

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**The influence of cultural on the growth of women
entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.**

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The influence of cultural on the growth of women entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the influence of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial behaviour of females registered with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. While entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as a means of empowering women economically, many female entrepreneurs encounter culturally embedded barriers that sharp how they start, manage and expand their businesses. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which cultural norms, values and expectations shape the entrepreneurial experiences of WRSETA-registered women. A qualitative methodology was adopted, utilising semi-structured interviews with seven female entrepreneurs affiliated with WRSETA. The data collected were analysed thematically with the assistance of NVivo software. The analysis process involved familiarisation with data, generating initial codes and identification of recurring themes. This facilitated the systematic interpretation of participants' personal experiences. The findings demonstrate that cultural socialisation plays a significant role in influencing entrepreneurial behaviours, particularly through gender-specific expectations regarding domestic responsibilities, decision-making authority and risk tolerance. While many participants identified these norms as potentially restrictive, some also described them as sources of emotional resilience and motivation. The thematic analysis identified key themes, including cultural norms and gender expectations, resilience and self-motivation, navigating tradition and entrepreneurship, and institutional support from WRSETA. In conclusion, the study underscores that cultural socialisation remains a vital component in shaping the entrepreneurial pathways of women in Durban. It highlights the dual role of culture as both a barrier and a facilitator. Based on these findings, it is recommended that WRSETA develop culturally sensitive support programs, including flexible, gender-responsive training schedules, mentorship initiatives rooted in community values, and outreach programs designed to accommodate the specific needs and realities faced by women entrepreneurs in the Wholesale and Retail sector. Critical reflection on restrictive regulations and policies can facilitate targeted interventions, alter mindsets and create a supportive environment for women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Cultural socialisation, female entrepreneurs, WRSETA, Durban, Entrepreneurial behaviour, Gender norms.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Nonhlanhla Agnes Mdakane, do hereby affirm that unless otherwise specified, this dissertation is the product of my own work and it has not been submitted to any other tertiary institution for a degree award or other purposes and all the authors whose work contributed to this study have been accordingly referenced.

I hereby give consent for this dissertation to be made available for inter-library loan, photocopying, and to outside interested organisations and students.

11/09/2025

Signed

Nonhlanhla Agnes Mdakane

Date

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Women's entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as a vital engine for economic growth, particularly in developing countries (Sajjad, Kaleem, Chani and Ahmed, 2020). However, cultural norms and societal expectations can significantly impact a woman's ability to thrive in the business world. This is especially relevant in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where cultural dynamics uniquely shape the entrepreneurial landscape. This research delves into the intricate relationship between culture and women's entrepreneurial journeys in this region, examining how cultural factors can both hinder and facilitate their success.

According to Musara (2020), South Africa grapples with a complex cultural legacy that influences entrepreneurial endeavours. Negative perceptions of entrepreneurship as a risky career path, coupled with limited entrepreneurial role-models, permeate society (Ng and Clercq, 2021). These factors disproportionately impact women, who often face additional cultural barriers and expectations related to gender roles, access to resources and societal support. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for fostering an environment where women entrepreneurs can overcome challenges and capitalise on opportunities.

This study examines the influence of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial activities of women registered with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. WRSETA is a government-established organisation responsible for delivering skills development and entrepreneurial training within the Wholesale and Retail industries. Although its initiatives are designed to provide women with essential knowledge and resources for successful entrepreneurship, many female participants still face challenges influenced by societal expectations and cultural norms related to gender roles. This chapter provides an overview of the study's context, importance and objectives, emphasising the importance of understanding the interaction between cultural factors and institutional support systems such as WRSETA.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as a strategic approach to addressing unemployment and economic disparities in South Africa, with particular emphasis on supporting historically marginalised groups such as women. According to Meyer and Hamilton (2020), female entrepreneurship contributes to employment creation, innovation, household well-being and poverty alleviation. Over the past twenty years, South Africa has implemented policy reforms and established institutional initiatives to enhance women's participation in the entrepreneurial sector (Mayer, Siegel and Wright, 2018). Nonetheless, enduring structural inequalities and socio-cultural norms continue to influence, restrict and shape women's experiences within the business environment, particularly in regions such as Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

According to Ndlela (2022), KwaZulu-Natal presents a diverse yet complex entrepreneurial landscape where contemporary ambitions co-exist with longstanding cultural traditions. In many local communities, women are often guided by societal expectations that emphasise caregiving, household responsibilities and deference to male authority (Ntshangase, Linda, Mabaleka and Mhlongo, 2024). These norms are transmitted early through socialisation processes, which internalise community values and establish gender-based roles and social hierarchies. Consequently, Bui, Kuan and Chu (2018) state that women's entrepreneurial pursuits may be constrained not only by external structural challenges but also by internalised beliefs that influence their aspirations, willingness to take risks and independence.

As women increasingly pursue entrepreneurship as a pathway to financial autonomy and social mobility, their success is influenced by cultural frameworks that can function as both facilitators and barriers (Wu, Li and Zhang, 2019). On the supportive side, community values such as Ubuntu, familial cohesion and collective skill-sharing foster resilience and social support networks amongst women entrepreneurs. Conversely, Kakeesh (2024) states that patriarchal attitudes, rigid gender roles and limited decision-making autonomy often restrict women's full participation and potential in entrepreneurial activities.

Institutions such as the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) have developed programs aimed at promoting entrepreneurship through training, skills development and mentorship. These initiatives are designed to empower underrepresented groups, including women, by enhancing capacity and business

competence (Raap and Mason, 2018). However, the extent to which cultural norms influence program outcomes and effectiveness remains underexplored.

This research focused on women entrepreneurs in Durban who have participated in WRSETA training programs. It examines how deeply rooted cultural norms continue to impact their entrepreneurial behaviours, decision-making processes and business practices, even after engaging with institutional support initiatives. The study aimed to assess whether current programs sufficiently address the complex realities faced by women within their cultural contexts.

By integrating the perspectives and lived experiences of women entrepreneurs, this study seeks to explore the interplay between institutional support mechanisms and cultural conditioning. Understanding this dual influence is crucial for developing more effective, inclusive and culturally sensitive entrepreneurship support systems that adequately reflect the needs and challenges of women in diverse socio-cultural settings.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the increasing recognition of women's entrepreneurship as a vital contributor to economic development and empowerment in South Africa, there remains a notable gap in empirical research examining how cultural socialisation influences entrepreneurial behaviours amongst women, particularly those engaged with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) in Durban. While women entrepreneurs encounter various challenges related to access to finance, markets and skills development, the impact of deeply rooted cultural norms, values and social expectations on their entrepreneurial intentions, decision-making processes and business sustainability is not yet fully understood. Most existing studies tend to address women's entrepreneurship broadly without sufficiently exploring how cultural socialisation, which refers to the ongoing process through which individuals internalise societal beliefs and practices, affects women's participation and success within structured support systems like WRSETA. This gap hampers the development of culturally responsive training and development programs designed to effectively enhance women entrepreneurs' capabilities.

In a diverse socio-cultural environment such as Durban, where multiple cultural identities and traditions co-exist, the influence of cultural socialisation on entrepreneurial behaviour can be complex and multidimensional. Gaining a nuanced

understanding of this influence is essential for designing targeted interventions that not only impart technical skills but also address cultural barriers and capitalise on cultural assets. Without this insight, existing support initiatives may be less effective in promoting sustainable women's entrepreneurship, potentially limiting their contribution to economic growth and social transformation. This study aims to investigate and analyse how cultural socialisation shapes the entrepreneurial behaviours of women registered with WRSETA in Durban, with the goal of filling this gap and providing insights to inform more culturally responsive and impactful entrepreneurship development strategies.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to explore the influence of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial behaviour of females registered under WRSETA in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aims to accomplish the following objectives,

- I. To identify the cultural socialisation factors that influence the entrepreneurial behaviour of WRSETA-registered females in Durban;
- II. To examine how cultural norms, values and expectations affect business decisions and operations amongst WRSETA-registered females' entrepreneurs in Durban;
- III. To explore the challenges and opportunities that arise from cultural socialisation in the context of WRSETA's entrepreneurial support; and
- IV. To identify culturally responsive strategies that WRSETA can implement to better support female entrepreneurs in Durban.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The proposed research questions for this study are:

- I. What are the key cultural socialisation factors influencing WRSETA-registered female entrepreneurs in Durban?
- II. How do cultural norms, values and expectations affect business decisions and operations amongst these entrepreneurs?

- III. What challenges and opportunities do these women experience in relation to cultural expectations and WRSETA's support programs?
- IV. What strategies can WRSETA adopt and implement to enhance its responsiveness to cultural dynamics in female entrepreneurship?

1.7 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) plays a vital role in promoting entrepreneurial capacity building and skills development within South Africa's Wholesale and Retail industries. Specifically, it supports women entrepreneurs who are increasingly recognised as significant contributors to economic growth and employment creation in these sectors (Mostert, 2018). Although WRSETA offers structured training programs, mentorship and institutional support, many women face ongoing challenges rooted in cultural norms and socialisation processes. These cultural influences often impact their business behaviours, decision-making, risk management and, ultimately, the sustainability and success of their ventures (Kreiser, Marino, Dickson and Weaver, 2020).

This study is motivated by the need to explore the complex relationship between cultural socialisation and the support mechanisms provided by institutions like WRSETA. While access to resources and training is essential, it is important to acknowledge that entrepreneurial activity does not occur in a cultural context-free environment. Women entrepreneurs carry with them culturally influenced values, beliefs and social expectations that can either facilitate or hinder their entrepreneurial pursuits (Rehman and Qamar, 2024). For instance, social norms related to gender roles, family responsibilities and community perceptions may affect their confidence, access to networks and engagement with available training and development opportunities.

By investigating how cultural socialisation impacts entrepreneurial behaviour amongst women engaged with WRSETA-supported initiatives, this research aims to address a critical gap in both academic scholarship and practical development strategies. The insights generated help identify the cultural factors that support or impede entrepreneurial success and inform the design of culturally sensitive interventions tailored to the socio-cultural realities of these entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader understanding of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts.

It sheds light on how social conditioning influences behaviour within formal development frameworks, thereby enriching theoretical perspectives on entrepreneurial development in diverse and multicultural settings. Ultimately, the findings are intended to assist policy-makers, training providers and development agencies in crafting more effective, inclusive strategies that foster sustainable women's entrepreneurship, thus supporting broader economic empowerment and social transformation objectives in South Africa.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Entrepreneurship

According to Bygrave, Zacharakis and Corbett (2024), entrepreneurship is the capacity or ability to see opportunities and, from there, either develop a brand-new business idea and organise resources to put it into action or re-organise resources to put an existing business idea into action.

1.8.2 Culture

According to Giuliano (2020), culture refers to the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society that sets one group or society's members apart from that of another.

1.8.3 Female Entrepreneurs

Female entrepreneurs are those who participate in independent business decision-making that has to do with business management (Meyer and de Jongh, 2018).

1.8.4 Cultural socialisation

Cultural socialisation refers to the process through which individuals acquire and integrate the values, beliefs, behaviours and norms of their cultural environment (Del-Toro and Wang, 2021). This process facilitates the development of the social competencies necessary for effective participation within various communities and enables the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations. Overall, cultural socialisation contributes to the formation of individual identities; shapes self-perception; and informs one's understanding of the surrounding world.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study specifically concentrates on women entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA who are active in the Wholesale and Retail sectors within Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The findings are focused on this particular demographic and geographic area and do not extend to women operating in other industries or regions. Additionally, the research primarily considers cultural practices and does not encompass broader economic or political influences.

Figure 1:1:KwaZulu Natal Map



Source: *The Safari Company: Detailed Map of KZN - the Zulu Kingdom*

1.10 RESEARCH STRUCTURE AND ROADMAP

Chapter One introduces the research topic, background to the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance and structure.

Chapter Two presents a comprehensive literature review on women entrepreneurship and cultural influences.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques.

Chapter Four analyses and interprets the findings.

Chapter Five discusses the results that were analysed and interpreted in chapter four

Chapter Six concludes the study, gives recommendations and areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a thorough review of existing literature related to the study's focus on how cultural socialisation influences the entrepreneurial activities of women, particularly those registered with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) in Durban. The purpose is to critically examine the key concepts, theoretical models and empirical research that underpin this area of study. The review discusses foundational theories relevant to entrepreneurship, cultural socialisation and gender, offering a framework to understand the ways in which social and cultural factors shape entrepreneurial behaviour. It then expands to evaluate research on women's entrepreneurship both globally and within the South African context, emphasising the unique challenges, opportunities and socio-cultural dynamics faced by women entrepreneurs.

A specific focus is given to the social norms and values prevalent in South Africa, including those particular to Durban's diverse communities, to explore how these cultural factors influence women's entrepreneurial intentions, decision-making processes and business sustainability. Furthermore, the chapter examines the role and effectiveness of WRSETA as an institutional support body dedicated to fostering skills development and entrepreneurial growth within the Wholesale and Retail sectors. By critically analysing existing research, this review identifies notable gaps, especially regarding the limited empirical investigation into the intersection of cultural socialisation and formal support mechanisms like WRSETA. Recognising these gaps underscores the importance of this study in contributing new insights and establishing a conceptual foundation for further research.

2.2 DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF CULTURAL SOCIALISATION

An understanding of cultural socialisation is important. It forms the basis for looking at how societal norms, values, and gender expectations affect women's participation, behaviour, and entrepreneurial choices.

Del-Toro and Wang (2021), define cultural socialisation is an ongoing process through which individuals develop an understanding of and internalise the values, norms,

beliefs and practices associated with their cultural background. According to Zhang and Pinderhughes (2019), this development typically begins early in life through interactions with family members, peers and community institutions, and continues throughout adulthood as individuals adapt to evolving social environments. This process influences personal identity by shaping perspectives and guiding attitudes, motivations and behaviours. Nelson, Syed and Lee (2018) found that it involves active engagement with cultural meanings, allowing individuals to effectively navigate social expectations and roles. In the context of entrepreneurship, cultural socialisation plays a significant role in shaping how individuals recognise opportunities, assess associated risks, and engage with economic activities (Saleem and Byrd, 2021).

2.2.1 Cultural socialisation and Gender roles

In many societies, including South Africa, cultural socialisation plays a significant role in shaping and sustaining gender roles that define responsibilities and acceptable behaviours for men and women (Jhai, Harmaii, Abdooliii and Munaiv, 2021). Traditional cultural frameworks often highlight women's roles in caregiving, household management and community support, which can inadvertently constrain their opportunities to pursue entrepreneurial activities (Adom and Anambane, 2019). These gender-specific expectations are reinforced through socialisation processes across family, educational and religious institutions, establishing normative boundaries around women's autonomy and economic engagement (Jejeebhoy, 2024). Consequently, Yoopetch (2021) states that women may adopt beliefs about their own abilities and societal roles that may discourage risk-taking or leadership in business, thereby influencing their entrepreneurial intentions and actions.

In the South African context, particularly amongst Zulu and other ethnic groups in KwaZulu-Natal, girls are often socialised to emphasise family responsibilities, modesty and service to others (Dlamini-Myeni, Mazibuko and Shumba, 2024). This cultural upbringing can influence their perception of agency and may impact their willingness to undertake business-related risks or challenge existing societal norms (Ng and Clercq, 2021). Over time, these influences can shape their aspirations, confidence and leadership development. However, gender identity is a dynamic and evolving aspect of individual experience. Through participation in educational, social and economic initiatives such as WRSETA programs, women have the opportunity to negotiate and redefine elements of their identity. This process illustrates both resistance to and the adaptation of cultural expectations, highlighting how identity is continuously shaped by

the interaction between societal structures and individual agency (Daspit, Fox and Findley, 2021).

