

Running head: RE-COGNIZING MYSELF AS AN ENTREPRENEUR

Re-Cognizing Myself as an Entrepreneur: Women, Language, and Entrepreneurship

Subtheme 12.5 Women in technological innovation

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Author Bio

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Introduction

Only about one-quarter of all U.S. businesses are owned by women (Center for Women's Business Research, 2009). These firms are smaller in terms of both assets and revenues, less profitable, and less likely to survive than men-owned firms (Robb & Coleman, 2009). Women engage in entrepreneurial activity at a lesser rate than men and, among those who do pursue an entrepreneurial path, are less likely to succeed than their male peers (Robb & Coleman, 2009).

At the same time, women offer important skills and values to the field of entrepreneurship and to growth of the private sector, as well as to the sustainability and prosperity of our communities (e.g., Bear, Rahman, & Post, 2010; Robinson, Blockson, & Robinson, 2007; etc.). Increasing women's engagement in entrepreneurship is critical, and has been pursued by a multitude of scholars and practitioners (e.g., Becker-Blease & Sohl, 2007; Smith-Hunter & Boyd, 2004; etc.) as well as critiqued by a large community of feminist scholars who have concluded that entrepreneurship is a masculine activity, thereby limiting women's participation (e.g., Ahl, 2006; Brush, 1992; Mirchandani, 1999; Stevenson, 1990; etc.).

This experiment examines how redefining entrepreneurship as a socially impactful career may be at the heart of increasing women's ambitions to pursue venture creation. Higher education is well-poised to catalyze this change, being a growing leader in entrepreneurship (Cole, 2010) and a promoter of student entrepreneurial activity (e.g., Russell, Atchison, & Brooks, 2008). Social marketing and innovation diffusion principles provide unique and impactful means to create social change (Rogers, 2003). Using mass communication strategies framed by feminist scholarship, this study identifies techniques that engage a more diverse population of college students in entrepreneurial activity and entrepreneurship education. Better understanding and altering how institutions market their entrepreneurship opportunities may influence how women in particular view entrepreneurship and will allow women to recognize themselves (and re-cognize themselves) as entrepreneurs.

State of the Art

Kruger and Brazeal (1994) define entrepreneurship as the pursuit of an opportunity, regardless of existing resources. Although this definition implies that entrepreneurship is a neutral career path, women are vastly underrepresented among entrepreneurs (Amine & Staub, 2009; Lewis, 2006). The following paragraphs outline the demographics of entrepreneurs and provide insight through feminist scholarship

into reasons for the disproportionate number of men versus women who have entrepreneurial ambitions. Mass communication is described as a way to alter current demographic trends, with an explanation of the current study's use of advertisements to achieve this goal. Finally, hypotheses regarding how these advertisements will test among college women and men are provided.

Today's Entrepreneurs (and Entrepreneurs-in-Training)

While 6.2 of every 100 U.S. adults aged 18 and older are in the process of starting new ventures (Reynolds, Carter, Gartner, Green, & Cox, 2002), White men aged 25 to 34 comprise the demographic group most active in venture creation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In fact, men are twice as likely as women to be involved in creating a new startup (Reynolds et al., 2002). Between 2002 and 2007, the number of companies owned by women increased from 6.5 million to 7.8 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), but male-owned firms typically outperformed female-owned firms across a variety of measures (Robb & Coleman, 2009). For example, in 2007, there were 911,285 women-owned firms that had one or more employees; these employer firms had 7.6 million persons employed and total payroll of \$218.1 billion (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In comparison, there were 3.2 million men-owned employer firms in 2007, and these employer firms provided jobs for 41.6 million persons with a total payroll of \$1.5 trillion (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). On average, women-owned employer firms have 8 employees while man-owned employer firms average 13 employees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Another important difference between men and women entrepreneurs is the type of industry they pursue. Women commonly pursue startups within retail, healthcare, education and other service sectors, more so than in fields such as construction, technology, and manufacturing, which are more lucrative (Anna, Chandler, Jansen, & Mero, 2000; Calas & Smircich, 2009; Loscocco & Robinson, 1991; Robb & Coleman, 2009). Women's choice of industry for their startups affects the capital they may attract to scale and sustain their ventures (Robb & Coleman, 2009).

Engaging more women in entrepreneurship opportunities is important because of the value they offer to individual businesses, to overall growth in the private sector, and to social prosperity. For example, women contribute unique skills and perspectives to work teams, and relative to male peers, often utilize transformational leadership styles, characterized by positive impact on individual, group, and organizational performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These contributions are particularly important, given

that the most successful ventures are team-created (Kamm & Nurik, 1993; Timmons, 1994), where team members represent diverse backgrounds, experiences, and networks (Beckman, Burton, & O'Reilly, 2007; Packalen, 2007; Weisz, Vassolo, Mesquita, & Cooper, 2010).

Women also bring a number of strengths to the business growth, including relational skills (Ryan & Haslam, 2007) and an increased sensitivity to corporate social responsibility (CSR), the distribution of corporate resources to improving society (Williams, 2003). As the number of women on a corporate board of directors increases, the business' CSR increases, which, in turn positively influences firm reputation and enhances the corporate bottom line (Bear et al., 2010). Particularly during times of crisis, women are often called to leadership positions to boost firm reputation; in these situations, women's relational skills become critical in transforming organizations (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Finally, in spite their lower rates of entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to economic, cultural, and social wellbeing (Calas & Smircich, 2009; Center for Women's Business Research, 2009; Robinson, Blockson, & Robinson, 2007). For instance, women entrepreneurs contribute \$3 trillion each year to the US economy, translating into 23 million jobs, or 16 percent of US employment (Center for Women's Business Research, 2009). In fact, if American women entrepreneurs represented a nation, they would have the 5th largest GDP in the world, closely following Germany and remaining ahead of a multitude of other industrialized nations, including France, the United Kingdom, and Italy (Center for Women's Business Research, 2009). Beyond economic gains and in contrast to their male peers, women entrepreneurs believe more strongly in the merit of utilizing entrepreneurship as a tool to build their communities, create jobs, and help others (Robinson, Blockson, & Robinson, 2007; Thompson & Hood, 1991; Walker & Brown, 2004).

