

Weaven, Scott and Carmel Herington. (2006) "Female franchisors: How different are they from female independent business owners?" *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 2006: 1-29.

In recognition of the growing importance of small business ownership by women to the economic well-being of national economies, considerable academic attention has been given to identifying the reasons why women enter self-employment. However, little is known about the motivations for women to become franchisors. This represents an important gap in the literature. While the absence of research may be due to early beliefs that women are risk-averse individuals that tend to limit the growth of their enterprises, more recent studies conclude that women perceive small business ownership as a vehicle for rapid growth and wealth creation. On this basis, franchising should represent an appealing business expansion strategy as it minimizes capital, labour, and managerial limitations on firm growth. However Australian female participation rates in franchising are substantially lower than in small business generally. The purpose of this research is to provide a clearer understanding of the motivational incentives driving the choice of franchising as a business development strategy from the female entrepreneur's perspective. It was felt important to use a qualitative, case study approach, to get a clearer picture of the main issues and parameters. Twenty-four female franchisors were interviewed to gather data on the salient factors influencing their initial decision to adopt franchising. In addition, 20 female entrepreneurs were interviewed. Significant differences were found between the influence of antecedent factors and motivational incentives of women entering franchising and small business, suggesting that changes in public policy initiatives are required to encourage greater acceptance of women as franchisors, build awareness of franchising as a small business alternative for women, and provide accessible information and training for women on how to become franchisors.

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The German government only recently started paying attention to the topic of female entrepreneurship as an important means to raise the overall level of entrepreneurship. Most relevant support policies, concentrate on extending and stabilizing the financial base of new female-owned ventures. Relevant consultancy appears to play a less important role, although there has been a shift towards integrated packages in recent years. However, access to mainstream support is implicitly gender biased. Moreover, an integrated support for fostering female entrepreneurship also needs to consider that there are shortcomings in the institutional (political and societal) environment, possibly restricting women's interest in entrepreneurship and thus determining the extent of female entrepreneurship.

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