

SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMEN IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY – CASE STUDY

Anna WISNIEWSKA

Vistula University, Faculty of Business and International Relations; a.wisniewska@vistula.edu.pl,
ORCID: 0000-0003-0876-1763

Purpose: The aim of the article is to identify the success factors of women with an entrepreneurial attitude, running a business in the Beauty industry.

Design/methodology/approach: The study used the method of analysis and criticism of literature and a case study. The author also cited the results of interviews with the owners of three micro-enterprises providing various services in the Beauty industry, in the Mazovian province.

Findings: The results of the analyses were presented in the form of case studies, which show the motives for the activities of enterprises and achieving success in the specific conditions of a given company. Based on them, it can be stated that the success factors result from: the entrepreneur/owner, the company itself and the company's environment, and professional success, which they associate with personal success, which is understood as the ability to make independent decisions, earnings in the first year of operation, a sense of peace and time for the family, the ability to fulfill passions and personal mission.

Practical implications: In the described enterprises, the factors of success of entrepreneurial women were identified, which can encourage women to establish and run a company in the Beauty industry.

Originality/value: The presented research and the resulting observations and conclusions contribute to the diverse context of research on the problem under consideration, and fill a specific research gap in the form of showing the factors of success of entrepreneurial women in the specific conditions of a given company in the Beauty industry. The conducted research can expand the literature on women's entrepreneurship.

Keywords: women's entrepreneurship, success factors, Beauty industry.

Category of the paper: Research article, case study.

1. Introduction

The first studies and research on women's entrepreneurship appeared at the turn of the 70s and 80s, while recent years have shown a clear increase in interest in this subject. The main trends in research on women's entrepreneurship (Lubacha-Sember, 2016) are barriers to their

entrepreneurship, motivation to start their own business, support for entrepreneurship, but also a comparative characteristic of women's and men's entrepreneurship (Rembiasz, Siemieniak, 2021). In research on the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, the dominating view is that they require an interdisciplinary approach: economic, psychological and social (Gano, Łuczka, 2017). The aim of the article is to identify the factors of success of women who run a business in the Beauty industry. The research problem formulated in the form of questions is as follows: what factors influence the success of women running a business in the Beauty industry, what are the components of this success, do they combine professional success with life success, and what prompted them to start a business in the discussed industry? To answer these questions, the author conducted interviews with the owners of three micro-enterprises providing various services in the Beauty industry in the Masovian Voivodeship.

2. Success of entrepreneurial women

In business management, the aim of the efforts undertaken is the desire to achieve success, i.e. success, prosperity, successful effect of one's own or joint actions (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2007). Success is understood as a successful result of some undertaking, achievement of the intended goal, gaining fame, wealth, high position (Dictionary of the Polish language). It is also understood as establishing a business, overcoming barriers related to entering the market, obtaining financial resources, equipping the company, increasing regular customers in subsequent years of operation, obtaining customer satisfaction. Success also means increasing profits from business activity and expanding the area of operation. Success is measured slightly differently by employees, who do it through the prism of the level of remuneration, quality of life and certainty of employment (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2007). Success in life, in turn, is most often associated with a successful family life, a combination of a good family and financial situation with good health and job satisfaction, happiness and fulfillment of dreams. In the literature, one can also find a statement that the success of a company depends not so much on the market, but on its internal situation. The foundations for lasting success are not created by management techniques and tools, but by the attitude, including entrepreneurship, values, mindset and approach of top management (Kwiecień, 2018).

One of the first to describe the phenomenon of entrepreneurship was R. Cantillon, who called it the ability to perceive opportunities and use the opportunity created by the market to achieve profit in order to continue effective action (Siemieniak, 2010). The concept of entrepreneurship is understood as an action that aims to create and implement new connections between production factors and shows the connections between entrepreneurship and human personality traits, such as creativity, activity in action, resourcefulness or ingenuity. In the literature, these traits are attributed to people who are the driving force of economic life,

i.e. people with entrepreneurial traits. After all, entrepreneurship is "the ability to perceive new opportunities and search for opportunities to achieve profit that others have not yet noticed" (Kurczewska, 2013, p. 26).

As Sabina Klimek states in her work on women's entrepreneurship in Poland, many types of entrepreneurship can be distinguished, because entrepreneurship in its essence is very diverse and with the progress of technology, its new varieties appear (Klimek, 2020, p. 19). In the cited study, entrepreneurship was classified according to:

- the nature of the activity, in which international, innovative, ecological, intellectual and academic entrepreneurship can be distinguished,
- the person of the entrepreneur, female entrepreneurship, family entrepreneurship, seniors, immigrants,
- the type of behavior, i.e. team entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship as a lifestyle,
- the level of company development: start-up entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in companies with strong growth.