Universities provide an important pipeline for women to learn entrepreneurial skills (Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007), particularly because in the past half-century, universities have dramatically enhanced their presence in leading entrepreneurship education and increased their capacity to train entrepreneurs (Katz, 2003; Kirby, 2004; Thorpe & Goldstein, 2010; Vesper & Garter, 1997). The first entrepreneurship courses taught within a higher education setting were offered in the 1940s and 1950s (Katz, 2003; Kirby, 2004; McMullen & Long, 1987; Vesper & Garter, 1997). Today, more than 2,000 American colleges and universities (roughly two-thirds of the total number of such institutions) offer one or

more courses in entrepreneurship (Cone, 2010). Many of these institutions also invest funding—often times their own—to host business plan competitions to attract students to the field of entrepreneurship (Marcum, Perry, & McGowan, 2010; Russell, Atchison, & Brooks, 2008). Beyond merely offering entrepreneurship courses and funding competitions, universities are increasingly adapting their organizational structures to accommodate for entrepreneurship education growth. In 2004, for example, there were more than 100 entrepreneurship-focused centers in the United States and over 270 endowed positions in entrepreneurship, a dramatic 120 percent increase in just five years (Charney & Libecap, 2004). These dramatic transformations evince entrepreneurship's growing presence as one of the most eminent disciplines among American postsecondary institutions today (Brooks et al., 2009) and demonstrate that entrepreneurship has become an established core of the postsecondary education institutional structure that will only continue to grow in decades ahead (Cole, 2010; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Thorpe & Goldstein, 2010).

Unfortunately, women participate in academic entrepreneurship programs at lower rates than men (Petridou, Sarri, & Kyrgidou, 2008). Examples of the disproportionate numbers of men to women in entrepreneurship programs are abundant in the entrepreneurship education scholarship, where men are predominantly the subject of research study (de Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2007; Stevenson, 1990). For example, Ohland, Frillman, Zhang, Brawner, and Miller's (2004) study of entrepreneurship as a retention tool for universities and engineering programs in particular was based on the study of the Engineering Entrepreneurship Program (EEP), in which 90 percent of the 126 students enrolled were men. Even for engineering, a field that is male-dominated, these numbers demonstrate a disproportionate number of men to women; according to the National Science Foundation (2011), approximately 21 percent of engineering degrees were awarded to women in 2004, and women represented about one-fifth of engineering majors.

The imbalance of men and women in entrepreneurship education is unfortunate because the relationship between education and startup success is even more prominent among women than men (Van der Sluis, Van Praag, & Vijverberg, 2008). The higher a woman entrepreneur's level of education and the more years of education she pursues, the higher are her earnings, as well as the growth and survival rates of her venture (Van der Sluis et al., 2009). Thus, exposing entrepreneurship to college

women is especially important as this audience has the most to gain from awareness. Further, evidence suggests that participation in entrepreneurship programs at the university positively affects student retention and academic performance (Ohland et al., 2004). Evidence has also shown that students who participate in entrepreneurship programs have more positive attitudes toward other male-dominated occupations, including engineering and technology (Dabbagh & Menasce, 2006). In general, individuals who have received entrepreneurship training have done so in their formal education and as a result, have greater awareness of entrepreneurship, higher levels of self-efficacy, and increased intentions to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors (Marinez, Levia, Kelley, Saemundsson, & Schott, 2010). When entrepreneurship training programs are created with the needs of women in mind, the results can be especially positive; for example, women who receive training from centers focused on women's entrepreneurship specifically have enhanced views of entrepreneurship and their entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which positively affects their performance as entrepreneurs (Godwyn, 2009).

The absence of women from university entrepreneurship programs is a detriment to the entrepreneurial success of women themselves, but it also has negative impacts on universities and general economic prosperity. By attracting primarily men to entrepreneurship programs, the field is missing out on a wealth of untapped talent: more women than men attend two and four-year institutions, and nearly 60 percent of bachelor's degrees are awarded to women, a trend which is expected to continue (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Universities, given their role in bolstering the U.S. economy (Etzkowitz, 2004; Kirchhoff, et al., 2002), would serve a predominant role in changing national culture of entrepreneurship to be more inclusive of women and their experiences.

What We (Think We) Know About Women Entrepreneurs: A Call for Feminist Theory

Since the publication of the first academic article on women entrepreneurs in 1976, a number of scholars and practitioners have sought to understand women's entrepreneurship experiences with the ultimate goal of enhancing women's participation in entrepreneurship (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004). Scholarship on women entrepreneurs has grown to be inclusive of several major research themes, including the industries from which female entrepreneurs arise, types and characteristics of female entrepreneurs, barriers that prevent female entrepreneurs from succeeding, factors that drive women to

pursue entrepreneurship, and the culture of women's enterprises (Brush, 1992; Bruni et al., 2004). Many scholars study women's entrepreneurship from a deficit approach (Mirchandani, 1999; Stevenson, 1990), considering the traits (e.g., Guiso & Rustichini, 2011), skills (e.g., Smith-Hunter & Boyd, 2004), and resources (e.g., Becker-Blease & Sohl, 2007) women lack (relative to their male peers) to engage in successful entrepreneurial activity.

