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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Edwina Pio (PhD, MA, BEd, BA, MNZAC) is an Associate Professor (Management) and Equity Coordinator at the Business School of AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand and Visiting Professor at Boston College, Massachusetts, USA. Embodying her passion for interdisciplinary scholarship, her research domains are: Eastern spirituality and management, ethnic minority women in work and enterprise and parable pedagogy. She has numerous publications in international journals and her accolades include the Duke of Edinburgh Fellowship, Research Fellowships at Boston College USA and at Jonkoping International Business School, Sweden; and she is the winner of the outstanding field report paper at the Academy of Management, USA (2006). She travels extensively on research and dissemination of her work and has been invited to Austria (Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration), the Netherlands (Radboud University Nijmegen), Spain (ESADE), Sweden (Jönköping International Business School) and USA (Boston College).

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This special issue on Gender and Entrepreneurship seeks to surface and address multiple strands in the scholarship of entrepreneurship around women. 'Women hold up half the world' is an Eastern saying and the authors in this issue seek to explore the hidden asymmetries, the diverse trajectories and the agency of women through a range of perspectives and methodologies. The central plank of these articles rests on the nuanced options that women entrepreneurs face and the powerful whispers of international scholars whose research is strengthening, consolidating and expanding the horizons of entrepreneurship. As the long standing dean of a North American school writes: "access to resources liberates people from the burdens that crush ambition and derail dreams; access makes it possible to be competitive..." (Woods, 2004, p.3).

The lead piece on familiar strangers sets a reflective tone by presenting the findings and interpretation of an ethnic minority researcher and her work with ethnic minority women entrepreneurs in New Zealand. This is followed by an empirical study on the economic outcomes of Asian born female immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia which shows the significant economic contributions to the creation of new businesses and jobs in addition to other non-quantifiable measures which immigrant women make to the host country. The geographical location of the next article is Belize Central America where the research question is: How does the changing position of Mennonite women in the

entrepreneurial system of their community contribute to their possession of (symbolic) capital? Next research in Singapore raises the question of difference among male and female entrepreneurs and the findings indicate that there are no significant differences in motivational factors between them, though there are significant differences in personality traits. Focusing on a qualitative five nation study on successful women entrepreneurs through self-reported determinants of success, the next article compares women entrepreneurs in Canada, Czech Republic, Ireland, Japan and Poland.

The next two articles deal with access to loans. In a study to determine the role of the gender factor in the process of financing entrepreneurial activity in Russia where the author notes that the gender component of credit policies was not very visible for, it is veiled by factors such as size of the enterprise, amount of loan requested and the gender affiliation of bank executives. In loan delinquency among small business owners in Ghana, the authors' results indicate that single college-educated women manage their loans more prudently than both men in general and married women and they write about Ghana's increased resource allocation to formal education.

The role of entrepreneurial and cultural dynamics are portrayed in a Ugandan study where it is argued that both women and men need enabling environments to start up and grow their micro enterprise. Effectiveness of women entrepreneurs in the 21st century looks at the characteristics of successful women entrepreneurs and suggests that such women's greatest contribution may be their insistence on breaking the mould rather than fitting in.

The final section consists of three theoretical papers. In an integration of role and identity concepts female entrepreneurs are portrayed as agents in their own lives, and the study seeks to create a more holistic understanding of the elements which make up entrepreneurial identity. The article on the role of gender in social capital, collaborative exchange and micro-enterprise performance presents a conceptual model with a configuration of network diversity, network size and relationship strength and argues for the need to augment the diversity and size of female micro-entrepreneurs networks in order to improve opportunities for collaborative exchange. The final article asks if there are differences in the perception of the importance of training for female and male entrepreneurs and the findings indicate that when male and female business owners are matched on relevant variables, the gender differences in ratings of the importance of training disappear.

Scholarship and the implementation of research findings in gender and entrepreneurship are some of the nuanced options to fulfil the third and eighth Millennium Developmental Goals that seek to promote gender equality and empower women and to develop a global partnership for development. In fact what Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen writes in the context of globalisation can be applied to gender and entrepreneurship, for:

“What must be asked ... is whether they can feasibly get a better – and fairer – deal, with less disparities of economic, social, and political opportunities, and if so, through what international and domestic rearrangements this could be brought about. This is where the real engagement lies.” (Sen, 2006, p.136)

## References

- Sen, A. (2006) *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, London: Penguin.  
 Woods, J. (2004) *Advancing the University from Within*, Boston: Boston College.