

# THE ROLE OF GENDER IN ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS TRAINING

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## ABSTRACT

*In recent years, the number of women-owned firms has expanded at 1½ times the rate of U. S. businesses overall. But given this impressive trend, women-owned businesses still generate fewer profits and revenues than businesses owned by men, and employ fewer people than male-owned firms. Prior research has offered several explanations for this trend including lower self-efficacy among women, type of firms owned by women, choice of industry in which they operate, work-life balance issues for women, and limited networks. A growing body of literature also suggests that in order to establish sustainable and growth oriented ventures, entrepreneurs must develop and utilize leadership skills. Yet, little research has been conducted to investigate whether these skills develop the same way for both genders when using traditional and technologically-driven approaches. In this research, we grapple with the challenge of how to effectively develop entrepreneurial leadership competencies among women. Using a quasi-experimental design, we empirically test the relationship, based on gender, between pedagogy style and perceived leadership effectiveness. The results suggest that the use of game-based simulations that emphasize role play may be particularly valuable for improving the perceived effectiveness of women entrepreneurs.*