Yet, despite over 35 years of research, few theories and working models for understanding women's decisions and success as entrepreneurs have been created (Ahl, 2006; Bird & Brush, 2002; Brush, 1992; Stevenson, 1990). In fact, recommendations that scholars have provided based on findings are often contradictory; as it turns out, while many studies conclude that there are relatively few differences between women and men entrepreneurs (e.g., Buttner & Rosen, 1988), other investigations demonstrate dramatic differences between genders, in terms of traits, experiences and needs (e.g., Hisrich, 1986). Current research approaches are inadequate to understand and change women's experiences in entrepreneurship for a multitude of reasons, but the ultimate and underlying reason for the inadequacy of these approaches is that they fail to get at the heart of the problem: women and men's perceptions of entrepreneurship as a masculine activity (Ahl, 2006; Bird & Brush, 2002; Blake & Hanson, 2005; Bruni et al., 2004; Calas & Smircich, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999; Robinson et al., 2007).

A new approach to the study and understanding of entrepreneurship can be gained through the perspective of feminist scholarship. Feminist theories have a focus on creating change at a structural level—in relationships, organizations, and society as a whole (Calas, Smircich, & Bourne, 2007). Although they espouse distinct values, all feminist theories share an emphasis on the historical domination of women by men (Ahl, 2002; Calas et al., 2007). Three feminist perspectives that help to understand gaps in past research and avenues for future scholarship are liberal feminism, radical feminism, and social feminism (Ahl, 2002; Calas et al., 2007; Greer & Greene, 2003). Liberal feminism has its roots in a philosophy that all humans are equal and thus merit equal rights; for that reason, liberal feminists often focus on the disadvantage that women face because of discrimination (Ahl, 2002; Calas et al., 2007; Fischer, Reuber, & Dyke, 1993; Greer & Greene, 2003). In contrast to liberal feminism, radical feminism celebrates the differences between men and women and views feminine qualities to be lacking in men (Calas et al., 2007). Radical feminists examine the role of culture in giving greater worth to the

male experience and encourage a refocusing of culture and society on the female experience (Ahl, 2002; Calas et al., 2007; Greer & Greene, 2003). Finally, social feminism explains how differences during early and continuous socialization lead women and men to inherently differ and that despite these differences, men and women develop equally effective qualities (Ahl, 2002; Calas et al., 2007; Fischer et al., 1993; Greer & Greene, 2003; Morris, Miyasake, Watters, & Coombes, 2006).

When applied to entrepreneurship scholarship, feminist theory creates change by moving away from the tradition of comparing women to men and understanding women's experiences through a masculine lens (Morris et al., 2006), the norm for understanding entrepreneurship today (Stevenson, 1990). As Collins and Moore (1964) expressed, "However we may personally feel about the entrepreneur, he emerges as essentially more masculine than feminine, more heroic than cowardly" (p. 5). Since the coining of the term, "entrepreneur," enterprise creation has been associated with masculinity (Ahl, 2002; Ahl, 2006). In fact, descriptors of entrepreneurs (e.g., strong-willed, daring, etc.) in foundational scholarly texts of entrepreneurship are closely matched with words used to describe masculinity, while the antonyms of these words (e.g., dependent, cowardly, etc.) are closely matched with words used to describe femininity (Ahl, 2006). These perceptions permeate beyond the walls of academe; Gupta, Turban Wasti, and Sikdar (2009) found that perceptions of entrepreneurship as a masculine career are predominant among male and female college students across the U.S., India, and Turkey.

Conceptualizing entrepreneurship as masculine is reified in contemporary academic research. For example, despite advances in research on women and entrepreneurship, the vast majority of entrepreneurship scholarship has been conducted using men as research subjects (Levenburg, Lane, & Schwarz, 2006; Stevenson, 1990). In fact, despite women's increasing rates of business ownership over the past 30 years, the proportion of scholarly journal publications about women entrepreneurs fell 12 percent in a single decade (Baker et al., 1997). Women's entrepreneurial pursuits are studied less by scholars and are included in fewer prestigious journals because of perceptions regarding the relatively low economic impact of women's businesses (Baker et al., 1997). Thus, the processes and activities of entrepreneurs are understood primarily from a male perspective (Levenburg, Lane, & Schwarz, 2006; Stevenson, 1990), as males are the greatest demographic of entrepreneurs (Reynolds et al., 2002) and also pursue the most lucrative and economically impactful fields (Robb & Coleman, 2009).

Understanding entrepreneurship from this limited perspective contributes to women and men's beliefs that all entrepreneurship should be pursued in the process experienced by men (Ahl, 2006; Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004; Calas & Smircich, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999; Robinson et al., 2007). This assumption creates three problems that limit women's engagement in entrepreneurial activity and success as entrepreneurs. First, this perception conceals much about the feminine portions of the venture creation process and the impact of entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007). For example, although widely held that entrepreneurship necessitates masculine qualities, in truth many tasks required of entrepreneurs require feminine skills, and often times, androgyny, a mixture of masculine and feminine qualities, actually improves performance, particularly early in the venture creation process (Mueller & Dato-On, 2008). In addition, a limited understanding of entrepreneurship conceals its broader impact on society, which extends beyond profit generation; entrepreneurship also bolsters social development (Calas & Smircich, 2009), attractive to women, who more often define success in terms of the social and civic support they provide, while men tend to define success monetarily (Robinson et al., 2007).

