

Guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa

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degree *Doctor of Philosophy of Business Administration* at
the North-West University

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DECLARATION

I, Leonie Greyling, declare that the thesis

Guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa

is my own work, where all of the resources have been acknowledged through complete references. Correspondingly, it has not been submitted for previous assessment for postgraduate studies at any other university.

Leonie Greyling

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ABSTRACT

Although South Africa is recognised as being the second largest economy in Africa, it is constrained by rising unemployment. Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in achieving inclusive economic participation, renewed economic vibrancy and overall economic growth for South Africa, as women are considered to be societal- and economic change agents. Although there has been an increase in female entrepreneurship activity over recent years, lower levels of education and confidence, domestic responsibilities, balancing work and family roles, lower societal status, and cultural biases present a Pandora's box of challenges for female entrepreneurs. The recurrent themes in women-owned businesses relate to solo entrepreneurship, low profit margins, vulnerability to market disruptions and economic shocks, which hinder business start-up and growth possibilities. Research has found that founder-identity shapes the market opportunities that individuals pursue, as well as the capabilities and resources they deploy to bring their ideas to fruition.

This study aimed to cast a light on the interaction between female entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success, with the ultimate objective of developing a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity in South Africa, as a catalyst for bringing about a shift in aspirations. To understand the drivers of female entrepreneurship identity and its contribution to the creation of value-creating businesses, an international study was undertaken in South Africa and the Netherlands. The complex nature of the study was characterised by two separate social realities, namely subjectivist and objectivist assumptions. Therefore, as a balanced approach, two methodological research approaches, including the interpretivist paradigm and the radical structuralist paradigm, were adopted.

The research commenced with an interpretivist phase, incorporating a systematic literature review (SLR) and semi-structured interviews, followed by a structuralist phase, in the form of an objective, structured questionnaire to determine female entrepreneurs' attitudes, opinions, behaviours and characteristics. The SLR resulted in the development of a conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity, which was validated by means of a statistical model, substantiated by the findings from the semi-structured interviews and the results of the questionnaire.

The study found that identity development is a dynamic, iterative process of 'becoming', with a complex interaction between self- and social constructs, which deeply impacts identity authenticity or dissonance and the approaches that are adopted to achieve an appropriate intersection between feminism and entrepreneurial identity. The study highlighted that women's entrepreneurial confidence is influenced by context, and that a stronger social identity contributes to women experiencing increased entrepreneurial authenticity; while belonging to groups and having strong networks positively influence female founders' entrepreneurial confidence and their occupational self-concept, business aspirations and success.

Finally, a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa was developed through the triangulation of the findings from the SLR, the semi-structured interviews and the results of the self-administered questionnaire. The framework provides guidelines for the development of higher levels of female entrepreneurial identity development, while also recommending policies aimed at supporting female entrepreneurship in South Africa.

Keywords: female entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial identity, social identity, business aspirations and success, guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards



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ETHICS APPROVAL



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Economic and Management Sciences Research
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

30 October 2020

Prof V Leendertz
Per e-mail
Dear Prof Leendertz,

EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 30102020

Student: Greyling, L (25071017)(NWU-00878-20-A4)

Applicant: Prof V Leendertz – PhD in Entrepreneurship

Your ethics application on, *Guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa*, which served on the EMS-REC meeting of 30 October 2020, refers.

Outcome:

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number **NWU-00878-20-A4** is given for one year of ethics clearance.

Due to the Covid-19 lock down ethics clearance for applications that involve data collection or any form of contact with participants are subject to the restrictions imposed by the South African government.

Kind regards,

Mark
Rathbone

Digitally signed by Mark
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Prof Mark Rathbone

Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BWASA	Business Women's Association South Africa
EBO	Established Business Ownership
EDHE	Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education
EO	Entrepreneurial orientation
EWP	Enterprising Women Programme
FEMS	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
GDP	Gross national product
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMD	Institute for Management Development
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy
MIWE	Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs
NAFCOC	National African Federated Chamber of Commerce
NWU	North-West University
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
SACCI	South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SAWEN	South Africa Women Entrepreneurs Network
Seda	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SLR	Systematic Literature Review
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SSIRC	Social Sciences International Research Conference
TEA	Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity
WEgate	European Gateway for Women's Entrepreneurs

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Nature and scope of the study for a
guiding framework for female
entrepreneurial identity development in
South Africa

CHAPTER 1

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1. BACKGROUND

Entrepreneurship is widely considered to be an essential driver of societal health and wealth, while also being a driver for economic growth (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 11). It is also a vehicle for exploiting opportunities, promoting productivity and creating employment. This is of particular importance in developing countries, where poverty and high unemployment rates are rife (Ambrish, 2014: 224; Athayde, 2012: 709-710; Phillips *et al.*, 2014: 86; Sivvam, 2012: 13). According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's (GEM) 2020/2021 Women's Entrepreneurship Report, new business creation is largely responsible for global innovation, job creation and economic impact, with female entrepreneurs contributing significantly to the global economy and society (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 13).

Notwithstanding their valuable contribution, female entrepreneurs still face tremendous challenges in growing and expanding their enterprises (Gatewood *et al.*, 2009: 129). Research has also confirmed that, although females become successful entrepreneurs, a large percentage of their businesses remain small, with limited growth potential (Meyer, 2018: 4). While the number of female-owned firms with employees expanded at three times the rate of all employer firms over recent years, women remain underrepresented in their proportion of high-growth firms (Morris *et al.*, 2006: 221). Correspondingly, the Enterprising Women Programme (EWP) offered by the North-West University (NWU) since 2013, with more than 170 female entrepreneurs successfully completing the programme since its inception, has demonstrated that the majority of businesses established by programme participants remain micro-businesses.

Entrepreneurial opportunities and the challenges encountered by entrepreneurs are defined by the particular economic and social environment in which entrepreneurs find themselves (Smith, 2022: 7), with cultural context impacting profoundly on female entrepreneurship, both in their social acceptance as entrepreneurs and sectoral choices and constraints (Bhatti *et al.*, 2010: 134). Furthermore, individuals' socio-

economic status, the socialisation process and career aspirations influence aspirant entrepreneurs' desires and activities (Mueller, 2004: 203), while country-specific factors also play a role (Minniti and Nardone, 2007: 225) in entrepreneurial activities.

Literary evidence suggests that female entrepreneurs in developed countries are surpassing their counterparts in emerging economies (Ramaswamy, 2013: 164), with the number of entrepreneurs in many emerging and underdeveloped countries growing at a slow pace (Osman *et al.*, 2011: 5975). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's (GEM) *Women's Entrepreneurship 2020/21: Thriving through crisis* report indicates that female entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries continue to lag behind in their ability to translate their aspirations into sustainable businesses when compared to their male counterparts and women in higher-income countries (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 30). These disparities emphasise the required impetus for unlocking female entrepreneurs' aspirations to empower them economically, while also contributing to economic growth and creating a greater degree of societal equitability (Elam and Teleki, 2021: 1).

Emerging economies, such as South Africa, are characterised by low levels of development compared to more advanced nations, with relatively low gross national product (GDP) and low per capita income (Duttagupta and Pazarbasioglu, 2021: Para. 7). The South African economy has consistently underperformed, with growth in real GDP per capita declining since 2011, and remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, despite almost three decades of democracy (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 11). With its structurally high levels of unemployment and inactivity, which have exceeded 25 percent since 2016 (World Bank, 2021: 13) and reached 34.5 percent in 2022 (Statistics South Africa, 2022: 1), entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a vehicle for economic growth. Female entrepreneurs, in particular, are seen as important social and economic change agents (Osman *et al.*, 2011: 5974-5975), and they make a valuable contribution, as they are not only good for communities, but also a critical country- and world economic investment (Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, 2022: 3; Brush *et al.*, 2009: 8).

“Wathint’ Abafazi, Wathint’ Imbokodo: You strike the women, you strike the rock”¹.

These words, from the famous resistance song sung in 1956 by South African women in protest against oppression, are a true reflection of the strength and courage of women. Africa boasts the highest growth rate of female-owned businesses globally, but female entrepreneurs are still in the minority in South Africa, with a 0.86:1 ratio of women to men (46.2% female) in total early-stage entrepreneurial activity for the adult population in 2021 (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 21). However, there is an apparent strong will, resilience and determination to survive: female necessity-driven entrepreneurship is surpassing that of males and the women entrepreneurial activity rate in South Africa grew when many other economies did not, as demonstrated by the 2021 Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) (Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, 2022: 21). Despite these promising indicators, persistent obstacles, such as the digital divide that disadvantages women in rural areas, insufficient skills, inadequate policies and cultural barriers jeopardise enterprise potential and impactful outcomes. Evidently, much remains to be done for entrepreneurship to be a significant driver of economic growth, job creation and social cohesion in South Africa (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 11).

With its outstanding business climate, stable legislative system, highly educated multilingual workforce and superior logistic and technology infrastructure, the Netherlands is ranked number 4 in the world by the World Competitiveness Ranking 2021 of the Institute for Management Development (IMD). The Netherlands is considered to be a world-class destination for business activity, internationally renowned for its open culture, emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation, and is home to a thriving, collaborative start-up ecosystem. With its creative entrepreneurial atmosphere, the Netherlands is developing into a start-up hub in Europe and is rated as the 4th best European country for start-ups (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2022: 7-10). This is demonstrated by the slow, but steady year-on-year growth in Dutch female entrepreneurs over the past nine years, with an increase of 62% in the number of registered female entrepreneurs in the Trade Register of the Chamber of Commerce (on 1 January 2022) since 2013. The male-female ratio had also increased, with women constituting 37% of entrepreneurs in the first quarter of 2022, compared to 34% in 2013 (Dijkhuizen, 2022: 1). Despite this growth and efforts to promote female

¹Stage play, written and devised by Phyllis Klotz in collaboration with Thobeka Maqhutyana, Nomvula Qosha and Poppy Tsira

entrepreneurship, the Netherlands is underperforming in their female ambition level compared to other benchmark economies, such as Germany, Israel, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States, with women continuing to experience hurdles in the Dutch culture to build and scale a business. A higher fear of failure and lower confidence levels in their ability to start a business, compared to their male counterparts, plague Dutch female entrepreneurs. This is in alignment with other studies that found that, in addition to being expected to start a business with high ambitions and raise capital to do so, women experience pressure to demonstrate their capabilities prior to starting a business (Stam *et al.*, 2021: 7). However, the gender gap narrows once females have experience in building a business, with serial female entrepreneurs demonstrating greater levels of confidence in their capabilities to start a business than first-time entrepreneurs. Ambitious Dutch female entrepreneurs remain rare, with limited involvement in technology-driven companies as the biggest and fastest growing sector. Evidently, much untapped female entrepreneurship potential remains in the Netherlands (Chembolu *et al.*, 2021: 25).

While there is much potential for female entrepreneurs to contribute economically, both in South Africa and the Netherlands, women continue to face challenges such as being responsible for the household and childminding, while having fewer assets, as well as less access to capital and business networks than their male counterparts. Coupled to this is lower status in a patriarchal society, with the lion's share of opportunities still reserved for their male counterparts (McClure, 2019: para. 5). These factors contribute to women creating smaller, survival businesses (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022: para. 6), with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship limiting female entrepreneurs' business aspirations and achievements (Ahl, 2006: 598-599; Cliff, 1998: 538; De Bruin *et al.*, 2006: 586). Research has found that the growth orientation of women is associated with entrepreneurial push- vs. pull factors. Evidently, this is regardless of whether they were motivated by wealth or achievement, the female identity in the venture, or the role of equity partners (Morris *et al.*, 2006: 239). Morris *et al.* (2006: 240) postulate that modest- and high-growth entrepreneurs have different perspectives in terms of how they view themselves, their families, their ventures and the environment as a whole, and that venture growth is a deliberate choice. Identity has been found to influence entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions, particularly with how they evaluate opportunities (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011: 952) and how they respond to

adversity (Powell and Baker, 2014: 1406) as they prepare to launch and run their organisations. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of the content and formation, as well as the upkeep or change of entrepreneurial identity will contribute to developing important insights into the broader new venture creation process.

1.2. THE PROBLEM AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

As indicated, although larger numbers of females are establishing businesses, most of these contribute only marginally to the economy. According to Aarons-Mele (2014: para. 3), the majority of these female-owned businesses struggle to match their corporate earnings, with around 88% of businesses being sole owners that employ no additional employees. They further postulate that very few studies had been undertaken on female entrepreneurs' business growth ambitions, which means that the reason for female-owned businesses largely remaining small, is unclear (Aarons-Mele, 2014: para. 3). According to Navis and Glynn (2011: 480), entrepreneurship may offer one of the most visible instances of identity; however, literature does not extensively expand on entrepreneurship as a site of identity creation and interpretation. Although scholars recognise entrepreneurial identity as being central to the behaviours that entrepreneurs engage in, limited attention had thus far been paid to its content, the processes followed by individuals to develop it, and the potential differences gender may play in the construction of entrepreneurial identity. Furthermore, research that deals specifically with identity, and its construction among female entrepreneurs, is even sparser (Crosina, 2018: 93), with no identifiable research on female entrepreneurial identity in the South African context having been undertaken, to date.

When considering that a large percentage of South African female-owned ventures remain micro-businesses, together with the notion that entrepreneurial identity influences entrepreneurs' choices and actions, the question arises: *What is the potential role that the development of higher-level female entrepreneurial identity might play in catalysing these businesses?*

1.3. THE NEED FOR A GUIDING FRAMEWORK FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Although there is limited agreement about what and how entrepreneurial identity comes to be, scholars almost unanimously consider entrepreneurial identity as a key input to entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions, thereby implicitly converging on the role of entrepreneurial identity (Crosina, 2018: 93). To illustrate, Fauchart *et al.* (2011: 952) described how founders' identities shape the market opportunities they pursue, as well as the capabilities and resources they deploy to bring their ideas to fruition, and Powel and Baker (2014: 146) framed entrepreneurial identity as a lens that influences how entrepreneurs respond to adversity.

A guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development will offer guiding principles for incorporating female entrepreneurial identity development into teaching, learning and support practices. It will therefore be a valuable tool to structure and drive female entrepreneurial development programmes for South African female-owned businesses to bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood business (those that merely support the business owner's existence) to those that create value (businesses that are scalable, sustainable, and which can make a significant contribution to the South African economy).

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

1.4.1. Primary objectives

The primary objective of the study was to develop a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development within a South African context.

1.4.2. Secondary objectives

To achieve the primary objective, the following secondary objectives were formulated for the study:

Addressed in article 2

- Review the literature on female entrepreneurial identity development
- Review the literature on business aspirations
- Review the literature on the influence of female entrepreneurial identity on the nature and development of female-owned businesses.

Addressed in article 1

- Ascertain female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, in the context of South Africa.

Addressed in article 3 and 4

- Ascertain the intersection of social entrepreneurial identity and successful female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration and new venture creation, in the context of the Netherlands and South Africa
- Ascertain the profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations and business aspirations
- Identify the key factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development
- Determine the relationships between the factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To attain the objectives formulated for the study, the following research questions were formulated:

- What is the literature on female entrepreneurial identity, women business owners' aspirations, and the influence of female entrepreneurial identity on the nature and development of female-owned businesses?
- What is the intersection of social entrepreneurial identity and female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration and new venture creation?
- What is the profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations and business aspirations?

- What are the key factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development?
- What are the relationships between the factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research study design provides an approach for generating empirical evidence that was used to answer the research questions. The intent was to use a design that would result in drawing the most valid, credible conclusions from the answers to the research question. As there are many types of research questions and research designs, it is imperative to create alignment between the research questions to a suitable research design. Research design is also important in managing limitations and concerns in interpreting results, while explicating how the data should be analysed (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 28).

Research designs can be classified into four major categories, namely (i) quantitative, (ii) qualitative, (iii) mixed method and (iv) analytic. *Quantitative research design* emphasises objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena. As a result, the research design maximises objectivity by utilising numbers, statistics, structure and control. *Qualitative research design*, on the other hand, emphasises gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena, with much of the data being in the form of words, rather than numbers, with the researcher generally searching and exploring a variety of methods until deep understanding is attained. *Mixed-method designs* combine quantitative and qualitative research and can therefore provide a more comprehensive investigation. An important advantage of mixed-method studies is that the results (quantitative) can be shown, while also explaining why it was obtained (qualitative). In an *analytic study*, the researcher investigates concepts and events through an analysis of documents. The major source of data is authenticated documents, which the researcher identifies, studies and then synthesises to provide an understanding of the concepts or past events, which may or may not have been directly observable (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 29-34).

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006: 267-268) proposed a three-dimensional typology of multi-method design that differentiates between (i) the level of mixing (partly versus fully mixed), (ii) the time orientation (concurrent versus sequential) and (iii) the

emphasis on approaches (equal status versus dominant status). The *level of mixing* relates to the ratio between quantitative and qualitative research. The *time orientation* considers whether the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research occur at the same time (concurrent) or successively (sequential). *Emphasis on approaches* relates to the level of priority assigned to each phase, with quantitative and qualitative research either carrying the same weight (equal status) or with one phase carrying more weight than the other (dominant status) (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006: 267-268).

Mixed research involves using both qualitative and quantitative research within one or more of four components in a single research study, namely (i) the research objective, where the researcher uses research objectives from both quantitative and qualitative research, such as the objective of both exploration and prediction; (ii) type of data and operations; (iii) type of analysis; and (iv) type of inference. When undertaking a mixed-methods study, the researcher uses qualitative research for one phase of a research study and quantitative research methods for the other phase of the research study. Mixed methods could either be partially mixed, where the quantitative and qualitative phases are not mixed within or across stages, or fully mixed, where the quantitative and qualitative techniques within or across one or more stages of the research process are mixed.

1.6.1. Paradigmatic perspective

Thomas Kuhn initially introduced the term 'paradigm' in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962). Kuhn defines it as "*an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approach and tools*". From a research perspective, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 105) define a paradigm as being "*a basic system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways*".

Ontology relates to the nature of social reality, with a fundamental belief in an external reality, founded on reason rather than experience (Blaikie, 2007: 13; Merriam, 2009: 8), with its main concern being how people view reality (Mack, 2010: 15) and the inter-relation between people, society and their environment (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008: 13). In social sciences, ontology adopts the notion of social activities that take

place if there are resources and deep-rooted connections, and reality that is built through social activities by participants, using their cognitive skills (Blaikie, 2007: 13). One of the attributes of ontology is the clear division between objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism, as an ontological point of departure, considers individuals' actions and activities that exist independent of their social worlds (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008: 13; King, 2004: 6), with objective researchers believing that social reality has an independent existence and research must therefore take place outside these boundaries, while subjectivism presumes that people have the knowledge and that they are active participants in social and cognitive processes. Researchers who conduct studies from a subjective approach believe that reality does not exist independent of the individual, but relates to the individual (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008: 14).

While ontology considers reality, epistemology considers methods to reveal knowledge and the extent of knowledge attained (Blaikie, 2007: 19; Merriam, 2009: 8), including the degree to which people may extract knowledge from their environment and the way in which they acquire knowledge. Epistemology delineates the criteria to accumulate knowledge, methods to access knowledge, the process to evaluate whether the knowledge obtained is adequate, and the procedure to assess the limitations and foundations of knowledge (Blaikie, 2007: 19; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008: 15; Mack, 2010: 5). Knowledge may be subjective or objective in nature, and as they both provide knowledge and are dependent on one another in the research process, ontology and epistemology have an inter-dependent connection. Unifying ontological and epistemological theories constructs a paradigm and, once there is a connection between the ontological position – that which may be researched – the epistemological position – what we know about it – and the methodological approach – how we go about it, research is considered to be aligned (Mack, 2010: 15).

The main question that drives this study, *How could female entrepreneurial identity be developed to bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses?* is of a complex nature (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 50), with complexity relating to models, rather than genuine settings, and a focus on the structure of the system, how the respective parts relate to one another, and how they are holistically connected (Edwards, 1999: 72). As it was anticipated that there would be a high degree of interaction among the components, with patterns emerging, a multi-mode of

methodological approaches was adopted. This approach allowed the researcher to integrate different theoretical stances, with access to a wider dataset, while strengthening the processes and outcome of the analysis (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: 21-25).

1.6.2. Meta-theoretical assumptions

Any delimitation rests on certain basic assumptions. These assumptions, of which we may or may not be aware, can be broadly labelled meta-theoretical. They underlie methodological decisions and the design and selection of research methods and techniques for specific projects (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 24).

When researchers are conscious of their domain of research, aware of the boundaries that define their perspective, and are able to undertake an intellectual crossing to other research domains, research commences (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: ix). Research of a sociological nature considers the subjective-objective and the regulation-radical change dimension. When these two dimensions are a subset of each other, four sets of assumptions pertaining to research-thinking emerge, namely ontological, epistemological, human nature and methodological assumptions. These four sets of dimensions contribute towards four paradigms, each with a separate social-scientific reality of how they describe the world, with each paradigm providing guidelines of viewing a problem, based on different meta-theoretical assumptions, a mutual belief system, the identity adopted by those involved, and the method to use for solving problems and acquiring knowledge regarding the phenomenon (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 24; Cohen *et al.*, 2011: 5). When additional knowledge is acquired and the initial paradigm cannot address all the questions of the phenomenon, then the parameters of the paradigm should shift (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: 5). Research of this calibre is of a complex nature and requires more than one paradigm to answer the research question. Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm, which supports sociology of regulation from a subjectivist viewpoint (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 22), and the Structuralist Paradigm, which is rooted in a materialist view of the natural and social world that promotes sociology of radical change from an objectivist standpoint, were sequentially utilised to develop the appropriate positioning of the research (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) and to explain the theoretical position and assumptions for this study. As a balanced approach, multi-mode research was established, which contributed substantially to the research question (Leendertz, 2013: 6).

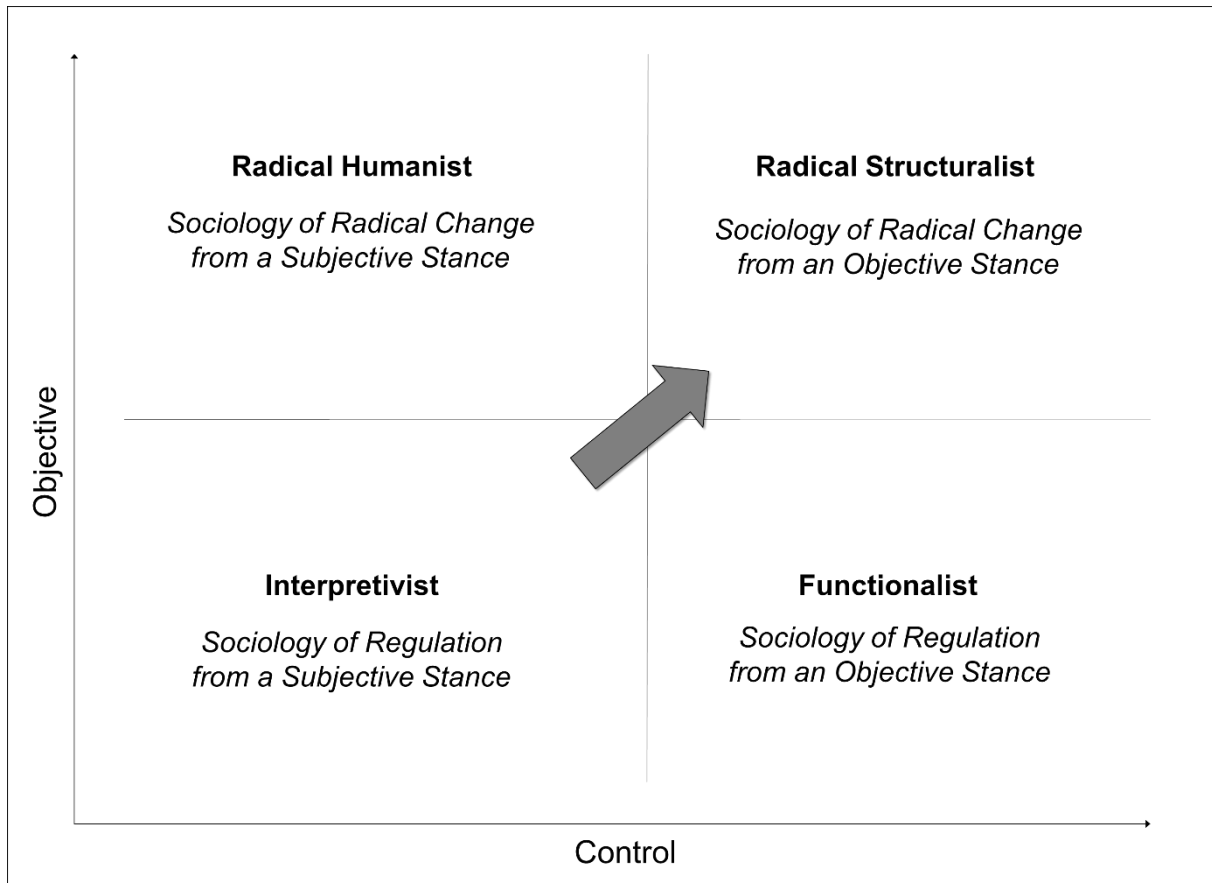
1.6.3. Theoretic assumptions

Extant research on founder identity exclusively draws on role identity theory, thereby applying a theoretical perspective that encourages investigation of different role identities within the entrepreneurial process (Cardon *et al.*, 2009: 511), the transition from a previous employee role into an entrepreneurial role (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010: 9; 18), and the differences between entrepreneurial role identity and other role identities (Murnieks and Mosakowski, 2007: 8). Drawing on a taxonomy of entrepreneurial activities established by Gartner *et al.* (1999: 220), Cardon *et al.* (2009: 516) suggested three entrepreneurial identities that underlie a passion for different kinds of activities in the process of creating a new business. These are an inventor role identity (passion for activities such as exploring new opportunities), a founder role identity (passion for activities related to opportunity exploitation), and a developer role identity (passion for activities related to growing a firm). In their conceptual study, Whetten and Mackey (2002: 398) suggested a link between founder identity and organisation type, such as “church vs. business organisational purpose” and “local market vs. global market”. They argued that a rough parallel can be drawn between founders’ selections of organisational forms and the inherent characteristics of individuals. Fauchart *et al.* (2011: 952) postulate that individuals who have a particular identity, identify and exploit opportunities along major dimensions – such as target market and the resources utilised to cater to that market – which are systematically different from those identified by individuals with other types of identities. Furthermore, they observed fundamental differences in the type of value creation potential that individuals associate with their opportunities, while they also developed intriguing insights into the different conceptions of firm performance, which founders with different types of identities associate with new firm creation (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011: 952). Based on these theoretical perspectives, the theoretic assumptions are that entrepreneurship identity influences the nature and growth of businesses, and that the development of entrepreneurship identity may be shaped or unlocked to bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses.

1.6.4. Research paradigm

Burrell and Morgan's (1979: 22-26) model of sociological paradigms, as depicted in Figure 1.1 is applied to explain the theoretical positions, assumptions and worldview, as applicable to this study.

Figure 1.1 Phase of complex research according to the four paradigms



Source: Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 22

The *radical humanist* seeks radical change, emancipation and potentiality, while emphasising the role that different social and organisational forces play in understanding change. This paradigm focuses on all forms of barriers to emancipation, in particular ideology, power and psychological compulsions and social constraints, and seeks ways to overcome them (Goles and Hirschheim, 1999: 253). The radical humanist acknowledges the ontological position of the social world and shares some attributes with the interpretivist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 32).

The *radical structuralist* emphasises the need to overthrow or transcend the limitations placed on existing social and organisational arrangements and focuses primarily on the structure and analysis of economic power relationships (Goles and Hirschheim, 1999: 253). This paradigm exists independently from the human mind, with the social world being characterised by intrinsic tensions and contradictions (Ardalan, 2018: 13-14), with social reality considered to be factual.

The *interpretivist Paradigm* adopts an implicit view, with interpretivists tending to be nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist, and ideographic (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 28). They hold constructivism views, which accentuates the attributes of the individual to construct meaning (Merriam, 2009: 9). Interpretivists challenge the ontological assumptions held by the functionalist paradigm that organisations exist side by side in a conceptual sense (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 31-32). They support a phenomenologist philosophy regarding humans by considering how their needs are addressed, how they perceive their environment, as well as the subjective interpretations of their environment (Mack, 2010: 7). Fundamentally, interpretivists seek to understand the social phenomena through the eyes of various participants in the social activity (Patton, 2002: 106). When utilising this paradigm, knowledge is constructed through interaction with other players in the environment, while acknowledging that multiple realities or interpretations exist for a particular occurrence (Merriam, 2009: 9).

The *functionalist paradigm* is concerned with providing explanations of the status quo, social order, social integration, consensus, need satisfaction and rational choice. Functionalists seek to explain how the individual elements of a social system interact to form an integrated whole (Goles and Hirschheim, 1999: 253).

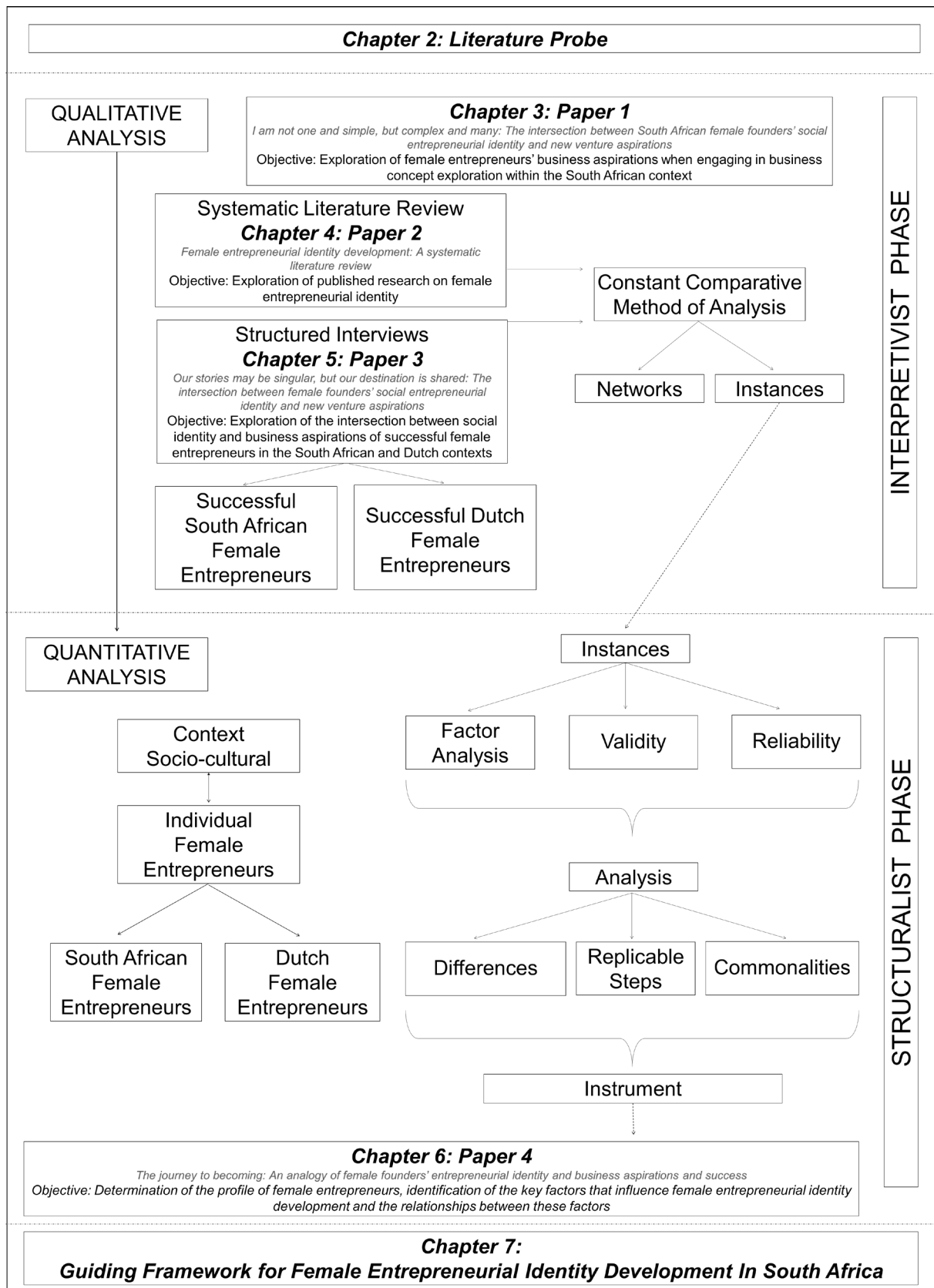
The complex nature of this study is characterised by two separate social realities, namely objectivist and subjectivist assumptions. Therefore, as a balanced approach, two methodological research approaches, incorporating the interpretivist paradigm, which supports sociology of regulation from a subjectivist standpoint (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 22), and the radical structuralist paradigm, which is rooted in a materialist view of the natural and social world that promotes sociology of radical change from an objectivist standpoint (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 26-28) were adopted.

1.6.5. Sequential equal status multi-mode study design

Given the complex nature of the research questions, a multi-mode approach was adopted as a means to (i) integrate different theoretical stances of considering the research problem, (ii) gain access to more diverse data when conducting the research and (iii) strengthening the process and outcomes of the analysis (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The three-dimensional typology of multi-method design, as conceptualised by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2006: 267-268), which differentiates the level of mixing (partially versus fully mixed), the time orientation (concurrent versus sequential) and the emphasis on approaches (equal versus dominant status), was applied to this research. Therefore, sequential, partially mixed research was undertaken, which means that the qualitative and quantitative elements were conducted sequentially in its entirety, before being mixed at the data interpretation stage (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2006: 267). As each phase of the research was of equivalent value, equal status research was undertaken.

Figure 1.2 depicts the study design that was utilised to conduct the research study. Thereafter, an overview is provided of the study design, followed by a description of each phase, as well as the respective steps taken to conduct the research.

Figure 1.2 Sequential equal status multi-mode study



Source: Adapted from Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2006: 271)

1.6.6. Overview of study design

As a mechanism for understanding the drivers of female entrepreneurship identity development and its contribution to the creation of value-creating businesses, an international study was undertaken to explore the development of female entrepreneurship identity in South Africa and that of a selected developed economy, namely the Netherlands, with the intention of identifying the replicable steps in developing and maintaining higher-level female entrepreneurship identity, which may be implemented in South Africa. As input into pinpointing these replicable steps, lessons and best practices were identified which could be adapted for the South African context.

The research commenced with an interpretivist phase, with qualitative research to seek to understand and gain the opinion of those directly involved in social processes through constructs and explanations (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), while developing an understanding of the social phenomena through the eyes of various people. This phase addressed the theoretical objectives of the research study, namely to (i) determine what female entrepreneurship identity is, (ii) how it influences the nature and development of female-owned businesses and (iii) how it is constructed and maintained.

This was followed by a structuralist phase, with quantitative research to determine participants' attitudes, opinions, behaviours and characteristics, in the form of an objective, structured questionnaire to obtain the data to answer the research question. This phase addressed the empirical objectives, namely to (i) pinpoint the lessons offered by the evolvement of female entrepreneurship identity in the selected developed country, which may be duplicated in South Africa, (ii) the strategies that may be deployed to unlock or shape the development and maintenance of female entrepreneurship identity as an input into shifting aspirations from small, livelihood businesses to those that create real value, and (iii) how may a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity be used to structure and drive female entrepreneurial development programmes within a South African context?

Finally, triangulation was undertaken to cross-validate the datasets from the respective data sources and data collection strategies (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 7), with the triangulation resulting in the development of the guiding framework for female

entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. Each phase is described in more detail below.

1.6.6.1. Interpretivist phase

Conducting a literature review contributes to establishing important linkages between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated. Broadly stated, the purpose of the review is to relate previous research and theory to the problem under investigation. McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 85-86) postulate that there are six additional specific reasons for undertaking a literature review, namely (i) to refine the research problem, (ii) to establish a conceptual or theoretical framework, (iii) to develop significance, (iv) to identify methodological limitations, (v) to identify contradictory findings and (vi) to develop research hypotheses.

Two distinct types of literature reviews have been identified, namely (i) traditional or narrative literature review and (ii) a systematic literature review. A *traditional or narrative literature review* critiques and summarises a body of literature and draws conclusions about the topic in question. Its primary purpose is to provide a comprehensive background for understanding current knowledge and highlighting the significance of new research. In contrast to the traditional or narrative review, a *systematic literature review* uses a more rigorous and well-defined approach to review the literature in a specific subject area. Systematic reviews are used to answer well-focused questions about clinical practice, and unlike traditional reviews, the purpose of a systematic review is to provide as complete a list as possible of all the published and unpublished studies relating to a particular subject area. While traditional reviews attempt to summarise results of a number of studies, systematic reviews use explicit and rigorous criteria to identify, critically evaluate and synthesise all the literature on a particular topic (Cronin *et al.*, 2008: 40).

Considering the nature of the study, the interpretivist phase entailed a qualitative analysis, starting with a scoping study to ascertain the social identity and business aspirations of South African female entrepreneurs, followed by a systematic literature review (SLR) to identify dominant authors and principles in the development of female entrepreneurial identity. A formally structured and stringent search of existing literature, with traceable steps, which other scholars are able to replicate or contribute to (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003: 208), was undertaken. A series of search terms were applied to

a host of electronic databases and digital libraries to identify the primary studies for the literature review. Once the primary study was concluded, a further filter with inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied to ensure that only studies relevant to the research question were included. Paper 2, which resulted from SLR, provides a detailed description and the findings of the SLR.

Next, an analysis of the literature review was undertaken to derive the necessary input to formulate and conduct semi-structured interviews with a select number of successful South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs. Addendum 5.1 depicts the semi-structured interview questionnaire, which was developed to align with the literature constructs. Paper 3, which resulted from the qualitative study, provides a detailed description thereof.

Target population

A target population is considered to be a group of specific elements or objects applicable to a study (Charmaz, 2006: 18; Zikmund, 2000: 342) and should be described in terms of the elements and sampling units to be included in the study, the geographical area where the study will take place and the timeframe during which the study will be concluded (Hair *et al.*, 1998: 328; Malhotra, 2010: 372).

The target population for the scoping stage of the study consisted of South African women in three categories, namely (i) successful entrepreneurs with an annual turnover exceeding ten million rand; (ii) up-and-coming entrepreneurs with an annual turnover of less than ten million rand; and (iii) start-up entrepreneurs who were participating in an entrepreneurial development programme at the time of the study.

The target population for the interpretivist phase of the study consisted of South African and Netherlands-based female entrepreneurs, who own a major share in a business that had been operating for longer than five years, with an annual turnover exceeding five million rand and six hundred and fifty thousand euro², respectively. The data collection for the interpretivist phase was conducted over a three-month period in 2021.

² The Big Mac Index, considered to be the global standard for determining purchasing power parity between countries, was used to equalise the turnover value of South African-owned businesses compared to its Dutch counterparts.

Sampling frame

A sampling frame may be considered to be a list – for example, membership of relevant organisations – from which a representative sample may be drawn (Zikmund and Babin, 2013: 312). Sampling techniques are classified into two main categories, namely probability- and non-probability sampling (Coldwell and Herbst, 2004: 79).

For the scoping study, a web search was conducted to identify study participants in the successful and up-and coming entrepreneurs' categories, while a random selection was made from Enterprising Women Programme participants to select the women in the start-up entrepreneurs' category.

For the South African sample of the interpretivist phase, female business owners who participated in the Standard Bank Top Women and Thriving Entrepreneurs business networks were selected, as these networks are specifically aimed at successful female business owners. For the Dutch sample, female business owners who are part of a business network or association, namely the Bites and Business Network, the Borski Fund and referrals from Startwijzer, were selected.

Sample method

As both the scoping study and interpretivist phase focused on female-owned businesses operating within specific parameters, a single cross-sectional non-probability sampling approach was adopted. To avoid convenience sampling, demographic markers such as age, ethnicity, educational levels and business location were considered. This contributed to ensuring that the sample was representative of the target population, while allowing for findings to be extrapolated for the population at large.

Sample size

For the scoping study, thirteen women were selected for each of the categories, with a total of twenty-nine women participating in the study.

The original intention was to select eight successful female entrepreneurs from the South African and Dutch contexts to participate in face-to-face interviews. However, given Covid-19 restrictions, Zoom interviews were conducted with seven women, at which point no new information or themes were observed in the data, with data

saturation occurring within both contexts. This is in line with other female entrepreneurial identity studies, with Martin *et al.* (2020: 316) and Adapa and Sheridan (2016: 26) who each studied three participants, Mills and Pawson (2011: 590) who studied eight participants and Hewapathirana (2011: 179) who studied five participants.

Measuring instrument and data collection method

Following on conclusion of the scoping study, a strong SLR was conducted to explore knowledge relating to female entrepreneurial identity, with the scientifically applied process providing constructs for developing semi-structured interview questions. For participants to reflect on the themes being explored, the semi-structured interview questionnaire was shared with participants prior to the interview.

Upon completion of the recorded Zoom interviews, audio and video files were exported and coded in ATLAS.ti™. The guidelines for coding and analysing qualitative data (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019: 2-24) were applied to identify and code the participants' identity meanings (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011: 940). A hybrid coding approach, which incorporated both deductive codes based on theoretical concepts, and inductive codes derived from the interviews, was adopted. The coding was followed by an analysis to determine how the intersection of identity and aspirations influences new venture exploration choices. The relevant statistical procedures are reported in detail in Article 3 (Chapter 5).

1.6.6.2. Structuralist phase

The structuralist phase incorporated the individual level (the female entrepreneur) and the context level (the social environment) to analyse the interaction between the entrepreneur and her socio-cultural context, and how this influences the development of entrepreneurial identity, and consequently, the entrepreneur's choice of business and its subsequent development.

Target population

The target population for the structuralist phase of the study consisted of South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs who owned a major share in a business at any stage

of development. The data collection for the structuralist phase was conducted over a five-month period in 2022.

Sampling frame

Business networks or associations were identified to reach potential study participants. The South African organisations included the Business Women's Association South Africa (BWASA), Future Females, South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI), Golden Triangle Chamber of Commerce (GTCOC), South Africa Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN), National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC), Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), Enterprising Women Programme Alumni, Enterprise Room, Fetola, Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) and Femalepreneurs. The Dutch organisations included Business Network Bites and Business, European Gateway for Women's Entrepreneurs (WEgate), Borski Fund, Future Females, Women Entrepreneurs Netherlands and the Dutch Branch of Enterprise Europe Network.

Sample method

A single cross-sectional non-probability sampling approach was adopted, utilising a combination of two non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was first employed, since it focuses on the characteristics of a population that addresses the objective of the study, in this case female entrepreneurs owning a business (Crossman, 2020: Para. 1). Secondly, given that the demographics from which the sample would be drawn were unknown, a convenience sampling technique was utilised.

The following methods were deployed to obtain the sample:

- Contacting the various business networks and organisations, on the understanding that they would share the details of the study with their members so as to comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)
- To identify additional study participants, snowball sampling techniques were utilised
- A business networking and branding specialist was utilised to identify additional business networks and organisations, as well as individual female entrepreneurs to participate in the study.

To overcome the limitations of using convenience sampling (Martinez-Mesa *et al.*, 2016: 328), business- and personal demographics, such as business duration, age and educational level, were included in the questionnaire. Doing so contributed to the representativity of the sample and the degree to which the study findings might be generalised to the larger population.

Sample size

It was estimated that a sample size of 100 female entrepreneurs would be sufficient for the structuralist phase of the study. The final sample size amounted to 80 usable questionnaires, which is in line with other female entrepreneurship studies: Steenkamp investigated 45 respondents (2016: 10), Stander investigated 87 respondents (2011:60) and Rasego investigated 58 respondents (2011: 57) in their studies.

Measuring instrument and data collection method

The interpretivist phase, which incorporated a systematic literature review and in-depth interviews, provided the constructs for the structuralist phase of the study. A worldview approach was adopted to develop an understanding of the attitudes, values, stories and expectations of female entrepreneurs, while gaining insight into how culture works out in individual practice (Sire, 2004: 43). To do so, an objective, structured, self-administered online questionnaire was developed and administered. Cohen *et al.*'s (2011: 259) 14 stages of questionnaire design and development were adopted, as depicted in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Stages of questionnaire development

Stages	Focus of each stage
Stage 1	Define the aim
Stage 2	Determine which type of survey to use
Stage 3	Formulate research question
Stage 4	Identify the aspects on which to focus
Stage 5	Clarify the information that is required to address the research question
Stage 6	Determine the target population
Stage 7	Compile the questions and metrics
Stage 8	Develop the instrument
Stage 9	Determine data collection strategies
Stage 10	Pilot the instrument
Stage 11	Prepare for data collection
Stage 12	Collect the data
Stage 13	Analyse the data
Stage 14	Report the findings

Source: Adapted from Cohen *et al.* (2011: 259)

Addendum 6.1 depicts the self-administered survey questionnaire, which was developed to align with both the literature- and interview constructs. The respective segments and parts of the questionnaire incorporated the following:

Segment 1 posed closed-end multiple-choice questions to which participants could respond by selecting one or more of the provided options, with the alternative to provide additional information. This segment included:

- **Part A** of the questionnaire posed business dynamics questions to ascertain the location (A1), duration (A2), business sector (A3), partnership structure (A4), male-female partnership ratio (A5), equity distribution (A6), sources of start-up capital (A7), and turnover levels (A9).

- **Part B** posed questions to ascertain respondents' entrepreneurial journey, including motivation for starting the business (B1), business aspirations (B2), elements required for successful business initiation (B3), founder characteristics (B4), identification of the business concept (B5), and success definition (B6).
- **Part C** sought to understand identity constructs by exploring founders' community involvement (C1), exposure to entrepreneurship (C2), and development of confidence (C3).
- **Part D** explored female identity in the eyes of other people, by posing questions about others' initial views of the founder (D1) and others' current views of the founder (D2).
- **Part E** posed questions regarding entrepreneurial development, including participation in a formalised business development programme (E1), and influence of such participation on business evolution (E2).
- **Part F** explored respondents' demographic features and included questions regarding ethnic group (F1: important within the South African context), age (F2), marital status (F3), number of children (F4), educational levels (F5), and employment tenure prior to business initiation (F6).

Segment II incorporated questions to which respondents were required to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement, using a six-point Likert scale (1932), ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) disagree somewhat, (4) agree somewhat, (5) agree to (6) strongly agree. This segment included:

- **Part G** further explored identity constructs, by posing questions related to the role of industry experience in founders' position to start a business (G1), networks and group belonging when initiating the business (G2), the influence of networks and group belonging to start a business (G3), the role of current network and group belonging on business evolution (G4), the influence of belonging to a social group of peers on comfort and confidence levels (G5), the relationship between cultural background and earning business respect (G6), and emotional support to develop a successful venture (G7).
- **Part H** further explored female identity, by exploring founders' confidence in entrepreneurial role (H1), emotional support to start a business (H2), the

influence of role in family on business evolution (H3), others' questioning of female founders' abilities (H4), work-home balance (H5), influence of family responsibilities on business responsibilities (H6), role association when initiating the business (H7), shift in role association over time (H8), current role association (H9), founders' adoption of male stereotypical behaviour (H10), the need to accommodate opposing responsibilities (H11), satisfying conflicting social identities (H12), founders' purposeful adoption of feminised entrepreneurial identity (H13), founders' rejection of restrictive femininity and adoption of authoritarian masculinities (H14), internal conflicts due to demands of contextually different situations (H15), association with entrepreneurship as a result of public role models (H16), alignment between entrepreneurship and founders' self-concept (H17), impact of imposter phenomenon on business growth goals (H18), and identification with the business and fulfilment (H19).

