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Female gender interests and education in women entrepreneurs' definition of success in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Studies on the intersection between women's education, motivations for entrepreneurship, and the structural constraints women face in Sub-Saharan Africa are scarce. In this study, we analyse the influence of education level on how women entrepreneurs in Uganda define business success. To this end, a total of 109 female agribusiness entrepreneurs were interviewed. The results firstly show that women's definition of business success and their level of education are intertwined. Secondly, that the main definitions of success are business performance, economic independence, and family welfare, which can be categorized in terms of women's practical interest, strategic interest, or a continuum of both, and where the education level of women is an influencing factor. The study has practical implications for policies aimed at women's economic empowerment and education. To transform the structure of gender relations, more opportunities for women's entrepreneurial training and child education are also needed, as well gender-sensitive indicators of business success that account for the particular interests of women in specific contexts.

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Female agribusiness entrepreneurs; Uganda; business success definition; women's interests; education level

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been traditionally defined as gender neutral. However, as Yousafzai et al. (2019) stated, women's entrepreneurship needs to be defined in relation with their context. Trends in the development world continue to define them as a homogeneous whole without being situated within a specific context. A deeper understanding of the influence of those specific contexts on women's entrepreneurship as part of the strategies aimed at poverty alleviation and economic development is needed. UN agencies and African governments have put measures in place to promote women through education and entrepreneurship (Namukwaya and Kibirige 2019). Education is often defined as a gateway out of poverty, and an educated population can more easily overcome economic problems such as unemployment through, for example, entrepreneurship (United Nations 2015). However, measures designed to promote entrepreneurship have been widely criticized and the research is limited (Brush and Cooper 2012). Criticism primarily focuses on structural conditions that hinder entrepreneurial sustainability (McQuaid, Vanderbeck, and Mbabazi 2020) in a context of masculinized normality (Marlow and McAdam 2013; Yousafzai et al. 2019).

In this article, we analyse how African female entrepreneurs define business success in relation to their education level in two of Uganda's most important commercial hubs: Kampala and Wakiso. The

research questions posed in the study are: How does education influence female agribusiness entrepreneurs' definition of business success? and how do these definitions connect to women's gender needs or interests? To answer these two questions, we used semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs working in the agribusiness sector.

Most entrepreneurial activities lead to the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, which contribute substantially to the economic development and growth of African countries (Mugoda et al. 2020; Iwu and Etim 2019). In the growing body of literature on women and entrepreneurship, most studies critique the concept of entrepreneurship as being discriminatory and gender biased (Guma 2015; Gomes et al. 2014). In Africa, Uganda ranks first in female entrepreneurship, followed by Ghana, Botswana, Malawi, and Angola (MasterCard Index of women entrepreneurs 2019) but the female entrepreneurial survival rate is low. Education appears to be a corrective measure for this poor outcome and many countries have adopted educational measures to reduce or eliminate entrepreneurial failure. Several studies have suggested important relationships between education, business creation, and entrepreneurial performance, as well as between business education and entrepreneurial activity (Boldureanu et al. 2020; Mbeteh and Pellegrini 2018). However, few have provided valuable qualitative data on the relationship between education and women entrepreneurs, and most are not applicable to African contexts. This study aims to contribute to literature on the association between education and female entrepreneurship in Africa by analysing the influence of education levels and female entrepreneurs' definitions of success and their relationship to the practical and strategic interests of these women.

To fulfil these objectives, this paper first describes the theoretical framework, focusing on women entrepreneurs, education, different gender interests, and business success. Section 3 explains the methodology, data collection and data analysis processes. In Sections 4 and 5, the results and discussions are presented. The next section discusses the practical implications of the findings and in the last section a conclusion is offered.

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

2.2. Women entrepreneurs: education and gender interests

A woman entrepreneur is someone who starts a business on her own or with one or more partners; takes on financial, administrative, and social risks and responsibilities; manages day-to-day operations; has the majority share in the business; and oversees the decision-making process (Carter and Shaw 2006). However, as Yousafzai et al. have stated, interaction with the environment determines the future of women's entrepreneurship, that is, women are never just women, but are also situated within a specific context (Yousafzai et al. 2019). In Uganda, the government declared that it wanted 'Uganda to transform from a peasant society to an entrepreneurial society: one of the main elements of this process was the introduction of universal and compulsory education' (New Vision Newspaper 1995). The government also sought to promote equality in education through the National Strategy for Girls' Education (2015–2019), which led to a 53% and 44% increase in enrolment in primary education of boys and girls, respectively, as well as a 44% increase in overall female enrolment in higher education (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2017). However, more males graduated at the end of the course (Asio and Mubatsi 2009), and students who persevere to attain higher education often face high unemployment rates upon graduation. It is estimated that at least 400,000 young people graduate from universities each year, yet the labour market provides only 150,000 jobs annually (Kanyehayo 2015; Mwesigwa 2014). Moreover, from 2012 to 2017, unemployment among women increased from 8.9% to 13.2%, while among men it decreased from 6.4% to 5.8% (Mukwaya 2019). Under these conditions, even women who have received an education find it difficult to access paid employment or obtain credit (Atekyereza 2001). The 2015 Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) sought to improve women's access to financial services and boost

entrepreneurial economic growth (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2019). However, there have been few long-lasting initiatives with a specific mandate to promote women's entrepreneurship, and the number of women who have benefited from them annually appears to be relatively modest (Mugabi 2014, April 1).