A second problem created by understanding entrepreneurship through the experiences of men is that this knowledge may or may not be applicable to women's experiences with venture creation (Brush, 1992); this is because women assume different roles in life than men and also face unique obstacles in pursuing entrepreneurship that are not faced by their male peers (Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni et al., 2004; Mirchandani, 1999; Robinson et al., 2007; Still & Timms, 2000). Brush, de Bruin, and Welter (2009), for example, explain that because family and household needs have a stronger impact on women than men, women entrepreneurs face greater challenges in balancing work and family than their male peers, which affects the process women utilize to develop and scale a venture concept. Elaborating on these consequences further, Carter and Allen (1997) found that women's deliberate choice to focus on their families negatively affected the size of the business that women were able to pursue. Even among women with aspirations for building a large business, discrimination along several points of the startup process may thwart women's intentions (Smith-Hunter & Boyd, 2004). When attempting to secure startup capital, for instance, women find that lenders frequently consider their entrepreneurial pursuits to be nothing more than hobbies and a greater financial risk than startups created by men (Buttner & Rosen, 1988; Smith-Hunter & Boyd, 2004).

A third and final problem caused by understanding entrepreneurship through men's experiences is that it may actually lead women to feel incompetent as entrepreneurs, which in turn, negatively impacts women's performance with venture creation (Godwyn, 2009). Steele (1997) explained this phenomenon as stereotype threat: the fear of being perceived as incompetent because of one's demographic, which then produces behavior confirming the individual's incompetence. For example, when women are made aware of stereotypes about gender and mathematics, their performance on mathematics tests actually decreases, relative to women who are not as informed about these stereotypes (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). Stereotypes about entrepreneurship negatively affect women's intentions to pursue entrepreneurship (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007; Gupta, Turban, & Bhawe, 2008) and also inhibit women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Godwyn, 2009). Kirkwood (2009) explains why these outcomes are problematic: women who feel lower levels of self-efficacy have a lessened ability to access finance and scale their ventures than women with relatively higher levels of self-efficacy, and access to finance is inherently tied to entrepreneurial success.

Gender socialization, the key to women's entrepreneurship as a new normal.

Gender can be thought of as the cultural interpretation of sex and is socially constructed through the performance of every day activities (Butler, 1990; Goffman, 1976; West & Zimmerman, 1987). When men and women act in gendered ways, they actively replicate and reinforce perceptions of feminine and masculine qualities and behavior (Butler, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987). It is through the act of performing gender that norms are defined (Butler, 1990). Men and women are socialized from birth to espouse gender roles, but in enacting what they have learned, perpetuate what it means to be a male or female (Butler, 1990). Women are socialized and perpetuate the role of females as caring and nurturing; men are socialized and perpetuate the role of males as strong and assertive (Butler, 1990; Bruni et al., 2004). These roles are salient and persist over time, despite changes in the political, technological, and economic landscape (Butler, 1990). For example, despite the fact that women have made dramatic progress in entering the workforce in the past half-century, they remain the primary child and elderly caregiver in the home and outperform husbands in terms of performing household labor (Erickson, 2005). This often times remains the case even in instances where both partners are employed outside of the home and the woman is the primary breadwinner (Zuo & Tang, 2000).

Scholarship supports the assertion that pervading views of gender roles affect the career choices of men and women (Gadassi & Gati, 2009; Oswald, 2008). Oswald (2008), for example, found through experimentation that women who are educated about gender stereotypes are more likely to report higher levels of interest in and ability to succeed in feminine versus masculine fields. O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) provide additional support for the effects of socialization on women and men's career choices and argue that leadership roles for women in corporate America are dominated by men largely because of how men and women have developed and how corporate structures have formed with a preference for masculine qualities. Women have been socialized to care for family above or while balancing a career, and upward mobility in corporate careers is not conducive to these balanced socialized priorities (O'Neil et al., 2008).

Similar to other male-dominated professions such as engineering, entrepreneurship is strongly associated with masculinity, and as such, is perceived as a profession most appropriate for men (Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Stevenson, 1990). Research has found that women do not identify with the word, "entrepreneur," even among those who have established and grown their own businesses (Kirkwood, 2009). Mirhacandani (1999) and Lewis (2006) bring attention to the fact that the very act of using the words, "women entrepreneur," or, "female entrepreneur," demonstrates widespread acceptance that the typical entrepreneur is a man, and thus, women's participation in entrepreneurship is different than the normative male standard. Both men and women stereotype entrepreneurship as a masculine activity (Gupta et al., 2009; Thebaud, 2009). In fact, Gupta and colleagues' (2009) study demonstrated that stereotypes about gender are greater predictors of intentions to pursue entrepreneurship than biological sex. Gupta et al.'s (2009) research provides support for a social feminist understanding of women's engagement in entrepreneurship. Stereotypes about women and men's entrepreneurial abilities are socially constructed, indicating that differences between men and women's entrepreneurial pursuits are less the result of genetics than of how women and men have been socialized to think and act in different ways (Gupta, Turban, & Bhawe, 2008; Mueller & Dato-On, 2008; Thebaud, 2010). And, neutralizing stereotypes has been found to have a positive influence on women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Godwyn, 2009). When women are provided with all-female environment to learn about entrepreneurship

that fosters their intra-group identity, they view women as normative business leaders and are more confident of their entrepreneurial skills, thereby influencing their performance (Godwyn, 2009).