Due to the problem raised in the article, attention should be paid to the classification of types of entrepreneurship according to the person of the entrepreneur, namely female entrepreneurship. This is a problem that is increasingly being paid attention to by researchers dealing with women's entrepreneurship and their role in the economy.

The increase in the number of professionally active women has been one of the dominant social trends in Europe for the last 30 years and continues to this day (Broniszewska, Ślusarczyk, 2017). The changes taking place on the labor market have been and continue to be a kind of impulse for the growth of women's entrepreneurship in the 21st century. The literature suggests that women are more adaptable than men and can cope better with stress. For many women, starting their own business is much easier than obtaining a managerial position in the company where they work. Working "on your own" allows women to more easily reconcile family and professional responsibilities (Ślusarczyk, Broniszewska, 2014, p. 222).

In recent years, the number of women starting their own businesses has been increasing, which is why it is necessary to strive to understand the essence of female entrepreneurship (Rembiasz, Siemieniak, 2021). This fact is confirmed not only by statistical data, but also by the growing interest of researchers in the topic (Zavodny-Pospisil, Zavodna, 2022, p. 53).

In Poland, women run businesses more often than in other countries. Poland is the second country in the EU in terms of the percentage of women running their own business – in our country it is 8%, it is higher only in Greece (10%). In turn, the average in the EU is around 6% (Figure 1).

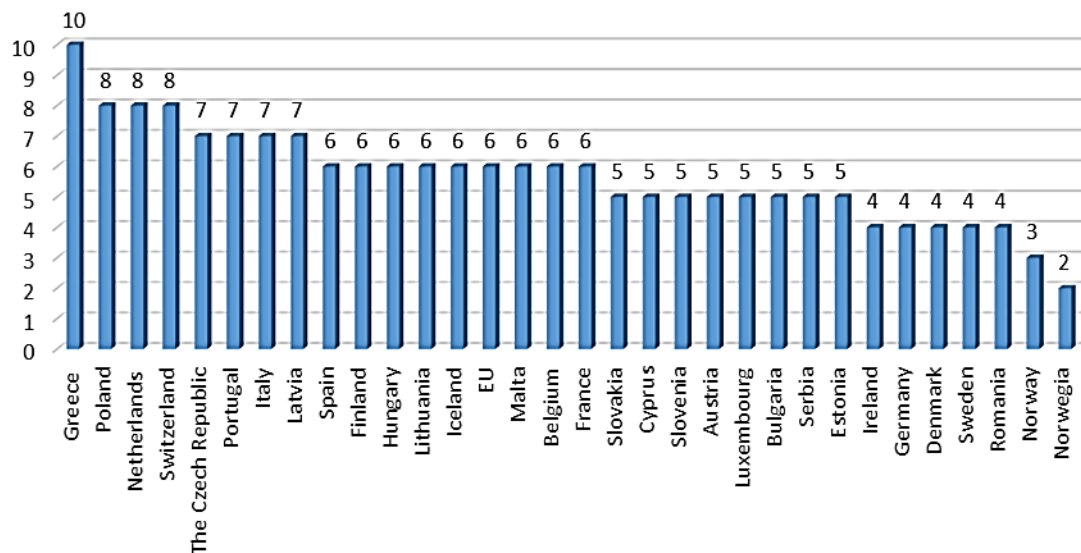


Figure 1. Percentage of women aged 15-64 running their own business in 2021.

Source: Polish Economic Institute, 2023, p. 18.