2.2.2 Influence of cultural socialisation on Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Behaviours

In societies where assertiveness and competitiveness are less encouraged for women, opportunities for entrepreneurial confidence may be limited (Bui, Kuan and Chu, 2018; Soltwisch, Dimitrov and Hojnik (2023), cultural). Conversely, cultures that prioritize communal support and relationship-building can promote collaborative entrepreneurial endeavours, often benefiting women-led businesses. Additionally, Rehman and Qamar (2024) found that socialisation patterns shape women's responses to challenges and setbacks, affecting their resilience and determination in entrepreneurial activities. These culturally ingrained behavioural tendencies impact not only the decision to initiate a business but also the strategies employed for management and growth, particularly in sectors such as Wholesale and Retail that require adaptability and a customer-focused approach.

2.2.3 The Role of Social Institutions in Cultural Socialisation

The family unit is a primary agent in the cultural socialisation process, shaping early perceptions about gender roles, acceptable conduct and responsibilities. In many households within Durban and the broader South Africa, there is a tendency to socialise girls towards submissiveness, nurturing and domestic responsibilities, while traits associated with entrepreneurship, such as assertiveness and risk-taking, are less prominently encouraged (Adom and Anambane, 2019). Eteng (2024) states that religious institutions also serve as significant conveyors of cultural values, often reinforcing gender norms by emphasising male leadership and female obedience, which can impact women's economic participation and autonomy. Educational systems can either uphold or challenge these norms, influenced by curriculum content and teacher attitudes. In some instances, educational materials and pedagogical practices subtly promote traditional gender roles, with limited exposure to female entrepreneurial role-models (Feder and Nițu-Antonie, 2017). Media representations further influence societal perceptions by often depicting women in caregiving or supportive roles rather than as independent entrepreneurs or business leaders. Additionally, community structures and peer interactions play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of acceptable and desirable behaviour. In certain South African contexts, communal understandings

of womanhood can either hinder or motivate entrepreneurial activities, depending on prevailing social norms and values (Mandongwe and Jaravaza, 2020).

2.2.4 Cultural Scripts and Entrepreneurial Behaviour

Cultural scripts refer to shared mental frameworks or societal templates that guide individuals' expected behaviours within specific roles or contexts (Boutyline and Soter, 2021). These frameworks are often influenced by gender norms and play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes toward risk-taking, ambition, success and leadership (Hofstede, 2011). In male-oriented cultures, entrepreneurship is frequently associated with masculine traits such as competitiveness, independence and assertiveness qualities that may be at odds with traditional notions of femininity (Offermann and Foley, 2020). Consequently, women may encounter role incongruity, perceiving that entrepreneurial pursuits are misaligned with culturally prescribed gender identities (Liñán, Jaén and Martín, 2022).

In South African communities, women often internalise cultural expectations that prioritise family commitments and community approval over personal business aspirations. This may result in self-imposed limitations, where women under-prioritise or downplay their entrepreneurial goals to conform to societal norms (Bullough, Guelich, Manolova and Schjoedt, 2022). However, cultural narratives are not uniformly restrictive. In some contexts, entrepreneurial success can positively influence a woman's social standing, particularly when positioned as an extension of nurturing roles such as supporting the family or empowering others (Constantinidis, Lebègue, El Abboubi and Salman, 2019). Recognising and strategically aligning with these positive cultural narratives can facilitate the framing of entrepreneurship as a culturally appropriate and rewarding pursuit for women.

2.2.5 Cultural Socialisation in the South African Context

South Africa's diverse multicultural environment encompasses a wide range of cultural norms and socialisation practices that can influence women's participation in entrepreneurship (Ojediran and Anderson, 2020). The country's historical context, including the legacy of apartheid and ongoing traditional cultural practices, has contributed to a complex setting where contemporary economic roles often intersect with deep-rooted cultural expectations. Raimi, Panait, Gigauri and Apostu (2023) highlight that women from different ethnic groups may encounter varying levels of support or challenges related to entrepreneurial pursuits, depending on their specific

cultural backgrounds. Urban centres such as Durban serve as hubs of cultural exchange and transformation, where traditional values co-exist with forward-looking attitudes. Understanding these nuanced social and cultural dynamics is essential for effectively supporting women entrepreneurs within formal frameworks such as WRSETA.

2.3 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

Women entrepreneurs are essential contributors to South Africa's socio-economic progress, actively creating employment opportunities; promoting innovation; and supporting poverty alleviation and community development initiatives (Nzama and Ezeuduji, 2020). Their enterprises operate across a diverse range of sectors, including retail, services, manufacturing and agriculture, demonstrating their expanding presence within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. However, despite their significant contributions, women remain underrepresented in entrepreneurial leadership roles, especially within high-growth and capital-intensive industries, which constrains their overall economic influence and leadership potential.

2.3.1 Historical Evolution of Women Entrepreneurship in South Africa

The history of women's entrepreneurship in South Africa is deeply connected to the nation's socio-political developments. During the apartheid period, Black women faced significant barriers to participating in formal economic activities due to restrictive legislation such as the Group Areas Act and pass laws, which limited their mobility, land access and business opportunities (Mkhize, 2020). As a result, many women's economic efforts were primarily focused on informal or subsistence activities, including sewing, street vending and domestic work (Vezi-Magigaba, 2018).

Following the end of apartheid, policy reforms including the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) strategy and the National Development Plan 2030 have acknowledged the vital role that women play in economic transformation (Gqubule, 2021). These initiatives have sought to enhance access to financing, training programs and formal markets. The creation of institutions like the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) has further supported women through skills development and financial assistance.

Although significant progress has been made, the legacy of economic marginalisation continues to influence women's entrepreneurial participation, especially amongst Black

women and those in rural areas. The transition from informal, survival-oriented ventures to growth-focused enterprises remains uneven and is challenged by ongoing structural inequalities.

2.3.2 Barriers to Entry for Women Entrepreneurs

While South Africa has made progress in advancing gender equity, female entrepreneurs continue to encounter a range of persistent challenges influenced by cultural and systemic factors, as discussed below.

2.3.2.1 Access to Finance

Access to financial resources remains a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs worldwide, including in South Africa. Tiwari and Goel (2020) indicate that women are less likely to secure formal business financing compared to their male counterparts. Contributing factors include limited access to collateral, insufficient credit history, lower levels of financial literacy, and persistent gender biases within financial institutions (Morsy, 2020). Furthermore, traditional financial systems often demand formal documentation, asset-based collateral and established business histories requirements that can be difficult for women to meet, particularly those managing informal or home-based enterprises.

Although various support programs exist, such as funding initiatives by the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), the Department of Small Business Development and other public or private microfinance providers, women entrepreneurs still encounter several obstacles. These include complex application procedures; limited digital connectivity to online platforms; and the insufficient dissemination of information about available funding opportunities, especially in rural and peri-urban communities (Nzama and Ezeudji, 2019). Cultural norms, including social expectations that discourage women from engaging with financial institutions or necessitate male approval, further compound these challenges.

Additionally, women often operate businesses in sectors perceived as less scalable or higher risk by investors, such as catering, beauty services and resale enterprises, which can hinder access to funding. Research by Tiwari and Goel (2020) suggests that women tend to adopt more conservative borrowing behaviours, often choosing to undercapitalise rather than incur debt. This reluctance is influenced by societal conditioning and structural barriers that limit their financial agency.

2.3.2.2 Access to Education and Training

Significant progress has been achieved in bridging the gender gap in formal education. However, disparities remain in access to specialised entrepreneurship training, particularly amongst women in marginalised or underserved communities. According to Ndaba (2021), many women still face challenges in acquiring essential skills such as digital literacy, financial management, marketing and strategic business development competencies that are crucial for fostering enterprise growth and long-term sustainability in a competitive environment.

While organisations such as WRSETA offer business skills development, learnerships and mentorship initiatives aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial capacity, various socio-cultural factors can limit women's active participation. Responsibilities related to caregiving; cultural norms emphasising domestic duties; and limited childcare support may hinder regular attendance at in-person training sessions and engagement in follow-up activities (Adiza, Alamina and Aliyu, 2020). Additionally, program schedules are often designed without fully considering gender-specific time commitments, and offerings may not be accessible in languages or formats aligned with the needs of women operating informal or micro-enterprises.

Furthermore, some training programs lack sufficient depth or adopt a standardised approach that does not accommodate diverse literacy levels, prior business experience or sector-specific requirements. Without personalised, ongoing mentorship and opportunities to apply skills in real-world contexts, many women encounter difficulties in translating training into sustainable enterprise development (Nzama and Ezeuduji, 2020).

2.3.2.3 Market Access

Market access remains a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs, who often operate within saturated, low-margin or informal sectors such as food vending, second-hand clothing and personal care services. This restricts their potential for income growth, scalability and long-term sustainability. These sectors are typically characterised by high levels of competition, price sensitivity and limited customer loyalty, which can hinder women's ability to transition from survival-focused ventures to more sustainable enterprises (Moreira, Marques, Braga and Ratten, 2019).

Additionally, women frequently encounter barriers to accessing comprehensive supply chains, formal procurement channels and high-value customer markets (Kaur and Virk,

2024). They are also often underrepresented in professional networks, trade exhibitions and industry associations that facilitate business development and deal-making. Limited mobility due to family responsibilities, safety considerations or transportation costs further constrains their capacity to explore new geographic markets or expand into online platforms.

Research by Moreira et al. (2019) indicates that many women entrepreneurs are unaware of international market trends, quality standards and branding practices, which impedes their ability to competitively market their products and services. Without access to market intelligence, digital tools or essential infrastructure such as logistics and formal storefronts, women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face difficulties in expanding beyond their local customer base (Shalizi, 2021).

Furthermore, issues such as sexual harassment, safety concerns and gender bias within male-dominated markets or supply chains serve as additional deterrents to women seeking to pursue aggressive market expansion or travel for business opportunities. Mandongwe and Jaravaza (2020) observe that many women prefer to limit their market engagement to familiar or gender-neutral environments, even if it constrains their growth potential. These market limitations are deeply rooted in socio-cultural norms that emphasise women's roles within the domestic sphere, thereby reinforcing structural barriers to expanded economic participation.

2.3.2.4 Cultural norms and societal expectations

Cultural norms and societal expectations significantly influence women's entrepreneurial experiences (Bullough et al., 2022). In various South African communities, particularly those with entrenched patriarchal traditions, women are socialised to prioritise family responsibilities, demonstrate submissiveness and exercise caution regarding risk-taking. These early socialisation processes often emphasise qualities such as obedience, caregiving and modesty over attributes like leadership, assertiveness or entrepreneurial ambition.

This cultural conditioning can impact women's confidence in pursuing business opportunities or lead them to select enterprise types that are culturally deemed more appropriate or socially acceptable (Rehman and Qamar, 2024). Even after establishing their businesses, women may encounter criticism for extensive time commitments outside the home, engaging in travel without male accompaniment or managing

finances independently. Such societal responses can restrict operational freedom and influence their self-perception as entrepreneurs, thus affecting emotional well-being.

Moreover, decision-making authority is frequently limited. Tundui and Tundui (2021) state that family structures and community dynamics may involve male partners or elders in determining how business revenue is allocated or what enterprises are deemed suitable for women. These gender-based restrictions can hinder women's ability to take calculated risks, re-invest profits or expand their operations.

Cultural influences also shape consumer behaviour (Rachwal-Mueller and Fedotova, 2024). In some contexts, customers may exhibit a preference for transacting with male business owners, assuming they possess greater authority or trustworthiness. These implicit biases can affect perceptions of women entrepreneurs, potentially limiting customer trust, brand recognition and market opportunities.

2.3.2.5 Government initiatives and support programs

Government initiatives and support programs, including those led by sector education and training authorities like WRSETA, aim to mitigate some of these barriers through skills development, mentorship and resource access. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of these programs is frequently impacted by prevailing cultural contexts. Recognising and addressing the interplay between cultural socialisation and entrepreneurial support is essential for designing more inclusive and effective interventions.

2.3.2.6 Isolation from business networks

Women are underrepresented in industry, trade and business associations. This lack of networks prevents women from accessing the good organisations or individuals who may be able to mentor them as they navigate the commercial world (Magigaba and Jili, 2019). Since most women are not frequently expected to own their own firms, they are not exposed to business fundamentals and are instead encouraged to participate in any type of business group. In the majority of cases, the networks that do exist only involve men, with a few wives of the members who are included as accompanying rather than directly involved. Moreover, women in business may become isolated due to a lack of business connections, which may have led to women networking exclusively with other women (Mozumdar, Hagelaar, Materia, Omta, Islam and van der Velde, 2019).

2.3.2.7 Access to policymakers

Most women have limited access to and representation in decision-making bodies (Thelma and Ngulube, 2024). According to Keohane (2020), large corporations and men have easier access to policymakers, who are more often viewed as their peers. Women are less likely to join traditional business organisations and even less likely to hold senior roles within these organisations, which limits their ability to lobby for policies (Handaragama and Kusakabe, 2021). The lack of information availability for women also affects their ability to make informed policy decisions (Ngubo and Mubangizi, 2020). The following are the main elements that influence the performance of women entrepreneurs, particularly in developing continents like Africa: Women are more susceptible to the negative effects of trade reform because of conflicting gender roles; gender inequality; inappropriate technology; restrictions at the legal, institutional and policy levels; restrictions relating to assets (land); a lack of knowledge to take advantage of opportunities; and poor mobilisation of women entrepreneurs (Alene, 2020).

2.3.3 Intersectionality: Gender, Class and Race

The entrepreneurial experiences of women in South Africa are diverse and influenced by a complex interplay of social identities, including gender, race and socioeconomic status. This understanding, originating from the concept of intersectionality introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), highlights the importance of considering multiple factors when analysing the challenges faced by women (Begum, Amin and Khatun, 2024). Recognising this complexity is essential for developing effective, inclusive policies and support mechanisms for entrepreneurs. In the South African context, where historical legacies of apartheid and ongoing socio-economic disparities continue to impact access to resources, opportunities and decision-making authority, an intersectional approach is particularly valuable for fostering equitable economic development.

2.3.3.1 Race and Gender

According to Branch and Kasztelnik (2023), black women entrepreneurs encounter significant challenges, including systemic racial disparities rooted in historical societal structures and gender norms that may limit women's participation in economic activities. According to Jury (2021), black women are underrepresented in high-growth business sectors and encounter greater difficulties in securing venture capital, bank financing and access to influential business networks compared to their White and

male peers. Furthermore, despite the existence of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies, women often remain on the periphery unless targeted, gender-focused initiatives are put into place to support their entrepreneurial endeavours.

2.3.3.2 Class and Geography

Class plays a pivotal role in influencing entrepreneurial pathways. Women from low-income backgrounds, particularly those residing in rural and peri-urban areas, often face barriers to entry within formal entrepreneurial ecosystems (Brändle and Kuckertz, 2023). They typically operate informal enterprises with limited prospects for growth due to challenges such as restricted access to education, transportation, technology and financial literacy. Additionally, these women are frequently deeply rooted in traditional cultural norms that emphasise domestic responsibilities, which may restrict their time and capacity to pursue business objectives (Pramanik, 2024).

Conversely, women from middle- to upper-income brackets, especially those with university-level education, digital proficiency and exposure to urban environments generally benefit from greater access to mentorship, specialised training programs (such as WRSETA initiatives) and formal markets. Nevertheless, they may still face gender-based biases in relation to leadership opportunities, investor engagement and balancing entrepreneurial ambitions with societal expectations related to motherhood and caregiving responsibilities.