Research on socialization and women and men's career choices indicates that in order to enhance women's participation in entrepreneurship, scholars and practitioners need to do more than study discrimination and other barriers to women's success; rather, they need to also take into account that women and men have been socialized to be different and to prioritize different values and roles (Gupta et al., 2009; Lewis, 2006). Because entrepreneurship is defined as a masculine activity, only by redefining it as an androgynous or feminine activity can significant numbers of women begin to view entrepreneurship as a career appropriate for them (Lewis, 2006; Mirchandani, 1999). Redefining entrepreneurship will alter current stereotypes about the profession, resulting in women's ability to recognize themselves as entrepreneurs and to "re-cognize" their skills and intentions to pursue venture creation. This new conceptualization should recognize the feminine qualities and benefits of venture creation, be relevant to the experiences of women creating startups, and give women confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities, all of which combat problems with understanding entrepreneurship through a masculine lens, as described above.

Building and Diffusing a Better Brand for Women and Entrepreneurship

Much can be learned about transforming perceptions of entrepreneurship by studying literature on mass communication, including branding, marketing, and advertising. These forms of mass communication are important tools for socialization, and thus, for legitimatizing and publicizing the existence of groups of individuals (Lee, Williams, & La Ferle, 2004; Moriarty, Mitchell, & Wells, 2009). By acknowledging women and minorities, marketing and advertising bring marginalized individuals into public being and help them to recognize themselves as members of a group (Lee et al., 2004). Inclusive forms of mass communication are also likely to produce positive attitudes among marginalized groups and promote positive self-esteem (Lee et al., 2004). For these reasons, mass communication is a viable method to redefine entrepreneurship to be inclusive of women. The following paragraphs describe the facets of mass communication that can be used to inform the creation of advertisements that 1) recognize the feminine qualities and benefits of venture creation; 2) are relevant to the experiences of women creating startups; and 3) give women confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities. These advertisements

are tested in the current study with the purpose of identifying language and imagery that could be utilized in communication by colleges and universities to redefine entrepreneurship as inclusive of women's experiences.

Branding.

A brand is an identity that differentiates a product, service, or company from others that may be similar to it (Kapferer, 2008; Keller, 2009; Moriarty et al., 2009; Neumeier, 2005). Brands are related to, but different from, marketing and advertising (Kapferer, 2008). Marketing refers to the way that products, services, and companies are designed, produced, priced, packaged, distributed, and promoted (Moriarty et al., 2009). Advertising is a paid form of communication that uses mass media to influence a target population (Moriarty et al., 2009). A company can control its marketing and advertising strategies, but it does not have direct control over its brand (Neumeier, 2005). Rather, brands are co-created by companies and by the individuals who interact either directly or indirectly with them (Kapferer, 2008; Neumeier, 2005); a brand is a widespread understanding of a product, service, or company, similar in some ways to a product, service, or company's reputation (Keller, 2009; Neumeier, 2005). For example, Apple's brand is viewed as technologically hip while Disney's brand speaks to wholesome family entertainment and happiness (Neumeier, 2005). No doubt, both Apple and Disney strongly contribute to the formation of these brands, but they rely on their target audiences to experience their companies' products and then share their perceptions with others (Neumeier, 2005).

Branding (or rebranding) a company, product, or service involves an understanding of consumers' current perceptions and the use of mixed marketing methods to change or sustain perceptions and influence consumer behavior, and when done well, those efforts pay off (Keller, 2009). Building a strong brand offers a multitude of benefits, including, but not limited to, improved perceptions of product performance, greater consumer loyalty, less company vulnerability during times of crisis, greater resilience of consumer response to price changes, greater trade support, and brand extension opportunities (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, a strong brand identity is central to the success of paid advertising campaigns, which supports an organization's financial wellbeing and bottom line (Keller, 2009). Overall, Hoeffler and Keller's (2003) extensive review of empirical literature on the

effects of branding demonstrates that strong brands are impactful, result in behavior, and enhance the effectiveness of communications efforts.

Social marketing.

Although branding has been often associated with for-profit companies and product consumption, branding principles are also applicable to the concept of branding an idea that will elicit action to benefit society and improve quality of life (Amine & Staub, 2009; Kotler & Levy, 1969; Rogers, 2003). Kotler and Zaltman (1971) refer to this type of branding as social marketing, “the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research” (p. 5). In other words, social marketing is the use of marketing campaigns and communication to create awareness and action related to a social need (Moriarty et al., 2009). Just as marketing and advertising can effectively contribute to a company’s brand, so too can marketing and advertising contribute to the adoption of a social concept (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Moriarty et al., 2009). For instance, social marketing has been applied to the concepts of energy conservation, smoking cessation, safety while driving, healthy eating, HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, and eco-friendliness, among many other efforts to influence the actions of the public (Rogers, 2003). The goals of social marketing campaigns may include the acceptance of a new behavior or belief, rejection of a potential behavior or belief, modification of a current behavior or belief, or desertion of a current behavior or belief (Amine & Staub, 2009). As with professionals who focus on company or product branding, social marketers are tasked with building a widespread understanding of a concept that should enhance its reputation (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). Also similar to the concept of branding, social marketers must rely on a mix of marketing strategies (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971).

Kotler and Zaltman (1971) describe the distinction between the necessities for successful common commercial advertising and successful social marketing campaigns. Typically, commercial advertising performed to build brand awareness and loyalty is effective because the task is not one of instilling new attitudes or creating significantly new behavior patterns, but rather shifting existing attitudes and behavior in a particular direction (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). For example, a company that sells a particular razor does not have to socialize men and women into new shaving habits, but rather to become

familiar with a specific brand of a product that he or she already has a desire to purchase (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). If pre-existing attitudes are present, then promotional campaigns are effective, since shifting pre-existing attitudes is a relatively easier undertaking than social reconditioning (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). Social marketing calls for action where pre-existing attitudes are absent and social reconditioning is required, increasing the complexity of the social marketer's task (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). For example, campaigns aimed to encourage family planning practices among women in developing countries not only must encourage a behavior (i.e., the use of birth control), but one that is completely new and foreign, misunderstood, and/or frowned upon by opinion leaders and the majority of the campaign's target audiences (Rogers, 2003).

