

Gender equality entrepreneurship in Botswana a great economic strategic policy: How viable, transformative, and sustainable is it in practice?

Abstract

Southern African Development Communities (SADC) are pursuing entrepreneurship towards economic and human development strategically. Although positive economic development strategic goals, policies and rules are acknowledged, their practical implementation needs full exploration. This research examines economic, gender equality, entrepreneurship strategies and their execution in Botswana as a case study. Methodologically, pragmatism paradigm, inductive approach, qualitative and quantitative methods constitute research processes and procedures. Digital statistical database, focus group discussions and workshops were applied for data collection through purposive and conveniently selected entrepreneurship and stakeholder participants. Research findings demonstrate positive economic gender equality entrepreneurship development strategies in Botswana. However, strategic implementation remains problematic in Botswana compared to other SADC, African and global regions. Sustainable, transformative, financial and managerial practices bring forward potential gender equality entrepreneurship. A theoretical model facilitating successful gender equality entrepreneurship is generated as a theoretical contribution.

Introduction

The South African Development Communities (SADC) are aware of the need to address gender equality through economic development and entrepreneurship (Koboyatau, 2023; Mtsweni et al., 2023). Many developing countries within the SADC region are creating economic development strategies (Nwakanma, 2021). However, the significant implementation of strategic goals, policies, rules and regulations in countries such as Botswana require full exploration. SADC regions particularly Botswana need transformative economic development to create sustainable gender equality entrepreneurship (Molwa & Tlhasana, 2023; Vidadievna 2023). Sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as gender equality, no poverty and zero hunger are therefore huge corporate, business and functional level strategies for the SADC region (Samkange, et al., 2021; Sibanda et al., 2023). Although the strategic policies rules and regulations in Botswana illustrate an awareness of these SDGs, their execution is yet to be achieved. According to Women Business and Law (2023), 62.8% of women in Sub Saharan Africa are living under extreme poverty. This research examines the implementation of the Gaborone, Botswana economic development strategic goals and their impact on the growth of gender equality entrepreneurship in Gaborone, Botswana.

Research Objectives

The study is designed to:

- To present and analyse the SADC human and gender equality development statistics.
- To critically analyse the implementation of strategic entrepreneurship goals and policies towards Gender equality entrepreneurship in the Gaborone case study

- To evaluate the implementation of the strategies, policies, goals and related gender equality entrepreneurship challenges and recommendations.
- To generate a gender equality entrepreneurship theoretical model as an important research contribution based on the research findings.

Background

Several countries in the SADC region including Botswana are creating economic strategies linked to gender entrepreneurship development. Special consideration for gender equality development is widely advocated by the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa which is consistent with the United Nations SDGs. The SADC strategic goals are linked to the SDGs including number 1: no poverty; 2: zero hunger; 5: gender equality and number 10: reduced inequalities (United Nations, 2018). This is supported by Nwakanma (2021), who believes the strategies are encouraging the increase of women economic growth. The SADC region for example was launched in 1992 to yield intentional fight against negative prejudices of women. In the year 2008 the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development legislation towards women empowerment, trade and entrepreneurship was formulated (SADC, 2016). Article 17 of this legislation addresses equality, fairness and a conducive environment for women in business. In 2015, Botswana developed institutional and budgetary mechanisms including the National Policy on Gender and Development were aligned towards SADC protocol. A total amount of 4.3 million United States dollars was allocated to initiate collaboration with SADC states (SADC, 2016). Non-profit organisations in countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are critically expected to promote women guidance (SADC, 2016). Culturally disadvantaged, the women can hardly access physical and financial capital compared to their male counterparts. Discovered in a study conducted in Tanzania, 40% of females used their own savings for business start-ups, while 26 % obtained financial aid from relatives and more that 50% did not know about government assistance initiatives at their disposal (Nziku, 2016). Consequently, many women perceived government policies as unfavourable for their entrepreneurial orientation (Nziku, 2016). The rationale for conducting this research is the premise of limited literature on the field of gender equality entrepreneurship in Botswana and it seeks to assess the efficacy of existing strategic goals and policies on women development.