- **Part I** further posed questions about founders' entrepreneurial journey, including reservations to start a business (I1), partners' and core teams' confidence within their roles (I2), founders' uncertainties and resistance relating to stereotypical views (I3), others' uncertainties and resistance relating to stereotypical views (I4), influence of stereotypical treatment of women on the business (I5), influence of society's traditional roles of women on business (I6), attaining entrepreneurial legitimacy within the context of masculine ethos of entrepreneurship (I7), access to similar opportunities as male counterparts (I8), specific role players' bias towards male entrepreneurs (I9), relationship between self-doubt and intentionally imposing business growth limitations (I10), and industry sector-specific gender perceptions (I11).
- **Part J** further explored entrepreneurial development by posing questions about female entrepreneurial role models (J1), the role of entrepreneurship education in supporting female entrepreneurs (J2), and the advancement of female entrepreneurship through tailored programmes (J3).

The questionnaire was pre-tested by two individuals with extensive business management and development experience. This step aided in avoiding and reducing data collection errors and ambiguous questions, while also improving the reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was then shared with potential respondents for participation on a voluntary basis, with no incentive for participation.

Addendum 7.1 depicts how the qualitative- and quantitative studies addressed the empirical objectives. As can be seen, there is appropriate alignment for the empirical objectives to have been attained.

1.7. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The structuralist phase was concluded by analysing the data derived from the quantitative study, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0. The statistical analysis comprised the collection, organising and interpretation of data to reveal similarities and differences within female entrepreneurs' socio-cultural contexts and how this influences the development of entrepreneurial identity, and consequently, their business choices. Methods deployed for this study included:

- Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation) to develop a profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographic and business dynamics,
- Inferential Statistics (exploratory factor analysis),
- Sampling appropriateness (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin),
- Measure of variance and quality scores (Bartlett's test),
- Reliability of the scales (Cronbach's alpha),
- Correlations (Levene's test for equality of variance and t-test for equality of means), and
- Bootstrapping to determine whether the correlations were significant ($p < 0.05$).

The analysis and interpretation of the data, using both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, was supervised by the North-West University's (NWU) Statistical Consultation Services. The relevant statistical procedures are reported in detail in Article 4 (Chapter 6).

1.8. ROADMAP TO THE THESIS

The following should be borne in mind, when reading this thesis:

- The work comprises seven parts in sequence: an introduction, a literature probe, four articles and a conclusion.

- The PhD candidate (Greyling, L.) was the first author on each of the articles. As first author, the PhD candidate acquired, analysed, interpreted the data, and drafted the works. The second author (Leendertz, V.) contributed towards the conception and design of the study and reviewed the drafted works. In one instance, a third author (Van der Merwe, H.J.) reviewed the drafted work. The Assistant Promoter (Mostert, C.L.) to the PhD candidate provided input into the subject disciplines and assisted with obtaining depth in the literature probe. The PhD candidate, as first author, therefore contributed more than 50% to all articles, as required by the North-West University. At the time this thesis was submitted for examination, one of the four articles have been accepted for publication and the other three articles had been submitted for review and passed initial screening by the respective journals:
 - Greyling, L. and Leendertz, V. 2022. I am not one and simple, but complex and many: The intersection of female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations: Social Sciences International Research Conference 2022 (Published in conference proceedings).
 - Greyling, L.; Leendertz, V. and Van der Merwe, H.J. 2022. Female entrepreneurial identity development: A systematic literature review: Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship (Submitted for review, with feedback for revision received).
 - Greyling, L. and Leendertz, V. 2022. Our stories may be singular, but our destination is shared: The intersection between female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations: International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship (Submitted for review, passed initial screening, and is being given full consideration for publication).
 - Greyling, L. and Leendertz, V. 2022. The journey to becoming: An analogy of female founders' entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success: International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research (Submitted for review, passed initial screening and is awaiting reviewer invitation).
- The four research papers focus on the respective aspects of the study, namely an introductory article, SLR, qualitative study conducted with the aid of semi-structured interviews, and quantitative study conducted with the aid of a self-administered online survey questionnaire.

- The SLR achieved the theoretical objectives. Table 7.1, which demonstrates the alignment between the empirical objectives and the qualitative- and quantitative studies, indicates that these objectives were satisfactorily achieved.
- The papers collectively address the research questions and sub-questions.
- The individual papers comply with the author guidelines prescribed by the individual publishing houses or conference organisers. These guidelines incorporate the font type and size, layout and bibliographical style. The Sage Harvard referencing style was used in the introductory and conclusive sections of the research.
- Chapter and paper references are incorporated into each of the chapters and papers.

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to realise that the ethical issues of research are intricate and pervasive, and that information obtained during research should not be used at the expense of others. Researchers should adhere to two basic principles of ethical responsibility, namely responsibility to those who participate in the research, and responsibility to the discipline of science, which requires accuracy and honesty in the reporting of research (Strydom, 2005: 56-69). Therefore, ethical standards of academic research were adhered to, with the key focus being on voluntary participation, full disclosure, informed consent and privacy, no harm or risk to research participants, legal constraints, professional integrity and the requirements of the institutional review board (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 129-136). In addition to the above ethical standards, which were applied to both the quantitative and qualitative research, the ethical guidelines for qualitative research, namely policy on informed consent, duplicity, confidentiality, privacy, anonymity and compassion (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 129-136), were adhered to. The requisite ethical clearances and approvals were obtained from the North-West University's Ethics Committee prior to commencement of the interpretivist phase, followed by further ethics clearance and approval prior to the structuralist phase, under ethics clearance number **NWU-00878-20-A4**. The questionnaire included an informed consent letter, detailing the nature and scope of the study, with the option for respondents to withdraw from the study at any point.

1.10. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

Female entrepreneurship is widely considered to be an engine for economic growth and social change, with scholars almost unanimously agreeing that entrepreneurial identity is a key input to entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions. However, focused female entrepreneurship identity research is still fragmented and at an exploratory stage, with research on female entrepreneurs' business aspirations being limited. Consequently, the body of research on the intersection between female entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations is even sparser. Specifically, no previous research with regards to female entrepreneurial identity in the South African context were identified, and while other researchers had conducted SLRs on entrepreneurial identity, the studies did not focus specifically on *female* entrepreneurial identity. This study makes a theoretical contribution, enhances the body of knowledge, and provides practical application of the knowledge in the following ways:

- The SLR provides an in-depth overview of female entrepreneurial identity, while also offering a conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity
- The custom-designed questionnaire provides a useable instrument for determining how female founders' identities evolve and how business aspirations and success intersect
- The statistical model for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa improves explanations, generates discourse and provides a visual representation of the abstract concepts relating to female entrepreneurial identity
- The study identifies the factors that contribute to the development of female entrepreneurial development and explicates the relationship between these factors and business aspirations
- The study culminates in a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa, which may aid female entrepreneurship development programme designers in incorporating interventions for the development of higher levels of female entrepreneurial identity development, which may bring about a shift from small, livelihood to sustainable, scalable businesses

- Application of the knowledge gained could aid in the development of policies aimed at supporting female entrepreneurship, particularly in the South African context.

1.11. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused on obtaining primary data from female entrepreneurs with a major share in a business. Data, incorporating a qualitative study with seven successful female entrepreneurs, and a quantitative study, incorporating 80 respondents, was collected from South Africa and the Netherlands.

1.12. THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

This chapter provides an overview of the research study, an introduction, and relevant background to the study, while incorporating a motivation for conducting the research, an outline of the problem statement, and the research objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature probe

The papers included in this study collectively address the primary research question and sub-questions, with an applicable literature review included in each of the papers. As a separate paper, a systematic literature review contextualises female entrepreneurial identity development. Consequently, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the South African economy and the significance of female entrepreneurship as a mechanism for increasing economic activity, while also providing a synthesis of the respective literature reviews incorporated in the papers.

Chapter 3: Paper 1: *I am not one and simple, but complex and many: The intersection of female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations*

As an introductory paper, this paper sought to synthesise social identity theory and female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, with the focus being on female founders' identities within the South African context. The study was initiated on the understanding that most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or achieve autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth (Shane *et al.*, 2003: 275; Fauchart *et al.*, 2011: 949). However, although 72 percent of the female entrepreneurs in the sample can be categorised as having a Maxeke identity (economic motives), ten percent demonstrate a Tamana identity (social motives), while a further 18 percent demonstrate a hybrid Maxeke-Tamana identity. Therefore, a significant number of the founders in the sample view their businesses as a catalyst for community development and social change. This is particularly evident among the start-up entrepreneurs. Interestingly, the sample did not reveal any Zainabs, so it can be deduced that initiating a business is not typically seen as a vehicle for advancing a political cause by South African female entrepreneurs. It can further be surmised that there is a strong link between founder identity and the industry within which the female business owners operate, with the study revealing that those with an entrepreneurial identity developed over a more extensive period tend to aspire to higher business growth. Conversely, start-ups' aspirations appear to be less ambitious, with their venture choices often being lifestyle businesses, with less potential for sustainability and scalability.

Within the South African context, the implications are that entrepreneurial identity research should incorporate deeper exploration of the Tamana and Maxeke-Tamana identities, as gaining a better understanding of the content and formation, as well as the upkeep or change of entrepreneurial identity will contribute to developing important insights into the broader new venture-creation process. Furthermore, developing an understanding of the potential role that the development of higher-level female entrepreneurial identity might play in bringing about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses, would be beneficial. This knowledge would be a critical input into the development of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. Finally, enterprise development

programmes for female business owners should be geared to support both women with a purely economic interest, as well as those who seek to empower and support a particular community with both parties benefiting from the venture, while still working towards developing a profitable business.

In summary, the study revealed that the intersection of social identity and aspirations influences new venture exploration choices and that female entrepreneurs who have been in business for a longer period appear to have a stronger entrepreneurial identity and operate higher-growth potential businesses than those who very recently initiated a venture.

Chapter 4: Paper 2: *Female entrepreneurial identity development: A systematic literature review*

This paper explores published research on female entrepreneurial identity. To achieve the primary objective of the study, the following theoretical objectives were pursued when the SLR was conducted:

- The literature on female entrepreneurial identity development was reviewed
- The literature on business aspirations was reviewed
- The literature on the influence of female entrepreneurial identity on the nature and development of female-owned businesses was reviewed.

The SLR found that identity development is a dynamic, iterative process of “becoming”, with a complex interaction between self- and social constructs, which deeply impacts identity authenticity or dissonance and the approaches that are adopted to achieve an appropriate intersection between feminism and entrepreneurial identity. Inevitably, women need to engage in specific, possibly more intensive, forms of identity work to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy and salience than their male counterparts. However, although scholastic work has over-emphasised sex differences, strong evidence of a gender-blind body of literature and a discriminatory ontology remains. The dichotomy is further convoluted by scholars’ views that academic research that focuses specifically on female entrepreneurship may encourage gender inequality or render masculinity invisible. Consequently, female entrepreneurial identity has manifested itself as a double-edged sword, with misalignment in academic research with regard to women’s new venture growth aspirations and their navigation of entrepreneurial

identity. Given that the SLR emphasises this double-edged sword, together with the fact that focused research on the topic is still at an early stage, opportunities for new conceptual and empirical work exist. These range from understanding the specific steps in the formation of a strong identity, with the associated new venture growth aspirations, to the process of entrepreneurial identity evolvment and behaviour.

Based on the finding of the SLR, a literature-based conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity was developed, which contributes to the understanding of female entrepreneurial identity, with potential application for entrepreneurial development initiatives, educational institutions and policy-makers.

Chapter 5: Paper 3: *Our stories may be singular, but our destination is shared: The intersection between female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations*

This paper explored the intersection between social identity and new venture aspirations.

The overall findings support the notion that, while aspirations are typically associated with the androcentric notion of high-growth entrepreneurship (Greene and Brush, 2018: 10-11), female entrepreneurs may seek other, non-monetary aspirations (Manolova *et al.*, 2012: Abstract). Additionally, the four overarching themes that emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, which enabled consideration of the women's social contexts, frames of reference and business aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, revealed that social entrepreneurial identity influences new venture aspirations. Two primary groups of social entrepreneurial identity were identified: (i) individuals whose social identity aligns with a pure type, and (ii) individuals whose meanings reflect more than one type of social identity. The study found that the majority of the successful female entrepreneurs in the sample could be classified as having a Darwinian identity, whose primary goal is to establish a strong and successful business. The balance is equally distributed between those who demonstrate a Communitarian identity, whose primary goal is to develop a business to support a group of like-minded individuals and those who demonstrate a hybrid identity of Darwinian-Communitarian.

While the study supports the emerging understanding of female entrepreneurial identity and its role in aspirations and new venture exploration choices, this paper focused specially on female entrepreneurs within both a developed- and developing country context. The study casts a light on contextual differences between a developing country (South Africa) and a developed country (the Netherlands), from a social entrepreneurial identity perspective. The findings demonstrate that the worlds to which these two groups of women belong are quite different, but contrary to what might be expected, there is a close correlation in their social identities and business aspirations.

The findings also extend the typical entrepreneurship concept beyond the androcentric notion of high-growth entrepreneurship, to include founders who either wholly or in part view their businesses as a catalyst for community development and social change. Additionally, the four overarching themes that emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, namely identity constructs, female identity, entrepreneurial journey and entrepreneurial development, further contribute to the body of knowledge by providing a conceptual framework for exploring female entrepreneurial identity.

Chapter 6: *Paper 4: The journey to becoming: An analogy of female founders' entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success*

This paper considered the interaction between entrepreneurial identity and female founders' new venture aspirations by exploring Dutch and South African female founders' demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations, business aspirations and success when engaging in a process of new venture development. In addition, it sought to identify the key factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development, and the relationships between these factors.

The study respondents were predominantly well educated, mature women who operate predominantly in the service, retail, and hospitality sectors. When considering respondents' business aspirations and definition of success, the study revealed that the women are largely motivated by independence and work-life balance, rather than pursuing high-growth entrepreneurship and aggressive funding goals. These findings correspond with the findings of Paper 1 and 3 that non-economic factors are of importance to women. The study further found that the inherent masculinity of the entrepreneurial domain has an influence on female entrepreneurs' identity work and

that they experience conflict when navigating between professional and authoritarian entrepreneurial masculinities and their femininity. Linked to this is female founders' role association (being a woman, wife/partner, mother or entrepreneur), experiencing imposter syndrome and having to balance work-home duties, which result in respondents experiencing dissonance and having to do more identity work to attain authenticity. The study also revealed that respondents' confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities is influenced by their context and that, when female founders' confidence in their entrepreneurial role and occupational self-concept increase, so does their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The study further found that a stronger social identity contributes to women experiencing increased entrepreneurial authenticity, while belonging to groups and having strong networks and business-related industry experience, positively influence female founders' entrepreneurial confidence, identifying with the business and consequently, their occupational self-concept. Finally, the study highlights that, as identity work increases, so does business aspirations and business success. In summary, this study demonstrates that female entrepreneurs' identity is intrinsically connected to their contexts and consequently, their new venture aspirations.

Chapter 7: Synopsis, conclusions and framework

This chapter, which offers a synopsis and overall conclusions, culminates in a *Guiding Framework for Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development in South Africa*. Study limitations, recommendations, contributions of the study and a reflection on the research journey are also provided in this chapter.

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Literature probe for guiding framework for
female entrepreneurial identity
development in South Africa

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE PROBE

The papers included in this study collectively address the primary research question and sub-questions, with an applicable literature review included in each of the papers. As a separate paper, a systematic literature review contextualises female entrepreneurial identity development. Consequently, this section provides a definition of entrepreneurship, an overview of entrepreneurship in South Africa, female entrepreneurship, and women's new venture aspirations, while also providing an overarching view of female entrepreneurial identity, as well as a synthesis of the respective literature reviews incorporated in the academic papers.

2.1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEFINED

While the term 'entrepreneurship' has its origins in the French word 'entreprendre', denoting 'one who undertakes' or is a 'manager' (Price, 2011: 16), there is no single unified and universally accepted definition for 'entrepreneurship' (Gedeon, 2010: 16). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) considers entrepreneurship as the *"act of starting and running a new business venture; not just thinking about it or intending to start, but actually allocating resources to get a new business off the ground"* (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 11). Gupta (2019: 37) considers entrepreneurship as harnessing together a diverse and unique combination of economic resources to exploit entrepreneurship and to create value. Ambrish (2014: 225), on the other hand, defines an entrepreneur as a proficient individual who uses better or more creative ways to deliver goods and services. According to Price (2011: Para. 3), entrepreneurs' principal objectives are profit and growth, with the term 'entrepreneur' incorporating technology transfer experts, university technologists, business venturing advisors, business owners, innovators and executives seeking capital for business expansion. In an extensive study of the different theoretical roots of entrepreneurship, Gedeon (2010: 18) found that there are numerous very different and contradictory historical definitions of entrepreneurship, as is evident from Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Summary of major definitions of entrepreneurship

Author	Definition or aspects of a definition
Baumol (1968)	“The entrepreneur (whether or not he in fact also doubles as a manager) has a different function. It is his job to locate new ideas and put them into effect. He must lead, perhaps even inspire... he is the Schumpeterian innovator and more. He is the individual who exercises what in the business literature is called ‘Leadership.’ And it is he who is virtually absent from the received theory of the firm.”
Brockhaus (1980)	An entrepreneur is defined as a major owner and manager of a business venture not employed elsewhere.
Bygrave and Hofer (1991)	“An entrepreneur is someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it.”
Cantillon (1755 (1931)) in Thornton (2005)	The entrepreneur is the bearer of risks inflicted by changes in market demand. Entrepreneurs purchase inputs at a given price to produce and sell later at an uncertain price. The entrepreneur brings prices and production in line with demand.
Casson (1982, 2003)	“An entrepreneur is someone who specializes in taking judgmental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources.”
Churchill (1992)	“Increased consensus has been attained on the concept of entrepreneurship as the process of uncovering and developing an opportunity to create value through innovation and seizing that opportunity without regard to either resources (human and capital) or the location of the entrepreneur – in a new or existing company”
Clark (1899); (Clark, 1907)	“An invention makes it possible to produce something more cheaply. It first gives a profit to entrepreneurs... and this profit... is an elusive sum, which entrepreneurs grasp but cannot hold. [It] slips through their fingers and bestows itself on all members of society. Were it not for that interval, entrepreneurs as such would get nothing, however much they might add to the world’s productive power.”
Cole (1959)	“The purposeful activity (including an integrated sequence of decisions) of an individual or group of individuals, undertaken to initiate, maintain, or aggrandize a profit-oriented business unit for the production or distribution of economic goods and services.”
Draheim (1972); (Howell, 1972)	Entrepreneurship – the act of founding a new company where none existed before. Entrepreneur is the person and entrepreneurs are the small group of persons who are new company founders. The term is also used to indicate that the founders have some significant ownership stake in the business (they are not only

Author	Definition or aspects of a definition
	employees) and that their intention is for the business to grow and prosper beyond the self-employment stage.
Drucker (1985)	“...this defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship - the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity.” “Entrepreneurs innovate. Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurs.” “Innovation can be defined the way J.B. Say defined entrepreneurship, as changing the yield of resources.”
Ely and Hess (1949)	“The person or group of persons who assume the task and responsibility of combining the factors of production into a business organization and keeping this organization in operation... he commands the industrial forces, and upon him rests the responsibility for their success or failure.”
Evans (1949)	“Entrepreneurs – very broadly defined – are those who organize, manage, and actively control the affairs of the units that combine the factors of production for the supply of goods and services.”
Gartner (1989)	Entrepreneurship is the process by which new organisations come into existence.
Hartman (1959)	A distinction between manager and entrepreneur in terms of their relationship to formal authority in the industrial organisation. The entrepreneur may justify his formal authority independently or he may describe it as delegated from others, notably from stockholders. However, within the organisation, he alone is the source of all formal authority. Management is defined residually as “not being the source of all authority.” The border between the entrepreneur and the manager is therefore relatively precise.
Hawley (1907)	Risk taking is the essential function of the entrepreneur. Proprietorship is the essence of entrepreneurship. “... the profit of an undertaking, or the residue of the product after the claims of land, capital, and labour are satisfied, is not the reward of management or coordination, but of the risks and responsibilities that the undertaker... subjects himself to.... profit is identified with the reward for the assumption of responsibility, especially, though not exclusively, that involved in ownership.”
Hébert and Link (1988)	Roles of the entrepreneur in the history of economic theory include: i) assumes risk associated with uncertainty, ii) supplies capital, iii) innovator, iv) decision-maker, v) leader, vi) manager, vii) organiser and

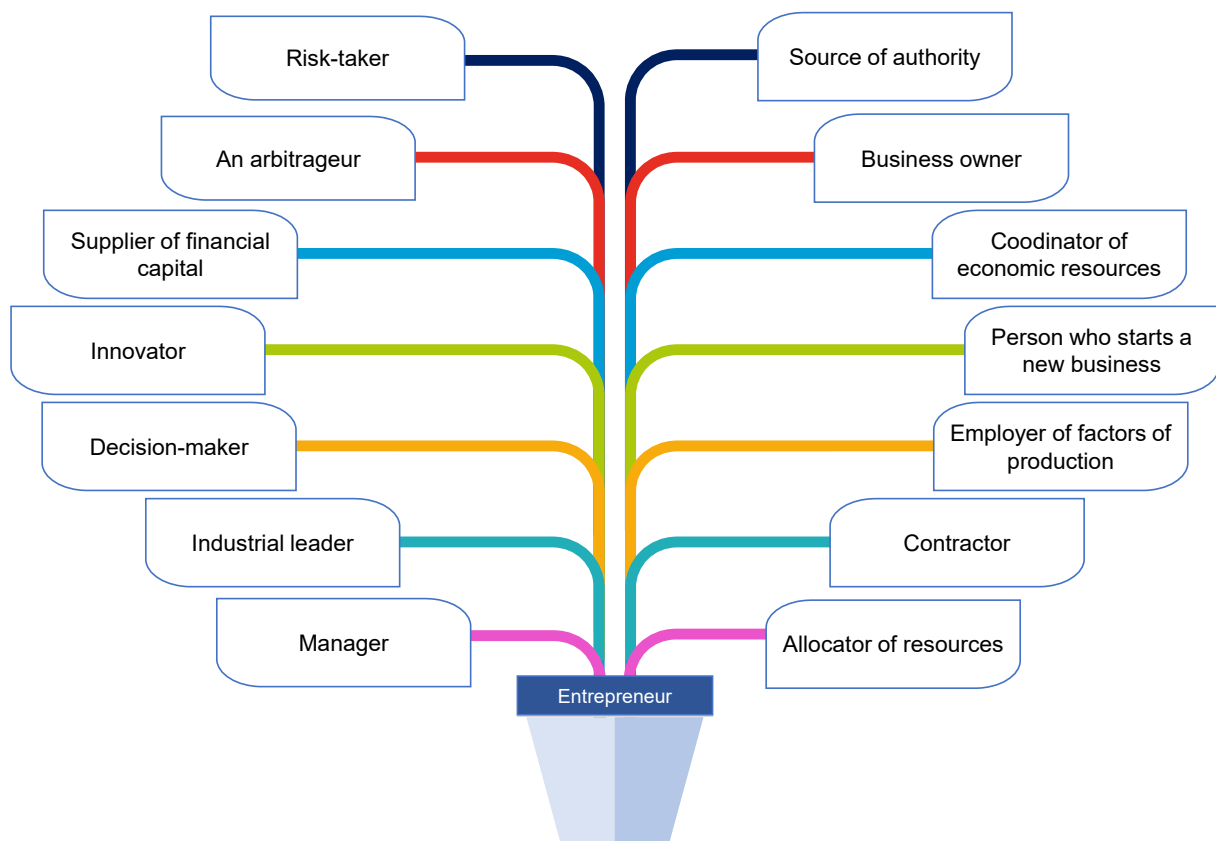
Author	Definition or aspects of a definition
	coordinator, viii) owner, ix) employer of factors of production, x) contractor, xi) arbitrage and xii) allocator of resources.
Hornaday and Bunker (1970) Hornaday and Aboud (1971)	The successful entrepreneur was defined as a man or woman who started a business where there was none before, who had at least 8 employees and who had been established for at least 5 years.
Hufeland (1807) Von Thünen (1826) in Knight (1964)	Profit is what is left after interest, insurance and management wages. This residual profit consists of payment for risk and the extra productivity of the manager's labour because he is working for himself, his sleepless nights when he is planning for the business. The residual profit that arises from this extra productivity is termed <i>Unternehmergeinn</i> – the entrepreneur's profits.
Hull and Bosley (1980)	A person who organises and manages a business undertaking assuming the risk for the sake of profit.
Kirzner (1973)	An entrepreneur is "a decision-maker whose entire role arises out of his alertness to hitherto unnoticed opportunities."
Litzinger (1965)	The distinction is drawn between 'entrepreneurs' who are goal- and action-oriented as contrasted to 'managers' who carry out policies and procedures to achieve the goals. Owners of mom-and-pop motels appear as the entrepreneurial type who have invested their own capital and operate a business.
Lumpkin and Dess (1996)	"The essential act of entrepreneurship is new entity." "An EO (Entrepreneurial Orientation) refers to the processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to new entry."
McClelland (1961)	Entrepreneurial activity involves i) risk-taking, ii) energetic activity, iii) individual responsibility, iv) money as a measure of results, v) anticipation of future possibilities, and vi) organisational skills.
Mescon and Montanari (1981)	"Entrepreneurs are, by definition, founders of new businesses."
Mises (1949)	"... the driving force of the market process is provided neither by the consumers nor by the owners of the means of productions – land, capital goods, and labor – but by the promoting and speculating entrepreneurs... Profit-seeking speculation is the driving force of the market as it is the driving force of production."
Palmer (1971)	The entrepreneurial function involves primarily risk measurement and risk-taking within a business organisation.

Author	Definition or aspects of a definition
Say (1816)	The entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield. The agent who unites all means of production and who finds in the value of the products, the re-establishment of the entire capital he employs, and the value of the wages, the interest and the rent that he pays, as well as the profits belonging to himself.
Schumpeter (1934 (1961))	"The carrying out of new combinations we call 'enterprise'; the individuals whose function it is to carry them out we call 'entrepreneurs'."
Soltow (1957)	"The not very tidy assumption can be made that entrepreneurship comprises 'a more or less continuous set of functions running from the purely innovative toward the purely routine,' performed within business firms or other agencies 'at many levels of initiative and responsibility... wherever significant decisions involving change are made affecting the combination and commitment of resources under conditions of uncertainty'."
Stevenson and Jarillo (1990)	"Entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control."
Vesper (1982)	"The overall field of entrepreneurship is loosely defined as the creation of new business enterprises by individuals or small groups."
Ripsas (1998)	The entrepreneur is described as a coordinator and arbitrager.

Source: Gedeon (2010: 19-21)

Since the term 'entrepreneurship' should be considered within context, several distinct entrepreneurial roles have been recognised, including a risk-taking individual who starts a business, industry leader, innovator, manager, supplier of financial capital and an allocator of economic resources who regularly takes decisions (Wennekers and Thurik, 1999: 4-5). When combining the entrepreneurial definitions above, together with Hébert and Link's (1989: 3) findings, it is evident that entrepreneurs fulfil numerous roles, as depicted in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.1 The roles of an entrepreneur



Sources: Hébert and Link (1989: 3); Gedeon (2010: 19-21)

The complexity and multi-dimensional nature of entrepreneurship is apparent when considering the various definitions of entrepreneurship and the diversity of roles that entrepreneurs play. While there may be no universally-accepted definition of entrepreneurship or agreement about the roles that entrepreneurs play, it is widely recognised that entrepreneurship is a formidable economic growth engine and an essential driver of societal health and wealth creation. It holds the potential to address societal challenges – such as recovery from the economic shockwave created by the global Covid-19 pandemic – while also promoting the requisite innovation to explore new opportunities, create employment and promote productivity (Hill *et al.*, 2022: 11).

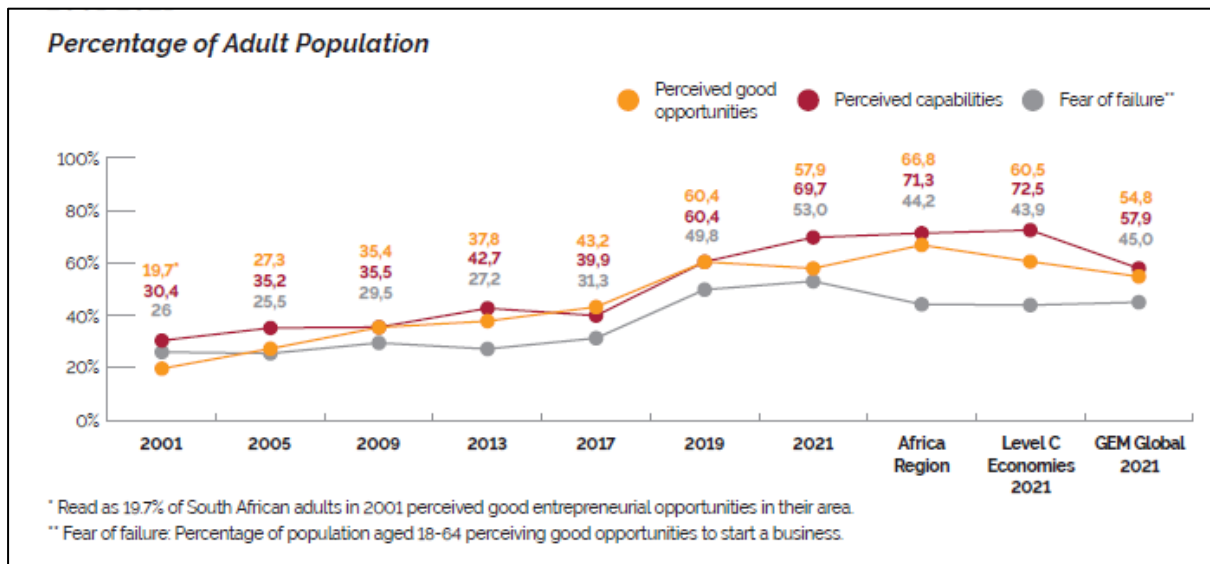
2.2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

With its relatively well-established markets and supply chains, South Africa is the second largest economy in Africa, by GDP (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 43). The country is, however, characterised by structural challenges and weak economic growth, with household welfare that is severely constrained by rising unemployment (World Bank, 2022a: Para. 2). The official unemployment rate stood at 33.9% in the second quarter of 2022 (Statistics South Africa, 2022a: Para. 1), with the youth bearing the brunt of unemployment, at a rate of 63.9% for those aged 15 to 24, and 42.1% for those aged 25 to 34 years (Statistics South Africa, 2022b: Para. 1). Inclusive economic participation, a renewed economic vibrancy and overall economic growth in South Africa could be achieved through the pivotal role that entrepreneurship has to play (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 9). However, considering how South Africa stacks up, much remains to be done to develop entrepreneurship as a significant driver of job creation, social cohesion and economic development.

Although it is complex to measure entrepreneurship (Wennekers and Thurik, 1999: 47), the GEM Consortium method to measure and compare cross-national entrepreneurial activity, as well as intra-country time series analysis, utilises a standardised research design for all participating countries and has been providing reliable comparison data (Herrington and Kew, 2013: 16; Herrington *et al.*, 2015: 15) for more than two decades. Therefore, the 2021/2022 GEM South Africa report is used to provide insight into entrepreneurship in South Africa. As can be seen from Figure 2.2, although there was a substantial increase in the number of South African individuals who perceived entrepreneurship opportunities from 2017 to 2019 (up from 43.2% to 60.4% in 2019), there has been a decrease in this percentage in 2021 (down to 57.9%). Although it is encouraging that this is much higher than the GEM global average (54.8%), it is well below the combined GEM participating African economies (66.8%). Nonetheless, when considering that there has been an increase (up 9.3% to 69.7% from 2019) in the percentage of the adult population who believe that they have the requisite capabilities required for entrepreneurship, the foundation for potential future entrepreneurial activity looks promising. However, the high percentage (53%) of the adult population who would not start a business due to fear of failure, together with the fact that the South African percentage is considerably higher than the GEM global average (45%), the combined GEM participating African countries' average (44.2%)

and the level C economies' average (43.9%), mars the picture somewhat (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 13).

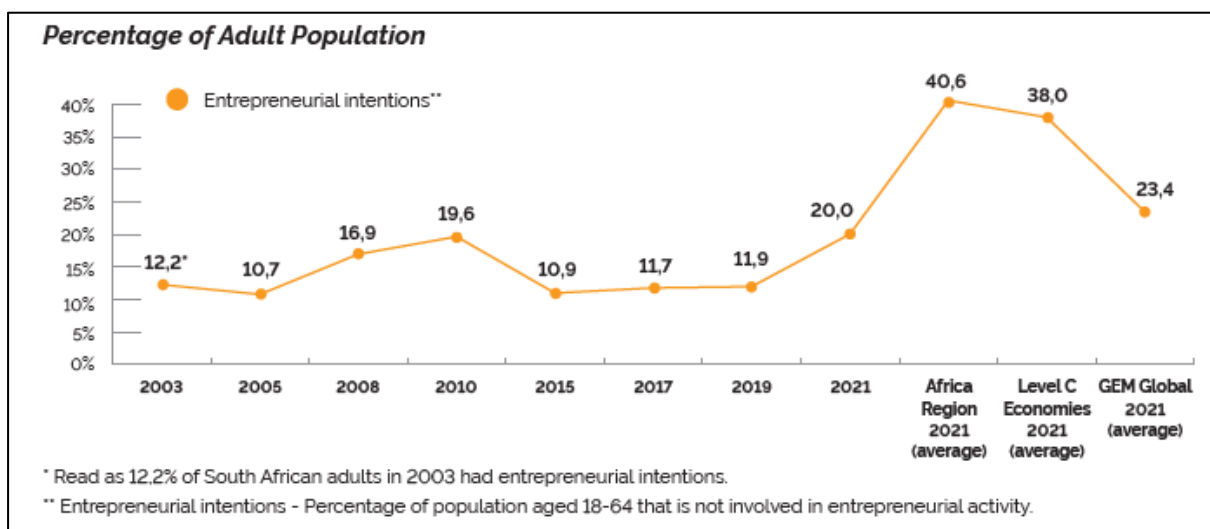
Figure 2.2 Entrepreneurial perceptions and competencies in the adult population of South Africa 2001-2021



Source: Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer (2022: 13)

Figure 2.3 provides insight into the entrepreneurial intentions of South Africans, compared to the African region, Level C economies and the GEM global average.

Figure 2.3 Entrepreneurial intentions in South Africa 2003-2021

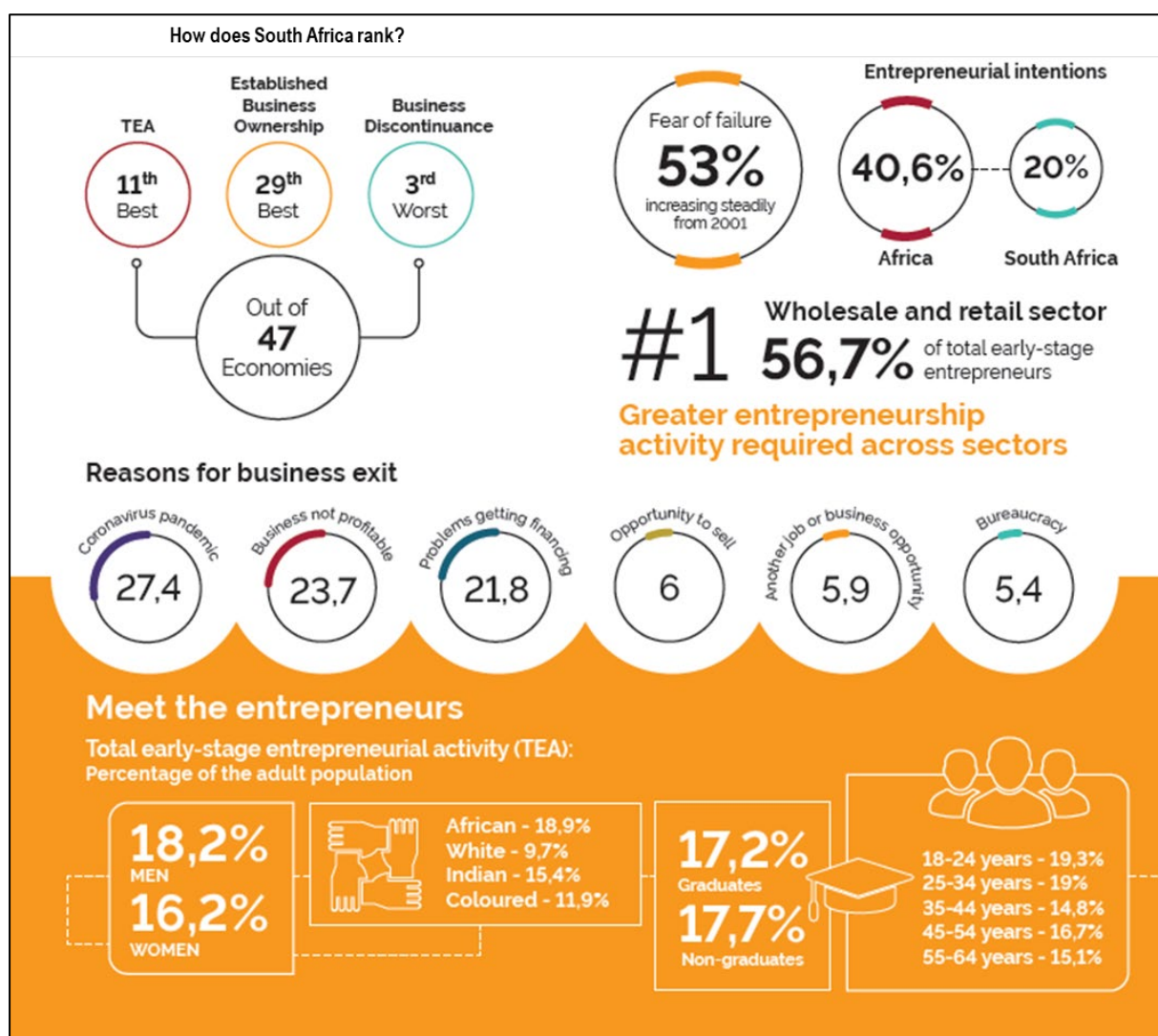


Source: Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer (2022: 15)

While 20% of the adult population intend starting a business in the next three years (up from 11.9% in 2019), South Africa lags behind that of the African region (40.6%) and level C economies (38%). Nonetheless, South Africa is slowly closing the global average gap (23.4%) (Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer, 2022: 15), as can be seen in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.4 provides a snapshot of how South Africa's entrepreneurial activities stack up.

Figure 2.4 South Africa's entrepreneurship ranking



Source: Bowmaker-Falconer and Meyer (2022: 11)

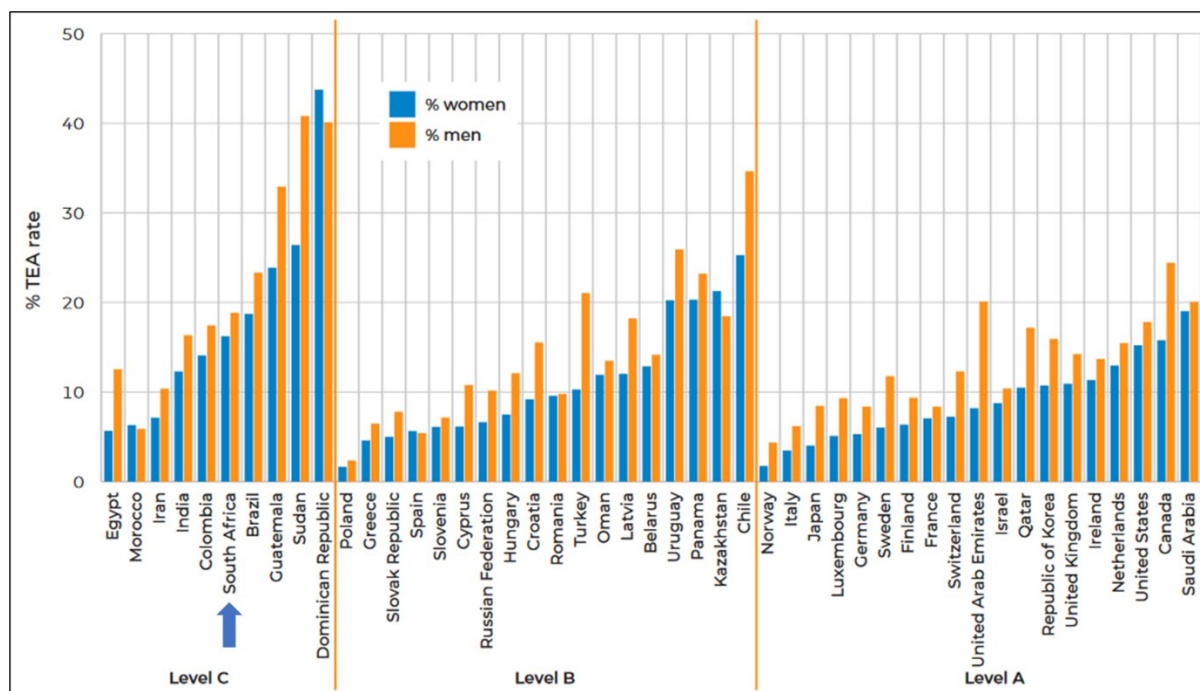
In terms of ranking, South Africa fares quite well (11th best) when considering its total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA), but lags behind when considering

established business ownership (EBO) (29th best) and business discontinuance (3rd worst), when compared to the 47 economies participating in the 2021/2022 GEM Adult Population Survey. Although it is evident that the Covid-19 pandemic contributed significantly to business continuance, lack of profitability and access to financing also play a fundamental role in entrepreneurs opting to exit their businesses. While there is a relatively even distribution in terms of the age of South African entrepreneurs, the majority of entrepreneurs fall within the 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups. Notably, female entrepreneurs are outnumbered by their male counterparts.

2.3. FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CONTEXT

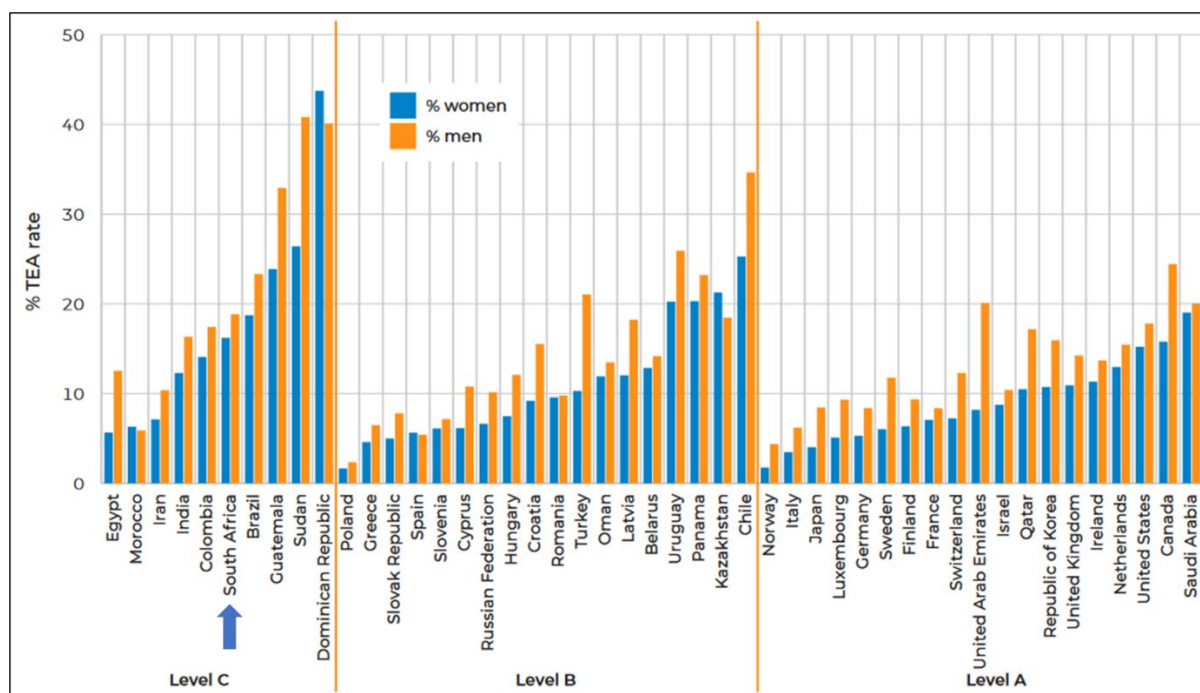
Traditionally, males have dominated both the business world and the world of new ventures. However, this landscape is changing, and relatively rapidly, in some countries. Female entrepreneurship is promoted by many governments within their economic and social development policy portfolios, with good reason: bringing female entrepreneurial activity in line with that of their male counterparts would substantially catalyse new businesses in many – although not all – economies. Doing so will create new job- and income opportunities, often for those who most need them (Hill *et al.*, 2022: 60). However, apart from a few countries (Kazakhstan, Spain, Dominican Republic and Morocco), men continue to surpass women in TEA, and considering that the increase in women's entrepreneurship rates is a relatively recent phenomenon, unsurprisingly, men also dominate EBO (Hill *et al.*, 2022: 63), as depicted by Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6. As can be seen, this situation also persists in South Africa, where men continue to outweigh women in both TEA and EBO.

Figure 2.5 Levels of total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) by gender (% women and % men)



Source: Hill *et al.* (2022: 60)

Figure 2.6 Established business ownership (EBO) rates by gender (% women and % men)



Source: Hill *et al.* (2022: 62)

Although women generally lag behind men in entrepreneurial activity, a large proportion of entrepreneurial ventures driving job creation, innovation and economic growth are spearheaded by women (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022: Para. 3), with one in every three growth-oriented entrepreneurs being female, according to the 2020/2021 Women's Entrepreneurship Report (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 14). However, women still experience challenges when converting their entrepreneurship intentions into profitable businesses, resulting in a restriction on their effectiveness, growth and success (Ajani *et al.*, 2021: 75), with 20% of female-owned businesses still failing annually (Irene, 2017: 1). Inadequate access, networks, finance, and role models are cited as some of the constraints, with Adom (2015: 10), Cabrera and Mauricio (2017: 59-60), Herrington *et al.* (2017: 31) and Urban (2010: 2) having found that women are weighed down by lower levels of education (which is particularly prevalent in developing countries), a greater degree of domestic responsibility and a lack of capital, assets and community-based business networks, compared to their male counterparts. In addition, the 2020/2021 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) data shows that less than fifty percent of female entrepreneurs know another entrepreneur (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022: Para. 4), while women also demonstrate twenty percent lower confidence in their capabilities than men when starting a business (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 37). Coupled with this are lower societal status, cultural biases, and a lack of assertiveness, all of which further contribute to a lack of self-confidence in their business capabilities (Adom, 2015: 10; Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017: 59-60; Herrington *et al.*, 2017: 31; Urban, 2010: 2). Scholars further found that balancing work and family roles, handling conflict and considering time and space constraints as they create new ventures are characteristics of female entrepreneurs (Fatoki, 2016: 6877; OECD, 2012: 15). Consequently, due to a lack of safety nets or other options, women tend to create a small business to survive and cite 'job scarcity' more often than men as a reason for opting to explore new venture creation. Being poorer, less educated and from lower-income households further contribute to women-owned businesses merely being a means of subsistence, particularly in the developing world (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022: Para. 6).

