FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (ICADE)

THE EXTENDED ROLE OF INFORMAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN CHALLENGING CONTEXTS

A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Credit Author Statement

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1. **Conceptualization:** Idea formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.
2. **Data curation:** The management of activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later re-use.
3. **Formal analysis:** Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data.
4. **Funding acquisition:** No acquisition of financial support for any published was sought.
5. **Investigation:** Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection.
6. **Methodology:** Development or design of methodology; creation of models.
7. **Project administration:** Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.
8. **Resources:** Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.
9. **Software:** Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components.
10. **Supervision:** Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.
11. **Validation:** Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.
12. **Visualization:** Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/data presentation.
13. **Writing (original draft):** Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).
14. **Writing (review & editing):** Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages.

Use of GenAI Statement

During the preparation of this disseration, I used Grammarly, one of the AI-powered writing assistant tools to suggest improvements or grammar corrections. After using this service, I reviewed and edited the content as needed and hereby take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Abstract

Within the wider context of business and territorial competitiveness, this thesis explores the extended role of informal entrepreneurship education and training (EET) to women's entrepreneurial activity in challenging contexts. The rationale for this topic centres on women's empowerment, considering females' entrepreneurial activity and well-being in challenging contexts is greatly affected by gender-specific constraints. Several studies show how gender-specific business training interventions have a positive impact on women's entrepreneurial performance in these contexts, mainly economically related gains. This thesis, however, delves into extant literature, using the intersectionality nexus as a theoretical lens, to offer a critical view into the socio-interactional factors beyond gender (like race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality). Consequently, this advances extant literature around how these interactional factors inform the processes of women's empowerment in varied constrained contexts.

Furthermore, by means of an empirical case study, the thesis investigates how informal EET processes support marginalised women in challenging institutional contexts into gainful participation in entrepreneurial activities, facilitating empowerment and emancipation. Using Uganda as the contextual background, findings illuminate a range of novel complementary practices that informal EET educators undertake during EET and their wraparound purposive work both pre-and-post EET. The resultant grounded model contributes to extant literature's processes of women's empowerment and emancipation by extending both the pedagogy and the realm of entrepreneurship education. Additionally, a second empirical case study looks into policymakers' perspectives on their EET interventions aimed at supporting marginalised populations in constrained contexts to deconstruct gendered institutions for their individual and societal good. Here, I illuminate an *'informal EET classroom'* that policymaking processes deliberate, adding novel insights to extant frameworks in the literature on the design of entrepreneurship education and the developments of EET policies and institutional strategies. This contributes a grounded conceptual model that extends a context-laden design of such programmes.

Keywords: Agency, Constrained Contexts, Entrepreneurship Education and Training, Empowerment, Policy, Women

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A note to the reader on formatting and style

Comillas Pontifical University stipulates that for all publications included in this thesis, all typeface, font size, sub-heading styles, page layout, page numbers, and referencing formats remain consistent all through the manuscript. This translates into publications varying from their published format, otherwise, the articles' content, the body text and structure remain unaltered. Also, for the reader's ease in manuscript perusal, all references are integrated and placed towards the end of the manuscript. The same applies to the tables and figures, they do not take on the numbering as in their individual publications, but rather, possess a more generalized numbering to fit with the thesis flow.

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PART I: STATE OF ART

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for the Thesis

This thesis delves into research that integrates two subfields: entrepreneurship education and training (EET) and women's entrepreneurship, to suggest new theoretical perspectives (MacInnis, 2011). EET is regarded as a vehicle for social change, considering it shapes learners' autonomy and their critical reflection thus fosters emancipation from ingrained assumptions and normative expectations of the societal status quo (Wadhwani & Viebig, 2021). As such, nurturing women's entrepreneurial skills and knowledge is gaining interest among key stakeholders like policymakers, academics, and educators (Jones, 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Morgan, 2020; O'Connor, 2013; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). As such, EET initiatives are proposed as a means to increase women's entrepreneurial activity aiming to narrow gender disparities in business (Elert et al., 2020). However, while women's participation in entrepreneurship is lower than men's in almost all societies (Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017), this may not be true for developing countries in the Global South as they experience high female entrepreneurial activity attributed to high gender disparities that drive women into necessity entrepreneurship (Amine and Staub, 2009; Chauke, 2015; Said and Enslin, 2020).

Currently, the majority of existing studies on EET interventions aimed at women in developing countries focus on transforming the survivalist sector into more profitable and employment-generating ventures (Gavigan et al., 2020; Lourenço et al., 2014). This thesis goes a step further to navigate the role of EET programs beyond entrepreneurship for economic growth. As such, the thesis offers theoretical perspectives relevant for marginalised women in constrained contexts under the rationale that given their level of education (usually illiterate or semi-illiterate), their perceptions about themselves at formal jobs or work experience, greatly influence their willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Yousafzai et al., 2018; Gavigan, et al., 2020). Here, I argue that for such marginalised, poverty-afflicted women, it is multifaceted education, not just business education extended as interventions to narrow the poverty gap.

This dissertation offers valuable pragmatic insights that speak to policy, EET practitioners and women entrepreneurs and, therefore merits knowledge exchange opportunities amongst practitioners, scholars, and policymakers. These opportunities ensure effective implementation in areas where the exchange of knowledge may have been hindered by scarce empirically grounded pointers (Cvitanovic et al., 2016). As such, all through the doctoral trajectory, opportunities presented themselves in various ways, some of which the targeted audience (scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and society in general) that design and implement propositions from research programs were in attendance. During these occasions (such as presentations at academic conferences, research stays and publishing at peer-reviewed journals), I made my research findings accessible. Indeed, the empirical study that makes up Chapter Three of the thesis highlights the agency of educators as enacted practice and its interaction with context. This was published in the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research (DOI number: 10.1108/IJEBR-09-2023-0917) as '*Beyond Teaching: The Extended Role of Informal Entrepreneurship Education and Training in Challenging Contexts.*'

1.1.1 Main Aim and Objectives

The main aim goal of this thesis is to illuminate under-explored areas such as nuanced EET approaches and unveil how they support women's entrepreneurship beyond economic gain in constrained contexts. Consequently, from this key objective stem three objectives (see Figure 1) and their subsequent theoretical importance and results are addressed in the thesis. Exploring this goal allows adopting multiple research methods that draw from extant studies and empirical data.

The first objective uncovers the role of entrepreneurship education in women's agency in constrained contexts, acting as a basis to identify theoretical gaps and critique extant literature in this area. Indeed, this illuminates areas where this topic is overlooked yet it is critical for socio-economic activities for women in challenging contexts (Al-Budirate, 2009; Sadi and Al-Ghazali, 2010). To address this oversight in the literature, chapter two provides an integrated review of the role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency. Furthermore, in chapters three and four, the thesis uses empirical studies to contextualise informal EET from two nuanced perspectives. The first perspective is derived from informal EET practitioners also known as skills training providers (Koyana and Mason, 2017) and the second is provided by policymakers in charge of legislating informal EET in developing countries. Chapter three explores the second objective of how EET practitioners' perspectives contribute to understanding the design of EET that aligns with learners' nuanced needs in terms of *why, who, what, how, and which* content to include (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008). In chapter four, the third objective investigates how EET policy (Hoppe, 2016; Kyrö, 2006; O'Connor, 2013) tackles gendered institutions and the social interactions that support them to be deconstructed (Deutsch, 2007; Marlow and Martinez, 2018).

<u>Figure 1: Thesis Objectives and their Key Results</u>

Objective 1. Understanding the role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency

Integrate key theoretical gaps in the literature on context, women's entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship education

Unveil Nuanced EET Approaches in constrained contexts

Adopt a women's empowerment lens

Objective 2. Exploring educators' agentic practices that go beyond merely teaching

A conceptual model unveils complementary practices that contribute to processes of empowerment and emancipation

Objective 3. Investigating Gender Inclusive processes in Policymakers' EET legislation

Empirical case study of an 'informal EET classroom' extending the developments of EET policies and institutional strategies

Source: Own elaboration

1.1.2 Definitions of Key Concepts

The definitions of the key concepts used in the dissertation are included in this section to provide the context of the research. Considering the ever-growing entrepreneurship types and thus, an increasing base of content and methods of imparting entrepreneurship knowledge in the academic arena, there is no consensus on the term '*entrepreneurship education*' (Abaho et al., 2015). Therefore, I borrow from two schools of thought to understand this term, as it will be applied in this thesis. First, *entrepreneurship education* is a type of skills acquisition that could free individuals from their contextual structural constraints (Jones, et al., 2012). Secondly, *entrepreneurship education* nurtures learners by providing skills that enhance their autonomy and emancipation from their imagined social status quo (Wadhwani and Viebig, 2021 p.343).

Delving wider, the EET ecosystem includes several actors (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008), most relevant to this thesis are the learners (women entrepreneurs), entrepreneurship educators, and policymakers. *Entrepreneurship educators* are commonly put forward as individuals who pool personal resources, such as beliefs, knowledge, or identity, to bring out learners' desirable entrepreneurial outcomes (Forbes, 2009). EET scholars (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008) hint on the role of educators as the facilitators of: "any pedagogical programme or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which involves developing certain personal qualities" (Page 572). Other EET actors include *policymakers* who actively use public policy (instituted by governments or development partners) to address specific public issues by instituting the structure needed for the conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies (Alberti et al., 2004).

Furthermore, I tackle the concept of *informal EET* as utilised in this thesis following Gedeon's (2014) institutional teaching model framework. Here, *informal entrepreneurship education* encompasses a "holistic personal growth and transformation that provides students with knowledge, skills and attitudinal learning outcomes. This empowers students with a philosophy of entrepreneurial thinking, passion, and action-orientation that they can apply to their lives, their jobs, their communities, and/or their own new ventures" (Page 238). This definition aligns with the learners (women entrepreneurs) that this thesis focuses on, as they get into informal EET for practical purposes (to apply to their lives, their jobs, their communities, or their own new ventures).

In defining an entrepreneur, the commonly used reference is an individual with the ability to not only turn ideas into action through creativity, innovation and risk-taking, but also plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives (Filion, 2021). From the generalised definition of an entrepreneur, and for purposes of this thesis, I refer to *women entrepreneurs* as females who apply innovation to pursue enterprising opportunities. Borrowing from definitions applied in the geographical scope of the European Union, *women entrepreneurs* are considered a social necessity that confronts demographic, social and environmental challenges for individual prosperity as well as the overall sustainable economic growth of the region (Nassif et al., 2016).

To understand how EET effectively impacts women's entrepreneurship, theoretical constructs need to accurately depict reality (Whetten 89), therefore, the thesis centres on *constrained contexts* to: "more accurately reflect the realities and insights that emerge empirically" (Fisher and Aguinis 2017, p.446). Context is critical in entrepreneurship studies (Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2014), more so when considered in understanding the role of context in entrepreneurship (Anderson et

al., 2017). Therefore, in this thesis, *constrained contexts* are characterized by limited resources and opportunities that dictate the type of entrepreneurship practice in a given place and time such as physical or historical situational occurrences like entrepreneurship in times of crisis (Doern et al., 2019; Williams, and Vorley, 2017), entrepreneurship in political conflict zones (Althalathini et al., 2020), or refugee entrepreneurship (De La Chaux and Haugh, 2020; Harima, 2022; Refai et al., 2021; Refai et al., 2024; Yeshi et al., 2022); geographical locations for instance entrepreneurship in developing countries (Abuhussein and Koburtay, 2021; Zayadin et al., 2022) or rural entrepreneurship (Elkafrawi and Refai, 2022; Gittins et al., 2022; Gittins and McElwee, 2023; Korsgaard et al., 2015; Müller and Korsgaard, 2018); necessity entrepreneurship (Chauke, 2015; O'Donnell et al., 2021; O'Donnell et al., 2024) or poverty entrepreneurship (Anderson et al., 2019; Ojediran and Anderson, 2020; Smith et al., 2019). In sum, this encompasses entrepreneurship born from scarcity of employment opportunities or economic resources, limited access to education that could lead to employment, and poor institutional structures that restrict individual or poor societal decision-making processes. The thesis uses the words *challenging contexts* and *constrained contexts* interchangeably.

The dissertation focuses on women's entrepreneurship in constrained contexts, mainly informal sector women entrepreneurs (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Hence, I adopt the women's empowerment framework (Kabeer, 1999) as a theoretical lens used in the majority of studies on interventions for females in such contexts. This purposive decision stems from the broad and rich background from which majority of the discussions and propositions this thesis offers originate such as agency as one of the three tenets of the women's empowerment framework (Kabeer, 1999). Here, agency (Kabeer, 1999) encompasses both individual (like personal decision-making) and collective agency (such as participation and influence in social and political processes) (Pelenc et al., 2015; Rossi, 1997). Entrepreneurial agency on the other hand is a narrower yet profound focus, denoted as the entrepreneurial action aimed at improving prevailing social structures (McMullen et al., 2021; Villares-Varela et al., 2022) such as entrepreneurship institutional conditions and processes (Bruton et al., 2010). Therefore, I undertake both definitions to understand *women's entrepreneurial agency* as the ability to control resources and opportunities embedded in institutional structures, geographical and situational contexts limiting their entrepreneurial activity. My understanding of *women's entrepreneurial agency* guided by women's empowerment is embedded in Longwe's (1998) definition: "the process by which women collectively come to recognize and address the gender issues that stand in the way of their advancement. In a patriarchal society, these gender issues are the practices of gender discrimination which are entrenched in custom, law, and ideological belief" (Page 19).

1.1.3 Contextual Background

1.1.3.1 Women's Entrepreneurship in Constrained Contexts

While research and practice implicitly regard entrepreneurship to be generally the same globally, scholars call for a focus on the differentiated type of entrepreneurial activity in contexts such as Africa (Ratten and Jones, 2018). Indeed, scholars argue that the influence of context on entrepreneurship is specifically relevant for African economies as these could offer unique contextual factors that shape opportunities or offer resources that are not available in other contexts (Berglund et al., 2020; Welter et al., 2014). This thesis focuses on constrained contexts in

developing countries of this region (See Table 2, in Chapter Two, on the conditions of females in constrained contexts). Although small and medium enterprises (SMEs) account for majority of firms in the sub-Saharan African region, several contextual factors stagnate the entrepreneurial progress, increasing challenges with many SMEs struggling to survive (Van Vuuren and Alemayehu, 2018). These challenges revolve around unfavourable business environments like constraining legal requirements; inadequate entrepreneurship skills; limited access to finance or financial markets political instabilities poorly managed infrastructure, and lack of institutional support, among others (Lourenço et al., 2014; Singh and Belwal, 2008).

As such, in constrained contexts as in developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, more jobs are available in the informal sector where SMEs are the major source of new employment opportunities (Gavigan et al., 2020; Mamman et al., 2019; Mutula and Van Brakel, 2006). The establishment and sustenance of SMEs and entrepreneurship rank high in several government policies of countries in such contexts to improve their economies that are characterised by poverty and high unemployment rates (Buwule and Mutula, 2017). For example, in many sub-Saharan African economies, entrepreneurship plays a key role in economic development, innovation, competitiveness, and poverty alleviation (Gajbiye and Laghate, 2017; Lyakurwa, 2009). As such, although African SMEs are generally characterised as necessity-based with very few prospects for growth (Fierro et al., 2018), their contribution to not only the macro economies but also individual citizens is substantial (Gavigan et al., 2020). However, empirical evidence reveals that although developing economies put together various initiatives to address societal and economic challenges such as unemployment, the impact of these initiatives is minimal owing to contextual constraints such as inconsistency in government policies, changes in government, and inadequate implementation mechanism amongst others (Brijlal, 2011; Jiyane and Zawada, 2013; Langevang and Gough, 2012).

On that account, limited access to resources and opportunities in several developing countries constrains women's agency (the willpower to make personal decisions) which is also linked to gendered power and patriarchal structures (Porter et al., 2020). Nevertheless, women entrepreneurs contribute to developing countries' gross domestic product and to the global market in general (Radović-Marković et al., 2018). Indeed, females' SMEs in developing countries such as in some African economies contribute to job opportunities creation, poverty reduction and more economic empowerment through equal distribution of resources (Gavigan et al., 2020; Lourenço et al., 2014). However, despite their potential contribution, extant literature reviews on women's entrepreneurship reveal gendered assumptions that position female entrepreneurs as either failed or reluctant business actors (Ahl and Marlow, 2012) attributed to barriers like unequal gender access to resources like land, start-up capital or education (Sullivan and Meek, 2012).

Furthermore, women in challenging contexts such as developing economies in Africa are mainly represented in the informal sector, mostly agriculture, traditionally accepted as 'female' responsibility that supposedly matches their knowledge and skills (Gavigan et al., 2020). They also lack access to resources for the successful running of their businesses such as credit (Akudugu et al., 2009) and possess fewer opportunities in education, and work. Scholars indicate that although women's entrepreneurship in Africa has increased (Kyrgidou and Petridou, 2013), constraining institutional and situational factors create and increase women's disadvantage along gender lines, promoting their market exclusion and reducing their opportunities for successful

entrepreneurship. As such, despite the increase of women's entrepreneurship in the region, gender disparities in business persist. Several studies in constrained contexts outside the African region also reveal a spectrum of challenges that hinder the entrepreneurial success of women, attributed to limited access to resources and unequal rights owing to gendered institutions. For instance, migrant women entrepreneurs experience constrained agency with limited autonomy and decision-making power, significantly impacting their entrepreneurial outcomes (Semeniuk and Makhnachova, 2022; Vinnytsia, 2022).

1.1.3.2 The Case of Uganda

One representative case, that is also critical in this thesis is the case of Uganda. The country's informal sector employs more than 2.5 million people and the jobs created by its SME base sustains the economy, contributing up to 75 per cent of the gross domestic product (Buwule and Mutula, 2017). Uganda offers a suitable empirical background for understanding how this thesis could contribute to exploring the women entrepreneurs' plight given the constraining contextual factors. For instance, the country provides few formal-sector employment opportunities, with almost half of the women in the labour force represented in the informal sector and as unpaid family workers, receiving lower pay than men, thus representing majority of the chronically poor (Okidi and Mugambe, 2002). Rather than explore already scarce opportunities in the labour market (Gavigan, et al., 2020), they pursue entrepreneurial activities out of the need to survive to supplement household income (Tobias et al., 2013). However, with 28 per cent of Uganda's adult population being entrepreneurs or engaged in some form of entrepreneurial activities (Kulabako and Ojambo 2016), women's entrepreneurial activity rate is almost equal to men's (GEM, 2012[1]). This owes to the fact that Uganda is a largely agrarian economy where women dominate the agricultural sector. As such, the primary occupation of at least 80 per cent of rural women is agriculture due to a range of sociocultural issues including men's reverse attitude towards agriculture as a source of income (Lourenço et al., (2014). Also, on top of the agricultural produce done mainly at the production level (growing and selling crop produce like bananas, groundnuts and honey and animal husbandry like piggery and poultry), many Ugandan women work in groups on multiple low-income generating activities, like crafts and alcohol production (Pickering *et al.*, 1996).

Considering the critical role played by women in agriculture, policymakers are increasingly addressing the constraints that they face (Meinzen-Dick and Quisumbing, 2012), such as through gender and entrepreneurship training initiatives. Such entrepreneurial training interventions are particularly relevant for this context, considering majority of the women in Ugandan households are relatively young (between 26 to 49 years old), lack formal education, have limited agricultural technical skills, and have less capital compared to their male counterparts (Lourenço et al., 2014). They are also much more likely to have a lower accumulation of business skills when compared to men (GEM, 2012). Furthermore, their perceptions about themselves at formal jobs or work experience, their level of education, degree of commitment to running businesses due to pressing household chores greatly influence their willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activity (Yousafzai et al., 2018; Gavigan, et al., 2020).

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1 Kelley, D. J., Singer, S., & Herrington, M. (2012). Global entrepreneurship monitor. *2011 Global Report, GEM 2011*, 7, 2-38.

According to the World Economic Forum of 2020, gender is a major source of marginalization, varying extensively globally (Pidduck and Clark, 2021). Although different cultures are found within sub-Saharan Africa, women across the varied cultural contexts of the region are associated with their position as the inferior group in society (Egbo, 2000). While some scholars find little or no differences between male and female business owners or managers in sub-Saharan Africa (Halkias et al., 2011), particularly in Uganda, other scholars find no differences in the way men and women handle conflict when dealing with peers or supervisors (Manyak and Katono, 2010). In sum, the social challenges women endure are gender inequalities that directly or indirectly intensify women's already existing unfavourable life conditions (Botha and Bignotti, 2017). Ugandan women undergo institutional constraints at a national or regional context (Nikou et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020) and are greatly affected by physical, psychological, and economic factors associated with the aftermath of the war but also by prevailing sociocultural challenges (Mukasa, 2017). Against this backdrop, this thesis adopts this rich contextual background to understand how EET processes address such women's needs beyond economic gain. Thus, this thesis provides two empirical case studies carried out in Uganda in the third and fourth chapters.

One key area identified by extant research as a general skill-set necessary for success in dynamic, challenging environments is the knowledge of entrepreneurial skills (Savickas et al., 2009; Szymanska et al., 2020). This thesis therefore focuses on entrepreneurship education and training as a potential solution to address the challenges faced by women in such constrained contexts. By providing women with the necessary knowledge, skills, and support, entrepreneurship education could empower women and enhance their agentic outcomes, better their entrepreneurial activities, thereby improving their labour market performance (Gavigan et al., 2020). Indeed, multifaceted EET (for instance education about reproductive rights like usage of contraceptives or teen marriages) interventions empower adolescent women towards self-employment and mitigate early entry into marriage/cohabitation (Bandiera et al., 2020).

However, although studies reveal that educated entrepreneurs are more likely to work in more productive enterprises, others contend that entrepreneurial education and formal management skills reduce, but do not eliminate the performance gap by gender (Aterido and Hallward-Driemeier, 2011). Moreover, extant studies show that men, rather than women, tend to have more schooling in running family businesses (Aterido and Hallward-Driemeier, 2011). Furthermore, the masculinization of entrepreneurship training programs in many countries often fails to consider the specific needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs (Abreu and Grinevich, 2017). Additionally, exposure to the negative side of entrepreneurship during EET discourages female learners (Ahmed et al., 2017; Dilli and Westerhuis, 2018) leading to poor participation among women. In sum, this thesis borrows from a pragmatic case study such as Uganda, to offer a theoretical context-relevant understanding of how EET could meet the specific needs of women entrepreneurs in constrained contexts.

1.2 The Women's Empowerment Framework as a Theoretical Lens

Following the contextual background laid out in this thesis, a deeper understanding of the processes in the empowerment of women is needed (Singh and Belwal, 2008), more so in challenging contexts. However, research examining context-relevant solutions for female entrepreneurship such as in African economies is scarce (Gavigan et al., 2020). Several schools of

thought are fundamental in justifying the adoption of the women's empowerment framework (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999; Longwe, 1998) for this thesis. The framework highlights three elements (resources, agency and achievement) (Kabeer, 1999) critical in tackling contextual factors that inhibit access to entrepreneurial activity which would reduce marginalized women's position of disadvantage. I drift from the notion of women's empowerment as generic, to adopt the concept of informal EET as a more context-laden approach to understanding women's empowerment in constrained contexts, so as to challenge and advance knowledge in the current analyses of entrepreneurship education theory and practice.

In this thesis, therefore, considering educational programs are regarded as part of the process whose outcomes result in empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995), I aim to advance understanding of the extended role of informal EET as a nuanced resource to women in challenging contexts. Figure 2, below, depicts women's empowerment as the conceptual framework of the thesis. Echoing scholars' arguments, the entrepreneurial goal is a great resource, however by itself, it possesses limited potential to lift marginalized populations out of poverty (Chauke, 2015). While women's empowerment is vital for development (Cornwall, 2016; Duflo, 2012; Ushma D. Upadhya, et al., 2014) and the progress of countries and their regions (Banha et al., 2022), most literature focuses on what women contribute towards development, rather than vice versa (Cornwall, 2016).

Following this thread, the resource dimension in the framework (Figure 2) not only focuses on personal factors but also structural or institutional factors (like societal negative perception of women's competence in entrepreneurship), that could constrain women's access to vital resources (Said, 2020). Here, the framework is useful in its inclusive nature. Scholars contend that in measuring empowerment amongst genders, investigations into women's empowerment often fail to include women with limited access to vital resources, rather, they focus on inequalities amongst the most educated and economically advantaged (Beteta, 2006). In fact, scholars on women's empowerment critic development policies for their tendency to overlook women as a critical integral part of economic development processes (Mehra, 1997). Thus, one would argue that an inclusive concept (Pilková et al., 2016), such as resources presented in this conceptual framework (Figure 2), illuminates the negative gender stereotyping as it involves under-represented groups aiming to support them to address their given economic and social challenges. For instance, empirical evidence shows that human capital resources such as EET interventions offer a learning environment for learners to acquire socio-psychological coping skills like emancipation, self-esteem and positive sociocultural integration (Annan et al., 2013; Mukasa, 2017). As such, this thesis outlines several ways in which EET as a resource for marginalised populations provides benefits beyond human capital. This includes social capital where learners acquire relational support (like peer learning) or societal positive perception of women's business skills, consequently tackling the educational gap compared to men. Such knowledge provides the rationale (the 'why') of the thesis, highlighting novel dimensions such as which skills (resources) are critical to succeed in constrained contexts (Dodd and Hynes, 2012; Leitch et al., 2012).

Other schools of knowledge argue that women's empowerment is a process rather than an outcome, as there are contextual elements that enable or limit its essence (Beteta and Hanny, 2007). These include informal views on - but not limited to - gender roles (Marques, 2017) such as family responsibilities (Minniti and Nardone 2007). Other perspectives include views from the legal and regulatory structures in a given context such as gender differences in entrepreneurial activity

attributed to differences in human and social capital (Greene, 2000) or where the national culture and societal norms are negative to entrepreneurship-related initiatives (Lee et al., 2006, 2011). As such, the agency dimension (see Figure 2) in the women's empowerment framework (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999; Longwe, 1998) enables a deeper understanding of the practices and processes that enhance empowerment amongst marginalized populations. In this thesis, I align my understanding of women's empowerment to Longwe's (1998) definition: "the process by which women collectively come to recognize and address the gender issues that stand in the way of their advancement" (Page 19). As such, empowerment is an intrinsic motivation to act (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) that is only enhanced by supportive forces, such as EET processes.

Following this thread, scholars contend that studies on women's empowerment often fail to include key non-economic dimensions such as the decision-making power (agency) over women's bodies and sexuality (Beteta and Hanny, 2007; Upadhya, et al., 2014). In that regard, processes that support critical and reflective thinking such as customized EET (EET that meets the nuanced needs of a given population) have been found to enhance women's autonomy and emancipation from their imagined social status quo (Wadhwani and Viebig, 2021). Building on this premise, women's empowerment enhances autonomy for individuals embedded in constraining structures while emancipation aims to change such structures to boost collective freedom (Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018; Inglis, 1997; Rubyutsa et al., 2023).

This is important for highly patriarchal societies where practices of gender discrimination are entrenched in customs and governing laws (Longwe, 1998). For instance, evidence from women's empowerment in action in Africa (Bandiera et al., 2020) reveals that post-EET interventions, adolescent girls in studied communities were not only more likely to be self-employed but also that teen pregnancies, early entry into marriage/cohabitation, and reports of sexual demands against their will fell sharply. This thesis delves into women's entrepreneurial agentic outcomes (such as self-confidence, decision-making and leadership abilities) that result from EET processes. As such, presented further in the thesis, I illuminate the processes (the 'how') through which multifaceted EET programs provide socioeconomic empowerment of women, enabling their sense of freedom from contextual structural constraints (Jones et al., 2012).

The women's empowerment framework (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999; Longwe, 1998) also highlights achievement (illustrated in Figure 2 below) in line with how individuals could be supported to institutionally engage in social good that elevates them from their marginalized positions (Pidduck and Clark, 2021). Scholars advocate for a reconsideration of women's empowerment in constrained contexts such as context-driven empowerment as opposed to broad-based approaches (Porter, 2013). This illuminates the specific range of cultural differences in a given community and subsequently the results of such empowerment. For instance, immigrant women report empowerment as a sense of achievement in terms of newfound freedom, and self-confidence by navigating traditional gender roles in new social-cultural contexts (Zentgraf, 2002).

In this thesis, I pursue the notion of EET amongst informal women entrepreneurs in developing countries (Lourenço et al., 2014; Gavigan et al., 2020), which results in achievements beyond supporting female entrepreneurship for economic growth and development. In delineating for whom (female entrepreneurs in constrained contexts) these EET interventions are intended, actors in this ecosystem such as educators and policymakers are able to drive EET short-and long-term

achievements. These include equal resource distribution, reduction of the gender productivity gap, job opportunities creation, and poverty reduction through improved household business outcomes. Such achievements include improved household business outcomes (Karlan et al., 2017); positive perception of women's business skills (Johansen and Foss, 2013); relational support through peer learning (Thomas and Moisey, 2006); belief in local business opportunities (Johansen and Foss, 2013); and narrowing the extant educational gap (Radović-Marković et al., 2009).