According to the GEM Report (2022), in 2021, entrepreneurial attitudes among Polish women and men changed compared to 2020 and again approached those observed before the pandemic, and compared to 2020, more women than men saw business opportunities in their environment. Polish women were much more likely than the average European to positively assess the conditions for starting a business in their environment, and were more convinced of their entrepreneurial competences than men (Tyrańska et al., 2023). More than half of all companies managed by women are microenterprises (55%). By opening them, they are realizing their goals and dreams. In which industries do women most often operate? Polish women own as many as $\frac{2}{3}$ of companies in the service industry. According to the KRS analysis conducted by the Dun & Bradstreet credit information agency on behalf of the Sukces Pisany Szminką Foundation, in the first quarter of 2022, the largest percentage of businesses owned by women (76%) was registered in the "social assistance without accommodation" section, and women are also owners of more than half of companies classified as "production of basic pharmaceutical substances and medicines and other pharmaceutical substances" (55%) (PARP, 2022). The third sector in terms of the number of companies owned by women is "other individual service activity", including hairdressing and beauty salons, solariums, massage and slimming salons, tattoo and piercing salons". Women constitute 63.5% of all business owners in the Beauty industry, which is called the women's industry. The results of the analyses by the Author and EFL (EFL Report, 2024) show that knowledge and business management skills are a very big challenge for people starting their own business. Neither Polish women nor Poles are "diligent students of entrepreneurship" and did not describe their knowledge as very high. However, women were much more likely than men to start their own companies without business preparation or with low knowledge and skills (28% vs. 21%), which was presented in the article. Gaining business knowledge in the discussed industry is very important for women, as shown by the number of training courses, workshops and conferences they participate in while running a company.

On February 28, 2024, the industry sanctioned its definition and identified the model areas of the Beauty industry, which is defined by M. Łenczyński as: "all fields dealing with beauty and well-being" (Beautyrazem)¹, i.e.: hairdressing, cosmetics, including treatments with technology, aesthetic cosmetology and aesthetic medicine, eyelash styling, eyebrows and eye framing, make-up, make-up with wigs and the work of a make-up artist and stylist, solariums, light therapy and spray tanning, ear piercing, piercing, including piercing performed by piercers, tattooing and permanent make-up, manicure, pedicure, nail styling and podiatry, hairdressing and trichology, cosmetic and relaxation massage, biological regeneration and SPA, body shaping, hair removal with any technique, including laser, sale of after-care products, and education in the form of courses and training and other forms, in all of the above Beauty areas. This is a rather specific industry, in which companies are mostly run by women, and women also constitute the majority of the staff. The specificity of this industry also lies in the fact that clients, when choosing a Beauty salon, are mostly guided by customer reviews published on the Internet (65.4%), recommendations and opinions of friends (59.6%). The driving force of success in the Beauty industry is recommendations. The reasons for such behaviors are fear of poor quality of service, lack of trust and anonymity of the beautician/cosmetologist (Stanisławska, 2017, pp. 14-17).

In the last decade, society's interest in improving its own image has increased significantly, and health awareness in society is increasing. From a social and economic perspective, the aspect of healthy life expectancy is very important. This is the expected average number of years that people in a given society have to live without major damage to their health and disability. In the last 15 years, this indicator for women in Poland has been around 62-64 years. This is a number similar to the average in the European Union. It is also worth noting that in Poland, women's healthy life expectancy is on average 2-3 percentage points higher than men's - similarly to some other EU countries, although in most of them such a disproportion is not visible (Polish Economic Institute, 2023, p. 38).

There is also a visible increase in interest in the services of companies in the Beauty industry, as well as skin care and makeup products. Especially ecological and natural cosmetics, which reflects the growing interest in a healthy and conscious lifestyle. In addition, product innovations, such as personalized cosmetics and products based on advanced research and technology, attract new consumers (fashionbiznes). This is supported by the current trend related to a healthy lifestyle, attractive appearance and well-being (Wiśniewska, 2020, p. 7). Society is increasingly aware of the threats caused by stress, a sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activity and rush, but also a lack of care for physical condition and appearance, which provides wide opportunities for the development of companies in the Beauty industry.

¹ The Beauty Razem Foundation is a professional social organization of the Beauty industry of 100,000 Beauty experts, beauticians, cosmetologists, stylists, make-up artists, hairdressers and representatives of dozens of related specialties. The president is Michał Łenczyński.

An additional factor strengthening the position of the Polish cosmetics industry is the generational change and the entry of young consumers into the market, who spend more on cosmetics. In 2023, the average Pole spent an estimated just over 125 euros on cosmetics - we read in the PKO BP report "Cosmetic industry - current situation and forecasts until 2028" in 2022, the average resident of our country spent 117 euros on these products. In 2028, this amount is forecast to increase to 165 euros. The largest share in the market (48.2%) is held by personal care cosmetics (PKO branża kosmetyczna, 2024).

3. Case studies

The case studies were developed based on interviews with the owners of three micro-enterprises providing various services in the Beauty industry, in the Mazovian province.