Some studies have argued that the determinants of formal and informal businesses in Uganda are whether the businesses are registered with the authorities, pay taxes, or enjoy social protection, among others (Chen and Carre 2020; Mugoda et al. 2020; Young 2019). Yet, these distinctions are not so clear cut and authors such as Nongo (2016) define informal businesses as those that are not controlled by the authorities and escape fiscal checks and regulations but support the survival of an important sector of the population, albeit in very precarious conditions. In Uganda, the informal economy accounts for 97% of unregistered enterprises in the country (Nangoli et al. 2013). It is dominated by the agribusiness industry where 51.5% of all agribusinesses are run by women aged 18–65 (Guloba, Sewanyana, and Birabwa 2017). According to Hassanzoy (2019), agribusiness 'refers to the various businesses involved in food and fibre production including farming, food and seed supply, agrichemicals, farm machinery, wholesale and distribution, processing, marketing and retail sales sector including agro services such as transportation services and international trade'. There are three main reasons for women's prevalence in agribusinesses in the informal economy. The first has to do with their traditional role as farmers and farm workers as well as their direct relationship with food and nutrition for their families as nurturers and homemakers (Sheldon 2017; Kupferberg 2003). The second is related to the ease of the sector in terms of not requiring large amounts of capital and not needing to comply with too many legal requirements (Young 2019; Nakibuuka 2017). The complex and costly procedures required, the time it would take to register, not being able to register using the internet, and the amount of reporting required once registered in Uganda place an undue burden on women's businesses due to their smaller size and volume of business (International Labour Organization 2014). The third reason is that agribusinesses in the informal economy do not require high academic qualifications and businesses are not required to be formally registered (Rugasira 2016).

To understand the relationship between education and entrepreneurship, the distinction made by Datzberger (2018) between assimilative and transformative approaches in education is useful. The assimilative approach is based on the assumptions that a more educated population and higher levels of education attained by the population will improve economic growth and favour poverty reduction. However, as Datzberger herself explains, the relationship between the amount of education (in terms of average years of schooling) and economic growth does not always go hand in hand, and low-income countries that have expanded schooling opportunities have not necessarily caught up with developed countries in terms of economic growth (Hanushek and Woessmann 2008). The transformative approach is related to empowerment and the social transformation of political, social, and economic structures where education is a resource to restructure society and enable people to initiate social movements to find their own models of change (Datzberger 2018; Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, and Smith 2015).

In Uganda, families who have been unable to educate their daughters through the system turn to informal education to equip them with the necessary entrepreneurial skills (Kolodych and Zarzycka-Dertli 2020; Kislova 2020; Curado 2017, July 14; Kayongo, Kawooya, and Mijumbi-Deve 2019, June; United Nations Children's Emergency Fund 2015). This type of education enables girls to gain competencies such as minimal financial literacy, which help to initiate them in entrepreneurship (Monteith and Camfield 2019; Noguchi 2018).

However, because informal education is not structured or officially recognized, academic degrees or credentials cannot be issued, thus impeding structural changes (Fitzgerald 2020; Eaton 2010). Education from a transformative approach could be an effective tool to satisfy the strategic interests of women entrepreneurs. The distinction between practical and strategic gender interests, originally proposed by Moulyneux (1986) and later transformed by Moser (1993) into practical and strategic gender needs with a view to gender and development planning, has an important analytical value in

our research. Given the distinction made between the two (Worthman 2016; Wieringa 1998), we will use the term 'interest' because of its association with women's agency. Practical gender interests refer to short-term needs in which the whole family or household share, and which arise from the daily responsibilities of women and from their social position in the community. Moreover, the fulfilment of such interests legitimizes the social status of women in their families and communities (Manzanera-Ruiz, Lizárraga, and Mwuaipopo 2016). Strategic interests have as their goal the emancipation of women and gender equality and empowerment, but their fulfilment requires structural changes and the challenging of gender relations and roles.