2.3.3.3 Intersectional Barriers in Support Systems

Despite the existence of support organisations such as WRSETA, many development initiatives continue to implement standardised approaches that may not effectively address the diverse needs of women. For example, women in rural areas may face challenges in attending urban-based workshops. Moreover, formal lending criteria often exclude women lacking property or established credit histories, thus disproportionately impacting Black women and women from working-class backgrounds. Assumptions that all women benefit equally from uniform entrepreneurship programs overlook the ways in which intersecting forms of discrimination can perpetuate existing inequalities.

2.4 THE ROLE OF CULTURAL NORMS IN SHAPING ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR

2.4.1 Gender Roles and Business Decision-Making

Cultural gender norms often influence perceptions of appropriate behaviour for women and men, thereby impacting decision-making processes amongst female entrepreneurs. In many South African communities, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, women are traditionally expected to focus on caregiving, obedience and family responsibilities, which can affect their engagement with assertive or risk-taking behaviours commonly associated with entrepreneurship (Adom and Anambane, 2019). These cultural roles shape women's self-perceptions regarding leadership, management and business expansion.

This internalisation of traditional gender expectations may lead to cautious decision-making, a tendency to avoid seeking external funding or reluctance to grow businesses beyond household operations. Additionally, decision-making in women-owned businesses may often be influenced or deferred to male relatives, reflecting broader cultural norms concerning male authority and control (Mandongwe and Jaravaza, 2020). Consequently, entrepreneurial ambitions may be moderated by societal gender roles, which can restrict strategic autonomy.

2.4.2 Patriarchy and Social Expectations

Patriarchy is defined by Mpunzana and Mofokeng (2023) as a societal system where men predominantly hold leadership roles and exert primary authority and remains a significant aspect of many South African cultures. Within such contexts, women are often perceived primarily as economic dependents rather than as entrepreneurs or decision-makers. These perceptions are reinforced by community norms, media representations and intergenerational beliefs that may inhibit women from pursuing independence through business endeavours (Bullough et al., 2022).

For female entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA, such expectations may manifest in both subtle and overt ways, including a lack of support from spouses, limited encouragement from family members, or social criticism of their ambitions. Women who seek to challenge these cultural norms may be subject to perceptions of being overly ambitious or neglecting traditional roles, which can lead to emotional stress and diminished motivation. These societal expectations influence not only women's

decisions to start and grow their businesses but also impact their approaches to business structuring, time management and goal setting.

2.4.3 Religious and Traditional Beliefs

Religion and traditional customs significantly influence societal norms, especially concerning gender roles. In communities within Durban and the broader KwaZulu-Natal region, religious teachings, whether from Christian, indigenous African or Islamic perspectives, can either support or pose challenges to women's engagement in entrepreneurship. For instance, some conservative religious interpretations may emphasise hierarchical gender roles, which can limit women's opportunities to assume leadership positions or manage financial affairs independently (McMorris and Glass, 2018.). Additionally, traditional expectations such as seeking guidance from male elders or fulfilling lineage-related responsibilities may impact women's mobility, autonomy and the ability to build professional networks. Conversely, religion and tradition can also serve as empowering forces. Many women draw strength and legitimacy from their faith, using cultural and religious values to position their entrepreneurial efforts as contributions to family and community well-being (Koburtay, Syed and Haloub, 2020). These examples demonstrate the complex ways in which beliefs and cultural norms shape individual behaviour and identities within entrepreneurial settings.

2.4.4 Cultural Attitudes toward Risk and Autonomy

Entrepreneurship involves a degree of risk-taking and autonomous decision-making, which may sometimes be at odds with cultural norms that emphasise caution, dependence and self-sacrifice, particularly for women (Aziz and Salloum, 2023). In many South African cultural contexts, especially amongst older generations, women are socialised to avoid high-risk activities, including financial investments, business expansion or entering male-dominated sectors (Hofstede, 2011). These cultural perspectives influence women's risk appetite and often lead to a preference for low-risk, informal enterprises such as home-based catering, clothing resale or hairdressing (Park and Chirkov, 2020). Additionally, autonomy in business decision-making may be limited by expectations to seek family approval or defer to male authorities, potentially impacting the agility and growth trajectory of these ventures. Furthermore, concerns about social reputation or community perceptions can discourage women from pursuing greater independence. For instance, women who frequently travel for business or engage with male clients may face gossip or community disapproval.

These cultural norms shape not only the opportunities available to women but also the scope of their aspirations and ambitions.

2.5 THE WRSETA CONTEXT: TRAINING, EMPOWERMENT AND LIMITATIONS

2.5.1 Overview of WRSETA Programs for Women

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) is one of South Africa's 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), responsible for promoting skills development and capacity enhancement within the Wholesale and Retail industries (Policy, 2018). For women entrepreneurs, WRSETA offers targeted training initiatives designed to develop competencies in business management, customer service, financial literacy and supply chain operations (Sewell, Steyn, Venter and Mason, 2016). These initiatives include learnership programs, entrepreneurship development workshops, mentorship schemes and funding opportunities to support small enterprise growth.

Aligned with national transformation objectives and gender equity targets articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, WRSETA endeavours to empower women by facilitating their integration into formal economic activities; enhancing employability; and supporting the establishment and expansion of their businesses (Moloi, 2021). Several of WRSETA's programs are specifically aimed at narrowing the gender gap in entrepreneurial participation by promoting women's involvement in formal training and enterprise development initiatives.

2.5.2 Strengths and Achievements of WRSETA

Wholesale and Retail Sector Education Training Authority has made notable progress in advancing skills development and strengthening business readiness amongst women in South Africa's Wholesale and Retail industries. Over the years, the organisation has effectively trained thousands of women in both foundational and advanced retail management, equipping them with the essential competencies needed for success in the sector (Aspeling and Mason, 2020). Additionally, WRSETA has extended its outreach to underserved communities by supporting rural and township-based enterprises through localised entrepreneurship training programs, thereby fostering inclusive economic participation (Raap and Mason, 2018).

In its commitment to cultivating a robust entrepreneurial culture, WRSETA actively promotes youth and women's entrepreneurship through strategic partnerships with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and other Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) (Motsie, 2023). These collaborations facilitate the delivery of structured, practical and accessible training initiatives aimed at empowering women to establish and sustain their own businesses.

Furthermore, WRSETA has demonstrated a dedicated commitment to gender equity through the implementation of Women's Empowerment Initiatives, especially during Women's Month and other national campaigns (Koyana and Mason, 2018). These initiatives aim to raise awareness; promote increased female representation in the economy; and provide platforms for women to access resources and showcase their entrepreneurial accomplishments.

According to the evaluations documented in the WRSETA Annual Report (2022), women who have completed these training programs frequently report increased confidence, a clearer understanding of formal business operations, improved financial literacy and enhanced employability (Motsie, 2023). Collectively, these outcomes highlight WRSETA's contribution to the national objectives of economic inclusion and reinforces its important role in supporting South Africa's pursuit of a more inclusive, diverse and competitive economy.

2.5.3 Structural and Operational Challenges

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) has made valuable contributions to fostering entrepreneurship development. However, it continues to face several structural and operational challenges that may impede the full realisation of its strategic objectives, particularly regarding gender equity and cultural inclusivity amongst women entrepreneurs.

A notable challenge is the predominantly urban-focused delivery of WRSETA programs. Most training sessions and capacity-building initiatives are held in urban centres, which can inadvertently limit participation from women in rural or peri-urban areas who encounter logistical, financial and transportation hurdles (Raap and Mason, 2018). This urban-centric approach may contribute to unequal access to development opportunities and exacerbate disparities between urban and rural women entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the limited scope of follow-up support following initial training sessions presents a concern. Mostert (2018) states that while participants often acquire valuable skills during workshops or short courses, ongoing mentorship, business incubation and technical assistance are frequently lacking. The absence of sustained support can hinder women's ability to practically implement their learning and to scale their enterprises sustainably.

Furthermore, the reliance on standardised training modules across diverse contexts does not adequately address the varied socio-cultural realities faced by women in different communities. Franz, Dulvy and Marock (2022) found that uniform program content may overlook challenges related to cultural norms, household responsibilities and local economic conditions, thereby reducing the relevance and applicability of the training to participants' lived experiences.

Language and literacy barriers also pose significant obstacles. Training materials are often provided exclusively in English, which can limit accessibility for participants with low literacy levels or those who communicate primarily in indigenous languages (Mostert, 2018). This language disparity may diminish the effectiveness of training initiatives, particularly for older women and those from rural backgrounds.

These operational and structural considerations highlight the need for WRSETA to develop more adaptable, culturally sensitive and community-oriented approaches to its training and development programs. By prioritising interventions that acknowledge the complex interplay of gender, culture and geographic context, WRSETA can enhance its capacity to empower women entrepreneurs across South Africa's diverse communities.

2.5.4 Cultural Competence in WRSETA Interventions

According to Eden, Chisom and Adeniyi (2024), cultural competence encompasses the capacity of institutions and programs to effectively engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds by recognising and integrating their values, beliefs and social contexts. In the field of entrepreneurship development, cultivating cultural competence is vital to ensuring that training initiatives are aligned with participants' lived experiences and do not inadvertently perpetuate existing inequalities (Agrahari, 2024).

Currently, WRSETA's program structure predominantly adopts a technical and economic perspective on development, often presuming that all entrepreneurs operate within neutral or gender-equivalent contexts. This approach may limit its effectiveness

in addressing the cultural and emotional challenges faced by women, such as family responsibilities, societal expectations and local perceptions of female leadership (Aziz and Salloum, 2023). To enhance its cultural responsiveness, WRSETA should consider incorporating gender-transformative modules that actively challenge patriarchal norms and promote equitable participation in entrepreneurship. These modules would serve to raise awareness of structural and cultural barriers and equip participants with the skills necessary to critically analyse and address these challenges within their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Furthermore, WRSETA could form strategic partnerships with community leaders, cultural influencers and women's advocacy organisations to ensure that training content and delivery methods are contextualised appropriately. Such collaborations would help ensure that program materials are pertinent, respectful and sensitive to the cultural realities of the women served, thereby fostering community trust and legitimacy, particularly in conservative environments. Implementing flexible scheduling options for training sessions would also significantly accommodate women with caregiving responsibilities. By adapting to their availability, WRSETA can make its programs more inclusive and accessible to women who might otherwise face participation barriers due to household or childcare commitments.

Lastly, establishing peer mentorship networks based on culturally relevant leadership models can create a sustainable support system. These networks would enable women to learn from others with similar experiences, fostering solidarity, shared knowledge and motivation to succeed. Aligning program content and delivery with the cultural contexts and everyday realities of participants strengthens the impact of WRSETA's initiatives and contribute to the long-term empowerment and success of women entrepreneurs across South Africa.

2.6 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

This research employs two interconnected theoretical frameworks, namely Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory to examine the nuanced relationship between cultural socialisation processes and women's entrepreneurial activities within the WRSETA context. These frameworks offer valuable insights into how cultural norms and institutional structures influence the entrepreneurial engagement of women in South Africa's Wholesale and Retail sectors.

2.6.1 Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory, established by Eagly in 1987, suggests that individuals develop internalised understandings of socially constructed gender roles through continuous cultural socialisation processes (Eagly Woo and Diekmann, 2012). These roles delineate the expected behaviours for men and women, often reinforcing traditional perspectives that associate women with nurturing, support and primary caregiving responsibilities (Carter, 2014). This theoretical framework is particularly pertinent for analysing how culturally influenced gender expectations impact women's participation in entrepreneurial activities.

In the context of women entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA, Social Role Theory provides valuable insight into the potential tensions between their entrepreneurial ambitions and the societal expectations imposed by family, community and broader societal norms. Women may encounter internal conflicts as they balance their identities as business leaders pursuing growth and independence with culturally prescribed roles as caregivers and nurturers. The theory thus serves as a useful lens to understand how women may adopt, challenge or re-interpret traditional gender roles in pursuit of their entrepreneurial objectives.

Furthermore, Social Role Theory sheds light on the psychological and behavioural effects stemming from cultural socialisation (Anglin, Kincaid, Short and Allen, 2022). For example, women socialised to perceive assertiveness or leadership as incompatible with traditional femininity may experience challenges related to self-confidence or may hesitate to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. These internalised norms can influence decision-making, risk-taking behaviours and their engagement with support structures facilitated by organisations such as WRSETA.

2.6.2 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory offers a comprehensive framework for examining how individual behaviours are influenced by both formal structures and informal cultural norms within institutional settings (Risi, Vignea, Bohn and Wickert, 2023). These institutions encompass organisational entities such as WRSETA, as well as overarching societal expectations and belief systems. This theoretical perspective is instrumental in analysing how such structures may facilitate or constrain entrepreneurial activities.

The application of Institutional Theory is particularly relevant to evaluating the functioning of WRSETA's training and empowerment initiatives within the wider socio-

cultural context. While WRSETA is established as a formal organisation aimed at fostering skills development and entrepreneurship, its effectiveness is partly contingent upon the alignment of its programs with the cultural realities of its participants. For example, the success of training programs may be impacted if they do not account for cultural considerations such as the gender roles or mobility constraints typically faced by women.

Additionally, Institutional Theory allows for an examination of whether WRSETA is itself influenced by the prevailing cultural norms that it aims to challenge. Institutional structures are often shaped by the societal values of their operating environments. Consequently, understanding the extent to which WRSETA either upholds or challenges existing gender norms is essential for assessing its capacity to empower women entrepreneurs and promote inclusive economic development.

2.6.3 Integrative Value of Both Theories

Together, Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory provide a strong theoretical foundation for this research. Social Role Theory sheds light on the internalised beliefs and behaviours influencing women's entrepreneurial activities, while Institutional Theory examines how formal support structures such as WRSETA interact with culturally influenced behaviours. By integrating these perspectives, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between individual identity, cultural expectations and institutional support. This dual-theoretical framework facilitates a detailed analysis of the opportunities and challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA in Durban. It also serves as a basis for evaluating the extent to which existing institutional support mechanisms effectively address the cultural factors impacting women's entrepreneurial experiences.

2.7 ROLE OF INFORMAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

According to Saleem, Asif and Lodhi (2024), informal networks and social capital are integral components in shaping the entrepreneurial career paths of women, particularly in environments where formal institutional support may be limited or insufficiently aligned with local cultural contexts. Social capital encompasses the resources individuals can access through their social relationships, including trust, information sharing and support networks (Claridge, 2018). For women entrepreneurs in South Africa and similar settings, familial ties, community connections and mentorship

relationships often serve as the foundational elements of these informal support systems.

2.7.1 Family and Community Support

Family remains a key source of emotional and practical assistance for women entrepreneurs. Often, families provide initial capital, childcare support and moral encouragement, facilitating women's efforts to establish and sustain their businesses within culturally acceptable frameworks (Constantinidis, Lebègue, El Abboubi and Salman, 2019). However, the nature of this support can be complex because while families can empower women, they may also reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations, which can impose limitations on their time and mobility.

Community networks further contribute to entrepreneurial success by offering access to localised market intelligence, informal lending circles and cooperative work environments. Research in regions such as KwaZulu-Natal has demonstrated how participation in community savings groups, stokvels and church-based groups enhances women's financial stability and social standing (Coetzee and Cross, 2022). These networks often fill service gaps left by formal financial institutions and government support programs.

