

# NETWORKING BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND ITS IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATION ROLE OF SELF-ESTEEM

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## Abstract

Extant literature has argued that networking by entrepreneurs will uplift business standards and performance. Yet, the networking behavioural analysis has overlooked integrating women's social behaviour in small and medium scale businesses. Thus, the study attempts to disentangle these issues by designing a mediator model that encapsulates women's self-esteem's mediator role in applying networking behaviour to achieve performance. Using simple random sampling, data were collected from 290 women entrepreneurs running small and medium scale businesses in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. The study developed the Structural Equation Model, which involved analysing the entrepreneur's attitudes and behaviours on networking (pro-activeness, commitment, strategy, and openness), self-esteem, and performance. The study ascertained a significant relationship between social networking behaviour and performance, and this relationship has been mediated by self-esteem. Accordingly, the study confirmed the vitality of social networking in enhancing business performance. Further, the study redounds to filling the gaps in the literature by contributing to the theory with an intensive focus on women entrepreneurs and the empirical gap in the concept of female entrepreneurial networking. Our study also suggests that future research could pay attention to how these networking behaviours of women entrepreneurs vary in terms of the individual and social factors associated with their businesses.

**Keywords:** Networking behavior, Women entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial performance, Self-esteem