Others more recent studies regarding practical and strategic gender interests, such as Osunmuyiwa and Ahlborg (2019), point out the importance of women's participation in the design of programmes and policies, in the field of energy and entrepreneurship, as a key issue in meeting gender interests and also as a form of women's empowerment. Norris et al. (2013) have expanded these concepts to include the so-called intersectional gender interest and women's intersectional strategic needs. They have taken into account the influence of women's class, race and ethnicity, and their intersection in the different structures of power to define these interests and needs. In this regard, Cecilia Sardenberg (2010) distinguishes between 'liberal' and 'liberating' empowerment. The first seeks to accommodate women within the market without altering existing social and power inequalities. The second emphasizes power relations, whereby women achieve autonomy and self-determination, and the gendered order of patriarchal domination is challenged (Cornwall 2018). Education could also be a resource for the strategic interests of women. Feminist literature argues that there are different limitations in this watertight separation because the boundaries between practical and strategic interests are, in fact, not clear cut (Young 1993; Wieringa 1994).

This distinction makes it easier identify how women can contribute to development and economic growth through entrepreneurship and business, and highlights how gender discourses were mostly conceptualized from a biological lens – and not from a socially constructed view of gender. In this study, in addition to identifying the different gender interests of women, we find a continuum of interests defined through entrepreneurial success. Despite the criticism, identifying gender interests allows us to understand how education is a differentiating factor for defining agribusiness success and women's autonomy in a context of gender inequality. Indeed, women's interests must be understood not only in an essential way but as historically and culturally constituted, as well as politically and discursively constructed, and in this case constructed in a patriarchal context.

2.2. Definition of business success

Business success has been defined in multiple ways based on a variety of economic and financial indicators such as efficiency, growth, liquidity, and market share to firm size, survival rates, and number of employees (Zhou et al. 2017; Fried and Tauer 2015). By contrast, other studies have highlighted the need for subjective criteria and non-financial indicators that do not necessarily equate success with wealth (Laguna and Razmus 2019; Wach, Stephan, and Gorgievski 2016; Alstete 2008). Indicators could include gender as a variable by valuing, for example, the work-life balance or the fact that male entrepreneurs understand success as prestige or recognition, while women understand it as achieving pre-planned goals (Bullini Orlandi 2017; Burger 2008).

In countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, business success is not only measured by generating wealth, seizing opportunities, and gaining independence (Brush and Cooper 2012; Namatovu et al. 2012), but also through cultural variables and structural and institutional conditions that influence business success motivations driving entrepreneurship. In this regard, recent studies have shown a relationship between the definition of entrepreneurial success and gender relations in patriarchal contexts that value aggressiveness, independence, and decisiveness as desirable qualities for entrepreneurial success for men, while women are expected to follow social norms of behaviour and prioritize family and domestic tasks over their personal career aspirations (Yousafzai et al. 2019).

Research has long shown that cultural environment can enable or constrain entrepreneurial activities, and that the micro-level processes underlying such activities often go unrecognized, without details of how, why, and when embedded social values relate to each other and integrate with the company in different places (Redhead and Bika, 2022; Hindle 2010).

It is important to highlight three major points of this theoretical framework. First, the political efforts being made to increase the education level of the population and the impact of education on women and their entrepreneurship initiatives. Second, how education can be a tool for defining success in line with strategic gender interests and liberating empowerment or, on the contrary, not challenging gender structures. Third, the fact that the definition of business success is contextual and gender sensitive. The next section discusses how we investigated this empirically.

3. Methodology and sample

To analyse women's entrepreneurship motivations and their definition of business success, data were collected from 2019 to 2021 using a qualitative empirical research method. The cities of Kampala and Wakiso were selected as the study areas given that they are important business hubs, and due to their accessibility and history. The principal tools used were a field diary for collecting data on observations of occurrences, theoretical notes, and methodological problems, participant observation, and semi-structured and open interviews.

3.1. Data Collection

The primary empirical data were collected in 2019 and 2020 in the cities of Kampala and Wakiso (see Table 1). The study used observation (experiencing), interviewing (enquiring), and secondary materials (examining) to collect rich data (Wolcott 1994). Incorporating these techniques allowed us to obtain rich data, which consist of 'a wide and diverse range of information collected over a relatively prolonged period of time' (Lofland and Lofland 1995, 16). The entrepreneurial process is a dynamic process; it occurs over time and involves multiple stakeholders as well as various dimensions of the immediate environment. Therefore, wherever possible, triangulation of the various data sources was used to check the validity of statements obtained in the interviews (Jick 1979; Dezin 1987). A sample of 109 women entrepreneurs from the agribusiness sector was selected using purposive sampling (Creswell 2012) based on the following criteria: a) female entrepreneurs in the Nakasero, Kalerwe, Ntinda, and Wandegaya markets were approached to identify the type of entrepreneurial activities they engaged in (market and street businesses, retail shops, restaurants, vegetable farmers, green house farmers, seed vendors, and mobile money providers); b) their willingness to participate in the interviews and their residency in the study area using snowball sampling.