When considering women-owned businesses' growth, the 2020/2021 GEM study (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 20) purports that poverty, traditional gender beliefs and restrictions in public life represent entrenched business start-up and growth barriers for female

entrepreneurs. Not surprisingly, solo entrepreneurship with smaller employer firms in local markets is typical of women-owned businesses (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 20). In addition, it is evident that women are overrepresented in industries characterised by small firms, low profit margins and vulnerability to market disruptions and economic shocks, with women opting to operate predominantly in the service, retail and hospitality sectors. In addition to these factors accounting for the weaker economic performance of their businesses (Carranza *et al.*, 2018: 1), it also contributes to persistent negative stereotypes that growth-oriented women face when seeking growth financing and other business expansion resources (Elam *et al.*, 2021: 20).

Notwithstanding female entrepreneurs' business limitations, it is accepted that entrepreneurship contributes to employment creation and growth, from the least developed economies, through to emerging- and advanced economies (Naudé, 2011: Para. 4), with females, in specific, becoming crucial change agents within social and economic environments and globally making valuable contributions (Carter *et al.*, 2006: 18; World Bank, 2022b: Para. 1-3). Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2014: 1) considers investment in female entrepreneurship development and support to be one of the most effective means of increasing equality and promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth. However, as previously discussed, women tend to create smaller businesses with limited economic contribution, and therefore it is important to understand women's new venture aspirations, as the "*differences in the motivation and reasons for starting a business could be a fundamental determinant of subsequent business performance*" (Carranza *et al.*, 2018: 12).

2.4. WOMEN'S NEW VENTURE ASPIRATIONS

When engaging in new venture creation, founders have the freedom to pursue opportunities that match their preferences and business aspirations, while also choosing how they explore these opportunities and goals (Sieger *et al.*, 2016: 542). While Greene and Brush (2018: 7) adopted Farmer *et al.*'s (2011: 245) classification of aspirations as being "*longings, aims, or ambitions*", they posited that the desired overall value to be created through entrepreneurial behaviours is largely amorphous and that a more articulated approach to delineate what an individual wishes to accomplish through their entrepreneurial behaviours is required. Subsequently, within

the context of female entrepreneurial identity, the application of the term 'new venture aspirations' refers to the entrepreneur's aims or ambitions when engaging in a new venture creation process – that is, what does an individual aspire to achieve with her entrepreneurial endeavours?

Traditionally, aspirations are associated with high-growth entrepreneurship with aggressive funding goals and the pursuit of venture capital funding, as supported by Locke and Baum's (2007: 95) assertion that most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth. Conversely, Kolvereid (1996: 3) and Shane et al. (1991: 275) noted that entrepreneurial aspiration may also be prompted by non-economic factors, such as autonomy, work-life balance, or prestige, while Manolova et al. (2012: 21) postulated that status and self-realisation are also of importance to female entrepreneurs. Additionally, life stage, career, family preferences and values influence women's motivations and goals. Specifically, mothers may pursue entrepreneurship in a quest to attain a more favourable work-life balance (Arai, 2000: 129; 140). Therefore, as there is significant heterogeneity among women, considering the extent to which personal circumstances and preferences influence the decision to become an entrepreneur, as well as subsequent business decisions, is important (Carranza *et al.*, 2018: 1).

In addition to the differences in motivation and reasons for starting a business, the way in which men and women define business success differs. For women, having control over their own destinies, building enduring relationships with clients, doing what they enjoy or achieving work-life balance constitute success. Conversely, for men, success implies achieving goals and higher profits (Carranza *et al.*, 2018: 1). Numerous authors (Ahl, 2006: 598; Bruni et al., 2004: 407; Cohen and Musson, 2000: 41; Hamilton, 2013: 90) observed the persistence of the symbolic male entrepreneurial domain, with an emphasis on traditional male qualities such as risk-taking, autonomy, strong internal locus of control and high achievement-need (Chasserio *et al.*, 2014b: 131; Galloway, 2012: 894), rather than subordination, support and dependence, characteristic of conventional female stereotypes (Bruni et al., 2004: 407). Smith's (2014: 466) assertion that the often pejorative stereotype of the 'pinkness' of female entrepreneurship, which is applied when constructing an image of women entrepreneurs, versus Hytti and Heinonen's (2013: 887) findings that heroic

characteristics are typically applied when describing masculine entrepreneurship, demonstrates the point in case. Furthermore, research on gender and entrepreneurship found that women are not immediately recognised as 'real entrepreneurs' (Lewis, 2006: 464-465) and that the professional qualities and individual attributes of their male counterparts are held in higher regard (Humbert and Brindley, 2015: 7). Verheul *et al.* (2005: 485) found that this masculine entrepreneurial ethos impacts negatively on a woman's association with being an entrepreneur, while other studies emphasised that it may place limitations on women's business aspirations and achievements (Ahl, 2006: 612; Cliff, 1998: 538; De Bruin *et al.*, 2006: 586-587), given that men and women 'do' entrepreneurship differently (Eddleston and Powell, 2008: 245; Powell and Eddleston, 2013: 266). Consequently, Ladge *et al.* (2019: 616) concluded that the degree to which a woman associates with being an entrepreneur is influenced by her masculine versus feminine traits. Eddleston and Powell (2008: 245) proposed that, while women with a strong feminine identity consider business ownership as a vehicle for pursuing socio-emotional goals, those with a strong masculine identity place higher value on the pursuit of status and business success.

Eddleston *et al.* (2020: 1) found that female entrepreneurs have a greater tendency to fear success and that those who harbour imposter fears believe that they will, in time, be discovered for who they really are: 'imposters'. Further to this, Ladge *et al.* (2019: 616) asserted that the entrepreneurial gender performance gap is multifaceted and that imposter fear or self-doubt leads to high achievers avoiding negative outcomes, with female entrepreneurs being unable to internalise their successful experiences. They concluded that the combination of fear of success and imposter fear could potentially diminish the relationship between entrepreneurial identity and women's business growth aspirations, which could contribute fundamentally to women intentionally limiting their business growth aspirations. Other researchers inferred that women seek only moderate growth (Morris *et al.*, 2006: 232) and that they tend to set business size limitations beyond which they prefer not to expand (Cliff, 1998: 523), given that they have lower preferences for advancement and wealth creation than men, with a greater degree of family and lifestyle emphasis (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003: 816). A number of researchers (Cliff, 1998: 533; Davis and Shaver, 2012: 496; Morris *et al.*, 2006: 240) have found that women have a clear sense of the costs and benefits

of growth, with a number of studies concurring that business growth is a deliberate choice and that women intentionally limit the size and growth of their businesses. To explicate, Carranza *et al.* (2018: 13) asserted that, if a woman starts a business to attain autonomy or independence, it could be expected that she would wish to keep the business small, as larger business owners tend to lose their independence (Davidsson, 1989: Para. 3).

In keeping with the findings of Stryker and Burke (2000: 11) that identity is at the root of behaviour and Fauchart *et al.*'s (2011: 937; 941) postulation that identity influences entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions, particularly with how they evaluate opportunities and how they respond to adversity as they prepare to launch and run their organisations (Powell and Baker, 2014: 1407; 1413), Ladge *et al.* (2019: 616) proposed that female business owners' growth aspirations are subject to the degree to which they possess a salient entrepreneurial identity.

2.5. ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

Identity is an intricate, complex and contested concept (Jenkins, 1996: 130). Identity was conventionally framed as an attribute of a single entity in either a social group or of an individual. Individuals were seen to possibly have multiple identities, both self-ascribed and as a result of group membership, for example, professional, religious, family, and gender. Identity typically spawned designations such as self-identity, occupational identity, societal identity, gender identity and entrepreneurial identity (Mills and Pawson, 2011: 5).

Fauchart *et al.* (2011: 950) postulated that a new venture becomes a manifestation and reflection of the entrepreneur. This view is supported by a growing body of literature that recognises that entrepreneurial activities are infused with meaning, since they are an expression of the individual's identity or self-concept (Cardon *et al.*, 2009: 515-516; Hoang and Gimeno, 2010: 9). Early authors described entrepreneurial identity as "*several possible constellations of meaning which may form the core of the entrepreneur's self-definition of the entrepreneurial role*" (Stanworth and Curran, 1976: 104) and "*a person's inclination to adopt a certain type of occupational entrepreneurial role*" (Vesalainen and Pihkala, 1999: 113). More recently, Powell and Baker (2014: 1413) framed entrepreneurial identity as a "*lens that influences how entrepreneurs*

respond to adversity", while Sarasvathy (2001: 250) referred to entrepreneurial identity as a "seed" fuelling the new venture creation process. On the other hand, Watson (2009: 255) and Nadin (2007: 457) postulated that entrepreneurial identity is a "*social resource, discursive and symbolic*", which entrepreneurs strategically deploy primarily to gain legitimacy. The aforementioned diverse descriptions emphasise the lack of consensus about entrepreneurial identity, both in terms of what it comprises, as well as how it develops, with entrepreneurial identity perspectives ranging from focusing solely on the entrepreneur, to others that also encompass the entrepreneur's team, their business, as well as the markets in which they operate.

Entrepreneurial identity is considered to be multi-dimensional, with personal- and social identity intersecting to form the whole. While personal identity relates to individual attributes, values, traits, beliefs and so on, social identity is concerned with "*the group in the individual*" (Henry et al., 1999: 562), which could be founded on either demographic characteristics or affiliations with specific beliefs, such as political party or religious denomination (Hogg et al., 1995; Tajfel, 1982: 6). Personal identity is mostly static and consistent, but life experiences and interactions with social norms influence individual identities over time. Therefore, an individual's identity is the result of intertwined personal and social identities (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 68). Some scholars (Hogg et al., 1995: 257; Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 39; 46; Sieger et al., 2016: 544) suggest that a person's identity not only serves as a cognitive frame for interpreting experiences, but also influences individuals to act in ways that are consistent with their identity. This is supported by Fauchart *et al.* (2011: 952), who found that the identities and self-concepts of founders are imprinted on the key dimensions of new ventures, while the social identity of an individual is influenced by a combination of external and internal influences that function as a unit. The formation of a person's social identity is dependent on how they communicate (language), their cultural heritage, social stance, political and religious beliefs, and the role they adopt when they engage within their social context or with others when they conduct business. Social identity is fluid and dynamic, with individuals moving from one group to a next as contextual changes occur (Hogg et al., 1995: 260). Unlike the relatively static nature of personal identity, the social identity of an individual is constantly constructed and reconstructed as they interact (*who I am*) and a desired identity (*who I want to become*). When a person interacts within a group, as a member of the group,

they adopt two roles – the one acknowledged as a member of the group and the other as a participant within the group. When these two roles are combined, it strengthens the social identity (Chasserio *et al.*, 2014a: 148). Therefore, over time, interacting with others within different contexts reshapes an individual's identity. Scholars have proposed a strong link between entrepreneurs' self-concept and subsequent outcomes, and although relatively little is known about the role of self-identity in motivating entrepreneurial action (Farmer *et al.*, 2011: 249), it is accepted that social identity is critical to the beliefs, feelings, values and actions within social contexts, including new venture creation (Hogg and Terry, 2000: 123-124). Consequently, social identity theory provides a theoretical connection that can aid in developing a rich understanding of how individuals' social identity influences the new venture creation process and the subsequent differences in the outcomes of their firms.

While there is limited agreement about what and how entrepreneurial identity comes to be, scholars almost unanimously consider entrepreneurial identity as a key input to entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions, thereby implicitly converging on the role of entrepreneurial identity (Crosina, 2018: 95-96). Researchers found that the decision-making process and subsequent entrepreneurial behaviour are influenced by founder identity (Alsos *et al.*, 2016; Fauchart *et al.*, 2011: 938), while an individual's entrepreneurial identity, in turn, can be influenced by engaging in the entrepreneurial process, as the individual internalises the extrinsic connotation of being an entrepreneur (Donnellon *et al.*, 2014: 491).

When considering female entrepreneurial identity specifically, Chasserio *et al.* (2014b: 140-141) observed that the intersection between different roles and identities can be conflicting and challenging to manage, as female entrepreneurs are required to accommodate opposing responsibilities – parenting, while at the same time, managing a business – and satisfying social demands of these conflicting social identities in an effort to legitimise their roles as mothers and entrepreneurs. A study by Diaz Garcia and Welter (2011: 398) demonstrated that women either build on a perceived dissonance between womanhood and entrepreneurship, or refute it when negotiating identity dissonance. This view is complemented by Lewis (2013: 260), who observed that some women, in an effort to attain authenticity, purposefully adopt a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship. In contrast, a study by Fernandes and Mota-Rebeiro (2017: 76)

revealed that others, particularly those in family businesses, reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power. Diaz Garcia and Welter (2011: 384) distinguished gendered practices for how women manage their businesses and relationships. These gendered practices focused on 'doing gender', to support the gender differences status quo and 'redoing gender', to challenge gender differences. Consequently, Crosina (2018: 99) deduced that women may need to engage in alternative, more intensive forms of identity work in an effort to be taken seriously as female entrepreneurs, compared to their male counterparts.

Evidently, identity development is a dynamic, iterative process of 'becoming', with a complex interaction between self- and social constructs, which deeply impacts identity authenticity or dissonance and the approaches that are adopted to achieve an appropriate intersection between feminism and entrepreneurial identity. Indeed, the words of distinguished English novelist, critic, and essayist, Virginia Woolf, "*I am not simple, but complex and many*" (1931) capture the essence of women's quest to develop their female entrepreneurial identity.

2.6. CONCLUSION

Female entrepreneurship has the potential to make a fundamental economic and societal contribution and has become the focus of government investment initiatives in many countries. Although the landscape has shifted and women are making a more robust contribution, gender barriers result in women generally starting and running small, livelihood businesses, with limited economic impact. Consequently, female entrepreneurs continue to lag behind their male counterparts. This chapter shed light on the role that entrepreneurial identity plays in new venture aspirations, which paves the way for exploring how female entrepreneurial identity may be developed to bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses.

Given the dearth of published works on female entrepreneurial identity in South Africa, the next chapter (Chapter 3: Article 1) provides a synthesis of social identity theory and South African female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, with the chapter thereafter (Chapter 4: Article 2) detailing the SLR which was undertaken to explore female entrepreneurial identity

concepts, how it influences the nature and development of female-owned businesses and how it is constructed and maintained.

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Article 1

I am not one and simple, but complex
and many: The intersection between
South African female founders' social
entrepreneurial identity and new venture
aspirations

I am not one and simple, but complex and many: The intersection between South African female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

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I am not one and simple, but complex and many¹: The intersection between South African female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

Abstract

Purpose: This paper synthesises social identity theory and South African female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration.

Methodology approach: Conceptual integration across multiple theoretical perspectives, linking independent views in a novel way and in so doing, offering an enhanced perspective of social identity theory and female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in new venture creation.

Findings: The study found that the intersection of social identity and aspirations influences new venture exploration choices, with South African female entrepreneurs who have progressed further in the development of their businesses demonstrating a stronger entrepreneurial identity, with aspirations to develop higher-growth potential businesses than those who very recently initiated a venture.

Practical implications: Developing an understanding of the potential role that the development of higher-level female entrepreneurial identity might play in bringing about a shift in business aspirations, would be beneficial. Based on the findings, enterprise development programmes for South African female business owners should be geared to support both women with a pure economic interest and those that seek to empower and support their communities.

Originality: The study contributes to the body of knowledge by focusing on social entrepreneurial identity as an important factor that shapes female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in new venture creation. Furthermore, the study provides constructs for potentially enhancing new venture development programmes aimed at female entrepreneurs, by elucidating how the development of social identity could enhance the process of business concept exploration.

Keywords: social identity, entrepreneurial identity, aspirations, female entrepreneurs, new venture

¹ Virginia Woolf. 1931

1 INTRODUCTION

The existential question - Who am I? - has sparked countless debates and philosophical ponderings, ranging from Plato's proposition that the answer to personal identity lies within the soul, to Locke's opposing view that each person starts with a clean slate – a *tabula rasa* – and that individuals' sense of self are shaped by personal experiences, reflections and sensations (Greene & Brush, 2018).

Identity is considered to be multi-dimensional, with personal- and social identity intersecting to form the whole, but more recently, scholars have begun to explore the social aspects of identity, focusing on individuals' group affiliations as a topic of inquiry, with the main approaches including personal identity, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and identity theory (Stryker & Serpe, 2012). This is substantiated by the study conducted by Morris *et al.* (2006) which found that three independent variables were significant predictors of female entrepreneurs' growth orientation, namely female identity, equity ownership and the perception that women face unique obstacles in marketing and selling. Interestingly, the study found that growth orientation is significant amongst women with a stronger female identity. Our interest lies in exploring social identity and its influence on female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of new venture creation.

When engaging in new venture creation, founders have the freedom to pursue opportunities that match their preferences and business goals, whilst also choosing how they explore these opportunities and business goals (Sieger *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, a new venture becomes a manifestation and reflection of the entrepreneur (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011). This view is supported by a growing body of literature that recognises that entrepreneurial activities are infused with meaning, since they are an expression of the individual's identity or self-concept (Cardon *et al.*, 2009; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). Given that new venture creation is inherently a social activity, with organisations themselves being social constructs, the social aspects of a founder's self-concept are of significance when considering the process of initiating a new venture (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Since social identity is critical to shaping the beliefs, values, feelings and actions in a social context – including new venture creation – applying social identity theory can provide an in-depth assessment of an individual's sense of self (Hogg & Terry, 2000). This view is supported by Fauchart and Gruber (2011) who held that applying social identity theory could serve as a valuable lens through which to gain a better understanding of the heterogeneity of the meanings associated by founders with their entrepreneurial endeavours, as well as the effects of such heterogeneity on firm creation.

Generating the cognitive knowledge-structures (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000) and developing the motivation to successfully identify and explore opportunities to become an entrepreneur (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), takes time and persistence. Most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth (Locke & Baum, 2007; Shane *et al.*, 2003). However, as Hessels *et al.* (2008) postulate, individual entrepreneurial motivation may determine the goals and aspirations for the venture, which in turn, may determine economic outcomes. Scholars have proposed a strong link between entrepreneurs' self-concept – in other words, identity – and subsequent outcomes and although relatively little is known about the role of self-identity in motivating entrepreneurial action (Farmer *et al.*, 2011), it is accepted that social identity is critical to the beliefs, feelings, values and actions in social contexts, including new venture creation (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In the context of the influence of social identity on aspirations, our application of the term ‘aspirations’ refer to the entrepreneur’s aims or ambitions when engaging in a new venture creation process – in other words, what does an individual really want to achieve with her entrepreneurial endeavours? Traditionally, aspirations are associated with high-growth entrepreneurship with aggressive funding goals and the pursuit of venture capital funding. However, Sieger, Gruber, Fauchart, and Zellweger (2016) postulates that these aspirations are stereotypically masculine, rather than feminine (Gupta *et al.*, 2009; Gupta & Turban, 2012), so it should be acknowledged that non-monetary expectations, such as status and self-realisation, are also of importance to female entrepreneurs, as elucidated by Manolova *et al.* (2012).

When considering identity and business aspirations in the context of entrepreneurship, particularly female entrepreneurship, a thought-provoking question arises: *How does the intersection of social identity and aspirations influence new venture exploration choices?* To answer this question, this paper considers the relationship between the social identity of female entrepreneurs and their venture aspirations when engaging in a process of business development exploration. This paper contributes to the body of knowledge by focusing on social identity as an important factor that shape female entrepreneurs’ aspirations when engaging in new venture creation.

2 PERSONAL IDENTITY, SOCIAL IDENTITY, SOCIAL IDENTITY FORMATION AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

A distinction is made between personal- and social identity, with personal identity encompassing individual attributes, values, traits, beliefs and so on. Social identity, on the other hand, refers to the individual within a group (which could be founded on either demographic characteristics or affiliations with specific beliefs, such as political party or religious denomination) (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel, 1982) – in other words, social identity is concerned with ‘the group in the individual’ (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). The following sections explicate the distinct differences and relationships between these concepts (personal identity, social identity and social identity formation). Furthermore, we discuss the social identity theory within entrepreneurship.

2.1 PERSONAL IDENTITY

Personal identities are mostly static and consistent, but over time, their life experiences and interactions with social norms influence their personal identity. Hence, an individual’s identity is the result of intertwined personal and social identities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Some scholars (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggest that a person’s identity not only serves as a cognitive frame for interpreting experiences, but also influences individuals to act in ways which are consistent with their identity. This is supported by Fauchart *et al.* (2011), who found that the identities and self-concepts of founders are imprinted on the key dimensions of new ventures.

2.2 SOCIAL IDENTITY

A *social identity* can be regarded as “belonging to a certain world, and can only be understood, in subjective terms, together with that world” (Viseu & Ponte, 2009). The social identity of an

individual is influenced by a combination of external and internal influences that function as a unit. The formation of a person's social identity is dependent on how they communicate (language), their cultural heritage, social stance, political and religious beliefs, and role that they adopt when engaging within their social context or with others when they conduct business. The social identity is fluid and dynamic, with individuals moving from one group to a next as contextual changes occur (Hogg *et al.*, 1995). The social identity of an individual is constantly constructed and reconstructed as they interact with others within their current environment. All individuals have an inherited identity (*who I am*) and a desired identity (*who I want to become*). When a person interacts within a group, as a member of the group, s/he adopts two roles - the one acknowledged as a member of the group and the other as a participant within the group. When these two roles are combined, it strengthens the social identity (Chasserio, Pailot, & Poroli, 2014). Therefore, over time, as an individual interacts with others within different contexts, their identities are reformed. Consequently, social identity theory provides a theoretical connection that can aid in developing a rich understanding of how individuals' social identity influences the new venture creation process and the subsequent differences in the outcomes of their firms (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

2.3 SOCIAL IDENTITY FORMATION

There are three key elements to social identity formation. Firstly, crucial to the development of an individual's identity, is their subjective and figurative interaction with others. This interaction permits the individual to (i) appraise how s/he socially compares with others within the group, and (ii) determine which social groups s/he wants to be associated with (Tajfel & Turner, 2001). Belonging to a specific social category or group (*I am part of this group*) enable individuals to conduct a self-evaluation, as well as to evaluate individuals who do not belong to the group (*You are not part of my group*). "Thus, a person's social identity serves as a system of social orientation and plays an instrumental role in establishing self-worth" (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

Secondly, the social self-categorisation of individuals can differ, depending on their level of inclusivity. A person's self-categorisation ranges from the most extreme level of social self-categorisation - known as the self, as a unique entity with own goals and dreams (*This is what I want and this is what I want to become*) (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) - to conceiving themselves as part of a group and therefore portraying concern for others (*I am because we are*) (Harb & Smith, 2008).

Thirdly, social identity theory enables people to predict what others will choose and how they will act and behave (Tajfel & Turner, 2001). A person's identity, through their cognitive processes, allows them to be thoughtful and interpret experiences with sensitivity. Therefore, people act in a particular way, consistent with their identity (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

2.4 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social identity theory in entrepreneurship, on the other hand, provides a theoretical lens through which different types of entrepreneurial identities can be recognised. This is possible by looking at the distinct differences of the following three main aspects: (i) basic social motivation, (ii) in the basis of self-evaluation, and (iii) in the frame of reference as an entrepreneur (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011).

When entrepreneurs start their business ventures they are motivated by various aspects and their actions are consistent with their inherent identities and thus they imprint their self-concepts on key dimensions of their emerging firms, including the process of early-stage opportunity identification. According to Fauchart and Gruber (2011), entrepreneurs can typically be categorised as one of three “pure” types of founder identity, namely Darwinian, Communitarian or Missionary. *Darwinian* founders typically start their business ventures for own economic self-interest and competition with other firms, whilst *Communitarian* founders commence with a business to empower and support a particular community where both parties will benefit from the venture. *Missionary* founders, on the other hand, see their businesses as a means of political empowerment for the broader community. As this article focuses on female founder identities within a South African context, the identity names were adapted to reflect females who made a relevant contribution to the history of women in South Africa, namely Maxekes (Darwinians), Tamanas (Communitarians) and Zainabs (Missionaries). Charlotte Manye Maxeke was one of the first Black women graduates in South Africa. Dora Tamana was a true communitarian, involved in starting self-help programmes ranging from a food committee, a women's sewing cooperative, to a childcare programme. Zainab Ebrahim Asvat was a political activist, Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) Member and medical doctor who challenged the political ideology in South Africa, stood-up against the violence, and denounced South African discriminatory laws (South African History Online, 2020). Table 1 illustrates the distinct differences between the three types of founders, as identified by Fauchart and Gruber (2011):

Table 1 Three dimensions of founder identity

Maxekes <i>Darwinian</i>	Tamanas <i>Communitarian</i>	Zainabs <i>Missionary</i>
<i>Who am I? This is what I want and what I want to become</i>	<i>I am because we are</i>	<i>Who am I? Who am I not?</i>
Basic social motivation		
The primary goal is to establish a strong and successful business	The primary goal is to develop a business to support a group of like-minded individuals	The primary goal is to start a firm to advance a greater cause
Focused on ensuring the success of the firm	Focused on uplifting the socio-economic status of the community in which they reside	Focusing on acting responsibly is considered to be critical
The industry within which they operate, the markets they serve or the greater social cause bear no- or relatively little meaning	The industry and greater social cause is important	Closely connected to social entrepreneurship
Generating profits and better possibility of success, changing ventures is not seen as a problem, and they are open to engaging in new ventures in completely new areas of business	Creating an authentic identity is important to be fully one with the social group, to share intimate knowledge of the community and to be able to serve it from the inside	Embraces a social entrepreneurial identity, has a need to distinguish themselves from and deny closeness to profit-seeking identities

Maxekes Darwinian	Tamanas Communitarian	Zainabs Missionary
<i>Who am I? This is what I want and what I want to become</i>	<i>I am because we are</i>	<i>Who am I? Who am I not?</i>
Basis of self-evaluation		
Based on self	Based on others	Based on self and others
Frame of reference/relevant others		
Competing firms	Not change the industry	Social status of social entrepreneurs
Other Maxekes	Creates new and more efficient means to serve their community or social context	
Social group	User-entrepreneur who generates an idea through their own use then shares it with the broader community	
	Collective creative activity prior to venture creation	

Adapted from (Alsos, Clausen, Hytti, & Solvoll, 2016; Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Sonali & Tripsas, 2007; Van Praag, 1999).

3 METHODOLOGY

This study forms part of a larger project on the development of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. It was imperative to first ascertain the founder identities of women within the South African context, as no previous research had been conducted on female entrepreneurial identity development and their venture aspirations when engaging in a process of business development exploration. Therefore, as a starting point, an initial web search was conducted to identify prospective candidates to interview, which constituted the sample for this paper.

Three types of entrepreneurs were used to identify the sample, namely (i) *successful entrepreneurs* with an annual turnover in excess of ten million rand; (ii) *up-and-coming entrepreneurs* with an annual turnover not exceeding ten million rand and (iii) *start-up entrepreneurs* who were participating in an entrepreneurial development programme at the time of the study. The final sample included thirty-nine female entrepreneurs - thirteen per category. A web analysis of these entrepreneurs was conducted to determine how the intersection of social identity and aspirations influence new venture exploration choices.

As we aimed to move beyond existing theoretical boundaries to offer an enhanced perspective of social identity theory and South African female entrepreneurs' choices when engaging in new venture creation, theory synthesis was undertaken, with the study divided into two phases, namely summarising and integrating concepts (MacInnis, 2011). The summarising phase sought to unravel extant knowledge of social identity and its theoretical constructs, whilst also considering the choices made by female entrepreneurs when engaging in a

process of new venture creation. Integrating concepts entailed the proposing of relationships between distinct phenomena, integrating the multiple independent theoretical perspectives and finally, generating novel insights (Jaakkola, 2020), particularly within the South African context.

4 FINDINGS

Table 2 summarises the founder identity-characteristics of the thirty-nine female entrepreneurs, in the South African context.

Table 2 Sample characteristics of female entrepreneurs

Sample Characteristics				
Successful entrepreneurs (Annual turnover in excess of ten million rand)				
Characteristics	Maxekes	Tamanas	Zainabs	Hybrids
Number of entrepreneurs in sample	9	2	None	2
Average firm age (at time of data gathering)	18	5		14
Average age of founder (at time of founding)	32	28		29
Highest education level				
University: Post-graduate	4			
University: Graduate	3	2		2
High School	2			
Other				
Industry				
Agriculture	1			
Construction				1
Education				
Financial Services	1			
Health and Wellness		1		
Hospitality				
Manufacturing	1			
Media and Communications	2			1
Professional Services	1			
Retail and Wholesale	2			
Other	1	1		
Company founded by individual partnership				
Individual	7	1		1
Partnership	2	1		1

Sample Characteristics				
Up-and-coming entrepreneurs (Annual turnover not exceeding ten million rand)				
Characteristics	Maxekes	Tamanas	Zainabs	Hybrids
Number of entrepreneurs in sample	9	2	None	2
Average firm age (at time of data gathering)	5	5		11
Average age of founder (at time of founding)	35	22		38
Highest education level				
University: Post-graduate	4	1		2
University: Graduate	3			
High School	1			
Other	1	1		
Industry				
Agriculture				
Construction				
Education	2			1
Financial Services	1			
Health and Wellness	2	1		
Hospitality				
Manufacturing				
Media and Communications	1			1
Professional Services	2			
Retail and Wholesale	1	1		
Other				
Company founded by individual partnership				
Individual	6	2		1
Partnership	3			1
Start-up entrepreneurs (Participating in entrepreneurial development programme at time of study)				
Characteristics	Maxekes	Tamanas	Zainabs	Hybrids
Number of entrepreneurs in sample	10	-	None	3
Average firm age (at time of data gathering)	0,30			0
Average age of founder (at time of founding)	34			30
Highest education level				
University: Post-graduate				
University: Graduate	2			1
High School	5			

Sample Characteristics				
Characteristics	Maxekes	Tamanas	Zainabs	Hybrids
Other	3			2
Industry				
Agriculture				1
Construction				
Education				
Financial Services				
Health and Wellness	2			
Hospitality	1			1
Manufacturing				
Media and Communications				
Professional Services	1			
Retail and Wholesale	1			1
Other	5			
Company founded by individual partnership				
Individual	9			3
Partnership	1			

The study revealed that the majority of female entrepreneurs in the sample could be classified as having one of two pure identities, with seventy-two percent demonstrating a Maxeke identity and ten percent demonstrating a Tamana identity. Fifteen percent of both the successful and up-and-coming entrepreneurs in the sample demonstrate a hybrid identity of Maxeke-Tamana. However, the identity of the start-up sample paints a slightly different picture, with seventy-seven percent demonstrating a pure Maxeke identity, whilst twenty-three percent demonstrate a hybrid Maxeke-Tamana identity. Interestingly, in the South African context, none of the entrepreneurs in the sample demonstrate a Zainab identity. Consequently, it could be deduced that South African female entrepreneurs do not generally initiate a business to advance a greater cause, whilst current start-ups seemingly have a stronger desire to also make a societal contribution with their ventures than their successful and up-and-coming counterparts, who have been in business for much longer.

In terms of the average founder-age at the time of initiating the business, a negligent variance is observed between the three categories, with the average age being thirty, thirty-five and thirty-four for successful, up-and-coming and start-up entrepreneurs, respectively. The study, however, reveals a significant variance in the level of education, particularly between successful entrepreneurs and start-up entrepreneurs, with eighty-five percent of successful entrepreneurs being graduates or post-graduates, whilst only fifteen percent of the start-up entrepreneurs in the sample are graduates. Seventy-seven percent of up-and-coming entrepreneurs are either graduates or post-graduates.

The study reveals a shift in industry focus between the three categories, with successful entrepreneurs - who have been in business for an average period of twelve years - focusing

largely on Media and Communications (twenty-three percent), Professional Services (fifteen percent) and Retail and Wholesale (fifteen percent). The up-and-coming entrepreneurs have been in business for an average period of five years, with a focus on Education and Health and Wellness (twenty-three percent each), whilst the balance operate largely in the Media and Communications, Professional Services and Retail and Wholesale industries (fifteen percent each). The concept choices of the majority of the start-ups (thirty-eight percent) - who have been in business for less than a year - are more dispersed, with a significant proportion of these businesses being classified as lifestyle businesses, such as beauty salons, catering, cleaning and laundry services. Whilst the general shift in industry focus could be attributed to market conditions, it can be surmised that the business concepts of start-up entrepreneurs are more dispersed since they are still in the process of concept exploration and have not yet developed the entrepreneurial identity and business confidence to aspire to developing a high growth-potential business.

Although the majority of the businesses (between sixty-nine and ninety-two percent) in each of the three categories were initiated by the founder, rather than as a partnership, it is notable that only eight percent of the start-ups in the sample were initiated as a partnership. As with the industry focus, this, too, could be attributable to the absence of a strong entrepreneurial identity and business confidence.

The findings demonstrate that the aspirations of female entrepreneurs in the sample who demonstrate a Tamana or hybrid Maxeke-Tamana identity, particularly those in the start-up phase, are less geared towards developing a high-growth business, as they are more concerned with having a positive societal impact whilst developing their businesses. Thus, it can be inferred that there is indeed a correlation between social identity and entrepreneurs' aspirations when exploring new venture creation.

5 CONCLUSION

The study sought to synthesise social identity theory and female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, with the focus being on female founder identities within the South African context. The study was initiated on the understanding that most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or achieve autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth (Locke & Baum, 2007; Shane et al., 2003). However, although seventy-two percent of the female entrepreneurs in the sample can be categorised as having a Maxeke identity (economic motives), ten percent demonstrate a Tamana identity (social motives), whilst a further eighteen percent demonstrate a hybrid Maxeke-Tamana identity. Thus, a significant number of the founders in the sample view their businesses as a catalyst for community development and social change. This is particularly evident amongst the start-up entrepreneurs. Interestingly, the sample did not reveal any Zainabs, so it can be deduced that initiating a business is not typically seen as a vehicle for advancing a political cause by South African female entrepreneurs. It can further be surmised that there is a strong link between founder identity and the industry within which the female business owners operate, with the study revealing that those with an entrepreneurial identity developed over a more extensive period tend to aspire to higher business growth. Conversely, start-ups' aspirations appear to be less

ambitious, with their venture choices often being lifestyle businesses, with less potential for sustainability and scalability.

Within the South African context, the implications are that entrepreneurial identity research should incorporate deeper exploration of the Tamana and Maxeke-Tamana identities, as gaining a better understanding of the content and formation, as well as the upkeep or change of entrepreneurial identity will contribute to developing important insights into the broader new venture creation process. Furthermore, developing an understanding of the potential role that the development of higher-level female entrepreneurial identity might play in bringing about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses, would be beneficial. This knowledge would be a critical input into the development of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. Finally, enterprise development programmes for female business owners should be geared to support both women with a purely economic interest, as well as those that seek to empower and support a particular community with both parties benefiting from the venture, whilst still working towards developing a profitable business.

In summary, the study revealed that the intersection of social identity and aspirations influences new venture exploration choices and that female entrepreneurs who have been in business for a longer period appear to have a stronger entrepreneurial identity and operate higher-growth potential businesses than those who very recently initiated a venture.

6 COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced the writing of this article.

7 AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors designed and implemented the research, the first author analysed the findings of the web-based data and both authors contributed to the writing of the paper.

8 FUNDING

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9 DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the first author, upon reasonable request.

10 DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not reflect an official position of the University.

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Addendum 3.1: Acceptance of Article 1 2022 Social Sciences International Research Conference



30 July 2022

Dear Mrs L Greyling and Prof V Leendertz

Paper SSIRC 2022-078 (I am not one and simple, but complex and many: The intersectionality between South African female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations)

Congratulations your paper has been accepted for publication in our conference proceedings. Under the following condition:

The paper must be presented (virtual or face-to-face) at the conference, 19 - 21 October 2022

Special Note:

Please keep the suggestions of the reviewers in mind when you finalize the paper.

We require the following before 1 October 2022 for it to be included in the Proceedings:

1. Final paper (after language editing was done) including authors names and OrCID numbers (READY TO BE PUBLISHED, correct format and pages – no track changes on final document);
2. Publishing agreement;
3. Proof of language editing;
4. Proof of payment. No paper will be published if full payment is not received.

Please remember to register before 10 August 2022. Payment is due before 12 September 2022

Kind regards

Ms Petra Lawson
Conference Administrator
E-mail: SSIRC.conference@gmail.com

Addendum 3.2: Double peer review of Article 1 2022 Social Sciences International Research Conference



SSIRC 2022 FULL PAPER REVIEW FORM

Title of Manuscript: I am not one and simple, but complex and many¹: the intersection between South African female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

Manuscript number: 078 P

PAPER EVALUATION CRITERIA	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
SIGNIFICANCE					
1. The paper makes a valuable contribution to the broad areas of the specific subject field.	x				
2. The paper will contribute to the enhancement of practices within the specific subject field?	x				
Comment: What is the relevance of the findings to the specific subject field?					
CONTENT					
3. The title is descriptive and concise		x			
4. The abstract is informative and adequately describes the study and results		x			
5. The manuscript provides an original contribution	x				
6. The introduction and/or literature review adequately describes the goal/purpose of the study	x				
7. The methodology used is adequate to answer the research questions/ achieve the objectives/purpose of the study		x			
8. Reliability and validity of instruments / data have been adequately stated		x			
9. Analysis of data is appropriate, correct and rigorous.		x			
10. Accurate interpretation of results have been made		x			
11. The discussion is based on the findings/results		x			
12. Logical conclusion have been drawn from data		x			
Comment: What is the relevance of the findings to the specific subject field?					
Please review the length of the title. If it can possibly be shortened, please consider doing this. Furthermore, please include a table describing (include characteristics or definitions or criteria for example) the three samples labelled successful entrepreneurs, up-and-coming entrepreneurs, and start-up entrepreneurs. This will assist the reader to understand the differences/similarities that distinguish these types of female entrepreneurs making up the sample groups..					
LANGUAGE, SPELLING AND REFERENCES					
13. Adequate referencing to prior studies in literature and the discussion support/refute the findings of this study	x				
14. The spelling of names, places and events referred to more than once is consistent		x			
15. The supplements (tables, charts, pictures and drawings) are necessary and clear.		x			

¹ Virginia Woolf. 1931

16. The referencing is correct, appropriate and current	x				
17. The language use is in line with English grammar rules	x				
Comment: Does the author(s) need to send the manuscript for professional language editing?					

OVERALL COMMENTS

Overall rating of manuscript on a scale of 15 (15 = excellent)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
													x	

RECOMMENDATION: Please indicate your final decision by choosing one of the options below

Publish in current form.	
Publish with minor revision as noted above.	x
Resubmit after major revision as noted above (This may involve a second round of review).	
Reject.	

Additional and confidential comments to the Scientific committee if applicable

General comments to the author (anonymous)

What are the major strengths of the manuscript?

What are the major weaknesses of the manuscript?



**SSIRC 2022
FULL PAPER REVIEW FORM**

Title of Manuscript: I am not one and simple, but complex and many: The intersectionality between South African female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

Manuscript number: SSIRC 2022 - 078

PAPER EVALUATION CRITERIA	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
SIGNIFICANCE					
1. The paper makes a valuable contribution to the broad areas of the specific subject field.	X				
2. The paper will contribute to the enhancement of practices within the specific subject field?		X			
Comment: What is the relevance of the findings to the specific subject field?					
Great manuscript in the area of inclusive entrepreneurship , which is relevant in these times					
CONTENT					
3. The title is descriptive and concise				X	
4. The abstract is informative and adequately describes the study and results			X		
5. The manuscript provides an original contribution		X			
6. The introduction and/or literature review adequately describes the goal/purpose of the study		X			
7. The methodology used is adequate to answer the research questions/ achieve the objectives/purpose of the study		X			
8. Reliability and validity of instruments / data have been adequately stated					X
9. Analysis of data is appropriate, correct and rigorous.			X		
10. Accurate interpretation of results have been made		X			
11. The discussion is based on the findings/results		X			
12. Logical conclusion have been drawn from data		X			
Comment: What is the relevance of the findings to the specific subject field?					
The title is too long. It is advisable to reduce it to 15 words. Abstract requires restructuring , methodology section is missing, findings and recommendations not clearly coming out					
LANGUAGE, SPELLING AND REFERENCES					
13. Adequate referencing to prior studies in literature and the discussion support/refute the findings of this study		x			
14. The spelling of names, places and events referred to more than once is consistent		x			

SSIRC Reviewers tool: page 1

15. The supplements (tables, charts, pictures and drawings) are necessary and clear.		x			
16. The referencing is correct, appropriate and current		x			
17. The language use is in line with English grammar rules		x			
Comment: Does the author(s) need to send the manuscript for professional language editing?					
Yes					

OVERALL COMMENTS

Overall rating of manuscript on a scale of 15 (15 = excellent)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
											x			

RECOMMENDATION: Please indicate your final decision by choosing one of the options below

Publish in current form.	
Publish with minor revision as noted above.	X
Resubmit after major revision as noted above (This may involve a second round of review).	
Reject.	

Additional and confidential comments to the Scientific committee if applicable

General comments to the author (anonymous)

What are the major strengths of the manuscript?

It brings new insights, and part of an interesting bigger study

What are the major weaknesses of the manuscript?

The structure should be adjusted to include research question and or objective clearly. The methodology section also requires more details, which is lacking.

Article 2

Female Entrepreneurial Identity
Development: A Systematic Literature
Review

Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore published research on female entrepreneurship identity, with the view of understanding what female entrepreneurial identity is, how it influences the nature and development of female-owned businesses and how it is constructed and maintained. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) which was conducted, with a final inclusion of 26 research articles for analysis, demonstrate that focused female entrepreneurship identity research is still fragmented and at an exploratory stage, with ample opportunities for new conceptual and empirical work. The SLR contributes to the body of knowledge by focusing on entrepreneurial identity as an important factor that shapes female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in new venture creation, while also providing constructs for potentially enhancing entrepreneurial development initiatives and policies, aimed at female entrepreneurs. The findings are explicated by a literature-based conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity, which was developed on the basis of the SLR findings.

Keywords

Female entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial identity, aspirations, business success, systematic literature review

Introduction

It has long been recognised that women start ventures that grow at a slower rate than those owned by men (1983), that female entrepreneurs tend to set lower thresholds for expansion, and that they are more concerned with the risks associated with rapid growth, than males (Cliff, 1998). A study conducted by Morris et al. (2006) found that three independent variables were significant predictors of female entrepreneurs' growth orientation, namely female identity, equity ownership and the perception that women face unique obstacles in marketing and selling. Interestingly, the study found that having more equity holders was positively associated with growth orientation, which in turn, correlates positively with not viewing obstacles as being greater for women than for men, while growth orientation is significant among women with a stronger female identity. High growth entrepreneurs were found to enjoy greater satisfaction, fulfilment and joy from their businesses and strongly identified with the business, as an extension of the entrepreneur's self-concept. The study suggested that a strong female identity could result in the business having a more strategic focus, while traditional male hierarchy is rejected, with a tacit embracing of entrepreneurship as a source of women's empowerment.

Research has found that the growth orientation of women is associated with entrepreneurial push- vs. pull factors., which include the female identity in the venture, or the role of equity partners, regardless of whether they were motivated by wealth or achievement (Morris et al., 2006). Morris et al. (2006) postulated that modest- and high-growth entrepreneurs have different perspectives in terms of how they view themselves, their families, their ventures and the environment, with venture growth being a deliberate choice. Identity has been found to influence entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions, particularly with how they evaluate opportunities (Fauchart et al., 2011) and how they respond to adversity (Powell & Baker, 2014) as they prepare to launch and run their organisations. So, gaining a better understanding of the

content and formation, as well as the upkeep or evolvement of entrepreneurial identity will contribute to developing important insights into the broader new venture creation process.

Various definitions had been advanced for entrepreneurial identity. Stanworth & Curran (1976) described entrepreneurial identity as “*several possible constellations of meaning which may form the core of the entrepreneur’s self-definition of the entrepreneurial role*”, while Vesalainen and Pihkala (1999) described “*entrepreneurial identity as a person’s inclination to adopt a certain type of occupational entrepreneurial role*”. On the other hand, Watson (2009) and Nadin (2007) postulated that entrepreneurial identity is a social resource, discursive and symbolic, which entrepreneurs strategically deploy primarily to gain legitimacy.

The aforementioned diverse descriptions emphasise the lack of consensus about entrepreneurial identity, both in terms of what it comprises, as well as how it develops. Broadly, entrepreneurial identity perspectives range from focusing solely on the entrepreneur, to others that also encompass the entrepreneur’s team, their business as well as the markets in which they operate. Despite limited agreement about what and how entrepreneurial identity comes to be, scholars almost unanimously consider entrepreneurial identity as a key input to entrepreneurs’ thoughts and actions, thus implicitly converging on the role of entrepreneurial identity (Crosina, 2018). To illustrate, Fauchart et al., (2011) described how founders’ identities shape the market opportunities they pursue, as well as the capabilities and resources they deploy to bring their ideas to fruition, and Powel and Baker (2014) framed entrepreneurial identity as a “lens that influences how entrepreneurs respond to adversity”. Sarasvathy (2001) refers to entrepreneurial identity as “a seed fuelling the new venture creation process”.

Scholars recognise entrepreneurial identity as being central to the behaviours entrepreneurs engage in. However, limited attention had thus far been paid to its content, the process to develop it and the potential differences gender may play in the construction of entrepreneurial

identity. In addition, research that deals specifically with identity and its construction among female entrepreneurs, is even sparser (Crosina, 2018).

Therefore, as entrepreneurial identity is considered to influence business concept choices and subsequent business development, it raises the question: *How can female entrepreneurial identity be developed to bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses?*

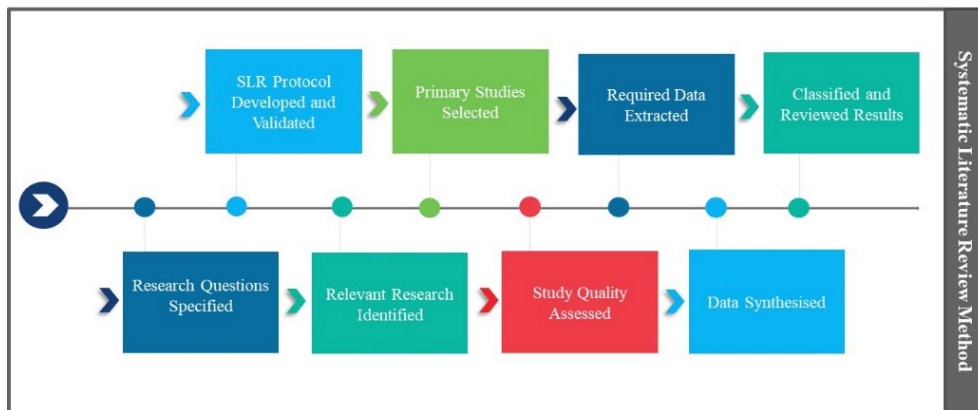
In order to address this question, a SLR was conducted to establish the status of existing knowledge relating to female entrepreneurial identity and how it can contribute to shift aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses.

This paper is structured as follows: (i) a description of the SLR method; (ii) an overview of the analysed data; (iii) key findings of the SLR and (iv) a presentation of the conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity.

Review Method

Figure 1 depicts the SLR method, adapted from the SLR process proposed by Kitchenham (2004), followed by a description of the respective SLR steps. While the process may appear to be sequential, a number of iterative steps were undertaken to refine the review.

Figure 1: Systematic Literature Review Method



Source: Own compilation

Research Questions

The SLR addressed the questions: (i) How can female entrepreneurial identity be developed? and (ii) How can identity development bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood-to value-creating businesses?

SLR protocol

Keywords were identified by drawing on the scoping study and published literature. The initial keywords were then refined by conducting a first database search and cross-examination of some of the articles, resulting in the following keywords being selected for the review: (i) female entrepreneur identity, (ii) women entrepreneur identity, and (iii) woman entrepreneur identity. As the scoping study found that the majority of research focusing specifically on female entrepreneurship identity was conducted during the last decade, the inclusion criteria was limited to a period of ten years, from 2010 to 2020, literature published in the English language and the terms “female”, “women” or “woman” appearing within ten words of the term “entrepreneur”. The Science Direct, Scopus and Web of Science databases were used to

conduct the search, as these were considered to be credible databases, appropriate to the nature of the SLR.

