emphasised that it was statistically proven that the WEP, as a training intervention, is effective in training potential, start-up and established women entrepreneurs in South Africa.

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