In the two cities, market businesses are in large public markets where the women sell fresh food and produce such as fruit, vegetables, and *matooke* (green bananas), while street businesses are located on the main streets or by the roadside and sell fresh fruit and food. Retail shops can also be found in and around markets and sell dry goods, green house farmers sell their crops in markets, and seed vendors sell seeds to farmers. Finally, mobile money businesses facilitate financial transactions in the markets and on the main roads, such as sending and receiving money through buyers and sellers' smartphones to initiate and conclude transactions. The women interviewed had been in business for an average of 8.1 years.

The selection criteria for participants were: agricultural sector of business, type and place for doing business, and willingness to participate in the research. The first participants then recruited more participants through snowball sampling. The contact strategy consisted in visiting the retail shops and streets and explaining the study aims and our interest in having them participate in the study.

The first author analysed the data and contributed to the interpretation within the theoretical framework. The second author conducted the main fieldwork and analysed the data. The third

Table 1. Personal and business characteristics of the participants.

Kampala	N=90	%	Wakiso	N=19	%
Name of place and type of area			Name of place and type of area		
Ntinda (high income area)	11	12.2	Seguku (high income)	11	58
Nakasero (high income)	9	10	Kasangati (low income)	1	5.2
Kalerwe (low income)	43	47.8	Kasenyi-Entebbe (low income)	5	26.3
Wandegeya (low income)	5	5.6	Namanve (high income)	2	10.5
Makerere (low income)	9	10			
Mulago (low income)	9	10			
Bwaise (low income)	1	1.1			
Mpererwe (low income)	1	1.1			
Naalya (high income)	1	1.1			
Mawanda Road (high income)	1	1.1			
Age			Age		
15–29	19	21.1	15–29	8	42.1
30–44	50	55.6	30–44	10	52.7
45–59	12	13.3	45–59	1	5.2
60–74	4	4.4			
No response	5	5.6			
Time in business			Time in business		
1–11 months	1	1.1	1–11 months	2	10.6
1–4 years	31	34.4	1–4 years	11	57.8
5–10 years	35	39	5–10 years	4	21.0
11–19 years	11	12.2	No response	2	10.6
20+	8	8.9			
No response	6	4.4			
Type of business			Type of business		
Market business	60	66.7	Street business	8	42.1
Street business	14	15.6	Retail shop	7	37
Restaurant	3	3.3	Seed vendors	1	5.2
Retail shop	11	12.2	Restaurant	1	5.2
Mobile money	1	1.1	Mobile money	1	5.2
Vegetable farmer	1	1.1	Green house farm	1	5.2
Marital status			Marital status		
Single	43	47.8	Married	7	36.8
Married	25	27.8	Single	10	52.6
Divorced	1	1.1	Widow	2	10.6
Widowed	7	7.8			
No response	14	15.5			
No. of children			No. of children		
1–4	56	62.2	1–4	15	79
5–10	21	23.3	5–10	4	21.0
No response	13	14.4			
Household composition			Household composition		
2–4 people	37	41.1	2–4 people	9	47.3
5–10 people	41	45.6	5–10 people	5	26.3
No response	12	13.3	No response	5	26.3
Residence			Residence		
Place of business and home not in the same area (commute)	60	66.7	Place of business and home not in the same area (commute)	5	26.3
Place of business and home in the same area (not commute)	18	20	Place of business and home in the same area (not commute)	12	63.1
No response	12	13.3	No response	2	10.6
Education level			Education level		
No education	10	11.1	No education	2	1.8
Primary education	43	47.8	Primary education	6	31.6
Secondary education	25	27.8	Secondary education	8	42.1
Higher education	9	10	Higher education	5	26.3
No response	3	3.3			
Nature of business			Nature of business		
Formal business	75	83.3	Formal business	9	47.3
Informal business	15	16.7	Informal business	10	52.7

^aHigh income areas refer to areas where the daily per capita consumption ranges from \$10–\$20. Low income areas refer to areas where the daily per capita consumption ranges from \$2–\$10 (Guloba et al. 2019)

author contributed to editing the text. In the interviews, the second author presented herself as a student at Makerere University. This established trust among the women entrepreneurs and her presence in the study areas was accepted as it was understood that the study involved a long-term commitment. Interviews were conducted in the Luganda language. The interviews usually took place in the women's working environment, either in an office, shop, or street. A research assistant with experience in qualitative research was recruited and trained to conduct the interviews. The second author met the research assistant at Makerere University while doing the research. He was in his final year pursuing his undergraduate degree in social sciences. He was interested in research on women entrepreneurs because his research topic concerned social service delivery in Uganda and how it impacted different demographics including women and children. He had experience in doing surveys and interviews and he also knew the Makerere area very well. The second author explained the research to him and he agreed to support and assist with interviews and questionnaires. Interview guides were covered and weekly meetings were arranged to review the responses and progress.