In sum, the women's empowerment framework (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999) is adopted to enable a deeper understanding of contextual factors that inhibit females' access to resources, agency, and achievement. This allows for a nuanced perspective of the virtuous cycle in processes of empowerment and reduction of disadvantage and marginalisation. In this thesis, the three concepts (resources, agency, and achievement) interlink to illuminate why and how informal EET is critical for women's empowerment in constrained contexts. That is, the *why* tackles the rationale for this type of women's empowerment through informal EET, mostly for enhancing autonomy and emancipation from the imagined social status quo (Wadhwani and Viebig, 2021). The resultant processes of women's empowerment provide the mechanisms of *how* individuals are freed from contextual structural constraints (Jones et al., 2012) and specifically the *whom*, that is, the individuals (women entrepreneurs) in constrained contexts (Gavigan et al., 2020).

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Thesis

WHY: *Enhance autonomy and emancipation from imagined social status quo*

Resources (EET):
- Human capital: Belief in local business opportunities
- Social capital: relational support e.g. peer learning
- Societal positive perception of women's business skills
- Reduced educational gap compared to men

FOR WHOM: *Substantial contribution to individuals and macro economies*

Constraining Contextual Factors:
- Unequal gender access to resources
- Informal institutions (patriarchy structures)
- Limited autonomy and decision-making power
- Market exclusion

Women's agency (From EET):
- Self-confidence
- Decision-making skills
- Leadership abilities

Achievement:
- Job opportunity creation
- Poverty reduction
- Equal resource distribution
- Improved household business outcomes
- Reduction of the gender productivity gap

HOW: *Free individuals from contextual structural constrains*

Source: Own elaboration

1.2.1 Research Questions

The essence of this thesis is to advance understanding of the extended role, beyond mere economic gain, of informal entrepreneurial education to women in challenging contexts. Indeed, what I explore unearths nuanced informal entrepreneurship education processes extended by policymakers and educators to marginalised women in developing economies. This goal is attained through extracting and building on knowledge from existing literature and data from two empirical perspectives informed by policymakers and informal EET educators. The resultant articles only act as a foundational base for practice and theory, benefitting other researchers, policymakers, and practitioners (such as EET educators or female entrepreneurs in constrained contexts). Hence, this thesis answers four underlying questions (see Table 1): the "WHAT" of the study seeks to understand the extended role of informal entrepreneurial education for females in challenging contexts. The "WHY" tackles the importance of such extended informal EET to women's entrepreneurship in challenging contexts and the "HOW" of the study unveils which methodologies were employed to extract knowledge from existing literature and from the field. Lastly, the "WHOM" illuminates actors such as policymakers and practitioners (EET educators) that extend EET interventions to marginalised women in constrained contexts.

With the growth of EET literature (Kuratko, 2005), this implicates several contextual factors (Thomassen et al., 2020) on which I hinge the dissertation's underlying research question: what is the extended role of informal entrepreneurial education in women's entrepreneurship and why is it important specifically to females in challenging contexts? To answer this foundational question regarding constrained contexts, the thesis unveils several multidimensional dynamics under which EET is a key ingredient for nurturing inclusive entrepreneurship in social innovation ecosystems for marginalised women in society. These types of marginalised women include low-skilled women with disabilities (Krüger and David, 2020); stigmatised, rejected, and socioculturally discriminated single mothers (Akello, 2013; Mukasa, 2017), jobless internally displaced or immigrant women (Semeniuk and Makhnachova, 2022; Vinnytsia, 2022), among others.

Indeed, studies show that when tailored to the needs of marginalised women, EET is a supportive tool in measures against discriminatory social exclusion such as the shortage of employment opportunities (Radović-Marković, Mir, 2016). It is the social-psychological capital part of EET that increases such women's knowledge of would-have-been inaccessible markets, microfinance, and other resources necessary for business growth (Bongomin et al., 2018). As such, a study into how the social-psychological capital, over and beyond the usual economic benefit of EET, offers nascent nuanced opportunities to understand how these women engage in income-generating activities where formal self-employment or waged employment are not culturally acceptable or economically feasible. This also unveils where the significance of this lies: women's entrepreneurial activity in constrained contexts. In all, this subject remains largely unexplored both as potential grounds of socio-economic activity for women (Al-Budirate, 2009; Sadi and Al-Ghazali, 2010) and beyond, such as the entrepreneurial agency (like the decision-making power) for females marginalised within the informal sector.

Considering the working definition of constrained contexts adopted for this thesis, one could infer that they are the opposite of well-functioning ones. Well-functioning contexts refer to entrepreneurial ecosystems where entrepreneurs and other key actors they connect with have easy

access to resources (Spigel and Harrison, 2018). However, what constrained contexts like sub-Saharan African countries such as Uganda have, is room to boost the potential of female entrepreneurs as previous studies find that they are not inferior to their male counterparts in business activities (Lourenço et al., 2014). Thus, to address the overarching research question that guides the research, that is, explore how and why the extended role of informal EET is important to women's entrepreneurship in challenging contexts, subsequent and more specific questions emerged. Given the main research question's relatively broad nature, intentional actions were taken, enabling the framing of the results that emerged from the three interrelated chapters that constitute the articles of this thesis. I outline the theoretical relevance of the subsequent questions, indicating where they are addressed in the thesis in Table 1. In the three chapters (two, three and four), the theoretical significance of the research questions was derived from the findings as they emerged from the fieldwork and the gaps in existing literature.

First, to answer the "WHAT" of the study, there was the inevitable need to highlight theoretical knowledge obtained from extant studies, as such, an integrated literature study that reviews theoretical gaps in agency-promoting programs amongst females in constrained contexts was conducted. Hence, in chapter two of the thesis, I posed two subsequent research questions: *'What is the overview of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts according to extant literature?'* and *'What is the role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts*?' Here, the objective was to identify and understand the overview of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts and the role of entrepreneurship education in women's agency in constrained contexts. Consequently, this acted as a basis to critique extant literature in this area.

Secondly, stemming from the gaps identified in existing literature, the thesis embarks on understanding key players (the "WHOM" of the study, see Table 1) who greatly influence EET processes for learners: EET educators (also denoted practitioners in this thesis) and policymakers. Evident from extant studies, the huge entrepreneurial potential that women represent attracts the attention of key players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Isenberg, 2010). Educators are commonly put forward as the key human contextual factors considering their role in influencing the transfer of EET (Thomassen et al., 2020). However, their perspectives on their enacted role that contribute to learners' development in constrained contexts (Hannon, 2018) are overlooked in extant literature. This could be attributed to the fact that EET educators operate within broad institutional contexts that influence the nature and efficacy of their educational interventions (Pittaway and Cope, 2007; Wraae and Walmsley, 2020). As such, recent research increasingly recognises the need to understand the role of entrepreneurship educators (Wraae and Walmsley, 2020; Wraae et al., 2021), mentors and role models (Spigel and Harrison, 2018).

This also calls for understanding their perceived roles and practices, as they operate in complex and ambiguous environments (Fiet, 2001; Neck and Corbett, 2018; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010; Wraae et al., 2021), such as challenging contexts. This could include understanding their lived experiences involved in meeting marginalised populations' nuanced needs, such as fostering resilience and innovative coping amongst post-war forced single mothers (Akello, 2013; Mukasa, 2017). Scholars stress that restoring women's self-esteem and social re-integration (Ephrem et al., 2019) is critical for the socioeconomic growth and development of those regions (Bongomin et al., 2020). This thesis in chapter three, therefore delves into understanding how EET practitioners' perspectives contribute to understanding the design of EET that aligns with learners' nuanced

needs in terms of *why, who, what, how, and which* content to include in the designed programmes (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008). In this vein, the thesis presents an inductive study drawing on interviews and a focus group with twelve informal EET practitioners in Uganda that addresses a two-part research question on the extended role of EET: How and through what practices informal EET practitioners: *promote the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship and support processes of female empowerment in challenging institutional contexts?*

Finally, building on the perspectives of practitioners in education and training as a pillar of the entrepreneurial ecosystems (Stam, 2015), women's entrepreneurial potential also attracts the attention of policymakers who advocate for and support entrepreneurship (Isenberg, 2010). This portion of the thesis responds to the "WHY" of the study. In the area of gender-specific business training interventions, studies show a positive impact on women's entrepreneurial performance (Brixiová et al., 2020). However, beyond economic gain, the theoretical gaps in existing scholarship identified lie in expanding knowledge on how governments' interests in females' agency-promoting programs (Porter et al., 2020) could promote entrepreneurial values and attitudes beyond merely teaching entrepreneurship skills (Hoppe, 2016; Kyrö, 2006; O'Connor, 2013). Therefore, the research question here revolves around the developments of EET policies and institutional strategies (Hoppe, 2016; Pittaway and Cope, 2007) to meet very specific and nuanced contextual needs of the targeted learners. The thesis presents an empirical study on how policies are translated into practice at a local regional level, influencing cultural contexts (Lindh and Thorgren, 2016), thus narrowing the knowledge gap in the link between wider national policies and institutional strategies (Pittaway and Cope, 2007). Therefore, to understand how EET policy (Hoppe, 2016; Kyrö, 2006; O'Connor, 2013) tackles gendered institutions and the social interactions that support them to be deconstructed (Deutsch, 2007), I propose the third subsequent research question: *How do policymakers' gender inclusive EET processes extend support systems to marginalised populations in constrained contexts to deconstruct gendered institutions for their individual and societal good?* In itself, chapter four takes on an empirical perspective of policymakers tackling multidimensional complex contextual constraints (regional i.e., rural post-war zone of a developing country, situational i.e., impoverished and extremely marginalised populations, and sociocultural i.e., breaking long-standing cultural norms) through EET interventions for women (Roncolato et al., 2017).

Table 1: Research Questions and their Theoretical Relevance

Research Question 1 (The "WHAT" of the study): What is the extended role of informal entrepreneurial education for females in challenging contexts?		
Subsequent Questions	**Theoretical Significance**	**Chapter 2**
a. What is the overview of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts according to extant literature?	To locate key theoretical gaps in the literature on context, women's entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship education.	RQ1 (a)
b. What is the role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts?	To integrate and build on extant knowledge on the role of entrepreneurship education in women's agency in constrained contexts.	RQ1 (b)
Research Question 2 (The "WHY" of the study): Why is the extended role of informal entrepreneurship education critical for females in challenging contexts?		

Subsequent Questions	Theoretical Significance	Chapter 3
RQ2: How and through what practices do informal EET practitioners:	To deepen understanding of how EET practitioners' perspectives contribute to understanding the design of EET that aligns with learners' nuanced needs in terms of *why*, *who*, *what*, *how*, *and which* content to include.	RQ2 (a)
a. promote the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship?		
b. support women's empowerment processes in challenging institutional contexts?		RQ2 (b)
RQ3: How do policymakers' gender-inclusive EET processes extend support systems to marginalised populations in constrained contexts to deconstruct gendered institutions for their individual and societal good?	To further understanding on how EET policymakers tackle gendered institutions by supporting marginalised female learners to deconstruct unfavourable social interactions.	**Chapter 4** RQ3

Research Question 3 (The "HOW" of the study):
Which methodologies were employed to extract knowledge from existing literature and from the field?

Research approach	Units of Analysis	Location
Integrative literature review	Extant studies	Chapter 2
Inductive qualitative study (grounded theory)	Informal EET educators	Chapter 3
Ethnographic case study (grounded theory)	Policymakers	Chapter 4

Research Question 4 (The "WHOM" of the study):
The marginalised women in constrained contexts such as developing economies to whom the policymakers and practitioners (EET educators) extend tailor-made entrepreneurship education interventions.

Source: Own elaboration

1.3 Research Design

1.3.1 Research Methods

I undertook different research methods for the three articles that make up three chapters of this thesis. Chapter two adopts an integrated literature review approach conducted in three stages. First, I marked the scope of the subject area since the studies considered as raw data for the study were attained from multi-disciplinary perspectives. This scoping not only allowed to assess the relevance and size of the literature but also doubled as a resource in reducing bias (Tranfield et al., 2003). Considering the main aim here was to be comprehensive, rather than research quality, the scoping identified key research gaps in the field of interest (Xiao and Watson, 2019), culminating in the formulation of research questions that guided the study. The second stage consisted of a systematic literature search with keywords and search terms (Tranfield et al., 2003) that enabled pooling of relevant extant literature from varied research fields (Thorpe et al., 2005). Lastly, to ensure the methodological process of the review was accurate, precise, and trustworthy (Torraco, 2005), the third stage involved an inductive interpretative approach. Here, the articles' key themes

were categorised into higher-level classifications, following principles applied in qualitative open coding (Gioia et al., 2013). This thesis undertook a type of quantitative literature review denoted the 'extending review', considering it aims at building upon extant literature to create new, higher-order constructs, culminating into qualitative literature (Xiao and Watson, 2019). This methodological approach enabled an explicit and systematic method thus minimizing bias to provide reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn (Moher et al., 2009; Torraco, 2005). Systematic literature reviews are recognised methods for conducting evidence-based scientific propositions in the entrepreneurship field (Pittaway and Cope, 2007), thus relevant for advancing knowledge by building on and understanding the scope of extant work and identifying gaps to explore (Xiao and Watson, 2019).

The thesis also consists of two empirical qualitative studies in chapters three and four, adopting an inductive approach and ethnographic case study. Using data collected through in-depth individual and focus group interviews, both approaches allow a physical immersion into and gleaning from the sociocultural life of participants' actions, interactions, and social situations (Sabella and El-Far, 2019). They provide grounds to identify socially constructed patterns in the lived world, enabling an in-depth understanding in view of the contexts that give them meaning. Ontologically, it is crucial to reflect on the meaning individuals' lived experiences generate in their daily practices (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004), however, the lived world provides different appearances and, thus, meanings to different people in given contexts (temporal, geographical, situational, or ideological) (Moses and Knutsen, 2019). Epistemologically, as no lived experience can be shared in the same light, knowledge is contextually situated from one's subjective view of one's social world (Moses and Knutsen, 2019). The main criticism of such a methodological approach is the lack of perceived objectivity and reliability as the researcher takes on the responsibility of conceptualizing interpretations of lived processes that participants gave meaning to. However, this approach allows tools such as interviews, which have gained legitimacy over the years and, therefore, accumulated solid ground to understand how humans give meaning to their lives (Clandinin, 2006).

1.3.2 Geographical Context

To attain a deeper understanding from the perspective of informants (Creswell and Poth, 2016; Cope, 2005), fieldwork was carried out in Uganda for the two empirical studies in chapters three and four of the thesis. The rationale for choosing this geographical context has been elaborated in detail in the section of the 'Case of Uganda', above. Considering the dissertation focuses on constrained contexts, developing countries are useful for understanding women's roles in harsh entrepreneurship environments as they attract government support and funding to boost female necessity-based entrepreneurial activity (Balachandra and Dublish, 2019; Gavigan et al., 2020). The first empirical study focused on getting research participants with representation from the entire country given that it presents a suitable empirical context as research documents that several institutional challenges constrain the socioeconomic endeavours of women in Uganda (Namatovu et al., 2012). The second empirical study navigates policymakers' extension of EET as a social change tool, thus, I focused on northern Uganda. Here, policymakers extend EET interventions targeting marginalised females who not only need to acquire entrepreneurial skills to economically start over in an impoverished post-war zone but to also withstand prevailing sociocultural and psychological conditions (Branicki et al., 2017; Branzei and Fathallah, 2021; Bullough et al., 2014; Shepherd et al., 2020).

1.3.3 Units of Analysis

For the empirical studies used in this dissertation, participants were purposively selected (Groenewald, 2004) as they possess lived experiences related to the overarching purpose of the research (Boyd, 2001). The first empirical study in chapter three captures different profiles of informal entrepreneurship educators, at multiple levels, and from varied geographical regions of the country under study. They are specialised in the different fields that they teach, such as assorted handicrafts like woodwork, shoes, beads, bags, African fabric, necklaces, among others; assorted confectionery skills like baking cakes, bread, cookies, among others; animal husbandry (rabbit and turkey rearing) and mushroom-growing; making candles, glass cleaning agents, shampoos, bar and liquid soaps; crocheting sweaters, dolls, dresses, and tailoring. The second empirical study in chapter four centres on participants involved with rehabilitating post-war marginalized groups of females. Their managerial or administrative positions at governmental or civil society organizations officiates them to legislate informal EET processes for various purposes like advancing entrepreneurial skills or reintegrating marginalised single mothers in post-war communities. To achieve their goals, they maximise their positions to encourage the learners to generate social capital from the close-knit groups created within the informal EET and use this as a tool to (re)shape constraining institutions in their environments. As such, the demographics of the participants in both empirical studies ensured heterogeneity (Appendices 1 and 3), critical for the reliability of the studies and generalisation of their findings (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

Chapter one is the introduction to the thesis that provides the background to the general scope of the research topic with its subsequent analyses, clearly stating the purpose of the thesis, and the underlying rationale covering why research is being conducted. The main goal is to lay out the research questions that emerge from the research rationale, the organization of the thesis in terms of an overview of what will be presented in the remaining chapters, as well as the relationship between the chapters (Figure 3). The thesis comprises three interrelated articles that take up chapters two, three and four, each article with its own research methodological approach.

Chapter two presents the first article of the thesis as an integrated literature review that lays the foundation for the dissertation, building on extant literature. The review integrates literature from diverse research domains covering both formal and informal EET and includes all ages, genders, and geographical settings (countries, communities, or institutions) to gain an overall understanding of women's need for EET in constrained contexts. This synthesis is then followed by a thematic analysis that explores the role of informal EET in women's entrepreneurial agentic outcomes in constrained contexts. This backdrop provides the rationale to critique fundamental assumptions regarding marginalised females' needs and make propositions for alternative approaches to informal EET for women entrepreneurs in constrained contexts. The resultant alternative approaches to informal EET for women entrepreneurs in constrained contexts are birthed from the critique in two empirical studies (see Figure 3).

Chapter three (article two) is an empirical case study that conceptually illuminates EET practitioners as institutional entrepreneurs. Their institutional work extends both the pedagogy and entrepreneurship education domains with implications for grander empowerment and

emancipatory outcomes, beyond the development of entrepreneurial competencies. Thus, the study analyses how informal EET processes encourage marginalised women in challenging institutional contexts into gainful participation in entrepreneurial activities. The study employs an inductive qualitative approach drawing on in-depth individual interviews, a focus group and observation of how female informal EET practitioners facilitate hands-on entrepreneurship education and training to marginalised female entrepreneurs in Uganda. The findings specify a range of novel complementary practices that informal EET practitioners undertake during the main instructional EET stage and elaborate on the design and architecture of such a programme. Furthermore, the study finds that EET practitioners' enacted wraparound purposive work, both pre-and-post the instructional stage, supports female empowerment processes for their disadvantaged female learners.

Chapter four consists of the third article that empirically explores policymakers' EET processes. More government interests and strategic role in EET policy programs are increasingly promoting initiatives beyond entrepreneurship to encompass teaching skills, entrepreneurial values and attitudes to practising or potential entrepreneurs (Hoppe, 2016; Kyrö, 2006; O'Connor, 2013). The focus is on understanding how policies are translated into practice at the local level, influencing cultural contexts (Lindh and Thorgren, 2016). More so on how policymakers support female entrepreneurs (Brixiová et al., 2020), showcasing women's empowerment in action (Bandiera et al., 2020). Chapter 5 provides the overall concluding remarks of the thesis including the general findings and discussions. The first part of the chapter covers an overview of what the findings from the articles mean for policy and practice. The second part of the chapter provides avenues for future research.

Figure 3: The Relationship between Thesis Chapters

Source: Own elaboration

1.5 Contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

From a broader and more generalised sustainable development outlook, my research supports knowledge transfer as a catalyst for regional development in constrained contexts. Here, informal entrepreneurship education and training (EET) is highlighted as a strategy for nurturing effective innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems amongst marginalized female populations. The significance of my thesis proposes nuggets with far-reaching impact summarised in four of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the Global Agenda 2030.

Figure 4: Entrepreneurship Education as a Strategy for Sustainable Development

Source: Own elaboration

SDG 1: No poverty. In general, women's entrepreneurship is globally recognized as one of the key elements contributing to an economy's prosperity and the global market (Radović-Marković, Mirjana and Achakpa, 2018). However, within the Global South context, studies show that there are few formal-sector employment opportunities, with almost half of the women represented in the informal sector. Here, women carry out unpaid family work, mostly in the care economy (such as caring for the young, elderly and the sick) yet receive lower pay than men when employed (Okidi and Mugambe, 2002). While on the wider global scene females own and manage significantly fewer businesses than men (Radović-Marković, Mirjana and Achakpa, 2018), the Global South context offers a rather distinctive perspective. For instance, Uganda's women's entrepreneurial activity rate almost equals that of men with a quarter of the adult population engaging in some form of entrepreneurial activities (Kulabako and Ojambo 2016). However, this is attributed to the dominance of women's participation in agriculture, the country's biggest employing sector,

considering that socioculturally few men participate in it as a source of livelihood (Lourenço et al., (2014).

Le Blanc (2015) explores the extent to which the structure of the proposed goals (such as No Poverty) can be seen as a network in which links among SDGs exist. As such, in response to extant calls in the literature, the thesis in chapter two offers a critique and proposes the application of the intersectionality lens (Ali et al., 2014) that contributes to contemporary debates for informal sector women entrepreneurs (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013), mostly in the global South. Here, the 'No Poverty' SDG does indeed cut across quality education, gender equality and decent work (see Figure 4 above). I delve into two empirical studies in the subsequent chapters (three and four) that adopt alternative EET approaches that go over and beyond the common discourse promoting the increase of female entrepreneurial activity (Marlow and McAdam, 2013) to curb poverty. For instance, the structuralist lens has been suggested to understand populations that engage in low-quality enterprise owing to harsh institutional conditions and also lack alternative means of livelihood thus settling for low pay to survive (Williams and Gurtoo, 2011). However, the EET approaches I use in chapters three and four build on such discussions and approaches as they explore the relevance of the contextual environment in the search for interventions for marginalised populations, contributing to knowledge that tackles poverty in the global South. They provide evidence of how sustainable inclusive and equitable quality entrepreneurship education contributes to tackling poverty.

SDG 4: Quality education. EET is attributed to the contribution of women's entrepreneurship to poverty reduction, employment, and economic growth (Jones, S., 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). Informal sector women entrepreneurs, such as the ones this thesis focuses on, have been found to possess little knowledge and skills in business management (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Generally, marginalized women in the Global South face disadvantages and discrimination compared to their male counterparts, mainly, in the area of lower levels of education and skill training (Radović-Marković, Mirjana and Achakpa, 2018). As such, several Global South policymakers are increasingly addressing this constraint through gender and entrepreneurial training interventions that specifically respond to their contextual needs (Lourenço et al., 2014) including vocational training and information on sex, reproduction, and marriage (Bandiera et al., 2020); financial literacy (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013); apprenticeships (Gough et al., 2019).

In all, if general education is a very efficient tool in reducing gender differentials in the labour market (Mulwa and Gichana, 2020), I argue that a more nuanced contextualised EET approach such as this thesis offers, could contribute to sustainable development in several ways. For instance, the thesis offers insights into narrowing the informal-formal entrepreneurship education gap (Gough et al., 2019) by focusing on marginalized learners who practice informal EET or hands-on learning. From this example, one could infer, therefore, that reduced educational gaps among women interlink with gender inequality as with the other SDGs (Figure 4). As such, by diverting from the usual EET in formal institutions such as universities, this thesis offers novel insights into women's entrepreneurship development through education (Radović-Marković, Mirjana and Achakpa, 2018), proposing nuanced practical equal education opportunities for women (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013) focused on the survivalist sector (Chauke, 2015) in developing countries.

SDG 5: Gender equality. Considering gender is a major source of marginalization (Pidduck and Clark, 2021), scholars suggest that contextual factors such as gendered institutional constraints in a national or regional context provide conditions that EET processes could address (Nikou et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020). For instance, women empowerment interventions through EET greatly influence female entrepreneurial activity (Radović-Marković, Mirjana and Achakpa, 2018). Studies show that through such interventions, policymakers are increasingly extending female entrepreneurship support (Brixiová et al., 2020). However, although recent years have seen an increase in women's entrepreneurship (Foster and Norman, 2016), the unconscious gender bias continues, indicating that rising female business ownership rates have not narrowed existing gender gaps in many contexts (Brixiová et al., 2020; Said and Enslin, 2020).

This thesis explores an empirical article in chapter three investigating EET policy regulators' gender-inclusive processes aimed at supporting marginalised populations in constrained contexts to deconstruct gendered institutions for their individual and societal good. This case in particular highlights structural sociocultural challenges women endure that intensify their already existing unfavourable gendered life conditions (Porter et al., 2020). Here, inclusive sustainable EET connects with gender inequality to tackle other goals like reduced poverty through decent work (Figure 4). Considering EET government policies are being developed for implementation beyond formal education (Rigby and Ramlogan, 2016), the thesis offers a practical instance critical for understanding women's empowerment in action (Bandiera et al., 2020; Jiyane and Zawada, 2013), moreover from the perspective of policymakers. This is important for the sustainable development of EET programmes that not only promote women's entrepreneurial activity but also advance gender policy-based implications (Hughes et al., 2012).

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth. Several women in the Global South work in multiple low-income generating activities (Pickering *et al.*, 1996). Rather than explore the already scarce opportunities in the labour market (Gavigan, et al., 2020), they pursue entrepreneurial activities out of the need to survive to supplement household income (Tobias et al., 2013). One key factor that contributes to this state, I argue, is not just women's agency in general but rather, women's entrepreneurial agency in specific terms. This aligns with the definition of women's entrepreneurial agency I adopt in the thesis as the ability to control resources and opportunities embedded in institutional structures, geographical and situational contexts limiting their entrepreneurial activity. Using the integrative review approach, this thesis explores the role of entrepreneurship education in women's agency in constrained contexts. Here, the proposed intersectionality nexus offers valuable insights into how socio-interactional structures inform the behaviours of individuals and groups. This highlights how the decent work SDG, through women's agency for instance, is caught up within the existing inequalities that are reinforced by wider structures of patriarchy (Porter et al., 2020). Advancing women's agency through sustainable and inclusive EET, therefore, tackles both individual (like personal decision-making) and collective (such as participation in social and political processes) agency (Pelenc et al., 2015; Rossi, 1997). This in turn tackles the wider poverty, gender inequality, and consequently economic growth sustainable goals.

In sum, this thesis delves into extant literature and two empirical studies that provide data from which I advance knowledge on how sustainable and inclusive EET addresses poverty, decent work, employment, and consequently economic growth.

CHAPTER 2:   LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrative Literature Review:

The Varied Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Women's Agency in Constrained Contexts.

The Varied Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Constrained Contexts' Women's Agency

This chapter explores the role of EET in light of constraining challenges in the SME environment, specifying whether and how this contributes to women's entrepreneurial agency processes. We conducted an integrative literature review of extant studies drawn from all geographies (countries, regions), genders (male and female), and research domains (entrepreneurship, management, education, psychology) that address antecedents of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Introducing the intersectionality nexus as a theoretical lens, this chapter offers the potential to extend existing EET literature that largely examines women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts from the narrow epistemological vantage-point of only gender. This provided a foundation to critique literature, considering women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts is not only shaped by their gender but also by other contextual socio factors like race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. As such, the intersectional perspective illuminates valuable insights into the socio-interactional factors and how these inform the behaviours, life conditions and life outcomes of individuals and groups at various times and in various contexts. Thus, this chapter advances a multidimensional framework that brings order to extant research on women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts, suggesting pathways for future streams in EET scholarship in all related research domains (sociology, education, psychology, etc).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Agency within the wider women's empowerment framework (Kabeer, 1999) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor for socioeconomic development interventions in entrepreneurship literature (Pareja-Cano et al., 2023). In constrained contexts, sustainable regional development actors such as policymakers are propelled to respond with interventions like entrepreneurship education and training (EET). This is evident where EET is a key parameter in policy programs (Kuratko, 2005; Morgan, 2020; O'Connor, 2013; Roncolato et al., 2017; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). Indeed, scholars argue that entrepreneurial agency empowers women in constrained contexts to achieve independence, such as in cases where EET role models establish examples that undermine entrepreneurially suppressive patriarchal structures (Ojediran and Anderson, 2020). However, although EET could efficiently increase entrepreneurial activity (Martinez et al., 2010) beneficial for context, and also further the theoretical development of EET (Matlay, 2008), women's entrepreneurial agency is rarely a focus in EET studies.

From the women's empowerment perspective, agency refers to females' ability to exercise choice, action, and control in contexts where they could not do so previously (Kabeer, 1999). Therefore, it is important to investigate how it can happen through EET. Agency could encompass both individual (like personal decision-making) and collective agency, such as participation and influence in social and political processes (Pelenc et al., 2015; Rossi, 1997). Entrepreneurial agency on the other hand is denoted as the entrepreneurial action aimed at improving prevailing social structures (McMullen et al., 2021; Villares-Varela et al., 2022) entailing entrepreneurship institutional conditions and processes (Bruton et al., 2010). We undertake both definitions to understand women's entrepreneurial agency as females' ability to control resources and opportunities embedded in institutional structures, geographical and situational contexts that would otherwise limit their entrepreneurial activity.

Women's entrepreneurial agency in many contexts such as in developing countries, is majorly constrained by gender inequality (Chant, 2013; Dilli and Westerhuis, 2018; Sullivan and Meek, 2012). These gender-related contextual constraints could include: established yet suppressive systems of power heavily run by patriarchal structures that entitle men to women's entrepreneurial labour (Porter et al., 2020); the perceptions of society towards women in entrepreneurship and limited government support (Said and Enslin, 2020); unpaid care economy services and reproductive work (Chant, 2013); or underserviced women-owned SMEs by financial institutions (Roncolato et al., 2017).

