

**5th Conference of the LSEE Research Network on Social
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Case study on Female Entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Introduction

- ❖ The total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) amounts to **3,531,159**
- ❖ Out of that number, **50.9%** are women, and **49.1%** are men (Agency for Statistics of BiH, 2018).
- ❖ Boys and girls have same access to education
- ❖ Female students attend universities in even larger numbers than male students.
- ❖ The number of **graduated female students** has been higher **than male students** in the **last ten years**.
- ❖ There is a **big difference** between the number of **men** and **women entrepreneurs**

Introduction (cont.)

Table 1. Structure of female persons in employment by employment status

	Females		
	2015.	2016.	2017.
Employees	74,3	74,7	75,6
Self-employed persons	23,9	23,6	22,6

Source: Agency for the statistic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018)



Motives for the research

- ❖ To determine **why women** in BiH who are as well educated as men and often even more, **do not choose to be entrepreneurs**.
- ❖ What are the **motives** for women to choose entrepreneurship, what are the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of **entrepreneurship** for them .
- ❖ Does **society** and **cultural norms** support or hinder **female entrepreneurship**?

Methods



- ❖ Qualitative research
- ❖ Convenience sampling method
- ❖ Semi-structured interview

Methods (cont.)

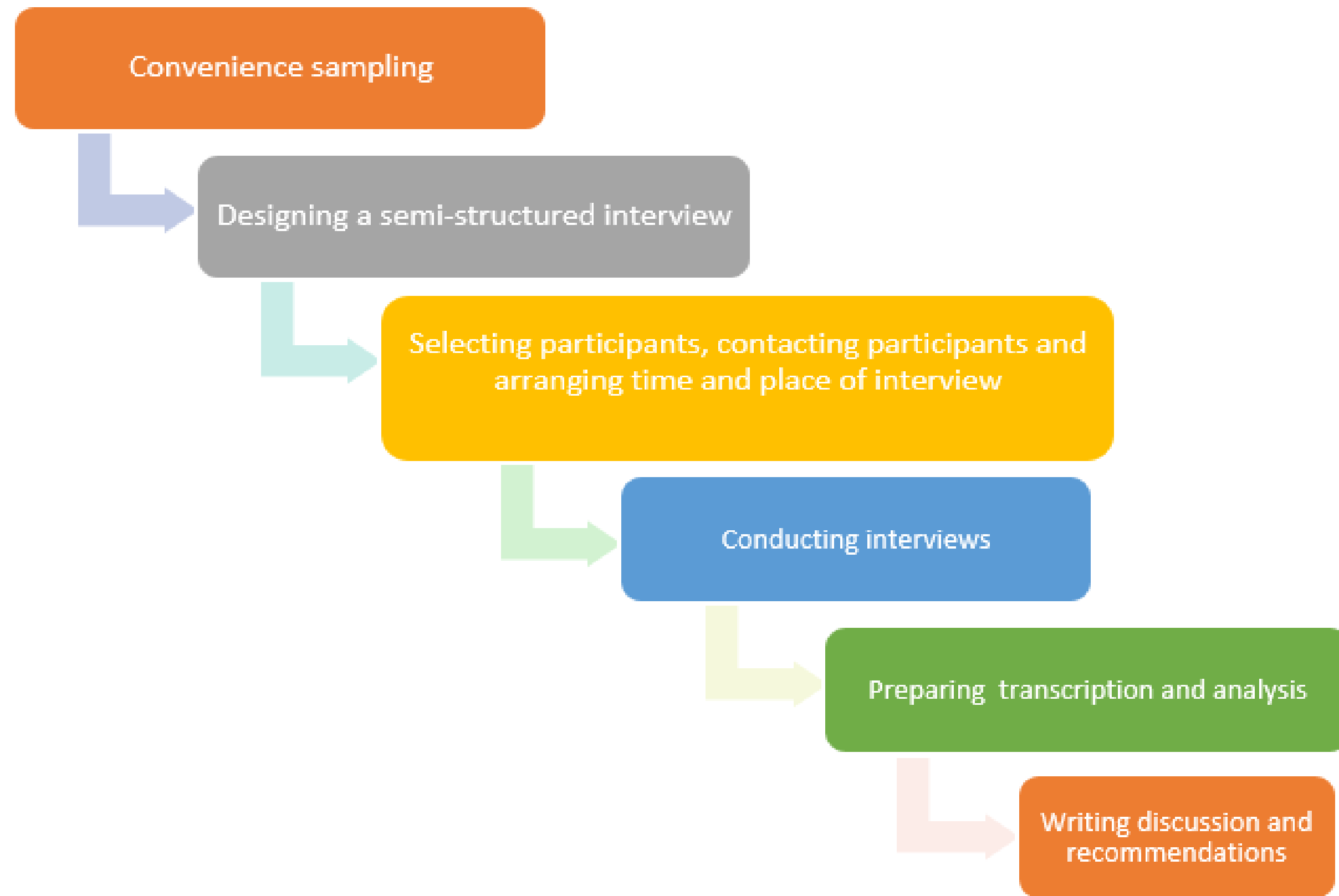


Figure 1 Flow of research conduct. Source: Author's compilation

Discussion

Researchers examined **10** successful **female businesses** in Sarajevo.