The participants were informed about the study and confidentiality and anonymity were always ensured. The literature review was primarily performed in the Makerere University library. The data was processed to identify the most significant aspects of the role of education in the women's entrepreneurship initiatives, expectations and constraints, with special attention given to key and recurring ideas, particularly motivations for entrepreneurship and differences in the definition of business success.

3.2. Data analysis

The transcripts of the interviews were re-read to identify emerging themes and secondly, to interpret them in light of existing theories, specifically those on education and definitions of success that connect them with the context and interests of gender. The transcripts were then organized, coded, and analysed. The analysis began with a first round of coding using a set of organizational and theoretical codes (primary coding) (Maxwell 2012). The codes that repeatedly emerged in this round were savings, expansion, business improvement, education of children, ownership, internationalization. These codes were supplemented with new codes that emerged from the data (secondary coding) to identify key sub-themes and the dimensions aggregated within them (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). The new codes informed the subsequent reformulation of the existing theory (Fletcher 2016) and allowed us to identify the difficulties the women entrepreneurs faced and their definitions of success, that is, to assess whether the definitions of success in relation to their educational levels were more or less in line with the practical and strategic interests of gender.

In the first phase, the data were classified in relation to education level and the definition of success. Emerging (first order) sub-themes were then identified from the main classification. The structure of the resulting analytical coding is illustrated in [Figure 1](#) and [Table 2](#).

Regarding the definitions of success by women entrepreneurs by level of education, three main definitions emerged from the categorization: family welfare, business financial performance, and economic independence (see [Table 3](#) for specific statistics). These were related to three theoretical dimensions: practical gender interests, strategic gender interests, and a continuum between both interests. The empirical details of the analysis and their interpretation are presented in the next section.

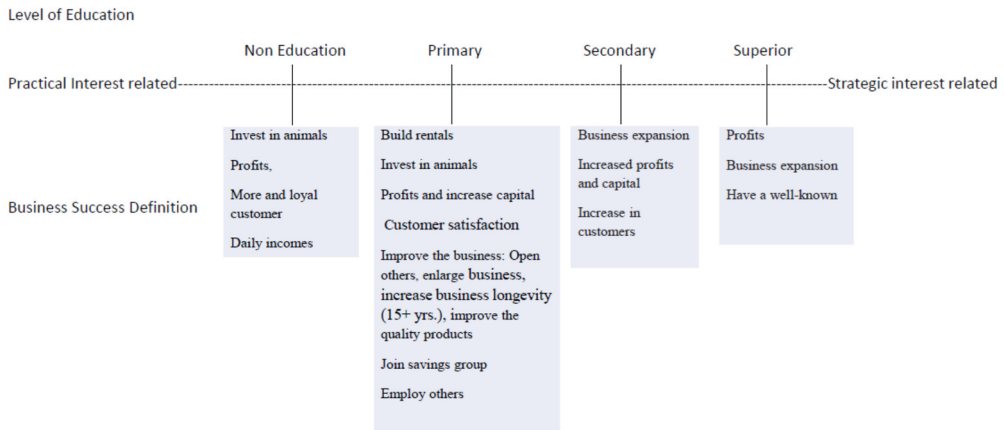


Figure 1. Success defined as financial performance by level of education and its relationship to women’s practical or strategic needs.

Table 2. An example of how a quote evolved to form the basis of the results.

Quotes to be analysed	Level of education and type of business (pre-determined codes) (12)	First stage of coding	Second stage of coding	Result/success definition
‘I started with very low capital but was able to save and with the savings, I managed to expand by selling <i>matooke</i> , which has enabled me to achieve success. My children have gone to school, I have been able to build my own house, and now I am a landlady’. Interviewee 1	Primary level of education. Market business	-Savings for capital -Expand business -Children have gone to school - Built own house -Own land to build property	-Business expansion -Education of children -Ownership of private property	Financial performance of business Family welfare Economic independence
‘When my business goes international, then that will be business success. I also have a responsibility toward my younger siblings and so I have to make money because taking care of my family is a great accomplishment for me e.g. in terms of school fees etc’. Interviewee 88.	University level of education. Retail shop	-Business going international -Responsibility towards younger ones -Provide school fees -Upgrade business premises	-Business expansion - Financial provision for the education of siblings through school fees payment -Level up from substandard premises to avoid dependency on others during city authority checks	Family welfare Economic independence Business financial performance

4. Results

4.1. Socio-demographic profile of women entrepreneurs, type of business, and level of education

A total of 109 women entrepreneurs were interviewed, of which 10 had no formal education, 49 had completed primary education, 33 had completed secondary education, and 14 had completed higher education. Three of the women did not respond to this question (see Table 1). None of them had attended or participated in the Women’s Entrepreneurship Programme. This educational programme is based on the assumption that a more educated population and higher levels of education will improve economic growth and favour poverty reduction i.e, from an assimilative

Table 3. Narratives drawn from the definition of business success categorized as women's practical and strategic interests.