2.7.2 Mentorship and Peer Networks

According to Emma (2024), mentorship is recognised as a vital aspect of social capital, assisting women entrepreneurs in overcoming challenges related to market access, regulatory compliance and balancing work and personal responsibilities. Peer mentorship networks create platforms where women can exchange experiences, strategies and encouragement, thereby strengthening their confidence and business skills (Elliott, Mavriplis and Anis, 2020).

In culturally diverse contexts such as South Africa, mentorship approaches that are sensitive to local social norms and gendered experiences tend to be particularly effective. Women benefit when mentors understand the interplay between cultural expectations and entrepreneurial aspirations, helping mentees develop strategies that respect familial commitments whilst fostering business growth.

2.7.3 Connecting Informal and Formal Support Systems

The integration of informal networks with formal institutional support mechanisms, such as programs offered by WRSETA, is essential for comprehensive entrepreneurship

development. While formal training provides technical knowledge and skill development, informal social capital enhances access to resources, market opportunities and the psychological resilience elements critical for sustained success (Laing, van Stel and Storey, 2022).

Nonetheless, institutional initiatives frequently underutilise the potential of social capital by insufficiently engaging community networks and peer support systems. Recognising and incorporating these informal mechanisms into program design can improve relevance and effectiveness, thus enabling women entrepreneurs to leverage both cultural assets and formal resources. Kebede (2018) stated that informal networks and social capital form a vital ecosystem that influences women's entrepreneurial outcomes. Family, community and mentorship structures provide not only financial support but also cultural legitimacy, emotional resilience and practical knowledge (Dillahunt et al.,2022). For initiatives such as WRSETA to maximise their impact, they should actively acknowledge, engage with and build upon these informal support systems, thereby creating a culturally informed, holistic framework that empowers women entrepreneurs to succeed.

2.8 COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

While cultural socialisation significantly impacts the entrepreneurial activities of women in South Africa, comparable patterns are evident in various regions worldwide, each influenced by distinct socio-cultural, religious and economic factors. Analysing how women in countries such as Nigeria, India and Brazil address cultural expectations within their entrepreneurial pursuits provides valuable comparative insights into common challenges and context-specific differences. This broader perspective also enables one to evaluate how South Africa's initiatives, including those by WRSETA, align with or differ from global efforts to support female entrepreneurship within culturally constrained environments.

2.8.1 Nigeria: Influence of Cultural and Religious Norms on Women's Entrepreneurship

In Nigeria, societal attitudes towards gender roles are heavily shaped by cultural, religious and ethnic traditions. Particularly in northern regions, Islamic practices often emphasise domestic responsibilities for women, which can limit their participation in entrepreneurial ventures (Bastian, Sidani and El Amine, 2018). These cultural

expectations may hinder women's engagement in public business activities and risk-taking behaviours. Despite these challenges, Nigerian women have demonstrated significant resilience by actively participating in the informal economy, frequently utilising familial networks and rotating savings groups to establish small-scale enterprises. Research by Nuhu (2021) indicates that although entrepreneurship often serves as a means of economic survival, many women display notable innovation and perseverance. Nonetheless, Adisa, Cooke and Iwowo (2020) highlighted that support from formal institutions remains inconsistent, and existing programs frequently lack the cultural specificity needed to effectively challenge entrenched patriarchal mindsets that influence business behaviour.

2.8.2 India: Socioeconomic Class, Caste and Domestic Expectations

In India, societal norms related to caste, gender and familial honour profoundly influence women's involvement in entrepreneurship. Women from lower caste backgrounds often face discouragement from pursuing entrepreneurial activities due to perceptions regarding purity and social acceptability, coupled with limited access to financial resources and markets (Agarwal, Lenka and Singh, 2020). Amongst urban and educated women, traditional expectations around marriage and motherhood often take precedence over professional ambitions. While initiatives such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and Women Entrepreneurship Platforms (WEP) aim to promote female entrepreneurship, they must contend with deeply rooted cultural traditions that undervalue women's independence (Ghatak, Alam and Qureshi, 2023). Additionally, India's caste system introduces unique layers of social exclusion that intersect with gender and socioeconomic status, necessitating culturally sensitive and localised intervention strategies (Chander, 2019).

2.8.3 Brazil: Community Support Structures and Cultural Attitudes

In Brazil, entrepreneurial activity amongst women is influenced by a diverse set of cultural factors, including Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian traditions and the legacy of colonial patriarchy (Hagberg, 2024). Although women have achieved notable progress, particularly within urban service industries, traditional expectations regarding maternal responsibilities and family commitments remain influential. Community-based support networks and social solidarity groups play a significant role in empowering women, providing relational capital to balance work and family life. Compared to other countries, Brazil exhibits a relatively higher acceptance of female entrepreneurial aspirations. However, Machado (2025) states that structural inequalities and gender-

based violence continue to pose challenges to sustained business development and confidence.

2.8.4 Summary of Comparative Insights

A common theme emerges across these national contexts, namely cultural socialisation through gender expectations, religious teachings and family traditions, which significantly influences women's entrepreneurial engagement. The effectiveness and scope of institutional responses vary widely. South Africa's progressive legal framework provides an advantageous starting point. However, without embedding cultural sensitivity into program design, there is a risk of perpetuating exclusion. Drawing lessons from international examples, particularly those emphasising localised support and community engagement, can strengthen South Africa's efforts to develop inclusive, sustainable and transformative entrepreneurial environments.

This survey of the literature on women and entrepreneurship paints a complicated picture of the major social, environmental and practical obstacles that women must overcome in order to start their own firms or grow their current ones. Given the variety of difficulties and barriers they face, it is likely that women's economic potential is not being fully realised and that they are underrepresented in the nation's officially recognised economic activity. From the literature reviewed and the findings, one can conclude that cultural value, practices and socio-economic variables have great negative significance and influence on the performance and success of female entrepreneurs in South Africa and other African Countries.

2.9 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Over the past twenty years, scholarly research has increasingly focused on women entrepreneurship in South Africa, primarily emphasising challenges such as access to finance, mentorship, training programs and regulatory environments. These efforts have yielded valuable insights into the structural barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, there remains a noteworthy gap in the literature regarding the influence of cultural socialisation on entrepreneurial behaviour, particularly how cultural norms shape women's engagement within formal institutional frameworks.

Few studies have explored the intersection of cultural socialisation and institutional support mechanisms, especially in the context of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) (Dlodlo, Turner and Buthelezi, 2022; Motsie, 2023; Hayes and

Miletzky, 2024). While organisations such as WRSETA play a vital role in fostering entrepreneurship through specialised training, capacity-building and funding initiatives, the cultural factors influencing women's participation and interactions with these programs are often under-examined. Consequently, many well-designed interventions may fall short of their objectives due to misalignments rooted in cultural contexts.

Existing literature frequently treats women entrepreneurs as a homogeneous group, thereby neglecting the ways in which embedded gender norms influence business behaviours, decision-making processes and engagement with training opportunities. This oversight is particularly evident in the Wholesale and Retail sectors, where community and familial expectations often heavily influence women's roles and participation. Moreover, limited research has addressed how institutional policies and empowerment initiatives are shaped or constrained by prevailing cultural norms. This gap hampers a comprehensive understanding of how support systems like WRSETA interact with and are affected by the socio-cultural environments in which women entrepreneurs operate.

This study aims to address these gaps by analysing the role of cultural socialisation in shaping the entrepreneurial behaviours of women registered with WRSETA. It aims to assess the alignment or potential conflict between WRSETA's support mechanisms and culturally influenced behaviours. The study employs a dual-theoretical framework that integrates Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationship between culture and institutional support. By exploring these critical dimensions, the research will contribute to both theoretical development and to practical strategies for designing culturally responsive entrepreneurship support initiatives that effectively meet the needs of women entrepreneurs across South Africa.

2.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by a conceptual framework that examines the relationship between cultural socialisation and institutional support within the context of women entrepreneurs operating in South Africa's Wholesale and Retail sectors. The framework integrates Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory to analyse how culturally influenced behaviours interact with formal empowerment initiatives provided by the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA).

2.10.1 Cultural Socialisation and Entrepreneurial Behaviour

Drawing on Social Role Theory, individuals tend to internalise culturally constructed gender roles that influence their identities, values and behaviours. In South Africa's historically patriarchal society, women are often socialised into roles emphasising domesticity, nurturing and subservience (Dankwa, 2018). These societal expectations impact women's perceptions of entrepreneurship, shaping their self-efficacy, risk-taking tendencies, leadership ambitions and engagement in competitive markets. Within this context, women entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA operate in a social environment where entrepreneurial activities may be perceived as contrasting with traditional gender expectations. Their behaviours such as participation in training, application of new skills, business management and decision-making are influenced by an ongoing negotiation between internalised cultural norms and entrepreneurial aspirations (Opute et al., 2021).

2.10.2 Institutional Influence: WRSETA as a Formal Support System

Institutional Theory provides a lens to understand WRSETA as a formal institution functioning within a broader socio-cultural environment, with objectives that include promoting entrepreneurship and skills development amongst marginalised groups, including women. Its policies, programs and strategic initiatives are shaped by legal frameworks as well as societal norms and beliefs. In this framework, WRSETA's initiatives such as training programs, mentorship and funding opportunities are examined for their alignment or potential mismatch with the cultural realities of women beneficiaries (Joubert, 2024). For example, Jayachandran (2020) indicated that the timing and location of training sessions may influence participation if they conflict with women's domestic responsibilities. Similarly, mentoring programs that do not consider culturally embedded communication styles or hierarchical norms may have limited effectiveness (Mullen and Klimaitis, 2021).

2.10.3 The Interaction Between Culture and Institutional Support

Central to this framework is the dynamic interaction between cultural socialisation and institutional support. Cultural norms influence how women engage with WRSETA's programs, while the design and delivery of these programs are affected by the socio-cultural context. This interaction creates a complex system where empowerment is either facilitated or impeded, depending on how well institutional strategies align with women's lived experiences.

The framework emphasises the role of internalised gender norms in shaping entrepreneurial behaviour (as described by Social Role Theory); the responsiveness of institutional support to these gender norms (analysed through Institutional Theory); and lastly, the feedback mechanism whereby cultural norms influence the effectiveness of institutional efforts, which in turn can reinforce or challenge existing cultural assumptions.

2.10.4 Implications for Policy and Practice

This conceptual framework serves as a foundation for analysing women's entrepreneurial experiences and understanding the factors contributing to the success or limitations of institutional interventions. By identifying areas where institutional offerings align or conflict with cultural realities, the study aims to inform culturally sensitive policy adjustments, program development and support strategies.

Furthermore, the framework contributes to academic discourse by linking individual-level cultural influences with system-level institutional structures, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of women's entrepreneurship in South Africa.

2.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of relevant scholarly literature concerning cultural socialisation, women's entrepreneurship and institutional support mechanisms, with a focus on women registered with WRSETA in Durban. It examined the influence of cultural norms, particularly gender roles, on entrepreneurial behaviours such as confidence, risk propensity and business participation. While WRSETA offers essential training and support services, the impact of these programs may be influenced by prevailing cultural expectations that can limit women's full engagement in entrepreneurial activities. The chapter also introduced Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory to contextualise how culturally driven behaviours interact with institutional frameworks. Furthermore, it identified a notable gap in the existing research: there is limited exploration of how cultural socialisation intersects with institutional support systems like WRSETA. This study aimed to fill that gap by providing a culturally informed analysis of women's entrepreneurial experiences within the Wholesale and Retail sectors. The subsequent chapter detailed the methodological framework employed to investigate these issues amongst WRSETA-registered female entrepreneurs in Durban.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology utilised to examine the impact of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial activities of women registered with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The selected methodology aligns with the study's aim to investigate the interplay between entrenched cultural norms and institutional support mechanisms in shaping women's entrepreneurial decisions and behaviours. Considering the nuanced and context-dependent nature of cultural influences, a qualitative research approach was adopted to facilitate a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of participants' experiences. This chapter details the research design, target population, sampling strategies, data collection instruments and data analysis procedures. It also addresses the ethical considerations implemented to uphold research credibility, confidentiality and integrity. Overall, this chapter establishes the methodological framework necessary for analysing how cultural factors and institutional support affect women entrepreneurs within the Wholesale and Retail sectors.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative research approach to thoroughly explore the cultural and institutional factors that influence the entrepreneurial activities of women registered with WRSETA in Durban. A qualitative methodology is particularly well-suited for investigating complex social phenomena as it enables an in-depth understanding of individuals' lived experiences, perceptions and the meanings they assign to their actions and environments (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

The primary focus of this study was to examine the interplay between cultural socialisation and institutional support in shaping women's entrepreneurial behaviours, necessitating an interpretive and flexible research framework. Quantitative methods would not adequately capture the nuanced insights, values and motivations rooted in cultural norms and institutional structures. Conversely, qualitative research provided an open-ended approach that allows participants to articulate their experiences in their

own words, fostering a richer data collection process (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020).

The selection of a qualitative approach was further grounded in the theoretical frameworks guiding this study. Social Role Theory highlights how individuals internalise societal expectations related to gender roles, whilst Institutional Theory explores the influence of formal and informal structures on behaviour. These perspectives necessitate a methodological strategy capable of uncovering subjective interpretations of women's roles within family, community and business contexts, as well as their perceptions of support or barriers encountered within WRSETA. Through this design, the data collected reflected the layered and contextually grounded interactions between cultural norms and institutional mechanisms. The qualitative methodology thus provided a comprehensive foundation for a holistic, culturally sensitive analysis of women's entrepreneurship within the Wholesale and Retail sector.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research entails a comprehensive exploration aimed at understanding participants' perspectives and experiences within their natural contexts (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). An exemplary illustration of this approach can be observed in anthropological research, where investigators immerse themselves in participants' environments to collect narratives and provide detailed accounts of lived experiences (Yadav, 2022). Such studies are grounded in a constructivist paradigm, emphasising that social reality is subjective and constructed through human interactions, thereby enabling the exploration of multiple, context-specific interpretations of experiences.

According to Allan (2020), a key characteristic of qualitative research is its occurrence within the natural settings related to the phenomenon under study, as opposed to controlled environments like laboratories. This approach is particularly valuable for examining how social, cultural and contextual factors influence individual and group behaviours. In the context of this study, understanding how cultural socialisation impacts women's entrepreneurial activities necessitates examining their lived experiences within their communities, households and business environment settings where cultural norms are both transmitted and practised.

Liamputtong (2020) further emphasises that qualitative research is inherently descriptive and presented through narrative formats, rather than numerical data or statistical tables. This narrative approach facilitates the uncovering of in-depth insights,

emotional nuances, motivations and meanings often overlooked by quantitative methods. For this study, detailed descriptions of how women registered with WRSETA interpret cultural expectations, respond to gender norms and navigate institutional challenges were vital to grasping the complexity of their entrepreneurial behaviours.

In addition, Nassaji (2020) highlighted that qualitative researchers serve as the primary instruments in data collection and analysis, relying on their intuition, interpersonal skills and reflective practices, rather than solely on standardised tools like surveys or tests. This immersive approach allows for a more adaptable, human-centred investigation. In this context, the researcher's ability to establish rapport with participants, understand local cultural nuances and sensitively explore issues such as gender bias and social constraints was essential.

Furthermore, qualitative research is particularly well-suited for exploratory investigations where little prior understanding exists (Allan 2020), such as the relationship between cultural socialisation and formal entrepreneurial training. It facilitates the emergence of themes and patterns such as internalised gender norms, resilience and community recognition that might not be anticipated. This approach supports the development of grounded, context-specific frameworks rooted in the participants' lived experiences.