Constrained contexts, in general, are characterized by limited resources and opportunities that dictate the type of entrepreneurship practice including: physical or historical situational occurrences like entrepreneurship in times of crisis (Doern et al., 2019; Williams and Vorley, 2017); entrepreneurship in political conflict zones (Althalathini et al., 2020) or refugee entrepreneurship (De La Chaux and Haugh, 2020; Harima, 2022; Refai et al., 2021; Refai et al., 2024; Yeshi et al., 2022); geographic like developing countries' entrepreneurship (Abuhussein and Koburtay, 2021; Zayadin et al., 2022) or rural entrepreneurship (Elkafrawi and Refai, 2022; Gittins et al., 2022; Gittins and McElwee, 2023; Korsgaard et al., 2015; Müller and Korsgaard, 2018); necessity entrepreneurship (Chauke, 2015; O'Donnell et al., 2021; O'Donnell et al., 2024) or poverty entrepreneurship (Anderson and Lent, 2019; Ojediran and Anderson, 2020; Smith et

al., 2019). Most of these types of entrepreneurship practices are born from scarcity of employment opportunities or economic resources, limited access to education that could lead to employment or poor institutional structures that restrict individual or societal decision-making processes.

We contend that research in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts is a multidimensional, multi-level and multifaceted phenomenon, presented from vastly diverse and extensively varying foci across different research domains. As such, several critical issues arise from extant literature reviews on EET and context that were useful in shaping our research questions, providing rationale and direction for the study. Although each literature review presents a distinct purpose, their sum, however, is useful for this study, contributing to a deeper understanding of this focus area (Krlev et. Al, 2025). For example, early reviews reveal how EET contributes to sustainable development outcomes in various contexts, such as poverty alleviation (Baxter, 2014) and economic growth like in the Asia Pacific region countries (Wu et al., 2017). Regarding how context could be adapted to and designed within entrepreneurship education (e.g. review by Thomassen, 2020), some reviews found that literature uncovered a vast range of geographical contexts and their relevance to EET practice (Henry and Lewis, 2018). Recent literature highlights the dominance of North American and European contributions, with proposals for studies that capture context as a social change mechanism (Weerakoon, 2024) in developing economies. In agreement, scholars suggest that future studies ingrain sustainability in EET in emerging economies (Nayak and Pillai K, 2024). However, seminal work in this area laments that EET impact research still predominantly focuses on short-term and subjective outcome measures (Nabi et al., 2017). Particularly in regard to women, reviews highlight the need for EET to tackle performance barriers for their enterprises in developing economies (Vis, 2012), and illuminate the struggles of females, such as those with special needs (Bullough et al., 2015; Jiboye et al., 2023).

Therefore, we undertake this study considering that the scientific and practical use of EET has matured, and the size of its literature has grown over the years (Blenker et al., 2014; Henry and Lewis, 2018; Kuratko, 2005; Matlay, 2006; Matlay and Carey, 2007; Mwasalwiba, 2010). This implies that from the wider context of the entrepreneurship domain, the impact of EET is increasing (Welter, 2011) tackling institutional, cultural, environmental, and human contextual factors (Thomassen et al., 2020). Therefore, coupled with this growth and the preliminary scoping of the literature in this area, we seek to address the following research questions: What is the comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts according to existing literature? and (ii) What is the varied role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts? Indeed, the women's entrepreneurship field benefits from calls for EET to develop women's entrepreneurial mindsets beyond business management skills, such as persistence and believing in oneself (Said and Enslin, 2020).

Therefore, this study explores elements that constitute entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts to understand the role of EET in women's challenges in the SME environment. To this effect, we conducted an integrative literature review drawing from all geographies (countries, regions), genders (male and female), and research domains (entrepreneurship, management, education, psychology) that address EET in relation to entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. This acted as a foundation to critique EET literature that implicitly tackles the essence of intersectionality, considering women's entrepreneurial agency in contexts with limited resources and opportunities is not only shaped by their gender but also by other contextual social factors like

race, ethnicity, or class. The intersectionality perspective provides valuable insights into the socio-interactional factors and how these inform the behaviours, life conditions and life outcomes of individuals and groups at various times and in various contexts. Thus, our discussion brings order to extant research on women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts, suggesting pathways for future research streams in EET scholarship in all related domains.

In the subsequent sections, we present the methodologies employed in the reviewed literature, the findings and the discussion of the findings as well as our concluding remarks.

2.2 METHODS

We aim to provide a foundational understanding of the elements that constitute entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts to subsequently extend our understanding of the role of women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. One would argue that the factors that constitute women's entrepreneurial agency are not independent of each other, but rather, they are interrelated. This calls for an integrative literature review aiming to holistically understand how females' entrepreneurial agency concerning EET possibly contributes to narrowing their contextual constraints.

2.2.1 Data Collection

This study was conducted in three stages. First, we planned the integrative review by scoping the subject area. This is because the studies considered as raw data for the study were collected from multi-disciplinary domains where entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts was investigated. Thus, this scoping stage not only allowed to assess the relevance and size of the literature but also doubled as a resource in reducing bias (Tranfield et al., 2003), culminating in the formulation of research questions that guided the study.

The second data collection stage consisted of a systematic literature search with keywords and search terms (Tranfield et al., 2003) built from scoping the study. As this enables pooling of relevant extant literature from varied research fields (Thorpe et al., 2005), systematic reviewing as a research method is gaining awareness in the entrepreneurship domain (Matthews et al., 2018; Pittaway et al., 2004; Thomassen et al., 2020). All key decisions undertaken during the systematic review process are made explicit to not only determine the suitability of the studies included, but also facilitate transparency and robustness of the resultant conclusions.

This integrative review sets out to challenge and extend existing knowledge by seeking to understand potential areas where new knowledge may be needed in the women's entrepreneurship and EET domains. Therefore, analysis of the articles did not follow any established format (Torraco, 2005), rather, we integrated two main sources of data collection: the Web of Science database and cross-citations from entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education journals. Systematic literature reviews are recognised methods for conducting evidence-based scientific propositions (Pittaway and Cope, 2007). The Web of Science as a database is pertinent because it is the home base for navigation on various academic topics, providing data structures that enable

scholars to extensively carry out their search, use the citation connections and measure impact of their research results (De Vita et al., 2014).

To ensure the methodological process of the review is accurate, precise, and trustworthy (Torraco, 2005) we detail the criteria undertaken to select sources for the data. For the systematic literature review, five restrictive selection measures were implemented on the Web of Science database: (i) Only publications from peer-reviewed journals were included to promote quality control, therefore, the rest of the publications like conference proceedings or books, or working papers or even chapters in books were not included; (ii) the articles were restricted to English given that we drew data from a pool of international correspondence and it is a language widely used in academic readerships; (iii) considering a 20 years' time-span enables a foundational observation of the evolution of trends, the articles selected dated between 1st January, 2004 to 31st December, 2023; (iv) we purposively used the advanced search option of the database to obtain a relevant scope of study following these keywords and booleans: ("Agen*") AND ("entrepreneurship" or "business*" or "enterprise*") AND ("educat*" or "train*") AND ("context*"). We omitted 'constrained' in constrained contexts because both are vast and ambiguous concepts in themselves. We added 'entrepreneurship', 'business', and 'enterprise' given that they are used interchangeably (such as 'entrepreneurship education' or 'business training' and 'enterprise education') in EET literature. As such, studies with vocational education and training that aligned with EET were included. Thus, all articles within our research area's scope were included: business economics, behavioural sciences and a wide range of contextual backgrounds such as women's development, among others; (v) For the search criteria, the topics of the articles were included as they generate both the titles and abstracts, as the final product of the review emerges from their core contributions (Tranfield et al., 2003).

After the rigorous inclusion criteria, the resulting sample consisted of 843 papers which was then generated into an Excel format sheet and downloaded for further scrutiny and analysis. This took on an exclusion criterion that conforms to the replicability required of an integrative literature review as it details the process followed to develop and present the synthesis and findings of the study (Torraco, 2005). Thus, as a result of the initial broad collection approach, several articles were excluded following this categorical criterion: (i) although we purposed to be inclusive, studies were excluded upon determination of their irrelevance in regard to women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Thus, all articles outside this scope were excluded such as retracted publications, clinical trials, editorial material and meetings; (ii) further exclusion occurred upon reviewing the titles and abstracts and entire articles, such as repeated articles. Following these exclusions, we compiled a final sample of 87 articles. The participation of more than one reviewer (also authors of the article) contributes to minimising subjectivity related to decisions made in the inclusion and exclusion stage of the systematic review (Tranfield et al., 2003). Once the final 87 sample of papers was obtained from the rigorous inclusion and exclusion measures, 11 papers were added to this number as cross-citations from the websites of the top-ranking entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education peer-reviewed journals to make a total of 98 reviewed papers. These 11 papers may not have originally surfaced in the preliminary systematic literature search in the Web of Science database as they may not have contained one or two keywords that were critical to this study, nevertheless, they were significant in attaining this study's goals.

2.2.2 Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the first analysis consisted of a synthesis of the broad data collection to provide a descriptive account of the conditions of females that act as push and pull factors to constitute women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Table 2 only shows the main contributions as a representation of the varied types of constraints from the literature. Here, we describe what has been studied as a foundation to justify our conclusions following a thematic inductive analysis and discussion of fundamental assumptions regarding women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Therefore, in the first analysis, our description generally constitutes of all contexts (including geographies, situations, and history), all genders (male and female), and categories from interrelated disciplines such as education, psychology, or sociology (behavioural studies).

Table 2: Contextual Constraints Affecting Women's Entrepreneurial Agency

Constrained Contexts	Conditions of Females in Constrained Contexts
Geographical	
Cameron & Gibson, 2005	Areas experiencing economic decline
Wallenborn, 2009	Poverty alleviation in target groups working in the informal sector and rural economy
Hailemariam et al., 2019	Psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness in the entrepreneurial activity of women entrepreneurs
Brijlal, 2011	Inconsistency in government policies, changes in government, inadequate implementation mechanism
Jiyane & Zawada, 2013	A high representation in the informal sector
	Lower levels of skills and knowledge in business management (unaware of information services) thus poor business operation skills
Rural	
Dungey & Ansell, 2020	A 'rural mindset' limits expectations to certain professional careers like nursing, teaching or being police officers or soldiers
Ogunmodede et al., 2020	Lack of access to credit, poor infrastructure and negative attitudes towards women's initiatives to facilitate economic endeavours
Koyana & Mason, 2017	Rural Development Programmes (the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training) to overcome high unemployment rates
Ariffin et al., 2020	Government tendency to ignore female entrepreneurship development at grassroots levels
Gavigan et al., 2020	Societal perceptions and quality of business
Developing countries	
Radović-Marković & Achakpa, 2018	Discrimination attributed to lower levels of education and skills
	Females own and manage significantly fewer businesses than men
Chauke, 2015	Majority of females own survivalist enterprises
Institutional	
McTavish & Thomson, 2007	Male-dominated senior management in universities

Brixiová et al., 2020	Policymakers' initiative to support female entrepreneurship as a possible growth driver
	Gender gaps in entrepreneurial performance
Bandiera et al., 2020	Teen pregnancy, early marriages/cohabitation, sex against girls' will
Ademiluyi, 2019	Unfriendly laws, inadequate support frameworks, institutional discrimination against women
Rugina, 2019	Gender-based sectoral segregation of female entrepreneurs
Franck, 2012	Women's informal micro-entrepreneurship is motivated only by "involuntary exclusion from the labour market" or "poverty"
Duque & Moreno, 2022	Women's capacity to make decisions about resource allocation
Johansen & Foss, 2013	Women's career preference for self-employment
Langevang & Gough, 2012	Shrinking public sector opportunities for formal wage employment
Chant, 2013	Gender inequality: unequal access to decent work, financial and physical assets
	Limited ability to exercise entrepreneurial willpower
Aterido & Hallward-Driemeier, 2011	Manage micro or small firms, that are unaffiliated with other businesses, and are not formally registered
Persons with Disabilities	
Jiboye et al., 2023	Women with disabilities
Immigrants & Refugees	
Marchand & Dijkhuizen, 2018	Female refugees lack knowledge of the host's regulatory environment
Lazarczyk-Bilal & Glinka, 2020	Lack knowledge of labour market integration through small business creation
Krüger and David, 2020	development of the entrepreneurial competence
STEM female students	
Orser et al., 2019	Underrepresented in STEM and information, communication and technology (ICT)
Shackleton et al., 2006	Gender inequality: little effort to provide developmental programmes
Elliott et al., 2020	Underrepresentation in STEM entrepreneurship e.g entrepreneurial self-efficacy, diversity and gender issues, or problem-solving
Situational	
Brixiová et al., 2020	Aftermath of the global financial crisis
Post-war communities	
Mukasa, 2017	Identity challenges - stigma and community rejection
Akello, 2013	Societal reintegration - need for resilience and innovative coping
Bongomin et al., 2020	Socio-cultural cohesion through microfinance - extreme poverty
Ephrem et al., 2019	Socio-psychological capital

Source: Own elaboration

To answer the second research question, findings of the synthesis in the first descriptive analysis underwent another analysis, thematic in nature, following an inductive interpretative approach. This methodological approach enabled an explicit and systematic method thus minimizing bias to

provide reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn (Moher et al., 2009; Torraco, 2005). Thus, articles' key themes were categorised into higher-level classifications, following principles applied in qualitative open coding (Gioia et al., 2013). Descriptive accounts of these classifications emerged from examined articles, specifying which constrained contexts women's entrepreneurial agency related to EET were observed such as geographical (rural, regional, national); situational (the entrepreneurship education and pedagogy type undertaken, classroom setting in terms of university or vocational); institutional (formal and informal rules of the game in operation), among others. Subsequently, in-depth manual reading of the source articles developed more holistic themes, tied to established theoretical foundations and research approaches, which collectively described the phenomenon as interpreted by our research team. Therefore, we coded the interpretative themes as relevant practices related to women's entrepreneurial agency and EET within each article, meaning that a single study could potentially tackle several constrained contexts. This finally led to a thematic aggregation process, in which we combined more theoretically relevant themes describing women's entrepreneurial agency, emerging from our interpretations as well as terms used in the source material. The visual representation of our analytical categorization process (Figure 5) depicts the resultant two aggregate dimensions as the relevance of EET and the need for EET.

Figure 5: Analytical Categorization of Women's Entrepreneurial Agency and EET

Representative Quotes	First Order Themes	Second Order Themes	Aggregate Themes
Pedagogical Type I: About entrepreneurship			
- Increased knowledge about income-generating activities results in start-ups (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013)	Pursue enterprising careers		
- Increased women's entrepreneurial potential increases their contribution to employment creation (Marlow and McAdam 2013)			
- Increases rural women's entrepreneurial skillsets by 25 per cent (Gavigan et al., 2023)	Social innovation		
- Shapes the entrepreneurial competence of low-skilled women (Krüger and David, 2020)			
Pedagogical Type II: For entrepreneurship			
- Economic development of women in emerging countries (Radović-Marković & Achakpa, 2018)	Micro enterprise activity	Learning opportunities	**The Need for EET**
- Women entrepreneurs' improved household business outcomes (Karlan et al., 2017)			
- More high-yielding start-ups (Brixiová and Kangoye, 2019)			
- Improved livelihoods & poverty reduction (Bongomin et al., 2018)			
Identification of new markets (Snyder, 2003)	- Networks		
- Bolsters women's entrepreneurial awareness (Zhao et al., 2022)	Societal reintegration		
- Acquired resilience and innovative coping skills (Akello, 2013)			
- Socio-cultural cohesion (Bongomin et al., 2020)			
- Socio-psychological capital (Ephrem et al., 2019)			
- Less stigma, rejection, and societal discrimination (Mukasa, 2017)			
- Entrepreneurial intentions (Ephrem et al., 2019; Margaca et al., 2021)	Boost females' enterprise mindsets		
- Self-efficacy (Piva & Rovelli, 2021; Sweida & Reichard, 2013)			
- Alertness skill: high intensity of intention (Westhead et al., 2016)			
- Self-empowerment: self-direction, autonomy (Thomas et al., 2006)			
- Positive attitudes in enterprise performance (Raven & Le, 2015)			
Pedagogical Type III: Through entrepreneurship			
- Guides disabled women's enterprise ideas (Krüger et al., 2020)	Inclusive ecosystems	Pedagogical needs	
- Boosts female farmers' societal perceptions and quality of business (Gavigan et al., 2020; Lourenço et al., 2014)			
- Teach learners 'How' to behave entrepreneurially (Kuratko, 2005)	Enterprising behaviour Decent work		
- Women's ability to cope with shocks (Karlan et al., 2017)			
- Reduction of unemployment crises (Vinnytsia, 2022)			
- Poverty reduction and job creation (Lourenço et al., 2014)			
- EET contributes to females' agripreneurship needs by discovering new ways of advancing entrepreneurship (Seuneke et al., 2013)	Perspectives beyond rural Quality life		
- Flexibility of EET learning processes (Radović Marković, 2006)			
- Better balance: personal commitments (Radović Marković, 2006)			
- Minimises costs and saves time (Radović Marković, 2006)	- Savings		
Gender equality			
- A Girls EET & sexuality Programme (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013)	Improves socialisation	Gender Inclusive EET	**The Relevance of EET**
- EET & HIV reduction & prevention (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013)			
- Higher qualifications through EET (Radović Marković, 2006)			
- Broad range of programmes (Radović-Marković et al., 2009)	Narrows education gap		
- Tackles embarrassment for informal learners (Capogrossi, 2002)			
- Greater awareness of diversity/gender issues (Elliott et al., 2020)			
- Reduces but does not eliminate the gender performance gap (Aterido & Hallward-Driemeier, 2011)		Gender exclusive EET	

- Majority of females in the informal sector (Buwule and Mutula, 2017)
- Majority of females in rural areas (Amine and Staub, 2009)
- Failure to displace habituated professional aspirations (Dungey & Ansell, 2020)

}   Unequal structural distribution of EET resources

- Lack of appropriate EET: discriminatory employment (Radović-Marković, 2016)
- Few girls trained to run family businesses (Aterido et al., 2011)

}   Social exclusion

- Negative entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Dilli & Westerhuis, 2018)
- Low self-perception, aspirations and intentions (Botha, 2020)
- No impact on women's career preference for self-employment and belief in local business opportunities (Johansen and Foss, 2013)

}   Exposure to the hard side of enterprising

Source: Own elaboration

2.3 FINDINGS

Our study followed the first research question to provide a comprehensive understanding of the antecedents of entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. According to the reviewed publications drawn from all geographies (countries, regions), genders (male and female), and research domains (entrepreneurship, management, education, psychology or behavioural studies in sociology), our findings are twofold. First, we offer a holistic overview of women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Secondly, emerging from the data, our analysis categorises findings into the positive and negative role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts within individual (micro), sociocultural (meso), and structural (macro) contextual levels.

2.3.1 An Overview of Women's Entrepreneurial Agency in Constrained Contexts

Our data collection from extant literature covers: (i) conditions of females embedded in constrained contexts, justifying their need for tailored EET; (ii) how and whether EET responds to female learners' contextual needs; (iii) the nature of research undertaken including the context, research methods as well as the theories and conceptual frameworks or perspectives employed.

2.3.1.1 The Need for EET: Conditions of Females in Constrained Contexts

To understand the rationale underlying EET interventions (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013) for women in constrained contexts, our findings reveal several conditions females face in constrained contexts as elaborated in extant literature. We find that considering the shrinking public sector opportunities for gaining formal wage employment (Langevang and Gough, 2012), most studies reported a high representation of females in the informal sector (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Within the Global South context (Gough et al., 2019), extant studies show that EET for women is multifaceted and not merely business education, including vocational training and information on sex, reproduction, and marriage (Bandiera et al., 2020); financial literacy (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013); apprenticeships for young females (Gough et al., 2019), among others. This is because informal sector women

entrepreneurs in developing countries not only possess lower levels of skills and knowledge in business management (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013), they also face more disadvantages and discrimination compared to their male counterparts (Radović-Marković and Achakpa, 2018). Thus, the multi-purpose EET interventions aim at achieving multiple results, with policymakers increasingly striving to support female entrepreneurship as a possible growth driver (Brixiová et al., 2020).

Some studies highlighted female urban dwellers confronted with gender inequalities in terms of unequal access to decent work, financial and physical assets, among others (Chant, 2013). These women are also more likely to manage micro or small firms, that are unaffiliated with other businesses and are not formally registered (Aterido and Hallward-Driemeier, 2011). They not only have limited mathematical literacy skills but are also unaware of business information services, and thus possess poor business operation skills (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013).

At the broader socioeconomic and political level, empirical evidence shows that women in constrained contexts are mainly concerned with tackling challenges and obstacles they encounter in starting up and operating their enterprises. These include women in constraining environments such as in most developing countries faced with a high presence of the informal economy and experiencing discrimination attributed to lower levels of education and skills (Radović-Marković and Achakpa, 2018). Other studies document that female rural entrepreneurs not only lack access to credit, experience poor infrastructure and negative attitudes towards their initiatives to facilitate economic endeavours (Dungey and Ansell, 2020; Gavigan, 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; Lourenço et al., 2014; Ogunmodede et al., 2020). They also possess a 'rural mindset' that limits their expectations to certain professional careers such as salaried jobs like nursing, teaching or being police officers or soldiers (Dungey and Ansell, 2020).

More recent studies included women with disabilities (Jiboye et al., 2023) and females undertaking STEM studies like information, communication and technology (ICT) (Orser et al., 2019) while older studies included females undertaking engineering programs (Shackleton et al., 2006). Other studies argued that female refugees lack specific knowledge of the regulatory environment (Marchand and Dijkhuizen, 2018) regarding labour market integration through small business creation (Lazarczyk-Bilal and Glinka, 2020).

In sum, findings from the data suggest that EET is fundamental to those found to possess limited ability to exercise their entrepreneurial willpower (Chant, 2013). Harsh conditions women experience in constrained contexts provide the rationale for specialised EET, mostly to bridge their skills deficit, develop their capacities for entrepreneurship, and hence, increase job creation (Ogunmodede et al., 2020). This could suggest that while EET opens access to resources such as human capital, the contextual conditions in return affect women's ability to apply their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. These include unfriendly laws, inadequate support frameworks, institutional discrimination against women (Ademiluyi, 2019) or the tendency of governments in some developing countries to ignore female entrepreneurship development at grassroots levels (Ariffin et al., 2020). Indeed, findings from the data indicate minimal impact of initiatives such as EET due to inconsistencies in government policies and their inadequate implementation mechanism such as in Nigerian and South African governments (Brijlal, 2011; Jiyane and Zawada, 2013).

2.3.1.2 The Relevance of EET: Female Learners' Contextual Needs

Evidence from the reviewed studies reveals that the relevancy of EET undertaken varied widely according to the specificities of each context. As such, our findings indicate that most studies contributed to the debate on the need for entrepreneurship education (Brijlal, 2011; Jiyane and Zawada, 2013) for females in constrained contexts. The EET interventions were instituted to meet their needs such as boosting women's entrepreneurial intentions (Brijlal, 2011) in terms of psychological capital and positive perceptions of social transformation (Ephrem et al., 2019; Koyana and Mason, 2017). This boost in turn increases women's employment and income generation such as in agribusiness (Ogunmodede et al., 2020). Findings highlighted EET as developmental programmes that could ensure a favourable institutional policy environment supportive of both gender and racial equity (Shackleton et al., 2006). Here, studies hinted at improving women's perception of business skills (Johansen and Foss, 2013) and institutionalising female talent development practices (Ibeh and Debrah, 2011).

Scholars emphasise the need for training interventions for females, mostly informal sector women entrepreneurs, stemming from the spread of unawareness of business information services (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Conversely, other scholars hinted that there is no difference between the business training required by both genders thus female entrepreneurs do not possess any special training needs (Tan, 2008). While some studies found women entrepreneurs to possess fewer informal entrepreneurial learning opportunities than men (Snyder, 2003), others highlighted the scarcity of business skills training amongst female entrepreneurs in constrained contexts (Weeks, 2009). Building on that thread, they indicated that this greatly constrains women at the time of business launching (Izyumov and Razumnova, 2000).

As such, empirical evidence reports almost non-existent vocational training (McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003; Nearchou-Ellinas and Kountouris, 2004), technical as well as business skills training for women entrepreneurs (Dzisi, 2008; Singh and Belwal, 2008; Bliss and Garratt, 2001; Hisrich and Fulop, 1994). In developing countries' contexts, this is attributed to little or non-existent exposure to sources of knowledge and skills in business management (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Evidence in the data reveals EET participants possessed few skills in business operation and mathematical literacy (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Investigations into the perceptions and knowledge towards entrepreneurship revealed that fewer female students indicated interest in starting a business (Brijlal, 2011). Conversely, other studies show that women entrepreneurs are better educated than their male counterparts (Yu, 2011; Cowling and Taylor, 2001). In terms of entrepreneurial learning within the realm of the Internet, they consist of one of the fastest-growing groups of informal learners in developed economies such as Canada (Thomas and Moisey, 2006). Scholars contend that the lack of developmental training during the operational and growth stages of their businesses reflects negatively on their advancement (Davis, 2012).

In sum, EET is critical in empowering disadvantaged women to gain access and skills (Koyana and Mason, 2017). This is evident in cases of females with disabilities and their incorporation into the labour force and in their integration into their workplace (Jiboye et al., 2023). Also, studies elaborate gender inclusive EET (Orser et al., 2019) grafted into rural development interventions aimed at improving the lives of low-income earners in rural communities (Karlan et al., 2017). This highlights such programmes' relevance to women's contextual needs. Empirical cases include

the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education to overcome high unemployment rates (Koyana and Mason, 2017); the Girls' Empowerment Programme coupled with HIV/AIDS prevention sessions (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013) and adolescent women's vocational training coupled with sex, reproduction, and marriage sessions to curb teen pregnancies and early marriages or cohabitation (Bandiera et al., 2020); and micro-finance programs emphasising financial literacy (Brixiová et al., 2020).

2.3.1.3 The Nature of Research Undertaken

Education in general reduces gender differentials such as increasing women's chances of entering the labour market (Mulwa and Gichana, 2020). Entrepreneurship education in particular has been promoted by educators and instituted by policymakers as a pathway to self-employment through entrepreneurship (Laukkanen 2000; Hahn 2017). Moreover, EET for women has been employed as a key parameter in policies and programs devised by governmental and non-governmental bodies (Roncolato et al., 2017). However, majority of what we know about EET for women is largely based on empirical studies investigating how relevant EET is to women pursuing entrepreneurial careers in terms of initiating or advancing their entrepreneurial attitudes and skills (Bae et al. 2014; Fayolle et al., 2006; Hahn 2017). Whilst the significance of this topic is indisputable in theory and practice for constrained contexts, the methodologies adopted in most existing literature in this area are limiting in terms of balancing researchers' tendencies to use either quantitative or qualitative research approaches.

In this regard, scholars lament the dearth of literature on female EET learners' experiences (Cochran, 2019). This concurs with Pressman and Summerfield's (2002) argument that conceptualisations be based on individuals, their living conditions and their day-to-day experiences. Moreover, whereas the qualitative approach offers rich narratives or observations of lived experiences, it is not generalisable to other contexts. The quantitative approach, on the other hand, could lack in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of the women involved in entrepreneurship education processes yet offer plausible statistical evidence about the phenomena under investigation (Sen, 1999). While earlier research suggested that generalised theoretical conclusions silence the voices of the marginalised (Sen, 1980) recent research attempts to be inclusive and gender-sensitive (Berggren, 2020; Orser et al., 2019).

In adhering to inclusivity and gender sensitivity, this article does not review methodological choices adopted when conceptualising the role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Rather, guided by our research questions, we selected articles with sampling methods, multilevel models, or analysis approaches relevant to EET and women's entrepreneurship. Furthermore, following the suggestion of Davidsson and Wiklund (2001) to complement the micro (individuals) and macro (wider contextual factors or actors) perspectives, we selected articles with relevant units of analysis to unveil the true essence of the entrepreneurial phenomenon under study. On the contrary, other scholars, Belitski and Heron (2017), advocate for the entire EET ecosystem as a unit of analysis when considering the contribution of all contextual actors.

2.3.2 The Varied Role of EET in Women's Entrepreneurial Agency

Our second research question uncovers a contentious debate in which the role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts is met with extensively varying (from positive to negative) results. As women's entrepreneurial agency is dependent on contextual factors such as individual experiences, sociocultural norms, and economic conditions, we explore the broad descriptive account of the debate on this varied role of EET in constrained contexts, in order to justify our critical conclusions.

2.3.2.1 Micro Dimension: Individual Experiences

Individual-level contextual factors include personal characteristics and capabilities that influence individuals' agency such as education, skills, self-efficacy, awareness of rights and opportunities. Scholars suggest that individuals with higher levels of education and skills are more likely to have better agentic outcomes (Lazarczyk-Bilal and Glinka, 2020). At an individual level, our analysis of the data reveals that EET plays a significant role in women's entrepreneurial agency by empowering women in constrained contexts (Karlan et al., 2017; Radović-Marković and Achakpa, 2018).