		Business Success Definition	
-Practical Gender Interests (no changes or challenges to gender roles)	<i>Financial performance</i>	<i>Economic independence</i>	
	For me success is when a customer is satisfied and when I get a profit from the business (Interviewee 26, no education)	Success is to go back to the village and open a shop there	
-Strategic Gender Interests (changes or challenges to gender roles)	<i>Financial performance</i>	<i>Economic independence</i>	
- Continuum	Success for me is expanding my business and having branches of the business in different parts of the country. . . (Interviewee 84, higher education)	My business has given me a lot to be proud of. I bought a plot of land, built a house, my children are being educated, I have a car, I drive myself and I am able to help my husband with home needs. (Interviewee 7, secondary education)	<i>Family welfare</i> If I was educated, I would be employed in a formal institution and would earn faster, this was what I wanted in my childhood, but now I work so that my children will graduate and get good jobs that I didn't get. (Interviewee 1, primary education).

approach (Datzberger 2018). However, women found it quite difficult and a loss of time to accomplish the criteria, and to have time to participate. Regarding the socio-demographic profile in terms of family responsibilities, all the women were mothers. Of the total number of women interviewed, 32 were married, 53 were single, 9 were widowed, 1 was divorced, and 14 did not respond to this question. Of those with an education, 16 were married and 30 were single. Of the women with no schooling or only primary education, 39 were single. All the women had an especially important economic role in their family structure, as this woman states,

I was pressured by the difficulties of life and, as you know, nowadays men have given up their responsibilities as men. So I wanted to work to take care of my children and also to pay the rent for my house. Yes, nowadays we are single mothers (Interviewee 43, primary education)

Of the women interviewed, only 3 had 1 year or less of experience in business ownership; 42 had 1 to 4 years, 39 had 5 to 10 years, 11 women had 11 to 19 years, and 8 had more than 20 years of business experience. Six women did not respond to this question. The women who had owned a business for the longest period of time had no formal education or only primary education (Table 1).

Of the total number of women entrepreneurs interviewed, 9.1% stated they had never been to school because their household financial situation did not allow it; 45.9% had abandoned education at primary school level due to the gender division of labour that required them to engage in reproductive work; and 29.3% stated they stayed in education until secondary school before they left to look for work. According to the women interviewed, the gender responsibilities that disrupted their formal education included starting families of their own and having to work to sustain them through entrepreneurship. In this interview, for example, this woman couldn't continue her education, given her gender responsibilities and expectations at home,

I couldn't go to school because I had to help out at home financially. My mother thought the best way to help was for me to go into business. It also kept me busy so I wouldn't get pregnant, which often happens to young girls who don't do anything. (Interviewee 92, secondary education)

As stated in the theoretical framework, although there are three main reasons for women's prevalence in agribusinesses in the informal economy, the interviews revealed the prevalence of two of these reasons regarding the ease of accessibility of the sector in terms of not requiring large amounts

of capital and not needing to comply with too many legal requirements (Young 2019; Nakibuuka 2017), and that the agribusiness sector does not require high academic qualifications and businesses are not obliged to be formally registered (Rugasira 2016).

Women who ran informal street businesses (18.3%) expressed their desire to change their business due to their precarious work conditions. They lack permanent premises where customers can find and access them easily, suffer adverse weather conditions that disrupt their work and limit their income, or have problems with the authorities who send street businesswomen to jail because they consider their businesses illegal as they do not pay taxes and rent. For these women, street businesses were temporary until they could access the necessary capital to have a market stall or a shop.

Fourteen of the women interviewed had higher education. Despite having higher qualifications, they preferred to open businesses in the agricultural sector due to the ease of entry, the lower start-up capital needed, and the immediate availability of products. In this regard, agribusinesses are considered an alternative to secondary and higher education and constitute a main source of income for single women without education. In this sense, education here follows an assimilative approach (Datzberger 2018), as education for those women is not related to empowerment or a way to transform structures. For married women, it is also a way to supplement the household income, that is, it is a form of pluriactivity adopted by domestic groups to guarantee the social reproduction of their members. This woman, for instance, does business with her husband as a way of household income pluriactivity,

I collaborate with my husband in my business. We started selling apples and later we expanded our business with oranges. We complement each other (Interviewee 12, secondary education)

4.2. Definitions of business success by women entrepreneurs according to level of education: practical, strategic, and continuum gender interests

The analysis and coding of the interviews enabled us to identify three narratives related to women's definitions of success. The narratives were categorized according to whether they refer to practical or strategic gender interests, or whether they constitute a continuum between both interests. This approach is in line with the contributions of Young (1993) and Wieringa (1994) where the boundaries between strategic and practical strategic are not clear cut (Figure 1). Educational differences were found in the narratives coded as success in financial performance or success in economic independence. However, no differences were found in the narratives coded as family welfare and they were defined as a continuum between practical and strategic gender needs.