Given the aim of this study, which explored the subjective meanings and social realities of WRSETA-registered women entrepreneurs in Durban and how these are influenced by cultural, gender and institutional factors, qualitative research was both appropriate and indispensable. It provided the necessary depth and flexibility to capture the complexities, diversities and contradictions inherent in women's entrepreneurial journeys within culturally rich settings.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

The study's population consisted of 1104 female entrepreneurs based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal who are officially registered with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA). This specific group was deliberately selected due to their active participation in WRSETA's entrepreneurial training, skills development and support programs within the Wholesale and Retail industries. WRSETA plays a significant role in the South African skills development framework by implementing targeted initiatives aimed at empowering women and fostering inclusive

economic growth. Female entrepreneurs involved in these initiatives are a valuable demographic for exploring how institutional support is perceived, accessed and utilised, particularly in the context of cultural and social influences.

Focusing on this clearly defined population allowed for an examination of the interaction between cultural norms and institutional mechanisms within a practical setting. These women navigate entrepreneurial endeavours whilst also managing culturally influenced expectations related to gender roles, family responsibilities and leadership. Their experiences offered meaningful insights into the ways in which social and institutional factors intersect to impact entrepreneurial behaviour. This targeted group was carefully chosen to facilitate the collection of rich, contextually relevant qualitative data, consistent with the study's theoretical frameworks which highlight the influence of social and structural environments on individual decision-making and actions.

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of a population to participate in a research study (Gravetter and Forzano, 2021). This study utilised purposive sampling as the primary method for selecting participants who could offer comprehensive, relevant and insightful information aligned with the research objectives. Ahmad and Wilkins (2024) describe purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique commonly employed in qualitative research to intentionally select individuals with specific characteristics or experiences pertinent to the study.

The sample comprised seven formally registered female entrepreneurs in Durban who had participated in WRSETA's training or support programs. These participants were chosen due to their direct engagement with institutional support mechanisms within the Wholesale and Retail sectors, as well as their contextual cultural backgrounds. Their insights were vital for exploring the relationship between cultural socialisation and institutional empowerment. Each participant was chosen from the different sectors represented by WRSETA.

The sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which is the point at which additional data no longer yields new information or themes (Mwita, 2022). This approach ensured a sufficient range of perspectives whilst maintaining a manageable scope for detailed analysis. Participant recruitment involved collaboration

with WRSETA coordinators and obtaining gatekeeper permissions to identify eligible entrepreneurs.

3.5 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Participant recruitment was conducted in partnership with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA), serving as a key institutional collaborator to facilitate access to the target population. Furthermore, WRSETA provided access to a database of registered female entrepreneurs who had previously participated in its training and development programs within the Durban region. This approach ensured engagement with individuals who met the specified inclusion criteria and were positioned to provide valuable insights into the influence of cultural and institutional factors on entrepreneurship.

The initial outreach was established through email and telephone communication during which potential participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study. A concise overview of the research was shared, along with an invitation to participate. Follow-up contacts were made as needed to confirm interest and address any questions or concerns that the participants may have had.

To adhere to ethical research standards, each participant received a participant information sheet outlining the study's objectives, details of their involvement, confidentiality measures and their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Informed consent (Appendix B) was secured through a signed consent form, which was collected either electronically or in person prior to data collection.

The recruitment process emphasised voluntary participation, transparency and respect for participants' time and autonomy. Additionally, efforts were made to ensure that the participant sample reflected diverse backgrounds and business experiences within the Wholesale and Retail sectors, thereby enriching the quality and depth of the data collected.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, a qualitative approach that effectively captures participants' lived experiences and

perspectives in detail. This methodology provided the necessary flexibility to explore responses more thoroughly whilst maintaining consistency through a structured interview guide (Lobe, Morgan and Hoffman 2020).

The interview guide was thoughtfully crafted in alignment with the study's research objectives and grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory. It comprised open-ended questions aimed at eliciting comprehensive insights into how cultural socialisation impacts women's entrepreneurial behaviour and their interactions with WRSETA's support initiatives. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or remotely through platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, based on participants' preferences and logistical considerations. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, allowing a sufficient depth of exploration while respecting participants' schedules.

With informed consent from all participants, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure an accurate documentation of the responses. The recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim to support a thorough qualitative analysis. Special care was taken during transcription to preserve the meaning and context of participants' statements. This data collection approach enabled the researcher to gather rich, contextual insights into the complex relationship between cultural norms and institutional support amongst women entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA.

3.6.1 Justification for using interviews

For this investigation, semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary data collection method. This choice was informed by the nature of the research focus, which aims to comprehensively explore the lived experiences, perspectives and cultural interpretations of women entrepreneurs. Given the study's emphasis on understanding how cultural socialisation influences entrepreneurial practices, interviews provide a flexible and interactive means to gather rich, contextually nuanced data.

Roberts (2020) states that interviews are a valuable tool in qualitative research because they enable participants to express their viewpoints in their own words, yielding insights that may not be accessible through standardised tools such as surveys or questionnaires. In this context, women's experiences regarding cultural norms, familial expectations, gender roles and training programs are inherently personal and socially embedded. Interviews therefore facilitate the capture of these complex and subtle dimensions.

According to Jones (2020), semi-structured interviews offer a balanced approach by combining guided questions with openness to spontaneous insights. This structure allowed the researcher to delve into critical areas such as participants' interpretations of their cultural backgrounds; responses to WRSETA's initiatives; and decision-making processes while remaining receptive to emergent themes. Such flexibility was particularly important when investigating a multi-faceted and socially constructed phenomenon such as cultural influence on entrepreneurship.

Additionally, interviews are especially effective for engaging marginalised populations whose perspectives may be underrepresented in conventional research. Saarijärvi and Bratt (2021) point out that interviews can empower participants by acknowledging their lived realities and making their knowledge accessible. In this study, many participants are women who may not have previously had opportunities to reflect on or communicate their entrepreneurial journeys in relation to cultural expectations. The interview process provided a safe and conversational environment conducive to this reflection.

Furthermore, whether conducted face-to-face or virtually, when necessary, interviews allowed for the observation of non-verbal cues, emotional expressions and contextual subtleties, all of which enhanced the richness of the data. This aligns with Nassaji's (2020) assertion that in qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary instrument of data collection, whose sensitivity and interpersonal skills are vital for interpreting meaning beyond the spoken word.

Ultimately, interviews were chosen because they support an in-depth, empathetic understanding of participants' realities, which is an essential aspect of this study rooted in constructivist and interpretivist paradigms. They facilitated the exploration of the intricate relationship between cultural socialisation and entrepreneurial behaviour, whilst also providing participants with agency to share their personal experiences.

3.7 PRE-TESTING

According to Ikart (2019), pre-testing (pilot study) is a crucial step in research methodology that allows researchers to assess the clarity and comprehensibility of questionnaire and interview questions. By conducting a pre-test, researchers can identify any potential issues with question structure, ambiguity or difficulty. This process

is essential for ensuring the quality and accuracy of data collection. It is better to identify and correct any mistakes with a smaller group of participants during the pre-test phase, rather than with the larger sample of participants in the actual study. Prior to the commencement of the primary data collection, a preliminary pilot study was conducted involving three female entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA who met the designated inclusion criteria. The objective of this pre-testing phase was to assess the clarity, relevance and comprehensibility of the interview questions to ensure that they effectively elicited the intended information whilst minimising potential misunderstandings or discomfort.

During the pilot, participants provided valuable feedback regarding the wording, flow and content of the questions. This input facilitated the identification of any ambiguous or leading questions and aided in verifying that the interview guide aligned appropriately with the study's theoretical framework and research objectives. In response to the insights obtained, the interview guide was subsequently refined and revised to enhance language clarity, optimise question sequencing and improve overall coherence. These adjustments aimed to strengthen the effectiveness of the instrument for the main study and to facilitate the collection of comprehensive, accurate and meaningful data. Additionally, conducting this pre-test contributed to the validation and reliability of the data collection tool, ensuring its suitability within the cultural context and educational backgrounds of the study participants.

3.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The research utilised thematic analysis as the primary qualitative data analysis method. This approach is particularly appropriate for the study as it systematically identifies, categorises and interprets meaningful patterns or themes within participants' narratives (Braun and Clarke, 2021). Employing this method facilitated an in-depth examination of how cultural socialisation processes and institutional factors influence the entrepreneurial experiences of women registered with WRSETA.

To enhance data management and coding accuracy, NVivo software was used as it supported the organisation of extensive textual data; enabled the systematic coding of data segments; and allowed for a visual mapping of connections between emerging themes. This utilisation contributed to the rigor and transparency of the analytical process.

The analysis adhered to the six-phase framework established by Braun and Clarke (2021), comprising data familiarisation. The researcher thoroughly reviewed the interview transcripts multiple times to develop a comprehensive understanding of the content and context. Secondly, initial coding was done. Relevant data segments were systematically coded to highlight significant features pertinent to the research questions. This was followed by theme development. Codes were examined and grouped into potential themes based on observed patterns and relationships within the data. Theme review and refinement followed thereafter, whereby identified themes were evaluated and refined to ensure that they accurately reflected the coded data and overarching dataset. Thereafter, theme definition and naming were done. Each theme was clearly defined and appropriately named to encapsulate its essence and significance. Lastly, the researcher did a report generation. The identified themes were synthesized and interpreted in relation to the theoretical frameworks of Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, providing a cohesive narrative aligned with the study's objectives.

Special consideration was given to themes aligning with key theoretical concepts such as gender expectations and role conflict (Social Role Theory), as well as access to institutional support and policy challenges (Institutional Theory). This thematic focus facilitated a nuanced understanding of the interaction between cultural and institutional dynamics and their impact on entrepreneurial behaviour.

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

To uphold the integrity and robustness of this qualitative research, multiple established methodological strategies were employed in accordance with standards for qualitative research quality, namely:

3.9.1 Credibility

The study enhanced credibility by conducting member checks, providing participants with opportunities to review and validate the accuracy of interview transcripts and initial findings. Furthermore, extensive engagement with the data, including multiple readings and detailed analysis, ensured a comprehensive understanding of participant perspectives, thereby minimising potential misinterpretations.

3.9.2 Transferability

To support transferability, detailed contextual descriptions were provided, including information about the participants, the cultural environment of Durban and the organisational setting of WRSETA. These rich descriptions enabled others to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability was maintained through the creation of an audit trail documenting all stages of the research process, from data collection and coding to theme development. This level of transparency facilitated replication and verification by other researchers.

3.9.4 Confirmability

To establish confirmability, the researcher maintained reflexive journals documenting personal reflections, assumptions and decision-making processes throughout the study. This reflexivity, along with methodological transparency, helped reduce researcher bias and ensured that the findings accurately reflect participants' narratives rather than researcher preconceptions. Together, these strategies contributed to the overall credibility, reliability and validity of the study's qualitative outcomes.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Arifin (2018), ethical considerations must be implemented at every stage and in every aspect of the research process. Iphofen and Tolich (2018) recommend that researchers adhere to certain principles to ensure ethical considerations when conducting research involving human subjects, namely demonstrating respect towards others maintaining objectivity and practicing transparency. Respondents are more inclined to provide information when they perceive that the researcher is seeking serious and justifiable answers for research purposes, and when they are assured that their responses will be kept confidential.

In this study, the researcher implemented the following ethical guidelines:

Ethical approval for this research project was duly granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the Durban University of Technology, confirming adherence to all relevant institutional and national standards for research involving human participants.

Prior to participation, all individuals provided written informed consent after receiving comprehensive information about the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of their

involvement and their rights, including the right to decline or withdraw at any point without consequence.

To ensure confidentiality and protect participant privacy, personally identifying information was anonymised or removed during data transcription and reporting processes. All data was securely stored on password-protected devices accessible solely to the research team and used exclusively for academic purposes related to this study.

Participants were debriefed after each interview to address any questions or concerns and to reinforce their understanding of the research goals. Upon request, participants were also provided with a summary of the study's findings to promote transparency and engagement.

These ethical practices were fundamental to upholding the integrity of the research process and fostering a respectful, trustworthy environment for all participants.

3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Only female entrepreneurs who are registered under the WRSETA in the KwaZulu-Natal province were deemed eligible and considered for participation in the survey. It may therefore not be generalisable to other regions in South Africa or other developing countries. Cultural contexts can vary significantly, even within the same country, and future research should explore these nuances. Consequently, female entrepreneurs outside of this demographic were not included in this study. The businesses in question were operated and overseen by either a female entrepreneur or a collective of female entrepreneurs. This study is limited by the data collection methods employed and the sample size. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the context of these limitations.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMAARY

This chapter outlined the qualitative research methodology utilised to examine the impact of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial behaviours of female entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA in Durban. It provided an overview of the research design, target population, sampling strategies, data collection methods and analysis procedures, alongside a discussion of the ethical considerations and

measures implemented to ensure credibility and reliability. The subsequent chapter proffers a comprehensive analysis and presentation of the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the perceptions of women-owned business and the impact of culture on the growth of female entrepreneurship in South Africa. Data was purposively collected from seven women-owned entrepreneurs in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The collected data was analysed thematically, aided by NVivo 20 software. The analysis involved objective comparisons of the data, aligning with the research questions and adhering to Spencer and Ritchie's (2012) recommendations for qualitative research. Furthermore, a provisional list of codes based on the research questions was established following Saldaña's (2021) guidance, with primary themes identified deductively and sub-themes emerging inductively throughout the data collection and analysis stages.

4.2 BUSINESS PROFILE

Table 4.1 provides the data that reflects the type of businesses owned by different participants, their locations and the number of years each business has been in operation.

4.2.1 Business Types

The types of businesses are diverse, ranging from spaza shops, tuck shops supermarkets and grocery stores (P1, P5, P6, P7) to Electronics (P2), clothing (P3), furniture and appliances store (P5), and beauty services (P4). This diversity highlights the various entrepreneurial opportunities that women in KZN are exploring.

4.2.2 Location

This study is located in Durban. Three participants (P1, P2, P3) are operating their businesses in Durban Central Business District (CBD), which is a strategic location with high foot traffic and access to a broad customer base. This suggests a preference for urban settings amongst women entrepreneurs, likely due to better business opportunities and infrastructure. P4 is located in Amanzimtoti, a coastal town known for its tourism. This might indicate a strategic choice for a beauty business, catering to both residents and tourists. P5 operates in Umlazi, one of the largest townships in South Africa. This location could suggest a focus on catering to a local, possibly

underserved market. In addition, P7 runs a grocery food business in Pinetown, an industrial and residential area. This location may offer a steady customer base of workers and residents.

4.2.3 Years in Operation

The businesses have been operating for different lengths of time, ranging from 2 to 7 years.

2-4 years: Businesses in this range (P1, P4, P6) are relatively new but have likely established themselves in their respective markets.

5-7 years: Businesses in this range (P2, P3, P5, P7) have been operational for a longer period, suggesting that they have survived initial challenges and are more stable.

Overall, the data suggests that women in KZN are engaging in a variety of entrepreneurial activities across different sectors and locations. The choice of location, from bustling urban centres like Durban CBD to residential areas like Umlazi and Pinetown, indicates a strategic approach to catering to different markets. The range of years in operation shows a mix of emerging and established businesses, highlighting both the potential and resilience of women entrepreneurs in the region

Table 4.1: Business profile of the participants

	Type of business	Location	Years in operation
P1	Supermarket	Durban CBD	4years
P2	Electronics	Durban CBD	6years
P3	Clothing	Durban CBD	7years
P4	Beauty	Amanzimtoti	4 years
P5	Tuck shop	Umlazi	5 years
P6	Spaza shop	Umlazi	2 years
P7	Grocery store	Pinetown	5 years

4.3 WOMEN PROFILES

Table 4.2 outlines various aspects of the participants, including their age, qualifications, business ownership, experience, how their roles have been affected, their motivations and personal characteristics.