Emerging from the data, we observe that among individuals who have undergone EET programs, women's empowerment manifests agency in various dimensions including increased self-confidence, decision-making skills, and leadership abilities. For instance, EET bolsters women's entrepreneurial awareness, fostering their entrepreneurial ability (Zhao et al., 2022). Furthermore, reports of increased perceptions of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intent manifest in greater awareness of diversity and gender issues such as changed perspectives on problem-solving (Elliott et al., 2020). Other examples include acquisition of the alertness skill where learners report high intensity of intention (Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). Moreover, the data also highlights the importance of EET using the Internet as a platform of self-empowerment in terms of self-direction, ranging from autonomous (seeking external learning resources) to relational (such as e-mail communication with colleagues for peer-support) (Thomas and Moisey, 2006).

Additionally, several studies indicate that EET has short-term or immediate outcomes like boosting females' entrepreneurial mindsets. This includes entrepreneurial intentions (Ephrem et al., 2019; Entrialgo and Iglesias, 2018; Margaca et al., 2021; Shinnar et al., 2018; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016), self-efficacy (Elert et al., 2020; Laviolette et al., 2012; Piva and Rovelli, 2021; Sweida and Reichard, 2013; Wilson et al., 2007) and overall positive attitudes towards performance of enterprises (Coleman and Robb, 2018; Morris et al., 2013; Raven and Le, 2015). In this thread, empirical evidence shows that EET has a positive impact on women's perception of business skills concerning career preferences and belief in local business opportunities (Johansen and Foss, 2013). EET also demonstrates positive results in women's ability to cope with shocks (Karlan et al., 2017), echoing EET scholars' views on effective EET programs' major contribution to female being 'how' to behave entrepreneurially (Kuratko, 2005).

Furthermore, in patriarchal rural communities with socioeconomically constraining norms and beliefs, EET interventions promote women's empowerment (Dungey and Ansell, 2020; Karlan et al., 2017; Koyana and Mason, 2017). This allows them to engage in income-generating activities

(Lourenço et al., 2014). As such, scholars argue that when females are supported with psychological capital through EET, this increases their positive entrepreneurial intention despite surrounding social norms (Ephrem et al., 2019). Also, in contexts where women are not often considered as priority, research on females pursuing EET shows that focusing on promoting their entrepreneurial potential consequently includes them among populations contributing to employment creation (Marlow and McAdam 2013). This way, EET increases their knowledge about income-generating activities resulting in the pursuit of entrepreneurial careers such as developing small businesses (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013).

Conversely, our analysis of the data reveals that the negative entrepreneurial self-efficacy or intentions amongst female learners are attributed to the exposure to the negative side of entrepreneurship practice during EET (Ahmed et al., 2017; Dilli and Westerhuis, 2018). Scholars attribute this to intrinsic motives and barriers such as one's self-perception - rather than extrinsic ones - that play a significant role in the entrepreneurial aspirations of women (Botha, 2020). Consequently, lower entrepreneurial self-efficacy, aspirations and intentions (Botha, 2020) amongst female students, discourage their entrepreneurial career pursuit (Ahmed et al., 2017; Dilli and Westerhuis, 2018; Wheadon and Duval-Couetil, 2019). Furthermore, whilst EET is meant to instil positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship career pursuit, studies show that the way schools deliver EET fails to displace long-standing, people's habituated expectations and aspirations to professional careers (Dungey and Ansell, 2020). Moreover, some studies depicted no impact on women's career preference for self-employment and belief in local business opportunities (Johansen and Foss, 2013).

2.3.2.2 The Meso Dimension: Sociocultural Norms

Socio-cultural factors encompass the norms, values, and beliefs that shape women's entrepreneurial agency such as cultural expectations, gender roles, and societal perceptions of women's roles. These include poor family and government support and the push for female entrepreneurship practitioners to adjust to social expectations (Said and Enslin, 2020). In this regard, the data analysis highlights that tailored entrepreneurship education programs are critical to addressing women's unique agentic needs in constrained contexts that confront specific challenges such as cultural barriers.

For marginalised women entrepreneurs in constrained contexts, the findings indicate that EET plays a significant role at the meso level beyond merely equipping entrepreneurial skills, in five ways. In post-war communities, the identity challenges and difficulties in societal integration of formerly abducted women who converted to single mothers due to rape by war rebels, become less tainted with stigma, rejection, and societal discrimination during and after EET (Akello, 2013; Mukasa, 2017). That is, acquired skills such as resilience and innovative coping facilitate sustainable community reintegration processes amongst marginalised women singly raising children born of war (Akello, 2013). EET also contributes sociocultural cohesion through microfinance sessions in post-war areas (Bongomin et al., 2020) and sociopsychological capital (Ephrem et al., 2019), as previously excluded women participate in enterprises that create employment. Additionally, EET is a key determinant of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises' (MSMEs) growth in post-war zones of developing countries that empower female learners through improved livelihoods and extreme poverty reduction (Bongomin et al., 2018).

For the rural women in agriculture, EET increases their entrepreneurial skillsets by 25 per cent, creating opportunities that improve their social standing and living standards (Gavigan et al., 2023). In this way, EET contributes to the debate on females' agripreneurship needs, shifting their perspectives beyond their status such as discovering new ways of advancing entrepreneurship (Seuneke et al., 2013). Indeed, informal EET has a positive impact on women's societal entrepreneurial performance such as an increase in high-yielding start-ups in given regions (Brixiová and Kangoye, 2019). For instance, evidence from developing economies like Uganda indicates that female farmers acquire new ideas and skills to run their agribusinesses (Lourenço et al., 2014), boosting their societal perceptions and quality of business (Gavigan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, we find that when tailored to the needs of marginalised women, EET acts as a tool against discriminatory employment barriers. Empirical evidence in Serbia shows that the lack of appropriate entrepreneurial educational programs is among the key roots of social exclusion and the lack of employment opportunities for marginalised groups (Radović-Marković, 2016). Evidence from the European Union indicates that EET offers human capital resources for the unemployment crisis amongst internally displaced women and immigrants (Vinnytsia, 2022; Semeniuk and Makhnachova, 2022).

For female persons with disabilities, EET offers a social innovation approach for inclusive ecosystems in two ways. First, the training material shapes the development of entrepreneurial competence for low-skilled women and secondly, it helps in setting guidelines for women with their own entrepreneurial ideas (Krüger and David, 2020).

In the realm of EET conducted via the Internet or distance learning, female learners obtain the power to control access to informational capital and connect (without border barriers) to social capital, for instance via e-mail (Thomas and Moisey, 2006). EET distance learning favours women (Radović Marković, 2006) in various ways: the flexibility of the learning processes (where learners study at the time most convenient to them); better balance between personal and other commitments (they may spend more time at home with their families); minimises costs when time and financial savings are made; provides a deeper sense of self-fulfilment when females' social status and quality of life improved owing to higher qualifications that enable them to contribute more to their community; tackles the embarrassment and alienation factor (Capogrossi, 2002) for women over the traditional age for young adult learners (18-22 years of age). Moreover, online EET offers women the opportunity to select from a broader range of programmes according to their professional interests and goals, contributing to narrowing the educational gap that exists in comparison to men (Radović-Marković et al., 2009).

However, at sociocultural levels, some studies report negative EET results for women in constrained contexts. More sons, rather than daughters, receive schooling to run family businesses, thus EET does not generate equal benefits for all (Aterido and Hallward-Driemeier, 2011).

2.3.2.3 Macro Dimension: Economic Conditions and Support Networks

We categorise structural factors as the broader social, economic, and political systems that shape women's entrepreneurial agency such as access to resources, legal frameworks, and institutional

support. We find that EET plays a significant role in the economic development of women in developing economies (Radović-Marković and Achakpa, 2018). Here, women entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial learning not only reflects positively on their microenterprise activity thus improving household business outcomes (Karlan et al., 2017) but also opens access to networks and identification of new markets (Snyder, 2003). At a macro scale, EET implicates poverty reduction and job creation (decent work) as EET has been found to enhance female learners' business managerial skills in rural areas (Lourenço et al., 2014).

On the other hand, studies reveal that the acquisition of education and formal management skills could reduce, not eliminate, the performance gap by gender as educated entrepreneurs are more likely to be working in more productive enterprises (Aterido and Hallward-Driemeier, 2011). This has more to do with the structural distribution of these EET resources. For instance, over 70 per cent of the sub-Saharan African population is highly present in rural settings (Amine and Staub, 2009) with a great representation of female employment in the informal sector (Buwule and Mutula, 2017) limiting their access to EET resources.

2.4 DISCUSSION

This review aimed to explore the varied role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. Our findings emerged from diverse research domains and geographical regions, elaborated in a three (individual, sociocultural, and structural) levelled dichotomy. In this section, we critique extant literature's implicit perpetuation of gendered stereotypes, through the intersectionality lens, considering women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts is also shaped by other contextual factors like race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. Through this perspective, our discussion attempts to bring to order concerns such as the reconciliation of contrasting evidence engendered from three key questions: whether females merely experience fewer entrepreneurial learning opportunities or whether the attention should shift to their special pedagogical needs; whether women's empowerment (focusing on their entrepreneurial agency) is a success or failure; whether EET for women in constrained contexts is inclusive or not. This backdrop provides pathways for future streams in EET scholarship in all related research domains.

Our discussion, therefore, lends itself to three tenets of the intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989) to interpret findings that emerged from the data analysis. First, the intersectionality theory asserts that individuals bear multiple contextualised identities (such as gender, class, or ethnicity) that complicate each other (McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Second, the theory holds that social identities are historically and contextually situated (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Translated, this means that an individual's identity or beliefs attached to it function differently at different times in different contexts such as in different geographic, institutional, or social organisational settings. Third, the theory argues that although one's identity is attached to their individuality. This individualised identity operates within and is affected by structures of power (such as the legal justice system, educational system, and political systems). In other words, all people interface with systems that view or respond to them in ways that conjure up patterns of marginalization or privilege; support or oppression according to race, gender, or class. In sum, these three dimensions borrowed from the intersectionality theory (Crenshwaw, 1989) focus on the ways that gender, a social contextual construct, could change or be changed by other contextual constructs.

Several EET studies highlight gender as a somewhat isolated gender-related denominator (Jiyane and Mostert, 2010). EET has no ceteris paribus (Thomassen, 2020), meaning that women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts is not only shaped by their gender but by gender interacting with other contextual factors. The intersectionality theory (Crenshwaw, 1989) nexus offers the potential to extend existing EET literature with valuable insights into how socio-interactional structures inform the behaviours, life conditions and life outcomes of individuals and groups at various times and in different contexts. Here, context entails settings in which EET training occurs to encompass the economic, political, and cultural contexts which have the capacity to enable entrepreneurial success (Pittaway and Cope, 2007).

The intersectionality perspective, having theoretically evolved from studies on the (re)production of inequalities (Glenn, 1985), is critical in examining how different dimensional relations mutually construct each other (Collins, 1998). This study considers other dimensions (such as social structures) that play a formative role in gender's manifestation and meaning. In this sense, we follow Cole's (2009) example that examines gender and its multiple intersections, although our study categorises constrained contexts at micro, meso, or macro levels. Scholars argue that the intersectionality perspective illuminates differences amongst different intersectional positions such as varying meanings of manhood when applied to one's own racial group as compared to another group (Mullings and Schulz 2006). Similarly, gender could take its meaning as a category in relation to another contextual category (such as geographical location, institutional systems, etc). For example, although the formal entrepreneurship environment is considered to be very developed in the Baltic countries, there is gender-based sectoral segregation as women are under-represented among the population of entrepreneurs (Rugina, 2019).

2.4.1 Critical Insights Using the Intersectionality Perspective

An intersectional perspective is critical in extending our understanding of gender (McCall, 2005) in terms of explicating the position and condition of women in constrained contexts and the varied role of EET in their entrepreneurial agency. This analysis will illuminate the otherwise implicit questions necessary to advance extant literature in three areas where gender intersects with other contextual factors. First, does the type of contextual constraint (e.g harsh cultural practices in different geographical areas, or social class such as immigrants or women with disabilities) warrant whether women need more entrepreneurial learning opportunities or do they need special training? A key example includes institutional constraints such as the societal undermining of women's entrepreneurial efforts given the perpetuated view of domestic chores as women's gender roles by majority family systems. Secondly, are women's empowerment interventions through EET in constrained contexts a success or failure? Thirdly, is EET advancing in its inclusivity or declining by being more exclusive in terms of the level of marginalisation, and historical situations (among others)? We argue that a more explicit elaboration of these intersections could advance the prevailing views of the varied role of EET in which majority of the literature highlights gender as a predetermining factor for the position and condition of women in constrained contexts.

2.4.2 More Entrepreneurial Learning Opportunities or Special Training for Women?

Our findings reveal contrasting evidence as to whether women are exposed to fewer entrepreneurial learning opportunities, or if it is special business training required. Constrained

contexts as evidenced in the findings have a trail of conditions that accentuate female entrepreneurial disadvantage, highlighting their need for special entrepreneurial training (Tan, 2008). Through the intersectionality lens, this creates both oppression and opportunity (Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill 1996). Following this thread, Tillmar (2007), argues that women entrepreneurs do have different and specific training needs based upon the predominating sexist attitudes, discrimination or prejudice they encounter operating as businesswomen. Women tend to be treated differently under some laws following a country's history or informal institutions like widespread cultural norms. For instance, a married female entrepreneur may be restricted because of pre-existing child-rearing 'gender role' sociocultural norms, however, in relation to a single mother, she enjoys more support in raising children with lesser sociocultural resistance than her single counterpart. As such, an intersectional position (a mother running a business) may be disadvantaged relative to one group but advantaged (she is married and has help with child-rearing) relative to another (a single mother running a business).

In other words, scholars' or practitioners' level of awareness of intersectionality could enhance positive views of difference, (Greenwood and Christian, 2008), as women's position only serves as a filter for EET actors to appraise. Women may require flexibility at the time of EET delivery considering they tend to balance self-employment with the care economy (the sick, elders and child-rearing) as well as handling majority of domestic work (Gavigan, 2020). Thus, some scholars suggest that EET be conducted at a time that suits the entrepreneurs, for instance when business activity is lower (Chauke, 2015) to increase their learning opportunities. Other scholars suggest that entrepreneurship in itself as a process of learning provides a gradual and cumulative series of multifaceted learning opportunities (Van der Lingen et al., 2020).

Through the intersectionality lens, gendered categorisations ought to be studied in relation to one another across varying contexts. As such, whether women possess fewer entrepreneurial learning opportunities or rather, possess special training needs, elicits a specific discourse that constructs and stereotypes women as occupying intersectional marginalised social positions defined by their marital status, age or class. Scholars refer to this as exploring the relationship between self-narrative and an institutional or structural narrative (Dottolo and Stewart, 2008). This suggests that females neither possess fewer entrepreneurial learning opportunities nor have special training needs, rather, sensitivity to intersectionality affects the perception of one interpreting the given condition. In other words, scholars ought to analyse the individual skills needed to inform educators and policymakers on how to cover structural-level educational gaps (Rădulescu et al., 2020). As such, the intersectionality approach proposes the inclusion of wider worldviews from varied standpoints (Walker, 2003) so as to benefit individuals, society and the structural systems at large. For instance, to narrow the informal-formal EET gap, apprenticeships could be included to promote hands-on business skills (Gough et al., 2019). However, the training strategies (the structured narrative) would differ depending on whether the female learners are in urban or rural settings (the institutional narrative of their embeddedness). Thus, Chauke's (2005) empirical study recommends different training strategies for urban and rural survivalist women entrepreneurs, which largely determines the most suitable type of technical and financial management skills.

2.4.3 Is Women's Empowerment through EET a Success?

Findings in this review reveal that EET has a positive effect in empowering women (Radović-Marković and Achakpa, 2018) in constrained contexts. Evidence shows that several developing

countries seek to expand knowledge-based societies through educating women entrepreneurs (Vis, 2012). Indeed, as a pathway to human capital resources (such as entrepreneurial skills for self-employment), EET is promoted as one of the main goals to achieve women's empowerment (Pineda Duque and Castiblanco Moreno, 2022). However, our findings reveal several areas in which despite efforts to achieve women's empowerment through EET, the delivery of EET seemingly fails to successfully displace pre-existing dominant aspirations to professional careers (Dungey and Ansell, 2020). This concurs with what Aterido and Hallward-Driemeier (2011) argue, suggesting that education reduces but does not eliminate the performance gap.

At an individual level, studies investigated EET struggles in getting women into self-employment and the results pointed to the pedagogical focus of such interventions being about how to think and behave entrepreneurially right (Berggren, 2020). We argue that applying an intersectionality perspective to explore the complex ways in which women's gender as a social identity factor and other social structures in each constraining context combine would unearth answers for each category. This is because this perspective reveals ways in which the interplay of gender as a social identity creates differentiated patterns of vulnerability and needs for particular subgroups (Mattis et al., 2008) and could therefore inform understanding of how each constraining context is perceived by individuals and society. In this regard, categorical approaches to intersectionality, have been suggested (Cole, 2009).

At the macro-political scene, intersectionality could be used as an analytic tool to understand gender as a social process. For instance, scholars advocate for the adoption of the structuralist lens to understand the diversity of women's experiences in the informal sector with emphasis on undoing common beliefs that all informal entrepreneurship by women in developing nations is low-paid, necessity-oriented, or the only option (Williams and Gurtoo, 2011). We posit that this approach could allow deeper findings such as similarities or differences arising from social and historical processes that cut across different constrained contexts. We observe from the findings the perpetuated and widespread discourse promoting entrepreneurship as a means of generating employment for young women despite little being known about how best to support them (Langevang and Gough, 2012). The intersectionality approach could help policymakers adjust EET programs to have an even stronger influence on women (Johansen and Foss, 2013). This includes cases in developing economies where gendered contextual constructs (such as sex, reproduction, and marriage) are integrated into EET interventions in communities with high teen pregnancies or early marriages/cohabitation.

2.4.4 Is Entrepreneurship Education in Constrained Contexts Inclusive?

Our dichotomous findings of reviewed literature unearth an implicit question of whether EET for women in constrained contexts is more inclusive or exclusive. Such questions are critical for problematization in EET practice, that is widely accepted as a channel through which skills could be acquired to reduce gender inequality (Elert et al., 2020). This calls for the additive approach in intersectionality which posits that social inequality increases with each additional marginalisation (Hancock, 2007). Therefore, following scholars' suggestions, we not only focus on demographic factors like gender, socioeconomic status, racial or ethnic groups (Helms et al., 2005), rather, we situate our findings in their given historical, social, or cultural contexts (Marecek, 2003). That is, we concur that although social identities (e.g. gender, race, class) and inequality (e.g. racial and

ethnic discrimination) are intersectional, they can be separated and treated independently (Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003). Here, females living in communities with imbalanced patriarchal powers are more oppressed with each additional status of disadvantage. Hence, through the intersectionality leans, we discuss how to isolate each construct as separate and independent while attempting to understand its summative meaning when analysed simultaneously with other constructs.

At individual level, early research noted that several EET programs were inadequately tailored to match learners' backgrounds and needs as they mostly adhered to a single curriculum that served learners of different ages, educational backgrounds, and expectations (Robb et al., 2014). Nevertheless, recent studies analyse existing pedagogies to identify potential gender-inclusive educational gaps (Orser et al., 2019; Jiboye et al., 2023). To this effect, we argue that it is vital to recognise the complex interplay between gender and contextual factors such as globalisation or institutions that play a critical role in creating, maintaining or widening educational gaps for individuals. This resonates with cases from our findings where EET plays a critical role in the entrepreneurial agency of females with special needs who use technology to generate decent employment and ease their job integration at the workplace (Jiboye et al., 2023). Hence, information, communication and technology (ICT) adoption is critical in gender-inclusive EET, mostly in understanding gender-related barriers (Orser et al., 2019). Lamentably, overall findings indicate that few EET programs address this area, although the modern era is advancing fast, tending towards a more virtual life. In developing economies, for instance, several women use more radio and television for business-related programmes than ICT business-related classes (Jiyane and Mostert, 2010). With this backdrop, the focus ought to be placed on the simultaneous and interacting effects of gender with other dimensions of experiences (e.g discrimination of females with disability in employment processes) (Stead et al., 2004) as this unveils the inclusive or exclusive nature of EET for women in constrained contexts.

At the wider macropolicy level, gender-inclusive EET is critical in the transformation agenda of several economies. Indeed, the literature on the promotion of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge among women as a key parameter in policy programs has seen an increase since the 2010s (Jones, 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Morgan, 2020; O'Connor, 2013; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). As such, earlier empirical evidence reveals that developing countries instituting policy environments that are supportive of gender equality (Shackleton et al., 2006). Also, recent studies show that policymakers are increasingly putting in effort to support female entrepreneurship to narrow gender gaps in entrepreneurial performance (Botha, 2020). From our findings, this includes tertiary education and entrepreneurial training programs focused on a balanced set of skills, including non-cognitive skills, among policies for women entrepreneurs as tertiary education has a direct positive link with the performance of women (Brixiová et al., 2020).

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

We conducted an integrative review on the varied role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. To achieve this goal, we collected data including all ages, genders and geographical settings (countries, communities or universities). We provided an overview of what was studied in a descriptive analysis of the findings, serving as a basis to criticise the fundamental gendered assumptions in extant literature. Our findings depict a dichotomy that leads to the varied

role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency within constrained contexts at three contextual (micro, meso and macro) levels. However, regarding how context could be adapted to and designed within entrepreneurship education (Thomassen 2020), literature uncovers a vast range of geographical contexts and their relevance to EET practice (Henry and Lewis, 2018). Our study sets an example by adopting a multidimensional perspective through the intersectional framework (Crenshwaw, 1989). Here, we borrow from the intersectionality perspective to unveil three implicit questions from existing literature that open up the discussion on the diversity of the wide range of constraints towards "understanding the nature, richness and dynamics" of contexts (Zahra, 2007, p. 451). This is relevant not only for the theoretical advancement of the EET subfield but also for women's entrepreneurship as it plays a key role in economic development and social welfare (Audretsch et al., 2021).

Incorporating intersectionality theory in EET research poses methodological challenges, as the discipline embraces multidimensionality (e.g., education, psychology, sociology), with complex and dynamic relationships among variables. Although our findings reveal the dominance of quantitative methods, earlier scholars propose combined methods (both qualitative and quantitative) which allow capturing the diversity of the contexts studied (Bamberger, 2008). While some authors argue that quantitative methods propose testable hypotheses that increase proof of legitimacy (Cornelius et al., 2006), qualitative methods capture the richness of the intersections of gender within other dimensions of contextual structures (Crenshaw, 2005). Hence, adopting intersectionality as a perspective in research, to some extent relies on researchers' level of analysis (Crenshaw, 2005) which in turn increases levels of subjectivity. Here, intersectionality requires a description of the forms and processes of relations among categories of phenomena and the themes and units of meaning relevant to those relations. As such, the qualitative researcher needs to be more open to emergent phenomena than the quantitative researcher whose work is driven by hypotheses determined a priori. Some scholars lament that subjective work such as those encountered in qualitative methods is less likely to get published in the top journals where proof of quality (such as results from tests) is required (Marchel and Owens, 2007). It is also important to note that qualitative methods have been critiqued because they involve reification, where key themes from texts that add fundamental ingredients such as the cultural value, are eliminated from the analysis (Van Peer, 1989). Therefore, our study and approach proposed theoretical and practical insights, relating to matters of textuality as an organizing principle underlying the cultural functioning of literary works of art.

Our study proposes theoretical and practical insights for researchers and practitioners such as policymakers or entrepreneurship educators in planning EET programs or interventions for populations in constrained contexts. For policymakers, structural and political intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2005) offers opportunities for the EET subfield. For instance, structural intersectionality could advance understanding into how women's social needs marginalise them in relation to a convergence of other contextual factors while political intersectionality illuminates conflicting needs and goals of the respective groups to which an individual belongs. In this line of thought, we draw attention to studies such as where majority of female learners perceived racial and ethnic discrimination as the most problematic career barriers and not gender discrimination or personal characteristics per se (Stead et al., 2004). Such studies are highly relevant for policymakers facing challenges with creating employment through entrepreneurship (Langevang and Gough, 2012). Here, multifaceted policy interventions (Bandiera et al., 2020) could categorise

constraints confronted by women in each cultural, social, and economic context, highlighting how they vary, considering intersectionality varies by context whenever gender is concerned. This concurs with Pressman and Summerfield's (2002) argument that conceptualisations be based on individuals, their living conditions and their day-to-day experiences.

From a practical stance, policymakers in developing countries are required to formulate multi-level interventions, such as psychological recovery programs designed within the EET interventions they extend to female learners in post-war communities. In addition, empirical evidence reveals that students' psychological capital transforms EET into entrepreneurial intentions (Ephrem et al., 2019). In this regard, we argue that a multidimensional framework such as intersectionality could enable policymakers to integrate varied dimensions of inequality experiences (such as stress, marginalisation and discrimination) that intersect with women's social identity such as gender. Our argument aligns with Franck's (2012) suggestion for policymakers to consider multidimensional approaches that tackle the underlying interactions of gender. We propose the intersectionality approach considering its inclusivity (Walker, 2003) when formulating EET strategies as a spur to economic development in constrained contexts.

To advance this field, we also propose that researchers recognize that EET happens in various contexts (Ramsgaard et al., 2023), mindful of bringing their own context to investigations carried out in given contexts and communities (Gartner, Davidsson, and Zahra, 2006). For instance, the socio-cultural context calls for the provision of basic socio-psychological needs, as investigations are not only based on individuals nor their social settings in terms of geographical locations but also their situational conditions (Olowu, 2012). Additionally, other contextual factors like gender interact with social factors like class, age, ethnicity or race to create realities that differ for different group specifications intra-culturally or cross-culturally (Egbo, 2000). The uniqueness of each contextual challenge suggests that women and the situations they confront are diverse across regions; thus, it is misguiding for researchers to insinuate uniformity even though women's struggles could be similar (Egbo, 2000). Therefore, intersectionality as an analytical approach allows for an understanding of multiplicity across lived experience constructs (e.g. challenges and barriers like discrimination) as well as within identity constructs like gender and class (Diamond and Butterworth, 2008).

Ultimately, this chapter highlights the contribution of intersectionality as a theoretical lens in entrepreneurship education and women's entrepreneurship research. The intersectionality perspective enables an integration of multiple dimensions of identity and structural inequality, thereby enriching our understanding of how entrepreneurial opportunities and constraints are differentially experienced. Furthermore, it offers methodological contributions by allowing systematic theoretical and empirical inquiry into how social categories (gender, disability, rurality) interact to shape entrepreneurial agency and outcomes. This is relevant for informing relevant actors more effectively and comprehensively (Dottolo and Stewart, 2008), such as is the case with policymakers or educators in the following chapters of this thesis. We argue that highly contextualized, nuanced studies offer deeper meaning to a holistic understanding of entrepreneurial ecosystems in constrained contexts. This perspective facilitates the development of more context-sensitive and equity-oriented EET interventions. Considering EET interventions are critical for empowering disadvantaged women to gain access and skills (Koyana and Mason, 2017) a multidimensional intersectional perspective not only addresses broad inclusion within the

entrepreneurial landscape, but also attends to specific challenges related to workplace integration and sustained participation (Jiboye et al., 2023). In sum, adopting an intersectionality-informed lens allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the varied role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts - such as the self-employment of rural female entrepreneurs - and how this, in turn, impacts labour market dynamics (Gavigan, 2020; Ogunmodede et al., 2020).

PART II: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 3:   EMPIRICAL STUDY I
Empirical Case Study

Beyond Teaching: The Extended Role of Informal Entrepreneurship Education and Training in Challenging Contexts.

Beyond Teaching: The Extended Role of Informal Entrepreneurship Education and Training in Challenging Contexts

This chapter aims to explore how informal entrepreneurship education and training (EET) processes support marginalised women in challenging institutional contexts into gainful participation in entrepreneurial activities, facilitating empowerment and emancipation. The study employed an inductive qualitative approach drawing on in-depth individual interviews, a focus group, and observation of how female informal EET educators facilitate hands-on EET to marginalised female entrepreneurs in Uganda. In the findings, the study illuminated a range of novel complementary practices that informal EET educators undertake during the main instructional EET stage and present the wraparound purposive work, both pre-and-post the instructional stage, they enact to support female empowerment processes for their disadvantaged learners. Furthermore, the resultant grounded model captured practices enacted by EET practitioners that illuminates ways in which informal EET can contribute to processes of empowerment and emancipation. The contributions were twofold. First was the conceptualisation of EET educators as institutional entrepreneurs undertaking institutional work beyond core teaching. Secondly, the paper specified a range of novel complementary practices they undertake before, during, and after the conventional instructional part. This illuminates how EET can contribute to processes of empowerment and emancipation. As such, drawing on data from a unique institutional context, the paper illuminated novel practices enacted by informal EET educators thereby extending both the pedagogy and the realm of entrepreneurship education with implications for grander empowerment and emancipatory outcomes beyond the development of entrepreneurial competencies.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing acknowledgement of the contributions made by female enterprise to employment, poverty reduction, productivity, and the larger economic development effort within Sub-Saharan Africa (Dabić et al., 2022; Mwaura, 2016; Ojong et al., 2021; World Bank, 2019). In line with research that highlights gender and ethnicity-based barriers in entrepreneurship globally (Ahl, 2006; Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Carter et al., 2015), prevalent gender disparities are found to greatly constrain women's entrepreneurial activity in such contexts (Chant, 2013; Lourenço et al., 2014; Said and Enslin, 2020). To help women navigate such constraints, entrepreneurship education and training (EET) is commonly promoted as a channel to enhance entrepreneurial skills and performance, to narrow gender disparities in business and wider society (Elert et al., 2020; Kuratko, 2005). Within the realm of official development assistance particularly, such training and other human resource development efforts have been a core pillar of capacity development programmes. Here, the aim is to improve livelihoods and support social transformation through the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes among underprivileged communities in developing countries (Kühl, 2009; Vallejo and Wehn, 2016).