Literature identification, selection and quality assessment

While several authors encourage the writers of a literature review to search for all available literature, including books, conference papers and grey literature (Briner & Denyer, 2012), Kraus et al. (2020) recommend that entrepreneurship literature reviewers mainly conduct their search using electronic databases for peer-reviewed journal articles. As these were considered to be the most credible sources, while creating a transparent process that could be applied globally, grey literature – which could open the SLR to subjective literature selection and quality appraisal criticism (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006) - was not included in the SLR, although topic-relevant books were included. In addition to limiting the search to English language publications of studies during the 2010 to 2020 period, the inclusion criteria considered whether the keywords were present in either the title or the abstract and whether the studies presented evidence that contributes to the research question. Inaccessible articles and those that were duplicated within the search documents were excluded from the primary data.

The first literature identification step entailed searching the Science Direct, Scopus and Web of Science databases to identify research items that are potentially relevant to the research question. This yielded an initial comprehensive review sample of 515 items, which was narrowed down to 96 research items, after removing those items that obviously do not fall within the scope of the study. Once the duplicates were removed, the abstracts of the remaining 69 research items were reviewed to determine suitability for comprehensive review. After excluding those articles that did not meet quality criteria or that did not provide useful information to answer the research question, 26 items remained, allowing the researcher to initiate data extraction.

Data extraction, synthesis and classification

After uploading the 26 selected research items in PDF format into the ATLAS.ti™ qualitative data analysis system, a number of coding stages were undertaken:

First Stage Coding: A hybrid coding approach was adopted, incorporating both deductive codes based on theoretical concepts and inductive codes derived from the research items. Rather than using the ATLAS.ti™ search tools to determine the number of instances a term appears in an article – which would merely yield quantitative counting – all data which was deemed to be of significance was coded by considering small segments in detail in order to fully unpack the meaning and context of each research item. Considering segments together contributed to the creation of an index, as a first attempt to identify areas of interest to the research question (Silver & Lewins, 2014).

Second Stage Coding: The second stage entailed grouping codes together into higher order categories and continually comparing and revisiting the codes and groupings (Silver & Lewins, 2014), whilst considering the terms that occurred frequently in the research items, to ensure alignment with social sciences constructs (Britten et al., 2002).

Third Stage Coding: The data and codes were then revisited, with the aim of identifying themes and relationships (Silver & Lewins, 2014). At this stage, quotations were linked to create network diagrams, which emphasised concepts, themes and patterns.

Fourth Stage Coding: The final step entailed generating the outputs into both visual- and textual format, as input into the SLR analysis.

Reliability: After coding of the selected articles, an independent coder, who was briefed on the codes and their associated meanings, coded three arbitrarily selected articles to ensure inter-rater reliability. The peer-coding yielded an inter-reliability of $\kappa=1.00$. As a result, the researcher is confident that the data extraction method and codes are reliable.

Analysis

The descriptive analysis is based on 26 core items, 21 articles, one book chapter from the search results and four book chapters identified prior to the SLR. Table 1 depicts the details of the 14 scientific journals, the two books, the published articles and chapters, after application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. When considering that only two journals have published more than one article, inclusive of the multidisciplinary scope and overall limited number of journals that engaged in the conversation about female entrepreneurial identity research, it is clear that interest in the topic remains exploratory and rather fragmented. Although the topic has not yet been claimed as a core area of interest by a specific journal, the International Small Business Journal had the highest number of publications over a ten-year period, followed by the International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship with only two publications. Overall, the book “*A Research Agenda for Women and Entrepreneurship: Identity through Aspirations, Behaviours and Confidence*”, with multiple contributing authors, made the second highest contribution to the SLR.

Table 1: Publications per Journal / Book per year

Publications per Journal / Book Chapter per year											
Publication Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
International Small Business Journal	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	5
A Research Agenda for Women and Entrepreneurship (Book Chapters)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Contemporary Economics	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
International Journal Of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Education and Training	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Journal of Asia Business Studies	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gender in Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Horizons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Gender Work And Organization	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Journal of Business and Psychology	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Journal of Business Venturing Insights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Indian Women as Entrepreneurs: An Exploration of Self Identity (Book Chapter)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Gender, Work and Organization	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	1	3	1	4	2	2	7	3	1	26

Source: Own compilation

Table 2, which depicts the author-journal / book publications, indicates that authors are yet to achieve much depth in the field of female entrepreneurial identity, given that none of them had published more than one item over the ten-year period. Correspondingly, no single author dominated the SLR, although a small group of authors played a prominent role across the respective themes, as detailed in the relevant sections.

Table 2: Author-Journal Publications

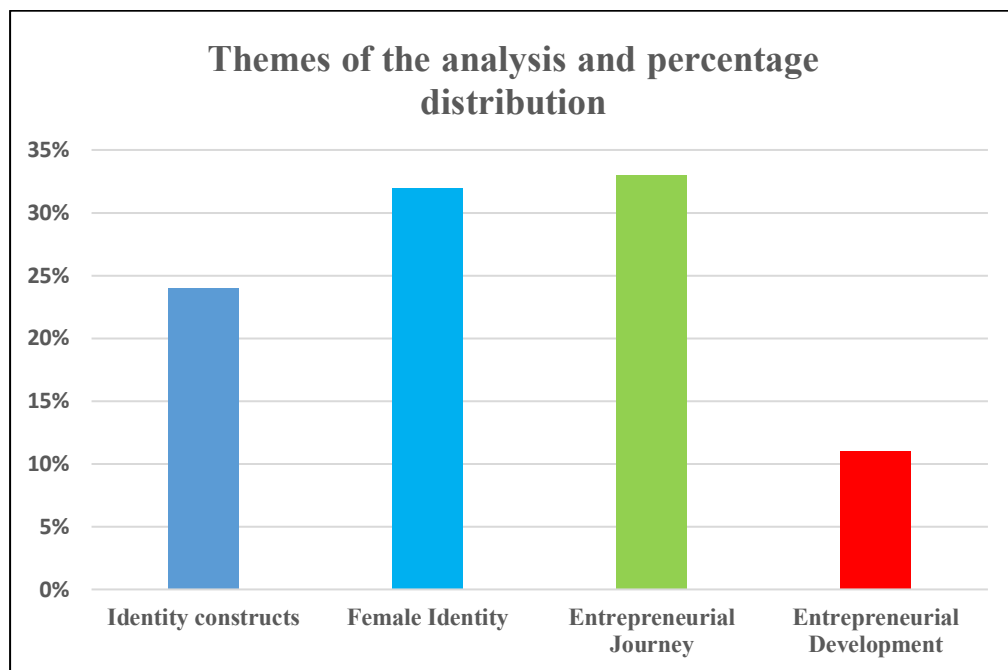
Author-Journal / Book Publications																			
Author/s	Journal / Book																		
	International Small Business Journal	Research Agenda for Women and Entrepreneurship (Book)	International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship	Contemporary Economics	International Journal Of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research	Education and Training	Journal of Asia Business Studies	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research	Gender in Management	Business Horizons	Gender Work And Organization	Journal of Business and Psychology	Journal of Business Venturing Insights	Indian Women as Entrepreneurs (Book)	Gender, Work and Organization	Total
Adapa S; Sheridan A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bjursell C; Melin L	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Brandle L; Berger E.S.C; Golla S; Kuckertz, A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Chasserio S; Pailot P; Poroli C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Crosina E	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Diaz Garcia M-C; Welter, F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fernandes E; Mota-Ribeiro S	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gherardi S	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Greene P.G; Brush C.G	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Harrison R.T; Leitch C.M	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hewapathirana G.I	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hytti U; Heinonen J	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Justo R; Cruz C; de Castro J.O	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ladge J; Eddleston K.A; Sugiyama K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lewis K.V	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lewis P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mahto R.V; McDowell WC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Marcus H; Ho M; Harris C; Morrison R	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Marlow S; McAdam M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Martin L; Jerrard B; Wright L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mills C; Pawson K	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Obschonka M; Silbereisen R.K; Cantner U and Goethner M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Orlandi, L.B	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Stirzaker R; Sitko R	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Swail J; Marlow S	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Tlaiss H.A; Kauser S	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	5	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	26

Source: Own compilation

Findings from the Qualitative Analysis: A Conceptual Model for Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development

The articles that were analysed revealed four core themes, namely *Identity Constructs*, *Female Identity*, *Entrepreneurial Journey* and *Entrepreneurial Development*, which formed the basis for a conceptual model (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Themes for female entrepreneurial identity development



Source: *Own compilation*

As seen from Table 3, which summarises the themes, codes and number of quotations per code, more than one thousand quotations were captured, of which *Entrepreneurial Journey* (347) was the dominant theme in this analysis, followed by *Female Identity* (333).

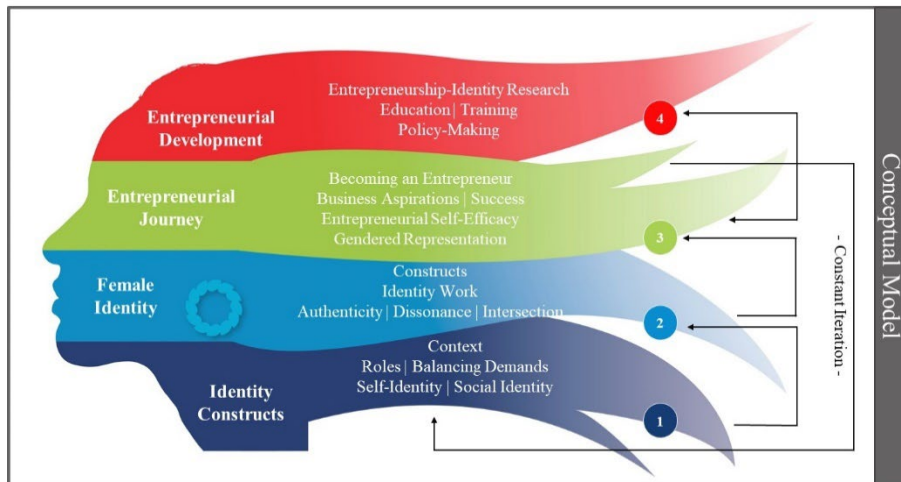
Table 3: Themes, Codes and Quotation Count

Themes, Codes and Quotation Count			
Themes and Codes	Quotations	Contribution to Theme	Contribution to SLR
Identity Constructs	252		24%
Context	74	29%	7%
Roles Balancing Demands	41	16%	4%
Self-identity	42	17%	4%
Social Identity	95	38%	9%
Female Identity	333		32%
Constructs	88	26%	8%
Identity Work	122	37%	12%
Authenticity Dissonance Intersection	123	37%	12%
Entrepreneurial Journey	347		33%
Becoming an Entrepreneur	52	15%	5%
Business Aspirations Business Success	80	23%	8%
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	24	7%	2%
Gendered Representation	191	55%	18%
Entrepreneurial Development	121		11%
Entrepreneurship-Identity Research	74	61%	7%
Education Training	33	27%	3%
Policy-making	14	12%	1%
Totals	1 053		100%

Source: Own compilation

Figure 3 depicts the Conceptual Model, with an elaboration of each of the core themes offered hereafter.

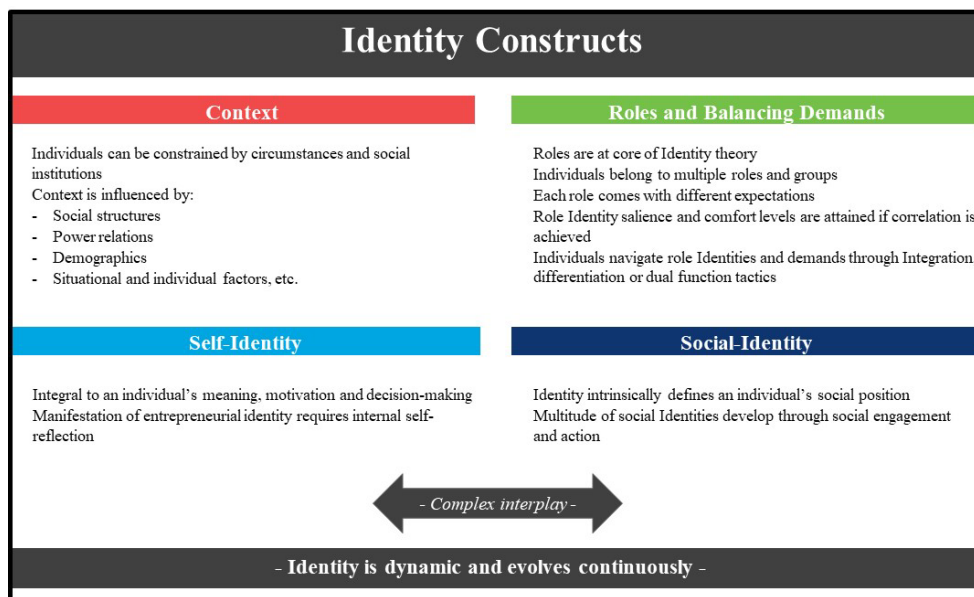
Figure 3: Conceptual Model for Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development



Source: *Own compilation*

Identity Constructs: In the context of the SLR, Identity Constructs refer to the respective elements of an individual's being, which collectively play a role in the development of personal identity. While no single author dominated in the field of Identity Constructs, Hytti and Heinonen (2013), Crosina (2018) and Fernandes and Mota-Ribeiro (2017) made a valuable contribution to the topic, with a number of other authors further advancing the discourse. Four inductive codes were identified for Identity Constructs, namely Context, Roles and Balancing Demands, Self-identity and Social Identity (Figure 4), with a detailed description of each key concept hereafter.

Figure 4: Identity Constructs



Source: Own compilation

“Who am I? This existential question has been central to philosophical pondering since the actual beginning of philosophy. It is largely a question of personal meaning, and one to which early philosophers brought different ideas”(Greene & Brush, 2018). Greene and Brush (2018) observed that Descartes built on Plato, who reasoned that the soul is the answer to personal identity, while John Locke disagreed, by asserting that an individual starts with a tabula rasa – a clean slate – which is shaped by experience, sensations and reflections. Several scholars concurred that identities are embedded within culture and context, with factors such as personal life path, experiences, social contexts, social structures and power relations influencing identity formation (Alvesson, 2010; Chasserio et al., 2014; Stewart & McDermott, 2004).

The review indicated that scholars are often concerned with the social dimensions of identity, with the viewpoints of Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003), Baumeister (2011) and Obrecht (2004) converging on identity being a social phenomenon. Identity is considered to be integral to an individual's meaning, motivation and decision-making, with identity intrinsically defining an individual's social position, which in turn, provides a meaningful description of

their roles and attachments. Essers and Benschop (2007) noted that individuals can be constrained by circumstances and social institutions. In a similar context, other scholars found that identities are under the influence of factors such as social contexts, social structures and power relations. Hytti (2005) suggested that demographic factors, such as age, gender and ethnicity play a key role in the assumption of identity, while Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006) elaborated on the influence of situational and individual factors on the nature of identity work, with Shepherd and Haynie (2009) having expounded upon an individual's pursuit of either integration, differentiation or dual function tactics when reconciling roles and identities, in an effort to mitigate these influences. Watson (2009) deduced that the manifestation of entrepreneurial identity may require a complex interplay of self-identity through internal self-reflection and a multitude of social identities through social engagement and action. Numerous scholars (Brush & Gale, 2014; Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker, 1980) agreed that role-based identities – for instance, parent or entrepreneur - are at the core of identity theory, which possibly accounts for changes in identities – for example, from bachelor to spouse – as individuals' personal identities and consequent decisions about relationships, careers, and so on, evolve (Greene & Brush, 2018). Burke and Reitzes (1991), as well as Meister et al. (2014), expanded on this by explaining that individuals fulfil many roles and belong to several groups, which means that there are multiple, potentially overlapping identities related to the roles which are enacted by individuals. This approach presents identities as cognitive schemas, built from comparisons with expectations, specifically the perception of expectations held for each role (Stryker & Burke, 2000). According to Adler and Adler (1987), Schneider et.al (1971) and Brush and Gale (Brush & Gale, 2014), people generally strive to enact their roles in ways and behaviours deemed socially appropriate for specific roles, while attaching value to different roles in potentially different ways and for situationally different contexts. In a similar vein, Jones, Latham and Betta (Jones et al., 2008) concluded that identity is not situated within the

individual per se, but is constituted via interactions between the individual, society and culture. Expounding upon this view, Hoang and Gimeno (2010) noted a correlation between the salience of an individual's identity and comfort levels in assuming a particular identity, subject to its relativity to other identities, roles or domains, with a possible correlating impetus to alter, abandon or adopt a more relative identity. The observation of Bjursell et al. (2011) that identity is dynamic and evolves through a continuous project, rooted in cyclical interactions between narration and action, synthesises these scholars' findings and those of this SLR.

Female Identity

Overall, contributions to Female Identity were discussed in detail, with Stirzaker and Sitko (2019), Chasserio et al. (2014), Diaz Garcia and Welter (2011) and Ladge et. al (2019) dominating the research pertaining to Female Identity. The following inductive codes were identified as core elements of Female Identity: Constructs, Authenticity, Dissonance and Intersection, and Identity Work. Figure 5 captures the key concepts, followed by a detailed description thereof.

Figure 5: Female Identity

Female Identity	
Constructs	Identity work
Entrepreneurship: - Not unitary; negotiated among multiple discourses and identities - Reflective of male norm; gender bias; male-dominated culture Women: - Face gender constraints - Personal and family scenarios, within context of life journey, must be taken into account	Enacted within situational context Identity work is dynamic and iterative Legitimacy is attained when self-identity is congruent with that of dominant reference group Women: - Purposefully adopt feminized identity or refutes it - Choose between “doing gender” or “re-doing gender” - Must engage in alternative, more intensive forms of identity work to be taken seriously as entrepreneurs
Authenticity Dissonance Intersection	
Gender context: - Masculine and gendered entrepreneurial ethos - Different roles and identities intersect - Characterized by complexity and conflicts Women: - Seen as being responsible for family realm and “other than entrepreneurs” - Find it challenging to claim entrepreneurial legitimacy - Must accommodate opposing responsibilities	From identity to behaviour: - Sociological and social psychological issues arise - Behaviour is driven by identity - Contextually different situations demand different behaviors - Women experience dissonance as a result of ‘ascribed femininity’ and male industry characteristics

Source: *Own compilation*

More recently, the entrepreneurial identity debate has concerned gender, specifically from a female entrepreneurial perspective. Jennings and Brush (2013) claimed that entrepreneurship is a “gender-neutral phenomenon”, but this notion is refuted by numerous other scholars. For instance, Fenwick (2002) noted that entrepreneurship is not unitary but is negotiated among multiple discourses and identities, while Ahl (2004) concluded that it represents the male norm. In a similar vein, Cohen and Mussan (2000) and Bruni et al. (2004) conceptualised identity as the dynamic effect of gender constraints pertinent to female entrepreneurs. Both Ahl (2002) and Bruni et al. (2004) noted that gender context contributes to the complexity and possibility of conflicts, since entrepreneurship is associated with the masculine, with women assumed to be responsible for the family realm and consequently considered to be something “other than entrepreneurs”. This notion supports the findings of early scholars like Collins and Moore (1964) and more recently, Marlow and McAdam (2015), who noted that the typical entrepreneur is assumed to fundamentally be more masculine than feminine, with femininity not aligning well with historical or contemporary iterations of entrepreneurial identity.

Consequently, Chasserio et al. (2014), highlighted the necessity to take into account female entrepreneurs' personal and family scenarios within the context of their life journeys, while also considering associations with institutions such as financial entities and activity sectors. Expanding further on the perception that entrepreneurship is a male-dominated domain, Orlandi (2017) noted that female entrepreneurs assert that specific role players, such as financial institutions, are biased towards male entrepreneurs or that certain organisations display a male-dominated culture. Interestingly, Orlandi (2017) found that female entrepreneurs expressed no concerns regarding social or institutional context, with their concern solely focused on gendered perceptions regarding entrepreneurship. This supports Marlow and McAdam's (2015) earlier observation that women find it particularly challenging to claim entrepreneurial legitimacy, given the masculine ethos and how it influences identity development. Crosina (2018) too, asserted that the broader social systems in which entrepreneurs are embedded shape entrepreneurial activity, with shared beliefs regarding appropriate behaviours for men and women influencing entrepreneurs' actions to develop positive identities. Marlow and McAdam (2015) observed that women need to be cognisant of sector-specific gender perceptions when engaging in entrepreneurship, so as to devise an appropriate strategy for addressing the dissonance between their "ascribed femininity" and the possible characteristic masculinity of their chosen sector. Similarly, Chasserio et al. (2014) noted that the intersection between different roles and identities can be conflicting and challenging to manage, as female entrepreneurs are required to accommodate opposing responsibilities – parenting, while at the same time, managing a business - and satisfy social demands of these conflicting social identities in an effort to legitimise their roles as mothers and entrepreneurs. A study by Garcia and Welter (2011) demonstrated that women either build on a perceived dissonance between womanhood and entrepreneurship, or by refuting it when negotiating identity dissonance. This view is complemented by Lewis (2013), who observed

that some women, in an effort to attain authenticity, purposefully adopt a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship. In contrast, a study by Fernandes and Mota-Rebeiro (2017) revealed that others, particularly those in family businesses, reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power. Garcia and Welter (2011) distinguished gendered practices for how women manage their businesses and relationships. These gendered practices focused on “doing gender”, to support the gender differences status quo and “redoing gender”, to challenge gender differences. Consequently, Crosina (2018) deduced that women may need to engage in alternative, more intensive forms of identity work in an effort to be taken seriously as female entrepreneurs, compared to their male counterparts.

Numerous scholars have considered the nature of identity work, with Ibarra (1999) having noted that identity work is enacted within situational contexts, shaped by the characteristics of those involved. Therefore, identity work is dynamic and iterative and legitimacy can only be attained when individual identity is congruent with that of the dominant referent group, as subsequently observed by Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010). In a similar vein, Marlow and McAdam (2015) considered identity work to be an activity undertaken by reflexive subjects as a mechanism for attaining legitimacy within various environments in which they function. The works of these scholars complement the work of Thomas and Linstead (2002), who asserted that identity is always emergent, as opposed to being aforethought or inflexible, with Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) observing that identity work entails the formation and reformation of identity, where people are “*engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness*”.

Stryker and Burke (2000) proposed an identity theory model, considering that individuals' internal salient hierarchy determines the precedence of a particular identity, with the situation, in turn, determining which identity is evoked. This contribution builds on the early work of Mead (1934) in Stryker and Burke (2000), who provided a conceptual pathway from identity to behaviour, by situating the study of identity in a framework for analysing sociological and social psychological issues. Burke and Reitzes (1991) subsequently concluded that a sense of shared meanings link identity and behaviour, while Stryker and Burke (2000) ultimately concurred that behaviour is driven by identity and that contextually different situations lead to different behaviours.

The analysis of the articles demonstrated the intricacy of identity, particularly when seeking to understand female entrepreneurial identity, its interwovenness with social constructs, the impact thereof on identity authenticity or dissonance and the approaches that are adopted to achieve an appropriate intersection between feminism and entrepreneurial identity. Gherardi (2015) captures the spirit of entrepreneurial identity, the overall findings of other scholars and the SLR best: *"An entrepreneurial identity is not something that one possesses; rather, it is a process of becoming, undertaken in the course of a life project, situated in time and space, and designed by the choices made in historical and cultural circumstances."* Therefore, understandably, women need to engage in specific, possibly more intensive, forms of identity work to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy and salience.

Entrepreneurial Journey

The entrepreneurial process of new business creation starts when an individual associates her- or himself with being an entrepreneur and a business opportunity is identified, for which there are specific business aspirations. Justo et al. (2018) dominates the discourse, with Ladge et al. (2019) also making a substantial contribution to understanding the process of undertaking an entrepreneurial journey. Analysis of the data revealed four inductive codes, namely Becoming

an Entrepreneur, Business Aspirations and Success, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and Gendered Representation, which collectively influences an individual's entrepreneurial journey. Figure 6 depicts the core Entrepreneurial Journey concepts, followed by a description thereof.

Figure 6: Entrepreneurial Journey

Entrepreneurial Journey	
Becoming an Entrepreneur Vocational realm predictor: identity activation and expression Identifying with being an entrepreneur is at the heart of becoming one Intent and motivation influenced by: - Strong entrepreneurial identity - Personal traits and situational factors - Complex interplay between personal and societal factors	Business Aspirations Success Entrepreneurial motivation factors: economic and non-economic Scholastic disparity regarding female entrepreneurial motivations Social identity impacts on nature of opportunities, strategies and value created Female entrepreneurs: - Growth intentions are negatively influence by imposter phenomenon - Unable to internalize success and hence downshifts ambitions Scant research on growth ambitions; understanding must be gained for reasons for women intentionally limiting growth of business and minimizing economic impact
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) Crucial to believe that have necessary skills and capabilities Generating cognitive knowledge-structures and developing motivation takes time and persistence Entrepreneurs driven by economic self-interest are perceived to have highest ESE levels High ESE = more entrepreneurially inclined Female entrepreneurs: - ESE and aspirations influenced by motherhood and family embeddedness - Lower ESE in non-traditional careers and in performing entrepreneurial tasks	Gendered Representation Academic over-emphasis of persistent symbolic male entrepreneurial domain Female entrepreneurs: - Face social and institutional barriers - Do NOT oppose gender differences, but protest against pragmatic implications in terms of opportunities and positions

Source: *Own compilation*

According to Bjursell et al. (2011), the decision to become an entrepreneur is influenced by a complex interplay between personal and societal factors, which ultimately leads to an individual potentially making the decision to embark on an entrepreneurial journey. They noted that, although certain personal traits might propel individuals to pursue entrepreneurship, numerous other factors should be recognised. For instance, children who were raised by an enterprising family develop a business orientation early-on, resulting in them implicitly acquiring an entrepreneurial identity. The notion that the probability of children who are

exposed to entrepreneurship during the identity-forming phase becoming entrepreneurs, is supported by several studies across Sweden (Linguist et al., 2015), Germany (Chlosta et al., 2012) and the United Kingdom . Mahto and McDowell (2018) noted that these studies emphasise enhanced entrepreneurial motivation and the corresponding construction of entrepreneurial identity, while Hytti (2005) and Down and Warren (2008) observed that, as identifying with being an entrepreneur is at the heart of becoming an entrepreneur, having a strong entrepreneurial identity could serve as a catalyst for new venture creation. In fact, Obschonka et al. (2014) found that self-identity is not only a driver of entrepreneurial behaviour due to its motivational effect, but the interplay with other motivational factors – such as attitudes, norms and control beliefs – means that self-identity is an antecedent for entrepreneurial intention and behaviour.

Shane and Venkataraman (2000) noted that entrepreneurial behaviour is characterised by substantial risk, uncertainty and complexity, with profound consequences for the individual. Although Peterman and Kennedy (2003) and Souitaris et al (2007) concluded that certain individuals may have a positive association with entrepreneurship – as a result of public role models and a perceived positive entrepreneurship social norm – and believe that they are capable of being entrepreneurs (possibly as a result of enterprise advice and education), Obschonka et al. (2014) noted that the concept of entrepreneurship may not align with their occupational self-concept and hence they may not necessarily identify themselves with becoming entrepreneurs. In early works, Super (1963) found that general literature on vocational choice suggests that identity activation and expression are important predictors in the vocational realm, since vocational behaviour is a prominent channel through which individuals enact their self-concept and identity. The link between an individual's identity and entrepreneurial career choice is supported by Lounsbury and Glynn's (2001) empirical findings.

According to Sieger et al. (2016), founders have the freedom to pursue opportunities that match their preferences and business goals, while also choosing how they explore these opportunities and business goals when engaging in new venture creation. Similarly, Fauchart et al. (2011) noted that a new venture becomes a manifestation and reflection of the entrepreneur. These views are supported by a growing body of literature that recognises that entrepreneurial activities are infused with meaning, since they are an expression of the individual's identity or self-concept. Given that new venture creation is inherently a social activity, with organisations themselves being social constructs, the social aspects of a founder's self-concept are of significance when considering the process of initiating a new venture (Whetten & Mackey, 2002).

While the nature of opportunities explored by entrepreneurs, the strategies which they pursue and the type of value that they create (Wry & York, 2017) is impacted by entrepreneurs' social identities (Fauchart et al., 2011), Greene and Brush (2018) found that there is scant research on the growth ambitions within the diversity of entrepreneurs. Ladge et al. (2019) found that the extent to which a female business owner possesses a salient entrepreneurial identity impacts her desire for business growth, while numerous earlier scholars (Clance & Imes, 1978; Good & Good, 1973; Horner, 1968) noted that female entrepreneurs' growth intentions are negatively influenced by the imposter phenomenon, as it could result in high achievers potentially being unable to internalise their success and in turn, downshifting their ambitions. Hence, Ladge et al. (2019) concluded that, until we gain a better understanding of the reasons for women intentionally limiting the growth of their businesses and in so doing, minimising their impact on the economy, female entrepreneurs may continue to be one of the most underutilised global economic and growth resources. Bandura (1989) and Chen et al. (1998) added a further dimension by having noted that the belief that one has the requisite skills and capabilities is crucial to when pursuing a career or becoming an entrepreneur.

A number of scholars considered the motivational factors to initiate a new venture, as well as the aspirations that drive business motives and success, with Mitchell et al. (2000) and Shane and Venkataraman (2000) having observed that generating the cognitive knowledge structures and developing the motivation to successfully identify and explore opportunities to become an entrepreneur takes time and persistence. While Locke and Baum (2007) postulated that most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth, Amit and Zott (2001), Kolvereid (1996) and Shane et al (1991) noted that entrepreneurial aspiration may also be prompted by non-economic factors, such as autonomy, work-life balance, or prestige. The data indicates that there is a disparity between scholars' views in this regard, as Fishcer et al (1993) argued that female entrepreneurs have a stronger motivation for financial gain than their male counterparts, whilst DeMartino and Barbato (2003) argued that women tend to become entrepreneurs in an effort to attain work-life balance, rather than seeking wealth creation and business advancement. These works were expounded upon by Hessels et al. (2008), who noted that, regardless of the motivation for new venture creation, individual entrepreneurial motivation may determine the goals and aspirations for the venture, which in turn, may determine economic outcomes. Brändle et al. (2018) subsequently noted that the central tenet of current research is that entrepreneurs driven primarily by economic self-interest are most likely to perceive the highest levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, whereas entrepreneurs driven by other factors – such as a desire to address societal problem or make the world a better place - do not experience high levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Expanding our knowledge on this, Chen et al. (1998) and Krueger et al. (2000) noted that individuals with high entrepreneurial self-efficacy are more entrepreneurially inclined, while Eddleston et al (2006) observed that societal expectations impact on women's self-confidence. In a similar vein, Mueller and Dato-On (2008) noted that women demonstrate lower self-efficacy in non-

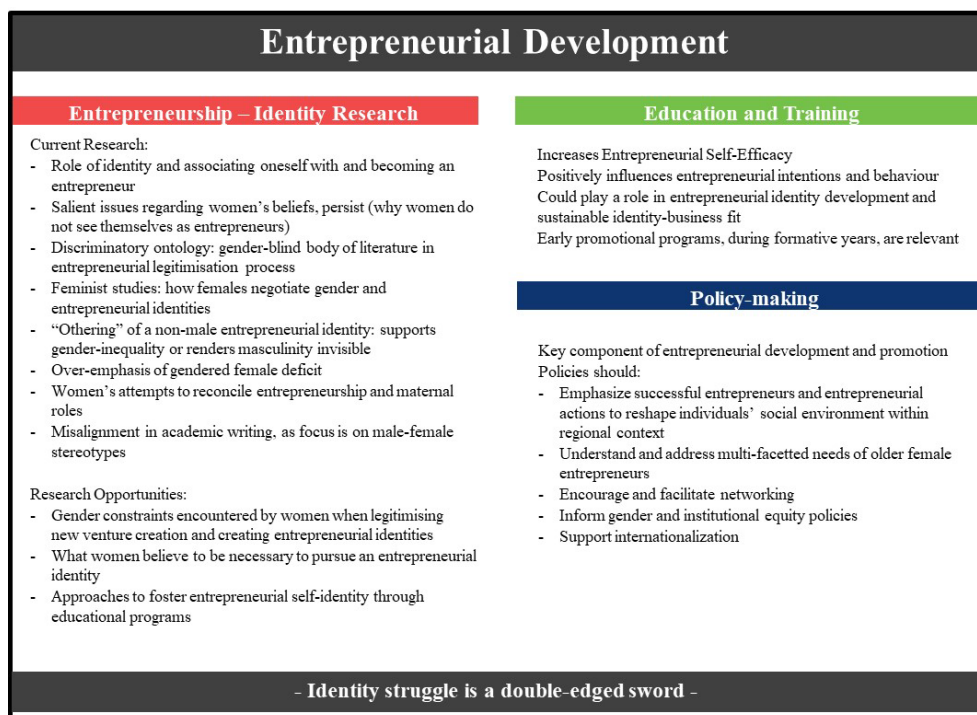
traditional careers and in performing entrepreneurial tasks. Brush et al. (2009) further shed light on female entrepreneurial self-efficacy by observing that motherhood and family embeddedness could potentially influence entrepreneurial self-efficacy, as well as aspirations when exploiting an opportunity. Consequently, the way in which the entrepreneurial process unfolds is impacted by motherhood and family embeddedness (2009), with an evident gendered dimension to entrepreneurial representation, as elucidated by numerous scholars. For instance, Cohen and Musson (2000), Bruni et al. (2004), Ahl (2006) and Hamilton (2013) observed the persistence of the symbolic male entrepreneurial domain, with emphasis on traditional male qualities such as risk-taking, autonomy, strong internal locus of control and high achievement-need (Chasserio et al., 2014; Galloway, 2012), rather than subordination, support and dependence, characteristic of conventional female stereotypes (Bruni et al., 2004). Overall, research on gender and entrepreneurship has found that women are plagued by social and institutional gender barriers, and that they are not instantly recognised as being entrepreneurs (Lewis, 2006), while they fall short of their male counterparts in terms of recognition for their individual attributes and professional qualities (Humbert & Brindley, 2015). Although researchers are in agreement that entrepreneurship is gendered, Lewis (2006) noted that this principle is not often applied when female entrepreneurs seek to understand their situation. They adopt a critical sensibility to gender differences and rather than opposing the differences, female entrepreneurs protest against the pragmatic implications in terms of opportunities and the positions occupied by men. Furthermore, some researchers are in favour of a more feminine approach to entrepreneurship and the way in which business is conducted (Orser et al., 2011; Patterson et al., 2012). Bjursell et al. (2011) and Brush et al. (2009), however, concluded that female entrepreneurs can aid their understanding of business experiences, by recognising gender relevance. Considering scholastic inputs, it is evident that the entrepreneurial journey is deeply impacted by gender perspectives and social constructs,

but that a chasm remains in understanding female entrepreneurs' business aspirations and their reasons for potentially opting to limit venture growth.

Entrepreneurial Development

Entrepreneurial development entails the process of improving the skill set and knowledge of entrepreneurs. The data analysis revealed that research on new venture creation, as well as entrepreneurship education and training, supported by sound policies, play a crucial role in the entrepreneurial development process, with Hewapathirana (2011) and Chasserio et al. (2014) dominating the discourse. The following inductive codes were revealed during the analysis: Entrepreneurship-Identity Research, Education and Training, and Policy-making. Figure 7 depicts the core concepts underpinning Entrepreneurship-Development, followed by a detailed description thereof.

Figure 7: Entrepreneurial Development



Source: Own compilation

Greene and Brush (2018) observed that the body of entrepreneurial research has grown and evolved over the years to a broader, deeper study of entrepreneurial identity, while other scholars found a greater interest in understanding potential identity differences within a defined arena of social entrepreneurship (Jones et al., 2008; Light, 2005), and the shaping of entrepreneurial identities through education (Donnellon et al., 2014; Edwards & Muir, 2012; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Vanevenhoven & Liguori, 2013). Analysis of the data indicated that the role of identity in associating oneself with, and becoming, an entrepreneur has been addressed by numerous scholars (Down & Warren, 2008; Hytti, 2005; Kempster & Cope, 2010; Lewis, 2020; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Murnieks et al., 2014), with the debate on female entrepreneurship having a long academic history (Bowen & Hisrich, 1986; DeCarlo & Lyons, 1979). However, although early researchers such as Cromie (1987) and MacNabb et al. (1993) addressed (at least in part) the issues relating to women's belief that they are not afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts, that they are not seen as entrepreneurial role models and that they lack the requisite emotional support to develop a venture, these salient issues persist, as demonstrated by a relatively recent article by Cain Miller (2017, June 9) entitled "*Why women don't see themselves as entrepreneurs*", published in the New York Times. Swail and Marlow (2017) argued that, although gender is a critical element of the entrepreneurial legitimization process, gender-neutrality is adopted, resulting in a gender-blind body of literature, which inevitably embeds a discriminatory ontology. However, several feminist studies have focused on how female entrepreneurs negotiate their gender and entrepreneur identities, in an effort to understand these entrepreneurs' approach to gender discrimination (Bruni et al., 2004; Diaz García & Welter, 2011; Lewis, 2013; Pettersson & Cassel, 2014), while Butler (2004) postulated that studying gender identity allows exploration of the development and naturalisation of masculinity and femininity, as well as the means by which it is deconstructed and denaturalized. However, while there is endorsement for the

importance of academic research to understand the marginalisation of female entrepreneurs through gendered practices (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2014; Stead, 2017), others have demonstrated that academic research focusing specifically on female entrepreneurship either encourages gender inequality (H. Ahl, 2004) or renders masculinity invisible, which supports the process of the “othering” of a non-male entrepreneurial identity (Bruni et al., 2004). Other scholars (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Saridakis et al., 2013) suggested that sex differences, reflecting stereotypical expectations of a gendered female deficit, have been overemphasised by researchers. The SLR, undertaken by the author of this article, supports this suggestion, given the number of quote-code linkages for gendered representation. Conversely, Swail and Marlow (2017) noted that, although the gender challenges encountered by women when creating their new entrepreneurial identity and establishing self- and venture legitimacy, could be a critical reason for women being less likely than men to create new ventures (McAdam, 2012), previous research has paid scant attention to this aspect. However, women’s attempts to reconcile entrepreneurial and maternal roles has received considerable attention from a number of scholars (Chasserio et al., 2014; Stead, 2017), with Richomme-Huet et al. (2013) specifically focusing on “mumpreneurs” as a means to attain work-life balance. In contrast, in a similar vein to Swail and Marlow’s (2017) observation, Orlandi (2017) found that academic literature has not sufficiently explored the issue of what women believe to be necessary to pursue an entrepreneurial venture, as most studies consider female entrepreneurship from a high-level research perspective. Orlandi (2017) concluded that, not only does this identity struggle manifest as a double-edged sword in academic writing, it also indicates some misalignment in academic research, given that the relationship between male and female stereotypes is academically addressed, while female entrepreneurs are, in fact, more concerned with stereotyping related to maternity and their roles as mothers.

The role of entrepreneurship education in entrepreneurial development has been considered by researchers, with Wilson (2007) having observed that it is seen to provide nascent entrepreneurs with the requisite entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and behaviour, which increases entrepreneurial self-efficacy. In a similar vein, Matlay (2006) observed that entrepreneurship education positively influences entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour. This is consistent with the findings of other scholars (Henry et al., 2005; Kolvereid, 1996; Krueger et al., 2000), which is further complemented by Hägg (2001), who observed that entrepreneurship education could also play a role in entrepreneurial identity development and sustainable identity-business fit (Mills & Pawson, 2011). Interestingly, Obschonka (2014) observed that, although entrepreneurship programs that fail to address the occupational self-concept may demonstrate limited effectiveness, scholars have not actually investigated approaches to foster entrepreneurial self-identity through educational programs. However, it should be noted that Rise et al. (2010) observed that identity change takes place over the long term, with Obschonka (2014) concluding that it appears to be a complicated endeavour. A number of scholars (Obschonka et al., 2014; Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004; Super, 1963) further suggested that early promotional programs, during the formative years, are relevant.

Potter (2005) noted that *'Public policies have a role to play in leveraging the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship, developing programmes that support market mechanisms that may not be well adaptable to entrepreneurship and promoting entrepreneurship in the population at large.'* Therefore, policy-making is considered to be a key component of entrepreneurial development. Previous entrepreneurship research put forward specific policy-making proposals, with Mahto and McDowell (2018) noting that emphasis should be placed on successful entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial actions, so as to reshape individuals' social environment within their regional context, while Stirzaker and Sitko (2019) suggested that it is important for policy makers to have an understanding of the multifaceted needs of older

entrepreneurs, so as to tailor programmes to suit their heterogeneous needs. It is specifically relevant to consider the nuances of experiences and the social-entrepreneurial identity intersection of older female entrepreneurs, if the aim is to encourage more mature individuals to engage in new venture creation. Dias Garcia and Carter (2009) indicated that policy makers should encourage and facilitate networking, since entrepreneurship is a socially embedded phenomenon. A number of researchers (Ahl, 2007; Calas et al., 2009; Diaz Garcia & Carter, 2009; Fernandes & Mota-Ribeiro, 2017) focused specifically on gender and institutional equality policies, with key observations that policies should encourage discussions of gender conceptions and questioning of dominant discourses, while considering the appropriate way of effecting entrepreneurship, redefining conventional and masculine notions of the entrepreneurial persona and the specific contexts and identities of female entrepreneurs. A further focus area was internationalisation, with Hewapathirana (2011) observing that policies which promote international networks and opportunities for female entrepreneurs to demonstrate their latent capabilities, by facilitating and providing education, resources and generating avenues to become both national and international leaders, are required. Consequently, the inputs of other scholars, emphasised by the SLR, indicate that there is much scope to enhance female entrepreneurial development through focused identity research, education and training, as well as public policies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to explore published research on female entrepreneurial identity. The SLR found that identity development is a dynamic, iterative process of “becoming”, with a complex interaction between self- and social constructs, which deeply impacts on identity authenticity or dissonance and the approaches that are adopted to achieve an appropriate intersection between feminism and entrepreneurial identity. Inevitably, women need to engage

in specific, possibly more intensive, forms of identity work to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy and salience, than their male counterparts. However, although scholastic work has over-emphasised sex differences, strong evidence of a gender-blind body of literature and a discriminatory ontology remains. The dichotomy is further convoluted by scholars' views that academic research that focuses specifically on female entrepreneurship may encourage gender inequality or render masculinity invisible. Consequently, female entrepreneurial identity has manifested itself as a double-edged sword, with misalignment in academic research with regards to women's new venture growth aspirations and their navigation of entrepreneurial identity. Given that the SLR emphasises this double-edged sword, together with the fact that focused research on the topic is still at an early stage, opportunities for new conceptual and empirical work exists. These range from understanding the specific steps in the formation of a strong identity, with the associated new venture growth aspirations, to the process of entrepreneurial identity evolution and behaviour.

Based on the finding of the SLR, a literature-based conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity was developed. Although there is ample room for theoretical elaboration, given that no single model is likely to account for the experiences of different entrepreneurs (Crosina, 2018), the conceptual model contributes to the understanding of female entrepreneurial identity, with potential application for entrepreneurial development initiatives, educational institutions and policy-makers.