Literature Review

The literature review focuses on the conceptualisation and analysis on sustainability, gender equality entrepreneurship and economic strategies. Identification, explanation, analysis and evaluation of economic strategies and their application including current challenges and related solutions constitute the main part of this section.

Conceptualization of sustainable gender equality entrepreneurship and economic strategy

Gender entrepreneurship is a perception addressing small to medium business enterprises and their relationship towards female, male and other exceptional genders (Samkange et al., 2023; Simba 2023;) This is a major issue within the SADC region including Gaborone in

Botswana because there is a huge difference between the development of women compared to their male counterparts from a business angle (Molwa & Tlhasana 2023; Vidadieva, 2023). Gender equality is linked towards sustainable issues from environmental, economic and community development perspectives (Samkange et al., 2021; Sibanda, et al. 2023; United Nations, 2018;).

Sustainability delivers 17 SDGs. Sustainable entrepreneurship development pursues gender equality as a major SDG especially within the SADC region where there is a huge discrimination of women against men based on cultural, political, legal, economic and educational circumstances (Ramkissoo and Mavondo 2023; Samkange et al., 2021; United Nations. 2018). Further SDGs in gender equality entrepreneurship development address zero hunger, no poverty including other SDGs (Fernández, 2021; Ramkissoo and Mavondo 2023; Samkange al., 2023; Zielinski, 2023). Economic strategies, laws, policies, rules and regulations should be designed and implemented to reduce levels of poverty and enhance stability, financial growth and organisational competitiveness among all business entrepreneurs (SADC Gender and Development Monitor, 2022). Strategic economic development addresses issues from corporate, business and functional levels implying the design of governance and impact on national and personal economic growth. Governments within the SADC region design corporate strategic decisions and goals while at business level, organisations unpack them to develop viable objectives, plans and actions at functional level (Koboyatau, 2023; Mtsweni et al., 2023). Gender entrepreneurship development according to a wide range of researchers (Estrada & Schuber, 2022; Samkange et al., 2023; Sibanda, et al., 2023; Sirimanne & Adhikari 2023), facilitates all these economic strategies for economic and personal growth.

Entrepreneurship strategies and policies impacting gender equality in SADC

Creating appropriate strategies to generate viable and sustainable economic growth is a major SADC issue (Koboyatau, 2023 and Mtsweni et al., 2023). Many countries within the SADC region including Botswana are subscribing towards global declarations on gender equity. Legal governmental aspects developed in SADC include the 1994 Dakar Platform, 1955 Beijing Platform, 2000 UN Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security and the 2003 African Charter on Women's Rights and the Millenium Development Goals (Jallow, 2023). Further gender related governmental developments included a declaration aimed towards eliminating all forms of discrimination and improving women's access to resources, education, and markets in 1997 (SADC Gender and Development Monitor, 2022). Furthermore, Gender Development was declared in 1997, transformed in 2008 and started implementation in 2013. This implementation was geared towards sustainable development through inclusion of women in policy making, legislation and projects development. This also included monitoring the success of the SADC protocol in 2016 (SADC, 2016).

Legal protocols, policies, rules and regulations established should facilitate economic, community, human development (Mtsweni, 2023). Botswana has the highest concentration on female entrepreneurs as ranked by the Master Index of women entrepreneurship scoring