4.3. Success defined as financial performance

The definition of success as financial performance differed in the women's narratives depending on their level of education and its relationship to their practical or strategic interests (see Figure 1). Among the uneducated women with street businesses, definitions of financial performance included upgrading from the street to a market so that they could obtain the means to afford permanent business premises, investing in farm animals, customer loyalty, and earning a daily income; all of which are related to the satisfaction of practical interests, that is, gender roles in their activities. A significant difference was found in the definition of success according to financial performance among the women entrepreneurs with education. Those with lower levels of education (primary and secondary) defined financial performance as the ability to reinvest and expand their business, for example, through product diversification in the same business and location. Those with higher education associate business success with a vision that could be considered cosmopolitan (Levy, Beechler, and Taylor et al. 2007), that is, growing their business is not seen simply as a way to increase their income in order to satisfy the needs of others or in terms of local boundaries. The definition of

business success of these women responds to the satisfaction of strategic gender interests as they transcend women's association with activities in the household and community:

Success for me, is expanding my business and having branches of the business in different parts of the country. In 5 years, I want a big business with branches in different places. (Interviewee 84, higher education)

4.4. Success defined as economic Independence

The women entrepreneurs viewed economic independence as the ability to attain personal needs and wants, such as buying their own plot of land, building their own house, or making business decisions without assistance from outside parties such as their husbands or family members. Property ownership is an essential condition for women to expand their businesses beyond the home and transcend gender roles that restrict them to the domestic space. While all the women entrepreneurs shared the desire to own property and satisfy their personal needs, those with higher levels of education also associated such gains with greater autonomy, that is, being able to make decisions about how their income is distributed. However, those with no education associated these aspects with greater financial security, especially the uneducated single women. Education for the former follows a transformative approach related to empowerment where education is a resource to initiate gender social change in decision making regarding revenue where businesses must serve strategic interests of greater autonomy and decision making (Datzberger 2018; Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, and Smith 2015).

Entrepreneurial success as measured by economic independence is related to the satisfaction of strategic gender interests in the sense that it gives women the freedom to make their own choices, to speak out on their own behalf, and to control their own lives. These women, for example, expressed their capacity to make decisions about income distribution,

I am proud that I have educated my children, that I have built my own home and that I am a landlady. I am also capable of obtaining what I desire without going through much money hustle. (Interviewee 1, primary education)

For me, my success is that I am personally contented because I can afford whatever I want from the money I get from my business. I have also been able to start another business – my own money lending business – from this juice one. Since my husband is not able to give me all I ask him, I happy to have my own money. (Interviewee 6, higher education)

Especially for the single women, buying a house is strategic in defining their success because of the gender relations in the domestic sphere. Given the patrilineal organization of Ugandan society, houses and land have traditionally been owned by males, and men are expected to provide houses for women after marriage. Women's businesses and income have enabled them to purchase houses and land as insurance for their future and that of their children (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] Organisation for economic co-operation and development 2015). Specifically, in the urban areas of Kampala and Wakiso, single women said that their businesses have given them the opportunity to own their own homes, which affords them greater personal security:

With my business I have been able to buy land and build a house for my children and myself. From here I get money for their school fees and medicine. (Interviewee 2, primary education)

My vision was to educate my children, build a house, and have money to take care of my family's health and save for the future. This I am achieving, and I think I am successful [...] my business is not growing at the moment, but I have achieved some things like educating my children and building a house. (Interviewee 3, primary education)

Family welfare as a continuum of gender interests in business

All the women shared a definition of success in relation to their families' welfare, regardless of their level of education: the ability to provide food for their children, cover the cost of their children's school fees, clothes, and medicines in case of illness, and the ability to pay rent. When asked 'What is

business success to you?', one of the interviewees, a woman with primary education who had a vegetable business, responded:

I have taken care of my children alone. I can feed them, clothe them, and I can send them to school from my business. (Interviewee 66, primary education)

Although this definition of business success is more in line with the satisfaction of practical gender interests, as it refers to fulfilling assigned gender roles, we found that, specifically in this context, providing an education for their children is a priority as it is a way to improve family welfare and for women entrepreneurs to satisfy their strategic interests. By educating their children, not only will the social status of these women improve, but their future will be more secure. Education will lead to better jobs for their children and guarantees that their children will be able to care for them in old age, thus transforming the position of the family as a whole and of women in particular in the next generation, as these interviewees explained,

I was being pressed by the difficulties of life. So, I wanted to work to take care of my children and to pay my home rent. Business success to me is when I can get the most amount of money from my business that can take care of my children so that they lack nothing. Success is when my children have school fees so that they are not chased from school, when my landlord does not have any debt with me and also when I also can take care of myself. So, a business that can get me these things, I know that it is taking me forward. (Interviewee 43, Primary level)

