

No Problem Here? The Invisible Face of Micro-Aggressions in Women Entrepreneurs' Funding Experiences

Pauline Gibard

Jean Moulin Lyon 3 University, iaelyon School of Management, Magellan Research Center, France

Abstract

This paper examines how micro-aggressions shape women entrepreneurs' experiences in entrepreneurial finance. While gender inequalities in access to funding have been widely documented, the subtle and everyday interactions through which these inequalities are enacted remain underexplored. Drawing on a qualitative study based on 44 narrative interviews with women entrepreneurs in France, this research adopts a practice-based and interactional perspective. The findings reveal that micro-aggressions are pervasive in funding interactions, taking the form of implicit doubts, paternalistic attitudes, and the invisibilization of women's expertise. These experiences are often ambiguous and not always recognized as discriminatory, contributing to their normalization. The study also highlights the diversity of responses mobilized by women entrepreneurs, including humor, avoidance, reframing, and over-legitimation strategies. These responses reflect ongoing interactional and identity work aimed at maintaining credibility in asymmetrical evaluation contexts. By introducing micro-aggressions into the study of entrepreneurial finance, this paper contributes to research on gender and entrepreneurship by foregrounding the micro-level processes through which inequalities are reproduced and negotiated in practice. It also extends the doing gender perspective by showing how gender is enacted and reworked in financial interactions.

Keywords: Doing gender; Entrepreneurial finance; Casual prejudice; Qualitative research; Women's entrepreneurship