4.3.1 Age Group

To enhance the demographic analysis, the ages of respondents were analysed using frequency distribution and percentage representation.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of respondents (n=7)

Age (Years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
20 – 24	2	28.6%
25 – 29	5	71.4%
Total	7	100%

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (71.4%) fall within the 25–29-year age group, while 28.6% are between 20 and 24 years old. This indicates a young, ambitious group of women who are in the early stages of their entrepreneurial journeys. Many young women are increasingly driven by the aspiration to attain a balanced integration of their professional and personal lives, as well as to shape their future careers. Research indicates that entrepreneurship provides a level of flexibility and autonomy that resonates with this demographic, particularly in cultures where gender roles are evolving. A study by Ogundana, Simba, Dana and Liguori (2021) reveals that women entrepreneurs frequently express a desire to move away from conventional employment frameworks that restrict their career advancement and independence. Moreover, economic factors such as elevated youth unemployment rates, particularly in emerging markets, often motivate young women to pursue entrepreneurial ventures as a strategy for financial independence and resilience. Necessity-driven entrepreneurship is notably common amongst young women, especially in regions where employment opportunities for women are constrained.

4.3.2 Qualifications

To address the demographic composition of respondents in greater depth, educational qualifications were analysed using percentage frequency distribution table.

Table 4.3: Educational Qualifications of Respondents (n=7)

Qualification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Matric	1	14.3%
Diploma	3	42.9%
Advanced Diploma	2	28.6%
Bachelor’s Degree	1	14.3%
Total	7	100%

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents (85.8%) possess post-matric qualifications, indicating a relatively strong educational foundation among the women entrepreneurs. Diplomas represent the largest category (42.9%), followed by Advanced Diplomas (28.6%). This suggests that these women have a strong educational background, which may contribute to their entrepreneurial success. The presence of higher education qualifications, such as Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, indicates that these women are likely well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage their businesses.

4.3.3 Business Ownership and Experience

All participants, except P7, own businesses. This shows a strong inclination towards entrepreneurship amongst this group. The participants have 2-7 years of experience in running their businesses. This suggests they are relatively new entrepreneurs, navigating the initial stages of business development. Despite their short tenure, they have likely gained substantial insights and experience.

4.3.4 Impact on Roles

Most participants report that their business roles have not significantly affected their personal roles, such as family responsibilities. This suggests that they have managed to balance their professional and personal lives effectively. However, P3 and P6 note some challenges:

P3: *Misses important gatherings due to business commitments, indicating a potential trade-off between personal and professional obligations.*

P6: *Struggles to spend enough time with her daughter, reflecting the challenges of balancing motherhood and entrepreneurship.*

According to research by Brush, Greene and Welter (2020), female entrepreneurs frequently encounter considerable challenges in effectively managing the demands of both their professional and personal responsibilities, including family care, household obligations and business administration. This dual burden tends to be more pronounced in societies characterised by patriarchal or traditional structures.

4.3.5 Motivations

The primary motivation across all participants is the desire for independence. They express a strong urge to be self-reliant, make their own money and not depend on others. Some specific motivations include:

Financial independence as cited by P1, P4, P5. These participants are driven by the need to be financially self-sufficient.

“I wanted to be independent, be my own boss I could not stand working for someone else” (Participant 1)

“I wanted to make my own money and did not see myself working for another person.” (Participant 5)

Business Passion as cited by P2 and P7. These participants have a deep interest in their respective fields (e.g., IT for P2, food and cooking for P7), which drove them to start their own businesses.

“my passion for food and cooking are what drove me to starting my own business.”(Participant 7)

“.....I had interest in how IT things work.” (Participant 2)

Necessity (P6). Participant 6 is driven by unemployment and financial struggles, highlighting entrepreneurship as a means of survival and financial stability. *“ I needed an income due to unemployment and financial struggles.” (Participant 6)*

Solesvik, Iakovleva and Trifilova (2019) align with this perspective articulated by the participants, noting that a significant number of female entrepreneurs are driven by a strong desire for autonomy. This encompasses the ability to oversee their work

schedules, engage in decision-making processes, and steer the overall trajectory of their business endeavours.

4.3.6 Personal Characteristics

The recurring personal characteristics include:

Independence: This was a key trait amongst all participants, reflecting their strong desire for autonomy. According to Gatewood, Shaver and Gartner (2019), women entrepreneurs require a high level of independence and self-efficacy, or conviction in their potential to achieve. This quality is frequently connected to their determination to overcome obstacles and persevere in the face of adversity.

Business Passion: Notable in P2, P3 and P7, this characteristic indicated that their love for their work fuels their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Risk-taking: Seen in P2, P3, P4 and P5, this characteristic demonstrates their willingness to take chances and step into the uncertain world of entrepreneurship. According to Harshitha, Chidananda and Varghese (2023), women entrepreneurs frequently display measured risk-taking capacity. Hence, they may be more risk-averse than their male counterparts, concentrating on sustainability rather than quick expansion.

In summary, the above profiles suggest that the group of young, educated women entrepreneurs in KZN is motivated by a strong desire for independence and self-sufficiency. Despite being relatively new to business, they have embraced the challenges of entrepreneurship, often balancing their personal and professional roles effectively. Their education and passion drive them to succeed, and they possess key entrepreneurial traits such as independence and a willingness to take risks. The data suggests a positive outlook for these young entrepreneurs as they continue to grow their businesses and navigate the complexities of balancing life and work.

Table 4.4: Profile of the women entrepreneurs

	Age	Qualification	Owned business	Experience	Roles affected	Needs	Personal Characteristics
P1	20-29	Diploma	Yes	3years	No	I needed money	Independence
P2	20-29	Matric	Yes	2.5years	No, my role is not affected they know that they can call me anytime I am needed.	I wanted to make money and I had interest in how things work.	Independence, business passion and taking risks.
P3	20-29	Diploma	Yes	3years	My role is not affected, but I do tend to miss certain important gatherings due to business commitments	I wanted to be independent, be my own boss. I could not stand working for someone else	Independence, business passion and taking risks.
P4	20-29	Advanced Diploma	Yes	2years	No, it is not affected as sometimes I do house calls and spend time with family at the same time.	I was tired of having to ask for money from parents and decided to start my own business so that I could be independent	Independence and taking risks
P5	20-29	Bachelor's degree	Yes	2years	No, it is not affected as my business is at home and most of the time, I am with them	I wanted to make my own money and did not see myself working for another person	Independence and taking risks.

P6	20-29	Diploma	Yes	3years	Yes, I am a mother, and I don't usually get enough time to spend with my daughter	I needed an income due to unemployment and financial struggles	Independence
P7	20-29	Advanced Diploma	No		No, I am able to manage my time quite well, in and outside the business	I wanted to be my own boss, as well as my passion for food and cooking are what drove me to starting my own business.	Independence and Business passion are what drove me to starting my own business.

4.4 FINDINGS

The findings are organised thematically to reflect both the cultural context of entrepreneurship and the influence of WRSETA's support mechanisms. This organisation highlights areas of alignment, challenges and opportunities for enhancement. Participant responses were quoted directly to facilitate interpretation and discussion, with all participant identifiers anonymised to ensure confidentiality. The development and refinement of themes were guided by a focus on gendered cultural norms as conceptualised by the Social Role Theory, such as expectations surrounding women's roles, perceptions of risk and leadership. Additionally, institutional dynamics outlined by the Institutional Theory, such as access to WRSETA's support, policy alignment and structural factors, were incorporated into the analysis. This theoretically grounded approach aimed to produce both descriptive and interpretative insights, thus offering a comprehensive understanding of how cultural socialisation and institutional support interact to shape entrepreneurial behaviour amongst women registered with WRSETA.

4.5 OBJECTIVE 1: TO IDENTIFY THE CULTURAL SOCIALISATION FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR OF WRSETA-REGISTERED FEMALES IN DURBAN

4.5.1 Theme 1: Cultural Expectations and Gender Roles

Cultural norms continue to play a significant role in shaping the identities and routines of women entrepreneurs. Participants revealed how societal expectations about women's roles influenced both their business behaviour and their decision-making processes.

4.5.1.1 Domestic Responsibilities vs. Entrepreneurship

Participants described how their daily schedules were constrained by the expectation that women should prioritise household duties before engaging in business.

“Even though I run my own shop, I still have to cook and clean before opening. My family expects that from me because I am a woman.” (Participant 4).

Traditions affect growth as a female entrepreneur in the sense that there will be added responsibilities... (Participant 1).

"As an African female entrepreneur, hard labour and technical work is frowned upon... there is a lot of prejudice in what you can and must do as a female." (Participant 2)

These quotes highlights how cultural perceptions of gender roles can influence entrepreneurial pursuits, frequently resulting in additional time and effort commitments for women entrepreneurs.

4.5.1.2 Cultural Perceptions of Ambition in Women

Some participants expressed how ambition and assertiveness in women were viewed negatively within their communities.

"A woman must not be too ambitious... otherwise people say you are disrespecting your husband." (Participant 6).

"It is difficult starting a business in South Africa especially because you are a woman... there is also prejudice that you will not succeed especially in the technology space." (Participant 2)

"There were mixed reactions as some did not believe in my capabilities... some were jealous and some doubting and undermining me." (Participant 1).

This sentiment suggests that cultural norms do not only dictate what women should do in the household but also how far they are socially permitted to go in business without being seen as stepping outside their "proper" role.

4.5.1.3 Pressure to Conform to Traditional Femininity

Participants indicated that there was some implicit expectation to conform to culturally accepted behaviours considered appropriate for women, even within professional environments. *"Traditions may limit women's access to male-dominated business networks, restricting valuable resources and opportunities." (Participant 6).* This pressure often impacted their demeanour, communication style during meetings and approach to pursuing business opportunities. Although not always explicitly articulated, these influences were evident in numerous reports.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Role Conflict and Emotional Resilience

Female entrepreneurs reported experiencing emotional challenges rooted in societal expectations related to caregiving responsibilities, alongside the demands inherent in

managing their businesses. While these pressures contributed to moments of emotional fatigue, they also highlighted areas of resilience and perseverance.

4.5.2.1 Guilt Over Family Neglect

Participants often felt conflicted when prioritising their businesses over traditional domestic roles.

“I sometimes feel guilty for choosing my business over family duties, but I know I have to push through if I want to succeed.” (Participant 6)

This reflects the internal struggle between personal ambition and cultural expectations to remain available and present for one’s family.

4.5.2.2 Resilience and Mental Strength

Despite the psychological challenges encountered, participants exhibited commendable resilience, illustrating how emotional tension can serve as a positive catalyst for personal development.

“When I work hard, it is not just for me but for my children and even the name of my family.” (Participant 5)

This quote illustrates how entrepreneurial ambition was re-framed as a sense of responsibility toward preserving the family legacy, thereby fostering emotional resilience.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Community Influence and Ubuntu

The role of community, tradition and shared values featured prominently in shaping entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviour.

4.5.3.1 Inter-generational Knowledge Transfer

Many participants learned their entrepreneurial skills from older family members.

“I learned to cook from my grandmother. Now I run a food stall and she is proud of me.” (Participant 3)

This shows how cultural knowledge is passed down through generations, shaping women’s business identities.

4.5.3.2 Moral and Spiritual Support from Community

Spiritual and community-based support was described as a strong enabler in starting or growing a business.

“My church group helped me raise the money to buy my first oven.” (Participant 7)

Faith-based or community structures provided not just emotional motivation, but also material support.

4.5.4 Theme 4: Family Support and Emotional Anchoring

The role of family emerged as a double-edged socialisation force. While sometimes a source of pressure, it was also a crucial pillar of support.

4.5.4.1 Family as Unpaid Labour

Some women were supported by siblings or children who contributed labour during the early phases of business development.

“Family support is very important... they will be there to support you all the way and make sure that they make you feel good.” (Participant 4)

“When your family supports you, you can deal better with overwhelming situations and tasks.” (Participant 3)

“My brother was working with me for free. This eased pressure on my business.” (Participant 7)

This reflects how informal family arrangements helped manage business burdens in the absence of formal staff.

4.5.4.2 Emotional Check-ins and Encouragement

Families provided emotional grounding during stressful periods.

“When the going gets tough, you can pick up the phone and call home... if you get positive support, you are encouraged to carry on.” (Participant 2)

“Emotional encouragement, shared responsibilities, and sometimes financial backing from my family provide stability and reduce stress.” (Participant 5)

Such encouragement bolstered morale and reduced isolation, especially during tough business phases.

4.5.5 Theme 5: Intrinsic Motivation – Independence and Passion

Beyond economic need, many participants cited personal dreams and the desire for independence as key motivators rooted in self-concept and upbringing.

4.5.5.1 Desire for Financial Independence

Women sought to reduce their dependency on family or partners for financial support.

“I was tired of asking my parents for money. I wanted to stand on my own.” (Participant 5)

This pursuit of autonomy was seen as part of personal growth.

4.5.5.2 Pursuit of Passion and Self-Fulfilment

Participants often followed personal interests and creativity.

“I wanted to be my own boss, as well as my passion for food and cooking drove me.” (Participant 7)

“It is the negative reactions that kept me going because they motivated me in a way that they did not know.” (Participant 6)

This underscores that cultural socialisation also influenced their sense of identity and purpose, not just duty.

4.6 OBJECTIVE 2: TO EXAMINE HOW CULTURAL NORMS, VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS AFFECT BUSINESS DECISIONS AND OPERATIONS AMONGST THESE ENTREPRENEURS

4.6.1 Theme 6: Institutional Support vs. Cultural Realities

Although WRSETA training was appreciated, its design and implementation often failed to account for the realities of women's social roles, hence limiting full participation.

4.6.1.1 Training Schedules Clashing with Caregiving Duties

Participants noted that training times often conflicted with childcare responsibilities.

“Workshops are usually during times when I must fetch kids. It's hard to fully participate.” (Participant 2)

This reflects how institutional structures do not accommodate women's multiple time-bound responsibilities.

4.6.1.2 Program Design Not Tailored to Women's Realities

The content and format of the training were seen as practical, but the delivery lacked flexibility.

"The training was good, but it did not consider the fact that we have other responsibilities outside the business." (Participant 6)

This suggests a disconnection between formal entrepreneurship support and lived female experiences.

4.6.2 Theme 7: Gender Bias and Access to Opportunities

Many participants reported facing gender-related discrimination in finance and supplier negotiations, which influenced how they navigated their businesses.

4.6.2.1 Discrimination and lack of access in Financial Services

Financial institutions were more trusting of male involvement.

"When I applied for a loan, they asked if my husband would be involved in the business." (Participant 1)

This shows how cultural assumptions about gender roles extend into financial gatekeeping.

Women in entrepreneurship in South Africa drive economic growth... while facing challenges such as limited access to finance." (Participant 4)

"Gender orientation can limit entrepreneurial growth by leading to biases in access to funding and resources..." (Participant 5)

The above finding reinforced the view that women entrepreneurs have difficulties acquiring the financial resources necessary for business startup and development.

However, some participants felt that these biases have not significantly impacted them.

"Gender orientation has not limited the growth of my business in any way." (Participant 4)

"I would not say that gender orientation has limited the level of growth of my business." (Participant 6)

4.6.2.2 Supplier and Market Disrespect Toward Women

Participants described how suppliers treated them with condescension or suspicion.