38.5%, compared to Uganda with 38.4% and Ghana with 37.2%. (Adepetun, 2022). The viewed strategic Botswana prosperity is connected to the creation of governmental gender equality entrepreneurship stakeholders. Entrepreneurship stakeholders include Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Authority (CEDA) and Local Enterprise Authority (LEA), Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) and Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) according to Mamabolo & Lekoko, (2021) and Rhudumbu et al., (2020). Despite these significant strategies, huge gender equality gaps are yet to be addressed amidst rising poverty, health and well-being and violence among women. According to the gender index, 3 out of 4 women are experiencing violence and hence poverty remains highly female oriented (Molwa 2023; Sibanda et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurship development in Africa should contribute towards poverty reduction, job creation and social transformation (Adepetun, 2022; Mtsweni, 2023). This justifies the persistence of gender equality entrepreneurship development within the SADC regions (Bobek et al., 2023; Vhumbunu, 2023). Strategic goals are designed to decrease the economic difference between men and women (Bobek et al., 2023; Koboyata, 2023; Rudhumbu, 2022). Although research reflects awareness of economic strategic decision policies, rules and regulations, major questions towards sustainable female resolutions are yet to be resolved (Bobek et al., 2023; Mtsweni, 2023; Vhumbunu, 2023).

Sustainability and Transformation in Gender Entrepreneurship

Sustainability is currently a huge issue from a global perspective (Hardoy, Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2024; Kutlu and Ngoassong, 2023; United Nations, 2018). Climatic changes for example, are beginning to negatively impact the whole world. Failure to transform environmental, economic and community development processes and procedures to achieve the SDGs, will negatively impact people's lives especially among future generations (Sikder et al., 2024; Whitmee et al., 2024). Recent climate change global conferences are encouraging the delivery of the SDGs including the reduction of carbon emissions (Zielinski, 2023). Additionally, business enterprises especially within the SADC regions are expected to pursue the achievement of gender equality SDGs. Entrepreneurship development processes are therefore expected to address sustainable gender equality entrepreneurship practices and outcomes (Fernández, 2021; Ratteen & Jones, 2023; Simba 2023).

Gender equality entrepreneurship challenges and opportunities

Current research studies demonstrate that women entrepreneurs normally possess a sense of responsibility towards the environment and society (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). However, according to current statistical information, the female gender development is very low compared to men in the SADC region (Sibanda et al., 2023). Women continue to struggle from an entrepreneurship perspective based on financial, strategic, operational financial and technological, cultural challenges (Samkange, et al., 2023 et al). Educational skills, knowledge values, attitudes and experiences still leave a lot to be desired in many SADC regions (Rudhumbu et al., 2022). Traditional and biological differences between men and women remain as huge challenges. (Mmereki, 2023; Sibanda et al., 2023). Sustainable entrepreneurship demands high levels of managerial skills (Molwa, 2023; Must, 2022).

However, the issue emerging is how effective are the countries creating training and development opportunities for women who have strategic entrepreneurship projects to ensure high levels of success?

Research Gap and justification for this research

Research studies reflect that many countries are now aware of the need to address gender entrepreneurship and ensure that women are becoming equality successful as men. The SADC region is creating appropriate economic development strategies to address their financial development from national and global angles (Bobek et al., 2023; Koboyatau 2023; Mtsweni, 2023; Vhumbunu, 2023). Strategic decisions to create gender equity are now designed and some awareness is recognised. However, the problem remains unexplored fully regarding how effective the strategies are being executed in Africa, SADC regions and in countries like Botswana (Adepetun, 2022; Mamabolo & Lekoko, 2021; Rhudumbu et al., 2020). According to numerous global studies the development of women is still problematic (Rhudumbu et al., 2022; Mmereki 2023; Samkange et al. 2023 and Sibanda et al., 2023). Current research regarding Botswana women entrepreneurship is limited (Sibanda, 2023 et al.). The challenges women in Botswana are facing towards empowerment have yet to be fully explored (Bobek et al., 2023; Khupe, 2022; Mmereki, Hovorka & Gwebi, 2020 and Rhudumbu et al., 2020).

Our study aims to explore gender equality entrepreneurship in Botswana drawing on our proposed conceptual framework (Figure 1). We examine human and gender equality development statistics while exploring strategic implementation of economic goals policies, rules and regulations.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework (Source: authors)



We analysed challenges, opportunities and emerging recommendations to deliver effective outputs contributing towards effective sustainable gender equality entrepreneurship.

