

Chapter 3

Contemporary Trends in Women's Entrepreneurship and Managerial Positions: A Comprehensive Global Overview of Women Shining in Tourism and Hospitality

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a broader global overview of contemporary trends in women entrepreneurship and managerial positions within the tourism and hospitality sector. The chapter synthesized findings from various scholarly articles, industry reports, and case studies to explore the dynamic role of women in diverse segments of the tourism and hospitality industry. The findings have revealed that recent years have witnessed a significant increase in women's involvement in entrepreneurship and managerial roles in tourism and hospitality, driven by factors such as evolving societal norms, technological advancements, and supportive governmental policies. However, despite these advancements, women still face substantial challenges, including gender biases, restricted access to capital, and the complexities of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. This study highlighted numerous success stories of women who have thrived as entrepreneurs and managers in tourism and hospitality.

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INTRODUCTION

The roles of women in tourism and hospitality have evolved significantly over the centuries, reflecting broader social changes and economic developments. Historically, women's involvement in this industry can be traced back to ancient times, where they often played crucial roles in managing inns and taverns. These establishments, often family-run, relied heavily on women's domestic skills and hospitality. During the 19th century, the industrial revolution and the rise of the middle class led to increased travel and the growth of the tourism and hospitality industry. Women found employment as housekeepers, cooks, and waitresses in hotels and restaurants (Tshabalala & Ezeuduji, 2016). Despite their significant contributions, they were largely confined to lower-paid and less prestigious roles. The early 20th century saw gradual progress, as women began to assume more visible roles in tourism and hospitality management, though still limited. World Wars I and II further shifted the landscape, as women stepped into roles vacated by men who had gone to war. This period marked the beginning of women's increased visibility and acceptance in professional settings. The latter half of the 20th century was characterized by the women's liberation movement, which propelled women into higher education and professional careers. This era saw more women entering and excelling in hospitality management and entrepreneurship. Legislative changes promoting gender equality and anti-discrimination also played a pivotal role in opening up opportunities (Filimonau, et al., 2024).

In recent decades, women's participation in tourism and hospitality has expanded significantly, with women now holding prominent positions as entrepreneurs, executives, and leaders within the industry (Filimonau, et al., 2024). Organizations like the United Nations Tourism (UN Tourism) and various global initiatives have further supported gender equality, promoting women's leadership and entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality (UN Tourism, 2024). Today, women continue to break barriers, contributing to innovation, sustainability, and inclusive growth within the sector. Existing research did not replicate the entrepreneurial and managerial roles of women in diverse segments of tourism and hospitality industry all together. It is pertinent to present a clear picture of women acceptance and contribution in tourism and hospitality with facts and figures.

This book chapter aims to present a comprehensive overview of contemporary trends in women entrepreneurship within the tourism and hospitality sector worldwide. Moreover, the chapter highlights the key managerial positions hold by women in this industry. This book chapter is a synthesis of findings from various scholarly articles, industry reports, and case studies based on the dynamic roles of women in the global tourism and hospitality sector.

2. CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF WOMEN IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Women play a significant role across various segments within the tourism and hospitality industry, contributing to its growth and development. Their involvement spans from grassroots operations to executive leadership positions, showcasing their versatility and impact (table 1).

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