Participants in the research are **women** from **different education backgrounds**, from **high school graduates** to **Ph.D. candidate**, a widespread of age, from **early twenties** to **late fifties**, different marital status and a quite different personal history.

They work in **different fields** like pharmacy, cosmetics, logistics, agriculture and food sector, education, wholesales, publishing, fashion industry, and plant production.

Discussion (cont.)

Interview Question 1 What is your initial motive for a startup?

- ❖ The **love** is the main motive for women in BiH to start a business. All interviewed women have chosen to do something they really enjoy. Many of them have left secure career in order to pursue the things they love. **Some women start business out of necessity.**
- ❖ None of interviewed female entrepreneurs put money at the first place as a motive for starting a business.
- ❖ *Amra Ribic, owner of Aurora stated her desire to be innovating, to create and offer to the market a new healthy product.*
- ❖ *“ After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts, the main and basic motive was the need to create and develop their own products under the label Made in BiH’’. (Ms. Emina Hodzić Adilović, Kaftan Studio).*

Discussion (cont.)

Interview Question 2. What are the benefits of entrepreneurship?

- ❖ **Freedom to manage their own time.** As women have to **balance family and business**, it is very important for women to have freedom to plan her own time.
- ❖ **Recognition**
- ❖ **Leaving the mark**
- ❖ **Creativity**
- ❖ *"Freedom in expressing your creativity, you are relying on yourself, the possibility of constant work and improvement on your self-professionally in order to be able to compete and follow trends on the market."* (Company X).
- ❖ *"Achieving the goals we set ourselves in the profession we were educated for."*(Kaftan studio)

Discussion (cont.)

Interview Question 3 What are the disadvantages of entrepreneurship?

- ❖ Entrepreneurship is hard work, full of obstacles.
- ❖ Entrepreneur lives with her business 24 hours.
- ❖ *"It is very difficult to choose this path. I do not regret it. It was worth it. I could not repeat it. You can not do this more than once in a lifetime.,"* - Bonum preschool institutions
- ❖ *"It is great thing that I can take break whenever I want, but unfortunately there is never time to use a break."* Ajla Čengić

Discussion (cont.)

Interview Question 4 In relation to that (question 2 and 3) do you find it easier for male colleagues entrepreneurs?

- ❖ There is a difference between male and female entrepreneurship simply because there is a difference between women and men. Women are emotional and take everything emotionally. They take their business emotionally. They love it as their own child. That's why women will do anything to keep business going. Women will hardly give it up and run their SMEs against everything and everybody
- ❖ It is quite normal in BiH's **culture** for **man** to be **entrepreneurial**. **Woman is regarded as a second class entrepreneur.**

Discussion (cont.)

Interview Question 5 How does society and the community perceive a woman entrepreneur?

- ❖ **BiH** is still **traditional culture** where women are expected to **take care** about **children** and make a lunch for family, no matter where does she work. You can still hear that women's place is in home.
- ❖ Aida Zubcevic, the owner of Faveda thinks that there is difference between Yugoslav and present time. In the time of ex Yugoslavia women was expected to finish university, find a job and then establish family. Women are expected in BiH now to finish university, establish family and eventually find a job. So, the whole generations of young brilliant women disappear after graduation from business and public life.
- ❖ *“Belittling. Very often. But I find that as a challenge. Then I prove them wrong. Our society judges by visuals.”* (MediaBiro d.o.o)

Discussion (cont.)

Interview Question 6 What kind of support have you received?

- ❖ Most of the support our interviewees received was coming from their parents and families
- ❖ Furthermore, many of them had perception that, even later when they needed financial support to keep business running, financial institutions, money lenders, grant providers, asked more questions and have more trust issues when it comes to collaborating with woman, which they believe it is not the case for their male colleagues.

Conclusion

- ❖ **Women** in BiH will **hardly decide** to be **entrepreneur**, because it is very difficult.
- ❖ **Women** have to do everything **by themselves** without any support and that requires a lot of courage.
- ❖ **First problem** that women with good idea face is where to find **financing**.
- ❖ **Second problem** is **how to start** and run small business. But once they start they do not accept defeat. Women will be responsible, very persistent, and even stubborn.
- ❖ Environment still thinks that women should take care about home, family and children.
- ❖ There is no support from State for startups.


Limitations, future work and recommendations

- ❖ This primary research, like every research has its limitations.
- ❖ The sample consists of ten companies from the field of pharmacy, logistics, production, education, wholesales, publishing.
- ❖ Possibility that the other companies might give different answers.
- ❖ The research was concentrated on Sarajevo area only.
- ❖ State should be much more effective when we talk about female entrepreneurship. There is no statistical data on number of women SMEs, their structure and size. These data could be easily calculated based on tax files that all SMEs submit regularly every year.
- ❖ Create action plan



Limitations, future work and recommendations (cont.)

- ❖ Creating favorable environment for female small business in the broadest sense.
- ❖ Organize female entrepreneurs' centers where women could get all advices regarding feasibility of their ideas, possibilities of financing, registration, legal matters, financial matters and all knowledge needed to start and manage small business.
- ❖ State definitely should direct and coordinate all international support that seems pretty chaotic, sporadic and out of focus.
- ❖ Entrepreneurship to be introduced in the school curricula as a required course in the high school and universities.
- ❖ The connection between universities and entrepreneurs should be straightened.



*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!*