"Some suppliers talk to me like I'm a child. They only respect my business when a man is involved." (Participant 6)

"There is a lot of mistrust and lack of belief in the potential of women..." (Participant 2)

"The society was very judgmental; some were jealous of the fact that I was starting my own business." (Participant 6)

This points to the broader structural disadvantage that women face due to culturally embedded gender norms.

4.6.3 Theme 8: Balancing Business and Domestic Roles

Entrepreneurs shared how they managed the tension between home life and business responsibilities, which shaped operational decisions.

4.6.3.1 Time Management Strategies

Several women attributed their business success to strong organisation and planning.

"Responsibilities at home do not have an impact on the growth of my business as I am fully organised." (Participant 1)

"I make sure that I give myself enough time for my business and for my household responsibilities." (Participant 4)

"It has not impacted my business in any way as I am able to balance out my business and household responsibilities." (Participant 6)

Efficient scheduling was key to managing dual responsibilities.

4.6.3.2 Discipline and Routine

Self-discipline emerged as a recurring strategy for managing time and commitments.

"I am able to manage my household responsibilities well, I think everything lies with time management and self-discipline." (Participant 2)

Participants viewed discipline as an enabler of entrepreneurial productivity within their cultural constraints.

4.7 OBJECTIVE 3: TO EXPLORE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM CULTURAL SOCIALISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF WRSETA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT

4.7.1 Theme 9: Positive Community Recognition

The entrepreneurs described how being recognised by their communities and on social media created encouragement and social validation for their work.

4.7.1.1 Community Praise as Encouragement

Women felt affirmed when their efforts were acknowledged by their communities.

“Even elders in my area were congratulating me for creating jobs for young people.”
(Participant 1)

Such validation strengthened their entrepreneurial identity and confidence.

4.7.1.2 Social Media Visibility as Marketing Tool

Participants described how social media enhanced visibility and credibility.

“There was a positive reaction from the community... people were posting my business on social media and were actually buying my food.” **(Participant 7)**

Social recognition acted both as a morale boost and as informal marketing.

4.7.2 Theme 10: Access to Networks, Training and Government Support

Participants acknowledged that gender-specific government programs and WRSETA trainings helped them, but accessibility and awareness remained uneven.

4.7.2.1 Participation in Women-Specific Training and Grants

Some women had successfully taken advantage of targeted training and funding initiatives.

“There are trainings and funding opportunities I have benefited from that are for women only.” **(Participant 3)**

“There are supportive networks and initiatives promoting women entrepreneurs.”
(Participant 1)

"There are support groups and trainings to help women in whatever they need help with." (Participant 6)

"There are women-specific programs like pitching, training, support groups, and incubators directed at helping women." (Participant 7)

These gender-sensitive supports were seen as empowering.

4.7.2.2 Limited Awareness and Unequal Access

it feels a bit lonely to be a woman entrepreneur, and there is usually no other woman you can relate to." (Participant 7)

This highlights the emotional and relational isolation that some women entrepreneurs experience due to a lack of female peer networks or relatable role models. It directly touches on networking gaps, which are a key issue in discussions about support structures, especially in gender-focused entrepreneurship literature.

Others noted barriers in accessing these resources, often due to a lack of information.

"Government support... I think BEE has been a positive for women." (Participant 7)

"It is difficult starting a business in South Africa especially because you are a woman... there is also prejudice that you will not succeed especially in the technology space." (Participant 2)

While BEE and other support systems existed, not all participants could access them equally.

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews with seven WRSETA-registered female entrepreneurs. Using thematic analysis and aligning each theme with the study's three objectives, the chapter has highlighted both the constraints and enabling factors embedded in cultural socialisation and institutional frameworks. Chapter Five will provide a deeper interpretation of these findings by engaging with the literature, theories and the central research problem.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter critically engages with the data presented in Chapter Four. It interprets and reflects on the findings through the lens of Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, while drawing on relevant literature to contextualise and contrast the results. The discussion follows the structure of the research objectives and uses the same thematic sub-headings for clarity and consistency.

5.2 OBJECTIVE 1: TO IDENTIFY THE CULTURAL SOCIALISATION FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR OF WRSETA-REGISTERED FEMALES IN DURBAN

5.2.1 Cultural Expectations and Gender Roles

The research findings indicate that cultural expectations significantly shape participants' experiences in their entrepreneurial pursuits. Participants reported experiencing societal expectations to adhere to traditional roles, such as domestic duties and caregiver responsibilities, even after establishing their own businesses. These gender-specific expectations originate from longstanding cultural norms that primarily associate women with domestic and reproductive responsibilities.

This aligns with the Social Role Theory, which suggests that social structures and role divisions perpetuate gender stereotypes, thereby influencing women's perceptions of themselves and their behaviours. The continued influence of these roles, even within entrepreneurial contexts, highlights the dual demands placed on women in Durban, which are balancing economic activity with unpaid domestic work. This dual responsibility can constrain their available time, energy and mental resources, potentially impacting their entrepreneurial development and risk-taking capacity.

Research in similar African settings (Adom and Anambane, 2019) has also noted that women often face social stigma when challenging these norms, with behaviours perceived as disrespectful or unfeminine for prioritising business activities. These observations underscore the importance of designing entrepreneurship interventions that address cultural norms and societal attitudes, in addition to providing skills and resources.

5.2.2 Role Conflict and Emotional Resilience

Participants described experiencing emotional challenges as they balance their roles as mothers, spouses and entrepreneurs. Despite these challenges, many demonstrated resilience, leveraging these experiences as motivation to continue advancing their objectives. This phenomenon highlights the emotional complexity involved in managing multiple responsibilities simultaneously.

Emotional resilience is an essential psychological resource that allows women to effectively manage multiple responsibilities and continue their pursuits, despite various demands. This aligns with local research (Wan Othman, Jaafar, Zainudin and Yusop, 2024), which highlights the significant emotional effort women invest in balancing diverse roles. According to Bullough et al. (2022), entrepreneurial resilience is frequently grounded in overcoming personal adversity. The narratives shared by participants illustrate that emotional tension can serve as a driving force for personal development and strategic goal setting. In the context of Durban, where cultural expectations around family commitments are prominent, women entrepreneurs adopt sophisticated coping strategies such as focusing on long-term objectives despite short-term feelings of guilt or integrating family members into business activities.

Role conflict can potentially contribute to burnout if not adequately supported (Varpio, Ray and Durning, 2018). However, the women in this study exhibit proactive strategies by redefining their challenges as opportunities for growth. Therefore, interventions should incorporate psychological support and resilience enhancement components, acknowledging the emotional aspects of female entrepreneurship within cultural settings that may heighten role-related stress. These insights also contribute to a nuanced understanding of women's entrepreneurial experiences. While acknowledging the initial challenges faced, it becomes evident that women often cultivate key skills such as emotional intelligence, resilience and adaptability traits that are critical for entrepreneurial success and merit greater recognition.

5.2.3 Community Influence and Ubuntu

The research indicated that the principle of Ubuntu, representing the African philosophy of shared humanity, plays a significant role in the entrepreneurial development of many participants (Kupangwa, 2025). Participants often received assistance from extended family members, neighbours, and church organisations in initiating or maintaining their businesses.

This highlights the importance of informal support networks that co-exist alongside formal institutional frameworks. Zizile and Tendai (2018) noted that African women's entrepreneurship frequently occurs within communal contexts, where knowledge, skills and resources are exchanged informally. Such practices challenge Western-centric, individualistic perspectives on entrepreneurship that are commonly reflected in policy and program development. This communal support system plays a significant role in assisting women to address resource limitations and social exclusion (Dagoudo, Vershinina and Murithi, 2024). Additionally, recognition within these networks enhances women's confidence and social standing, thereby reinforcing their entrepreneurial identity. These insights indicate that entrepreneurship policies should encompass not only formal support mechanisms but also recognise and strengthen informal community networks as essential contributors within African contexts.

Additionally, Social Role Theory offers insights into why women may more readily leverage community-based networks. Traditionally regarded as nurturers within their communities, women are often culturally encouraged to seek and provide support through these social structures (Pike, 2019). Acknowledging these communal dynamics can enable WRSETA to develop support programs that are more effectively aligned with the social realities and cultural contexts of their target populations.

5.2.4 Family Support and Emotional Anchoring

The support provided by family members, encompassing both emotional encouragement and practical assistance, frequently serves as a key facilitator of entrepreneurial activity. Families often contribute to start-up efforts through free labour, initial capital and moral encouragement. According to Meyer and Hamilton (2020), such backing often forms the foundation of sustainable family enterprises. In the South African context where access to formal employment opportunities and financial resources may be limited, the family unit often functions as an informal incubator for entrepreneurial initiatives (Iwu, Malawu, Makwara and Sibanda, 2024).

However, this dynamic also prompts important considerations. While familial support can empower women entrepreneurs, it may also perpetuate patriarchal influences by shaping business decisions or expecting specific outcomes (Babar, Al-Sulaiti and Al-Sulaiti, 2023). Consequently, programs facilitated by WRSETA should aim to optimise the benefits of familial involvement while promoting individual autonomy and decision-making independence.

5.2.5 Intrinsic Motivation – Independence and Passion

Many participants highlighted intrinsic motivations such as personal independence, self-esteem and a passion for their profession. This challenges the common assumption that women pursue entrepreneurship primarily out of necessity. Supporting this perspective, McClelland's (1961) Achievement Motivation Theory emphasises autonomy and a sense of purpose as key drivers of entrepreneurial behaviour (Carsrud, Brännback, Elfving and Brandt, 2017). These internal motivators are essential for sustaining long-term engagement and fostering innovation.

In the Durban context, choosing to be one's own boss may also serve as a subtle form of resistance to traditional cultural dependency models where women often rely on male providers. This insight suggests that entrepreneurship training programs should extend beyond technical business skills to include elements of identity development, confidence building and creative expression. Programs that neglect to nurture internal motivation may face challenges in participant retention and in achieving meaningful, lasting impact.

5.3 OBJECTIVE 2: TO EXAMINE HOW CULTURAL NORMS, VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS AFFECT BUSINESS DECISIONS AND OPERATIONS AMONGST THESE ENTREPRENEURS

5.3.1 Institutional Support vs. Cultural Realities

Participants expressed appreciation for WRSETA's support. However, they also highlighted challenges related to scheduling conflicts and cultural alignment. Numerous training sessions were scheduled during times such as school pick-up periods or holidays, which coincided with periods when women were expected to prioritise caregiving responsibilities.

According to Institutional Theory, the effectiveness of formal institutions depends on their alignment with informal social norms (Eesley, Eberhart, Skousen and Cheng, 2018). When institutional initiatives do not consider existing cultural dynamics, their intended benefits may be underutilised. This misalignment underscores a broader challenge within development initiatives: programs are often designed from a top-down perspective without sufficient adaptation to local contexts.

Research by Shepherd and Burton (2019) indicates that interventions lacking cultural sensitivity are more likely to encounter resistance or limited engagement. For WRSETA, this highlights the importance of adopting a participatory approach to program design, one that involves women in co-creating schedules and content formats that resonate with their lived realities.

5.3.2 Gender Bias and Access to Opportunities

Participants encountered systemic and interpersonal gender biases, particularly in interactions with financial institutions and suppliers. Their credibility was frequently questioned in the absence of male oversight or partnership. This observation aligns with Meyer and De Jongh's (2018) research, which highlights that South Africa's institutional environment continues to be influenced by patriarchal norms, despite the implementation of progressive legal frameworks. Gender bias within economic interactions constitutes a structural obstacle that hampers women's agency and perpetuates their exclusion (Christopherson, Yiadom and Thiemann, 2022).

Drawing on Institutional Theory, it is evident that institutions are influenced by the historical biases of their creators. Therefore, WRSETA should pursue comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies, moving beyond the provision of separate programs for women to actively address and dismantle embedded biases within service delivery, partnerships and policy implementation. The opportunities available to entrepreneurs can be substantially influenced by gender stereotypes that shape venture growth expectations. These preconceived notions often lead to biased evaluations of business potential, influencing funding decisions and support for ventures led by individuals from underrepresented genders (Bullough, et al., 2022).

5.3.3 Balancing Business and Domestic Roles

Participants emphasised that achieving success depends on effective time management and self-discipline. Rather than framing business and domestic responsibilities as opposing forces, they demonstrated how these roles can co-exist through deliberate planning. This perspective aligns with Mawoyo and Nani (2023), who highlight time management as a critical entrepreneurial competency for women. Ullah Khan, et al. (2021) point out that women's involvement in business endeavours presents a significant challenge in reconciling professional and familial responsibilities. Nonetheless, this responsibility should not fall solely on individuals. Organisational

support should encompass training in delegation, outsourcing and the utilisation of productivity tools specifically designed for micro-enterprises. Furthermore, the Social Role Theory provides insight into how societal pressures to balance it all are culturally constructed (Anglin, Kincaid, Short and Allen, 2022). Until societal expectations surrounding gender roles evolve, women are likely to continue bearing a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic work.

5.4 OBJECTIVE 3: TO EXPLORE THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM CULTURAL SOCIALISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF WRSETA'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT

5.4.1 Positive Community Recognition

Community acknowledgment and engagement on social media platforms have proven to be significant factors in enhancing morale within the organisation. Recognition from senior colleagues, clients and online audiences reinforces participants' perceptions of their value and credibility. According to Martin, Jerrard and Wright (2020), social legitimacy constitutes a vital yet often underappreciated form of capital in entrepreneurial endeavours. In culturally conservative regions, such acknowledgment serves to affirm women's economic contributions and mitigate associated stigmas. This presents an opportunity for WRSETA to incorporate public recognition strategies into its initiatives. For example, highlighting the achievements of successful women through local media outlets or community events can help reinforce positive societal norms and motivate greater participation.

5.4.2 Access to Networks, Training and Government Support

While certain participants benefited from targeted initiatives such as B-BBEE and women-only training programs, others encountered challenges related to limited awareness or bureaucratic obstacles. Abdelwahed, Soomro, Shah and Saraih (2022) emphasise that accessibility, beyond mere availability, is a critical factor in the effectiveness of such programs. According to Institutional Theory, successful implementation and clear communication are equally vital as program design. This highlights the need for WRSETA to streamline access procedures, localise information dissemination and engage community ambassadors to effectively connect formal institutional frameworks with the practical realities faced by women entrepreneurs.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The findings indicate that cultural socialisation significantly influences women's entrepreneurship by both presenting challenges and offering support. While traditional gender norms, biases and domestic responsibilities can act as barriers, communal networks, familial support and internal motivation serve as valuable resources. The application of Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory has provided insight into these complex dynamics, highlighting the necessity for both individual and systemic change. It is recommended that WRSETA implement culturally sensitive, gender-aware strategies to effectively engage with and empower the women they aim to support. Building on the analysis and findings discussed in this chapter, the following chapter presents key conclusions of the study and practical recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive synthesis of the study's findings. Building upon the analysis presented in Chapters Four and Five, it offers informed recommendations for the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA) to strengthen its support for female entrepreneurs in Durban. These recommendations are grounded in the real-world experiences of the participants and are informed by both Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory. The chapter discusses the study's contributions to existing knowledge, addresses its limitations, and proposes potential avenues for future research.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 Culturally Responsive Program Design

The findings indicate that many female entrepreneurs registered with WRSETA encounter challenges in fully participating in entrepreneurship training and support programs due to competing cultural responsibilities, particularly those related to domestic and caregiving roles. Despite recognising the value of these programs, several participants noted that scheduled training sessions often coincided with personal obligations such as caring for children or preparing household meals. This misalignment between the design of institutional programs and prevailing gendered expectations underscores a significant limitation in program accessibility and effectiveness.