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Addendum 4.1: Systematic literature review Data collection and curation process

Systematic literature review: Data collection and curation process				
Abstract, Title, Keywords				
Data collection	female AND entrepreneur* AND identity and wom?n AND entrepreneur* AND identity			
Data curation	TS=(female near/10 entrepreneur* AND identity) and TS=(wom?n near/10 entrepreneur* AND identity)			
Study selection criteria				
Criteria	Inclusion Criteria		Exclusion Criteria	
Period	2010-2020		Older than 10 Years	
Language	English		Non-English languages	
Journal ranking	A - C in VHB journal ratings		Lower than C in VHB journal ratings	
Data selection				
Database	Data collection (Comprehensive review sample)	Data curation (Items not within study-scope eliminated)	Data filtration (Duplicates eliminated and abstracts reviewed)	Post-abstract review and data extraction
Science Direct	4	3		
Scopus	325	67		
Web of Science	186	26		
Total	515	96	69	26

Addendum 4.2: Systematic literature review

Data filtered and abstracts reviewed

Systematic literature review: Data filtered and abstracts reviewed			
Source	Title	Author/s	Included for analysis (Yes / No)
Scopus	The complex hues of entrepreneurial identity amongst women owning accounting firms	Adapa S., Sheridan A.	Yes (Focused on Indian women in accounting, but appears to offer good insight)
Web of Science	Understanding the role of culture and gender stereotypes in women entrepreneurship through the lens of the stereotype threat theory	Adom, K; Anambane, G.	No (Focused on gender stereotyping, not identity)
Scopus	Case study 2: How working in a collective boosts self-esteem and choice-making propensity in women	Anand S.	No (Focused on team-work etc. in context of no physical space, rather than identity)
Scopus	Women entrepreneurs: An approach from performative identity theory	Astorga P.S.S.	No (Spanish article; does not appear to align well with research topic)
Scopus	The symbiosis between identity and migrant entrepreneurship among Ghanaian women entrepreneurs in South Africa	Besem, O.V.	No (Focused on Ghanaian versus South African identity)
Scopus	Proactive and reactive plots: Narratives in entrepreneurial identity construction	Bjursell C., Melin L.	Yes
Scopus	The construction of a professional identity of a female entrepreneur	Boers Q., Boers B.	No (Focused on integration of Chinese women in Sweden)
Science Direct	I am what I am - How nascent entrepreneurs social identity affects their entrepreneurial self-efficacy	Brandle, L; Berger, E.S.C; Golla, S, Kuckertz, A.	Yes
Web of Science	Factors affecting the success of women's entrepreneurship: a review of literature	Cabrera, E.M.; Mauricio, D	No (No reference to identity)
Scopus	When entrepreneurial identity meets multiple social identities: Interplays and identity work of women entrepreneurs	Chasserio S., Pailot P., Poroli C.	Yes (Focused on French women, but appears to be applicable)
Scopus	Understanding the gendered identity role of skilled female entrepreneurs amongst the Indian diaspora in Europe	Chatwani N.	No (Focused on female entrepreneurs of the Indian diaspora in Europe who negotiate transient identities)
Book	On becoming an entrepreneur: unpacking entrepreneurial identity	Crosina, E	Yes
Scopus	Case study 3: It's my business: Personal evolution and assertion of identity	Desai S.	No (Focused on entrepreneurship as a way to form self-identity, rather than development of entrepreneurial identity, in context of Indian patriarchal society)

Systematic literature review: Data filtered and abstracts reviewed			
Source	Title	Author/s	Included for analysis (Yes / No)
Web of Science	Gender identities and practices: Interpreting women entrepreneurs' narratives	Diaz Garcia, M.C; Welter, F	Yes
Web of Science	The career identities of "mumpreneurs": Women's experiences of combining enterprise and motherhood	Duberley, J.; Carrigan, M.	No (Focused on the discourse between mothering and enterprise, not entrepreneurial identity)
Web of Science	Connecting gender identity, entrepreneurial training, role models and intentions	Feder, E.S.; Nitu, A.; Renata, D.	No (Focused on intentions, not identity, of higher education students)
Web of Science	Respect and "self-determination" women entrepreneurs' identities and entrepreneurial discourses	Fernandes, E; Mota-Ribeiro, S.	Yes (Based on Portuguese women, but appears to offer good identity insight)
Web of Science	Authoring the female entrepreneur while talking the discourse of work-family life balance	Gherardi, S.	Yes (Largely focused on work-life balance, but appears to offer insight into identity)
Scopus	Introduction: The ABCs of women's entrepreneurial identity-aspirations, behaviors and confidence	Greene P.G., Brush C.G.	Yes
Scopus	Positively deviant: Identity work through B Corporation certification	Grimes M.G., Gehman J., Cao K.	No (Focuses on adoption of sustainability certification)
Scopus	Tourism Entrepreneurship Performance: The Effects of Place Identity, Self-Efficacy, and Gender	Hallak R., Assaker G., Lee C.	No (Focuses on place identity in relation to entrepreneurial self-efficacy)
Web of Science	Entrepreneurial Narrative Identity and Gender: A Double Epistemological Shift	Hamilton, E.	No (Initially appeared to offer insight, but closer inspection revealed that it is entirely focused on narratives; does not offer concrete insight)
Scopus	Identity and identity work in constructing the woman entrepreneur	Harrison R.T., Leitch C.M.	Yes
Scopus	Communication and identity management by New York city's immigrant women entrepreneurs	Haseki M., Scott C.R.	No (Strong focus on immigrant women in New York)
Scopus	Communicatively Managing Multiple, Intersecting Identities Among Immigrant Women Entrepreneurs	Haseki M., Scott C.R., Gailliard B.M.	No (Focused on immigrant women communicating identity, rather than developing identity)
Web of Science	The entrepreneurial gender divide: Hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity and organizational forms	Hechavarria, D.M.; Ingram, A.E.	No (Focused purely on the choice to establish commercial versus social enterprises)

Systematic literature review: Data filtered and abstracts reviewed			
Source	Title	Author/s	Included for analysis (Yes / No)
Scopus	"Bloody Wonder Woman!": Identity performances of elite women entrepreneurs on Instagram	Heizmann H., Liu H.	No (Instagram and male versus female-specific)
Scopus	The role of social identity in internationalization of women-owned small businesses in Sri Lanka	Hewapathirana, G.I.	Yes (May be too focused on internationalisation and Sri Lanka, but may often valuable insights regarding social identity)
Scopus	Gender integration in enterprise development programmes	Huq A., Moyeen A.	No (Focused on gender in enterprise development programmes in Bangladesh)
Scopus	Heroic and humane entrepreneurs: Identity work in entrepreneurship education	Hytti U., Heinonen J.	Yes
Scopus	Unexpected entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurs with disabilities' embodied identity struggles	Jammaers E., Zanoni P.	No (Focused specifically on physically disabled male and female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial archetypes)
Scopus	Perception of success of men and women entrepreneurs: A social identity approach	Justo R., Cruz C., de Castro J.O.	Yes
Scopus	Nostalgia, anxiety and hope: Migration and ethnic identity of Chosŏnjok in China	Kim W.B.	No (Focused on Korean identity in China, not entrepreneurial identity)
Scopus	Gender and the business environment for new firm creation	Klapper L.F., Parker S.C.	No (Focus is on male versus female, rather than identity)
Scopus	Entrepreneurship within social and health care: A question of identity, gender and professionalism	Kovalainen A., Österberg-Högestedt J.	No (Initially appeared to offer insight, but found to be too heavily focused on switching from public health care employment to healthcare sector entrepreneur, in Nordic context)
Scopus	Indian women as entrepreneurs: An exploration of self-identity	Kumar P.	No (Very specifically focused on Indian women in a patriarchal society)
Scopus	Developing entrepreneurial identity among start-ups' female founders in high-tech: Policy implications from the Chilean case	Kuschel K., Labra J.P.	No (Focused on technology Chilean entrepreneurs, with no alignment with study context)
Science Direct	Am I an entrepreneur? How imposter fears hinder women entrepreneurship business growth	Ladge, J.	Yes
Scopus	Motherhood and entrepreneurship: Gender role identity as a resource	Leung A.	No (Initially appeared to offer insight, but closer inspection revealed that it is entirely focused on two specific case studies of Japanese mothers-entrepreneurs)

Systematic literature review: Data filtered and abstracts reviewed			
Source	Title	Author/s	Included for analysis (Yes / No)
Web of Science	Enacting Entrepreneurship and Leadership: A Longitudinal Exploration of Gendered Identity Work	Lewis, K.V.	Yes (Largely focused on leadership, but appears to offer good insight)
Web of Science	The Search for an Authentic Entrepreneurial Identity: Difference and Professionalism among Women Business Owners	Lewis, P.	Yes
Web of Science	Women's experiences of legitimacy, satisfaction and commitment as entrepreneurs: embedded in gender hierarchy and networks in private and business spheres	Liu, Y.; Schott, T.; Zhang, C.	No (Focused on gender hierarchy, not identity)
Scopus	Interplay between individual and shared identities of women entrepreneurs in Manipur	Loitongbam B., Anurag, P.	No (Initially appeared to offer insight, but closer inspected revealed that it is entirely focused on informal entrepreneurs operating within a specific mother-run bazaar in Manipur)
Web of Science	Entrepreneurial motivation: a non-entrepreneur's journey to become an entrepreneur	Mahto, RV; McDowell, WC.	Yes (Focused on identity as motivation to become an entrepreneur; may offer good insights)
Web of Science	Becoming an entrepreneur: opportunities and identity transitions	Marcus, H; Ho, M; Harris, C; Morrison, R.	Yes
Web of Science	Incubation or Induction? Gendered Identity Work in the Context of Technology Business Incubation	Marlow, S; McAdam, M.	Yes (Focused on technology incubation, but appears to offer identity insight)
Scopus	How gender stereotypes shape venture growth expectations	Martiarena A..	No (Focused on stereotyping, rather than identity)
Scopus	Identity work in female-led creative businesses	Martin L., Jerrard B., Wright L.	Yes (Limited to three women in creative sector, but appears to offer good insight)
Web of Science	Integrating motivation, risk-taking and self-identity: A typology of ICT enterprise development narratives	Mills, C; Pawson, K	Yes (Focused on ICT start-ups in New Zealand, but appears to offer ID insight)
Scopus	The gender, racio-ethnic and professional work identity of an Indian woman entrepreneur in South Africa	Mohamed, H.C.N.	No (Focused on Indian women in male-dominated environment, rather than identity)
Web of Science	Enrichment for retail businesses: How female entrepreneurs and masculine traits enhance business success	Moudry, D.V; Thaichon, P.	No (Not identity at all, but rather inculcating masculine traits in females)
Web of Science	Entrepreneurial Self-Identity: Predictors and Effects Within the Theory of Planned Behavior Framework	Obschonka, M; Silbereisen, R.K; Cantner, U and Goethner, M.	Yes

Systematic literature review: Data filtered and abstracts reviewed			
Source	Title	Author/s	Included for analysis (Yes / No)
Web of Science	Am I an Entrepreneur? Identity Struggle in the Contemporary Women Entrepreneurship Discourse	Orlandi, L.B.	Yes
Scopus	Feminist attributes and entrepreneurial identity	Orser, B.J., Elliott, C., Leck, J.	No (Entirely focused on feminist entrepreneurs)
Scopus	The interplay between identity construction and opportunity structures: Narratives of Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands	Ozasir K.S., Essers C.	No (Focused on Turkish women in the Netherlands, in context of political tensions)
Scopus	Gender and innovation in the new economy: Women, identity, and creative work	Poutanen S., Kovalainen A.	No (Focused on innovation-shift from heavy industry to game industry, rather than identity)
Web of Science	A research agenda for women and entrepreneurship: Identity through aspirations, behaviors, and confidence	Ramers, L.H.	No (Book Review)
Web of Science	Black entrepreneurship and ethnic beauty salons: possibilities for resistance in the social (re)construction of black identity	Rezende, A.F.; Mafra, F.L.N.; Pereira, J.J.	No (Foreign language, not English)
Scopus	New Insights on Psychological Factors for the Development of Women Entrepreneurs in Indonesia	Riantoputra C.D., Muis I.	No (Focused on motivation, challenges and opportunities in Indonesia, not identity)
Science Direct	Entrepreneurial identity formation during the initial entrepreneurial experience: The influence of simulation feedback and existing identity	Robert, N.	No (Based on undergrad students)
Web of Science	Mind the gap: The role of gender in entrepreneurial career choice and social influence by founders	Rocha, V.; van Praag, M.	No (Focused on how founders influence employees)
Web of Science	Belonging and women entrepreneurs: Women's navigation of gendered assumptions in entrepreneurial practice	Stead, V.	No (Strong focus on belonging, rather than identity)
Scopus	The unfolding impact of leader identity entrepreneurship on burnout, work engagement, and turnover intentions	Steffens N.K., Yang J., Jetten J., Haslam S.A., Lipponen J.	No (Focused purely on leader identity and work engagement among team members)
Web of Science	The older entrepreneurial self: intersecting identities of older women entrepreneurs	Stirzaker, R; Sitko, R.	Yes
Scopus	'Embrace the masculine; attenuate the feminine'—gender, identity work and entrepreneurial legitimation in the nascent context	Swail J., Marlow S.	Yes
Scopus	Entrepreneurial Leadership, Patriarchy, Gender, and Identity in the Arab World: Lebanon in Focus	Tlaiss H.A., Kauser S.	Yes (Strong focus on Lebanese women, but appears to offer good overall insight)
Scopus	Investigating women's intentions for entrepreneurial growth	Venugopal V.	No (Focused on growth intentions rather than identity)

Systematic literature review: Data filtered and abstracts reviewed			
Source	Title	Author/s	Included for analysis (Yes / No)
Web of Science	Narratives of International Women Entrepreneurs: An Exploratory Case Study of Identity Negotiation in Technology Startups	Williams, S.D.; Ammettler, G; Rodriguez-Ardura, I; Li, X	Yes
Scopus	Sex differences in entrepreneurs' business growth intentions: an identity approach	Zampetakis L.A., Bakatsaki M., Kafetsios K., Moustakis V.S.	No (Focused on men versus women's growth intentions)

Addendum 4.3: Submission of Article 2

Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship

From: Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship (JDE) <em@editorialmanager.com>
Date: Tue, May 17, 2022 at 8:29 AM
Subject: JDE: Submission Confirmation for Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development: A Systematic Literature Review
To: Verona Leendertz <13173391@g.nwu.ac.za>

Dear Prof Verona Leendertz,

Your submission entitled "Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development: A Systematic Literature Review" has been received by journal Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship

You will be able to check on the progress of your paper by logging on to Editorial Manager as an author. The URL is <https://www.editorialmanager.com/jde/>.

Your manuscript will be given a reference number once an Editor has been assigned.

Thank you for submitting your work to this journal.

With kind regards

Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship

In compliance with data protection regulations, you may request that we remove your personal registration details at any time. (Use the following URL: <https://www.editorialmanager.com/jde/login.asp?a=r>). Please contact the publication office if you have any questions.

Article 3

Our stories may be singular, but our destination is shared: The intersection between female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

Our stories may be singular, but our destination is shared¹: The intersection between female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

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¹ Barack Obama: 2008

Our stories may be singular, but our destination is shared²: The intersection between female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations

Abstract

Purpose: This paper offers an original typology of female entrepreneurs' social entrepreneurial identity by synthesising social identity theory and female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration and new venture creation.

Methodology approach: This paper adopted the Interpretivist approach, with in-depth semi-structured individual interviews with female entrepreneurs in South Africa and the Netherlands.

Findings: The findings demonstrate that social entrepreneurial identity influences new venture aspirations, with the majority of study participants in both contexts having a pure Darwinian identity. However, a significant number of the women also demonstrate a Communitarian or hybrid Darwinian-Communitarian identity.

Originality: The study casts a light on contextual differences between a developing country and a developed country, from a social entrepreneurial identity perspective, and its role in shaping female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in new venture creation. Furthermore, the study provides constructs for potentially enhancing new venture development programmes aimed at female entrepreneurs by highlighting that a significant percentage of female founders aspire to not only develop a profitable business, but also to empower and support a particular community, with both parties benefiting from the venture.

Keywords: social identity, entrepreneurial identity, aspirations, female entrepreneurs, new venture

² Barack Obama: 2008

Introduction

The existential question – Who am I? – has sparked countless debates and philosophical ponderings, ranging from Plato's proposition that the answer to personal identity lies within the soul, to Locke's opposing view that each person starts with a clean slate – a *tabula rasa* – and that individuals' sense of self is shaped by personal experiences, reflections and sensations (Greene and Brush, 2018).

Identity is considered to be multi-dimensional, with personal- and social identity intersecting to form the whole, but scholars have begun to explore the social aspects of identity, focusing on individuals' group affiliations as a topic of inquiry, with the main approaches including personal identity, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and identity theory (Stryker and Serpe, 2012). This is substantiated by a study conducted by Morris *et al.* (2006) that found that three independent variables were significant predictors of female entrepreneurs' growth orientation: female identity, equity ownership and the perception that women face unique obstacles in marketing and selling. Interestingly, the study found that growth orientation is significant among women with a stronger female identity.

When engaging in new venture creation, founders have the freedom to pursue opportunities that match their preferences and business goals, while also choosing how they explore these opportunities and business goals (Sieger *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, a new venture becomes a manifestation and reflection of the entrepreneur (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011). This view is supported by a growing body of literature that recognises that entrepreneurial activities are infused with meaning, since they are an expression of the individual's identity or self-concept (Cardon *et al.*, 2009; Hoang and Gimeno, 2010). Given that new venture creation is inherently a social activity, with organisations themselves being social constructs, the social aspects of a founder's self-concept are of significance when considering the process of initiating a new venture (Whetten and Mackey, 2002). Since social identity is critical to shaping the beliefs, values, feelings and actions within a social context – including new venture creation – applying social identity theory can provide an in-depth assessment of an individual's sense of self (Hogg and Terry, 2000). This view is supported by Fauchart *et al.* (2011), who held that applying social identity theory could serve as a valuable lens through which to gain a better understanding of the heterogeneity of the meanings associated by founders with their entrepreneurial endeavours, as well as the effects of such heterogeneity on firm creation.

Generating the cognitive knowledge structures (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000) and developing the motivation to successfully identify and explore opportunities to become an entrepreneur (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000) takes time and persistence. Most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth (Locke and Baum, 2007; Shane *et al.*, 2003). However, as Hessels *et al.* (2008) postulate, individual entrepreneurial motivation may determine the goals and aspirations for the venture, which,

in turn, may determine economic outcomes. Scholars have proposed a strong link between entrepreneurs' self-concept and subsequent outcomes, and although relatively little is known about the role of self-identity in motivating entrepreneurial action (Farmer *et al.*, 2011), it is accepted that social identity is critical to the beliefs, feelings, values and actions within social contexts, including new venture creation (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Within the context of the influence of social identity on aspirations, our application of the term 'aspirations' refers to the entrepreneur's aims or ambitions when engaging in a new venture creation process – that is, what does an individual really want to achieve with her entrepreneurial endeavours? Traditionally, aspirations are associated with high-growth entrepreneurship with aggressive funding goals and the pursuit of venture capital funding. However, Sieger *et al.* (2016) postulate that these aspirations are stereotypically masculine, rather than feminine (Gupta *et al.*, 2009; Gupta and Turban, 2012), so it should be acknowledged that non-monetary expectations, such as status and self-realisation, are also of importance to female entrepreneurs, as elucidated by Manolova *et al.* (2012).

When considering identity and business aspirations within the context of entrepreneurship, particularly female entrepreneurship, a thought-provoking question arises: *How does the intersection of social identity and aspirations influence new venture exploration choices?* We explore this question from the perspective of a developing country (South Africa) and a developed country (The Netherlands) to identify the differences and similarities between two distinctly different groups of female entrepreneurs. We then apply Fauchart *et al.*'s (2011) classification of the three 'pure' founder identities, which demonstrate how social entrepreneurial identity influences venture concept choices.

The following sections provide a theoretical background and perspectives, research context and methodology, findings and analysis. Finally, conclusions are drawn, and implications are explicated.

Theoretical background

When considering identity, a distinction is made between personal- and social identity, with personal identity relating to individual attributes, values, traits, beliefs and so on. Social identity, on the other hand, refers to the individual within a group (which could be founded on either demographic characteristics or affiliations with specific beliefs, such as political party or religious denomination) (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel, 1982) – simply put, social identity is concerned with "the group in the individual" (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The following sections explicate the distinct differences and relationships between these concepts (personal identity, social identity and social identity formation). Furthermore, we discuss the social identity theory within entrepreneurship.

Personal Identity

Personal identity is mostly static and consistent, but life experiences and interactions with social norms influence individual identities over time. Therefore, an individual's identity is the result of intertwined personal and social identities (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Some scholars (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel and Turner, 1979) suggest that a person's identity not only serves as a cognitive frame for interpreting experiences, but also influences individuals to act in ways that are consistent with their identity. This is supported by Fauchart *et al.* (2011), who found that the identities and self-concepts of founders are imprinted on the key dimensions of new ventures.

Social Identity

A social identity can be regarded as “belonging to a certain world, and can only be understood, in subjective terms, together with that world” (Viseu and Ponte, 2009). The social identity of an individual is influenced by a combination of external and internal influences, which function as a unit. The formation of a person's social identity is dependent on how they communicate (language), their cultural heritage, social stance, political and religious beliefs, and the role they adopt when they engage within their social context or with others when they conduct business. Social identity is fluid and dynamic, with individuals moving from one group to a next as contextual changes occur (Hogg *et al.*, 1995). The social identity of an individual is constantly constructed and reconstructed as they interact with others within their current environment. All individuals have an inherited identity (*who I am*) and a desired identity (*who I want to become*). When a person interacts within a group, as a member of the group, s/he adopts two roles – the one acknowledged as a member of the group and the other as a participant within the group. When these two roles are combined, it strengthens the social identity (Chasserio *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, over time, interacting with others within different contexts reshapes an individual's identity. Consequently, social identity theory provides a theoretical connection that can aid in developing a rich understanding of how individuals' social identity influences the new venture creation process and the subsequent differences in the outcomes of their firms (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stets and Burke, 2000).

Social identity formation

There are three key elements to social identity formation. Firstly, crucial to the development of an individual's identity is their subjective and figurative interaction with others. This interaction permits the individual to (i) appraise how s/he socially compares with others within the group, and (ii) determine which social groups s/he wants to be associated with (Tajfel and Turner, 2001). Belonging to a specific social category or group (*I am part of this group*) enables individuals to conduct a self-evaluation, as well as to evaluate individuals who do not belong to the group (*You are not part of my group*). “Thus, a person's social identity serves as a system of social orientation and plays an instrumental role in establishing self-worth” (Hogg *et al.*, 1995).

Secondly, the social self-categorisation of individuals can differ, depending on their level of inclusivity. A person's self-categorisation ranges from the most extreme level of social self-categorisation – known as the self, as a unique entity with own goals and dreams (*This is what I want and this is what I want I to become*) (Brewer and Gardner, 1996) – to conceiving themselves as part of a group and therefore portraying concern for others (*I am because we are*) (Harb and Smith, 2008).

Thirdly, social identity theory enables people to predict what others will choose and how they will act and behave (Tajfel and Turner, 2001). A person's identity, through their cognitive processes, allows them to be thoughtful and interpret experiences with sensitivity. Therefore, people act in a particular way, consistent with their identity (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Stets and Burke, 2000).

Social identity theory in entrepreneurship

Social identity theory in entrepreneurship, on the other hand, provides a theoretical lens through which different types of entrepreneurial identities could be recognised. This is possible by looking at the distinct differences of the following three main aspects: (i) basic social motivation, (ii) in the basis of self-evaluation, and (iii) in the frame of reference as an entrepreneur (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011).

When entrepreneurs start their business ventures, various aspects motivate them, with their actions being consistent with their inherent identities, and therefore they imprint their self-concepts on key dimensions of their emerging firms, including the process of early-stage opportunity identification.

According to Fauchart *et al.* (2011) entrepreneurs can typically be categorised as one of three 'pure' types of founder identity, namely Darwinian, communitarian or missionary. *Darwinian* founders typically start their business ventures for own economic self-interest and competition with other firms, while *Communitarian* founders commence with a business to empower and support a particular community where both parties will benefit from the venture. *Missionary* founders, on the other hand, see their businesses as a means of political empowerment for the broader community. Table I illustrates the distinct differences between the three types of founders.

Table I: Three dimensions of founder identity

Darwinian	Communitarian	Missionary
<i>Who am I? This is what I want and what I want to become</i>	<i>I am because we are</i>	<i>Who am I? Who am I not?</i>
Basic social motivation		
The primary goal is to establish a strong and successful business	The primary goal is to develop a business to support a group of like-minded individuals	The primary goal is to start a firm to advance a greater cause
Focus on ensuring the success of the firm	Focus on uplifting the socio-economic status of the community where they live	Focus on acting responsibly is considered to be critical
The industry within which they operate, the markets they serve or the greater social cause bear no, or relatively little meaning	The industry and greater social cause are important	Closely connected to social entrepreneurship
Generate profits and better possibility of success, changing ventures is not seen as a problem, and they are open to engaging in new ventures in completely new areas of business	Creating an authentic identity is important to be fully one with the social group, to share intimate knowledge of the community and to be able to serve it from the inside	Embrace a social entrepreneurial identity, have a need to distinguish themselves from and deny closeness to profit-seeking identities
Basis of self-evaluation		
Based on self	Based on others	Based on self and others
Frame of reference/relevant others		
Competing firms	Not changing the industry	Social status of social entrepreneurs
Other Darwinians	Create new and more efficient means to serve their community or social context	
Social group	User-entrepreneur who identifies an idea through their own use, then shares it with the broader community Collective creative activity prior to venture creation	

Source: Adapted from Fauchart and Gruber (2011); Van Praag (1999); Sonali and Tripsas (2007); Bacq and Janssen (2011); Alsos et al. (2016)

Methodology

This study forms part of a larger international comparative project to explore the development of female entrepreneurial identity in South Africa vs. that of a selected developed economy, namely the Netherlands. The intention is to identify replicable lessons of the evolvement of female entrepreneurial identity in the Netherlands, as input into the development of a guiding framework for developing and maintaining higher-level female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. This framework seeks to address the inability of female entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries to translate their aspirations into sustainable businesses when compared to their male counterparts and women in higher-income countries (Elam and Teleki, 2021).

The complex nature of this study is characterised by two separate social realities, namely objectivist and subjectivist assumptions. Therefore, as a balanced approach, two methodological research approaches, incorporating the Interpretivist Paradigm - which supports sociology of regulation from a subjectivist standpoint (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) - and the Radical Structuralist Paradigm – which is rooted in a materialist view of the natural and social world that promotes sociology of radical change from an objectivist standpoint (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) – was adopted. Consequently, a sequential equal status multi-mode research design and methodology was adopted, with the first phase rooted in the Interpretivist Paradigm. The focus of this paper is Phase I of the study, which sought to understand and gain the opinion of those directly involved in social processes through constructs and explanations (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), while developing an understanding of the social phenomena through the eyes of various people. As a first step, a strong systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted to explore knowledge relating to female entrepreneurial identity, with the scientifically applied process providing constructs for developing interview questions. It was imperative to ascertain the founder identities of successful female entrepreneurs within the South African context, as no previous research had been conducted locally on female entrepreneurial identity development and their venture aspirations. Thereafter, the identities of Dutch female founders were ascertained to pinpoint the differences and commonalities between the two groups of female entrepreneurs, followed by the application of a theoretical lens to classify the women according to Fauchart *et al.*'s (2011) three primary types of entrepreneurial social identities.

Sampling and participants

While business success may be measured on the basis of various variables, including turnover, profit and employment levels of the organisation (Phillips *et al.*, 2014), the study focused on turnover as a measure of success. The target population consisted of successful female entrepreneurs, who own a major share in a business that had been operational for longer than five years, with an annual turnover in excess of R5 million and €650 000, respectively. To select the appropriate participants, a number of South African and Dutch entrepreneurial support, networking associations, and venture funds were approached to identify suitable interviewees.

Data collection and analysis

For participants to reflect on the themes being explored, the semi-structured interview questionnaire was shared with participants prior to the interview. Recorded Zoom interviews were conducted with seven successful female entrepreneurs, with data saturation occurring within both contexts. Upon completion, audio and video files were exported and coded in ATLAS.ti™. The guidelines for coding and analysing qualitative data (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019) was applied to identify and code the participants' identity meanings (Fauchart et al., 2011). A hybrid coding approach, which incorporated both deductive codes based on theoretical concepts, and inductive codes derived from the interviews, was adopted. The coding was followed by an analysis to determine how the intersection of social identity and aspirations influences new venture exploration choices. As we aimed to move beyond existing theoretical boundaries to offer an enhanced perspective of social identity theory and female entrepreneurs' choices when engaging in new venture creation, theory synthesis was undertaken, with the study divided into two phases, namely summarising and integrating concepts (MacInnis, 2011).

The summarising phase sought to unravel extant knowledge of social identity and its theoretical constructs, while also considering the choices made by female entrepreneurs when engaging in a process of new venture creation. Integrating concepts entailed the proposing of relationships between distinct phenomena, integrating the multiple independent theoretical perspectives and finally, generating novel insights (Jaakkola, 2020), particularly within the South African context, given that the ultimate aim of the comparative study is the development of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. In the interest of anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to the participating women.

Findings

Four overarching themes emerged from the qualitative analysis. These themes are (i) identity constructs, (ii) female identity, (iii) entrepreneurial journey and (iv) entrepreneurial development. As seen from Table II, which summarises the themes, codes and number of quotations per code, 383 quotations were captured, of which entrepreneurial journey (134) was the dominant theme in this analysis, followed closely by female identity (113) and identity constructs (103). A brief description is provided hereafter for each of the overarching themes.

Table II: Themes, codes and quotation count

Themes and codes	Quotations	Contribution to theme	Contribution to study
Identity constructs	103		27%
Context	41	40%	11%
Roles balancing demands	21	20%	5%
Self-identity	12	12%	3%
Social identity	29	28%	8%
Female identity	113		30%
Constructs	7	6%	2%
Authenticity dissonance intersection	42	37%	11%
Identity Work	64	57%	17%
Entrepreneurial journey	134		35%
Becoming an entrepreneur	14	10%	4%
Business aspirations business success	57	43%	15%
Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE)	51	38%	13%
Gendered representation	12	9%	3%
Entrepreneurial development	33		8%
Entrepreneurship-identity research	4	12%	1%
Education training	17	52%	4%
Policymaking	12	36%	3%
Totals	383	0%	100%

Source: Own compilation

Identity constructs: Within the context of the study, identity constructs refer to the respective elements of an individual's being, which collectively play a role in the development of personal identity, with four inductive codes making up identity constructs, namely context, roles and balancing demands, self-identity and social identity.

Female identity: Female identity concerns entrepreneurial identity from a woman's perspective, with the following inductive codes constituting female identity: constructs, authenticity, dissonance and intersection, and identity work.

Entrepreneurial journey: The entrepreneurial process of new business creation starts when an individual associates her- or himself with being an entrepreneur and identifies a business opportunity for which s/he has specific aspirations, with becoming an entrepreneur, business aspirations and success, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and gendered representation collectively influencing an individual's entrepreneurial journey.

Entrepreneurial development: This entails the process of improving the skillset and knowledge of entrepreneurs, with entrepreneurship-identity research, education and training, and policymaking underpinning entrepreneurial development.

These overarching themes provided the constructs for analysing study participants' social entrepreneurial identity, business aspirations and their new venture exploration choices.

Social entrepreneurial identity

Entrepreneurs are a reflection of their personal life paths, experiences and social interactions, and as such, they assume various social roles and identities (Chasserio et al., 2014), with the social roles and dimensions of women's lives being intrinsically intertwined (Bruni et al., 2005; Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Powell and Greenhaus, 2010). Wide-ranging studies contribute important insights relating to individual differences and characteristics when budding entrepreneurs undertake the dynamic process of new venture creation. In particular, experience (Westhead et al., 2005), personality (Zhao and Seibert, 2006), human capital and capabilities (Dimov and Shepherd, 2005), cognition (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Baron and Ward, 2004) and gender (Dalborg et al., 2015; Manolova et al., 2012) have been shown to underpin the launch of a business.

Interacting with the successful South African and Dutch entrepreneurs confirmed that these individual attributes indeed influence the conceptualisation of opportunity, as demonstrated by the systematic deconstruction of the core concepts hereafter. To develop an understanding of the group within the individual, consideration is first given to the women's self-identities, where after a light is cast on their social contexts and the formation of their social identities, with the intention of providing a lens for considering their new venture aspirations. Excerpts from the interviews are provided to illustrate the central themes.

When considering their life journeys and the decision to venture into entrepreneurship, the South African women universally had exposure to entrepreneurship, having grown up with family members who were business owners:

"[...] dad always owned businesses [...] some were successful, others were not [...]" (Suzanne)

"[...] have an entrepreneurial soul [...] born entrepreneur, who can see an opportunity [...] just run with it and sees where it goes." (Daphne)

"[...] mom tried to start a couple of small businesses, but never fully pursued it [...] father ran his own practice [...] sister opened a guesthouse [...] I worked at the guesthouse." (Melody)

Once they completed their schooling, the women worked in diverse roles in numerous industries prior to initiating their businesses, rather than following traditional business- or industry-related education and career paths. Suzanne's comment about herself demonstrates the point in case:

"[...] I am a bit of a junk-yard dog [...]." (Suzanne)

In contrast to the South African women, only one of the Dutch women, Manon, grew up in an entrepreneurial household, with the other women developing an interest in being business owners through contact with other entrepreneurs during varying stages of their careers.

Some of the women gained industry experience, which ultimately led to the initiation of their businesses, whilst Janneke ventured into entrepreneurship at the onset of her career, at age 18.

While entrepreneurial exposure, albeit at different levels, played a fundamental role in the women's decision to start a business, self-assurance or confidence – often investigated as self-efficacy in the field of entrepreneurship – and *"the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes"* (Bandura, 1977) are important precursors in starting a business.

Having grown up in a non-English speaking household, Daphne's lack of English language skills initially negatively influenced her levels of self-confidence. Her confidence grew through experience and attaining success and she believes that her upbringing contributed to her tenacity. Similarly, Suzanne initially lacked confidence and she acknowledges that she tends to question her abilities, which she attributes to her lack of formal business education:

"[...] don't have an MBA." (Suzanne)

This demonstrates Eddleston *et al.*'s (2006) theory that societal expectations (such as having strong English language skills and formal business qualifications) impact on women's self-confidence. Adriana and Janneke are, by nature, very confident individuals and had no doubt that they could successfully start and run a business. Conversely, Elina initially lacked confidence in her abilities, but the company's co-CEO, who she views as her 'entrepreneurial teacher' mentored her to make decisions and she now feels secure in her ability to take calculated risks. Similarly, Manon was initially not confident and while she tends to have moments when she still doubts herself, she now feels secure in her role as business owner. Adding to her inherent confidence, Adriana's confidence increases when she sees that things are working well and that her intuition proved to be right. Janneke's approach is to be optimistic and to build her own confidence:

"[...] boast about wins [...] not focus on losses [...] if you always believe in yourself and think big, then it is all a bit of fun." (Janneke)

For Elina, others' support, pushing her and guiding her, contributed to a growth in confidence. Manon, who experienced an about-turn when she allowed herself to be pushed beyond her comfort zone with successful results, echoes this sentiment:

"[...] I felt that this is me, this feels so great. I thought that I had finally found myself - it was a Eureka moment for me." (Manon)

As the manifestation of entrepreneurial identity may require a complex interplay of self-identity through internal self-reflection and a multitude of social identities through social engagement and

action (Watson, 2009), the women's social environment – the group within the woman – was also considered.

The South African women universally play a role in their communities, with both Daphne and Suzanne having initiated substantial, sustainable community initiatives under the auspices of their businesses. None of the women belonged to formal groups when first initiating their businesses; therefore, it did not influence their decision to engage in new venture development. While they eventually joined formal groups, neither Daphne nor Melody found that belonging to these groups was beneficial. In fact, they experienced groups as being overly politically driven or “time wasters” and for Daphne, group membership resulted in some negative consequences for her business. Suzanne, on the other hand, initiated interactions with other small business owners and joined formalised groups, which she found very beneficial in terms of exposure, networking and access to business opportunities. Although formal group membership did not suit Daphne, belonging to informal, social groups positively influenced her confidence levels., For Suzanne, realising that other women also suffer from imposter syndrome is helping her to overcome her own feelings of inadequacy:

"[...] just knowing that knowing what you are doing is not something that you should know (is helpful) - no one knows this [...]." (Suzanne)

The group within the Dutch women is also very much present, with each of the entrepreneurs playing a role in their communities to some degree and in Adriana's case, she spearheaded an impactful social initiative. All the Dutch entrepreneurs, apart from Manon, joined formal networks or business groups soon after they initiated their businesses. For Janneke, her intention was purely to explore international markets through a trade mission, not to network with others.

Only Elina's decision to initiate a business was influenced by having belonged to a formal group; it served as affirmation that what she wanted to do, was a good idea. Engaging with other group members contributed positively to Adriana and Manon's confidence and comfort levels (even though Manon only started engaging more with others over the last two years). While Elina's peers provided social support, it did not directly influence her comfort and confidence levels as an entrepreneur. Janneke's confidence and comfort levels were not affected at all by engaging with others:

"[...] my doctor diagnosed me with the rare characteristic of having too much confidence [...]." (Janneke)

Consequently, it is evident that belonging to groups, whether formal or informal, played a role in the development of the women's social identity and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, while, for some of the women, group membership also influenced their decision to initiate a business.

Like groups, participation in formalised business development programmes also had an influence on the development of social identity (in addition to developing entrepreneurial self-efficacy) for some of the women. In terms of the South African women, only Daphne participated in a formalised

business development programme, which gave her exposure to other African female entrepreneurs. This experience was eye opening and contributed to her confidence, while putting her on a path to “stop complaining and look back” at what she had learnt:

“[...] they always say when you hear other people’s challenges, yours is not so big. [...] I got to know women in Africa who really struggle [...] who not even have road infrastructure [...] but who are tremendously successful [...].” (Daphne)

Daphne feels that participation in the programme helped her to feel supported and played a role in developing her competencies. Melody believes that it would undoubtedly have been beneficial to participate in a business development programme, while Suzanne believes that she might not have been very receptive:

“[...] I needed to lose some arrogance the old-fashioned way first.” (Suzanne)

Apart from Manon, the Dutch female entrepreneurs either participated in a formalised business development programme or worked with a business coach, which they found beneficial in terms of developing the business. In Manon’s case, her participation was limited to an industry-related sustainability programme, which is positively influencing the evolution of the company’s innovation initiatives. The women universally indicated that they felt supported in their ventures by participating in initiatives such as coaching, a formalised business development- or sustainability programme.

Women’s perceptions of what is considered appropriate societal roles are influenced by gender identity and how women define their roles (Ahl *et al.*, 2002; Lippa, 2005). While the study participants universally experience support in their business ventures, role association presents a challenge for them.

Role association for the South African women shifted over time, depending on family circumstances and for two of the women, role association also shifted with business development stage. Initially, the women associated more with being a wife or a mother, rather than being an entrepreneur. In Suzanne’s case, she had to find a balance that works uniquely for her family, so now she does not fulfil the conventional role of being the primary caregiver. For her, the traditional roles and structures contributed to experiencing imposter syndrome:

“[...] feeling that I should be this or that, without understanding why.” (Suzanne)

A similar picture emerged with the Dutch women, with role association largely having shifted over time, depending on their personal circumstances:

“[...] the priorities are very clear, but the one does not go without the other [...] entrepreneur and mother [...].” (Elina)

Manon very strongly associates herself with being a *female* business owner – as opposed to simply being a business owner – given the male-dominated industry in which she operates:

"[...] I am showing people that, as a female you can enter a space that is actually a male business [...] but not do it the way the male does [...]." (Manon)

Previously, Manon saw herself as a mother and the wife of the business owner (even though she owns a major share in the business):

"When you are a female and an entrepreneur, who have kids in their younger years, it's really hard [...] you have to switch every hour between different roles [...] it's like being a chameleon." (Manon)

In contrast, Janneke has always associated herself with being an entrepreneur:

"[...] everybody that knows me knows that I am focused on the business and that comes first. [...] nothing can stop me." (Janneke)

Janneke's perspective is not entirely surprising, given that she initiated her business at a very young age, got married later in life and never had children, so it is understandable that there would have been less of a need for adapting to different roles, as her life and business evolved.

Consequently, the study confirmed the findings of Brush *et al.* (2009) that the way in which the entrepreneurial process unfolds is impacted by motherhood and family embeddedness. Furthermore, women are expected to follow and respect specific social rules and norms (Chasserio *et al.*, 2014) and to master social identities, while maintaining their social responsibilities (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009).

When considering others' perceptions of how well they maintain their social responsibilities, most of the women believe that they are seen as being businesswomen who maintain a good balance between being entrepreneurs and meeting social obligations. However, for Suzanne, this is only true within her inner circle, as she continues to experience criticism from her in-laws and the parents of her children's friends, given their non-conventional family structure. In contrast, Janneke emphatically believes that others see her as a workaholic who does not maintain social responsibilities:

"[...] I often said no when friends invited me [...] I was typically working [...] or I wanted an evening off and did not want to waste time on people [...]." (Janneke)

Given our traditional patriarchal society, the evident gendered dimension to entrepreneurial representation and the persistence of the symbolic male entrepreneurial domain (Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.*, 2004; Cohen and Musson, 2000; Hamilton, 2013), the women's perceptions regarding gender were explored.

The South African female entrepreneurs all experienced strong gender bias, notably as they operate in traditionally male-dominated industries. They universally feel at a disadvantage, with clients and staff only responding to male voices, their abilities are constantly questioned and given the South African context, others do not accept their leadership roles; it is seen as window-dressing or others believe they attained their roles based on gender (female) and race (non-white, in one instance):

"[...] I always wanted to be a peacock - proud of who and what I am, but then I realised that the one that opens his feathers is actually a male. That just shows you, the woman is always in the background, doing everything, while he is there, showing everyone how beautiful he is [...] but challenge him, and see what happens." (Daphne)

"[...] it is a very difficult line that you walk, especially as a woman; you have to develop quite a rhino-like skin [...] you have to not let too much penetrate that and know that you are not necessarily the person with all the answers [...] not bullying your way through it. [...] you have to get to that space where you have a voice and a seat at the table [...] finding a balance is a challenge." (Suzanne)

In contrast, the Dutch women universally indicated that, in the Netherlands, typical stereotypes regarding women's roles (being a stay-at-home mother, rather than working, for instance) are not relevant:

"[...] my mother always worked [...] all Dutch women work [...] those that do not, are not normal." (Adriana)

"[...] women are career-minded [...] Holland has a series of very strong, independent businesswomen [...] but there are more men than women [...]" (Janneke)

Elina and Manon nonetheless experienced some challenges, which they attribute to the fact that they operate in male-dominated industries (like their South African counterparts):

"[...] short and small [...] look younger than what I am [...] made it difficult to gain credibility." (Elina)

"[...] suppliers would not listen to me [...] I had to get my husband to speak to them [...] before they would cooperate." (Manon)

Adriana also observed that, prior to initiating her business, she engaged in high-level project work, with male colleagues earning more, even though she worked harder, with more outputs. Janneke paints a different picture, although it could be surmised that her over-confidence possibly contributed to her having escaped gender bias.

New venture aspirations

Having established the women's social entrepreneurial identities, we now move our attention to the creation of their ventures. As elucidated by Down and Reveley (2004), identifying with being an entrepreneur could be a catalyst for new venture creation, while also sustaining the individual during the process of transitioning from employee to business owner. The process of new venture creation involves a journey of improvising and developing entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which ultimately influences business success. As an input into understanding the business context of the study participants, Table III summarises the founder identity characteristics of the South African female entrepreneurs, with Table IV summarising the founder identity characteristics of their Dutch counterparts.

Table III: Characteristics of South African female founders

Successful South African female entrepreneurs			
Characteristics	Daphne	Melody	Suzanne
Age of founder (at time of founding first firm)	16	27	28
Age of founder (at time of founding subsequent firm/s)	27	42	30
Highest educational level	Graduate diploma	High school	National diploma
Firm age (at time of data gathering)	20	16	9
Industry	Beverage and Hospitality	Construction	Software Engineering
Company founded by individual / partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership
Equity distribution	87.5% female-owned Originally less female-ownership	100% female-owned	100% female-owned Originally part-male owned
Source of funding	Partners' equity investments, which helped secure bank loan	Capital injection from another business in which she has shareholding	Bootstrapped

Source: Own compilation

Table IV: Characteristics of Dutch female founders

Successful Dutch female entrepreneurs				
Characteristics	Adriana	Elina	Janneke	Manon
Age of founder (At time of founding first firm)	52	32	18	24
Age of founder (At time of founding subsequent firm/s)	-	-	58	43
Highest education level	Tertiary Degree	Post-graduate degree	High school	High school
Firm age (At time of data gathering)	7	8	8	9
Industry	Social Work Training	Medical Technology	Footwear	Manufacturing
Company founded by individual / partnership	Individual	Partnership	Individual	Partnership
Equity distribution	100% female-owned	23% female founder; 57% male co-founder; 12% VCs; 8% industry role-player	100% female-owned	49% female-owned 51% male-owned (spouse)
Source of funding	Own funds, utilised capital from strategy consulting work. Launched with one paying client and grew rapidly. No funding required, given that clients are sponsored by social security	Two launching customers; one prepaid for a year of work; Capital investment by partners (€10 000); Leveraged bootstrapping; Prior to 2021 no external funding	Used capital from sale of previously-owned company, supplemented by loans from friends (€15 000, now repaid)	Unable to secure bank loan, due to former company's bankruptcy; utilised own funding (10 000 Euro)

Source: Own compilation

In terms of the average founder age at the time of initiating their first businesses, South African female entrepreneurs were younger, at age 24, than the Dutch founders, at age 32. The study, however, revealed that the educational level of Dutch female entrepreneurs was generally higher than that of South African female entrepreneurs, with two of the four Dutch entrepreneurs having completed tertiary education (one of whom holds a doctorate degree). In contrast, diploma studies are the highest level of education among the South African entrepreneurs.

At the time of gathering the data, South African entrepreneurs have been in business for a period of between nine and 20 years, while the Dutch businesses are younger, at between seven and nine years. Not surprisingly, given that the data was derived from successful female-owned businesses, the study participants uniformly operate in diverse, high-growth industries, with products constituting 71% and services 29% of the distribution.

The South African businesses were all founded through a partnership, while only half of the Dutch entrepreneurs founded their businesses individually. This could potentially be attributed to the fact that both Adriana and Janneke, who founded their businesses individually, are very confident in their abilities and therefore did not feel the desire to work with others in an ownership capacity. Interestingly, as a clear indication of their entrepreneurial spirit, all of the South African entrepreneurs and two of the Dutch entrepreneurs had previously owned a business, prior to conceptualising their current businesses.

Conceptualising the business was quite different for each of the women. In Daphne's case, the business evolved from a community-based project, which she had undertaken with her then-employer; Melody's business came about by chance, when meeting her current business partner, and Suzanne saw a market opportunity in the industry in which she was employed at the time. The Dutch women conceptualised their businesses through two distinct avenues: both Adriana and Elina identified an opportunity to initiate their businesses as a spin-off from their chosen careers, while Janneke and Manon's ventures were borne from frustrations with a personal gap in the market.

The South African women universally had reservations about starting the business, ranging from partnership concerns for Daphne and Melody, to a struggle with imposter syndrome for Suzanne, given her lack of formal business education. Notably, she continues to question whether she belongs and whether she should be winning awards, as she does not have a Master in Business Administration (MBA) degree. For the Dutch women, only Manon had real reservations about initiating the business, although some of the people in Adriana and Elina's environment expressed concerns. Given her success in her first venture, there were no reservations within either herself or others in Janneke's inner circle for her to start her current venture. This lack of reservations to venture into their businesses could possibly be attributed, at least in part, to the support that they experienced. The South African women all experienced deep support, particularly from their spouses and parents, when they initiated their businesses.

As with the South African women, Adriana, Elina and Mannon also felt supported when they initiated their businesses, albeit that some of their family members initially expressed reservations. Conversely, Janneke did not experience support when initiating her first business:

'[...] my parents never asked about the business [...] never told me they were proud.' (Janneke)

Although the women generally felt supported, it does not mean that they did not encounter obstacles. Since Daphne operates in a white-male dominated industry, race and culture (important within the South African context), coupled to resistance from other role players, were initially a major obstacle and continue to pose challenges. Not having access to mentorship and a lack of financial and legal expertise were major obstacles for Suzanne:

'[...] if I had access to groups earlier, it might have accelerated my growth [...] I would not have had to pay such expensive school fees.' (Suzanne)

Melody did not experience any real obstacles, although there have been some business challenges. For Janneke, her lack of industry knowledge initially presented a hurdle, while cultural differences between the Netherlands and other countries within her supply chain continue to be a challenge.

Apart from Adriana, access to financing presented a challenge for the Dutch women, either at start-up or when scaling-up. Both Elina and Janneke found it challenging to secure venture capital to scale up.

Having observed that reservations, obstacles and support from their immediate environments influenced the women's entrepreneurial experiences, we now focus on the women's business aspirations and concept choices. A number of authors have found that, while aspiration may be prompted by a desire for economic gain or profit maximisation, non-economic factors, such as autonomy, work-life balance, or prestige (Amit and Zott, 2001; Kolvereid, 1996; Shane *et al.*, 1991), may also play a role in motivating entrepreneurial action and success. Daphne and Suzanne aspired to establish stable, profitable businesses that made a real difference in others' lives:

"[...] making a difference and profitability is completely interwoven [...] in the process, I found myself and the way forward, without having any expectations to do so." (Daphne)

'[...] job creation is a big driving factor [...] know that they have a place and that they can grow [...] provide others with stability.' (Suzanne)

For Melody, although the pursuit of independence by attaining wealth was alluring, the objective was to attain a greater quality of life, rather than abundant wealth. When considering business aspirations, none of the Dutch entrepreneurs are strongly motivated by wealth generation, although they do believe that the business must make money, either as incentive or to enable them to make a difference:

"[...] because I make more money, I can do more." (Adriana)

"I am not very money-driven, but it must pay off [...] if you are not making money, it's only a hobby [...] must do what you like and have fun doing it [...] will stop doing it, if I am not having fun." (Janneke)

The women universally aspire to grow their businesses, with Daphne aiming to leave a legacy and to ensure that others can assume the reins, in time. Manon would like to do things in a way that is better for the environment and people's health. Melody wishes to establish industry standards and a training academy, while also pursuing ambitious manufacturing goals. Suzanne aims to grow her product offering, employee base and supply chain, although she does not wish to become a large corporate. Interestingly, the South African study participants are all pursuing initiatives to empower women in their respective industries.

The Dutch entrepreneurs universally have high-growth goals for their businesses, with Adriana and Janneke specifically focused on implementing an exit strategy (which is not surprising, given that

they are both mature women). Elina's company is pursuing a new business-to-business and stronger marketing strategy, which will likely result in a steep growth in employee numbers:

"[...] we want to stay who we are, but tell the world who we are [...] we really found our unique story and niche to be very, very different to most other companies." (Elina)

Similarly, Manon is pursuing growth opportunities by expanding into German-speaking countries, while raising awareness to transition support from chemicals and oil- to natural and organic companies in a bid to make her product more accessible, while also being kind to the earth and people's health.

Discussion

The study aimed to explore the intersection between social identity and new venture aspirations. Our overall findings support the notion that, while aspirations are typically associated with the androcentric notion of high-growth entrepreneurship (Sieger *et al.*, 2016b), female entrepreneurs may seek other, non-monetary aspirations (Manolova *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, the four overarching themes that emerged from our analysis of the semi-structured interviews, which enabled us to consider the women's social contexts, frames of reference and business aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, revealed that social entrepreneurial identity influences new venture aspirations. We found two primary groups of social entrepreneurial identity: (i) individuals whose social identity aligns with a pure type and (ii) individuals whose meanings reflect more than one type of social identity. The study found that the majority (42%) of the successful female entrepreneurs in the sample could be classified as having a Darwinian identity, whose primary goal is to establish a strong and successful business. The balance is equally distributed between those that demonstrate a Communitarian identity, whose primary goal is to develop a business to support a group of like-minded individuals and those that demonstrate a hybrid identity of Darwinian-Communitarian (29% respectively), as depicted in Table V.