Despite the difficulty in developing effective social marketing campaigns, this strategy to alter mass behavior can be incredibly successful. For example, in the U.S., tobacco use has been a major social problem causing nearly half a million deaths per year and costing the nation nearly \$200 billion annually (Lee, 2011). Smoking is especially problematic among youths because early adoption of smoking is linked with a multitude of other health risk behaviors (Lee, 2011). Unfortunately, youth opinions regarding smoking are particularly challenging to alter, as youths view tobacco smoking as a social norm and lack the skills to refuse tobacco offers (Lee, 2011). In the early 2000s, social marketing successfully helped to alter attitudes and behaviors regarding youth tobacco smoking (Lee, 2011). The truth[®] Campaign, a youth smoking prevention program, utilized a variety of social marketing techniques, including grassroots strategies, online interaction, and viral videos, which ultimately kept 450,000 teens from starting to smoke in its first four years and saved the U.S. between \$1.9 and \$5.4 billion in medical care costs during its first two years (Lee, 2011).

Applying branding and social marketing to women and entrepreneurship.

The principles of branding and social marketing can be applied to redefine entrepreneurship as inclusive of women's experiences. Extrapolating from the literature on gender, as well as scholarly defined qualities of entrepreneurs and typologies of entrepreneurship, the widespread understanding (or, "brand") of entrepreneurship as a career path is one of masculinity, including the qualities of assertion, risk-taking, and an inclination toward adventure (Ahl, 2006; Blake & Hanson, 2004; Bruni et al., 2004). Entrepreneurship is also understood to be strongly tied to the field of business, and to a lesser extent, to

engineering, technology, and innovation, all of which are also associated with masculinity (Blake & Hanson, 2004). Marketing and advertising are keys to branding and redefining entrepreneurship as a legitimate career path for women and to legitimize women entrepreneurs. These forms of mass communication are methods to diffuse new ideas about what entrepreneurship means and who entrepreneurs are that can ultimately influence the behavior of more women to confidently pursue entrepreneurship as a career.

Collateral about entrepreneurship programs in higher education.

Current trends in entrepreneurship collateral provide a baseline for identifying potential shortfalls of marketing strategies. Entrepreneurship collateral trends at ranked institutions provide particularly keen insight; rankings provide a measure of a university's quality, prestige, character, and even hipness (Morphew & Swanson, 2011). Moreover, ranked universities have greater national and international visibility and serve as role models for others (Morphew & Swanson, 2011). Annually, The Princeton Review, a business focused on standardized test preparation and college admissions consulting, compiles a top 25 ranking for undergraduate and graduate entrepreneurship programs, which is published in *Entrepreneur Magazine*. The rankings compare thousands of institutions, seeking those with programs that offer, among other qualities, the greatest percentage of faculty who are entrepreneurs, the amount of scholarships available to student entrepreneurs, the number of entrepreneurship clubs and mentorship programs, and the annual amount awarded in business plan competitions.

An analysis of communications produced by the top 25 undergraduate and top 25 graduate entrepreneurship programs demonstrates that they are housed predominantly in business schools and to a lesser extent engineering schools, and language and imagery in collateral emphasize business concepts. For example, the brochure for University of Houston's Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship, the top-ranked undergraduate entrepreneurship program of 2011, features men and women predominantly in business attire (e.g., collared shirts, jackets, etc.), a representation of masculinity (O'Barr, 2006), and 14 men are highlighted in the publication, versus six women. Evidence suggests that women will have more positive responses to images of women than of men in advertisements and that viewing advertisements with images that are predominantly of men are likely to create feelings that women are an out-group (Lee

et al., 2004). Thus, forms of collateral such as these reinforce status quo beliefs about the “brand” of entrepreneurship as being masculine.

Creating a successful campaign about women and entrepreneurship.

Although some social marketing campaigns are highly successful, many others do fail (see Rogers, 2003, for a review of case studies). A multitude of factors are at play in social marketing efforts, and the diffusion of innovation theory provides a helpful framework for understanding those campaigns that result in success (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) defines diffusion as, “the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 5). Diffusion is a very particular type of communication because the messages are concerned with new ideas, and these new ideas create uncertainty (Rogers, 2003). In order to reduce their uncertainty regarding new ideas, communication participants create and share information with one another (Rogers, 2003). As they share information, individuals respond to their perceptions of what credible peers are thinking and how they are behaving and in doing so, respond to social pressure (Dearing, 2008). Diffusion itself is a highly social process (Rogers, 2003; Dearing, 2008). In fact, most individuals engage in a primarily subjective judgment of an innovation that they formulate through information sharing with individuals who are like themselves but have already adopted (or refused to adopt) an innovation (Rogers, 2003). The information sharing may occur spontaneously (e.g., word of mouth) or through the directed and managed dissemination of ideas (e.g., paid advertisements) (Rogers, 2003; Dearing, 2008). A combination of grass roots and managed dissemination strategies is usually best (Rogers, 2003). In fact, managed dissemination is most effective when it stimulates peer conversation about the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

Utilizing diffusion principles is not precisely the same as social marketing, but the two are highly compatible; while diffusion scholars seek to explain social change in a negative, neutral, or positive direction, social marketing scholars seek to identify communication strategies which result in behavioral and attitudinal changes in a particular prosocial direction (Dearing, Maibach, & Buller, 2006). As Rogers (2003) asserts, diffusion itself is a method to create social change; when successful, diffusion creates transformation in the structure and function of a social system. When new ideas are created, diffused, and adopted or rejected, the inherent ramifications include social change (Rogers, 2003). The processes

of diffusion and social marketing are also very similar; both rely on: 1) formative research to understand the information-seeking behaviors of target audiences; 2) message pre-testing to understand how information about the new idea will be understood and shared; 3) careful dissemination of information about the new idea among target audiences; and 4) support and assistance to those target audience members who wish to learn more about the new idea (Dearing, 2008).

