

The role of intersectionality theory in women's leadership: The case of women entrepreneurs in Oita

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Summary of Research

Intersectionality theory is considered one of the hopeful solutions to expand the relationship study between leadership performance and surface/deep-level diversity. Then, intersectionality was first articulated by Crenshaw in 1989, discussing blacks and women simultaneously. Rosette et al. (2018) argued that the significance of research on intersectionality is to "find the points of contact between multiple social sections and individual identities," and "to explore two essentially inseparable social sections simultaneously". In previous research, race and religion were chiefly discussed in Europe and US. However, little research was taken in a society like Japan where the influence of race and religion is not so strong.

This research focuses on women's leadership. There are three main reasons. The first one is intersectionality has a close relationship to feminist research. Secondly, women's leadership studies by intersectionality are little. Lastly, very few previous articles have been conducted about intersectionality in high gender gap society like Japan.

This research set three research questions. These are to clarify stereotypes and biases that women entrepreneurs in Japan are facing, to explore the differences of stereotypes and biases by intersectional identities, and to find out the developed leadership styles and decision-making processes by intersectional identities.

To explore three setting research questions, our research is going to take a qualitative approach in Oita prefecture. Oita is a higher rank of women CEO share in Japan and some alumni of APU are running businesses in Oita. Additionally, members of this research team have some connections to the institutions that support entrepreneurs and small and medium firms in Oita. The team estimates that the feasibility of this research is high. The research method has four phases. Those are literature reviews to reveal the research gaps and develop the interview questions, implementation of an in-depth semi-structured interview, analysis of interview data, and dissemination of outputs.

The research team consists of four members with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Two are female and the other two are male. In addition, two members are in their 30s, one member is in their 40s, and one member is in their 60s years of age. Each also has teaching and publishing research experience in the field of leadership and entrepreneurship. In addition, one research member is from the Philippines, one is from Thailand, and two are from Japan.

This research will take three methods of dissemination. Those are presentations at domestic conferences, organization of seminars, and publishing in peer review journals.