Table V: Social identities of successful South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs

Social identity	Darwinian	Communitarian	Darwinian-Communitarian
South African female entrepreneurs			
Entrepreneur	Melody	Daphne	Suzanne
Social identity percentage	33%	33%	33%
Dutch female entrepreneurs			
Entrepreneur/s	Elina and Janneke	Manon	Adriana
Social identity percentage	50%	25%	25%
South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs combined	42%	29%	29%

Source: Own compilation

Conclusion

Whilst the study supports the emerging understanding of female entrepreneurial identity and its role in aspirations and new venture exploration choices, our study focused specially on female entrepreneurs in both a developed- and developing country context. The study casts a light on contextual differences between a developing country (South Africa) and a developed country (the Netherlands), from a social entrepreneurial identity perspective. Our findings demonstrate that the world to which these two groups of women belong is quite different, but contrary to what might be expected, there is close correlation in their social identities and business aspirations.

Our findings also extend the typical entrepreneurship concept beyond the androcentric notion of high-growth entrepreneurship, to include founders who either wholly or in part view their businesses as a catalyst for community development and social change.

Additionally, the four overarching themes which emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, namely identity constructs, female identity, entrepreneurial journey and entrepreneurial development, further contributes to the body of knowledge by providing a conceptual framework for exploring female entrepreneurial identity.

Limitations and future research

Apart from restrictions on face-to-face interviews imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which might have played a role in establishing rapport and trust with the study participants, there were no notable challenges in achieving the objectives of the study. However, notice should be taken of the limitations

of the study in terms of general application thereof. Considering that the study was specifically limited to a small sample of South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs, the findings are not generalisable to female entrepreneurs in South Africa or the Netherlands. However, despite these limitations, the women who participated in the study are all successful female entrepreneurs who largely operate in male-dominated industries, with all but two not having pursued tertiary education, so the findings can be contextualised for successful female entrepreneurs with no post-schooling education, operating in male-dominated industries in the two contexts. Future research focusing on these two contexts could benefit from a larger sample and longitudinal studies to examine any changes that might occur in the interaction between female entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations, over a period of time.

Implications

Considering the insights gained into South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs, this paper has implications for policy, practice and scholarship. The study highlights the disparity between the South African and Dutch contexts, with the South African women universally having their abilities questioned and experiencing strong gender bias and, given the South African context, others questioning their leadership roles. In contrast, typical stereotypes in the Dutch context were found to be irrelevant, albeit that some of the women experienced challenges relating to the male-dominated industries in which they operate. Therefore, from a policy perspective, more attention should be paid to addressing systemic gender inequalities in South Africa. From a policy and practice perspective, interventions that specifically focus on supporting female entrepreneurs warrants attention. While such measures are in place in both contexts, additional interventions to support female entrepreneurs operating in male dominated industries, would be beneficial. Furthermore, enterprise development programmes for female business owners should be geared to support both women with a pure economic interest, as well as those who seek to empower and support a particular community, with both parties benefiting from the venture, while still working towards developing a profitable business. From a scholarly perspective, entrepreneurial identity research should incorporate deeper exploration of the Communitarian and Darwinian-communitarian identities, as gaining a better understanding of the content and formation, as well as the upkeep or change of these entrepreneurial identity types will contribute to developing important insights into the broader new venture creation process.

Competing interests

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced the writing of this article.

Author contributions

The primary author designed and implemented the research, analysed the findings of the qualitative data and drafted the paper, with support and editing input from the secondary author.

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Data availability

The data that supports the findings of this study is available from the primary author, upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are that of the author and do not reflect an official position of the University.

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Addendum 5.1: Semi-structured interview questionnaire

Business dynamics

1. How long has your current business been operational?
2. How many business partners are there and what is the female | male ratio and equity distribution?
3. Did you utilise own funds, financial support from friends or family, or did you access a line of credit or an external investment to start the business?
4. In your view, what are the key elements and soft skills that are required to successfully initiate a business?
5. Did you experience any stumbling blocks in initiating and developing your business?
6. What do you consider to be the strongest indicators of business success – for example, financial performance, wealth generation, independence, social recognition, self-achievement, or making a difference?

Identity construction

7. Tell me a little about your role in the community – for instance, are you actively involved in community initiatives, do you volunteer at any charitable organisations, or do you serve on any institutional committees (for instance, at church / school)?
8. Please describe your business-related industry experience (sector, years of experience, position/s, and so on.)
9. Please give me an indication of your exposure to entrepreneurship – for instance, did you grow up in an entrepreneurial household, did any of your extended family members or close friends own a business or do you have a particular entrepreneurial role model?
10. What process did you follow in the early stages to identify and pursue the business opportunity?
11. Did you have any particular reservations about starting a business?
12. How did you experience emotional support from your family to start your business and how did your role in the family – for instance, being a mother – influence how your business evolved?
13. Did you experience any uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner (in other words, gender discrimination), either within yourself or by others and do you feel that you were afforded the same opportunities as your male counterparts?

14. Tell me a little about your confidence, as an entrepreneur, as well as those of your partners and your core team – how confident would you say you are in your roles?
15. What, in your view, contributed to your entrepreneurial confidence?
16. Which role do you currently most strongly identify with – for instance, entrepreneur or business owner, employee, woman, wife / partner or mother? What is the reason for this, and did it shift at all over time, as you explored your business concept / developed the business?
17. Let's talk a little about others' perception of you – how did they predominantly see you, as your business evolved? For instance, did they / do they see you as a career-orientated women who still fulfils social expectations or one who focusses on her business and neglects her family roles as wife and mother?
18. Tell me a little about your network and the groups (formal / informal) which you belonged to when you initiated your business:
19. Did belonging to these groups influence your decision to start a business and is it impacting on the way in which the business is evolving?
20. Did you participate in a formalised business development programme/s when you were developing the business and if so, how did it influence your business decisions?
21. What role did the business development programme/s play in feeling supported and developing your competencies, as an entrepreneur (if applicable)?
22. Did being part of a social group of peers influence your comfort- and confidence-levels, as female entrepreneur, in any way?
23. Tell me a little about your business growth goals – what do you envision, going forward?
24. Is there anything else that you would like to add, which you believe to be of importance?

Addendum 5.2: Submission of Article 3

International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship

-----Original Message-----

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27-Sep-2022

Dear Mrs. Greyling:

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Article 4

The journey to becoming: An analogy of female founders' entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success

The journey to becoming: An analogy of female founders' entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper explores the interaction between entrepreneurial identity and female founders' business aspirations and success.

Methodology approach: A structuralist approach was adopted, using a self-administered questionnaire to explore Dutch and South African female founders' demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations, and business aspirations when engaging in a process of new venture development.

Results: The study demonstrates that female entrepreneurs' identity is intrinsically connected to their contexts and, consequently, their business aspirations and success.

Practical implications: Insights could be leveraged by initiatives aimed at supporting female founders to design and implement strategies to assist women in attaining entrepreneurial authenticity and developing a higher level of female entrepreneurial identity.

Social implications: The study paves the way for potentially leveraging initiatives for bringing about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating female-owned businesses.

Originality: Our work builds on insights from research on female entrepreneurial identity and extends thereon by not only focusing on those aspects that inherently challenge female founders' efforts to attain entrepreneurial authenticity, but also identifying aspects that could be leveraged to develop a stronger female entrepreneurial identity to positively influence business aspirations and business success.

Keywords: female entrepreneurial identity, aspirations, new venture

Introduction

A large proportion of entrepreneurial ventures driving job creation, innovation and economic growth is spearheaded by women (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022), with one in every three growth-oriented entrepreneurs being female, according to the 2020/2021 Women's Entrepreneurship Report: Thriving through crisis (Elam *et al.*, 2021). However, women still experience challenges when converting their entrepreneurship intentions into profitable businesses, with inadequate access, networks, finance, and role models cited as some of the constraints. Adom (2015); Cabrera and Mauricio (2017); Greene and Brush (2018); Herrington *et al.* (2017), and Urban (2010) found that women are weighed down by lower levels of education (which is particularly prevalent in developing countries), a shortage of capital, assets, a greater degree of domestic responsibility, and community-based business networks, which is not the case with their male counterparts. In addition, the 2020/2021 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) data shows that less than fifty percent of female entrepreneurs know another entrepreneur, while women also demonstrate twenty percent lower confidence in their capabilities than men when starting a business (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022). Coupled with all of this, lower societal status, cultural biases and a dearth of assertiveness further contribute to low levels of confidence in their business capabilities (Adom, 2015; Cabrera and Mauricio, 2017; Greene and Brush, 2018; Herrington *et al.*, 2017; Urban, 2010).

Scholars further found that balancing work and family roles, handling conflict and considering time and space constraints as they create new ventures, are typical of female entrepreneurs (Brush and Greene, 2016; Fatoki, 2016). Consequently, women tend to create small businesses to survive, due to the absence of safety nets or other options and cite 'job scarcity' more often than men as a reason for opting to explore new venture creation. Being poorer, less educated and from lower-income households further contribute to women-owned businesses merely being a means of subsistence, particularly in the developing world (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022). When considering women-owned businesses' growth, the 2020/2021 GEM study (Elam *et al.*, 2021) purports that poverty, traditional gender beliefs, and restrictions in public life represent business start-up and growth barriers for female entrepreneurs. Not surprisingly, solo entrepreneurship with smaller employer firms in local markets is typical of women-owned businesses (Elam *et al.*, 2021), with an overrepresentation in industries characterised by small firms, low profit margins, and vulnerability to market disruptions and economic shocks. Women opt to operate predominantly in the service, retail, and hospitality sectors. In addition to these factors, accounting for the weaker economic performance of their businesses (Carranza *et al.*, 2018), it also contributes to persistent negative stereotypes that growth-oriented women face when seeking growth financing and other business expansion resources (Elam *et al.*, 2021).

Carranza *et al.* (2018) postulated that there is significant heterogeneity among women, considering the extent to which personal circumstances and preferences influence the decision to become an entrepreneur, as well as subsequent business decisions. To explore this heterogeneity, we consider

female entrepreneurship from both a developed country (The Netherlands) and a developing country (South Africa).

Female entrepreneurship in the Netherlands and South Africa

In the Netherlands, there has been a slow, but steady year-on-year growth in female entrepreneurs over the past nine years, with an increase of 62% in the number of registered female entrepreneurs in the Trade Register of the Chamber of Commerce (as at 1 January 2022) since 2013. The male-female ratio has also increased, with women constituting 37% of entrepreneurs in the first quarter of 2022, compared to 34% in 2013 (Dijkhuizen, 2022). Despite this growth in female entrepreneurship, the Netherlands is underperforming in their female ambition level compared to other benchmark economies, such as Germany, Israel, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States: women in the Dutch culture continue to experience hurdles to build and scale a business, despite efforts to promote female entrepreneurship. A higher fear of failure and lower confidence levels in their ability to start a business, compared to their male counterparts, plague Dutch female entrepreneurs (Stam *et al.*, 2021). This is in alignment with other studies that have found that, in addition to being expected to start a business with high ambitions and raise capital to do so, women experience pressure to demonstrate their capabilities prior to starting a business (Annink and Den Dulk, 2014). However, the gender gap narrows once females have experience in building a business, with seasoned female entrepreneurs demonstrating greater levels of confidence in their capabilities to start a business than first-time entrepreneurs. Ambitious Dutch female entrepreneurs remain rare, with limited involvement in technology-driven companies as the biggest and fastest growing sector. Evidently, much untapped female entrepreneurship potential remains in the Netherlands (Stam *et al.*, 2021).

Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo: You strike the women, you strike the rock. These words, from the famous resistance song sung in 1956 by South African women in protest against oppression (South Africa History Archive, Unknown), are a true reflection of the strength and courage of women. Based on the World Bank's findings, Africa boasts the highest growth rate of female-owned businesses globally, but female entrepreneurs are still in the minority in South Africa, with only 38% of small and medium enterprises being women-owned (McClure, 2019). However, there is an apparent strong will, resilience and determination to survive: female necessity-driven entrepreneurship is surpassing that of males and the women entrepreneurial activity rate in South Africa grew when many other economies did not, as demonstrated by the 2021 Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE, 2022). However, female entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries continue to lag behind in their ability to translate their aspirations into sustainable businesses when compared to their male counterparts and women in higher-income countries. These disparities emphasise the required impetus for unlocking female entrepreneurs' aspirations

to empower them economically, while also contributing to economic growth and creating a greater degree of societal equitability (Elam and Teleki, 2021).

Evidently, although the two contexts are very different, with the Netherlands being a first-world country and South Africa still being part of the developing world, there are many similarities as to what female entrepreneurs experience. Women continue to face challenges such as being responsible for the household and childminding, while having fewer assets, as well as less access to capital and business networks than their male counterparts. Coupled to this is lower status in a patriarchal society, with the lion's share of opportunities still reserved for their male counterparts (McClure, 2019). These factors contribute to women creating smaller, survival businesses (Ionescu-Somers and Sampaio, 2022), with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship limiting female entrepreneurs' business aspirations and achievements (Ahl, 2006; Cliff, 1998; De Bruin et al., 2006; Jennings and Brush, 2013).

Considering that women have a propensity for running small, life-style businesses and that they experience challenges when developing impactful businesses, this paper seeks to cast a light on the relationship between females' business aspirations and success with entrepreneurial identity.

Theoretical background

Business aspirations and success

Within the context of this study, our application of the term 'business aspirations and success' refers to the entrepreneur's aims or ambitions when engaging in a new venture creation process – that is, what does an individual really want to achieve with her entrepreneurial endeavours?

Carranza (2018) asserted that "the differences in the motivation and reasons for starting a business could be a fundamental determinant of subsequent business performance." Traditionally, aspirations are associated with high-growth entrepreneurship with aggressive funding goals and the pursuit of venture capital funding. Locke and Baum (2007) asserted that most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth. Conversely, Amit and Zott (2001), Kolvereid (1996) and Shane *et al.* (1991) noted that entrepreneurial aspiration may also be prompted by non-economic factors, such as autonomy, work-life balance, or prestige, while Manolova *et al.* (2012) postulated that status and self-realisation are also of importance to female entrepreneurs. Additionally, life stage, career, family preferences and values influence women's motivations and goals. Specifically, mothers may pursue entrepreneurship in a quest to attain a more favourable work-life balance (Arai, 2000).

Notably, the way in which men and women define business success, differs. For women, having control over their own destinies, building enduring relationships with clients, doing what they enjoy or achieving work-life balance constitute success. Conversely, for men, success implies achieving goals and higher profits (Carranza *et al.*, 2018). Studies emphasised that this male ethos of

entrepreneurship may place limitations on women's business aspirations and achievement (Ahl, 2006; Cliff, 1998; De Bruin et al., 2006; Jennings and Brush, 2013), given that men and women 'do' entrepreneurship differently (Eddleston and Powell, 2008; Kelly et al., 2011; Powell and Eddleston, 2013).

Researchers have found that women sought only moderate growth (Morris *et al.*, 2006) and that they tend to set business size limitations beyond which they prefer not to expand (Cliff, 1998), given that they have lower preferences for advancement and wealth creation than men do, with a greater degree of family and lifestyle emphasis (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003). Carranza *et al.* (2018) postulated that, if a woman starts a business to attain autonomy or independence, it could be expected that she would wish to keep the business small, as larger business owners tend to lose their independence (Davidsson, 1989). Furthermore, researchers concluded that women have a clear sense of the costs and benefits of growth, with a number of studies finding that business growth is a deliberate choice and that women intentionally limit the size and growth of their businesses (Cliff, 1998; Davis and Shaver, 2012; Morris et al., 2006).

Female entrepreneurial identity

Various definitions have been advanced for entrepreneurial identity, with early authors describing it as "several possible constellations of meaning which may form the core of the entrepreneur's self-definition of the entrepreneurial role" (Stanworth and Curran, 1976) and "a person's inclination to adopt a certain type of occupational entrepreneurial role" (Vesalainen and Pihkala, 1999). More recently, Powel and Baker (2014) framed entrepreneurial identity as a "lens that influences how entrepreneurs respond to adversity", while Sarasvathy (2001) refers to entrepreneurial identity as "a seed fuelling the new venture creation process". Broadly, entrepreneurial identity perspectives range from focusing solely on the entrepreneur, to others that also encompass the entrepreneur's team, their business, as well as the markets in which they operate.

While there is limited agreement about what and how entrepreneurial identity comes to be, scholars almost unanimously consider entrepreneurial identity as a key input to entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions, thereby implicitly converging on the role of entrepreneurial identity (Crosina, 2018). To illustrate, Fauchart *et al.* (2011) described how founders' identities shape the market opportunities they pursue, as well as the capabilities and resources they deploy to bring their ideas to fruition. Furthermore, researchers have found that the decision-making process and subsequent entrepreneurial behaviour are influenced by founder identity (Alsos *et al.*, 2016; Fauchart *et al.*, 2011), while an individual's entrepreneurial identity, in turn, can be influenced by engaging in the entrepreneurial process, as the individual internalises the extrinsic connotation of being an entrepreneur (Donnellon *et al.*, 2014).

Identity is considered to be multi-dimensional, with personal- and social identity intersecting to form the whole. While personal identity relates to individual attributes, values, traits, beliefs and so on,

social identity is concerned with “the group in the individual” (Hogg and Abrams, 1988), which could be founded on either demographic characteristics or affiliations with specific beliefs, such as political party or religious denomination (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel, 1982). Scholars have proposed a strong link between entrepreneurs’ self-concept and subsequent outcomes, and although relatively little is known about the role of self-identity in motivating entrepreneurial action (Farmer *et al.*, 2011), it is accepted that social identity is critical to the beliefs, feelings, values and actions within social contexts, including new venture creation (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Gherardi (2015) succinctly captures the spirit of entrepreneurial identity: “*An entrepreneurial identity is not something that one possesses; rather, it is a process of becoming, undertaken in the course of a life project, situated in time and space, and designed by the choices made in historical and cultural circumstances.*” Therefore, understandably, women need to engage in specific, possibly more intensive forms of identity work to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy and salience.

Interest in entrepreneurial identity has grown over the past three decades (Radu-Lefebvre *et al.*, 2021), with other scholars having studied the effect of female entrepreneurial identity on the process of new venture exploration. However, these studies largely focused on theory, published texts or case studies. This study offers a new perspective by focusing on a larger group of South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs, at any stage of business development. Three main research questions are explored:

1. What is the profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations and business aspirations?
2. What are the key factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development?
3. What are the relationships between the factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development?

Research design and methodology

This study forms part of a larger international project to explore the development of female entrepreneurial identity in South Africa and that of a selected developed economy, namely the Netherlands. Ultimately, the intention is to identify best practices and replicable lessons of the evolvement of female entrepreneurial identity, which may be adapted for the African context, as input into the development of a guiding framework for developing and maintaining higher-level female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. This framework seeks to address the inability of female entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries to translate their aspirations into sustainable businesses when compared to their male counterparts and women in higher income countries (Elam & Teleki, 2021).

The complex nature of the larger project is characterised by two separate social realities, namely objectivist and subjectivist assumptions. Therefore, as a balanced approach, two methodological

research approaches, incorporating the interpretivist paradigm – which supports sociology of regulation from a subjectivist standpoint (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) – and the radical structuralist paradigm – which is rooted in a materialist view of the natural and social world that promotes sociology of radical change from an objectivist standpoint (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) – were adopted. The multimode approach sought to (i) integrate different theoretical stances of considering the research problem, (ii) gain access to more diverse data when conducting the research, and (iii) strengthen the process and outcomes of the analysis (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The first phase of the research followed the interpretivist approach, whereby systematic literature reviews on female entrepreneurial identity as well as interviews were conducted with successful female entrepreneurs in the Netherlands and South Africa. Four overarching themes emerged from the qualitative analysis, namely (i) identity constructs, (ii) female identity, (iii) entrepreneurial journey, and (iv) entrepreneurial development.

This paper focuses on the second phase of the research, whereby, based on the literature and qualitative findings, a quantitative study was conducted to obtain an unbiased view on the following: *What are female founders' aspirations and entrepreneurial identities when engaging in a process of business exploration?* Therefore, an objective, structured, self-administered online questionnaire, using the literature constructs and qualitative analysis, was developed and distributed to a group of female entrepreneurs within the two contexts. The respective segments and parts of the questionnaire incorporated the following:

Segment I posed closed-end multiple-choice questions for which respondents could select one or more of the provided options, with the alternative to provide additional information. This segment included:

- Part A of the questionnaire posed business dynamics questions,
- Part B of the questionnaire sought to understand respondents' entrepreneurial journeys,
- Part C of the questionnaire sought to understand identity constructs,
- Part D of the questionnaire explored female identity in the eyes of other people,
- Part E of the questionnaire posed questions regarding entrepreneurial development, and
- Part F of the questionnaire explored respondents' demographic features.

Segment II incorporated questions to which respondents were required to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement, using a six-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) disagree somewhat, (4) agree somewhat, (5) agree to (6) strongly agree. This segment included:

- Part G further explored identity constructs,
- Part H further explored female identity,
- Part I further posed questions about founders' entrepreneurial journey, and
- Part J further explored entrepreneurial development.

The questionnaire was pre-tested by two individuals with extensive business management and development experience. This step aided in avoiding and reducing data collection errors and ambiguous questions, while also improving the reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was then shared with potential respondents for participation on a voluntary basis, with no incentive for participation. The target population consisted of South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs, who own a major share in a business. As the intention was to engage with a broad spectrum of women, no restriction was placed on annual turnover or the duration that the business had been operational, so any female entrepreneur, regardless of the stage of business development, could participate in the study. To select the appropriate participants, a number of South African and Dutch entrepreneurial support, networking associations and venture funds, as well as individual female entrepreneurs were approached to identify respondents. Although the intention was to secure 50 respondents from each country, securing an adequate number of Dutch participants proved to be a challenge. Consequently, 63 South African and 17 Dutch female entrepreneurs ultimately participated in the study. Despite this limitation, the data yielded sufficient insight to develop the necessary constructs (Ethical clearance number: NWU-00878-20-A4).

Data analysis

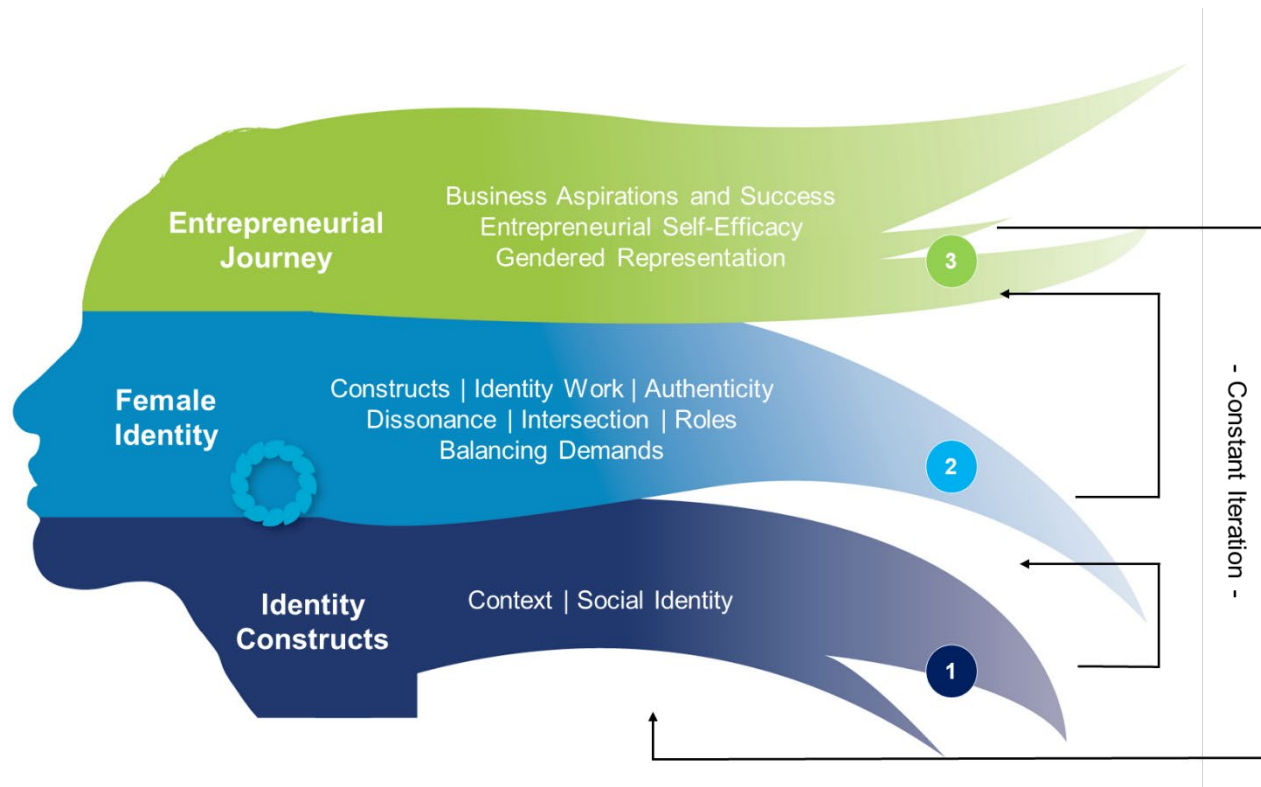
The statistical analysis comprised the collection, organising and interpretation of data to reveal similarities and differences within female entrepreneurs' contexts and how this influences the development of entrepreneurial identity, and consequently, their business choices, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0. Statistical techniques deployed for this study included:

- Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation) to develop a profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographic and business dynamics,
- Inferential statistics (exploratory factor analysis),
- Sampling appropriateness (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin),
- Measure of variance and quality scores (Bartlett's test),
- Reliability of the scales (Cronbach's alpha),
- Correlations (Levene's test for equality of variance and t-test for equality of means), and
- Bootstrapping to determine whether the correlations were significant ($p < 0.05$).

Results

Concatenation of the results led to the development of a statistical model for female entrepreneurial identity development, as depicted by **Error! Reference source not found.**, which is followed by an elaboration of the respective research questions, results and discussion thereof.

Figure I: Statistical model for the development of female entrepreneurial identity



Source: Own compilation

Research question 1: What is the profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographics and business dynamics?

Business dynamics

The majority of respondents have been in business for a period of between one and five years, and operate predominantly in the consulting, education, community, social and personal services, as well as health and manufacturing. Their businesses are overwhelmingly characterised by being sole-owned, and consequently, 100% female-owned, and employ only the founder or between one and ten people. Respondents largely utilised bootstrapping to start their businesses and generate an annual turnover of less than R500 000 (South Africa) or €300 000 (the Netherlands).

Demographics

The demographic analysis show that the majority of respondents are white (47.5%), followed closely by being black (42.5%). This distribution is of particular interest within the South African and cultural context, considering its racial profile, with 81% of South Africans reported to be black Africans (Statista, 2022). Interestingly, respondents are predominantly older than 40 and the majority of respondents are married and have one to two children.

When considering education, the majority of respondents are well educated, with 41.3% holding post-graduate degrees, 27.5% holding an undergraduate degree and, apart from a relatively small percentage (7.8%), the remainder all holding some form of post-school education.

In terms of employment prior to initiating their businesses, there is a relatively close distribution, but the majority of the women were employed for a period exceeding 15 years. Notably, only 5% of respondents never worked for someone else prior to initiating their businesses. The extensive period of employment correlates closely with respondents largely being more mature.

Start-up motivations and business aspirations

Respondents' key motivations for starting a business were independence and work-life balance, with financial independence or personal profits ranking third in the top three start-up motivations. The women were largely prompted by industry experience to identify an opportunity to start a business (61.3%), with only 26.3% of the respondents having identified a particular gap in the market to introduce an innovative offering.

When considering business aspirations, the women are divided between wishing to establish a high-growth business or a life-style business (45% each), with a small minority (10%) aspiring to address social aspects by operating a not-for-profit entity. This corresponds with the women largely defining business success as 'making a difference' (37.5%), with 20% considering wealth generation, and 17.5% considering business financial performance as being indicators of entrepreneurial success.

Research question 2: What are the key factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development?

Descriptive statistics of identity constructs

Within the context of entrepreneurial identity and this study, 'identity constructs' relate to individuals' context, roles and balancing demands, as well as self- and social identity, which collectively play a role in the development of personal identity.

The results indicate that the majority of respondents believe that their business experience and industry exposure positioned them well to start a business and that their ability to earn respect in their business communities is not influenced negatively by their cultures. While half of the respondents had strong networks when initiating their businesses, the majority were not influenced

by these networks to start a business. Notably, however, respondents largely agree that having strong networks and belonging to groups are influencing business evolution and that their comfort and confidence levels are also influenced by being part of a social group of peers. Correspondingly, they believe that they have the necessary emotional support from their network to develop a successful venture.

Factor analysis of identity constructs

Seven questions relating to female founders' identity constructs were analysed using principal component analysis with Kaiser normalisation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.624, above the commonly recommended value of 0.6, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017) was significant ($X^2(21) = 143.484$, $p < .001$), indicating that there is an adequate number of correlations between the variables for factor analysis. Using eigenvalues >1 to identify the underlying components (Cohen *et al.*, 2018), the analysis yielded two factors explaining a total of 58.32 percent of the variance in the data.

Factor 1 was labelled 'context' as a result of the high loadings by the following items: having strong networks and belong to groups that are influencing business evolution; having the necessary emotional support to develop a successful venture; industry business-related experience that positioned respondents well to start a business; and being part of a social group of peers that influence respondents' comfort and confidence levels. This factor explained 37.829 percent of the variance after rotation. Since these factor loadings are more than 0.5, they describe context when considering identity constructs.

Factor 2 was labelled 'social identity' because of the high loadings by the following items: having strong networks and belonging to groups that may have influenced respondents' decision to start a business; having strong networks and belonging to groups when initiating the business; and the influence of cultural background on earning respect in respondents' business community. These items had negative (-) correlation results, with the relationship between the variables being in the opposite direction. However, since the factor loadings are more than 0.5, these items are nonetheless considered to be of importance to the study. As these variables are related in the opposite direction with the factors, they do not describe social identity.

The internal consistency of the scale, with optimal values between 0.7 and 0.9 (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), is quantified by Cronbach's alpha, which measured 0.660 for context and 0.700 for social identity. This indicates an absence of internal consistency of the scale. Social identity, with the highest Cronbach alpha of the two factors, indicates that social identity is of relative importance in respondents' business development.

Descriptive statistics of Female Identity

Within the context of this study, 'female identity' relates to the core elements of female identity, namely constructs, entrepreneurial authenticity, dissonance and intersection, and identity work.

Most respondents are confident in their role as entrepreneur and experienced emotional support from their families to start their businesses. However, they are somewhat divided on whether their abilities as women are questioned and whether they experience occasional imposter syndrome, which impacts negatively on their business growth goals. Nonetheless, a substantial majority have a positive association with entrepreneurship and believe that they are capable of being an entrepreneur. Correspondingly, they have a strong business association and derive great satisfaction, fulfilment, and joy from their businesses, with the notion of entrepreneurship aligning well with their occupation self-concept in terms of beliefs and feelings about themselves within a working context.

The majority of the women did not initially identify more strongly with being a woman, wife/partner or mother than being an entrepreneur when they started their businesses. However, for most respondents, their roles in their families influenced how their businesses evolved over time, with a shift in role association as their businesses progressed. Currently, the majority identify most strongly with being an entrepreneur or business owner, rather than being a woman, wife/partner or mother. This indicates that, although their entrepreneurial identity evolved over time, respondents had a strong association with being an entrepreneur from the onset.

Interestingly, while the majority of respondents need to accommodate opposing responsibilities, with a resulting struggle to balance work and home duties for some, only half of the respondents feel that they occasionally need to neglect their business responsibilities to take care of family matters. Curiously, although most of them also experience challenges in satisfying demands of conflicting social identities to legitimise their roles as mother and/or wife/partner and entrepreneur, they do not find that contextually different situations require different behaviours and therefore they do not experience internal conflict in balancing these different behaviours. Most of the female entrepreneurs do not adopt male stereotypical behaviour to be taken seriously or to get things done, with half purposefully adopting a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship. However, only a small majority disagreed that they reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power in their businesses.

Evidently, entrepreneurship and social identities are based on conflicting expectations, resulting in the female entrepreneurs attempting to navigate these conflicts in a variety of ways, including "doing gender" and "redoing gender" (Díaz García and Welter, 2011). The results highlight the different ways in which the female entrepreneurs either accept and conform to norms, or alternatively, distance themselves from social expectations to define new social norms (Chasserio *et al.*, 2014; Lewis, 2006).

Factor analysis of female identity

Nineteen questions relating to women entrepreneurs' female identity were analysed using principal component analysis with Kaiser normalisation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.808, above the commonly recommended value of 0.6 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Malhotra *et al.*, 2017) was significant ($X^2(171) = 710.236$, $p < .001$), indicating that there is an adequate number of correlations between the variables for factor analysis. Using eigenvalues >1 to identify the underlying components (Cohen *et al.*, 2018), the analysis yielded five factors explaining a total of 68.782 percent of the variance in the data.

Factor 1 was labelled '*identity work*' as a result of the high loadings by the following items: the shift in respondents' role association over time; the need to neglect business responsibility to take care of family matters; role identification when initiating the business; balancing work and home duties; the influence of family role on business evolution; and experiencing imposter syndrome and its impact on business growth goals. This factor explained 31.165 percent of the variance after rotation.

Factor 2 was labelled '*constructs*' because of the high loadings by the following items: the alignment between the notion of entrepreneurship and occupational self-concept; identifying strongly with the business and deriving satisfaction, fulfilment, and joy from it; entrepreneurial confidence; having a positive association with entrepreneurship and self-belief in entrepreneurial capabilities; and experiencing emotional support from family to start a business. This factor accounted for 16.327 percent of the variance after rotation.

Factor 3 was labelled '*self-identity*' as a result of the high loading of currently identifying most strongly with being an entrepreneur, rather than with being a women, wife/partner or mother. This factor explained 8.612 percent of the variance after rotation.

Factor 4 was labelled '*authenticity, dissonance and intersection*' given the high loading of the following items: rejecting femininity and adopting professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable business power; the need to adopt male stereotypical behaviour to be taken seriously or to get things done; having abilities questioned as a result of being a woman; and experiencing internal conflict in trying to balance the need to exhibit different behaviours in contextually different situations. These items had negative (-) correlation results, with the relationship between the variables being in the opposite direction. However, since the factor loadings are more than 0.5, these items are nonetheless considered to be of importance to the study. As these variables are related in the opposite direction with the factors, they do not describe authenticity, dissonance and intersection when considering female identity. This factor explained 6.543 percent of the variance after rotation.

Factor 5 was labelled '*roles and balancing demands*' as a result of the high loading of the following items: purposefully adopting a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the

androcentric notion of entrepreneurship; experiencing challenges with satisfying demands of conflicting social identities to legitimise roles of a mother and/or wife/partner and entrepreneur; and having to accommodate opposing responsibilities while, at the same time, managing a business. These items had negative (-) correlation results, with the relationship between the variables being in the opposite direction. However, since the factor loadings are more than 0.5, these items are nonetheless considered to be of importance to the study. As these variables are related in the opposite direction with the factors; they do not describe roles and balancing demands when considering female identity. This factor explained 6.134 percent of the variance after rotation.

Cronbach's alpha measured as follows: 0.835 for identity work, 0.812 for constructs; 0.767 for authenticity, dissonance and intersection and 0.723 for roles and balancing demands, while self-identity had no value, given that it is reliable on its own, as a single item that grouped into this factor. This indicates internal consistency (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) of the scale.

Descriptive statistics of Entrepreneurial Journey

The entrepreneurial process of new venture creation starts when a business opportunity is identified and having specific business aspirations, with the process involving a journey of improvising and developing entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which ultimately influences business success. This process could be quite different for females than it is for men. This section explored respondents' entrepreneurial journey, which incorporates the decision to become an entrepreneur, business aspirations and success, entrepreneurial self-efficacy and gendered representation, which collectively influence a woman's entrepreneurial journey.

The majority of respondents had some reservations about starting a business and they sometimes doubt themselves and therefore intentionally limit their venture growth. Conversely, most respondents believe that their partners and core team are confident within their respective roles. In contrast to other studies that have found that the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship impacts negatively on female business owners, respondents strongly disagreed: the majority did not experience internal- or external uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner. In addition, they mostly disagree that the stereotypical treatment of women in the business world affects their businesses negatively, nor do societal views of the traditional roles of women impact negatively on their ability to run their business. Furthermore, the majority have no difficulty with attaining entrepreneurial legitimacy as a result of the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship and feel that they are afforded the same business opportunities as their male counterparts are. Correspondingly, a small majority do not believe that specific role players (such as financial institutions) are biased towards male entrepreneurs, although they do believe that there are sector-specific gender perceptions in their industries, which they need to be aware of and navigate to run their businesses.

Factor analysis of entrepreneurial journey

Eleven questions relating to female founders' entrepreneurial journey were analysed using principal component analysis with Kaiser normalisation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.832, above the commonly recommended value of 0.6 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Malhotra et al., 2017: 711) was significant ($X^2(55) = 240.593$, $p < .001$), indicating that there is an adequate number of correlations between the variables for factor analysis. Using eigenvalues >1 to identify the underlying components (Cohen et al., 2018: 820), the analysis yielded two factors, explaining a total of 54.522 percent of the variance in the data.

Factor 1 was labelled '*gendered representation*' as a result of the high loadings by the following items: sector-specific gender perceptions that female founders need to be aware of to navigate and run their businesses; and female founders' belief that they are afforded the same business opportunities as their male counterparts, with the latter item having a negative (-) correlation result. This factor explained 42.856 percent of the variance after rotation.

Factor 2 was labelled '*business aspirations and success*', given the high loadings by the following items: female founders' occasional doubt within themselves, leading to intentionally limiting their business growth; having reservations about starting a business; and the confidence of partners and the core team within their respective roles. This factor explained 11.667 percent of the variance after rotation.

Cronbach's alpha measured 0.879 for gendered representation and 0.282 for business aspirations and success. This indicates internal consistency (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) of the scale for gendered representation, but not for business aspirations and success.

Research question 3. What are the relationships between the factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity development?

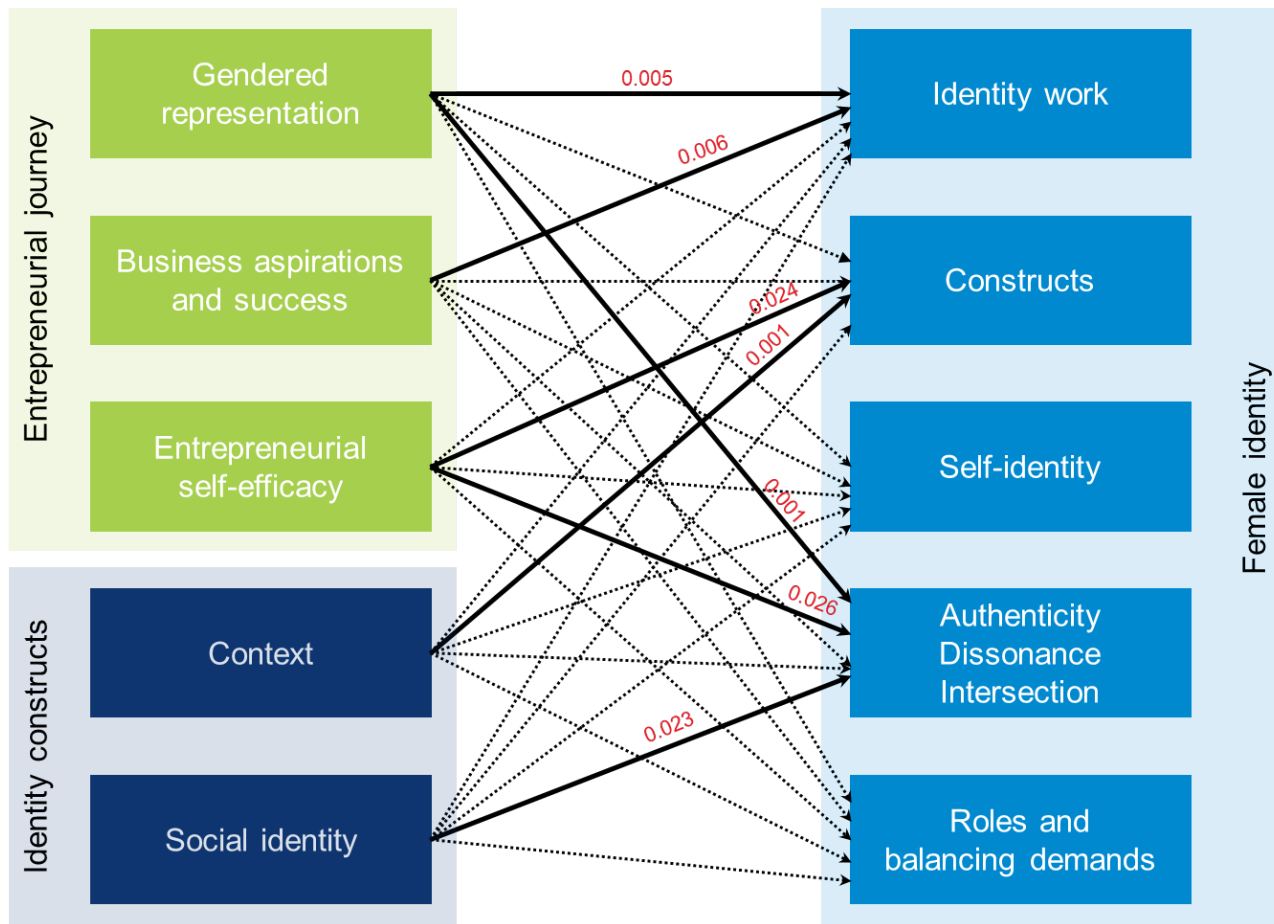
In this section, the researcher aimed to establish the correlation between the respective factors. The results, depicted in Table I, demonstrate the items and factors where evidence of a positive relationship (Bordens and Abbott, 2018) was found through the Spearman rank-order correlation. Since the data did not follow normal distribution and did not meet the normality assumption of traditional statistics, nonparametric bootstrapping was utilised to repeatedly resample the dataset, to generate an empirical estimate of the sampling distribution (Hossain, 2000: 76). The true sampling design of the data was therefore reproduced as closely as possible, while unknown aspects of the statistical model were replaced by sample estimates (Boos, 2003: 1). This allowed determination of the statistical significance of the correlations between the respective factors, with Figure II providing the path results of the structural model. The p-values are depicted for the factor correlations, which are statistically significant at <0.05 .

Table I: Correlation between the factors

ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY		FEMALE IDENTITY					
EJ1	Gendered Representation	F11	Identity work				
EJ2	Becoming an entrepreneur	F12	Constructs				
EJ3	Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy	F13	Authenticity, dissonance, intersection				
EJ4	Business aspirations and Success	F14	Roles and balancing demands				
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTS							
IC1	Context						
IC2	Social identity						
Factor (n=80)		Female Identity				Identity Constructs	
		F11	F12	F13	F14	IC1	IC2
EJ1	Correlation coefficient	.472**		.681**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000			
EJ3	Correlation coefficient		.471**			.456**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000			0.001	
EJ4	Correlation coefficient	.583**					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000					
F11	Correlation coefficient			.548**	.525**		.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000		0.000
F13	Correlation coefficient				.543**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000		
IC1	Correlation coefficient		.533**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000				
IC2	Correlation coefficient			.467**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000			

Source: Own compilation

Figure II: Path results of the statistical model



Source: Own compilation

The correlation between gendered representation (EJ1) and female identity work (FI1) implies that the inherent masculinity of the entrepreneurial domain has an influence on female entrepreneurs' identity work, while the relationship between gendered representation (EJ1) and authenticity, dissonance and intersection (F13) indicates that female entrepreneurs experience conflict when navigating between professional and authoritarian entrepreneurial masculinities and their femininity. The correlation between business aspirations and business success (EJ4) and identity work (FI1) indicates that, as identity work increases, so do business aspirations and business success. Correspondingly, the correlation between female entrepreneurial self-efficacy (EJ3) and female identity constructs (FI2) indicates that, as female founders' confidence in their entrepreneurial role and occupational self-concept increases, so does their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Linked to this is the correlation between entrepreneurial self-efficacy (EJ3) and female identity constructs (FI2), which indicates that women's confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities is linked to the elements that collectively play a role in their identity construction of being an entrepreneur, such as gender context, personal and family scenarios within the context of their life journeys, the broader social systems in which they are embedded and the interwovenness with social constructs. As a result,

there is also a relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy (EJ3) and entrepreneurial authenticity, dissonance and intersection (FI3), which implies that a woman's confidence in her entrepreneurial abilities influences her entrepreneurial authenticity, with women lacking in confidence likely to experience dissonance. The relationship between context (IC1) and female identity constructs (FI2) indicates that belonging to groups and having strong networks and business-related industry experience positively influence female founders' entrepreneurial confidence, identifying with the business, and consequently, their occupational self-concept. Finally, the correlation between social identity (IC2) and identity authenticity, dissonance and intersection (FI3) indicates that a stronger social identity contributes to women experiencing increased entrepreneurial authenticity.

Discussion and conclusion

This paper sought to cast a light on the interaction between female entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations. To start with, we considered respondents' demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations and business aspirations, to develop a picture of who these female founders are. We then explored the factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity and how these factors interact with one another.

The respondents in this study are predominantly older than 40, which is reflective of other scholars' findings that the number of older female entrepreneurs are on the rise (Kautonen et al., 2012; Stirzaker and Galloway, 2017) and that this trajectory is likely to continue as a result of improved health and wellbeing in later life, with an associated impetus to augment retirement benefits (Wainwright *et al.*, 2011). The study revealed that the majority of respondents are well educated, with the results refuting other authors' (Adom, 2015; Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017; Greene & Brush, 2018; Herrington *et al.*, 2017; Urban, 2010) claims that women are weighed-down by lower levels of education. While this is postulated to be particularly prevalent in developing countries, it is evidently not applicable to the respondents who participated in this study. The results of this study substantiate other scholars' findings that women are overrepresented in industries characterised by small firms, low profit margins and vulnerability to market disruptions and economic shocks, with women opting to operate predominantly in the service, retail, and hospitality sectors (Carranza *et al.*, 2018). When considering respondents' business aspirations and definition of success, the study highlights the fact that women are largely motivated by independence and work-life balance, rather than pursuing high-growth entrepreneurship and aggressive funding goals. These findings correspond with other scholars' assertions that non-economic factors are of importance to women (Amit and Zott, 2001; Kolvereid, 1996; Shane et al., 1991), and that mothers, specifically, may pursue entrepreneurship in a quest to attain a more favourable work-life balance (Arai, 2000). Consequently, the need for female entrepreneurs to balance work and family roles, handle conflict and consider time and space constraints as they create new ventures (Brush & Greene, 2016; Fatoki, 2016), is of significance.