Linkages between education and empowerment outcomes are well established, with scholars suggesting that EET could have empowerment potential for individuals (Gutiérrez et al., 1995; Kyrö, 2006). The scope of EET has expanded beyond formal education programmes to include informal unaccredited provisions that primarily foster real-life entrepreneurial practice (Solomon, 2007). While this informal EET is considered particularly relevant for those in contexts of disadvantage (Santos et al., 2019), there remains a dearth of research on EET and impoverished women in challenging developing country contexts (Arthur and Adom, 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017). The implication is thus that gaps remain in our understanding of the ways in which EET promotes gainful participation in entrepreneurship for marginalised women in developing countries and generally how EET supports processes of empowerment in such contexts.

Within this line of work, recent research has increasingly recognised the need to better understand the erstwhile neglected role and place of entrepreneurship educators (Wraae and Walmsley, 2020; Wraae et al., 2021). Indeed, research suggests that entrepreneurship educators (henceforth EET practitioners) not only encounter the fundamental challenge of facilitating learning in a dynamic, unpredictable, and non-linear world (Haase and Lautenschläger, 2011). They also operate within a broader institutional setting with multiple objectives and stakeholders which influences the nature and efficacy of the educational interventions (Pittaway, Luke and Cope, 2007; Wraae and Walmsley, 2020). Operating in such complex and ambiguous environments undoubtedly impacts many aspects of entrepreneurship education (Ramsgaard et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020a; Toutain et al., 2017). These include questions to do with the agency of EET practitioners, their perceived roles, and practices they enact in various institutional contexts (Fiet, 2001; Neck and Corbett, 2018; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010; Wraae et al., 2021).

It follows that within challenging institutional environments, like in Sub-Saharan African developing countries, informal EET practitioners that help support and empower marginalised women into gainful entrepreneurial activities. Yet within the embryonic research on entrepreneurship educators, little is known about the practices enacted by informal EET

practitioners in such challenging contexts. Extant research suggests that in such contexts, non-usual actors supporting disadvantaged entrepreneurs often become institutional intermediaries, providing vital services that help entrepreneurs navigate institutional voids (Mair and Marti, 2009; Sydow et al., 2022). Further, given the nature of challenges faced, other research suggests that such actors become institutional entrepreneurs (Garud et al., 2007). They undertake the institutional work of purposively creating, maintaining, and disrupting structures that govern behaviour and outcomes in society (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). In contexts of severe institutional voids, such institutional work may require "wraparound" approaches that encompass a range of complementary actions to enhance the wellbeing and empowerment of underprivileged groups (Mair and Marti, 2009).

In this vein, this paper addresses the following two-part research question: how and through what practices do informal EET practitioners a) promote the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship? and b) support processes of female empowerment in challenging institutional contexts? To achieve this, we conducted an inductive study drawing on interviews and a focus group with twelve informal EET practitioners in Uganda. Uganda is a low-income East African country with well-known institutional voids associated with poverty, gender inequality, and a history of economic, military, and political challenges.

By focusing on practices enacted by informal EET practitioners in complex institutional contexts, we build on discussions emphasising the importance of practice (Champenois et al., 2020) and context (Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2019). This is within the realm of entrepreneurship research, particularly EET research (Ramsgaard et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020a). Further, we respond to calls highlighting the potential of the unique context of the sub-Saharan African region to contribute novel insights to mainstream business research and theory (Okafor and George, 2016). Accordingly, this paper advances two key contributions. First, drawing on empirical evidence, we specify a range of novel complementary actions that educators undertake, including pre-and-post the main instructional EET part. These are pivotal to empowering and enhancing gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurial activities. This allows us to advance the conceptualisation of informal EET practitioners as institutional entrepreneurs who undertake institutional work that goes beyond core teaching. Second, we propose a grounded model that illuminates mechanisms of institutional work through which informal EET contributes to processes of empowerment and emancipation among disadvantaged women in challenging contexts (Dungey and Ansell, 2020; Santos et al., 2019).

3.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1 Developments in Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy: The Role of Educators

Entrepreneurship education and pedagogy has undergone significant evolution over the last forty years - developing from a largely teacher-centred education focused on teaching about entrepreneurship (Hägg and Gabrielsson, 2020). Drawing on the key pillars of the entrepreneurship teaching model (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008), Hägg and Gabrielsson (2020) outline recent developments in entrepreneurship education. They show that since the 2010s, entrepreneurship

education has become increasingly learner-centred with pedagogy extending beyond new venture creation to include broader entrepreneurial competencies. These include learners seeking to develop broad entrepreneurial competencies such as the entrepreneurial mindset, that are useful as life skills, beyond business contexts (Casulli, 2022; Mawson et al., 2023). A key EET development has been "a shift from how to teach entrepreneurship towards how students can learn valuable lessons for life through entrepreneurial education" (Hägg and Gabrielsson, 2020, p. 839). Here, scholars highlight innovative developments including the use of scaffolded experiential learning approaches (Bosman, 2019; Neergaard and Christensen, 2017; Pittaway et al., 2023), guided learning (Hägg, 2020), engaging students as co-learners (Verduijn and Berglund, 2020), pedagogical nudging (Neergaard et al., 2021) and mindset training (Casulli, 2022; Mawson et al., 2023).

Other research underlines the changing role of the entrepreneurship educator, where greater emphasis is placed on content aggregation to support customised student learning according to "individual student interests, motivations and needs… with the learner directly involved in the entrepreneurial learning process" (Henry, 2020, p. 671-2). Bell (2022) also advocates for the espousal of a humanist positive *whole-person* approach in entrepreneurship education, while Walmsley and Wraae (2022) point to the empowerment and emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship education. Considered together, these developments have significant implications on the role of EET practitioners in such processes.

Overlooked in EET research, however, is the less-formal business training, commonly addressed from a performance implications perspective (Idris et al., 2023). Generally, informal EET encompasses programmes that are usually unaccredited and do not lead to certification, while formal EET is often credit-bearing education, mostly 'about' entrepreneurship with less focus on practical entrepreneurial activity (Matlay, 2008). Crucially, informal EET provisions primarily foster entrepreneurship skills and entrepreneurial practice (Solomon, 2007). Given their focus on supporting practical entrepreneurship, informal EET provisions are prevalent within capacity building agendas for developing countries (Arthur and Adom, 2019; Koyana and Mason, 2017; McKenzie, 2021). However, limited research has explored this from an EET perspective. Amid the pedagogical developments discussed above, the role of context has also been highlighted as pivotal in gaining a fuller understanding of EET (Ramsgaard et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020). As such, a critical exploration of contextual dimensions of EET is essential to understand informal EET in developing countries.

3.2.2 Entrepreneurship Education Context: Influences on Educators

To enact practices that contribute to learners' development, context is a critical factor for entrepreneurship educators to consider in the design and delivery of EET (Hannon, 2018; Thomassen et al., 2019). Extant research acknowledges that EET educators are embedded within contexts comprising students, educational processes, institutions, and the community, wherein they engage in a series of dialogic relationships that, in turn, influence their role (Jones and Matlay, 2011; Wraae and Walmsley, 2020). To enhance context framing, within research that calls for increasingly humanist approaches in EET (Bell, 2022; Henry, 2020), a key aspect of context

commonly excluded from literatures is the learner's context at the personal level, including personal circumstances, motivations and needs. Similarly, recent research includes a focus on individual, interpersonal, institutional, and infrastructural context and interactions between these levels that generate more positive and negative outcomes in EET (Brentnall, 2020; 2022; 2025).

For informal EET practitioners, the complex interactions between various levels of context may have significant impact upon the design and delivery of EET, particularly where learners are vulnerable and operating within wider contexts of disadvantage. Such vulnerable learners may include: the impoverished, illiterate or semi-illiterate groups, or remote rural dwellers seeking gainful entrepreneurship opportunities (Chauke, 2015; Gavigan et al., 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; Lourenço et al., 2014; Santos et al., 2019); women operating in extreme poverty or experiencing gender-based vulnerability such as women engaging in sex-work or experiencing gender-based violence (O'Neill et al., 2013); and refugees or women in post-war areas (Akello, 2013; Mukasa, 2017), among others. With such cases, research suggests that tailored interventions - rather than generic EET - tend to offer more beneficial outcomes (Elert et al., 2020).

In addition, within challenging environments, the interaction of context levels may result in outcomes that call for the extension of the scope of EET beyond teaching. Thus, for the women in *personally* vulnerable contexts operating in challenging *meso* contexts (O'Neill et al., 2013), informal EET practitioners may require undertaking purposive engagement activity at the recruitment stage before such potential learners can enrol and embark on the main EET offering. Here, in considering the pertinent factors at both the personal and meso contexts, the scope expands beyond educational content to include the practices that EET practitioners enact in response to contextual demands. Similarly, Wraae and Walmsley (2020 p. 263) find that in dealing with multiple stakeholders in the community and their institution, educators viewed their role as one that includes many "quasi-liaison" tasks.

Thomassen et al. (2019) further note that considerations of context also help EET practitioners understand which contextual elements can be influenced proactively and which must be adhered to. This suggests that entrepreneurship educators will often need to evaluate contextual structures and undertake agentic practices towards the achievement of desired EET learning objectives and outcomes (Fiet, 2001; Neck and Corbett, 2018; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010; Wraae et al., 2021). Building on the empowerment and emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship education (as highlighted by Walmsley and Wraae (2022)), this suggests that in certain contexts, entrepreneurship educators may require to undertake tasks that qualify as institutional work. This is of particular relevance within developing countries where institutional environments are less developed, highlighting the need for research in such contexts to illuminate the agentic work that EET educators undertake in response to prevalent institutional structures. In Uganda particularly, EET may work to support female entrepreneurial engagement by specific groups facing barriers and constraints defined by institutional structures. This includes women facing barriers to labour market participation, such as marginalised female war survivors in the north (Akello, 2013; Mukasa, 2017); rural women entrepreneurs (Gavigan et al., 2020); necessity entrepreneurs (Langevang et al., 2012); and females whose agricultural output is largely constrained by patriarchal power and societal norms (Lourenço et al., 2014).

3.2.3 Institutional Work in Entrepreneurship Education and Training

In many developing countries, a myriad of institutional factors combine to create and exacerbate disadvantage along gender lines. For example, laws governing inheritance or property rights can (re)produce relative disadvantage and impact upon women's ability to fund their participation in formal EET (Anosike, 2019). Domestic roles, 'gender-appropriate' roles for work, and social interactions interfere with or greatly constrain women's engagement with EET programmes (Amine and Staub, 2009; Arthur and Adom, 2020; Gavigan et al., 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; Lourenço et al., 2014). As part of capacity building efforts within development assistance, such concerns have led to a surge of informal EET interventions in many countries that tend to focus on supporting entrepreneurs from disadvantaged - or marginalised - groups (Arthur and Adom, 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; McKenzie, 2021). Implemented by policy and development practitioners, the objective of these programmes is to develop practical entrepreneurial abilities and skills that enhance gainful entrepreneurial activity. Among other development outcomes, these programmes aim to increase income generating activities to enable financial independence, empowerment, and emancipation (Dungey and Ansell, 2020; Gavigan et al., 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; Lourenço et al., 2014).

Within such contexts, this renders informal EET *institutional work* - "the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p. 215), with those undertaking institutional work termed 'institutional entrepreneurs' (Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2007). Viewed from this perspective, EET in challenging institutional contexts may be conceptualised as work that disrupts extant structures of disadvantage and endeavours to build towards structures that are fairer for their targeted learner entrepreneurs, such as marginalised women. Indeed, extant research on EET also highlights self-efficacy and entrepreneurial performance outcomes, thereby enhancing individual and collective empowerment and emancipation (Adom and Anambane, 2019; Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018; Dungey and Ansell, 2020; Gavigan et al., 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; Lourenço et al., 2014). However, research is yet to clearly identify the specific practices and mechanisms of the institutional work undertaken by informal EET practitioners. Further, links between these informal EET practices and wider empowerment and emancipation processes and outcomes require to be illuminated.

Previous research on institutional work in challenging institutional contexts highlights the need to adopt creative approaches to overcome barriers (Mair and Marti, 2009; Sydow et al., 2022). In addition, research has found that institutional work undertaken in contexts characterised by severe institutional voids may require combinations of complementary actions to comprehensively and sustainably enhance the wellbeing and empowerment of the target underprivileged groups (Mair and Marti, 2009). While the literature identifies capacity development and community development as critical (Lovat and Toomey, 2009; Pigg, 2002; Schuftan, 1996), further empirical research is necessary to better understand how the practices and mechanisms of informal EET contribute to these themes. This is especially the case for marginalised women whose pursuit of empowerment may be more challenging; requiring that women are afforded expanded access and control over three related dimensions of resources, agency, and achievement amid a history of entrenched disadvantage (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999).

3.3 METHODOLOGY

To address this relatively under-theorised issue, our research adopts an inductive qualitative study (Gioia et al., 2013) to attain a deeper understanding from the perspective of informants (Cope, 2005; Creswell and Poth, 2016). We conducted fieldwork in Uganda, a developing economy whose institutional environment presents a suitable empirical context for our research questions. Research documents that several institutional challenges constrain the socioeconomic endeavours of women in Uganda (Namatovu et al., 2012). In recent years, the incidence of female breadwinners (often operating as necessity entrepreneurs) has increased (Lourenço et al., 2014) as a result of endemic political instability that precipitated social displacements, unemployment, and large-scale male migration from rural to urban areas (Spitzer and Twikirize, 2013). Also, the continued weak implementation of government policies has limited women to informal, micro, and short-lived enterprise (Komunte, 2015). Other barriers include the lengthy and inflexible business registration procedures and discriminatory socio-cultural conditions – with limited access to inheritance rights for women (Namatovu et al., 2012). The latter is further linked to banks' inflexible financial products that require collateral (Fred et al., 2018). Given that the majority of Ugandan women entrepreneurs do not access formal entrepreneurial training, it is argued that their skills are inadequate for successful business development and operation (Komunte, 2015; Langevang et al., 2012). These challenging institutional conditions have resulted in the need for basic EET, commonly delivered by third sector organisations, development practitioners and volunteers (Gavigan et al., 2020). This study draws on data from a sample of EET practitioners that work with disadvantaged women in this context.

3.3.1 Participant Selection Approach

Participants were selected purposively suggesting that they had lived experiences relevant to our research question (Cope, 2005). Also, their demographics ensured heterogeneity (Annex I), capturing different fields of informal entrepreneurial teaching, at multiple levels, and from varied geographical regions of the country, critical for the reliability of the study and generalisation of findings (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Regarding their professional work, there was a Christian spiritual leader, a primary school teacher, a professional accountant, three secondary school teachers, a business consultant, a university lecturer, two business managers and two housewives. In terms of education, one attained advanced secondary school, three possessed tertiary professional training, and seven were Bachelors and Postgraduate university graduates. For societal responsibilities, one runs a community-based association and the other is a community leader (local council chairperson). The Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association from which majority of the participants attained entrepreneurial training served as an access route, however, the rest of the participants were contacted through snowballing.

3.3.2 Data Collection

We drew from several data sources including individual interviews, the focus group, participant observation, and field notes to enable data triangulation and credibility (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). The individual interviews lasted between one hour to 90 minutes and closed at twelve participants when apparent data saturation was attained with additional data found to essentially mirror previous interviews (Saunders et al., 2018). The focus group involved seven of the 12 interview participants and field notes were taken to further support and validate data collected

(Creswell and Miller, 2000). Participant observation took place at participants' premises of operation. All interactions were conducted in English. During recruitment, all participants were informed of the study's purpose and written consent was obtained, not only ensuring that ethical research guidelines were met, but also mitigating against participant reticence and promoting sincere responses (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Throughout, the field researcher assumed the role of a neutral listener and observer, allowing participants to raise issues they felt were relevant and intervening only to seek clarifications or refocus deviations (Cope, 2005).

3.3.3 Data Analysis

To achieve a trustworthy thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017), a step-by-step grounded analysis was undertaken following Gioia et al. (2013). First, data were transcribed verbatim, and codes were assigned to statements that captured participants' experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Secondly, the coded units of meaning were scrutinised and only those deemed relevant for the study were selected for further analysis. Here, we rigorously examined the coded units to generate themes in relation to the practices enacted by participants. Thirdly, emerging themes shown in the data structure (Figure 6) built into the final aggregated themes from which the conceptual model (Figure 7) emerged based on analytical findings and their interpretations (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

3.4 FINDINGS

This study explored the practices of informal EET practitioners to understand how their enacted practices promote the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship, and support processes of female empowerment and emancipation in challenging institutional contexts. Our analysis highlighted three aggregate themes (Figure 6). The first two aggregate themes constitute different informal EET, and other complementary practices enacted to foster participation and empowerment: pre-EET (engaged outreach) and during EET (entrepreneurial capacity building). The third aggregate theme focuses on post-EET practices: entrepreneurial community building.

3.4.1 Pre-EET: Engaged Outreach

Our findings highlight three practices enacted by EET practitioners pre-EET: targeted recruitment, collaborating with partners and intermediaries, and co-defined learner-centred outcomes.

Targeted Recruitment. First, in their targeted recruitment practices, we find that EET practitioners purposively recruit disadvantaged women, indicating a specific intention to generate broader change. For example, P5 who operates within post-conflict districts specifically recruits ex-combatants, people experiencing conflict-related trauma and child-mothers (women ostracised because of raising 'fatherless' children - often following rape or rebel abduction). Similarly, P4 specifically targets young female school-leavers, introducing them to "*tailoring and catering, to help them acquire knowledge they require to earn a living to survive.*" While there are many reasons behind the incidence of girls leaving school early in Uganda, many do so due to teenage pregnancy or early marriage. Other EET practitioners target housewives without an independent income, refugees, and sometimes even employed women seeking opportunities to enhance their financial wellbeing: "*If they have jobs, it's something extra to add on to what they earn*" (P6).

Figure 6: Analytical Categorization of Data with Educator's Representative Quotes

Aggre-gate	Second Order Theme	First Order Codes	First Order Codes Representative Quotes
Engaged Outreach	Targeted recruitment	Target select groups	- *"Women with inferiority complex who were very shy and cannot speak out. These are my target group." (P6)* - *"I render the service basing on the need. These refugees from South Sudan were well-connected but didn't have anything. I told them to come and train so that they are able to sustain themselves." (P10)*
		Use adverts enhancing educator accessibility	- *"The people that I target most are women who were illiterate because, those are the majority we find at home." (P5)* - *"I wear what I make, and some find me sewing at the workshop" (P12)* - *"In a month, I get around four people that want to learn baking from the cake signpost." (P2)*
		Leverage word of mouth	- *"I normally post my things on Facebook and WhatsApp groups. In villages, it's through recommendations." (P9)*
	Collaborate with partners and intermediaries	Work with intermediaries	- *"We go to the L.Cs [Local Councils, village-level community leaders] asking for people we can train in a skill. It is their parents who bring them, especially girls that dropped out of school." (P12)* - *"The Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Association recommended me to several organizations every time they needed a trainer including the Private Sector Foundation Uganda and Trademark East Africa." (P5)* - *"Networking at women-focused events exposes me to opportunities" (P5)*
		Work with partners	- *"I am doing now training financial literacy in a UN-Funded project for women-led SMEs in agri-business." (P3)* - *"We apply according to NGOs' adverts on their websites or newspapers ... of recent, UK AID wanted crotchet knitting trainers, so we applied and were called for an interview." (P11)*
	Co-defined learner-centered outcomes	Demonstrate potential outcomes	- *"I tell jobless housewives what I do and that I train, and they pick interest in learning" (P2)* - *"I tell women mushroom is a good home business, it does not hinder them from doing other chores, requires a small space, good for nutrition, reduces on hospital expenses and grows within 3 weeks to sell for an income." (P4)*
		Provide choice	- *"We suggest a list of skills and they identify those they need" (P7)* - *"They choose skills that help them to stand financially on their own" (P12)*
		Provide voice and codesign/ customization	- *"We have training workplans and different trainers for different levels, the women evaluate what they want." (P6)* - *"Others prefer English trainers, but most prefer the local language because they are school dropouts." (P5)*
	Scaffolding learning	Experiential staged learning	- *"We elaborate many things in uncomplicated language ... they see the production process; the products and know what can be done. So, they get experience touching with their hands, tasting, smelling everything." (P7)* - *"I show them exactly how I do it - how the shoe ends up looking." (P10)* - *"We start with the beginners' package progressing to advanced levels" (P3)* - *"I take students to rabbits farms; to improve on what they have". (P12)*
		Facilitate peer learning	- *"I borrowed an idea from India. People are clustered so that those who don't know, learn from others." (P3)* - *"Students need that touch of an equal". (P10)* - *"When it comes to the second stage and someone is not catching up, fast learners show slow learners." (P4)* - *"When people share; their stories are relatable with others'" (P6)* - *"I tailor my training per given client. I always identify that person who needs more of my attention to have results from these trainings." (P9)* - *"My students tell me: 'we observe the way you do things, and we are inspired'." (P5)*

The diagram shows a hierarchical structure with two main categories:

Entrepreneurial Capacity → **Person-centred support**

- **Provide coaching**
  - "I mentor students informing and taking them through procedures and requirements" (P3)
  - "I mentor crocheting until someone has learned and are able to do it for themselves" (P11)

- **Subsidise learning according to need**
  - "I give free rabbits to all my trainees to encourage them to practice everything they learn" (P4)
  - "When I get people who can't afford, I do whatever I can to train and teach them". (P12)
  - "For villagers, we give free materials after training sessions" (11)

- **Provide advice and mentorship**
  - "They sit with me and I take them through step as they write, so that when they go back home they can make the studied product." (P4)
  - "We have to interest them to keep coming otherwise, they relapse" (P8)
  - "I reminded them of how much potential they have and how important they are to the community" (P2)
  - "I mentor students informing through procedures and requirements" (P3)
  - "I mentor crocheting until someone is able to do it for themselves" (P11)

- **Sponsor and chaperon for further development**
  - "I share opportunities (like markets, etc) that can empower women" (P1)
  - "Whenever I get an opportunity with organizations that offer development, I identify students with the right mindset to engage them." (P3)
  - "We connected them to centers like Exposure Africa and got an exhibition in Belgium! Their interest increased since they were getting money." (P11)
  - "When I go to train, I do not only tell them about mushrooms, I tell them of other trainings in such and such areas … like the Kabale Resource Center that trains in every kind of mushrooms." (P6)

Community Development

Promote social mobilization and advocacy

- **Organise for group action**
  - "We have government, Private Sector Foundation, and the World Bank grants for those that come as a group." (P3)
  - "We categorized them into clusters so as to have a standard price so that they weren't exploited." (P11)
  - "The small struggling groups with no focused goal, we encourage them to work together and get them market." (P10)

- **Build partnerships**
  - "Community leaders appreciate that we are able to give school dropouts skills to start in life, of course this also develops the community." (P11)
  - "The community appreciates that we contribute to the development of the area because we support the local shops by buying from them." (P9)
  - "Where we need to put more emphasis is on the public and private sector partnerships. It's sad that we're working with foreign investors without fully utilizing the local resources we have here." (P5)

Build a sustainable pipeline

- **Nurture role models and ambassadors**
  - "What I consider as success is when somebody becomes a role model in the community" (P11)
  - "When my student becomes a community role model, I refer her colleagues to her" (P4)
  - "I train women in Church to interact with people outside this circle." (P9)
  - "One of those women went to school, stood for Member of Parliament and works in the president's office now." (P2)

- **Train future trainers**
  - "I am preparing books with templates and drawings that ease people's work; something they can look at and easily transfer into a design." (P12)
  - "I picked about 3 groups of women and trained then for free, as a start-up kit to train others." (P12)

Source: Own elaboration

To boost enrolment chances, the informal EET practitioners employ advertising tactics that enhance direct accessibility to the educators. P2, for example, uses colourful photos and posters, attracting interested learners. She notes: "*They normally see what I do from the posters at my salon*

and get interested, and request to do trainings." More innovatively, P12 acts as her own marketing ambassador: "*I wear what I make, and some find me sewing at the workshop*". A more prevalent mode of recruitment that EET practitioners leverage on, is word of mouth, including online presence: "*I market myself on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. That is how they find me. For example, TASO* [The AIDS Support Organisation] *found me from Facebook.*" (P9). In these contexts, beyond mere awareness, referrals can be an effective way for targeted recruitment, as P8 observes: "*Referrals from individuals and NGOs that work with other networks recommend my services to each other.*"

Collaborating with Intermediaries and Partners. The second pre-EET practice under engaged outreach involves collaboration with other actors. P12 highlights just how effectively this can work in challenging contexts: "*We go to the L.Cs* [Local Councils, village-level community leaders] *asking for people we can train a skill.*" P5 also notes that working with The Private Sector Foundation Uganda exposed her to The Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Association (UWEAL) and the opportunity to deliver agriculture and craft training. Our findings suggest that the engaged outreach undertaken by EET practitioners is more than a micro-scale practice. Rather, it entails a cooperative and collaborative approach (with formal partners and intermediaries such as NGOs or development organisations, in paid or voluntary roles) which aims to contribute to wider empowerment efforts and broaden the pool of potential learners (through access to databases). For instance, P3 illustrates: "*I volunteered as a trainer in many instances when I worked with UWEAL.*" P12 adds: "*When I joined efforts with the NGOs, the first job I got was in Action for Development directed at women.*" Other educators also directly apply for advertised remunerated positions for entrepreneurship educator roles within government or NGO projects while others cited being approached by such organisations through referrals or as a result of exposure such as through social media.

Co-defined learner-centred outcomes. Crucially, findings suggest that the engagement practices of EET practitioners entail working with potential learners to co-define learning outcomes in-line with learners' needs and aspirations. Effectively, the intention is decidedly not to deliver pre-packaged EET. Here, EET practitioners firstly expose learners to *potential* positive outcomes in order that learners are better able to visualise how EET may help them and how learning may be implemented in their lives. P2, focusing on women in post-conflict rural districts narrates: "*I tell the women who are traumatised, 'You are still traumatised because you don't have a source of money. If you're able to meet your basic needs, you're able to pay your children's school fees, those thoughts will stop crossing your mind'.*" Similarly, P4 highlights the impact of entrepreneurial activity at household levels: "*My role is to improve on the livelihood of women in our community with challenges in sustaining a job and a home. I understand their challenges because I've been working as a community leader and open my home as a demonstration site. I use mushroom growing as a home cottage industry to show these women the need to have some income to contribute to their homes as they do other chores at home or other businesses.*"

EET practitioners provide choice and voice to enable increasingly learner-centred outcomes. P7 notes: "*For every step of my training, people are made aware of opportunities. My first result is arousing interest once they're exposed to a variety of skills. These varied skills become options when the time comes to choose their life careers.*" The learner-centred approach also enables the women to exercise choice in customising and adapting course content, in-line with individual needs

and interests. P6 offers technical guidance, noting "*I always encourage that when they choose crop husbandry, they do animal husbandry as well because whatever the crop industry needs, can be provided for by the animal husbandry and vice versa*". P6 adds that the women choose *"what they want to start with*." At a more practical level, P5 indicates where learner-centred preferences are pivotal: "*Most of these women are semi-literate, they prefer I use the local language*."

Considered together, pre-EET practices appear to be necessitated by the inhibiting contexts of the targeted learners. These practices, however, serve to create the conditions that enable the delivery of EET to hard-to-reach women in contexts of disadvantage that is learner-centred with empowerment potential. Indeed, all participants exhibited a strong desire to help empower the less fortunate through EET. For example, P8 defines the EET they practice as "*teaching others the entrepreneurship skill that you know, to better their lives*".

Table 3: Skills Informal EET Practitioners Teach

Technical skills	Assorted handicrafts like woodwork, shoes, beads, bags, African fabric, necklaces, among others; Assorted confectionery skills like baking cakes, bread, cookies, among others; Animal husbandry (rabbit and turkey rearing) and mushroom-growing; Making candles, glass cleaning agents, shampoos, bar and liquid soaps; Crocheting sweaters, dolls, dresses, and tailoring.
Business skills	Marketing, sales, customer care, human resource management, business strategy, financial training (product pricing, bookkeeping, making profits and creating village savings groups), business sustainability and business-to-business networking.
Soft skills	Communication, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, opportunity identification, capacity building (like linking local entrepreneurs to experienced and successful volunteer consultants abroad for leadership and governance skills).

Source: Own elaboration

3.4.2 During-EET: Entrepreneurial Capacity Development

During the delivery of EET, EET practitioners enact specific entrepreneurial capacity development practices – including technical, business and soft skills - to ensure increasingly holistic development (Annex II). Findings reveal two key practices during this stage: scaffolded experiential learning and person-centred support.