Being in position to take care of my responsibilities is business success to me. It is taking care my children's needs and also having some money to send to my parents for their needs. (Interviewee 102, Higher Education)

5. Discussion

Despite the ease of doing business in this sector, significant differences were found in the education level of women by type of business. Women with less education engage in activities such as street or market vending, which do not require specific skills. These women have generally received informal training from their mothers or relatives as defined by Monteith and Camfield (2019) in businesses where there is greater ease of entry and low capital for their creation, as well as being outside the fiscal control and regulations of local authorities (Nongo 2016). However, they face more disadvantages and insecurity than those with higher education. Our results coincide with Curado (2017, July 14), who argued that informal learning does not help improve women's economic and social conditions.

The educated women defined success in terms of achieving financial performance and economic independence. This coincides with strategic gender interests but does not substantially change gender relations or situations of inequality or inequity in business or in access to education as in the case of the gender-energy studied by Osunmuyiwa and Ahlborg (2019). These results are in line with Cecilia Sardenberg's (2008) distinction between liberal and liberating empowerment, as we found that, although more educated women entrepreneurs have greater spending power and may also have more personal influence, for example through travel, they do not appear to use this influence to obtain benefits that could serve to change the unequal situation of women in education or entrepreneurship. Their definitions of success, however, indicated that children's education was a common aim, regardless of educational level. While this may be a practical interest of women, the context in which it occurs is a continuum between practical and strategic interests as it will lead to a change in women's status and security to ensure their sustainability in old age. In this sense, our findings differ from those of Yousafzai et al. (2019), who stated that women prioritize family and domestic tasks over their personal career aspirations. In fact, the women entrepreneurs in our study do not prioritize family welfare over personal career aspirations, but rather it is one of the many priorities of their career aspirations and success. This interest forms a continuum between women's practical and strategic interests where the boundaries are blurred Education makes a difference in

terms of the type of business (whether it is more secure and permanent) and influences the definition of success. However, it does not lead to a transformative change in gender relations which would, as Datzber (2018) argued, allow for the social transformation of political, social, and economic structures.

6. Practical implications

Our study has four practical implications. The first is related to policies aimed at women's economic empowerment. In this regard, Uganda has implemented policies to promote entrepreneurship among women, but the women entrepreneurs in Kampala and Wakiso have not benefited from them. Moreover, these programmes are often framed by materialistic concerns about persistent inequality rather than the structural transformation of inequalities and focus on women's entry into labour markets underpinned by inequitable and discriminatory norms and practices (Cornwall 2018). Second, policies that aim to increase women's education do not favour women's empowerment either. As we have shown, the increase in educated women is not accompanied by better labour market insertion, and entrepreneurship is a refuge from the lack of education continuity and quality employment. Higher education seems to have a significant impact on women entrepreneurs' definitions of success in terms of their strategic interests in the sense of challenging certain gender norms. However, these interests are directed towards individual gain rather than a structural change in gender relations. Therefore, the education system needs to move towards a transformative approach if it is to have an impact on structural conditions of inequality. Thirdly, women's success is partly defined in terms of family welfare, especially regarding the education of their children as it has implications for social mobility and security in old age.

Policies aimed at supporting female entrepreneurs must offer women more opportunities for entrepreneurial training and facilitate the education of their children. Such programmes would not only help to improve these women's business skills but their family's welfare and security as well. Fourthly, indicators of business success need to be improved so that they are not only gender-sensitive but also context-sensitive and account for women's interests.

7. Conclusions

Our findings highlight differences in the way practical and strategic gender interests are constructed based on level of education, marital status, and definition of success of women entrepreneurs in different business settings. The women entrepreneurs we interviewed defined business success in very distinct ways: as financial performance, economic independence, family welfare, and education level. The dynamic approach taken in this research contributes to previous research on women entrepreneurship by considering the relationship between definitions of business success, education level, and gender, but contextually situated. This study specifically contributes to the literature on gender and entrepreneurship by demonstrating that women's education level influences how they define agribusiness success, which in turn is influenced by a continuum of practical and strategic gender interests. The study has also demonstrated how *the socio-cultural and economic context in Uganda provide the backcloth to women's awareness of and engagement with business ownership, the type of business in which they engage, and where and how they practice their business*. Family welfare, particularly the education of children, cuts across all education levels and types of businesses. This indicates the critical importance of children's education in determining women's entrepreneurial goals and underscores the long-term continuum between practical and strategic interests by linking women's responsibilities towards their children's education in the present (practical interest) with the end goal to yield rewards from them in the future (strategic interest). The study invites further research such as comparative studies on the education level of women and men entrepreneurs and

definitions of business success influenced by practical and strategic gender interests in entrepreneurial activities.

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