Research Methodology

This study is philosophically pragmatic focusing on objective and subjective perceptions (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2022; Chowdhury, 2014). The research approach was inductive because it sought to develop insights from the Gaborone Botswana case study focused on a whole day workshop, focus group discussions and engagement with the government policy related stakeholder institutional teams. The research method applied both quantitative and qualitative data collection as phase 1 for numerical data and phase 2 for thematic data.

Phase 1: Statistical and Numerical Data Collection

Phase 1 applied numerical data using Mintel database technological application. Statistically, the database was accessed through secondary digital data collection process tools (Dyvik 2024). Human and gender equity development statistical details regarding Botswana in particular and in SADC region was collected. Sustainable global excellence regarding economic management of human and gender development gaps were addressed. The sampling technique was purposive (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2022; Pope et al., 2023). A sample of 12 countries constituting 75% of the SADC region population of 16 countries were selected. In addition one of the best global countries was also selected for comparative analysis (See Table 2)

Phase 2: Subjective and Thematic Data Collection

Phase 2 generated qualitative data using focus group discussions and workshops. Qualitative method addresses data collection from a subjective and interdisciplinary perspective (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2022; Pope et al., 2023). Based on grounded theoretical focus, a unique theoretical model was designed to address gender equality entrepreneurship. This is supported by Tegan(2023), who justifies the application of grounded theory to generate theoretical grounding. The participant sampling technique was purposive and convenient (Dougherty, 2017). The study included the female entrepreneurs to address the gender equality issues linked to Botswana. Mixed genders were conveniently selected for government oriented stakeholders, entrepreneurship lectures and researchers from the Botswana Accountancy College and the workshop participants in general. Participant sample groups and numbers are reflected in table 1

Table 1: Research participants

Participants	Groups	Gender	Numbers
Entrepreneurs	3	Female	33
Stake Holder Institutions	2	Mixed	12
University entrepreneur lectures and researchers and workshop presenters including and stakeholders including CEDA and LEA	1	Mixed	15
Workshop	1	Mixed	(33+15)
Total	6	Mixed	60

The group discussions generated data regarding the gender equality economic strategies, policies, rules and their functional execution in Botswana. Managerial challenges opportunities and recommendations were also addressed. The processing, presentation and analysis of the data collected was thematically articulated. This is justified as part of the focus group oriented research data collection according to (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Ethically all the research participants including the organisations involved, were given a research briefing and allowed to provide permission to be involved in the research. The

participants were anonymously addressed and the findings are also delivered anonymously. Creating such ethical considerations is essential according to (Alharahsheh & Pius 2022; and Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Chowdhury, 2014).

Research Findings

Data Presentation Phase 1: Statistical economic, human and gender gap development

Addressing economic strategies to impact gender equality entrepreneurship is based on establishing and analysing the statistics regarding the economic, human development while decreasing the gender development gap (Dyvik, 2024). The statistical data regarding Botswana and its comparative analysis towards SADC and global gender equality sustainability is reflected in table 2

Table 2: Economic, human and gender gap development statistics (adapted from Human Development Report Statistical Data 2024)

Global Well Developed Country A		Economic Human Development Index %	Human gender development gap rank	Gender development gap values
Iceland		0.91	3	0.959
B SADAC Countries		Economic Human Development Index	Human gender development gap rank	Gender development gap values
1	Botswana	0.71	114	0.708
2	Namibia	0.8	142	0.610
3	Zambia	0.69	153	0.569
4	Mozambique	0.77	183	0.461
5	Zimbabwe	0.74	159	0.550
6	South Africa	0.78	110	0.718
7	Congo	0.61	180	0.481
8	Tanzania	0.74	167	0.532
9	Lesotho.	0.7	168	0.521
10	Malawi	0.67	172	0.508
11	Angola	0.65	150	0.591
12	Comoros	0.66	152	0.586
Average SADC Statistics		0.71	154	0.570

