

AN EXAMINATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES PERFORMANCE: DOES GENDER STILL MATTER

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This study explores changes in gender differences in business performance over a 15-year period. By comparing the results of the Fairlie and Robb study from 2009 (using 1992 survey data) and our study in 2019 (using 2007 survey data), we provide novel insights into gender differences and offer a longitudinal examination of changes in gender inequality in business. Analyzing the first publicly available microdata from the U.S. Census Bureau, in a fashion similar to Fairlie and Robb (2009), we find that gender differences persist and that female-led businesses continue to trail male-led businesses in survival rates, profits, employment (i.e., firm size), and sales. However, the news is not all bad. In fact, our findings reveal that although female-led businesses continue to trail male-led businesses in all categories, both female- and male-led businesses are improving and in some cases performance improvements by female-led businesses are outpacing their male-led counterparts.