One of the main reasons for analyzing the selected cases was to identify the key factors that influenced the success of the owners, i.e.: establishing the company, its development, generating profits, the ability to repay loans. Each of these women, before starting their own business, had different experiences, worked in a different industry, and yet decided to establish a company in the Beauty industry, which functions well and brings personal satisfaction and financial profit.

Company A. Beauty salon, (cosmetology and training), legal form: sole proprietorship, run by a 46-year-old married woman with two children. Higher education - master's and postgraduate, on the market for over 20 years. Activity according to PKD: hairdressing and other beauty treatments, and other extracurricular forms of education, not classified elsewhere. She runs the company alone, for several years she has not employed employees. In addition to her business activity, she has a loan. Before opening her own company at the age of 24, the owner was employed full-time for 3 years, in a profession learned in the Beauty industry. The experience gained was very helpful when opening the business.

The owner takes part in training sessions at least once a month, which are conducted by leading companies on the Beauty market, on new products, running a business and how to perform treatments, running social media, a holistic approach to skin care, and interpreting research results. The costs she incurs are an average of one thousand per training session.

According to her, the success factors of running a business in the Beauty industry are primarily knowledge of the industry, previous and acquired professional experience, running a business without debt, having children, introducing new solutions, growing demand for services, fashion for a healthy appearance, changing the mentality of women - healthy egoism, good location of the company, equipment of the salon, building relationships with employees, but also "reliability, training in the Beauty industry, holistic approach to the human body and its skin, empathy for people, permanent development in cosmetology, mission, bringing reliable

knowledge to future beauticians and cosmetologists, persistence and determination". The professional success that she achieved, she does not combine with personal success at every stage of life. "There are different stages in every person's life, you can achieve professional success by struggling with turmoil of a personal nature".

Company B. Body shaping studio (body shaping, facial and body treatments), legal form: sole proprietorship, run by a 43-year-old married woman with one child. Master's degree, on the market for 1 year. Activity according to PKD: hairdressing and other beauty treatments, her husband supports her in running the company. She employs one employee on the basis of an employment contract. In addition to her business activity, she has a loan. Before she started her business at the age of 42, the owner was employed full-time in her learned profession as an accountant in a pharmaceutical company for over 15 years. The experience gained was helpful when she started her own business, but she does not use it at present.

The owner takes part in industry training sessions at least twice a month, which are conducted by the franchisor as part of the franchise agreement, concerning marketing, sales training, and on getting to know the customer's personality and using new equipment. In her work, she uses the products of companies that conduct training.

Success factors of running a business in the Beauty industry are primarily knowledge of the industry, family support, introduction of new solutions, cooperation with other companies, trusted employees, growing demand for services, fashion for a healthy look, support of friends (using its services), investment in equipment, new services, good location, equipment of the salon and building relationships with clients, but also: "determination, family support, customer loyalty". She combines professional success with personal, satisfaction from independence and earnings in the first year of business. Possibility of investing from the generated profit. Achieving peace and time for the family.

Company C. Podiatry studio, (foot and hand care), legal form: limited liability company, run by a 39-year-old married woman with one child. Master's degree, on the market for 7 years. Activity according to PKD: hairdressing and other cosmetic treatments, her husband supports her in running the company. In addition to her business activity, she has a loan. Before she started her business at the age of 31, the owner was employed full-time for 13 years, in a profession learned as an office worker in the police and municipal guard. The experience gained was helpful when she started her own business.

The owner takes part in hand nail styling training at least five times a year, on the subject of wound treatment, the role of a podiatrist in the world of medicine and industry training, the cost of which ranges from 2 to 6 thousand. In her work, she uses products from companies that conduct training.

In her opinion, the factors of success in running a business in the Beauty industry are primarily running a business without debt, having children, increasing the wealth of society, good location, building relationships with customers, continuous development of the company and rapid introduction of new products, and: "having financial resources to start, determination

and determination, self-confidence, improving qualifications, support from family". She combines professional success with personal success, job satisfaction, support from her spouse, the opportunity to pursue one's own passion and mission related to it, in the form of volunteering several times a month".

3.1. Summary of case studies

Table 1.

Characteristics of the women studied

Item	A	B	C
Age of the owners	46	43	39
Age of the owners at the time of establishing the company	24	42	32
Family status	husband, two children	husband, one child	husband, one child
Education	higher, master's and postgraduate degrees	higher, master's degree	higher, master's and postgraduate degrees
Experience in the industry at the time of founding the company	yes, school, full-time employment in the Beauty industry	none	none
Previous experience	3 years of full-time employment in the Beauty industry	15 years of full-time employment as an accountant	13 years of full-time employment as an office worker in the municipal guard and police

Source: Based on own research.