When considering the factors that influence female entrepreneurial identity, we observed both negative and positive factors. On the negative end of the spectrum, this study brought to light that the *inherent masculinity of the entrepreneurial domain* has an influence on female entrepreneurs' identity work and that they experience *conflict when navigating between professional and authoritarian entrepreneurial masculinities and their femininity*. Linked to this is female *founders' role association* (being a woman, wife/partner, mother or entrepreneur), experiencing *imposter syndrome* and having to *balance work-home duties*, which result in respondents experiencing *dissonance* and having to *do more identity work to attain authenticity*. To balance the scales, we also identified factors that positively influence entrepreneurial identity and success. The study revealed that respondents' *confidence* in their entrepreneurial abilities is influenced by their *context* and that, when female founders' confidence in their entrepreneurial role and occupational self-concept increases, so does their *entrepreneurial self-efficacy*. A stronger *social identity* contributes to women experiencing *increased entrepreneurial authenticity*, while *belonging to groups* and *having strong networks* and *business-related industry experience*, positively influence female founders' entrepreneurial *confidence*, *identifying with the business* and consequently, their *occupational self-concept*. Finally, the study highlights that, as *identity work increases*, so do *business aspirations and business success*.

Our study demonstrates that female entrepreneurs' identity and their answers to the question 'who am I?' are intrinsically connected to their contexts and consequently, their new venture aspirations. Our work builds on insights from research on female entrepreneurial identity and extends thereon by not only focusing on those aspects that inherently challenge female founders' efforts to attain entrepreneurial authenticity, but also identifying aspects that could be leveraged to develop a stronger female entrepreneurial identity and, in so doing, positively influencing business aspirations and business success.

Study limitations

The study was limited to South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs, therefore the findings are not generalisable to female entrepreneurs within other contexts. As the questionnaires were completed at a specific point in time, future longitudinal studies may provide valuable information regarding the evolution of female entrepreneurs' identity over an extended time period.

Competing interests

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced the writing of this article.

Author contributions

The authors designed and implemented the research, analysed the results of the qualitative data, and drafted the paper.

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Data availability

The data that supports the results of this study are available from the principle author, upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not reflect an official position of the University.

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Addendum 6.1: Self-administered survey questionnaire

Segment I: Select one or more of the provided options	
A. Business dynamics	
A1	Please indicate whether your business is located in South Africa or the Netherlands
A2	How long has your current business been operational?
A3	Which sector does your business operate in?
A4	How many business partners are there in your business?
A5	What is the male/female partnership ratio?
A6	What is the male/female partnership equity distribution?
A7	What was your main source of start-up capital?
A8	How many people does your business employ?
A9	What is the annual turnover of your business?
B. Entrepreneurial Journey	
B1	What was your motivation for starting a business?
B2	How would you describe your business aspirations?
B3	In your view, what are the most important requirements for successfully initiating a business?
B4	In your view, what are the key characteristics which the founder/s should possess to successfully initiate and grow a business?
B5	Please indicate the process which you followed to identify your business concept
B6	What constitutes success for you, in terms of being an entrepreneur?
C. Identity Constructs	
C1	Are you actively involved in community initiatives?
C2	Please indicate your exposure to entrepreneurship
C3	Please indicate the factors that contributed to your confidence as an entrepreneur
D. Female Identity	
D1	Please indicate how other people initially saw you (during the early days of your business)
D2	Please indicate how other people predominantly see you now
E. Entrepreneurial Development	
E1	Please indicate whether you participated in a formalised business development programme/s when you were developing your business
E2	Please indicate whether the formalised business development programme influenced how your business evolved
F. Demographics	
F1	Which ethnic group do you fall in?
F2	What is your age?
F3	What is your marital status?
F4	Do you have any children?
F5	What is your highest level of education?
F6	How long were you employed, prior to starting your business?

Segment II: Rate the degree to which you agree/disagree with the statements
(1: strongly disagree to 6: strongly agree)

G. Identity Constructs

- G1 My business-related experience, in terms of industries in which I worked, the number of years of experience, the roles that I fulfilled, etc. positioned me well to start a business
- G2 I had strong networks and belonged to groups (formal/informal) when I initiated my business
- G3 Having strong networks and belonging to groups influenced my decision to start a business
- G4 I currently have strong networks and belong to groups, which is influencing how my business evolves
- G5 Being part of a social group of peers influences my comfort- and confidence-levels, as female entrepreneur
- G6 My cultural background makes it difficult for me to earn respect in my business community
- G7 I have the necessary emotional support from family, friends and colleagues to develop a successful venture

H. Female Identity

- H1 I am confident in my role as an entrepreneur
- H2 I experienced emotional support from my family to start my business
- H3 My role in the family - for instance being a wife and / or mother - influenced how my business evolved over time
- H4 Because I am a woman, people sometimes question my abilities
- H5 I sometimes struggle to balance work and home duties
- H6 I sometimes need to neglect my business responsibility to take care of family matters
- H7 When I started My business, I identified more strongly with being a woman, wife / partner or mother, rather than being an entrepreneur
- H8 My role association - being a wife / partner or mother - shifted over time, as my business evolved
- H9 I currently identify most strongly with being an entrepreneur or business owner, rather than with being a woman, wife / partner or mother
- H10 I sometimes need to adopt male stereotypical behaviour to be taken seriously or to get things done
- H11 As a female entrepreneur, I need to accommodate opposing responsibilities – parenting and/or being a wife/partner - while at the same time, managing my business
- H12 It is challenging to satisfy demands of conflicting social identities to legitimise my roles as mother and/or wife/partner and entrepreneur
- H13 In an effort to attain authenticity, I purposefully adopt a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship
- H14 I reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power in my business
- H15 Contextually different situations require different behaviours and I sometime experience internal conflict in trying to balance these different behaviours
- H16 I have a positive association with entrepreneurship – as a result of public role models and a perceived positive entrepreneurship social norm – and believe that I am capable of being an entrepreneur
- H17 The notion of entrepreneurship aligns well with my occupational self-concept in terms of my beliefs and feelings about myself in a working context
- H18 I sometimes experience imposter phenomenon, which impacts negatively on my business growth goals
- H19 I identify strongly with my business and derive great satisfaction, fulfilment and joy from my business

I. Entrepreneurial Journey	
I1	I had some reservations about starting a business
I2	My partners and core team are confident within their respective roles in the organisation
I3	I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner within myself
I4	I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner by others
I5	Stereotypical treatment of women in the business world sometimes affects my business negatively
I6	The views held by society on the traditional roles of women impact negatively on my ability to run my business
I7	I found/find it difficult to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy, given the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship
I8	I feel that I am afforded the same business opportunities as my male counterparts
I9	Specific role players, such as financial institutions, are biased towards male entrepreneurs
I10	I sometimes doubt myself and therefore I intentionally limit my venture growth
I11	There are sector-specific gender perceptions in my industry, which I need to be aware of and navigate to run my business
J. Entrepreneurial Development	
J1	Women are seen as entrepreneurial role models
J2	Entrepreneurship education has a role to play in supporting women to identify with being entrepreneurs
J3	Tailored programmes to suit the diverse needs of women could advance female entrepreneurship

Addendum 6.2: Informed consent



NWU Business School
North-West University
Private Bag x6001
Potchefstroom, 2520
<http://commerce.nwu.ac.za/business-school>

F-EMS: Female entrepreneurship research

Informed consent for participation in research: Female entrepreneurs

We are currently conducting research and would like you to form part of it. The ethical clearance number for the project is NWU-00878-20-A4.

Aim of the research:

The aim of our research is to develop a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa, as a mechanism for catalysing value-creating female owned businesses. Through data collected, we will:

- Gain an understanding of the role that entrepreneurial identity played in the development of participants' businesses, whilst also exploring the process of constructing and maintaining their identity, as entrepreneurs.
- Contribute to the structuring and implementation of female entrepreneurial business development programmes, such as the NWU's Enterprising Women Programme, so that we may support the development of businesses that are scalable, sustainable and that can make a significant contribution to our economy.

Please note the following:

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you will receive no form of compensation for participating.
- Given the nature of the study, biographical data is included in the research. This data will allow us to gain an understanding of participants' cultural context, as an input into entrepreneurial identity.
- Information shared will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Individual responses will not be identified, as only collated results will be utilised in the study.
- All data obtained is stored on a secure server at NWU.
- Our names will appear on the essay, which will be published in an online platform.
- The essay may be published in the form of peer-reviewed academic publications.

If you feel, at any time, that you wish to halt participation in this study, please feel free to do so without judgement.

By agreeing to complete a questionnaire, you give consent that information shared may be used for research purposes. For additional particulars, please feel free to contact the primary researcher.

Yours truly

Leonie Greyling
Digitally signed by
Leonie Greyling
Date: 2022.02.10
08:28:00 +02'00'

Mrs Leonie Greyling
PhD student
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Verona Leendertz
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Study promoter
North-West University
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Addendum 6.3: Call for respondents



Leonie Greyling • You

Female Entrepreneurship Champion | PhD Candidate

8mo • 🌐

#FemaleFounders,

Be the **#change** that you want to see, by sharing your experience of your entrepreneurship journey.

We know that **#FemaleEntrepreneurship** has the potential to be a significant economic growth engine, but that female entrepreneurs remain an under-utilised resource. You can make a difference by enhancing our understanding of the **#newventure** development process, as an input into a Guiding Framework for Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development.

All female entrepreneurs based in **#southafrica** and the **#netherlands** with a majority shareholding in a business, regardless of its stage of development, are eligible for participation in the study.

In the spirit of collaboration, please complete the questionnaire at https://lnkd.in/g/eHXaEB_5 and invite participation from your network. Together, we can create a new **#future** of strong, independent **#femaleentrepreneurs**.

#growth #development #startups #gender



Female Entrepreneurial Identity

I am Leonie Greyling and I am currently undertaking my PhD at the North-West University on female entrepreneurship (ethical clearance: NWU-00878-20-A4). Specifically, my study aims to develop a Guiding Framework for Female Entrepreneurial Identity Development, as a mechanism for catalysing value-creating female owned businesses. As I am sure you are well aware, female entrepreneurs have the potential to be a significant economic growth engine, but remain an under-utilised resource. Therefore, continuous research to enhance the development and understanding of female entrepreneurship is crucial. Your contribution by completing the questionnaire is important and highly appreciated.

Through data collected, we will gain an understanding of the role that entrepreneurial identity played in the development of participants' businesses, whilst also exploring the process of constructing and maintaining their identity, as entrepreneurs. In addition, we will be in a position to contribute to the structuring and implementation of female entrepreneurial business development programmes, so that we may support the development of businesses

Female Entrepreneurial Identity

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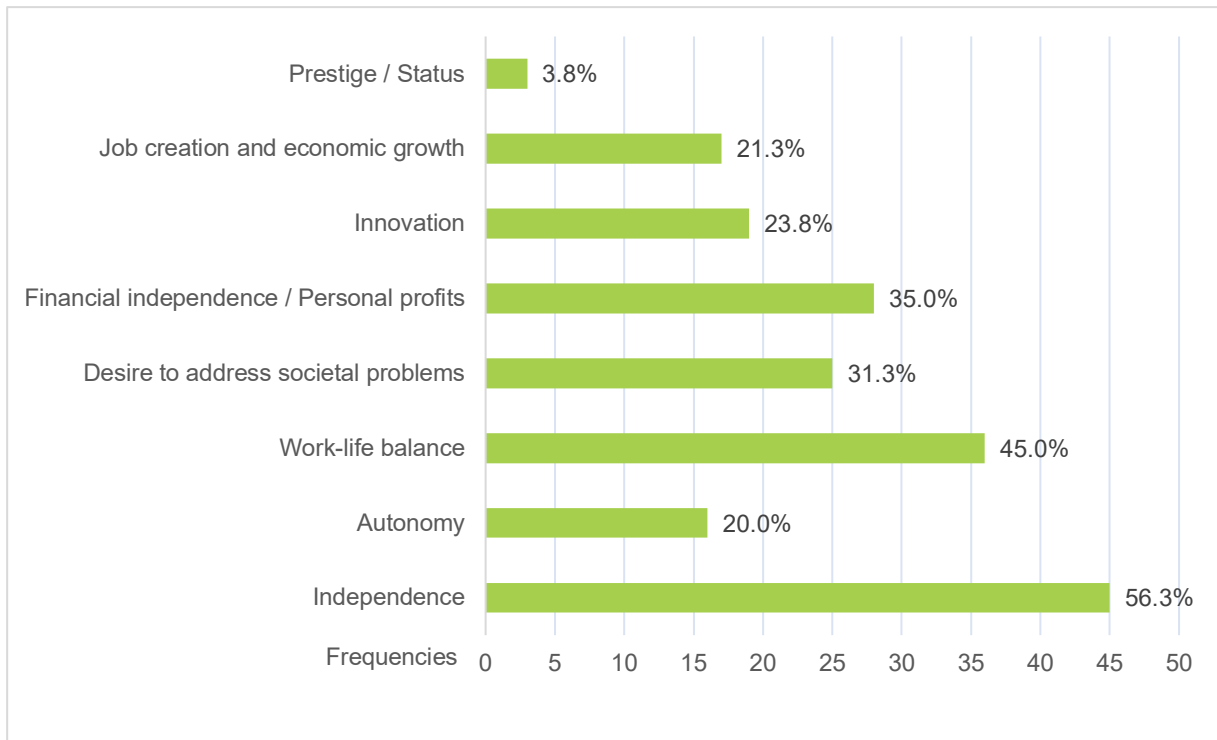
Addendum 6.4: Frequencies and percentages of business dynamics and demographics

Frequencies and percentages of business dynamics				
f=frequency %=percentage			f	%
A1	Location	South Africa	63	78.8%
		The Netherlands	17	21.2%
A2	Business duration	Less than 1 year	8	10.0%
		1 to 5 years	41	51.2%
		Longer than 5 years	31	38.8%
A3	Business sector	Consulting services	15	18.8%
		Education	9	11.3%
		Other	9	11.3%
		Community, social, personal services	7	8.8%
		Communication and Marketing	5	6.3%
		Health	5	6.3%
		Manufacturing	5	6.3%
		Agriculture	3	3.8%
		Catering, accommodation, other	3	3.8%
		Construction	3	3.8%
		Beauty services	2	2.5%
		Electricity, gas, water	2	2.5%
		Finance and business services	2	2.5%
		Graphic and interior design	2	2.5%
		Information technology	2	2.5%
		Retail, motor trade, repairs	2	2.5%
		Transport, storage, communication	2	2.5%
		Mining and quarrying	1	1.3%
		Wholesale	1	1.3%
A4	Number of partners	Founder only	59	73.8%
		Founder and 1 partner	14	17.5%
		Founder and 2 or more partners	7	8.8%
A5	Partnership ratio	100% Female	72	90.0%
		More than 50% female	4	5.0%
		Less than 50% female	4	5.0%
A6	Equity distribution	100% Female	70	87.5%
		More than 50% female	6	7.5%
		Less than 50% female	4	5.0%
A7	Main source of start-up capital	Own resources (Bootstrapping)	65	81.3%
		Loan from a friend or family member	4	5.0%
		External investment	5	6.3%
		Grant from a government department	3	3.8%
		Loan from a government department	1	1.3%
		Other	2	2.5%

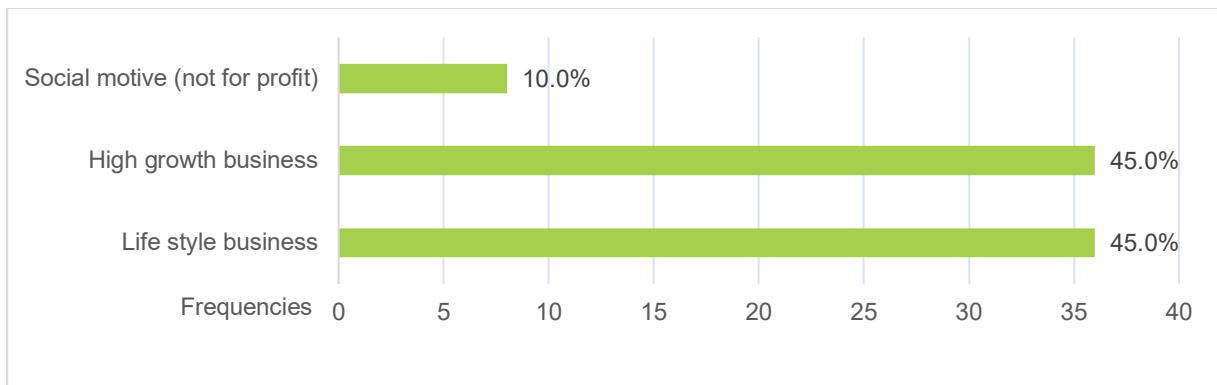
Frequencies and percentages of business dynamics				
f=frequency %=percentage			f	%
A8 Number of employees	Founder only (no employees)		38	47.5%
	Micro (1 - 10 employees)		34	42.5%
	Small (11 - 49 employees)		8	10.0%
	Medium (50 - 249 employees)		0	0.0%
	Large (More than 250 employees)		0	0.0%
A9 Annual turnover	<R500 000 per annum <€30 000 per annum		46	57.5%
	R500 000 - R5 million per annum €30 000 - €300 000 per annum		31	38.8%
	R5 million - R15 million per annum €300 000 - €870 000 per annum		1	1.3%
	R15 million - R50 million per annum €870 000 - €2.9 million per annum		2	2.5%
Frequencies and percentages of demographics				
f=frequency %=percentage			f	%
F1 Ethnic group	White		38	47.5%
	Black / African		34	42.5%
	Coloured		5	6.3%
	Indian / Asian		3	3.8%
F2 Age at last birthday	Between 41 and 50 years		31	38.8%
	Between 31 and 40 years		18	22.5%
	Between 51 and 60 years		16	20.0%
	Between 21 and 30 years		11	13.8%
	Older than 60		3	3.8%
	Younger than 21 years		1	1.3%
F3 Marital status	Married		36	45.0%
	Single		26	32.5%
	Divorced		8	10.0%
	Living Together		6	7.5%
	Widowed		4	5.0%
F4 Number of children	1 - 2		43	53.8%
	None		24	30.0%
	3 - 4		13	16.3%
F5 Highest educational level	Post Graduate degree		33	41.3%
	Undergraduate Degree		22	27.5%
	Diploma		16	20.0%
	Secondary school; completed Grade 12		5	6.3%
	Certificate		3	3.8%
	Secondary school; did not complete Grade 12		1	1.3%
F6 Period of employment, prior to initiating the business	Longer than 15 years		23	28.8%
	Between 10 and 15 years		19	23.8%
	Between 1 and 5 years		17	21.3%
	Between 5 and 10 years		17	21.3%
	Never worked for someone else		4	5.0%

Addendum 6.5: Entrepreneurial journey results

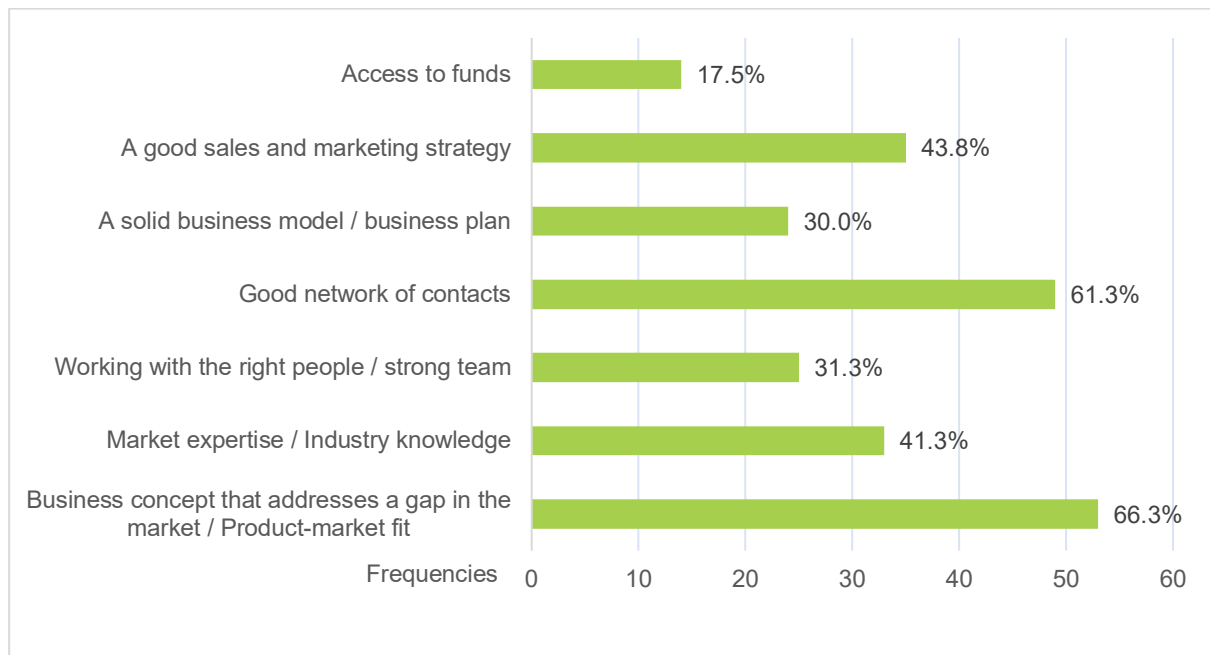
Motivation for starting a business



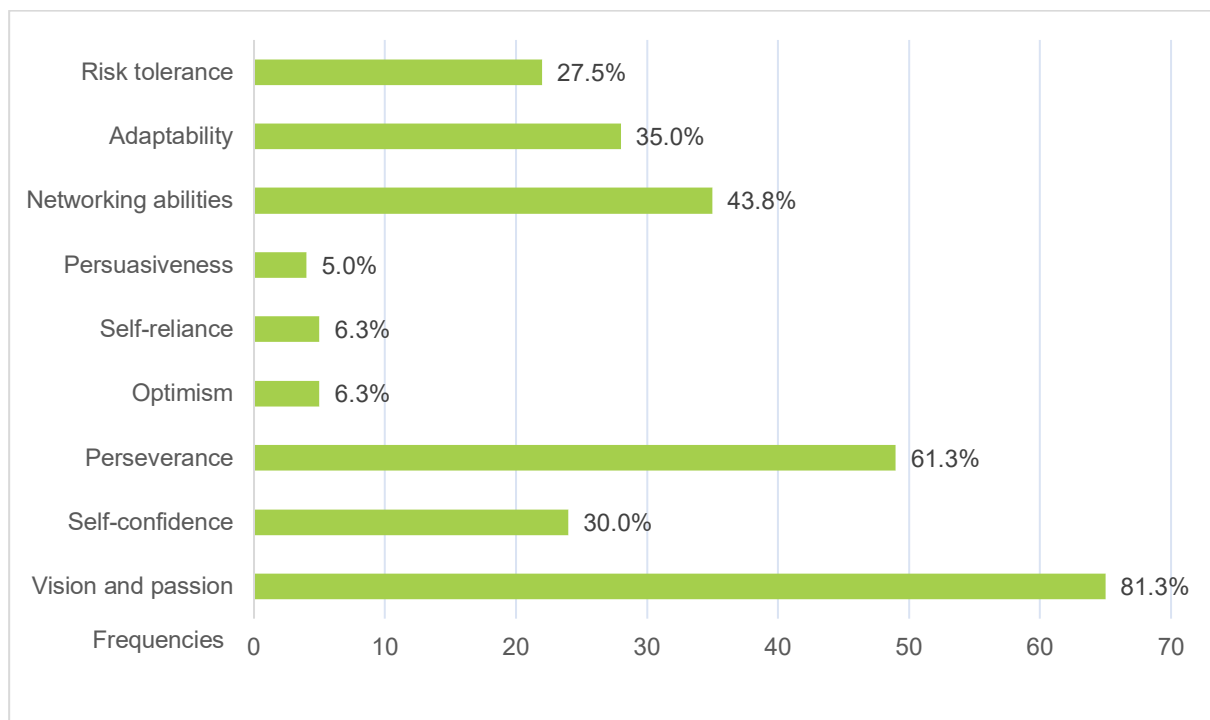
Business aspirations



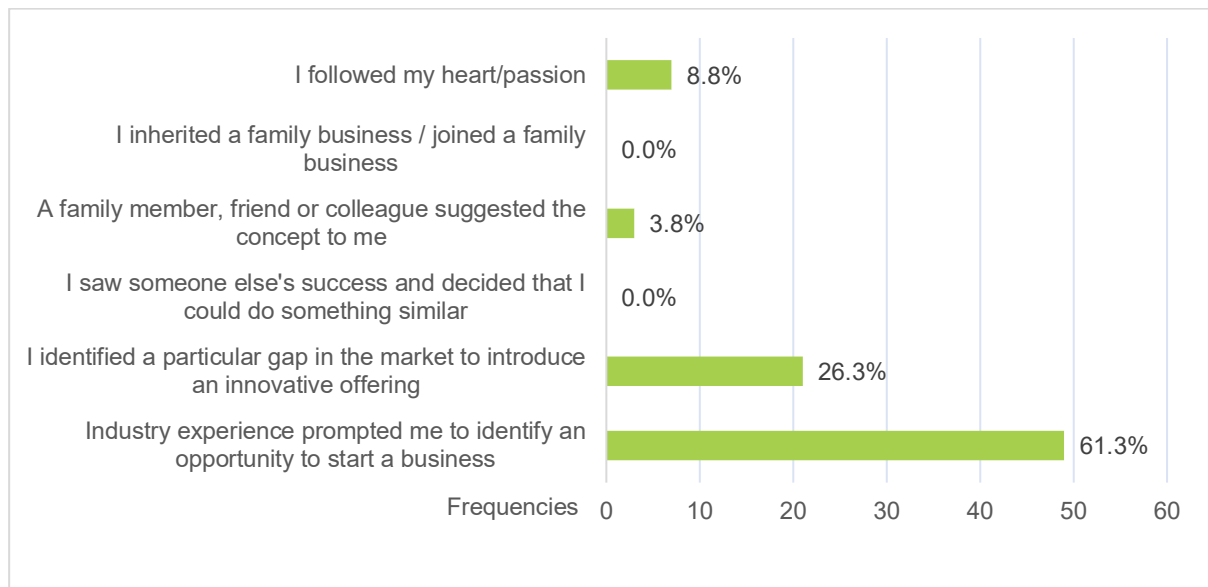
Requirements for successfully initiating a business



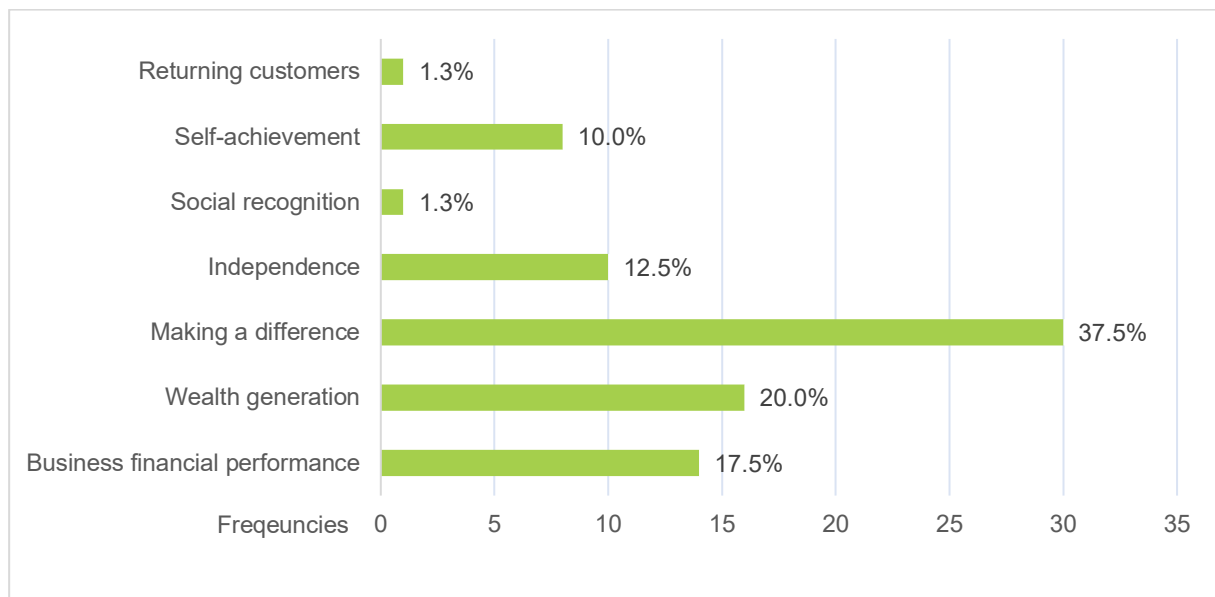
Founders' key characteristics for successfully developing a business



Business concept identification

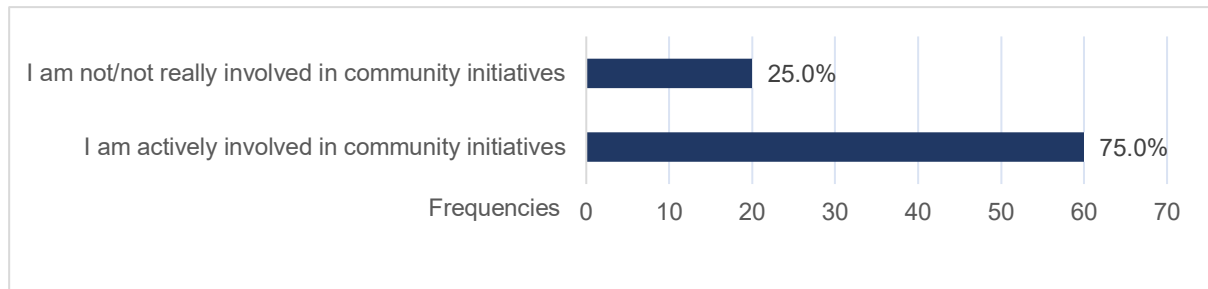


Entrepreneurial success definition

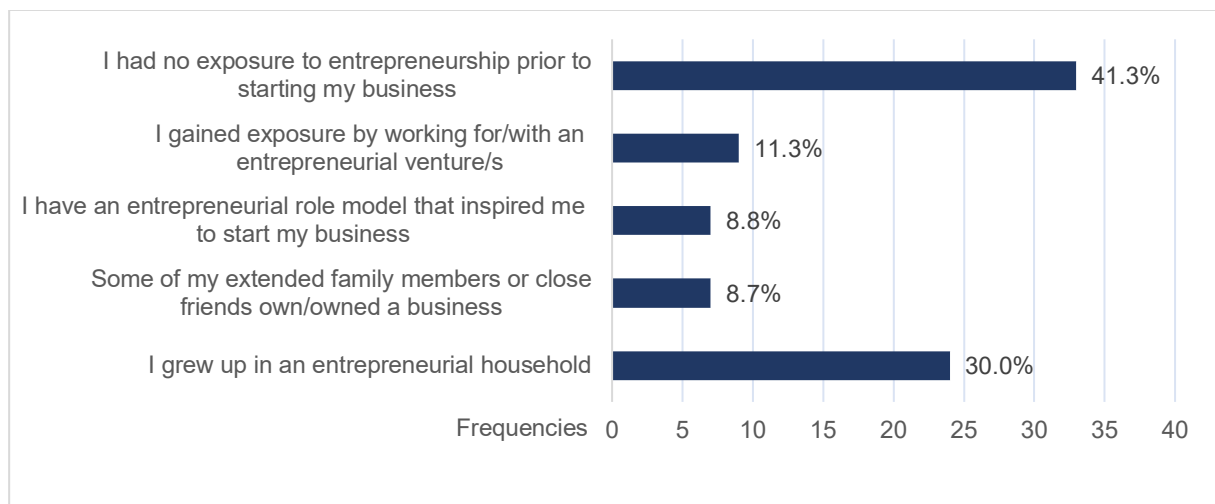


Addendum 6.6: Identity constructs results

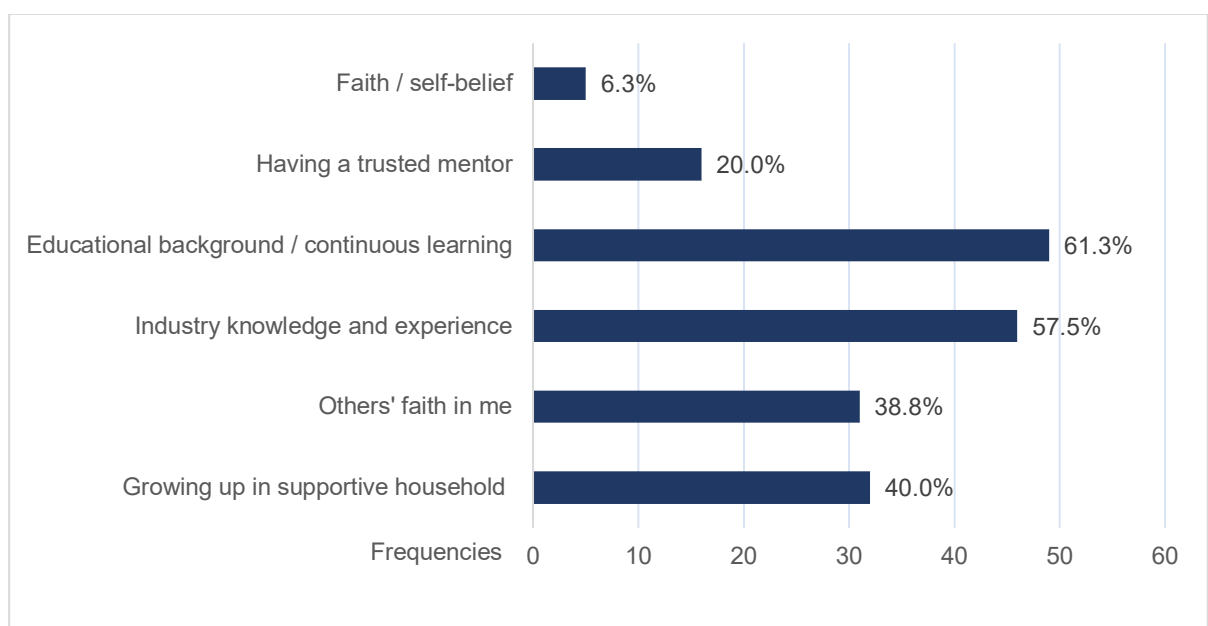
Community involvement



Entrepreneurial exposure

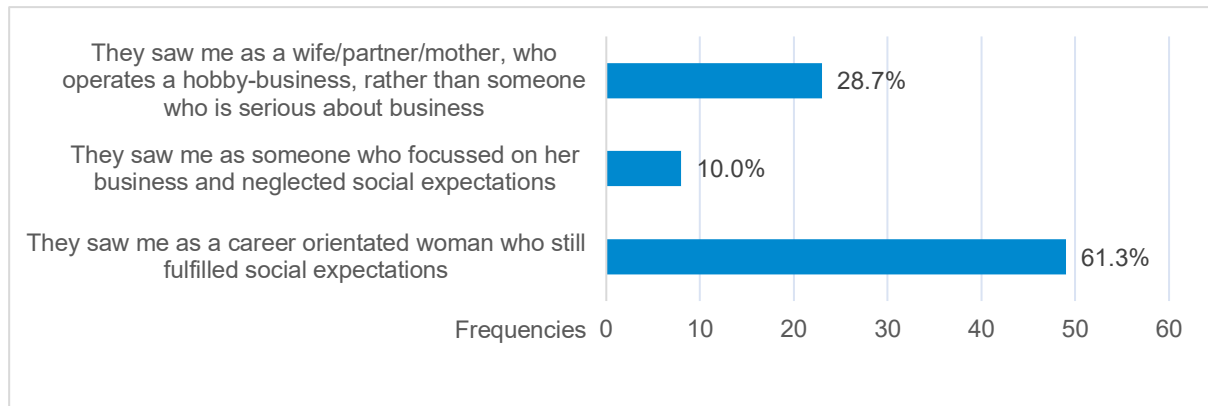


Contributing factors to entrepreneurial confidence

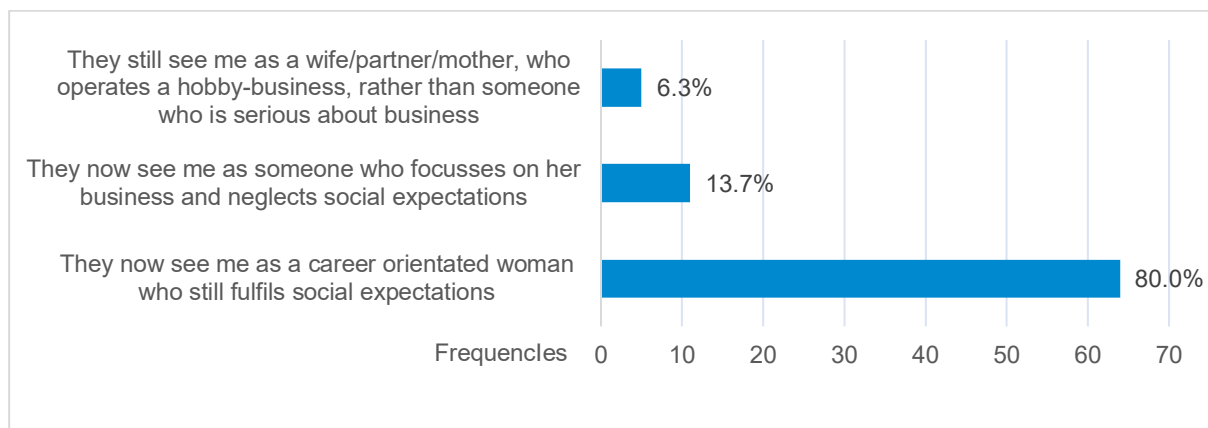


Addendum 6.7: Female identity results

Others' initial perceptions

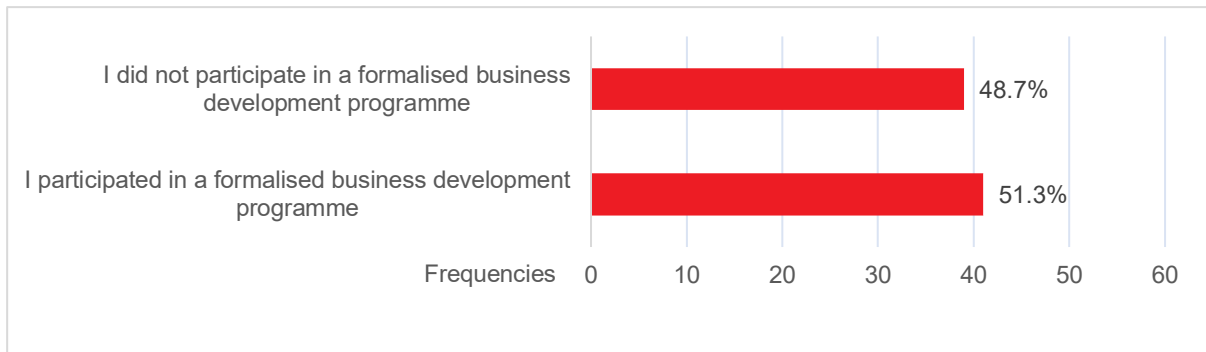


Others' current perceptions

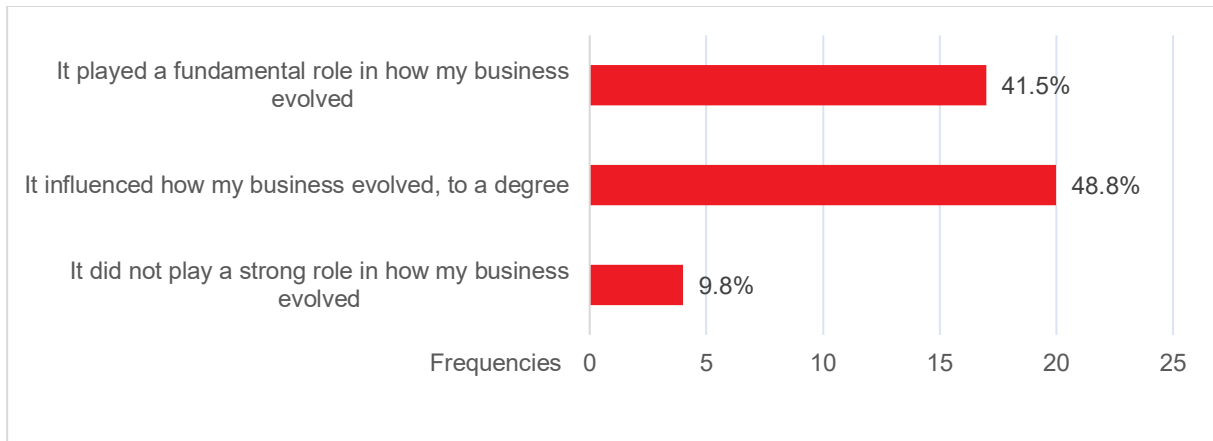


Addendum 6.8: Entrepreneurial development results

Business development programme participation



Influence of business development programme participation



Addendum 6.9: Descriptive statistics of identity constructs

Descriptive statistics of identity constructs									
Scale item		Strongly disagree / Disagree		Disagree somewhat		Agree somewhat		Agree / Strongly agree	
f=frequency %=percentage		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
G1	My business-related experience, in terms of industries in which I worked, the number of years of experience, the roles that I fulfilled, etc. positioned me well to start a business	24	30.0%	1	1.3%	12	15.0%	43	53.8%
G2	I had strong networks and belonged to groups (formal / informal) when I initiated my business	29	36.3%	11	13.8%	17	21.3%	23	28.8%
G3	Having strong networks and belonging to groups influenced my decision to start a business	44	55.0%	7	8.8%	13	16.3%	16	20.0%
G4	I currently have strong networks and belong to groups, which is influencing how my business evolves	11	13.8%	15	18.8%	16	20.0%	38	47.5%
G5	Being part of a social group of peers influences my comfort- and confidence-levels, as female entrepreneur	18	22.5%	3	3.8%	25	31.3%	34	42.5%
G6	My cultural background makes it difficult for me to earn respect in my business community	54	67.5%	5	6.3%	11	13.8%	10	12.5%
G7	I have the necessary emotional support from family, friends and colleagues to develop a successful venture	12	15.0%	5	6.3%	11	13.8%	52	65.0%

Addendum 6.10: Descriptive statistics of female identity

Descriptive statistics of female identity									
Scale item		Strongly disagree / Disagree		Disagree somewhat		Agree somewhat		Agree / Strongly agree	
f=frequency %=percentage		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
H1	I am confident in my role as an entrepreneur	2	2.5%	3	3.8%	13	16.3%	62	77.5%
H2	I experienced emotional support from my family to start my business	14	17.5%	5	6.3%	10	12.5%	51	63.8%
H3	My role in the family - for instance being a wife and / or mother - influenced how my business evolved over time	20	25.0%	9	11.3%	10	12.5%	41	51.3%
H4	Because I am a woman, people sometimes question my abilities	25	31.3%	8	10.0%	23	28.8%	24	30.0%
H5	I sometimes struggle to balance work and home duties	19	23.8%	9	11.3%	19	23.8%	33	41.3%
H6	I sometimes need to neglect my business responsibility to take care of family matters	26	32.5%	14	17.5%	18	22.5%	22	27.5%
H7	When I started my business, I identified more strongly with being a woman, wife / partner or mother, rather than being an entrepreneur	39	48.8%	12	15.0%	11	13.8%	18	22.5%
H8	My role association shifted over time, as my business evolved	32	40.0%	6	7.5%	20	25.0%	22	27.5%
H9	I currently identify most strongly with being an entrepreneur or business owner, rather than with being a woman, wife / partner or mother	26	32.5%	11	13.8%	16	20.0%	27	33.8%
H10	I sometimes need to adopt male stereotypical behaviour in order to be taken seriously or to get things done	36	45.0%	13	16.3%	11	13.8%	20	25.0%
H11	As a female entrepreneur, I need to accommodate opposing responsibilities – parenting and/or being a wife/partner - while at the same time, managing my business	16	20.0%	8	10.0%	20	25.0%	36	45.0%
H12	It is challenging to satisfy demands of conflicting social identities to legitimise my roles as mother and/or wife/partner and entrepreneur	27	33.8%	9	11.3%	24	30.0%	20	25.0%
H13	In an effort to attain authenticity, I purposefully adopt a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric (male) notion of entrepreneurship	28	35.0%	12	15.0%	15	18.8%	25	31.3%

Descriptive statistics of female identity									
H14	I reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power in my business	31	38.8%	11	13.8%	13	16.3%	25	31.3%
H15	Contextually different situations require different behaviours and I sometime experience internal conflict in trying to balance these different behaviours	37	46.3%	10	12.5%	12	15.0%	21	26.3%
H16	I have a positive association with entrepreneurship and believe that I am capable of being an entrepreneur	2	2.5%	6	7.5%	8	10.0%	64	80.0%
H17	The notion of entrepreneurship aligns well with my occupational self-concept in terms of my beliefs and feelings about myself in a working context	2	2.5%	3	3.8%	10	12.5%	65	81.3%
H18	I sometimes experience imposter phenomenon, which impacts negatively on my business growth goals	28	35.0%	9	11.3%	20	25.0%	23	28.8%
H19	I identify strongly with my business and derive great satisfaction, fulfilment and joy from my business	2	2.5%	4	5.0%	4	5.0%	70	87.5%

Addendum 6.11: Descriptive statistics of entrepreneurial journey

Descriptive statistics of entrepreneurial journey									
Scale item		Strongly disagree / Disagree		Disagree somewhat		Agree somewhat		Agree / Strongly agree	
f=frequency %=percentage		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I1	I had some reservations about starting a business	27	33.8%	4	5.0%	27	33.8%	22	27.5%
I2	My partners and core team are confident within their respective roles in the organisation	5	9.3%	4	7.4%	10	18.5%	35	64.8%
I3	I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner within myself	46	57.5%	6	7.5%	15	18.8%	13	16.3%
I4	I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner by others	41	51.3%	8	10.0%	12	15.0%	19	23.8%
I5	Stereotypical treatment of women in the business world sometimes affects my business negatively	38	47.5%	9	11.3%	18	22.5%	15	18.8%
I6	The views held by society on the traditional roles of women impact negatively on my ability to run my business	49	61.3%	12	15.0%	12	15.0%	7	8.8%
I7	I found / find it difficult to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy, given the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship	48	60.0%	11	13.8%	13	16.3%	8	10.0%
I8	I feel that I am afforded the same business opportunities as my male counterparts	18	22.5%	15	18.8%	22	27.5%	25	31.3%
I9	Specific role players, such as financial institutions, are biased towards male entrepreneurs	23	28.8%	19	23.8%	20	25.0%	18	22.5%
I10	I sometimes doubt myself and therefore I intentionally limit my venture growth	29	36.3%	6	7.5%	21	26.3%	24	30.0%
I11	There are sector-specific gender perceptions in my industry, which I need to be aware of and navigate in order to run my business	27	33.8%	10	12.5%	15	18.8%	28	35.0%

Addendum 6.12: Descriptive statistics of entrepreneurial development

Descriptive statistics of entrepreneurial development									
Scale item		Strongly disagree / Disagree		Disagree somewhat		Agree somewhat		Agree / Strongly agree	
f=frequency %=percentage		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
J1	Women are seen as entrepreneurial role models	15	18.8%	7	8.8%	17	21.3%	41	51.3%
J2	Entrepreneurship education has a role to play in supporting women to identify with being entrepreneurs	4	5.0%	1	1.3%	8	10.0%	67	83.8%
J3	Tailored programmes to suit the diverse needs of women could advance female entrepreneurship	3	3.8%	1	1.3%	9	11.3%	67	83.8%

Addendum 6.13: Factor analysis of identity constructs

Factor analysis of identity constructs		
Items	Context	Social Identity
G4 I currently have strong networks and belong to groups, which is influencing how my business evolves	0.809	
G7 I have the necessary emotional support from family, friends and colleagues to develop a successful venture	0.806	
G1 My business-related experience, in terms of industries in which I worked, the number of years of experience, the roles that I fulfilled, etc. positioned me well to start a business	0.593	
G5 Being part of a social group of peers influences my comfort and confidence levels, as female entrepreneur	0.507	-0.346
G3 Having strong networks and belonging to groups influenced my decision to start a business		-0.860
G2 I had strong networks and belonged to groups (formal / informal) when I initiated my business		-0.750
G6 My cultural background makes it difficult for me to earn respect in my business community		-0.691
Cronbach's Alpha	0.660	0.700
Eigenvalue	2.648	1.433
KMO		0.624
Bartlett's approximate Chi-Square		143.484

Addendum 6.14: Factor analysis of female identity

Factor analysis of female identity					
Items	Identity Work	Con-structs	Self-identity	Authenticity Dissonance Intersection	Roles and Balancing Demands
H8 My role association shifted over time, as my business evolved	0.824		0.317		
H6 I sometimes need to neglect my business responsibility to take care of family matters	0.802				
H7 When I started my business, I identified more strongly with being a woman, wife/partner or mother, rather than being an entrepreneur	0.747				
H5 I sometimes struggle to balance work and home duties	0.662				-0.346
H3 My role in the family influenced how my business evolved over time	0.607		-0.474		
H18 I sometimes experience imposter phenomenon, which impacts negatively on my business growth goals	0.336			-0.320	
H17 The notion of entrepreneurship aligns well with my occupational self-concept in terms of my beliefs and feelings about myself in a working context		0.880			
H19 I identify strongly with my business and derive great satisfaction, fulfilment and joy from my business		0.870			
H1 I am confident in my role as an entrepreneur		0.865			
H16 I have a positive entrepreneurship association, as a result of public role models and a perceived positive entrepreneurship social norm, and believe that I am capable of being an entrepreneur		0.787			
H2 I experienced emotional support from my family to start my business		0.474	-0.324	0.297	-0.311
H9 I currently identify most strongly with being an entrepreneur or business owner, rather than with being a woman, wife/partner or mother			0.832		

Factor analysis of female identity					
Items	Identity Work	Con-structs	Self-identity	Authenticity Dissonance Intersection	Roles and Balancing Demands
H14 I reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power in my business				-0.791	
H10 I sometimes need to adopt male stereotypical behaviour in order to be taken seriously or to get things done				-0.654	-0.491
H4 Because I am a woman, people sometimes question my abilities			-0.432	-0.611	
H15 Contextually different situations require different behaviours and I sometime experience internal conflict in trying to balance these different behaviours				-0.593	
H13 In an effort to attain authenticity, I purposefully adopt a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship					-0.846
H12 It is challenging to satisfy demands of conflicting social identities to legitimise my roles as mother and/or wife/partner and entrepreneur	0.396				-0.537
H11 As a female entrepreneur, I need to accommodate opposing responsibilities while at the same time, managing my business	0.321				-0.527
Cronbach's Alpha	0.835	0.812		0.767	0.723
Eigenvalue	5.921	3.102	1.636	1.243	1.165
KMO	0.808				
Bartlett's approximate Chi-Square	710.236				

Addendum 6.15: Factor analysis of entrepreneurial journey

Factor analysis of entrepreneurial journey		
Items	Gendered Representation	Business Aspirations and Success
I5 Stereotypical treatment of women in the business world sometimes affects my business negatively	0.854	
I7 I found / find it difficult to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy, given the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship	0.852	
I4 I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of me being a business owner	0.811	
I6 The views held by society on the traditional roles of women impact negatively on my ability to run my business	0.809	
I3 I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner	0.751	
I9 Specific role players, such as financial institutions, are biased towards male entrepreneurs	0.648	
I11 There are sector-specific gender perceptions in my industry, which I need to be aware of and navigate in order to run my business	0.623	
I8 I feel that I am afforded the same business opportunities as my male counterparts	-0.593	0.646
I10 I sometimes doubt myself and therefore I intentionally limit my business growth		0.639
I1 I had some reservations about starting a business		0.526
I2 My partners and core team are confident within their respective roles in the organisation		0.449
Cronbach's Alpha	0.879	0.282
Eigenvalue	4.714	1.283
KMO		0.832
Bartlett's Approx. Chi-Square		240.593

Addendum 6.16: Submission of Article 4

International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research

International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research - Author update



International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>
To ● Leonie Greyling; ○ Verona Leendertz

28-Jan-2023

Dear Author(s),

It is a pleasure to inform you that your manuscript titled The journey to becoming: an analogy of female founders' entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations (IJEBr-01-2023-0051) has passed initial screening and is now awaiting reviewer invitation.

