

PAPER:

***WOMEN, BUSINESS AND VET:  
FURTHERING A DIVERSE RESEARCH AGENDA***

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Abstract:

Research into women business operators has greatly expanded since the 1970s, in recognition of the growth and economic potential of this segment of the local, national and international economy. Prompted by this development research into training women as business owners have also received a boost. Yet several of the policy “solutions” derived from this research have received at best limited success from a “user” perspective.

The problem stems partly from not recognising the diversity of users of this research. Via a comprehensive literature review, this paper examines the implied identify of “users” of research into women’s business ownership and related training. It also examines implicit political agendas embodied in that research and models of women’s experience which do not match the realities of women themselves.

These partialities and discrepancies in the worldview of researchers and research users, as much as the notorious elusiveness and diversity of the target research population, have constrained both the broad research agenda and specific research techniques for VET women business operators. Greater use of qualitative techniques is suggested. The paper also sets out how some combinations of research techniques may better recognise the diversity of users of research into women’s business ownership training, their perspectives, and their goals.