Scaffolding learning. This practice highlights three teaching practical methods that include experiential staged learning, facilitated peer learning, and coaching. In experiential staged learning, EET practitioners help develop hands-on skills through illustrative and participatory learning practices. P7 observes*: "We elaborate many things in uncomplicated language ... they see the production process and know what can be done. So, they get experience touching with their hands, tasting, smelling, everything!"* This is coupled with peer-learning and site visits to facilitate social learning through accumulation of social capital (experienced entrepreneur to aspirant entrepreneur), which enables sharing, complementing, and learning through networking. EET

practitioners employ role models or assume the position of role models, providing aspirational examples that substantively enable an *'it is possible'* narrative: "*I give them role models so that they see how* [the role models] *come up with their businesses, to gain guidance and information to do better.*" (P1). Through coaching, EET practitioners support goal-orientated learner-centred development in specific areas: "*I will hold your hand, but you will do the work. I am like the glue that holds your pieces together and helps you with where you want to go.*" (P3).

Person-centred support. Findings also suggest a move from a learner-centred approach to an increasingly *person*-centred form of support. EET practitioners offer learning aligned with need, critical for processes of empowerment in institutionally challenging contexts (Gavigan et al., 2020; Lourenço et al., 2014). Further indications of this move towards empowering, person-centric support are found in EET practitioners offering training for reduced or no fees: "*There's a family of a young girl whose mother died... So, the girl and her six siblings didn't have anything. In such a scenario I can't ask for anything from such a person. I just give. So many times, I've found myself in scenarios such as these. I tell them to come and train so that they are able to acquire skills to sustain themselves.*" (P5). They also provide advice and mentorship as P8 narrates, "*We guide entrepreneurs on where to improve in their SMEs.*" Lastly, they also sponsor and chaperon their learners, building towards further development of their EET skills: "*whenever I have an opportunity with an organisation with offers for development, I identify students with the right mindset and engage them.*" (P3)

3.4.3 Post-EET: Entrepreneurial Community Development

The post-EET community development process reveals two practices geared towards sustaining woman-to-woman connections and interdependence: promoting social mobilisation and advocacy and building a sustainable pipeline of institutional entrepreneurs. These actions suggest outcomes beyond individual entrepreneurial proficiency; they suggest impact at the collective level (Alkhaled and Berglund 2018; Inglis, 1997; Rubyutsa et al., 2023).

Promote social mobilisation and advocacy. This is achieved by organising group action and building partnerships to foster sustainable empowerment outcomes. In organising for group action, EET practitioners work to identify resources to support and sustain group activities. P3 discloses, "*We have government, Private Sector Foundation, and World Bank grants for those that come as a group.*" Additionally, they introduce processes to enable market participation, peer support and mitigate against competition. For example, P11 explains how they "*categorized them into clusters so as to have a standard price so that they weren't exploited.*" P10 adds, "*The small, struggling groups with no focused goal, we encourage them to work together and get them market.*" In building partnerships, the outcomes of EET extend beyond the individuals supported to impact the wider communities in which they are situated, helping tackle structures of disadvantage: "*Now the L.Cs* [Local Council community leaders] *welcome the fact that we are able to give school dropouts skills to start in life, of course this also develops the community*." (P11).

Build a sustainable pipeline of institutional entrepreneurs. EET practitioners also extend into community development as the learners and alumni are further encouraged to offer informal peer accountability and support as well as undertake institutional work. Here, they identify 'fast learners' - those well placed to pass on acquired knowledge to peers: "*I picked three groups of women and*

trained them for free, as a start-up kit to train others." (P12). Further, EET practitioners support and resource sustainable and scalable EET and outcomes thereof by, for example, "*preparing books with templates and drawings that ease people's work; something they can look at and easily transfer into a design.*" (P12). Moreover, EET practitioners also nurture role models and ambassadors, as P11 confirms: "*What I consider as success is when somebody becomes a role model in the community.*" This is reinforced by P4: "*When my student becomes a community role model, I refer her colleagues to her.*" P2 spoke proudly of a former learner that has since advanced to gain a strong political position that she uses to represent the interests of disadvantaged women nationally, beyond being a highly inspirational feat: "*One of those women went back to school, stood for Member of Parliament and is working in the president's office now.*" EET practitioners enact practices that seek to not just support individual disadvantaged women but build collective capacity to effectively challenge institutions responsible for such disadvantage.

3.5 DISCUSSION

We sought to understand how informal EET practitioners promote both the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship and support processes of female empowerment in challenging institutional contexts. Based on our analysis, we make two key contributions. First, we position EET practitioners as institutional entrepreneurs. Second, we develop a grounded model capturing practices enacted by EET practitioners that illuminate the ways in which EET can contribute to processes of empowerment and emancipation (Figure 7).

3.5.1 Informal EET Practitioners as Institutional Entrepreneurs

Our findings demonstrate that the practices of EET practitioners indeed align with definitions of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), and institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2007). Firstly, through a targeted approach to engaged outreach (pre-EET), they specifically recruit marginalised women with intersecting vulnerabilities (trauma victims, refugees, child-mothers, women with limited education, for example). In enacting this, EET practitioners work to effectively challenge structures of disadvantage and address the discriminatory socio-cultural conditions (Namatovu et al., 2012) and their resulting constraints. These constraints include, for example, business skills deficiencies (Komunte, 2015) that inhibit the participation of women in gainful entrepreneurship. Further, EET practitioners indicate a meaningful orientation towards helping women "*better their lives*" (P8) in the face of severe disadvantage through 'beyond teaching', person-centred support. Additionally, EET practitioners work to continually confront institutional structures that create and perpetuate disadvantage among marginalised women. Building on research highlighting agentic actions of entrepreneurship educators pertaining to education aspects (Fiet, 2001; Neck and Corbett, 2018; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010; Thomassen et al., 2020; Wrae et al., 2021), we illuminate how EET practitioners in challenging contexts further expand on EET to undertake wider institutional work.

Indeed, we find that this institutional work extends beyond the micro level, as EET practitioners enable cascading outcomes within the entrepreneurs' wider community in distinct ways. First, they engage with wider stakeholders, including community leaders and other intermediaries, at the recruitment and enrolment stages (pre-EET). Second, post-EET, through community development
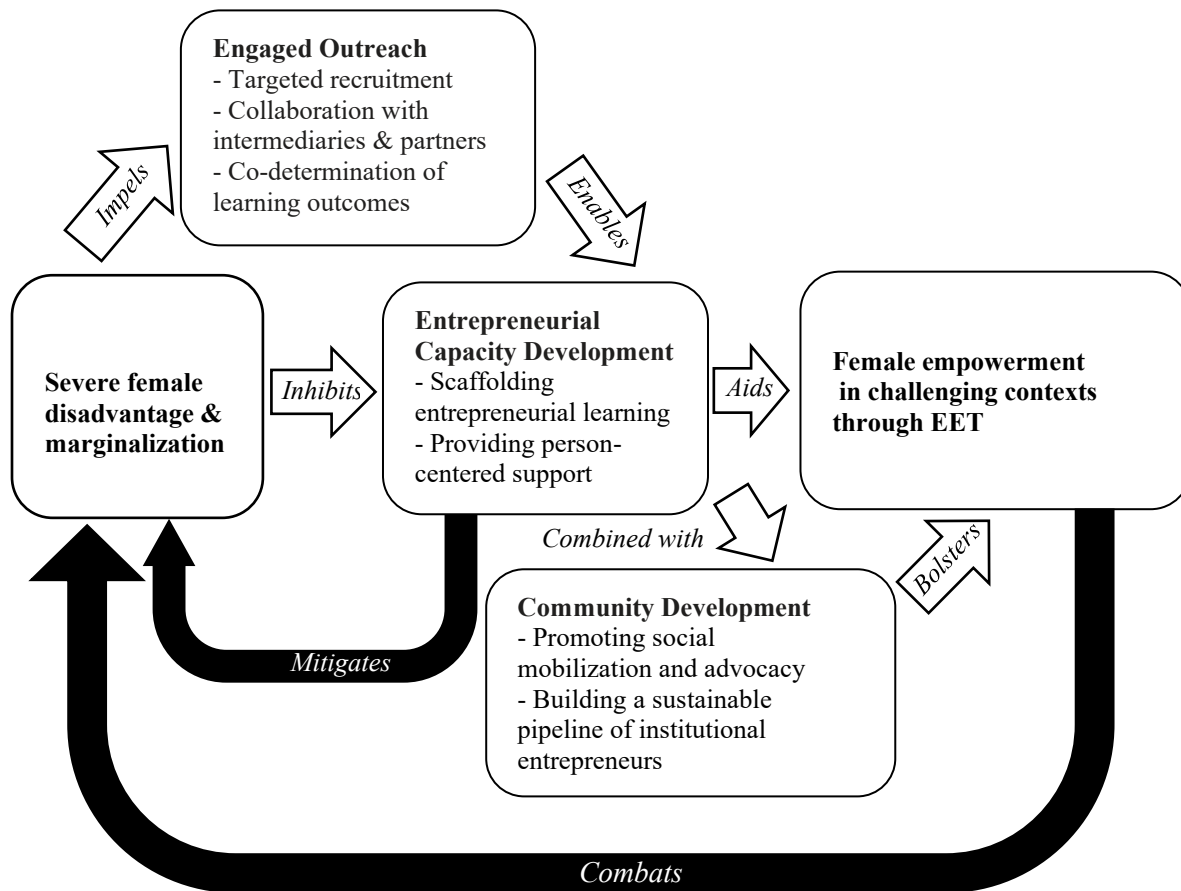
work, they mobilise their alumni female learner entrepreneurs into a growing and impactful collective. These findings resonate with research that highlights how female entrepreneurs acting with others can achieve collective empowerment and emancipation from oppressive structures (Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018; Rubyutsa et al., 2023). Indeed, our findings further align with research from adult education that argues that educators enable emancipation when they 'become part of the power struggle of an oppressed people' (Inglis, 1997). Our findings show how EET practitioners support such empowerment and emancipation processes in a sustainable way through the engaged outreach and recruitment, person-centred capacity building, and community and pipeline building activities they undertake. In this case, emancipation is not 'brought' by an educator, rather, it 'emerges from within the oppressed themselves' (Inglis, 1997).

3.5.2 Informal EET Practices and Female Empowerment Outcomes: A Grounded Model

Building on the previous discussion, our findings have identified novel complementary practices, enacted by EET practitioners before, during and after the conventional instructional part, that illuminate the ways in which EET can contribute to processes of empowerment and emancipation (Figure 7). We note that these practices, in many ways, align with and enrich recent innovative developments in EET scholarship more widely.

Our findings highlight that, in view of the challenging contexts that marginalised women operate within (thus rendering them hard-to-reach, seldom-heard and easy-to-ignore (Fluegge et al., 2019)), EET practitioners as institutional entrepreneurs are proactively impelled to act. They introduce and enact a number of pre-EET 'wraparound' engagement outreach practices that seek to overcome the institutional forces that disadvantage and marginalise such women. They do this through targeted recruitment, collaboration with intermediaries and partners, and working with learners to co-determine learning outcomes. These, in turn, enable disadvantaged and marginalised women to access the entrepreneurial capacity development programmes offered by EET practitioners. In the absence of engaged outreach, we propose that female disadvantage and marginalisation fundamentally inhibits pursuit of entrepreneurial capacity development (Figure 7), perhaps partly explaining the high incidence of women's entrepreneurial failure in Uganda (Komunte, 2015).

Figure 7: Mechanisms of EET Institutional Work Contributing to Women's Empowerment and Emancipation. A Grounded Model

Engaged Outreach
- Targeted recruitment
- Collaboration with intermediaries & partners
- Co-determination of learning outcomes

Impels

Enables

Severe female disadvantage & marginalization

Inhibits

Entrepreneurial Capacity Development
- Scaffolding entrepreneurial learning
- Providing person-centered support

Aids

Female empowerment in challenging contexts through EET

Combined with

Mitigates

Community Development
- Promoting social mobilization and advocacy
- Building a sustainable pipeline of institutional entrepreneurs

Bolsters

Combats

Source: Own elaboration

Building on broader higher education literatures on widening participation (Fluegge et al., 2019; Scull and Cuthill, 2010), we highlight the critical role of engaged outreach in the wraparound practices. Here, the complementary practice of co-defining (practitioner and learner) learning outcomes in-line with learners' needs and aspirations as posited by recent EET research (Henry, 2020; Verduijn and Berglund, 2020). We propose that together, these engaged outreach practices lay a strong foundation for the next stage, entrepreneurial capacity development (during EET).

During-EET, to support learning, informal EET practitioners employ scaffolded experiential approaches (Bosman, 2019; Neergaard and Christensen, 2017; Pittaway et al., 2023) and person-centred support, bearing out Bell's (2022) vision of a whole-person approach in EET. Complementing EET research (Hägg, 2020; Neck and Corbett, 2018), we find that in scaffolded experiential learning, EET practitioners employ peer-learning, coaching, and guiding approaches to enable the development of applied entrepreneurial capacity. Further, our findings describe an increasingly person-centred support (Henry, 2020), where learning is customised, based on learners' individual interests and needs co-designed with the learners. We extend the positive person-centred advances by highlighting that EET practitioners in challenging contexts adopt a more holistic *whole-person* approach by specifically considering their learners' position of

disadvantage and marginalisation. Indeed, for some EET practitioners, they adopt an empathy-driven approach, demonstrated by the provision of low or no cost training opportunities for those in greatest need.

Based on our findings, we posit that entrepreneurial capacity development practises enacted by EET practitioners aid female empowerment processes since they promote the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurial activities. This allows marginalised women to secure a livelihood and greater autonomy to meet their needs as well as enjoy other social and wellbeing benefits of economic participation, including competence, esteem, and extended social connections. In turn, this means that entrepreneurial capacity development works to mitigate against severe female disadvantage and marginalisation afflicting women in the respective communities (Figure 7). This enables greater access to resources, agency, and achievement in line with the women's empowerment framework (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999). Subsequently, such melioration of severe female disadvantage and marginalisation will work to abate contextual factors that inhibit access to entrepreneurial capacity development which would further enable a virtuous cycle in processes of empowerment and reduction of disadvantage.

Still, extant research shows that capacity development interventions at the individual level are limited (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Pigg, 2002). Thus, capacity development has increasingly been implemented at meso and macro levels (Kühl, 2009; Vallejo and Wehn, 2016), and includes efforts to build collective strength, advocacy, and expand choice (Lovat and Toomey, 2009; Pigg, 2002; Schuftan, 1996). Findings demonstrate that EET practitioners as institutional entrepreneurs move beyond individual-level capacity development, enacting community development practices that promote social mobilisation and advocacy. This includes organising for social action and building partnerships that facilitate conscientisation and wider community engagement. Such practices have been argued to move beyond empowerment towards more substantive emancipation. In this thread, empowerment enhances greater autonomy for individuals within given institutional structures while emancipation seeks to change such structures to enhance collective freedom (Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018; Inglis, 1997; Rubyutsa et al., 2023).

Furthermore, research from these challenging institutional contexts cautions that interventions with empowering intentions may inadvertently have disempowering outcomes. These include entrenching dependency and the introduction of structures that may introduce new constraints on participants' agency and alternatives (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Lovat and Toomey, 2009). Our findings, however, highlight practises that may militate against such outcomes. In line with their role as institutional entrepreneurs, we establish that EET practitioners proactively enable the development of an increasingly sustainable pipeline of institutional entrepreneurs by developing the women as accountable peers and future trainers. This aligns with studies that affirm that true emancipation must emerge from within the oppressed themselves (Inglis, 1997). Building on these advances, we contribute to EET and institutional entrepreneurship literatures by highlighting the importance of enabling 'institutional entrepreneur pipelines' in empowerment dynamics.

In effect, we posit that in combining individual entrepreneurial capacity development with community development work, EET educators bolster the processes of female empowerment and emancipation in challenging contexts. Accordingly, this more forcefully combats the underlying structures of female disadvantage and marginalisation which in turn fuels the virtuous cycle of

EET's contributions to female empowerment and emancipation. In illuminating these mechanisms, we extend extant research on entrepreneurship support programs in the Global South that highlights similar dynamics (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Mair and Marti, 2009; Rubyutsa et al., 2023).

3.6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We investigated practices enacted by informal EET practitioners in fostering gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship and supporting processes of female empowerment and emancipation in a challenging institutional context: Uganda. Our inductive study offers a rich empirical depiction of their enacted extended practices and a nuanced theoretical understanding of the mechanisms through which informal EET can enhance both the gainful participation in entrepreneurship and greater empowerment among marginalised groups. The analysis unveiled two contributions. First, we extend the conceptualisation of informal EET practitioners by demonstrating how their work effectively renders them institutional entrepreneurs, rather than mere educators. This is attributed to their intentionality and agentic work challenging incumbent institutional structures and fostering change. Second, we developed a grounded model illuminating how they concurrently enact engaged outreach, entrepreneurial capacity development and community development. The model depicts how they enable marginalised women's access to capacity development opportunities, entrepreneurial competencies and undertake sustainable collective steps towards empowerment and emancipation.

We offer implications for EET research and practice. Recent research envisions a more person-centred humanist entrepreneurship education (Bell, 2022; Henry, 2020), with significant empowerment and emancipation potential in line with similar debates in education scholarship (Walmsley and Wraae, 2022). We draw on data from a unique institutional context, to empirically bear out propositions as well as extend nuanced theoretical understanding on the following research issues: institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2007; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), development (Kühl, 2009; McKenzie, 2021; Vallejo and Wehn, 2016), and empowerment and emancipation (Inglis, 1997; Kabeer, 1999). The implication for research here is that drawing on context (Thomassen et al., 2019), especially unique institutional contexts, there is much scope to advance theory in entrepreneurial education cross-fertilising insights from sister fields.

For policy, notwithstanding concerns relating to entrepreneurship being considered a policy panacea, our study shows that informal EET has an important role to play in efforts to enhance gainful entrepreneurship and emancipation among the marginalised in society. However, amid concerns that such interventions do not work in such contexts (McKenzie, 2021), our study proposes that to work effectively, informal EET should be complemented by engaged outreach and community level reinforcements. Thus, policy should consider wraparound approaches, beyond mere teaching. Furthermore, policy evaluation should place an emphasis on targeted empowerment processes for traditionally marginalised groups (Kabeer, 1999), beyond business performance.

This study is, however not without limitations. We acknowledge that the day-to-day practices of a small sample of female informal EET practitioners' working with marginalised women in specific contexts within Uganda may be very different from EET in other contexts. While this study proffers novel insights, future research, adopting comparative approaches in similar or distinct contexts,

could offer further understanding on the link between informal EET and empowerment or emancipation processes. Further, we recognise that the gender dimension, both on the part of the educators and the learners, requires further investigation to fully understand the complexity our findings suggest. In all, this study demonstrates that informal EET warrants a prominent position in academic, policy and wider debates on the role of entrepreneurship and education in modern society.

CHAPTER 4:   EMPIRICAL STUDY II

Empirical Case Study on Policy:

Policymakers' Gender-Inclusive Entrepreneurship Education Processes in Constrained Contexts.

Policymakers' Gender-Inclusive Entrepreneurship Education Processes in Constrained Contexts

This chapter aims to explore policy regulators' perspectives on their entrepreneurship education and training (EET) interventions aimed at supporting marginalised populations in constrained contexts to deconstruct gendered institutions for their individual and societal good. Drawing from a broader ethnographic study, I conducted in-depth individual interviews and a focus group on policymakers regulating informal EET processes in a poverty, post-war rural context of Uganda. The study unveils three foundational gender inclusive informal EET legislating processes undertaken by policymakers aimed at empowering female groups to deconstruct gendered sociocultural institutions to elevate themselves and others in society from marginalized positions. The empirical study illuminates an *'informal EET classroom'* that policymaking processes deliberate, adding novel insights to extant literature on the design of entrepreneurship education and the developments of EET policies and institutional strategies. I propose a grounded conceptual model that extends a context-laden design of such a programme.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The surge in entrepreneurship education and training (EET) initiatives aimed at increasing female entrepreneurial activity owes to policymakers' interest to stimulate entrepreneurial skills among women (Jones, S., 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Morgan, 2020; O'Connor, 2013; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). Indeed, women's entrepreneurship gathers policy regulators' attention (Sarfaraz et al., 2014) in an attempt to address gender gaps evident in many contexts that constrain their entrepreneurial activity (Roncolato et al., 2017; Wheadon and Duval-Couetil, 2019). An increase in women's entrepreneurship (Foster and Norman, 2016) is not sufficient as the unconscious gender bias persists, indicating that rising female business ownership rates have not narrowed existing gender gaps in many contexts (Brixiová et al., 2020; Kelley et al., 2011; Said and Enslin, 2020).

The contextualisation of EET argues for the design of EET programs grounded from regional circumstances (Walter and Dohse, 2012). This could add an alternative view aside from the entrepreneurship perspective, more so when EET policies are developed for implementation beyond formal education (Rigby and Ramlogan, 2016) or economic and social development (Hoppe, 2016; O'Connor, 2013). Thus, an in-depth understanding of the EET legislation processes are of great importance in this regard (Nasr and Boujelbene, 2014; Sarfraz et al., 2018). More government interests and strategic role in EET policy programs are increasingly promoting initiatives beyond entrepreneurship to encompass teaching skills, entrepreneurial values and attitudes to practising or potential entrepreneurs (Hoppe, 2016; Kyrö, 2006; O'Connor, 2013). Although EET policy interventions are highlighted as an entrepreneurial pipeline (Kyrö, 2006), I focus on understanding educational programs whose outcomes result in learners' empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995). More so on how policies are translated into practice at the local level, influencing cultural contexts (Lindh and Thorgren, 2016).

Although increasing entrepreneurial competence is a main policy issue for governments seeking growth outcomes (Acs et al., 2008), to improve the benefits from EET beyond mere economic gain, policymakers may have to refine their objectives by promoting a broad range of skills, including soft skills (O'Connor, 2013). Considering EET provides processes through which institutional culture can shift and vice versa (Jacob et al., 2003), scholars call for empirical research that explores this two-way interconnection (Pittaway and Cope, 2007). Thus, this study responds to calls for EET empirical studies that could narrow the knowledge gap in the link between wider national policies and institutional strategies (Pittaway and Cope, 2007), specifically, on how gendered institutions and the social interactions that support them are deconstructed (Deutsch, 2007). The research question, therefore, addresses how policymakers' EET legislating processes extend gender-inclusive support systems to marginalised populations in constrained contexts to deconstruct gendered institutions for their individual and societal good.

Early scholarship advocated for policy interventions in constrained contexts to enable formation of support systems for entrepreneurs (Mcmullan and Long, 1987). Subsequent empirical studies show that EET offers a conducive learning environment for learners in constrained contexts such as post-war zones to acquire socio-psychological coping skills like empowerment, emancipation, self-esteem, and positive sociocultural integration (Annan et al., 2013; Mukasa, 2017). This contributes novel dimensions to economic growth and social development, such as which skills are critical to succeed in constrained contexts (Dodd and Hynes, 2012; Leitch et al., 2012). Constrained contexts

are generalised by limited resources and access to opportunities that dictate they type of entrepreneurship practice in a given place and time, such as times of crisis or necessity (Abuhussein and Koburtay, 2021; Chauke, 2015; Elkafrawi and Refai, 2022; Gittins and McElwee, 2023; O'Donnell et al., 2024; Ojediran and Anderson, 2020; Refai et al., 2024; Smith et al., 2019).

Adopting an ethnographic approach, data collection was by means of in-depth individual and focus group interviews from nine governmental and civil society programme administrators in charge of regulating informal EET in northern Uganda. Their EET interventions target marginalised women to not only economically start over but also acquire skills to withstand prevailing institutional extremes they confront in sociocultural and psychological conditions (Branicki et al., 2017; Branzei and Fathallah, 2021; Bullough et al., 2014; Shepherd et al., 2020). The data analysis uncovers three processes, grounded from a women's empowerment perspective, that the EET policy legislators extend: building agents of action, providing career choice and encouraging sustainable achievement. I propose an *'informal EET classroom'* model with a more nuanced gender-sensitive policymakers' perspective that extends literature in the design of entrepreneurship education (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008) and the developments of EET policies and institutional strategies (Hoppe, 2016; Pittaway and Cope, 2007) in constrained contexts, with implications for both theory and practice.

The following is the layout of the remainder of this paper; research methods and the findings from the data collection follow the contextual and theoretical background. Lastly, the discussion and conclusions are presented with limitations, implications, and future research directions.

4.2 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

4.2.1 Gender and Entrepreneurship Education in Constrained Contexts

This study explores policymakers' gender-inclusive mechanisms in EET processes that specifically target learners outside traditional education settings, denoted informal EET. Unlike formal EET that is certified, informal EET encompasses uncertified programs '*through*' or '*for*' purposes of entrepreneurship, that targets prospective or actual practitioners (Valerio et al., 2014). The '*for*' EET type centres on acquiring relevant entrepreneurial skills, and the '*through*' type of EET aims to enable opportunities in real-life entrepreneurial practice, like creating start-ups (Pittaway et al., 2009; Solomon, 2007). For purposes of this study, I borrow from an extant the definition of EET as a means for social change, considering it nurtures learners towards autonomy and emancipation from their underlying assumptions and expectations of societal status quo (Wadhwani and Viebig, 2021). Another similar school of thought includes Gedeon's (2014) EET definition: "empowering students with a philosophy of entrepreneurial thinking, passion, and action-orientation that they can apply to their lives, their jobs, their communities, and/or their own new ventures" (Page 238). Furthermore, EET is also understood as a type of skills acquisition that could free individuals from their contextual structural constrains (Jones et al., 2012).

With these beyond-economic-gain definitions of EET and in line with the contextualisation of EET policy, EET in general is increasingly becoming a key parameter in policy programs (O'Connor, 2013; Pittaway and Cope, 2007) thus gaining policy recognition globally (Fayolle, 2013; Johannisson, 2016; Jones, 2019; Neck and Greene, 2011; Sewell and Pool, 2010). Several sub-Saharan African governments, for example, have reformed traditional education curricula to include

entrepreneurship programs and have also incentivized private-sector start-ups to increase skills development (Gavigan et al., 2020; Gavigan et al., 2023; Lourenço et al., 2014). Evidence shows that policymakers in this region are tasked with EET interventions that meet the specific needs of the context (Porter et al., 2020). Contextual factors, such as is the case in most developing economies where gender inequalities are prevalent (Said and Enslin, 2020; Ogbor, 2001), these inequalities greatly constrain women's SMEs (Asiedu et al., 2013).

According to the World Economic Forum of 2020, gender is a major source of marginalization, varying extensively globally (Pidduck and Clark, 2021). According to the societal structuring approach in the undoing-gender debate, gender disparities emerge from the different social positions which men and women occupy or resources they can access (Deutsch, 2007). For example, although different cultures are found within sub-Saharan Africa, women across the varied cultural contexts of the region are associated with their position as the inferior group in society (Egbo, 2000). However, the gender structural approach also posits that these gender differences and unequal structural conditions and positions result from social interactions that can always be resisted or changed (Deutsch, 2007). For instance, scholars regard the continued gender disparities in entrepreneurship are attributed to research majorly inclining towards barriers inhibiting female entrepreneurial activity (Marlow and McAdam, 2013; Wheadon and Duval-Couetil, 2019). Others highlight that the mere use the of the term "women entrepreneurs" categorically sets women apart from the "ideal" (male) entrepreneurs (Ahl, 2006; Wheadon and Duval-Couetil, 2019).

Furthermore, in line with our contextual focus, not all developing economies' informal women's entrepreneurship is low-paid or survivalist/necessity-driven (Williams and Gurtoo, 2011). However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, most empirical studies position female entrepreneurs in third sector low-productivity activities and with less mention of their presence in activities considered value-adding or of high productivity like manufacturing (Brixiová et al., 2020; Hallward-Driemeier, 2013). As such, research plays a huge role in perpetuating women's position such as 'passive' or 'goals of action' (Herrmann, 2008; Volkmann et al., 2009) or continuously comparing them to the socially and culturally gendered categorisation linked to white, western masculinity's access to resources (Jones, M., 2012). However, through human agency, the social interactions or institutions that support these gendered constructions can potentially be deconstructed, considering that gender is dynamic and all its associated behavior changes with time (Deutsch, 2007). As such, there is a need for alternative approaches on top of promoting increase of female entrepreneurial activity (Marlow and McAdam, 2013) which is insufficient in itself to overcome gender disparities (Foster and Norman 2016; Kelley et al. 2013).

In line with research extending propositions for perspectives on the contextualisation of entrepreneurship (Wheadon 2018), the provision of information, knowledge and education in the support and empowering of females is promoted as a critical in women's entrepreneurship (Lourenço et al., 2014). Contextual factors not only condition entrepreneurial action and behaviour, but they also act as a vehicle in the midst of adversity to push individuals to create social value (Branzei and Fathallah, 2021; Bullough et al., 2014; Langevang and Namatovu, 2019; Pidduck and Clark, 2021). Thus, while the gendering of the wider entrepreneurship field has received increasing attention (Ahl, 2006; Hughes et al., 2012; Marlow and Swail, 2014), on a narrower EET scope, scholars advocate for a gender-neutral EET curricula (Jones, 2014). Taking gender career stereotypes as socially constructed (Duval-Couetil et al., 2014; Wheadon, 2018), the reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship

courses vary vastly for men and women. There is scarce knowledge about availability of entrepreneurship training in women's business practices, growth strategies and career opportunities (Adeola et al., 2017), as women entrepreneurs have fewer informal entrepreneurial learning and development opportunities than men (Davis, 2012). Therefore, this study seeks to illuminate EET programmes that not only promote women's entrepreneurial activity, but also advance gender policy-based implications (Hughes et al., 2012), such as creating a foundation critical for marginalised groups to institutionally engage in social good to elevate themselves and others from oppressed positions (Pidduck and Clark, 2021).