Diffusion theory is particularly helpful for understanding how to build successful social marketing campaigns (Dearing et al., 2006). By breaking the decision to adopt or reject an innovation into steps and analyzing the factors that affect each phase of the process, diffusion scholars offer clarity to social marketing best practices (Dearing et al., 2006). Marketers have most control over the first step of this process, in defining how the innovation is communicated to create awareness among audiences (Dearing, 2008; Rogers, 2003). When communicated clearly, the attributes of an innovation can speed its rate of adoption among audiences (Dearing, 2008; Rogers, 2003). Five attributes contribute most to the rate of adoption of an innovation: relative advantage, complexity, trialability, observability, and compatibility (Dearing, 2008; Rogers, 2003).

Although each of these attributes is critical to spread a new idea, this study focuses primarily on the last of these qualities, compatibility, as research indicates that men and women view entrepreneurship as incompatible with feminine values and abilities (Ahl, 2006; Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni et al., 2004; Calas & Smircich, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999). Research has already demonstrated that altering communication about an innovation's compatibility can rebrand careers to be more inclusive of the experiences of women, including campaigns to enlist more women to the U.S. military (Marshall & Brown, 2004) and to recruit more women to the field of engineering (National Academy of Engineering, 2008). Research on promoting engineering indicates the dramatic difference that altering communication can have on young women's perceptions; messages about engineers creating impact on their communities and on others health were the most positively received by girls (National Academy of Engineering, 2008). Yet, current views of engineering associate it with masculinity, earning money, and performing math and science tasks in solidarity (National Academy of Engineering, 2008). As a result, the National Academy of Engineering has called upon engineering programs to alter the way they communicate about the profession to change widespread beliefs regarding the congruity between

feminine values and abilities and engineering. Similarly, to enlist more women in military positions, Marshall and Brown (2004) discovered that marketing campaigns needed to emphasize the social aspects of military duty, including how soldiers help one another and their communities, as well as how soldiers utilize collaboration and teamwork to accomplish their goals. Marshall and Brown (2004) advocate for altered marketing strategies to influence women's perceptions about military duty.

These findings on what women seek and value in their careers mirror conclusions drawn from the entrepreneurship literature. Evidence suggests that women as well as minorities are driven to pursue entrepreneurship for reasons that are different from the motivations of White men (Brush, Monti, Ryan, & Gannon, 2007). For example, many women who pursue startups primarily do so to create social impact, help others, and have a positive influence on their communities, rather than to generate personal wealth (Robinson et al., 2007; Still & Timms, 2000; Thompson & Hood, 1991). Women also tend to define entrepreneurial success differently than men, arguing that the extent to which their ventures support individuals and communities is a success criterion (Robinson et al., 2007). These motivations and success criteria are in alignment with women's socialization as nurturers (Calas & Smircich, 2009) and their pursuit into careers such as nursing or education, which focus on supporting others. The concept of doing good for others is also in stark contrast to that of generating and accumulating wealth, which is often associated with successful entrepreneurship (Robinson et al., 2007).

Given what is known about women's socialization and the effectiveness of mass media to alter widespread perceptions, this study examines how redefining entrepreneurship to focus on feminine qualities can change women's attitudes about venture creation. Through a widespread altering of promotional materials at postsecondary institutions that demonstrate how women can, through entrepreneurship, create social impact and benefit their communities, practitioners can positively affect women's intentions to pursue entrepreneurship as a career. Four hypotheses to this effect will be tested:

H1: Communicating about entrepreneurship as socially impactful enhances college women's attitudes about entrepreneurship.

H2: Communicating about entrepreneurship as socially impactful increases college women's intentions to engage in entrepreneurship education.

H3: Communicating about entrepreneurship as socially impactful increases college women's intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activity.

Methodology

Procedure and Participants

A random sample of 3,000 undergraduate students from a large southwestern university will be sent an email invitation to participate in the study. All potential participants will be requested to select a website link to participate in the study. The first page of the site will describe the purpose of the study to understand how universities can enhance their entrepreneurship programs and opportunities. The survey will be administered through the Internet for three reasons: 1) to avoid the possible confounding effect of the gender of a survey administrator (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999); and 2) to increase response rates, allowing the participant to complete the survey in a location and at a time that is most convenient for him/her (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003).

Students who agree to participate in the study will be randomly assigned to one of two groups. Each group will view a separate advertisement that promotes a university's entrepreneurship programs: one advertisement will use traditional business language and imagery (referenced as Business Advertisement); the second advertisement will use language and imagery that emphasize social impact (referenced as Social Impact Advertisement). Following the viewing of the advertisements, participants will be asked two questions on the content of the advertisements to ensure they had reviewed it carefully. Participants will then complete a survey that asks them to report their attitudes about entrepreneurship and their intentions to pursue entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial activity. Results will be utilized to improve communications at the institution where the study is based, as well as shared with the broader entrepreneurship education community.