Table 2.

Conditions of running a business

Company	A	B	C
Equipment	very good	innovative	very good
Location	good	good	very good
State of competition	small	big	no competition
Credit/leasing available	yes	paid off	yes

Source: Based on own research.

Table 3.

Comparative Characteristics

Company	A	B	C
Motivation to start your own business	- desire to go it alone, - need for independence, - pursuing one's own passion	- lack of promotion opportunities, - desire to start your own business, - need for independence, - upcoming opportunity, - tired of working full-time, - pursuing your own passion	- desire to act on your own, - need for independence, - pursuing your own passion
Reasons for your success	- empathy for people, - permanent development in cosmetology, - mission, - providing reliable knowledge for future beauticians and cosmetologists, - persistence and determination	- determination, - family support, - customer loyalty	- determination, - self-confidence, - improving qualifications, - family support

Cont. table 3.

The way of doing marketing	- website, - instagram, - facebook, - word of mouth marketing	- website, - instagram, - facebook, - franchise, - word of mouth marketing	- website, - instagram, - facebook, - cooperation with influencers, - word of mouth marketing
Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Women	- diligence, - courage, - self-discipline, - persistence, - initiative, - patience, - ease of establishing contacts, - continuous acquisition of industry skills	- diligence, - courage, - patience, - ease of establishing contacts, - continuous acquisition of industry skills	- diligence, - self-discipline, - patience, - ease in establishing contacts, - continuous acquisition of industry skills

Source: Based on own research.

Industry education when starting a business (Table1) is not always a factor in success, just like creativity, initiative and courage or a strong desire to succeed. However, diligence, persistence, self-discipline, ease in establishing contacts and communication skills, as well as patience and continuous improvement of skills and expansion of industry knowledge (Table 3) are very important factors that distinguish successful women in the discussed industry, and these are trainings, workshops and industry conferences.

The equipment of the salon (Table 2) is of great importance, as well as the high quality of services provided and communication skills, because the specificity of the Beauty industry shows that over 65% of clients using services in Beauty salons take into account the recommendations of friends, family, and are also influenced by opinions found on the Internet. The reason is simple but very important, and it is characteristic of the Beauty industry. A client going for a treatment that improves appearance and well-being must have an inner conviction that they will achieve the desired effect in a given time. It is extremely rare for us to decide on a facial treatment without feeling that we are putting ourselves in good hands, which is why so much depends on the skills and experience of the person performing the treatment, the owner, but also trusted, well-trained employees, as well as recommendations and orders, which is particularly important in the Beauty industry.

4. Conclusions

The results of analyses and research conducted by the author, which aimed to demonstrate the motives for establishing and running businesses in specific conditions of a given company, show that success factors result from:

- the entrepreneur/owner: the age of the owner (borderline of generation X and Y), experience in the industry and continuous acquisition and improvement of industry skills, personal mission, improving qualifications, character/personality traits (industriousness, self-discipline, ease of establishing contacts, high quality of services provided, communication skills), motivation to establish a business, having children and a stable family situation;
- from the company itself: introduction of new solutions, trusted employees-specialists, availability of dates for services provided, having a pool of regular customers, investment in equipment, continuous development, place of business, equipment of the office, introduction of new services, good location;
- from the company's environment: support from family and friends, good financing conditions (leasing, credit), cooperation with influencers who recommend using the services of a given person, and companies offering benefit systems and sports and recreation subscriptions (Multisport, Medicover Sport, PZU Sport), growing demand for services, the motivating role of competition, the fashion for a healthy appearance, increasing wealth of society, changing the mentality of women – healthy egoism.

Professional success, which entrepreneurial women running a business in the Beauty industry associate with personal success, is understood as: the ability to make independent decisions, earnings in the first year of business, a sense of peace and time for the family. They also define it as the ability to fulfill a dream, to pursue one's own passion and a personal mission to help, e.g. in the form of volunteering or training competent staff of beauty and cosmetology salons. An important factor in achieving success was establishing cooperation with companies providing benefit systems, which in the case of company B had a significant impact on retaining customers during the holiday and vacation period. It is worth noting that all the owners notice a change in the mentality of their clients from generations X and Y, namely healthy egoism determining systematic visits to Beauty salons in order to take care of the appearance and condition of the skin and body, which is closely related to well-being.

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