Iceland has the highest global gender equality development score of 0.91% with a gender development rate index of 3 and the value development score of 0.959. This country is used to analyse the statistical human and gender gap development efforts of the SADC region ((Moiwa

&Tlhasana, 2023; Sibanda et al., 2023; Sikder et al., 2024; Vidadievna, 2023; Whitmee et al., 2024)

The statistical data shown in table 2 demonstrates the need for the SADC region to address economic, human and gender equality gap developments. The SADC countries have an average human development rank of 154 compared to 3 in Iceland. SADC also has a gender development value average of 0.507 compared to 0.959. Reflectively, SADC still has a long way to transform its impact on economic human development. Nevertheless, Botswana is doing better than other SADC countries with an average human development gap of 114 compared to the SADC average of 154. The gender development Botswana value of 0.708 is compared to SADC average development value of 0.570. This justifies the need for SADC to create innovative human development economic strategies.

Phase 1 Data Analysis

Addressing the human development gap between men and women also remains a huge challenge within SADC whose average index is .71 compared to .91 for Iceland. Although Botswana is on the same index rate of .71 with SADC average it still needs to ensure women do not remain undeveloped compared to man. South Africa is showing the highest SDAC region index of .80 well above the average. This implies Botswana can learn a few things from South Africa which is getting closer to Iceland whose index is .91. Statistically, Botswana still has to increase its human and gender development based on the gender equality SDG (Adepetun, 2022; Bobek et al., 2023; Mtsweni, 2023; Koboyatau, 2023; Vhumbunu, 2023). Analytically, these findings justify the need for economic and gender equality strategic development efforts within the SADC region (reference). The average value of creating gender development gaps for the SADC region is 0.570 compared to Iceland whose development value is 0.959. However, Botswana has a value of 0,708 regarding the development of the human development gap between men and women. Unfortunately, the huge difference regarding human, economic and gender equality development from a global sustainable perspective remains a major challenge.

Phase 2: Data Presentation and Analysis: Gender equality economic strategic goals policies and rules

We conducted workshops and focus group discussions which created the necessary qualitative data (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2022 and Pope et al., 2023). The data collected is summarised in tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 below. Analytical discussion of findings is based on four major themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) reflected on the data presentation including some examples of quotations linked to the research objectives

Table 3: Gender equality economic strategic goals policies and rules

Theme	Key findings	Some key quotations
Theme 1: Gender Economic Strategic Goals, Policies and Rules	Strategic goals are linked to economic development focusing on gender entrepreneurship development, development of women and improved income generation.	“No private organisations are yet coming forward to offer help to the clients. They will be welcome if only they don’t jeopardise the sustainability of the businesses”

	Botswana Acts include Economic Inclusion Act 2021 related to the establishment of specialised courts by economic justice and Gender Equality; Citizen equality act 1955 linked to the prohibited gender discrimination but associated towards gender equality Policies rules and regulations address labour prohibition law associated with race, colour sex, religion, disabilities, gender equality, social and marital status Entrepreneurship development stakeholder institutions including CEDA and LEA are established. CEDA provides loans starting from P500 to P50 million towards small, medium and large entrepreneurships. It also provides mentorship and training to the entrepreneurship. LEA works together with CEDA to provide the training and mentoring aspects while facilitating the funding application proposal processes and procedures. These stakeholders are linked to universities in Botswana expanding entrepreneurships teaching and learning experiences .	
Theme 2: Gender equality Entrepreneurship Projects and their Implementation Based on Strategic Goals, Policies and Rules and Regulation	Stakeholders institutions such as CEAD and LEA are designed to offer entrepreneurship start-up capitals, financial assistance, delivery of appropriate skills and knowledge, entrepreneurship support and guidance and support. This is recognised. Most women entrepreneur participants were focused on food production and food consumption projects such a poultry production. Horticulture. Value added activities such as food production and food consumption market platforms . Food product retails are delivered. However practical entrepreneurship implementation is weak as projects remain challenging. Sustainable goals such as gender equality, zero hunger and no poverty are therefore not being accomplished	“Goals are acknowledged and very much appreciated”. “Our struggles are linked to poor execution of the strategic gaols to provide support and guidance from a financial and managerial positions”.

