

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 57068

Title: Entrepreneurial Journeys: A Gendered and Scaled Analysis of Challenges and Support Systems for Business Owners.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Techn. Quality	✓			
Clarity	✓			
Significance	✓			

Reviewer Name: Dr. Bishwajit Rout

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)

The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.

- Significance:** This study is significant as it integrates gender and firm scale to examine entrepreneurial challenges, addressing a notable gap in entrepreneurship literature. By incorporating qualitative insights from immigrant entrepreneurs, it adds depth to understanding lived experiences often overlooked in quantitative research. The findings contribute to policy discourse by emphasizing scale-sensitive and structurally informed approaches to fostering inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems.
- Strength:** The study's primary strength lies in its rich qualitative dataset and well-structured thematic analysis, offering nuanced insights into entrepreneurial experiences. Its integration of literature with empirical findings enhances conceptual coherence. The focus on firm scale as a moderating factor is particularly valuable, providing a multidimensional perspective. Additionally, the study demonstrates strong relevance to policy, ecosystem development, and academic research.
- Key Insight:** The central insight is that entrepreneurial challenges evolve significantly with firm scale, shifting from resource constraints during startup to systemic complexity during growth. While gender-based disparities are structurally embedded, they are often perceived indirectly rather than explicitly by entrepreneurs. This highlights a critical disconnect between institutional realities and individual perceptions, emphasizing the need for policies addressing underlying structural inequalities rather than surface-level interventions.

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Reviewer's Comment / Report

The paper titled “*Entrepreneurial Journeys: A Gendered and Scaled Analysis of Challenges and Support Systems for Business Owners*” explores entrepreneurial journeys through a gendered and scaled lens, combining literature review with semi-structured interviews of ten Indian-origin entrepreneurs in the US. Findings highlight launch-phase challenges dominated by capital constraints, legitimacy issues, hiring difficulties, and immigrant adjustments, shifting to scaling operations, talent management, and external complexities during growth. Informal support from family and networks prevails over formal systems, with strong reliance on self-funding. Gender effects are perceived as indirect or structural rather than explicit. Firm scale moderates challenges and support access. The study advocates scale-sensitive policies and early-stage interventions for inclusive entrepreneurship, though limited by small, male-dominated sample.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Clearly state research questions instead of embedding them within paragraphs.
2. Improve structural clarity by dividing introduction into background, research gap, objectives, and significance with clear subheadings for better academic organization.
3. Strengthen argument by explicitly linking gender and firm scale as interacting variables rather than discussing them in partially disconnected narrative segments.
4. Develop a synthesized conceptual framework connecting gender, firm scale, institutional context, and entrepreneurial outcomes to enhance theoretical integration and clarity.
5. Explicitly identify contradictions and debates within literature to position study more critically within existing scholarship and demonstrate stronger analytical contribution.
6. Provide detailed explanation of coding procedures, reliability checks, and steps taken to ensure validity and consistency in thematic analysis.
7. Discuss limitations of gender-imbalanced sample more critically and explain how this affects interpretation of gender-related findings and conclusions.
8. Reduce repetition of similar examples across themes for conciseness.
9. Strengthen linkage between themes and theoretical frameworks discussed earlier.
10. Separate policy, ecosystem, and academic implications more clearly.
11. Expand limitations with deeper critical evaluation of methodological constraints.

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

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The paper provides a meaningful and well-structured exploration of entrepreneurial challenges through a gendered and scale-based lens, offering valuable qualitative insights. Its integration of thematic analysis with literature is commendable; however, limitations in sample size, gender imbalance, and analytical depth reduce its generalizability. With improved theoretical synthesis, methodological justification, and structural refinement, the study has strong potential for publication in IJAR. Addressing the identified weaknesses will make it suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.