To mitigate this issue, it is advisable for WRSETA to consider adopting a culturally responsive approach to program development. Strategies may include implementing flexible training schedules, such as evening and weekend sessions, and developing modular, self-paced learning options that participants can engage with at their convenience. Additionally, offering supportive services such as on-site childcare or stipends for domestic support could substantially reduce the barriers faced by women in accessing training opportunities. These measures align with institutional principles, emphasising the importance of designing programs that are consistent with social

norms and realities to enhance their overall effectiveness (Ojong, Simba and Dana, 2021).

6.2.2 Community-Based Mentorship and Ubuntu Integration

The research indicates that community values, particularly those aligned with the African philosophy of Ubuntu, significantly influence the development and sustainability of female entrepreneurship. Participants highlighted the importance of support from family members, faith-based organisations and local networks, which provide not only resources but also moral encouragement and validation. This insight presents an opportunity for WRSETA to incorporate informal support structures into its entrepreneurship development initiatives.

It is recommended that WRSETA consider integrating community-based mentorship programs by establishing partnerships with local churches, cooperatives and women's organisations. These entities can serve as effective platforms for peer mentorship, collaborative problem-solving and resource sharing (Gundry, Miriam and Posig, 2022). Additionally, acknowledging and recognising community leaders who have supported entrepreneurial efforts can strengthen the legitimacy and impact of this approach. By aligning formal interventions with community values, WRSETA can enhance trust, relevance and engagement within its programs.

6.2.3 Gender Sensitisation of Financial and Market Institutions

A common concern amongst participants involves gender-related biases within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, particularly regarding access to financing and interactions with suppliers. Several women reported being asked about their marital status when applying for loans or experiencing perceptions of being less competent unless accompanied by a male partner. These instances highlight the persistence of deep-seated societal attitudes that can impede women's full engagement in business activities.

To address these issues, it is advisable for WRSETA to collaborate with financial institutions, procurement agencies and business networks to foster an awareness and understanding of gender equality principles throughout the sector. Developing training sessions for loan officers, procurement managers and other relevant stakeholders can

help challenge existing misconceptions and promote inclusive, non-discriminatory practices (Kogut and Mejri, 2022). Additionally, WRSETA should advocate for the adoption of supplier diversity policies that encourage partnerships with female-led enterprises and ensure equal opportunities in procurement processes. Implementing these measures will contribute to removing structural barriers and supporting a more equitable entrepreneurial environment.

6.2.4 Targeted Awareness Campaigns and Outreach

Several participants have benefited from gender-specific training programs and policy initiatives, such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) framework. However, there remains a portion of the community that is unaware of the available opportunities. This disparity indicates a need to enhance communication efforts between institutional providers and the communities they serve.

To address this, it is recommended that WRSETA develop targeted awareness campaigns utilising accessible and community-oriented platforms. These could include local radio broadcasts, community gatherings and social media initiatives conducted in multiple languages, including isiZulu. Additionally, Ogundana et al. (2021) state that the distribution of visually engaging brochures and infographics at community centres, clinics, churches and small businesses can further facilitate information dissemination. WRSETA might also consider training community ambassadors or liaisons to effectively communicate with women in underserved areas. Implementing these strategies will help ensure broader awareness and facilitate greater participation amongst women in these programs.

6.2.5 Training in Time Management and Work-Life Integration

The research indicates that many participants experience considerable challenges in balancing domestic responsibilities with entrepreneurial endeavours. While some have successfully implemented strategies for effective work-life integration, others report feelings of stress, fatigue and disorganisation. Such challenges are often overlooked in conventional entrepreneurship training programs, which tend to assume full-time availability and external support systems.

Therefore, it is recommended that WRSETA incorporate specialised training modules focused on enhancing work-life management skills for women entrepreneurs. These modules should provide practical tools for time management, task delegation and strategic planning, alongside techniques to promote emotional well-being and self-care. Additionally, sessions addressing methods for negotiating shared household responsibilities, particularly with spouses and extended family, can empower women to advocate for their needs while maintaining positive family relationships. Integrating these life-skills components into entrepreneurship training can bolster program effectiveness and support the long-term sustainability of women-led businesses (Khan, Salamzadeh, Shah and Hussain, 2021).

6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study enhances the understanding of the relationship between cultural socialisation and women's entrepreneurial activity in South Africa. Using Social Role Theory and Institutional Theory, the research examined how gender norms, community values and institutional structures influence women's experiences in entrepreneurship. It underscores the complex role of culture as both a potential obstacle and a source of support, impacting women's opportunities and social capital.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring the personal experiences of WRSETA-registered female entrepreneurs in Durban, a group that is often underrepresented in entrepreneurship literature. By centring their perspectives, the research offers context-specific insights and practical recommendations that challenge uniform approaches to business development. In so doing, it supports broader efforts toward inclusive, culturally sensitive and equitable development practices.

6.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research endeavours may build upon this study through various avenues. Moreover, comparative analyses between urban and rural women entrepreneurs could yield more comprehensive insights into how geographic location influences cultural and entrepreneurial dynamics. The study is qualitative. To generalise the findings, a quantitative methodology may be contemplated. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial in understanding the progression and evolution of entrepreneurial

behaviours over time, particularly following engagement with WRSETA programs. Further examination of household dynamics, with a focus on the roles of male allies in either supporting or challenging female entrepreneurial initiatives, could enhance the understanding of social influences. Additionally, an in-depth investigation into the effects of policy and regulatory frameworks, including B-BBEE and other empowerment initiatives, on gender-specific entrepreneurship remains a critical area for future scholarly inquiry.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the impact of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial activities of women registered with WRSETA in Durban, as well as to identify opportunities for enhancing institutional support mechanisms. The results indicate that traditional gender roles continue to influence women's availability, agency and access to resources. However, cultural principles such as Ubuntu and strong familial networks also serve as sources of support, resilience and motivation. While existing institutional programs provide valuable assistance, they often do not fully align with the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs and would benefit from a culturally responsive re-evaluation.

To effectively empower women entrepreneurs, WRSETA and other relevant stakeholders should pursue an integrated strategy that combines formal support structures with informal cultural and community-based systems. By incorporating women's perspectives; tailoring support to their specific circumstances; and addressing structural challenges, institutions can better facilitate the growth of women-led enterprises and promote a more inclusive and equitable economic environment in South Africa.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INFORMATION



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: The influence of cultural on the growth of women entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Masters: Business Administration

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: PhD

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to determine how culture influences the rise of female entrepreneurship in KwaZulu-Natal. The study will also find out whether the women in this province believe that culture is the reason for their lack of development, as well as the crucial elements that significantly affect the development of their entrepreneurial journeys and, ultimately, the support they need to develop to the level they want.

Dear Respondent

My name is Nonhlanhla Agnes Mdakane, and I am a Masters student at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am currently pursuing a Master's in Business Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences. My topic is titled: **The influence of cultural on the growth of women entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.**

Outline of the Procedures: The purpose of this research is to explore how cultural socialisation influences the entrepreneurial behaviour of women in Durban, with a specific focus on entrepreneurs registered under the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA). This study seeks to understand the extent to which cultural values, norms, and social expectations shape women's entrepreneurial decisions, motivations, and sustainability within a structured support framework like WRSETA. To collect relevant data, I will be conducting one-on-one interviews with selected female entrepreneurs who are registered with WRSETA and operating in the Durban area. These interviews will take approximately 30 minutes and will be guided by a semi-structured interview schedule to allow for open and honest responses. Information shared during the interview will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: Your participation in this study will not result in any physical risks or discomforts

Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may withdraw from the Study: Your participation in the study is strictly voluntary, therefore please feel free to withdraw from the study at any particular point should you feel the need to.

Remuneration: There will be no remuneration paid for participating in this study. Participation is strictly voluntary.

Costs of the Study: There will be no costs to you for participating in this study

Confidentiality: Please rest assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and no names will be divulged to any third party. The collated responses will only be used for statistical analysis.

Results: The results of the study will be made available to the respondents on request should if needed.

Research-related Injury: A brief summary of the main findings will be posted to you on completion of the study.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings DUT's requirement of 5 years storage will be adhered to, accessible only to the researcher and supervisors. Thereafter, all data will be destroyed.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Please contact the researcher (Tel: 031 373 5147 or nonhlanhla.mdakane10@gmail.com), my supervisor Dr K Gustave (gustavekm@gmail.com) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Prof K Motaung on TtiDirector@dut.ac.za

General

A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiZulu.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Full Title of the Study: The influence of cultural on the growth of women entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.

Names of Researcher/s: NONHLANHLA AGNES MDAKANE

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance
- Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant

Date

Time

Signature

/

Right

Thumbprint

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

My name is Agnes Nonhlanhla, and I am a Master's student at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am currently pursuing a Master's in Business Administration in the Faculty of Management Sciences. My topic is titled: **The influence of cultural on the growth of women entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.** The purpose of this research is to explore how cultural socialisation influences the entrepreneurial behaviour of women in Durban, with a specific focus on entrepreneurs registered under the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (WRSETA). This study seeks to understand the extent to which cultural values, norms, and social expectations shape women's entrepreneurial decisions, motivations, and sustainability within a structured support framework like WRSETA.

This interview will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete. Please note that participation is voluntary and therefore there is no obligation on your part to answer any questions which make you uncomfortable. Please feel free to stop the moderators or myself at any point during the interview where you need some clarity or where you feel that you no longer wish to continue with the interview.

Please rest assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and no names will be divulged to any third party. The collated responses will only be used for statistical analysis. A brief summary of the main findings will be posted to you on completion of the project. Please let me know if you are happy with proceeding with the focus group interview and with me recording the session.

Respondent Code: _____ Date: _____

Designation: _____ Time: _____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The questions that will be asked the participants will be open ended; more questions will be derived from the answers. Herewith is the outline of the possible questions.

A Business Profile

1. What type of business do you operate, and where is it located?
2. How long have you been running your business?

B. Personal and Socio-Cultural Profile

1. How old were you when you started your business?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. What role do you play in your family or community, and has running a business affected those roles?
4. What inspired or motivated you to pursue entrepreneurship?
5. How would you describe your upbringing in relation to cultural values (e.g., gender roles, family expectations, independence)?

C. Cultural Socialisation Factors (Objective 1)

1. In your upbringing, what cultural expectations were placed on women, particularly regarding work and leadership?
2. Were there any cultural or family teachings that encouraged or discouraged business ownership for women?
3. Do you believe your cultural background influenced your decision to become an entrepreneur? In what ways?
4. How does your culture view women who pursue business over traditional family roles?

D. Cultural Impact on Business Decisions and Operations (Objective 2)

1. Do you feel your cultural background has influenced how you run your business (e.g., how you treat employees, customers, or make decisions)?
2. Have cultural norms ever influenced your business hours, dress code, marketing, or partnerships?
3. Are there any practices you follow in your business because of your cultural beliefs or community expectations?
4. How do family or community members influence your business choices?

E. Challenges and Opportunities Arising from Cultural Socialisation (Objective 3)

1. What challenges have you faced as a woman entrepreneur that you feel are rooted in cultural or social expectations?
2. Have you encountered resistance or lack of support from family or society because of your role as a female entrepreneur?
3. Have there been any opportunities that emerged because of your cultural identity or community connections?
4. How has your experience with WRSETA influenced or helped you navigate these cultural challenges?

F. Perceptions on Female Entrepreneurship in South Africa

1. What is your view on the status and recognition of women entrepreneurs in South Africa?
2. Do you believe female-owned businesses in KwaZulu-Natal have the same potential as male-owned ones? Why or why not?
3. How has society reacted to your success or struggles in business?
4. How do other women in your community view your entrepreneurship journey?

G. Government and WRSETA Support (Objective 4)

1. What kind of support have you received from WRSETA (e.g., training, funding, mentorship)?
2. Do you think WRSETA programs are culturally responsive or inclusive of women's lived realities?
3. Are you satisfied with government and stakeholder support for female entrepreneurs in your sector?
4. What improvements would you suggest for WRSETA or government support to be more effective and empowering for women in Durban?

APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT

Nonhlanhla Mdakane Final Thesis

ORIGINALITY REPORT

5% SIMILARITY INDEX	3% INTERNET SOURCES	3% PUBLICATIONS	2% STUDENT PAPERS
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PRIMARY SOURCES

1	www.northernnews.co.za Internet Source	<1 %
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3	Marcus Goncalves, Sadaf Sartipi, Ghazale Asadi Damavandi. "Leadership and Entrepreneurial Choices: Understanding the Motivational Dynamics of Women Entrepreneurs in Iran", Merits, 2025 Publication	<1 %
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Dr GM Kankisingi

APPENDIX F: EDITORS LETTER

EDITOR'S LETTER

Researchers Beyond-Borders (PTY) LTD
Umhlanga, Durban
South Africa
3 September 2025

To whom it may concern

Editing of Master's dissertation: Nonhlanhla Agnes Mdakane (Student number -20423930)

Title of dissertation: The influence of cultural socialisation on the entrepreneurial behaviour of females in Durban: a case study of WRSETA- registered entrepreneurs

This letter serves as confirmation that the aforementioned dissertation has been language edited.
Any queries may be directed to the author of this letter.



Regards

Maleni Pillay
Researchers Beyond-Borders
consult@researchersbeyondborders.com
www.researchersbeyondborders.com



PROOF OF REGISTRATION
To Whom It May Concern

11-Sep-2025

It is hereby confirmed that the under mentioned person is a registered student at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

Surname:	MDAKANE	First Names:	NONHLANHLA AGNES
Student Number:	20423930	Qualification:	MMBAD1 M MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (BUS ADMIN)
Registration Year:	2025	Offering Type:	Durban Campus Part-time
Block:	POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS	Period of Study:	Study period 3
Department:	ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES & MGMT	Faculty:	FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Subject	Description	PreReq/Exp	Block	Class Group	Offering Type	Exam Year	Exam Month	Cancel	Amount
	Registration Fees/Levies								3250.00
	P0 POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS								
RSBA531	RESEARCH (3RD REGISTRATION)		P0	A	D3	2025	11	N	0.00
								Subtotal:	3250.00
								Total:	3250.00

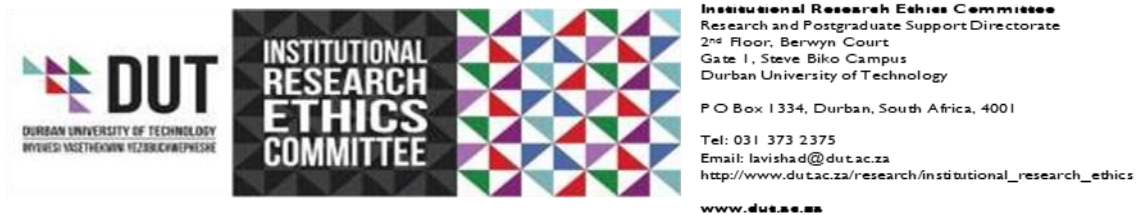
* Subjects with Requisites will be cancelled if the requisite rules are not met in mid-year exams. Refer to Department handbook.

Outstanding Balance: 3192.50

Please verify and rectify the above registration details with the Faculty Office to avoid academic and financial penalties before the dates published in the General handbook.

Faculty Officer

APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



6 March 2024

Ms N A Mdakane

1901 Haven Court

2 Fenton Lane Durban

4000

Dear Ms Mdakane

The influence of cultural on the growth of women entrepreneurship in Durban KwaZulu Natal.

Ethical Clearance number IREC 142/23

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt acknowledges receipt of your final data collection tool for review.

We are pleased to inform you that the data collection tool has been approved. Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's. Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Prof J K Adam

Chairperson DUT-IREC

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