The data indicated in Table 3 identifies the economic and gender equality entrepreneurship strategic goals, policies, rules and procedures in Gaborone which are acknowledged in a number of research articles (Adepetun, 2022; Mtsweni, 2023). The research participants outlined the strategic goals, policies and rules focusing on gender equality and general economic developments. They highlighted that the *“goals are acknowledged and very much*

appreciated". The Botswana acts including Economic Inclusion Act 2021 related to the establishment of specialised courts by economic justice and Gender Equality; Citizen equality act 1955 linked to the prohibited gender discrimination but associated towards gender equality were acknowledged. Policies, rules and regulations addressing labour prohibition law associated with race, colour sex, religion, disabilities, gender equality, social and marital status were also recognised (SADC Gender and Development Monitor, 2022 and SADC, 2016). The governmental development of entrepreneurship stakeholder institutions including CEDA and LEA, is associated with the strategies. Similarity, the recognition of a lot of women pursuing entrepreneurship as part of economic development while acknowledging the SDGs such as gender equality, no poverty, zero hunger and reduced inequality was recognised. This is considered as positive economic and sustainable development (Nwakanma, 2021).

Findings indicate that entrepreneurship projects for most women are linked to food production and food consumption. Many entrepreneurs created retail food product market platforms, food consumption retails, including agricultural and animal food production scenarios such as raising chickens, goats and pigs. Unfortunately, most of these entrepreneurs are facing huge financial and managerial problems implying limited implementation of the strategic goals despite the policies, rules and regulations designed to facilitate functional developments. This is confirmed with the statistical findings in phase 1 where human and gender equality development is way below the global development. This argument is supported in many research scenarios (Adepetun, 2022; Bobek et al., 2023; Mtsweni, 2023; Koboyatau, 2023; Vhumbunu, 2023). Business enterprises as reflected by the research participants, hardly implement the identified strategic goals. This is part of what was reflected in the quotations: *"Our struggles are linked to poor execution of the strategic goals to provide support and guidance from financial and managerial positions"*. The equality of women in delivering entrepreneurship as economic development is yet to be accomplished in Gaborone. This is a major concern regarding human development scenarios within the SADC region (Molwa & Tlhasana, 2023; Sibanda et al., 2023; Sikder et al., 2024; Vidadieva, 2023; Whitmee et al., 2024). It can be argued that strategic goals though eloquent theoretically, are yet to practically transform gender equality. Human development for women remains limited as their poverty is still pertinent compared to global development with countries doing better such as Iceland.

Although Botswana acts including Economic Inclusion Act 2021, Gender Equality; Citizen Equality Act 1955 and prohibited gender discrimination policies and rules (Jallow, 2023) are consistent with gender equality and reduced inequity, no poverty, zero hunger SDGs (United Nations, 2018). Delivering these SDGs is yet to be practically and fully accomplished. The engagement of stakeholders such as CEDA and LEA to create financial opportunities, managerial support and personal development is yet to positively impact gender equality entrepreneurship. Although these stakeholders confirmed their understanding of the institutional outputs, their opportunities, processes and procedures to deliver the strategic goals were not adequately addressed. Effective strategic execution requires support beyond governmental institutions. Research participants especially the women entrepreneurs complained that, *"No private organisations are yet coming forward to offer help to the*

clients.” They will be welcome only if they don’t jeopardise the sustainability of the businesses. The involvement of other commercial institutions such as banks, established businesses including intellectual and practical oriented business individuals, is necessary to deliver the gender equality economic development. This is confirmed by many by gender entrepreneurship research (Bobek et al., 2023; Koboyatau, 2023; Rudhumbu, 2022).