4.2.2 The Case of Uganda. EET Policy Interventions for Marginalized Women

Northern Uganda consists of the Acholi tribe that has immensely been impacted by a two-decade civil war, causing widespread post-war effects like the government policy on forced displacement to camps. Consequently, this resulted into extreme poverty and over dependency on foreign aid (Langevang and Namatovu, 2019; Mukasa, 2017). Furthermore, the slow on-going post-war developmental efforts in the region mirror the inadequate essential services and limited employment opportunities (Langevang and Namatovu, 2019). Moreover, in the Acholi tribal society, the sociocultural position of women is determined by pre-existing and long-standing patriarchal gender relations. Within this sociocultural context, a cohort of women denoted Child-Mothers, is severely marginalized for singly raising 'fatherless' children, born during or after the war as a result of rebel abduction or random rape. Thus, fending for their individual and children's survival, without sociocultural support, they are forced into necessity entrepreneurship (Akello, 2013; Bongomin et al., 2020; Mukasa, 2017). These women not only confront physical, psychological, and economic factors associated with the war aftermath; the prevailing harsh sociocultural conditions elevate their challenges in their entrepreneurial activities (Akello, 2013).

This cohort of women has received interventions such as informal EET from government policymakers and their development partners (Akello, 2013; Bongomin et al., 2020; Mukasa, 2017). Scholars suggest that EET meets learners' contextual needs (Thomassen et al., 2019), when their social settings, including geographical locations and situational conditions (Olowu, 2012) are captured. This implies capturing all the specificities of the actors and the environment in which they are embedded and operate (Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Kasseeah, 2017), as contextual factors provide conditions that EET processes could address, such as institutional constraints in a national or regional context (Nikou et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2019). As such, social challenges women endure (as in this given case study) are gender inequalities that directly or indirectly intensify women's already existing unfavourable life conditions (Porter et al., 2020).

EET policy interventions are critical for the social cohesion of such marginalized individuals in oppressive contexts to operate thriving entrepreneurial ventures (Berglund and Johansson, 2007; Bongomin et al., 2020). However, considering contextual factors may indirectly influence individuals' approach to EET (Pittaway and Cope, 2007), scholars propose that the relevant government agencies should regularly survey targeted learners' (marginalized women entrepreneurs in this case) needs and challenges then formulate policy accordingly (Davis, 2012). Marginalized populations necessitate effective intervention to (re)gain economical, physical, emotional, social, resources (Pidduck and Clark, 2021). Government policy, indeed, influences context element by promoting EET through purposive resource allocation and attention (Thomassen et al., 2020). Purposive resource allocation takes on many forms linked to EET processes that go beyond

developing human capital (e.g., Bates 1995; Delmar and Davidsson 2000; Brush and Brush 2006). These include social capital such as networking and close-knit associations to increase business growth and identification of new businesses and new markets (Davis, 2012; Snyder, 2003).

4.2.3 Rationale for the Study. Entrepreneurship Education Policy Gaps

This backdrop provides the rationale to conduct further research on policymakers' EET legislation processes (Nasr and Boujelbene, 2014) geared towards a framework for the design of EET that aligns with the nuanced *why, who, what, how, and which* of a given context (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008). In other words, to understand *why* EET processes extended by policy need to align rather than create tensions in practice (Berglund and Holmgren, 2013), we identify theoretical gaps that could assist policymakers to locate an EET program with specific contextualised objectives (O'Connor, 2013). First, a critical gap in investing in skills for better socioeconomic outcomes is knowing exactly *what* should be taught and *how* (Hoppe, 2016). In terms of *what* to teach, scholars call government policy attention to engage entrepreneurial competence not only for new business creation but rather a broad range of skills (Hoppe, 2016), including soft skills (O'Connor, 2013). On *how* EET could be taught, scholars suggest an alternative - practical experience - arguing that the skillset required to start new enterprises is overly broad-based and extensive to be effectively taught in class settings (Acs et al., 2008).

Another important gap in joining the dots between EET practice and economic policy is substantiating EET economic benefit (O'Connor, 2013), partly due to the multi-definitional perspectives of entrepreneurship (Baron and Shane, 2007; Moroz and Hindle, 2012). While EET ranks as a top policy agenda in several economies, there is scarce research to assess its impact (*which* outcomes EET generates), as policymakers' strong EET interest lies in high growth outcomes, mostly in increased new business activity (Acs et al., 2008). However, in line with learners' (for *whom* EET is intended) contexts, scholars suggest that policymakers ought to reevaluate how efficiently their interventions support their learning needs (Davis, 2012). For instance, in contexts with constrained labour market conditions like high levels of unemployment, government policies should not only promote EET to influence students' attitude towards entrepreneurship for self-employment (Libombo and Dinis, 2015). Furthermore, researchers also point to educators as those *who* are co-involved with policymakers in EET curricula design (Henry, 2013; O'Connor, 2013; Thomassen et al., 2020). However, to make informed choices when designing EET with context, educators need to identify what organisations decide upon policy (Thomassen et al., 2020). This is because they risk being unclear about what to teach in trying to satisfy policy makers' agendas (such as the increasing policy trend to ingrain EET into non-business disciplines like STEM), when not carefully managed (Henry, 2013).

Although extant literature has studies with similar goals to this study, however, these exist as policymakers' decision-making processes in schools (Banha et al., 2022) or educators' context laden EET framework (*who, what, where and when)* for designing EET (Thomassen et al., 2020). Therefore, drawing from the identified theoretical gaps for policy, I employ qualitative methods to pursue the research question of how EET legislating processes extend gender-inclusive support systems to marginalised populations in constrained contexts to address challenging institutions for their individual and societal good.

4.3 METHODOLOGY

The ethnographic approach adopted for the study is appropriate for physical immersion into participants' actions, interactions, and social situations (Sabella and El-Far, 2019). The focus centres on participants engaged in not only legislating informal EET processes for learners' entrepreneurial skills. They also maximise their position to help learners generate social capital from the close-knit groups created within the informal EET classroom aimed at pooling a force from each other to (re)shape constraining institutions environments. Therefore, in line with the research question, the methodological approach allowed the data to emerge by capturing the descriptions of participants' (EET policy legislators) day-to-day practises and their contextual settings (Groenewald, 2004).

Participants were purposively selected (Groenewald, 2004) as their lived experiences were directly related to the overarching purpose of this study (Boyd, 2001). They were sourced from different organisations involved with rehabilitating post-war marginalized groups of females, including civil society like the non-government organisations, religious institutions, social enterprises and international projects sponsored by the government or the United Nations. For organisations that extended these services to all genders, I specifically requested for the projects they work with that only engage with women. Their specialisations (Annex I) ensured heterogeneity, capturing a diversified and rich background, critical for the reliability of the study and generalisation of findings (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

4.3.1 Data collection

Following Boyd's (2001, Page 73) argument: 'the qualitative researcher endeavours to locate and collect data that best describes the experience under study', I drew from several data sources like individual interviews, the focus group and field notes. This is critical in reinforcing data validation and triangulation, by contrasting the varied forms of collected data (Korstjens and Moser, 2018; Stahl and King, 2020). All participants agreed to a debriefing session, giving consent and permission to have the interview. However, given the sensitivity of their policy positions in regard to post-war occurrences, some sessions were not recorded, thus notetaking was undertaken. The in-depth individual interviews were unstructured to allow the participants the freedom to reply in their own way, ensuring complete participants' subjectivity, as they were only interrupted for clarifications or when refocusing them way from deviating (Cope, 2005). The individual interviews lasted between an hour to 90 minutes. All interactions were conducted in English, however where need-be, the presence of a local research assistant, who doubled as an interpreter, was important. The face-to-face focus group consisted of all the participants. Both the individual and focus group interview processes consisted of nine participants each, considering two to ten participants could be sufficient to reach data saturation (Boyd, 2001), especially when additional data merely mirrors previous interviews (Saunders, 2018). Field notes included field observations and those undertaken in the absence of recorded interviews to back up and validate data collected (Creswell and Miller, 2000). This is crucial in qualitative research to collect representative data for a trustworthy data analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

4.3.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis involved a systematic grounded procedure aimed at identifying common key features and relationships (Gioia et al., 2013) to achieve a trustworthy thematic analysis (Nowell et

al., 2017). The systematic thematic analysis underwent three stages. The first stage involved delineating units of meaning, generated from the transcripts from interview audios and notes. This ensured that these units of meanings were extracted and assigned codes to statements that evidently illuminated participants' experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Secondly, the clustered units of meaning were carefully scrutinised to form themes and only those deemed relevant for the study were selected for further analysis (Bless et al., 2006). Here, a rigorous examination of the clusters of themes that emerged by grouping units of meaning that portrayed lived experiences in a common way was done. Thirdly, a summary was produced from all emergent themes to constitute a holistic context, consequently providing an overall understanding of the lived experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2016) as portrayed in the data structure (Figure 8). Lastly, the resultant aggregated themes were formed (Gioia et al., 2013) and during this process other unique themes, significantly different from the clustered common themes were identified. In all, this systematic grounded procedure was useful for developing a conceptual model (Figure 9) that was representative of the context from which all themes emerged as a basis for scientific interpretations (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

Figure 8: Analytical Categorization of Data with Policymakers' Representative Quotes

Aggregate Theme	2nd Order Theme	First Order Codes	First Order Codes Representative Quotes
Build Agents of action	Purposive recruitment	Own recruitment efforts	*"The key issue we look at is the level of poverty they're going through."* P2 *"Then I told them shea is a free commodity that one simply collects because no one owns the trees. So, it was a viable business for anyone. That is how I got 25 women"* (P7)
		Complementary recruitment efforts	*"... the local government staff give us theoretical views that enables us to generate an assessment form for recruiting the right beneficiaries."* P5
	Conducive learning environment	Spiritual support	*"All these women profess to be Christians, but they still all go to* [Ritual site's name with-held] *to appease ancestral spirits. I know it but turn a blind eye because I know how desperate they are in search for 'spiritual cleansing'."*
		Emotional support	*"We helped* [Name with-held] *open a bank account. Later, she borrowed money in the name of her* [tailoring] *business. She gave all that money to her husband who she feared would leave her if she didn't comply. He immediately disappeared for eight months as he went to live with his mistress and ended up dying there. Now in three days the Bank's grace period will lapse and they will collect the sewing machine* [her only asset, that she put in as collateral]. *All we can do is support her emotionally until she can get back on her feet, to show she can learn from such mistakes…"* (P8)
		Psychological support	*"This particular training not only targets the business side but looks at the psychological part also."* P9
Provide career choice	Female informal EET educators	What EET type is appropriate	*"We provide several offers, and the beneficiaries choose"* P5
		How to provide EET effectively	*"…We want to get quality people who can give the right knowledge to the child mothers."."* P2
Nurture Achievement	Human Capital (informal EET)	Social Capital	*"If you have a child, others cater for the child while she goes about the classes so that she is not distracted."* P1
		Start-up Capital	*"We offer these because some beneficiaries especially in tailoring, don't have machines, or the money to buy the machines."* P3

Source: Own elaboration

4.4 FINDINGS

This study sought to understand how policymakers' EET processes support marginalized populations to deconstruct gendered institutions in constrained contexts, for their individual and societal good. Based on the analysis of the processes that the participants enact, three gender inclusive processes emerged as findings. First, EET policy legisltors seek to build agents of action through: (i) purposive recruitment of learners to mitigate negative gender stereotyping; (ii) Seek provisions for learners' conducive learning environment. Secondly, they provide career choice for their targeted learners by: (i) ensuring the type of EET interventions they extend aligns with learners' contextual background needs; (ii) devising the most effective means to make this EET content available to the marginalized women. Thirdly, they nurture learners' achievements with resources for self-efficacy.

4.4.1 Building Agents of Action

The findings reveal that the overall goal of the EET policy legislators is to extend tools and resources for their targeted learners to raise to positions in which they not only tackle challenging gendered institutions for their individual but also for societal good. Thus, as a consensus amongst the majority, their view of the female EET learners was that of '*potential agents of action'*. To align with this EET overarching goal (building agents of action), this study's findings reveal that they incorporate two gender-inclusive mechanisms: (i) purposive recruitment of learners to mitigate negative gender stereotyping; (ii) Seek provisions for learners' conducive learning environment.

First, they engage in the purposive enrolment of marginalised female learners to tackle gender stereotyping. To achieve the goal of building agents of action requires that EET policy legislators possess more than surface knowledge of whom to recruit, as P5 confirms: "*We usually have our own questions based on what we want to know about the community or from the people we're looking to engage.*" This process is mostly achieved by policymakers' Monitoring and Evaluation teams: "*With the assessment forms, we move around in the targeted area and interview, for example, for the bakery project, we focus on teenage girls with children.*" (P2).

Their recruitment assessment processes purposively target post-war psychologically traumatised women with little or no education, rural dwellers addressing unemployment due to sociocultural norms and are vulnerable to gender-based violence or young women (teenagers) that have to raise children because of sociocultural constrains such as early marriages. While P5 provides a generalised perspective of their targeted learners' needs as: "*human rights and gender equality",* and P7 shares the same sentiment about their post-war predicament background: "*They all had the poverty and dependency syndrome problem having lived in the camps. They were dependent on foreign aid hand-outs."* P2 confirms their targeted learners' poverty condition and position: "*When you look at the kind of beneficiaries we select for the program, they are single mothers that need help in the community. Some are married but are struggling financially. Because of the war, many of them and settled in urban settings but live in dilapidated houses and are struggling with feeding. The key issue we look at is the level of poverty they're going through."*

In addition to their own recruitment efforts, the EET policy legislators also engage supplementary or complementary help. In some cases, they join efforts with local leaders of the wider society as P2

indicates: *"Sometimes we link up with them and we able to identify those who are in need within their communities."* P5's Organisation that is dedicated to women's empowerment through development holds Consultancy meetings with District sub-county level leaders and local government staff to align their work with local community structures adds: *"In those meetings, the leaders usually advise us on the sub-counties to target and also the kind of interventions which their community needs. We also have community awareness sessions, or awareness dialogues in those meetings. We don't stop at that, the local government staff give us theoretical views that enables us to generate an assessment form for recruiting the right beneficiaries, so we don't impose the intervention on them."*

However, to help break down these interventions into palatable knowledge, policymakers work with informal EET trainers that possess technical skills in assorted fields including cookery (baking cakes, cookies), agri-produce (shea nut, black beans, sesame) and processing, animal husbandry (bee rearing, piggery, poultry), handicrafts, tailoring, embroidery, among others. They post job advertisements over the radio or on their organisations' notice boards. P2 corroborates this: *"We put up the advertisements so that those who are interested can show up. We want to get quality people who can give the right knowledge to the child mothers."* Once they get interested candidates, they conduct interviews, intentionally selecting those who best suit the job requirements: *"The person who can give well versed knowledge concerning a skill."* P2. The number of EET trainers required depends on the number of targeted learners. Although some of the policy legislating entities recruited informal EET educators regardless of their sex (male or female), they concurred that majority purposively chose female trainers during the selection process. This tackles the negative attitudes towards women's ability to handle economic or business success, that leads to gender inequality in the business arena, as the informal EET educators possess reputable success in their fields of teaching.

An outstanding finding in the purposive enrolment process, however, involves undertaking precautionary moves. The findings of this study show that policy legislators do not entirely depend on what the local community leaders say, but rather, deliberately concern themselves with understanding the real pragmatic individual and societal needs. This mitigates could-have-been negative results as P5 points out: *"We work with them, although we don't wholesomely take them at their word because we know that as human beings, they also want to benefit from the projects. Some have had a borehole project planted at the vicinity of their homes, that should have been at a GWED-G Office. We appreciate that they are well versed with the area, but we go also there by ourselves and confirm if there's a need for that project or not."*

In all, purposive enrolment, whether through their own initiative or others' support, is a key ingredient in enabling EET policy legislators mitigate negative gender stereotyping. An in-depth understanding of *whom* they target and *who* they approach to supplement or complement their efforts contributes directly to attaining the goal as to *why* they purposively extend in EET: support marginalized populations to deconstruct gendered institutions.

Secondly, policymakers make provisions for a conducive learning environment that puts into consideration learners' individual and social needs, given their contextual background, as P9 affirms: *"Working with this community comes with many challenges. People are still stuck in the past. A small problem will trigger what happened to them in the past. It takes time for people to forget, and*

it also takes time for people to change their mindset. But they also can't keep living in the past forever, we have many support trainings involved in this training." Making provisions for conducive learning environments entails preparing strategies to prevent or manage likely barriers to learners achieving EET outcomes. I elucidate the provisions (resources) they put in place to nurture achievement in their third process below, however, at this stage I highlight the reason they need learners to focus without distractions from their contexts. The study's findings unearth that they hold and maintain a perspective of their targeted learners as: '*potential change agents*'. Viewing marginalised learners as agents of change requires to equally align the focus of their learners and partners (such as educators) with this view. For instance, P6 takes time to address learners at EET inaugural events: *"It's true you have lived in the bush* [displacement to survive in the wilderness when hiding from the rebels]*, you have been tortured, your parents have been killed. But you can still show the world that you can change things and become somebody."*

A conducive learning environment encourages reflexive learning. By reflexive learning we mean a pedagogical method, which could shift learners' attitudes and their identification with the entrepreneurial field. Findings show that through reflexive nudging and reflection, policy legislators are able to actively engage learners to generate actions (such as idea generation to resolve problems). P7, through her females' war survivors rehabilitating social enterprise engages prospective learners in question-and-answer sessions until they are able to identify the problem for themselves and propose ways in which they will act towards the change they need to realize. In her words, she intentionally provides clues to what goals they should aim for, beyond poverty: *"We asked them, 'Why do you think you're poor?' And they said it's because they didn't have any money. I said, that's not poverty. They said, they didn't have clothes. I said that's poverty, but not the poverty that lasts for long. Another group said they didn't have proper housing. I said that's not poverty. Finally, I said, 'Your children are not educated. There is no future hope if nobody changes this status.'"*

4.4.2 Provide Career Choice

In line with building agents of action, the analysis unveils that EET policy legislators' processes provide career choice to their targeted learners. This addresses two closely related mechanisms of understanding: (i) what type of EET interventions to extend to nurture learners' self-efficacy; and (ii) how to effectively make this EET content available to the marginalized women. Policymakers' processes of ensuring provision of career choice increases interest in EET, thus, boosts active involvement in EET activities and self-efficaciousness of the learners.

First, findings reveal that the type of EET interventions to extended by the policymakers matters considering the institutionally challenging and gendered contextual background their female learners encounter. The sociocultural exclusion for singly raising 'fatherless' children forces some of these targeted women into survivalist entrepreneurship to fend for themselves and their children. For this precise reason, findings higlight that EET legislators intervene with multiple career choices in entrepreneurship considering learners' entrepreneurial careers are born out of necessity, rather than out of choice. P5 elaborates how she enacts this choice: *"We provide several offers, and the beneficiaries choose what enterprise they prefer to go with: bakery, metal fabrication, beauty salons, ... it depends on what they want."*

While the provision of career choice process exposes learners to multiple opportunities and experiences, that would increase their interest, tackling inequalities where limited entrepreneurial career choice that is based on gender acted as a barrier, the reverse is true. P5 points out an extreme example in which one of the international NGOs extended EET without offering choice to learners: *"One of our teammates, a war survivor, was rehabilitated by* [name of the international NGO withheld]. *She was given some start-up capital, but what they gave her to do, isn't what she really wanted to do. They instructed her along with other women on what to do."* P5 narrates that her colleague abandoned the type of career imposed on them and later made the decision to *"choose tailoring"*, her field of interest and grew to contribute her expertise to benefit current learners interested in tailoring at P5's EET policy legislating offices.

In addition to provision of career choices that reduce gendered barriers to entrepreneurial career pursuit, findings show that the way EET legislators increase career choices is by expanding their interventions' scope, such as combining entrepreneurial skills with soft skills. This boosts learners' self-efficacy as it goes beyond economic productivity and returns to combat poverty through SMEs, to meeting the nature of learners' personal needs, given their context. P9 specified an example where counseling is offered along with the EET classes because their targeted learners lack confident and are looked down upon: *"There's a lady that came on the first day of the training, when they were going through the theoretical part, she was really broken and crying. So, she underwent counselling throughout the training. By the end of the course, she was an example to the people who don't think they mean anything to the society."* P5 adds: *"Training involves psychosocial support as I deal with ex-combats and child mothers and people with trauma from the war experience like their parents being killed in front of them."*

EET policy legislators' process of selecting what type of skills-set to extend to marginalized populations encompasses teaching *'through' and 'for'* entrepreneurship applied or hands-on mechanisms. The experiential mechanisms they incorporate in their EET interventions include using sports to fight post-war trauma, as distraction techniques. P9 elucidates why such overly experiential mechanisms are critical: *"Because child mothers face a different trend of problems: absentee fathers or violent relationships. So, we try to distract their minds off these problems."* On several occasions, it is during the EET processes, through the educators, that policy legislators tackle the lingering post-war challenges head-on. They also carry out monitoring and evaluation to ensure the EET interventions are running meeting learners' needs as P2 confirms: *"The reason we have our projects at 3km radius from our churches is that we want to be able to access and visit beneficiaries in their homes. We want to check out how they're performing on the skill that we have given them. We do monitoring."*

4.4.3 Nurturing Achievement

The process of nurturing achievement fosters and restores resources. For instance, through the educators, policymakers extend tangible capital (entrepreneurial skills), which is human capital in terms of taught EET content. However, the processes in which human capital is delivered, in turn, creates a special in-group social capital that is key in nurturing resilience towards recurring harsh patterns of gendered institutional inequalities. Furthermore, policymakers also avail non-tangible capital to include support in terms of spiritual, emotional, and psychological resources. P2

elaborates: *"We get them in to the Program so they get skills that they can independently go and implement themselves."*

Another strategy is to provide support that goes beyond extending entrepreneurial knowledge through EET, thus, policy legislators offer psychological and psychosocial resources as P9 confirms: *"This particular training not only targets the business side but looks at the psychological part also."* P8 adds why the learners need this support: *"This particular group, the child mothers, are so vulnerable. They're easily crushed. They give up so fast. But they don't see it that way because they have been through so much pain. Yet for us, we are looking at the bigger picture, they will not continue like this for long."* They reinforce this by establishing mechanisms to enable learners keep with the goal of these EET interventions, which in this case includes breaking the cultural norms that women are perpetual dependents: "Our slogan is; 'Stop begging, start doing something with what you have.'" (P7). Additionally, P7's organisation opened bank accounts in learners' names, far from the reach of their husbands (who culturally are supposed to be in charge of all household income), in order to keep with the savings goal: *"they realized that this was the safest way to keep this money for their children's school fees."*

Findings also illuminate policy legislators' nuanced approach with interventions targeting women confronting multidimensional marginalisation due to the contextual factors in which they are embedded like situational (poverty-inflicted), historical (post-war), geographical (rural region of a developing economy) and institutional (sociocultural norms). Their gendered sociocultural position (rejected for singly raising 'identity-less' children) escalates their already existing disadvantage such as in accessing formal sources of funding during the start-up phase (absence of collateral), nor personal sources (due to extreme poverty). Therefore, an explicate of all the findings is done to suggest theoretical and practical propositions on how policymakers' EET approach extends extant literature.

4.5 DISCUSSION

This empirical study illuminates the setting of an informal entrepreneurship education classroom, contributing to narrow this theoretical gap from policymakers' viewpoint (Hoppe, 2016) aimed for marginalized populations in constrained contexts. Building on research that highlights the pivotal role of context in understanding EET (Ramsgaard et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020), the findings uncover three gender-inclusive processes that EET policy legislators enact. Explication of these findings proposes a model (Figure 9) that builds on extant literature on the design of entrepreneurship education (Fayolle and Gailly, 2008) in terms of the: targeted audience (whom); objectives and goals of EET (why); content taught (what); teaching methods (how); and evaluation of EET results (which). Furthermore, the suggested model enables propositions for implications for both theory and practice in line with the developments of EET policies and institutional strategies (Hoppe, 2016; Pittaway and Cope, 2007) for constrained contexts.

4.5.1 Policymakers' Gender-Inclusive Informal EET Classroom. A Grounded Model

Findings emerged from EET policy legislators' perspective, to illuminate three core processes that mirror the three dimensions (agency, resources, and achievement) of the women's empowerment

framework (Kabeer, 1999). Considering that empowerment is an intrinsic motivation to act (Thomas, K. W. and Velthouse, 1990) and is fundamental for the progress and evolution of countries and their regions (Banha et al., 2022), policy legislators purposively 'build agents of action'. In building agents of action their role is to identify and enrol agentic actors who will tackle challenging institutions (Lawrence et al., 2009; Maguire et al., 2004). These include socioculturally marginalised women "*whom*" they target, and informal EET educators "*who*" they choose to work with to teach the targeted women.

Building agentic actors addresses the core purpose (the "*why*") of policy involvement in EET, which in this context fundamentally goes beyond providing essential resources for females to become businesses owners (Steele et al., 2002). Scholars advocate for human agency or the 'power within' (Kabeer, 1999) to intercept the temporary realm of gendered institutions (Deutsch, 2007). Therefore, for relevant policy formulation, purposive recruitment is the first inevitable step to map out the current status of the under-represented groups. The under representation of rural female entrepreneurs, for example, accounts for many inappropriate poverty-alleviation or entrepreneurship-promotion strategies (Gavigan et al., 2020). Thus, to avoid such instances, policymakers intentionally recruit the marginalised populations, to undo their own cultural and historical traditions that harbour social attitudes that support gendered stereotyping. This plays a significant role in boosting inclusiveness. Similar to the inclusive entrepreneurship concept (Pilková et al., 2016), purposive recruitment aims to undo negative gender stereotyping by involving under-represented groups with the goal of supporting them to address their given economic and social challenges.
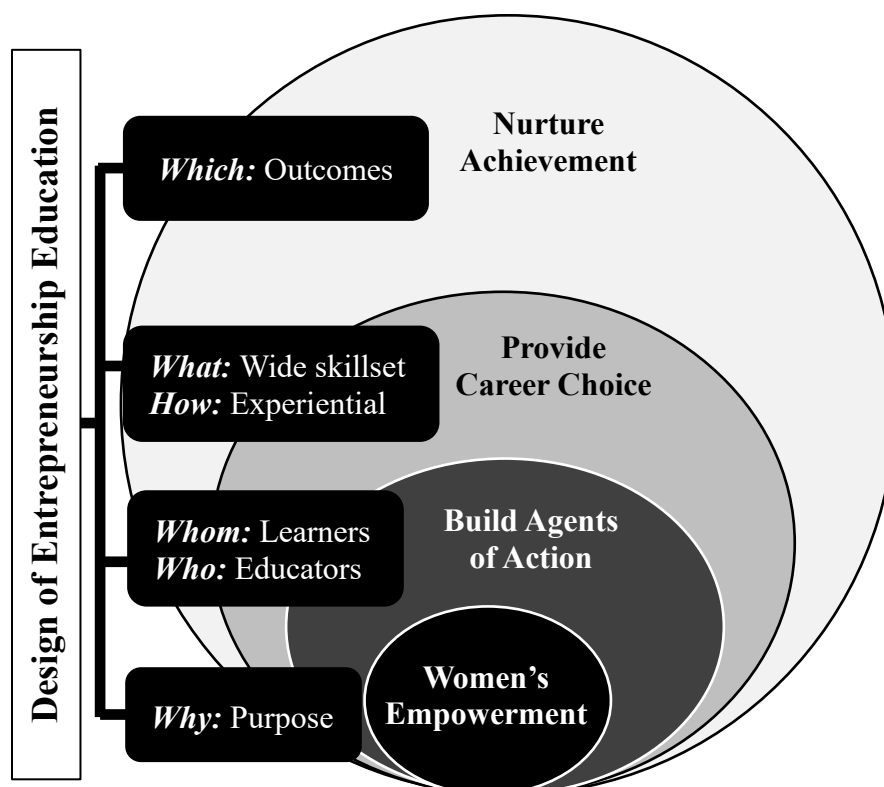
The process of purposive recruitment focuses on capturing actors' heterogeneity, unveiling their nuanced contextual needs. Grounded from the data, the resultant model (Figure 9) aligns with the fulfilment of government policy economic goals, as evident in extant literature, where scholars argue that EET promotes self-employment (Mwasalwiba et al., 2014). However, also evident in extant literature, while entrepreneurial activities may improve the women's survivalist livelihood, it possesses limited potential to lift them out of poverty (Chauke, 2015). In this given context, one would argue that the entrepreneurial goal alone is too inadequate in enabling marginalized populations to significantly challenge gendered societal norms. To achieve their overarching goal (the "why" dimension), the model establishes that "what" (EET content taught) the legislators offer their targeted audience goes beyond the limits of entrepreneurship.