Business and Social Impact Advertisements

The advertisements will each be two pages in length. Advertisements will also utilize standard university branding. The first page will have a large image of student entrepreneurs and a tagline. The second page will have an image of a student entrepreneur, an anecdote about a successful student entrepreneur, and a list with descriptions of various university resources that support student entrepreneurs.

For the Business Advertisement, the image on page one will feature men and women in business attire talking amongst one another in an office setting. The tagline for the Business Advertisement reads, “Venture forward with your business idea,” speaking to Ahl’s (2006) typology of traditional entrepreneurship being associated with adventure and business. On page two, the anecdote will utilize business language and focus on wealth generation. This anecdote reads,

As a student, Lee Johnson had an idea to create simple, useful smart phone apps and then give them away; in under five years, Johnson’s idea has transformed into FreeApps4All.com, a business that has not only won the 2008 Business Strategy of the Year Award, but also generated \$1 million in revenue last year.

The name Lee Johnson was selected as Lee is a gender-neutral first name (Van Fleet & Atwater, 1997). Johnson was selected as it is one of the ten most popular last names in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). This anecdote describes what Lee’s idea was, an idea related to technology, and places heavy emphasis on business, thus emphasizing male-dominated fields (Blake & Hanson, 2004). The final phrase of the anecdote references revenue generation, a criterion of success in traditional entrepreneurship, a motivator that means less to women than to men entrepreneurs (Robinson et al., 2007). A descriptive paragraph of entrepreneurship at the university follows, that emphasizes university resources can help students, “move our venture forward faster” and “take a product or service from idea to market.” The image on the second page of the brochure is of students in business attire delivering a presentation. Language and imagery are meant to speak to the business components of entrepreneurship.

For the Social Impact Advertisement, the image on page one will feature men and women in a community setting, wearing sweatshirts as they work with children in a grade school gymnasium. The tagline for the Social Impact Advertisement reads, “Make a difference in our communities through entrepreneurship,” speaking to Robinson and colleagues’ (2007) finding that women care about the impact of their entrepreneurial work. On page two, the anecdote will utilize language that emphasizes social impact and making a difference. This anecdote reads:

As a student, Lee Johnson had an idea to lead high school students in solving social challenges faced by their communities; in under five years, Johnson’s idea has transformed into Build Some

Good (BSG), an organization that has not only won the 2008 Community Impact Award, but also earned a \$1 million grant to further the venture's mission.

Again, the gender neutral name Lee Johnson is utilized and the anecdote remains similar in structure to the anecdote used for the Business Advertisement. The difference is in its emphasis on community impact and on grant earning versus revenue generation. A descriptive paragraph of entrepreneurship at the university follows, that emphasizes university resources can help students, “make a difference” and “take a product or service from concept to action and impact.” The image on the second page of the brochure is of student entrepreneurs working at a construction site. Language and imagery are meant to speak to the impact of entrepreneurship.

Measuring Entrepreneurial Intention and Attitudes about Entrepreneurship

Five, five-point Likert items will be used to measure attitudes about entrepreneurship, including starting a venture is harmful/helpful, negative/positive, not worth doing/worth doing, bad/good, and disappointing/rewarding. Entrepreneurial intentions will be measured using four, five-point Likert items that assess how interested students are in engaging in entrepreneurial activities, based on Zhao, Seibert, and Hill's (2005) entrepreneurial intentions measure.

Conclusions, Policy Implications, and Directions for Future Research

The purpose of this study is to determine language and imagery that can be used to engage more women in entrepreneurship programs at institutions of higher education. This study draws on feminist scholarship and mass communication literature to create and test advertisements that can be used in social marketing campaigns to change the way that men and women understand entrepreneurship. The potential impact of this work is in transforming policies universities hold for understanding and embracing women's contributions to entrepreneurial pursuits. Bringing visibility to women's values and unique abilities may alter more than just perceptions of entrepreneurship, but long-term, may also impact how entrepreneurship is taught in the context of higher education and how entrepreneurship is perceived beyond the walls of academe.

Despite these potential contributions, this study has several limitations. First, creating messaging that speaks to feminine gender roles does not question the socialization of women into nurturing roles (Butler, 1990). Arguably, teaching women masculine skills is an important societal responsibility,

particularly because although feminine skills add much to the pursuit of entrepreneurship, masculine skills are just as necessary to succeed as an entrepreneur (Mueller & Dato-On, 2008). As Marshall and Brown (2004) point out, enticing women to pursue male-dominated careers under the auspices of being a female-friendly atmosphere should only be pursued when practitioners can deliver a female-friendly experience.

Second, socialization itself is a process that begins at birth (Butler, 1990). Gender identity is formed, perpetuated, and reified throughout women and men's development (Butler, 1990). Thus, altering women's perceptions about entrepreneurship once they reach college may be too late to have a notable impact on their attitudes and intentions.

The current study also only examines attitudes and intentions, but intentions are the result of several additional factors, including self-efficacy and social norms. Self-efficacy is a critical factor for women entrepreneurs (Kirkwood, 2009). In addition, women entrepreneurs in particular may be influenced by social norms in that those who women entrepreneurs must associate for business purposes (e.g., lenders, consumers, etc.) and the men in their personal lives (e.g., romantic partners, fathers, brothers, etc.) likely do not associate feminine qualities with entrepreneurship and may therefore be unsupportive of women's entrepreneurial pursuits (Gupta et al., 2009). Lee and colleagues (2004) stress that in terms of predicting behavior, influences of family members and other close companions often outweigh advertising. Future research should take these factors into account and seek to examine actual behaviors.

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