The manuscript was submitted by Mrs. Leonie Greyling with you listed as a co-author.

As you are listed as a co-author, if you have not already done so please log in to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijebr> and check that your account details are complete and correct, these details will be used should the paper be accepted for publication.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Paul Jones

Editor, International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research

Synopsis, conclusions and guiding
framework for female entrepreneurial
identity development in South Africa and
recommendations for future research

CHAPTER 7

SYNOPSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDING FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the study was to explore how females' entrepreneurship identity may be unlocked or shaped to bring about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating businesses, which are scalable, sustainable, and which can make a significant contribution to the South African economy, with the aid of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity.

The chosen methodology for the study is detailed in each of the papers, with an explanation of the sample selection and -size, as well as the design, format and layout of the respective interview schedules for the qualitative phase, including the questionnaire, which was developed for the quantitative phase of the sequential equal status research design and methodology, which was executed to address the objectives of the research. Furthermore, the statistical methods utilised to answer the research questions and hypotheses, as well as subsequent decision-making, are explained in Chapter 1, but also addressed in each of the relevant papers.

This chapter provides a synopsis of the study to reflect on the primary and secondary objectives and synthesises the findings of the qualitative study (Papers 1, 2 and 3) and the quantitative study (Paper 4). The triangulation of the data from the SLR, the qualitative interviews with successful female Dutch and South African entrepreneurs, and the questionnaire distributed to Dutch and South African female entrepreneurs facilitated the creation of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa. Additionally, this chapter provides a synopsis of the important components of the guiding framework, addresses the limitations of the research, and provides recommendations for future research endeavours.

7.2. SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

This section reflects on the research design and methodologies and provides a synopsis of the attainment of the primary and secondary objectives of the study, as set out in Chapter 1.

7.2.1. Sequential equal status research design and methodology

As a mechanism for understanding the drivers of female entrepreneurship identity development and its contribution to the creation of value-creating businesses, an international study was undertaken to explore the development of female entrepreneurship identity in South Africa and the Netherlands, with the intention of identifying the replicable steps in developing and maintaining higher-level female entrepreneurship identity, which may be implemented in South Africa. A sequential equal status research design and methodology were used to address the objectives of this research, which was executed in two phases (interpretivist and structuralist).

The research commenced with qualitative research (interpretivist) incorporating an SLR to identify dominant authors and principles in the development of female entrepreneurial identity. The SLR resulted in a conceptual model, which formed the basis of the constructs for conducting semi-structured interviews with successful South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs to develop an understanding of the social phenomena of female entrepreneurial identity.

The qualitative study provided the constructs for the development of an objective, structured questionnaire to determine female founders' attitudes, opinions, behaviours and characteristics. To ensure standardisation and reliability of the questionnaire, it was distributed as a self-administered questionnaire, so that all respondents were asked precisely the same questions, in an identical format, and with responses recorded in a uniform manner. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested by two individuals with extensive business management and development experience. This step aided in avoiding and reducing data collection errors and ambiguous questions, while further improving the reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was then shared with potential respondents for participation on a voluntary basis, with no incentive for participation. Data collection, organising and interpretation to reveal similarities and differences within female entrepreneurs' socio-

cultural contexts and how this influences the development of entrepreneurial identity, and consequently, their business choices, concluded this phase of the study.

As the final phase, triangulation of the findings and results was undertaken as input into the development of a guiding framework to unlock or shape the development of female entrepreneurial identity in South Africa.

7.2.2. Study objectives

The primary objective of the study was to develop a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development within a South African context.

The primary objective of the research was achieved through the execution of a sequential equal status research design and methodological approach, starting with an SLR and semi-structured interviews with successful Dutch and South African female entrepreneurs, and the distribution of self-administered questionnaires to Dutch and South African female entrepreneurs at any stage of business development.

The first secondary objective of the study was achieved by conducting an SLR:

- Review the literature on female entrepreneurial identity development
- Review the literature on business aspirations
- Review the literature on the influence of female entrepreneurial identity on the nature and development of female-owned businesses.

The methodology for designing and conducting the SLR, as a component of the first phase of the study, together with the findings and implications, formed part of Paper 2.

The remainder of the secondary objectives of the study was achieved by conducting semi-structured interviews with successful Dutch and South African female entrepreneurs and collecting quantitative data from Dutch and South African female entrepreneurs at any stage of business development:

Identity constructs

- Develop a profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographic and business dynamics.
- Determine the role of cultural background, exposure to entrepreneurship, and emotional support in female founders' ability to develop a successful venture.
- Ascertain the alignment between industry experience, networks and group belonging with female founders' ability to start and develop a successful business.

Female identity

- Ascertain female founders' entrepreneurial identity in the eyes of other people.
- Ascertain the influence of female founders' role in family, stereotypical views, the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship and conflicting responsibilities on business evolution.
- Determine the alignment between female founders' identification with the business and occupational self-concept.
- Determine the relationship between the various factors and female entrepreneurial identity.

Entrepreneurial journey

- Ascertain women's entrepreneurial journey, including motivation for starting the business, identification of the business concept and business aspirations.
- Determine female founders' definition of success and the entrepreneurial characteristics and elements required for successful business initiation and development.
- Determine female founders' development of confidence.

Entrepreneurial development

- Determine female founders' participation in formalised business development programmes and the influence thereof on business evolution.

The methodology for conducting the semi-structured interviews, and the findings and implications were discussed in Paper 3, while the questionnaire design, administration and results were discussed in Paper 4.

7.3. KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The key findings and implications of the respective phases of the study (included in Chapter 1) are synthesised here for reader convenience:

Paper 1: *I am not one and simple, but complex and many: The intersection of female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations*

Objective: This paper sought to synthesise social identity theory and female entrepreneurs' aspirations when engaging in a process of business concept exploration, with the focus being on female founders' identities within the South African context. The study was initiated on the understanding that most entrepreneurs start a business to generate personal profits or achieve autonomy, rather than aiming to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth.

Findings: The study revealed that the intersection of social identity and aspirations influences new venture exploration choices, and that female entrepreneurs who have been in business for a longer period appear to have a stronger entrepreneurial identity and operate higher-growth potential businesses than those who very recently initiated a venture. Conversely, start-ups' aspirations appear to be less ambitious, with their venture choices often being lifestyle businesses, with less potential for sustainability and scalability. The study further found that a significant number of female founders view their businesses as a catalyst for community development and social change, which is particularly evident among start-up entrepreneurs.

Implications: Based on the findings, enterprise development programmes for South African female business owners should be geared to support women to develop higher levels of entrepreneurial identity, as an input into higher business aspirations. Furthermore, enterprise development programmes should also be designed to support both women with a purely economic interest, as well as those who seek to empower and support a particular community where both parties can benefit from the venture, while still working towards developing a profitable business.

Paper 2: *Female entrepreneurial identity development: A systematic literature review*

Objective: An SLR was conducted to explore published research on female entrepreneurial identity, by reviewing the literature on female entrepreneurial identity, business aspirations, female entrepreneurial identity construction and maintenance, as well as the influence of female entrepreneurial identity on the nature and development of female-owned businesses.

Findings: The SLR found that identity development is a dynamic, iterative process of 'becoming', with a complex interaction between self- and social constructs, which deeply impacts identity authenticity or dissonance and the approaches that are adopted to achieve an appropriate intersection between feminism and entrepreneurial identity. Inevitably, women need to engage in specific, possibly more intensive, forms of identity work to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy and salience than their male counterparts.

Implications: Based on the findings of the SLR, a literature-based conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity was developed, which contributes to the understanding of female entrepreneurial identity, with potential application for entrepreneurial development initiatives, educational institutions, and policy-makers.

Paper 3: *Our stories may be singular, but our destination is shared: The intersection between female founders' social entrepreneurial identity and new venture aspirations*

Objective: This paper explored the intersection between social identity and business aspirations of successful female entrepreneurs within two contexts, namely South Africa, as a developing country, and the Netherlands, as a developed country.

Findings: The overall findings support the notion that, while aspirations are typically associated with the androcentric notion of high-growth entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurs may seek other, non-monetary aspirations. Similar to Paper 1, the study found that the majority of the successful female entrepreneurs in the sample seek to establish a strong and successful business (Darwinian identity). However, the balance is equally distributed between those whose primary goal is to develop a business to support a group of like-minded individuals (communitarian identity) and those who demonstrate a hybrid Darwinian-communitarian identity. Additionally, while the findings demonstrate that the contexts of the two groups of women are quite different, there is a close correlation between their social identities and business aspirations.

Finally, the four overarching themes that emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed that social entrepreneurial identity influences business aspirations.

Implications: The findings support those of Paper 1 that enterprise development programmes should be geared to support both women with a purely economic interest, as well as those who seek to empower and support a particular community, while also supporting women to develop higher levels of social entrepreneurial identity, as an input into higher business aspirations. Furthermore, the four overarching themes that emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, namely identity constructs, female identity, entrepreneurial journey and entrepreneurial development, correlate with the findings of the SLR and provide a conceptual framework for female entrepreneurial identity development.

Paper 4: *The journey to becoming: An analogy of female founders' entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success*

Objective: This paper considered the relationship between entrepreneurial identity and female founders' business aspirations and success. The questionnaire yielded Dutch and South African female founders' demographics, business dynamics, start-up motivations, and business aspirations when engaging in a process of new venture development.

Results: The respondents were predominantly well-educated, mature women who operate predominantly in the service, retail and hospitality sectors. When considering respondents' business aspirations and the definition of success, the study revealed that the women are largely motivated by independence and work-life balance, rather than pursuing high-growth entrepreneurship and aggressive funding goals. These results affirm the findings of Papers 1 and 3 that non-economic factors are of importance to women. The study further found that the inherent masculinity of the entrepreneurial domain has an influence on female entrepreneurs' identity work and that they experience conflict when navigating between professional and authoritarian entrepreneurial masculinities and their femininity. Linked to this are female founders' role associations (being a woman, wife/partner, mother or entrepreneur), experiencing imposter syndrome and having to balance work-home duties, which result in respondents experiencing dissonance and having to do more identity work to attain authenticity. The study also revealed that respondents' confidence in their

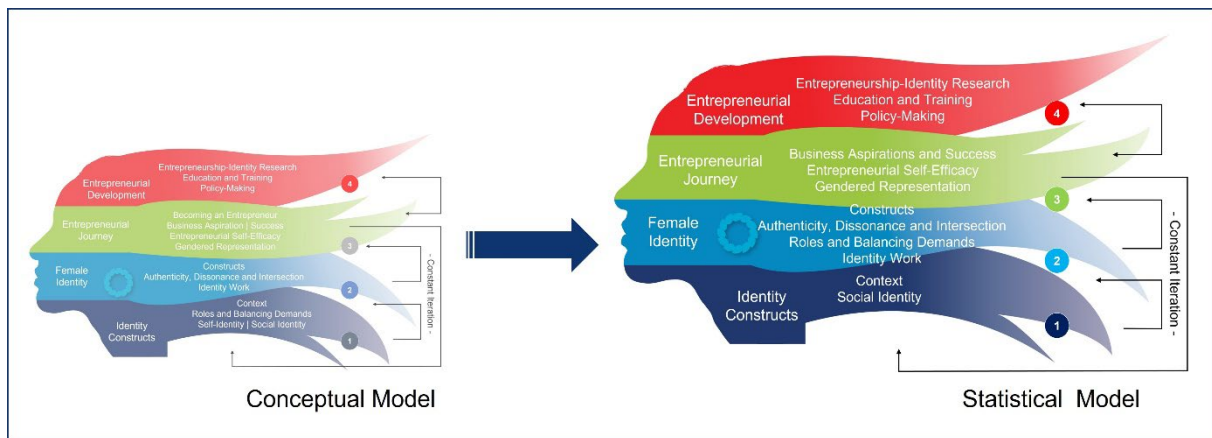
entrepreneurial abilities is influenced by their context and that, when female founders' confidence in their entrepreneurial role and occupational self-concept increases, so does their entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The study found that a stronger social identity contributes to women experiencing increased entrepreneurial authenticity, while belonging to groups and having strong networks and business-related industry experience positively influence female founders' entrepreneurial confidence, identifying with the business, and consequently, their occupational self-concept. Finally, the study highlights that, as identity work increases, so do business aspirations and success.

Implications: As the study demonstrates that female entrepreneurs' identity is intrinsically connected to their contexts, and consequently, their business aspirations, attention should be paid to context and the development of higher female entrepreneurial identity. Enterprise development programmes should include initiatives to support women with (i) navigating between professional and authoritarian entrepreneurial masculinities and their femininity, (ii) managing imposter syndrome and balancing work-home duties, (iii) developing a greater degree of entrepreneurial confidence, (iv) developing an increased occupational self-concept, (v) developing a stronger social identity, (vi) belonging to groups and having strong networks, and (vii) increasing identity work. These programmes should pay particular attention to supporting women with economic aspirations, as well as those who pursue non-economic factors, while also incorporating initiatives to support women who operate in male-dominated sectors.

7.4. TRIANGULATION OF THE FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The SLR resulted in the development of a conceptual model for female entrepreneurial identity, which was validated by means of a statistical model substantiated by the findings from the semi-structured interviews and the results of the questionnaire, as depicted in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Evolution of conceptual model into statistical model



Source: Own compilation

Using the different methods to approach the primary research question, namely the qualitative- and quantitative study, methodological triangulation was undertaken to ensure that the findings from the qualitative data were integrated with the results from the quantitative data. The conceptual model, which was developed through the systematic literature review process, was validated through peer coding and Cohen's Kappa, and developed into the validated statistical model, with the four overarching themes, namely (1) identity constructs, (2) female identity, (3) entrepreneurial journey, and (4) entrepreneurial development, remaining unchanged. However, the exploratory factor analysis, which was undertaken as a component of the statistical analysis of the quantitative study, brought about some changes in the categorisation of the content. The statistical model formed the foundation of the guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development, which is discussed in the next section.

7.5. GUIDING FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED THROUGH THE TRIANGULATION OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

The data derived from the SLR, the semi-structured interviews with seven successful female entrepreneurs within the Dutch and South African contexts, and the results of the self-administered questionnaire, which was distributed to 80 female entrepreneurs within the Dutch and South African contexts, was cross-validated by comparing the different sources and methods of data collection to identify recurring patterns and

themes. The quantitative results of the study enhanced generalisability, while the qualitative findings were helpful in explaining context, with the results of the different methods converging and supporting one another, resulting in triangulation (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 433).

The triangulation resulted in the development of the guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa, illustrated in Table 7.1. The respective themes and key initiatives are unpacked in greater detail in Table 7.1, but to provide some context, a brief synopsis of the key elements of the guiding framework, structured according to the four overarching themes, is also provided.

Table 7.1: Guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa

Theme	Objectives
Identity constructs <i>The respective elements of an individual's being that collectively play a role in the development of personal identity</i>	
Context	Leverage industry experience to identify entrepreneurial opportunities
	Be aware of the entrepreneurial resources provided within your context
	Develop a strong home- and entrepreneurial support network
Social identity	Social orientation and self-worth - How do I socially compare to others within a particular group? - Which social groups do I wish to be associated with? - I am because we are: What is my role?
	Optimising groups - The 'individual within the group': Demographics and belief affiliations - The 'group within the woman': Group member vs. group participant - Group belonging: Establishing the rules of engagement
	Master social identities and maintain social responsibilities
	Develop a strong social identity through groups and networks
Female identity <i>Entrepreneurial identity from a woman's perspective</i>	
Constructs	Develop an entrepreneurial mindset
	Develop a 'can-do' attitude
Entrepreneurial authenticity, dissonance and intersection	Align occupational self-concept with being an entrepreneur
	Navigate imposter syndrome and overcome self-doubt
	Navigate gender bias: have a voice and get a seat at the table
	Manage femininity vs. professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect
	Claim entrepreneurial legitimacy
Roles and balancing demands	Understand the demands of entrepreneurship and identify techniques to fulfil different role expectations
	Find a balance that works uniquely for you: Navigate traditional social roles and structures
	Derive satisfaction and joy from being a successful entrepreneur to bring about abundant success in other roles
	Be a social chameleon: show up in each role that you fulfil
Identity work	Who am I and who do I want to become?
	Evaluate own competencies and personal traits against those required to become a successful entrepreneur
	Self-reflection and self-awareness
	Engage in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising identity to obtain a sense of coherence and distinctiveness

Theme	Objectives
Entrepreneurial journey <i>An individual's association with being an entrepreneur and identifying a business opportunity for which she has specific aspirations</i>	
Business aspirations and success	Define business motivation and concept choices: What do you really want to achieve from your entrepreneurial endeavours?
	Define business aspirations and primary goals: Economic interest vs. social motives vs. advancing a political cause vs a combination of social entrepreneurial identities
	Balance economic interests with non-monetary expectations
	Define business success parameters
	Industry connection: Develop awareness of industries characterised by small firms, low profit margins and vulnerability to market disruptions and economic shocks vs. those that offer high growth potential
	The deliberate choice of venture growth
	Develop a growth orientation for greater satisfaction, fulfilment and joy
	Internalise success to upshift ambitions
	Presenting yourself and your business to attain unquestionable power
	Partnership or solo entrepreneurship? Understand the potential role of equity partners in growing a sustainable business
	Get out of your comfort zone: Do what you have never done before
	Whom do I wish to emulate? Exposure to female entrepreneurial role models
Entrepreneurial self-efficacy	Greater self-confidence for increased self-efficacy
	Optimism as a confidence-builder
	Develop big-picture thinking
	Recognise and celebrate successes
	Be decisive and take calculated risks
	Develop tenacity and endurance
	Manage fear of failure
	Strategies to respond to adversity
	Getting back up when you fail
	Empowerment for a strong, independent team
	Delegating effectively
Gendered representation	Recognise gender relevance
	Awareness of sector-specific gender perceptions
	Strategies for addressing ascribed femininity and possible masculinity of your chosen sector
	Doing gender' or 'redoing gender' to navigate gender differences

Theme	Objectives
Entrepreneurial development <i>Improving the skillset and knowledge of entrepreneurs, supported by sound policies and research</i>	
Entrepreneurship-identity research	Explore the issue of what women believe to be necessary to pursue an entrepreneurial venture
	Explore female entrepreneurs' concern with stereotyping related to maternity and their roles as mothers (as opposed to focusing on the relationship between male and female stereotypes)
	Develop an understanding of the different subgroups of female entrepreneurs to tailor programmes to suit their heterogeneous needs - The multifaceted needs of older female entrepreneurs - Those who purely have economic interests vs. those who seek to empower and support a particular community vs. those who have a hybrid economic-community interest
Education and training	Align programmes with industry-focus
	Tailored support for women operating in male-dominated industries
	Tailored programmes geared to support both women with a purely economic interest, as well as those who seek to empower and support a particular community
Policy-making	Create mechanisms to make entrepreneurial resources available and visible, publicise entrepreneurial successes, increase the diversity of opportunities, and avoid policies that create real or perceived obstacles
	Encourage discussions of gender conceptions and questioning of dominant discourses, while considering the appropriate way of effecting entrepreneurship, redefining conventional and masculine notions of the entrepreneurial persona and the specific contexts and identities of female entrepreneurs
	Devise strategies to address systemic South African gender inequalities
	Devise strategies to address the 'being poor' mindset in South Africa to bring about a shift in mindset from settling for small lifestyle businesses to aspiring to develop impactful businesses
	Devise strategies to address persistent negative stereotypes which growth-oriented women face when seeking growth financing and other business expansion resources
	Implement policies to support ambitious female entrepreneurs, particularly in technology-driven companies (as the biggest and fastest growing sector)
	Implement policies to facilitate access to assets, capital and business networks for female entrepreneurs
	Implement policies to promote international networks and opportunities for female entrepreneurs to demonstrate their latent capabilities, by facilitating and providing education and resources to become both national and international leaders
	Showcase public female entrepreneurial role models to develop a perceived positive female entrepreneurship social norm
	Recognise women's individual attributes and professional qualities to promote the female entrepreneurial vocational self-concept
	Devise strategies to remove social and institutional gender barriers
	Encourage and facilitate networking

Source: Own compilation

7.5.1. Identity constructs

Within the context of the study, *identity constructs* relate to the respective elements of an individual's being, which collectively play a role in the development of personal identity.

Context: The findings of the study demonstrate that leveraging industry experience to identify entrepreneurial opportunities and being aware of the business development resources that are available, are important antecedents for developing a successful business, while it is crucial to have strong home- and entrepreneurial support networks that contribute to female entrepreneurs' ability to focus their attention on business development.

Social identity: Since organisations are essentially social structures, having a strong social orientation and self-worth, coupled with a clear concept of the important role that group membership and participation might play in developing a venture, could contribute substantially to developing a strong social identity, and consequently, business success. Naturally, women need to master their social identities and maintain their social responsibilities, as an inherent component of their entrepreneurial role.

7.5.2. Female identity

The elements that collectively play a role in females' entrepreneurial identity were considered from a gender perspective to identify the core components of female identity.

Constructs: Combining an entrepreneurial mindset and a positive attitude towards dealing with challenges is an important element of a woman's entrepreneurial identity.

Entrepreneurial authenticity, dissonance and intersection: The dynamic effect of gender constraints, coupled with the complexity of fulfilling various, often conflicting, roles result in women experiencing entrepreneurial dissonance. Aligning occupation self-concept with being an entrepreneur and learning to navigate the turbulent landscape of imposter syndrome will contribute to attaining entrepreneurial authenticity. In addition, having strategies to negotiate gender bias, and managing the paradoxical nature of femininity versus authoritarian masculinities, can help women to construct an identity of respect, while claiming entrepreneurial legitimacy.

Roles and balancing demands: The intersection between different roles and identities can be conflicting and challenging to manage, as female entrepreneurs are required to accommodate opposing responsibilities. Therefore, it is important for women to understand the demands of entrepreneurship and to identify techniques to fulfil different role expectations, while finding a balance that works uniquely for her and her family. Learning to derive satisfaction and joy from being a successful entrepreneur, while being fully present in each of her respective roles, could lead to greater success in other roles (for example, being a good entrepreneur makes her a better mother, as observed by one of the Dutch interviewees).

Identity work: As a female entrepreneur, identity work entails knowing who she is and whom she wants to become. Evaluating her competencies and personal traits against those required to become a successful entrepreneur, while doing self-reflection and being self-aware, are important components of doing identity work. Since there is constant interaction with her environment and subsequently, the evolution of her identity, a female entrepreneur must engage in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising her entrepreneurial identity to attain a sense of coherence and distinctiveness.

7.5.3. Entrepreneurial journey

An individual's entrepreneurial journey starts when she associates with being an entrepreneur and identifies a business opportunity for which she has specific aspirations.

Business aspirations and success: Knowing what a woman really wants to achieve from her entrepreneurial endeavours and having a clear delineation between having economic interests (do I aim to build a successful business?) or social motives (do I wish to support a particular community?), coupled with strategies to balance economic interests with non-monetary expectations and a clear sense of her business success parameters are precursors to business success. Within the context of women being overrepresented in industries characterised by small firms, low profit margins and vulnerability to market disruptions, it is important to develop awareness of industry attributes. Making a deliberate decision to pursue venture growth and to develop a growth orientation could contribute not only to greater business success, but also bring

about greater satisfaction, fulfilment and joy. However, to upshift ambitions, women need to internalise their success. An important initial decision – or possible future decision – is the choice between venturing into business with a partner/s or being a solo entrepreneur. For some women, getting out of their comfort zone and doing what she has never done before could be a life- and business-changing event, while having a female entrepreneurial role model could be a catalyst for more ambitious business aspirations and success.

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy: Naturally, no venture can succeed without a woman believing in her capacity to execute the requisite behaviours to be an accomplished entrepreneur. Consequently, behaviours such as being optimistic, self-confident, decisive, taking calculated risks and having strategies to respond to adversity are crucial to entrepreneurial success. To truly elevate a business, a female entrepreneur must have a strong, empowered team to whom she delegates effectively.

Gendered representation: Since entrepreneurship is still a male-dominated domain, female entrepreneurs must recognise the relevance of gender and be aware of sector-specific gender perceptions. Having strategies for addressing ascribed femininity and the possible masculinity of her chosen sector, together with a blueprint for navigating gender differences, could mitigate the potential negative effects of the gendered nature of entrepreneurship.

7.5.4. Entrepreneurial development

Entrepreneurial development is aimed at improving the skillset and knowledge of female entrepreneurs, supported by sound policies and research.

Entrepreneurship-identity research: A number of specific entrepreneurial identity research dimensions were identified as an input into enhancing female entrepreneurship support initiatives. Notably, these relate to exploring what women believe to be necessary to pursue an entrepreneurial venture, better understanding female entrepreneurs' concern with stereotyping relating to maternity and their roles as mothers, and developing a better understanding of the different subgroups of female entrepreneurs to tailor programmes to suit their heterogeneous needs.

Education and training: The study found that aligning programmes with an industry focus and designing support initiatives for women operating in male industries, as well

as those who have a purely economic interest versus those who also seek to empower and support a particular community, is of importance within the South African context.

Policy-making: There is scope for policy-making to make a significant contribution to supporting the development of a higher level of female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa, by, among others, encouraging discussions of gender conceptions and questioning dominant discourses, devising strategies to address systemic gender inequalities and the 'poor mindset', which result in women settling for small lifestyle businesses rather than pursuing high-growth potential ventures. Furthermore, implementing policies to support ambitious female entrepreneurs in fast-growing sectors, while facilitating access to assets, capital and business networks, could lead to a shift in aspirations. Encouraging and facilitating networking, showcasing female entrepreneurial role models and recognising women's individual attributes and qualities to promote the female entrepreneurial vocational self-concept will enrich the female entrepreneurial ecosystem.

7.5.5. Proposed mechanisms for implementing the guiding framework

Mechanisms for implementing the guiding framework could include the following:

Business training: Business training could help female entrepreneurs with the development of competencies (Quach *et al.*, 2020: 10), such as understanding the demands of entrepreneurship and identifying techniques to fulfil different role expectations, finding a balance that works uniquely for the entrepreneur to navigate traditional social roles and structures, the development of a strong team, and delegating effectively.

Case studies of role models: Scrutinising case studies of entrepreneurial role models could assist female entrepreneurs when identifying values, behaviours and business approaches that they could learn from and emulate, to identify growth opportunities for themselves and their businesses.

Coaching: An interpersonal relationship between a coach and a female entrepreneur could serve as a support structure that leads to learning and the development of potential and the entrepreneur ultimately 'growing as a person' and widening her personal horizons (Audet and Couteret, 2012: 516). This method of learning could assist with managing the femininity-authoritarian masculinities paradox, defining who

an entrepreneur is, and who she wishes to become, and claiming entrepreneurial legitimacy.

Digital tools: Digital tools, such as online resource platforms, quizzes and entrepreneurial personality profiling could be utilised for female entrepreneurs to access business development resources, to evaluate their competencies and personal traits against those required to become a successful entrepreneur, and to market themselves and their business.

Mentorship: Making use of mentors who share their insight, grounded in their own personal experiences (Bell and Bell, 2016: 7-14), could be beneficial for female entrepreneurs in aspects such as developing an entrepreneurial mindset, developing a 'can-do' attitude, developing greater self-confidence, managing fear of failure, self-reflection and self-awareness. Matching an experienced local entrepreneur with a female entrepreneur could result in a deeper level of personalised support and growth.

Networking: Both face-to-face and virtual networking could be beneficial for female entrepreneurs to develop a support network, participate in social- and industry groups, and identifying potential business opportunities.

7.6. STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS

Female entrepreneurship is widely considered to be an engine for economic growth and social change, with scholars almost unanimously agreeing that entrepreneurial identity is a key input into entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions. However, focused female entrepreneurship identity research is still fragmented and at an exploratory stage, with research on female entrepreneurs' business aspirations being limited. Moreover, the body of research on the intersection between female entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations is even sparser. To address this gap, the study intended to ascertain how the development of higher levels of female entrepreneurial identity may contribute to a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood to sustainable, scalable female-owned businesses, with the study culminating in the development of a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development.

The SLR, explicated in Paper 2, provides an in-depth overview of female entrepreneurial identity and the **conceptual model for the development of female entrepreneurial identity development**, which resulted from the SLR, highlights the

intersection between identity constructs, female identity, entrepreneurial journey and entrepreneurial development. Consequently, the study enhances knowledge on female entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations by identifying the factors that contribute to the development of female entrepreneurial development and by explicating how these factors influence business aspirations.

The findings of the semi-structured interviews, presented in Paper 3, draw attention to women's non-monetary entrepreneurial motivations and highlight the influence of social entrepreneurial identity on business aspirations. Additionally, the findings reveal that, even though the Dutch and South African contexts are quite different, their social identities and business aspirations are very similar. As a result, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on female entrepreneurs' motivations, social entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations, which provide meaningful input into the design and implementation of enterprise development programmes for women.

The **custom-designed questionnaire**, utilised for the quantitative study, provides a usable instrument to determine how female founders' entrepreneurial identity evolves and how their identities intersect with their business aspirations and success. Therefore, it contributes significantly to the field of entrepreneurial identity research.

The results of the survey questionnaires contribute to the body of knowledge on the inherent relationship between female entrepreneurs' identity and their contexts and consequently, their new business aspirations, while highlighting the need for enterprise development programmes to include initiatives to support women with developing entrepreneurial authenticity and legitimacy. In addition to highlighting the need to incorporate initiatives to support women who operate in male-dominated sectors, the quantitative study further highlights that particular attention should be paid to supporting women with economic aspirations, as well as those who pursue non-economic factors, thereby further contributing to the body of knowledge on female entrepreneurship.

The **statistical model for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa** provides a snapshot of the themes and content for female entrepreneurial identity development, with the model improving explanations, generating discourse and providing a visual representation of abstract concepts.

Triangulation of the qualitative- and quantitative studies resulted in the development of the **guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development**, which

can aid female entrepreneurship development programme designers to incorporate interventions for the development of higher levels of female entrepreneurial identity development, which may bring about a shift from small, livelihood to sustainable, scalable businesses. As a final contribution, the study could aid the development of policies aimed at supporting female entrepreneurship within the South African context.

7.7. STUDY LIMITATIONS

As the study was limited to South African and Dutch female entrepreneurs, the findings are not generalisable to female entrepreneurs within other contexts and while the guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa has the potential to form the basis for similar frameworks within other contexts, care should be taken to consider local context and to make the necessary adjustments.

The Covid-19 pandemic posed numerous restrictions and limitations, such as the inability to engage directly at networking events (conferences, for instance), which made it challenging to identify potential participants and respondents, while restrictions on face-to-face interviews might have played a role in establishing rapport and trust with the study participants.

Both the interviews and the questionnaires were completed at a specific point in time. Future longitudinal studies may provide valuable information regarding the evolvement of female entrepreneurs' identity over an extended time period.

7.8. FUTURE RESEARCH

Within the South African context, entrepreneurial identity research should incorporate deeper exploration of women who seek to empower specific communities, rather than having economic interests, as well as those who have a dual motivation of pursuing economic interests and empowering communities.

Based on the findings of the SLR, scholastic work has over-emphasised sex differences, with female entrepreneurial identity having manifested itself as a double-edged sword as a consequence of the gender-blind body of literature, discriminatory ontology and female entrepreneurship research, which might encourage gender

inequality or render masculinity invisible. Consequently, opportunities for new conceptual and empirical entrepreneurial identity work exist.

Future avenues for research also include exploring what women believe to be necessary to pursue an entrepreneurial venture, female entrepreneurs' concern with stereotyping relating to maternity and their roles as mothers and the different subgroups of female entrepreneurs as input into tailoring programmes to suit their heterogenous needs.

7.9. REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

Through my work with female entrepreneurs, I became increasingly aware that, despite their enormous potential, the majority of women-owned firms remain micro-businesses. This both surprised and perplexed me and I felt drawn to understanding the intricacies of the new venture development process. I started questioning women's business aspirations and the reasons for the sub-optimal development of female-owned businesses. A pivotal point was realising that founders' identities shape the market opportunities they pursue. So, I became intrigued with taking a deep-dive into the relationship between female entrepreneurial identity and women's business aspirations. This prompted me to embark on a PhD, but initially, I struggled with finding a 'so what' for my study, as I truly wished for my research to have a practical application and positive impact on female entrepreneurship. My 'aha moment' came when I realised that developing a guiding framework for female entrepreneurial development could be a catalyst for bringing about a shift in aspirations from small, livelihood- to value-creating female-owned businesses.

I started the SLR with the knowledge that focused entrepreneurship identity research is rather limited. Nonetheless, I was surprised that only 26 research items specifically considered female entrepreneurial identity, with the relationship between female entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and success remaining largely unexplored and offering an immense opportunity for exploration. Finding that identity development is a dynamic, iterative process of 'becoming', with a complex interaction between self- and social constructs, opened my eyes to the fact that female entrepreneurs often experience internal dissonance and that they perpetually appear to be in a cycle of traversing the dichotomy between their ascribed femininity and the

inherent masculinity of entrepreneurship, in an effort to attain entrepreneurial authenticity. Drafting the corresponding SLR article proved to be a rather daunting task, and at times, I despaired that I would not be able to make sense of what appeared to be an immensely complex landscape. Despite this, and while I originally had no expectation of doing so, I was thrilled to be able to derive a conceptual model from the SLR, which served as guidance for the remainder of my study.

Conducting the interviews with the Dutch and South African successful female entrepreneurs brought me closer to understanding women's realities and yielded another surprising finding: While there are significant contextual differences between the two groups of women, their experiences as female entrepreneurs are very similar, with close correlations in their challenges, social identities and business aspirations. The narratives of the interviewees made for a very interesting, engaging experience when I drafted the article for the qualitative study.

Developing the customised questionnaire to explore the entrepreneurial identity and business aspirations and -success of a larger group of Dutch and South African female entrepreneurs was an absorbing process, with many iterations. Identifying women who were prepared to complete the questionnaire amid Covid-19-related challenges, with potential respondents who were experiencing survey fatigue, was no easy task. Although the statistical analysis was also challenging, the results yielded rich insights, which led to the development of the statistical model and finally, the guiding framework for female entrepreneurial identity development in South Africa.

As my journey progressed, the complexity of the study delighted and dismayed me in equal measures. At times, I felt adrift, with many delays, detours, discoveries, and what seemed to be insurmountable little mountains. Despite this, it felt good to be lost in the right direction and each step of the process brought me closer to my goal of understanding female entrepreneurs' journeys and how their identities are infused in their businesses.

The words of Dawud Wharnsby, which I stumbled across during my research, describe what is perhaps the most profound discovery of my journey: "*We must open up our hands, raise our palms up high to see, the mazes of our unique selves, end with similarity.*" At the heart of it, there is a deep similarity in women's entrepreneurial experiences, despite their unique contexts and challenges.

I can truthfully say that this journey has been an engaging learning experience, not only on my topic, but also who I became as an individual and researcher. Through the narratives of the women who participated in my study, I found my voice.

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Addendum 7.1: Secondary objectives aligned with qualitative- and quantitative study

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Entrepreneurial Development		
1 Develop a profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographics and business dynamics	20 Did you participate in a formalised business development programme/s when you were developing the business and if so, how did it influence your business decisions? 21 What role did the business development programme/s play in feeling supported and developing your competencies, as an entrepreneur (if applicable)?	E1 Please indicate whether you participated in a formalised business development programme/s when you were developing your business E2 Please indicate whether the formalised business development programme influenced how your business evolved J1 Women are seen as entrepreneurial role models J2 Entrepreneurship education has a role to play in supporting women to identify with being entrepreneurs J3 Tailored programmes to suit the diverse needs of women could advance female entrepreneurship

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Entrepreneurial Journey		
2 Ascertain women's entrepreneurial journey, including motivation for starting the business, identification of the business concept and business aspirations	4 In your view, what are the key elements and soft skills that are required to successfully initiate a business? 5 Did you experience any stumbling blocks in initiating and developing your business?	B1 What was your motivation for starting a business? B2 How would you describe your business aspirations? B3 In your view, what are the most important requirements for successfully initiating a business?
3 Determine female founders' definition of success and the entrepreneurial characteristics and elements required for successful business initiation and development	6 What do you consider to be the strongest indicators of business success – for example, financial performance, wealth generation, independence, social recognition, self-achievement, making a difference, etc.?	B4 In your view, what are the key characteristics which the founder/s should possess to successfully initiate and grow a business?
4 Ascertain the alignment between industry experience, networks and group belonging, with female founders' ability to start and develop a successful a business	8 Please describe your business-related industry experience (sector, years of experience, position/s, etc.)	B5 Please indicate the process which you followed to identify your business concept
6 Determine female founders' community involvement, exposure to entrepreneurship and development of confidence	9 Please give me an indication of your exposure to entrepreneurship – for instance, did you grow up in an entrepreneurial household, did any of your extended family members or close friends own a business or do you have a particular entrepreneurial role model?	B6 What constitutes success for you, in terms of being an entrepreneur?
8 Ascertain the influence of female founders' role in family, stereotypical views, the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship and conflicting responsibilities on business evolution		I1 I had some reservations about starting a business
9 Determine the alignment between female founders' identification with the business and occupational self-concept	10 What process did you follow in the early stages to identify and pursue the business opportunity?	I2 My partners and core team are confident within their respective roles in the organisation
10 Determine female founders' participation in formalised business development programmes and the influence thereof on business evolution	11 Did you have any particular reservations about starting a business? 13 Did you experience any uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner, either within yourself or by others and do you feel that you were afforded the same opportunities as your male counterparts?	I3 I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner within myself I4 I experienced uncertainties or resistance related to the male stereotypical view of being a business owner by others I5 Stereotypical treatment of women in the business world sometimes affects my business negatively

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Entrepreneurial Journey		
	14 Tell me a little about your confidence, as an entrepreneur, as well as those of your partners and your core team – how confident would you say you are in your roles? 15 What, in your view, contributed to your entrepreneurial confidence? 23 Tell us a little about your business growth goals – what do you envision, going forward?	16 The views held by society on the traditional roles of women impact negatively on my ability to run my business 17 I found/find it difficult to attain entrepreneurial legitimacy, given the masculine ethos of entrepreneurship 18 I feel that I am afforded the same business opportunities as my male counterparts 19 Specific role players, such as financial institutions, are biased towards male entrepreneurs 110 I sometimes doubt myself and therefore I intentionally limit my venture growth 111 There are sector-specific gender perceptions in my industry, which I need to be aware of and navigate to run my business

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Female Identity		
5 Determine the role of cultural background and emotional support in female founders' ability to develop a successful venture	11 Let's talk a little about <i>others'</i> perception of you – how did they predominantly see you, as your business evolved? For instance, did they / do they see you as a career orientated women who still fulfils social expectations or one who focusses on her business and neglects her family roles as wife and mother?	D1 Please indicate how other people initially saw you (during the early days of your business) D2 Please indicate how other people predominantly see you now H1 I am confident in my role as an entrepreneur H2 I experienced emotional support from my family to start my business
7 Ascertain female founders' entrepreneurial identity in the eyes of other people.	12 How did you experience emotional support from your family to start your business and how did your role in the family influence how your business evolved?	H3 My role in the family - for instance being a wife and / or mother - influenced how my business evolved over time H4 Because I am a woman, people sometimes question my abilities
	16 Which role do you currently most strongly identify with – for instance, entrepreneur or business owner, employee, woman, wife / partner or mother? What is the reason for this and did it shift at all over time, as you explored your business concept / developed the business?	H5 I sometimes struggle to balance work and home duties H6 I sometimes need to neglect my business responsibility to take care of family matters H7 When I started My business, I identified more strongly with being a woman, wife / partner or mother, rather than being an entrepreneur
	17 Let's talk a little about <i>others'</i> perception of you – how did they predominantly see you, as your business evolved? For instance, did they / do they see you as a career orientated women who still fulfils social expectations or one who focusses on her business and neglects her family roles as wife and mother?	H8 My role association - i.e. being a wife / partner or mother - shifted over time, as my business evolved H9 I currently identify most strongly with being an entrepreneur or business owner, rather than with being a woman, wife / partner or mother H10 I sometimes need to adopt male stereotypical behaviour in order to be taken seriously or to get things done H11 As a female entrepreneur, I need to accommodate opposing responsibilities – parenting and/or being a wife/partner - while at the same time, managing my business

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Female Identity		
		H12 It is challenging to satisfy demands of conflicting social identities to legitimise my roles as mother and/or wife/partner and entrepreneur H13 In an effort to attain authenticity, I purposefully adopt a feminised entrepreneurial identity, rather than fitting in with the androcentric notion of entrepreneurship H14 I reject restrictive femininity and adopt professional and authoritarian masculinities to construct an identity of respect and to attain unquestionable power in my business H15 Contextually different situations require different behaviours and I sometime experience internal conflict in trying to balance these different behaviours H16 I have a positive association with entrepreneurship – as a result of public role models and a perceived positive entrepreneurship social norm – and believe that I am capable of being an entrepreneur H17 The notion of entrepreneurship aligns well with my occupational self-concept in terms of my beliefs and feelings about myself in a working context H18 I sometimes experience imposter phenomenon, which impacts negatively on my business growth goals H19 I identify strongly with my business and derive great satisfaction, fulfilment and joy from my business

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Identity Constructs		
4 Ascertain the alignment between industry experience, networks and group belonging, with female founders' ability to start and develop a successful a business	7 Tell me a little about your role in the community – for instance, are you actively involved in community initiatives, do you volunteer at any charitable organisations or do you serve on any institutional committees (e.g. at church / school)?	C1 Are you actively involved in community initiatives? C2 Please indicate your exposure to entrepreneurship C3 Please indicate the factors that contributed to your confidence as an entrepreneur
6 Determine female founders' community involvement, exposure to entrepreneurship and development of confidence	18 Tell us a little about your network and the groups (formal / informal) which you belonged to when you initiated your business 19 Did belonging to these groups influence your decision to start a business and is it impacting on the way in which the business is evolving? 22 Did being part of a social group of peers influence your comfort- and confidence-levels, as female entrepreneur, in any way?	G1 My business-related experience, in terms of industries in which I worked, the number of years of experience, the roles that I fulfilled, etc. positioned me well to start a business G2 I had strong networks and belonged to groups (formal/informal) when I initiated my business G3 Having strong networks and belonging to groups influenced my decision to start a business G4 I currently have strong networks and belong to groups, which is influencing how my business evolves G5 Being part of a social group of peers influences my comfort- and confidence-levels, as female entrepreneur G6 My cultural background makes it difficult for me to earn respect in my business community G7 I have the necessary emotional support from family, friends and colleagues to develop a successful venture

Secondary Objectives	Qualitative Study	Quantitative Study
Business Dynamics and Demographics		
1 Develop a profile of female entrepreneurs pertaining to demographic and business dynamics	1 How long has your current business been operational? 2 How many business partners are there and what is the female male ratio and equity distribution? 3 Did you utilise own funds, financial support from friends or family or did you access a line of credit or an external investment to start the business?	A1 Please indicate whether your business is located in South Africa or the Netherlands A2 How long has your current business been operational? A3 Which sector does your business operate in? A4 How many business partners are there in your business? A5 What is the male/female partnership ratio? A6 What is the male/female partnership equity distribution? A7 What was your main source of start-up capital? A8 How many people does your business employ? A9 What is the annual turnover of your business? F1 Which ethnic group do you fall in? F2 What is your age? F3 What is your marital status? F4 Do you have any children? F5 What is your highest level of education? F6 How long were you employed, prior to starting your business?