Indeed, according to the model, the EET policy legislators through the provision of career choices extend context-appropriate skills-sets such as soft skills or intangible resources like social capital. This approach illuminates the intentionality of the legislators to align the type of EET (informal or hands-on EET) with contextual needs. Scholars argue that this type of approach mirrors what is mostly found '*through*' experience education rather than *for* entrepreneurship in formal education which is suitable for development interventions (Acs et al., 2008). Career choice provision encourages the use of multiple methods to boost holistic EET, similar to empirical studies in China showing how policy encourages EET through entrepreneurship competitions (Li et al., 2022). Such approaches not only increase learners' choice but also their interest in EET. On the contrary, where the national culture and societal norms is negative to entrepreneurship-related initiatives, this constrains learners' attitudes to entrepreneurship (Lee et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2011). The model further reveals that through nurturing achievement, policymakers establish mechanisms to enable

learners keep with the goal of deconstructing gendered institutions, such as sociocultural expectations of women's dependency on men or societal systems. This contrasts with critics of empowerment that suggest that empowerment interventions encourage further dependency, consequently reintroducing constraining structures of learners' agency (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Lovat and Toomey, 2009). For instance, the "how" (the methods through which EET should be taught) dimension enables a conducive pedagogical environment for learners to participate. In this case, policymakers encourage methods such as idea generation through nudging and reflexive learning, also evident in the recent developments in EET (Bosman, 2019; Casulli, 2022; Neergaard et al., 2021). The nudging and reflective approach increases learners' motivation and entrepreneurial intention to pursue the change they themselves have envisioned during the course of this process. This is important in reversing how extant research portrays women to positions where they are their own change ambassadors and therefore 'agents of action' (Herrmann, 2008; Volkmann et al., 2009).

In all, the surge in EET interventions for females, is not only reflective of the overall worldwide increase in EET pedagogy (Matlay, 2008; Kuratko, 2005; Martín-Rojas et al., 2013). It is also attributed to the contribution of women's entrepreneurship to poverty reduction, employment, and economic growth (Jones, 2014; Kuratko, 2005; Westhead and Solesvik, 2016). The grounded model offers an alternative and nuanced perspective of how policy legislators' entrepreneurship education processes support marginalised populations to deconstruct gendered institutions through three women's empowerment-related mechanisms they extend in EET interventions.

Figure 9: A Policy Gendered Informal EET Classroom in Constrained Contexts Model

Source: Own elaboration

4.5.2 Implications for Research, Practice and Policy

Extant research proposes that the design of EET programs be grounded from regional circumstances (Walter and Dohse, 2012) such as this empirical case study offers. Extant studies on interventions aligned with contextual needs show that EET processes allow for learners to acquire socio-psychological coping skills like empowerment, emancipation, self-esteem among others (Annan et al., 2013; Mukasa, 2017). While such results depict that EET is critical for legislating tactical responses to adversity (Mmbaga et al., 2020; Powell and Baker, 2014) be it historical or situational adversity such as war, we call for further studies that build on what our study contributes, to capture the longitudinal impact of policymakers' purposive interventions. Comparative investigations (different contextual backgrounds), experimentations, or single case studies could advance debates or knowledge into actors, such as policymakers' purposive role in meeting not only economical but more nuanced contextual needs. Specifically, they could advance understandings into how EET policymakers processes intersect at micro, meso or macro levels in the contexts in which they operate.

In terms of refining policy objectives to meet contextual needs, governments and their partners play a critical role in extending specific EET interventions, as our study along with others depict. However, in addressing the scholarly challenge of scarce evidence that entrepreneurship education successfully achieves specific economic outcomes because of the inconsistency definition of entrepreneurship (O'Connor, 2013), we propose a more nuanced sociocultural approach. Future lines of empirical investigations could therefore pursue a relational perspective of sociality, that is, how informal EET learners embedded in multiple cultural, social-structural, and social-psychological contexts perceive meanings of their individual or societal identity. For instance, we propose research questioning in the lines of how informal EET learners positioned at the intersectional gendered, situational (poverty, rural) and institutionally challenging context perceive their individual or societal identity.

In the same vein, considering scholars suggest that EET in challenging contexts should majorly aim for formation of support systems for entrepreneurs (Mcmullan and Long, 1987), we propose that future research extends to the study of actors in policy legislating positions and how they practically evaluate these types of learners' sustainable development outcomes from their informal EET interventions. Thus, future research could explore this article's model to ascertain if and how EET learning for marginalized women in constrained contexts supports the deconstruction of gendered institutions, implicating the empowerment and equality sustainable development goal that policymakers perpetuate. Considering EET provides ways through which institutional cultures could be remodelled (Jacob et al., 2003), I argue that both in theory and practice, purposive, finetuned policy EET interventions could illuminate cases in which cultural institutions shift for societal good. Therefore, in the formulation of EET policies, I propose that EET legislators take on a much narrower scope, acknowledging the heterogeneity of learners within wider representative groups, such as the women entrepreneurs in this case study.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Considering the poverty- stricken and institutionally constrained context of marginalised women in rural Uganda, this study provides empirically grounded insights from the perspective of policymakers, contributing to the formulation of gender-responsive EET. The findings offer a nuanced understanding of the design of a gendered EET curriculum, structured around Kabeer's (1999) three dimensions of women's empowerment: building agents of action, providing career choice and nurturing sustainable achievement. These dimensions highlight how informal EET can serve as a mechanism for women to challenge and navigate a range of institutional barriers spanning from internal constraints such as self-stereotyping. These barriers also extend to structural limitations including limited employment opportunities, restricted access to education, and prevailing sociocultural norms such as the stigmatization of single mothers. This chapter therefore proposes an 'informal EET classroom' theoretical model, developed from policymaker insights, which extends current literature on entrepreneurship education design (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008) and informs the development of EET policy and institutional strategies (Hoppe, 2016; Pittaway & Cope, 2007). In doing so, it contributes both theoretically and practically to advancing the role of context in entrepreneurship education and offers a platform for future research into how gendered barriers within educational and institutional systems might be addressed through targeted interventions (Deutsch, 2007).

PART III: CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis offers novel theoretical insights and avenues for future research, demonstrating that informal EET warrants a prominent position in academic, policy and wider debates on the role of entrepreneurship and education in modern society. The three main contributions of this thesis are thereby summarised in what the findings stand for in theory, policy, and practice.

5.1 An overview of the Thesis findings

The thesis uncovers several findings, explored from extant studies and data collected from fieldwork. The analysis of the overall data emphasise the need for key players in EET such as policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to develop and implement effective entrepreneurship education initiatives that address nuanced challenges women in constrained contexts face.

Employing an integrated literature review in chapter two, findings from the data suggest that entrepreneurship education can effectively influence gendered factors for women in constrained contexts. Following the three anchors of the women's empowerment framework (Kabeer 1999), data from extant literature provides a foundational understanding of the elements that constitute agency, including EET, that extend our understanding of the role of women's entrepreneurial agency in constrained contexts. This includes transforming individuals' sense of freedom from their contextual structural constrains (Jones et al., 2012) and enhancing their autonomy and emancipation from their imagined social status quo (Wadhwani and Viebig, 2021). Here, I the critique extant theoretical frameworks that implicitly tackles the essence of intersectionality, considering women's entrepreneurial agency in contexts with limited resources and opportunities is not only shaped by their gender but also by other contextual socio factors like race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. In this regard, I concur with scholars' suggestions to adopt tailor-made EET that meet learners' needs in any given context (Thomassen et al., 2020). For instance, scholars argue that although in developing economies entrepreneurship by itself is emancipatory and empowering (Hughes et al., 2012), for disadvantaged groups such as women embedded in constrained contexts, it is more tailored interventions, as opposed to generic ones, that tend to have beneficial outcomes (Elert et al., 2020). This lays a foundation for subsequent research, offering pragmatic research directions that extend our understanding of the extended role of EET in challenging contexts for women's entrepreneurship.

In chapter three, findings portray EET practitioners as institutional entrepreneurs that purposively act over and beyond individual-level capacity development, to promote community development practices and social mobilisation. The thesis illuminates practices of informal EET practitioners to understand how their: (i) enacted practices promote the gainful participation of marginalised women in entrepreneurship, and (ii) support processes of female empowerment and emancipation in challenging institutional contexts. For instance, the post-EET community development practices include building partnerships that facilitate wider community engagement. Their pre-EET activities (targeted recruitment, collaborating with partners and intermediaries, and co-defined learner-centred outcomes); and during the delivery of EET (entrepreneurial capacity development including technical, business and soft skills: scaffolded experiential learning and person-centred support) not

only empower marginalised women into gainful participation in entrepreneurial activities but also emancipation as they aim towards building a sustainable pipeline of institutional entrepreneurs.

The empirical study in chapter four seeks to understand how policymakers' EET processes support marginalized populations to deconstruct gendered institutions in constrained contexts, for their individual and societal good. This is through three gender inclusive processes that highlight the importance of tailored entrepreneurship education programs for women in constrained contexts. First, EET policy legislators seek to build agents of action through: (i) purposive recruitment of learners to mitigate negative gender stereotyping; (ii) Seek provisions for learners' conducive learning environment. Secondly, they provide career choice for their targeted learners by: (i) ensuring the type of EET interventions they extend aligns with learners' contextual background needs; (ii) devising the most effective means to make this EET content available to the marginalized women. Thirdly, they nurture learners' achievements with resources for self-efficacy. As such, the findings illuminate EET policy legislators as the resourceful support link that narrows the gap of inaccessibility to entrepreneurial knowledge and skills in constrained contexts such as impoverished rural post-war areas.
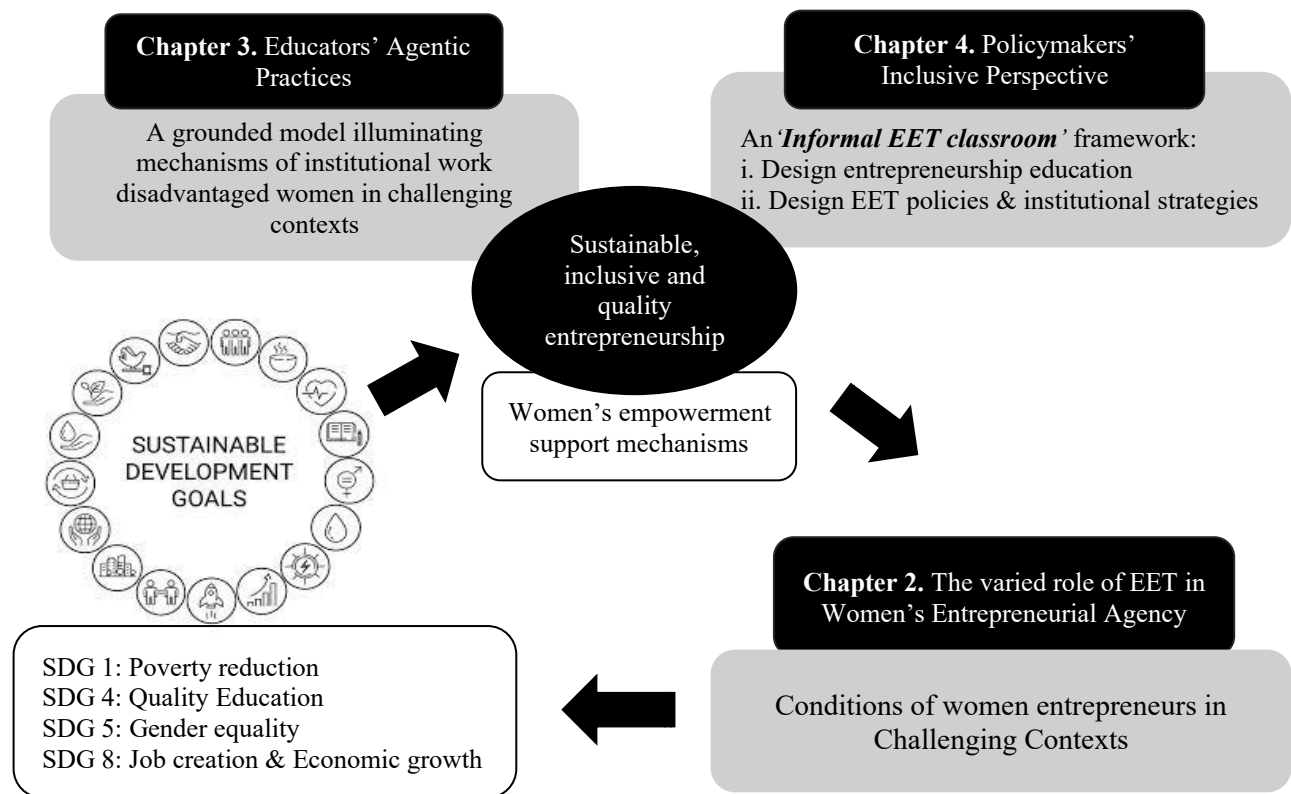
5.2 Thesis Contributions

Building on research that highlights the pivotal role of context in understanding the contribution of EET (Ramsgaard et al., 2023; Thomassen et al., 2020) for women's entrepreneurship in constrained contexts, the overall discussions of the findings of the thesis present three major contributions. The three contributions are elaborated in chapters two, three and four of the thesis, illustrated in Figure 10 below. While there is limited research on women entrepreneurs in African nations (Said and Enslin, 2020), for example, findings point to the need for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to develop and implement effective EET initiatives that address the specific gendered challenges faced by women in the continent's constrained contexts. EET is pivotal for those with limited access to formal employment and a constrained ability to exercise entrepreneurial potential (Chant, 2013). For instance, gender inclusive EET (Orser et al., 2019) rural development interventions for low-income earners in rural communities (Karlan et al., 2017) are critical. However, while women's unawareness of business information services warrants their need for training interventions, there is little or non-existent exposure to sources of knowledge and skills in business management in developing countries (Jiyane and Zawada, 2013). Other scholars argue that there is no difference between the business training required by both genders thus female entrepreneurs do not possess any special training needs (Tan, 2008). Furthermore, where studies elaborated EET programmes and their relevance to specific contextual needs (Brixiová et al., 2020; Koyana and Mason, 2017; O'Neill Berry et al., 2013), findings revealed dichotomous results. The intersectional perspective was employed to obtain both a holistic and a narrow, more specific understanding of the varied role of EET in women's entrepreneurial agency to contribute to sustainable development (Figure 10). To nurture gender equality such as boosting women's empowerment and emancipation, scholars suggest that actors such as policymakers consider agency-promoting EET programs (Porter et al., 2020).

Building on this premise, findings from the first empirical analysis in chapter three contribute towards research on entrepreneurship educators' agentic actions in the EET ecosystem (Fiet, 2001; Neck and Corbett, 2018; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010; Thomassen et al., 2020; Wraae et al., 2021), in view of the challenging contexts marginalised women operate within (Fluegge et al., 2019). In

enacting a targeted outreach approach for example, they recruit and engage marginalised women with intersecting vulnerabilities such as post-war trauma victims, refugees, or women with limited education, to challenge structures of disadvantage and address the discriminatory socio-cultural conditions (Namatovu et al., 2012). Hence, this illuminates how EET practitioners in challenging contexts expand on EET with an institutional work approach (Figure 10). As such, the thesis demonstrates that the practices of EET practitioners indeed align with definitions of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) and institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2007). Here, through the emergent conceptual model, the thesis expounds on extant knowledge on how female entrepreneurs could achieve empowerment and emancipation from oppressive structures (Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018; Rubyutsa et al., 2023) and also highlight how EET practitioners enable emancipation when they 'become part of the power struggle of an oppressed people' (Inglis, 1997).

The second empirical study illuminates the setting of an informal entrepreneurship education classroom, contributing to narrow this theoretical gap from policymakers' viewpoint (Hoppe, 2016) aimed for marginalized populations in constrained contexts. The resultant grounded model offers an alternative and nuanced perspective of how policy legislators' entrepreneurship education processes support marginalised populations to deconstruct gendered institutions (Figure 10). This involves processes enacted through three women's empowerment-related mechanisms they extend in EET interventions, that mirror the three dimensions (agency, resources, and achievement) of the women's empowerment framework (Kabeer, 1999). As such, their practices, such as building agents of action to intercept the temporary realm of gendered institutions (Deutsch, 2007), play a significant role in boosting inclusiveness to undo negative gender stereotyping by involving under-represented groups with the goal of supporting them to address their given economic and social challenges (Pilková et al., 2016). Through the provision of career choices, EET policy legislators extend context-appropriate skills-sets such as soft skills or intangible resources like social capital. These tackle negative cultural or societal norms to entrepreneurship-related initiatives, that constrains individuals' attitudes to entrepreneurship (Lee et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2011). Through nurturing achievement, policymakers establish mechanisms that enable learners keep with the goal of deconstructing gendered institutions, such as sociocultural expectations of women's dependency on men. For instance, the nudging and reflective approach contributes an alternative view of how extant research portrays women to positions where they are their own change ambassadors and therefore 'agents of action' (Herrmann, 2008; Volkmann et al., 2009). This contrasts with critics of empowerment that suggest that empowerment interventions encourage further dependency, consequently reintroducing constraining structures of learners' agency (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Lovat and Toomey, 2009).

Figure 10: Overall Contribution of the Thesis to Research and Practice

Chapter 3. Educators' Agentic Practices

A grounded model illuminating mechanisms of institutional work disadvantaged women in challenging contexts

Chapter 4. Policymakers' Inclusive Perspective

An *'Informal EET classroom'* framework:
i. Design entrepreneurship education
ii. Design EET policies & institutional strategies

Sustainable, inclusive and quality entrepreneurship

Women's empowerment support mechanisms

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Chapter 2. The varied role of EET in Women's Entrepreneurial Agency

Conditions of women entrepreneurs in Challenging Contexts

SDG 1: Poverty reduction
SDG 4: Quality Education
SDG 5: Gender equality
SDG 8: Job creation & Economic growth

Source: Own Elaboration

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

The thesis is not without limitations. These include methodological limitations as I undertook different research methods for the three articles that make up the three chapters of the thesis. The first chapter adopts an integrated literature review approach, to achieve the goal of understanding the state of the art in the dissertation's area of research. Thus, a well-defined protocol was implemented, necessitating several key stages for the literature review to unfold. These include determining the underlying research question, setting the search strategy (like the inclusion and exclusion criteria), data extraction and its analysis. However, this meant dealing with several clarity challenges on the outset of the integrative review given the size and nature of extant literature from various research domains. For instance, determining key words is a prerequisite at the start of the review to establish the foundation for addressing a common question; any slight change of the key words could result in different search results. As such, although I selected the data field based on whether extant publications provided data that was useful to answer the guiding research questions, it may be highly likely that some data fields that were not selected could have been useful for the thesis. Another limitation surrounds the reproducibility of the empirical studies in chapters three and four. While the literature review can be validated following the protocol proposed in chapter two,

the data collected and qualitatively analysed from the field studies may lack objectivity, conjuring up varied interpretations amongst researchers.

An important limitation encountered in this thesis is oriented towards the assumption that EET is universally good, a panacea derived from the entrepreneurship domain. Having explored, discussed and illuminated the benefits of informal EET, this thesis reveals only part of the picture as there may be some taxing experiences, opposite in nature compared to the positive benefits. Indeed, EET is critiqued as a taken for granted field (Brentnall, 2020; 2022; 2025), therefore, I acknowledge the limitations of this positive focus. The justification for this choice of focus has been highlighted in following the scope that the research questions would allow given the publication requirements such as maximum number of pages per article. in chapters two, three and four. , and re-stating your justifications.

The dissertation's empirical articles (Chapters three and four) draw on data from constrained contexts ladened with restrictive institutional factors (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2007), local development (McKenzie, 2021; Kühl, 2009; Vallejo and Wehn, 2016), and empowerment and emancipation (Inglis, 1997; Kabeer, 1999) for marginalised women. The empirical analyses suggest propositions that could extend more nuanced theoretical understanding for these areas. Here, the implication for research is that upon drawing on context (Thomassen et al., 2020), specifically those characterised as constrained contexts, the thesis illuminates a wider scope from which to theoretically extend the EET subfield. The ground to cover is even wider when related domains such as psychology or sociology are put into consideration. In line with extant propositions to design of EET programs grounded from regional circumstances (Walter and Dohse, 2012), the thesis suggests avenues for future studies to capture the longitudinal impact of policymakers' purposive EET interventions for marginalised populations. These could include comparative investigations (such as different geographical backgrounds), experimentations, or single case studies that could advance debates into policymakers' role in meeting not only economical but also more nuanced contextual needs. This impact could advance understandings into how their EET processes intersect at micro, meso or macro levels in the contexts.

In the same vein, future empirical investigations could pursue the lines of social identity, considering scholars' suggestions that EET in challenging contexts should majorly aim for formation of support systems for entrepreneurs (Mcmullan and Long, 1987). For instance, future research could pursue questions in the lines of how informal EET learners positioned at the intersectional gendered, situational (poverty, rural) and institutionally constraining contexts (culturally, social-structurally, or social-psychologically) perceive their individual or societal identity. Future studies could investigate the collective agency dimension (Pelenc et al., 2015; Rossi, 1997) as this thesis highlights it but has not fully pursued it due to the wide scope the thesis could not allow at this given timeline. Considering that the individualistic side of EET may, over time, erode or act against collective agency, such as success and failure perpetuated by the individualized EET skills focus discourse (Brentnall, 2020; 2022; 2025). Also, future scholarship could explore the proposed frameworks grounded from the empirical studies in the thesis to ascertain if and how EET learning for marginalized women in constrained contexts supports the deconstruction of gendered institutions, implicating the empowerment and equality sustainable development goal that policymakers perpetuate.

In conclusion, this thesis advances the scholarly discourse on entrepreneurship education and training (EET) by foregrounding informal EET within a women's empowerment framework (Bruton et al., 2010; Kabeer, 1999). Indeed, the findings in the thesis unveil novel, non-economic dimensions

through which informal EET contributes to the entrepreneurial success of women in constrained contexts. This challenges the predominantly underlying economistic focus of existing literature and underscores the multifaceted role of informal EET in fostering agency, resilience, and social inclusion. By explicating the interplay between informal learning mechanisms and empowerment processes, this dissertation offers a nuanced theoretical and empirical contribution to understanding how EET can more effectively address systemic marginalization in constrained contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participants' Demographics and Specializations

Participant One (P1): A Christian spiritual leader (Church pastor) running a non-religious community-based Association through which she extends informal EET to young girls and women, mostly immigrants because of the insurgencies in the neighboring Burundi. Here, she runs two workshops both at her home and church vicinities to nurture skills in assorted handicrafts like shoes, leather bags, African fabric, necklaces, among others. She is married with four children and attained advanced secondary school education. Her role as an informal EET practitioner was motivated by her lived experience (her late mother and current husband were diagnosed HIV/AIDS+), propelling her altruistic responsibility towards supporting socio-psychologically needy women.

Participant Two (P2): A primary school teacher with a tertiary professional training focuses on rural women in her local community and its surroundings to cover village women, mainly housewives, in need of enterprising hands-on cookery skills within their home vicinities. Her motivation in this specialty was birth from poverty levels amongst rural that need home-based skills training to earn a living without compromising wifely and motherly roles. Thus, she provides assorted baking skills (cakes, bread, cookies, among others) and business-related skills like marketing their produce and networking. She is a married woman with four children.

Participant Three (P3): Graduated from University as a professional accountant and currently runs an informal EET initiative focusing on exposing her learners to varied handicrafts, including woodwork. Because of her accounting background, she emphasizes financial training on top of handicraft technical skills to include product pricing, bookkeeping, making profits and creating village savings groups. She also includes leadership and governance trainings, focusing on how women can be good leaders and the value of networking. She was motivated by her first job as an accountant was in an NGO for women's development in the third sector focusing on agriculture and handicrafts.

Participant Four (P4): A University graduate and also secondary school teacher where she practiced over 24 years. She is also a community leader (commonly known as the local council female chairperson) and runs a home cottage program that was motivated by an understanding of women's struggles in sustaining a job and a home simultaneously. She centers on teaching rabbit and turkey rearing, emphasizing to her learners how animal husbandry sustains crop farming. The model she employs in her trainings includes theories of entrepreneuring (skills for business sustenance, business skills growth or revenue skills). Her trainings, focusing on business sustainability and business-to-business dependency, for instance, in agriculture (crop and animal husbandry), she emphasizes value addition (food processing and manufacturing).

Participant Five (P5): A University graduate secondary school teacher running two registered social enterprises; one exclusively for confectionery (baking cakes, bread, cookies) and the other on capacity building for women in business, such as informal EET or linking them to commercial banks. Having lived the frustrating survivalist business, she joined Enterprise Uganda's training for entrepreneurship and noted good progress once she registered making extra money. From

Enterprise Uganda networking, she got into the Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Association Limited (UWEAL) which allowed her to register as a chapter member for the Northern Uganda region. These entities recommended her to several other organizations, which reinforced her as a trainer.

Participant Six (P6): An architectural graduate who works majorly as a business consultant, offering business development services. She was exposed to the entrepreneurship and the business field in 2012 at the Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU), working on policies. She organized the annual International Training school for their third sector beneficiaries and identified gaps that she forwarded to PSFU top management. When they did not heed to her suggestions, she developed the urge to start her own Consulting Firm. In 2015, she run a UKAid-based consultancy firm that remotely linked Uganda entrepreneurs to volunteer consultants abroad which opened doors for her to work with different SME development organizations outside Uganda like Rwanda, Malawi, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Congo. She currently runs her business development consultancy firm.

Participant Seven (P7): A teacher by profession with a master's degree in business administration with a majors in Human Resource Management. She mostly trains rural girls and women (mainly housewives) in assorted technical skills like handicrafts, like shoes, bags, African fabric, necklaces, among others. She mostly works with NGOs and The AIDS Organization (TASO). Her motivation into entrepreneurial teaching was ignited after her recovery from a long-term sickness that had led to the loss of her job and had only sustained her economic through knitting from home.

Participant Eight (P8): A postgraduate University lecturer focusing on nurturing mushroom-growing skills amongst rural women whilst running a nursery and primary school. This was motivated by the flexibility because these two activities provided, allowing her time to spend with her family. In 2016, she undertook training on growing mushrooms of every kind and also studied a professional Managerial M&E program where one of the lecturers discovered that she was multi- equipped and recommended her to her superiors and other staff members to become a trainer for different groups of women. She offers trainings as consultancy work in assorted skills like making candles, glass cleaning agents, beads and paper bags, bar-soaps, shampoos and liquid soaps, which acted as a financial breakthrough when she ran out of raw material (cotton and coffee husks) for the mushroom business.

Participant Nine (P9): A widowed housewife and mother of three, solely trains mushroom-growing to women entrepreneurs using the home cottage (cottage industry) approach. She started in 1995 after listening to a Program over the radio encouraging housewives to grow mushrooms but began informal trainings once the overwhelming demand from her clientele forced her to look for more out-growers to increase her supply. She concentrated on training fellow women as out-growers considering the advantage of securing a good income from a home business suits housewives. She was motivated by her quitting formal work as advised by the doctors because of a severe cerebral condition, thus gravitates towards women without seemingly other survival outlets apart from entrepreneuring.

Participant Ten (P10): A 33-year-old, single, informal EET practitioner with no children. She is the CEO and skills consultant for her fashion consultancy company that deals in assorted handicrafts like shoes, bags, African fabric, necklaces, among others. While juggling her father's wholesale shop, another family company and MBA studies, broke down and she underwent depression, thus paused the MBA, and left the home businesses. She embarked on crocheting as therapy and worked hard until she could make a living from it. Once she established crocheting

as a source of income, she proceeded to train people. The trainings escalated with so much demand from the capital city to rural districts. She focused on training youth and women and runs an incubation training program that enables learners to formalize their businesses, with information about registration, taxes, among others.
Participant Eleven (P11): A business manager with an MBA focusing on training crocheted items like sweaters, dolls, dresses, among others. She used to have a job until her mother fell terminally ill. Nursing her mother was strenuous to her job and the medical financial stress became burdensome. She quit work and embarked on crocheting fulltime, to earn while having ample time to take care of her mother. Because of this experience, she started reaching out to women in similar positions, training them to earn from the skill. Thus, she does not have a particular category of people she trains; she teaches anyone (women, school-going children) with the need to learn. She also encourages those that may not have immediate use of the skill to learn it in case they ever need to earn from it in the future.
Participant Twelve (P12): A housewife with one child, teaching hands-on skills in crocheting assorted items like sweaters, dolls, dresses, as well as tailoring, shoe-making and liquid soap making. Growing up, her basic needs were covered by the earnings her mother made from selling items crafted with hands-on skills such as mats and crocheted items. However, it was not until adulthood when she lost her job that she embraced crocheting as the 'handiest' way to earn a living. Even then, she did not engage as a crocheting teacher/trainer until she was motivated by a Kenyan crochet-master who was successfully engaging Ugandan females in the skill and needed an assistant in the training sessions. Currently, the biggest percentage of her female learners reside in rural settings.

Appendix 2: Participants' Specializations

Participant A (PA, Female): A Women's Rehabilitation Project Enforcement Officer in charge of all national programs funded by at Christian Canadian international cooperation agencies.
Participant B (PB, Male): A Child Development Programs Manager in charge of sponsor-donor relations at a Christian Church Project funded by the Roman Catholic Church.
Participant C (PC, Female): A Child Development Programs Officer at a Christian Church Project funded by the Roman Catholic Church.
Participant D (PD, Female): A retired Member of Parliament responsible for women war survivors' business initiatives in the whole of the war-affected region of Northern Uganda.
Participant E (PE, Female): A Women's Development Projects Enforcement officer at an NGO that is funded by UN Women and the German government
Participant F (PF, Female): A Local Council (Five villages) female representative in charge of females' economic development programmes at council levels.
Participant G (PG, Female): A district representative for Women Affairs, running a post-war females' economic rehabilitation social enterprise.
Participant H (PH, Female): A Municipality (Five districts) representative for Women Affairs in the Northern Uganda region.
Participant I (PI, Female): A former Local Council (Five villages) female representative in charge of females' economic development programmes at council levels.