Gender equality entrepreneurship projects and their implementation based on strategic goals, policies and rules and regulation

Although the creation of appropriate stakeholder institutions towards gender entrepreneurship development are considered as key economic strategic goals, policies and rules and regulations, it is clear the delivery remains problematic. This argument is supported in many research studies (Mmereki, 2023; Moilwa, 2023, and Must, 2022). Although the corporate level strategies are recognised, business and functional level strategies are not effectively accomplished. Financial support remains inadequate. Managerial skills, knowledge values and attitudes are critical needs to deliver viable entrepreneurs. Poor managerial practices involving sustainable, financial, marketing, operations have yet to be effectively resolved. This is consistent with phase 1 statistical findings where a big global gender equality development gap of 114 compared to 3 in Iceland and even South Africa with 110 gap is reflected.

Perceptively, current regulatory framework governing businesses within SADC is not adequately addressing the negative plight of small entrepreneurs. These findings are very consistent with research linked to Botswana entrepreneurship (Khupe, 2022; Moilwa, 2023; Nziku, 2016; Rhudhumbu et al., 2020; Sibanda et al., 2023). Strategically, the implementation of goals towards practical oriented plans, objectives, tasks including resource management is a huge problem. What is worrisome is the fact that a wide range of challenges and related opportunities are not addressed.

Gender equality entrepreneurship challenges and opportunities emerging

According to the findings, key gender equality entrepreneurship challenges are associated with poor financial access, managerial and leadership practices. This implies the need to pursue business and functional level strategies from a practical orientation, as reflected in table 4.

Figure 4: Gender equality entrepreneurship challenges

Theme	Key findings	Some key quotations
Theme 3 Gender equality entrepreneurship challenges		
Financial challenges	Commercial banks are still very complicated in delivering loans to poor women. Entrepreneurship start-up access to finance is not based on viable strategic goals to pursue successful businesses Access to entrepreneurship start-ups through stakeholder institutions such as CEDA is still limited based on critical proposal development skills and knowledge. Financial help to keep the business going on is very difficult to acquire and many businesses are breaking up. Financial management to ensure business are viable is a huge challenge. Managing costs and prices and how to deliver viable productive businesses needs further improvement to achieve effective revenue management and significant profit margins not effectively addressed. Access to resources and their development as part of the business is a problem	<i>“Government loans are paid late because it takes between 2 to 6 months to settle invoices. This makes it difficult to operate as cash will have been taken up by servicing the government tender. This often leads to collapse of businesses.”</i> <i>“Oversupply of same agricultural produce and therefore prices go down. There is no documentation of local crop production in different regions of the country”</i> <i>The “absence of social capital makes it hard for entrepreneurs to lobby for effective policies as a group”.</i> <i>“There are difficulties in securing retail space in supermarkets for SMME products. Shelf space is also paid for and thus it becomes expensive for these entrepreneurs</i>
Operations Managerial Challenges	There is limited managerial design and development skills and knowledge especially food science expertism. It is hard to find such skills locally. No effective strategic goals and plans for the enterprise including limited anticipation and future trends to address or prevent problems are effectively applied.	<i>“Limited investment in post-harvest technologies particularly if perishable products are not sold out”</i> <i>“There is oversupply of same agricultural produce and therefore prices go down and</i>

	This shows limited managerial and leaderships development necessary to address business plans and budgets is difficult. There is poor transformation of business using resources to produce customer needs. Access to appropriate buildings and facilities to create small business remains a big problem because some unique licenses are required. Design and development of appropriate servicescapes facilities is not well managed. There is poor operational managerial skills and knowledge resulting in poor service quality management. The delivery of quality products is not always good. Generally, poor social interaction with other businesses and stakeholders remains a problem. Logistics, supply chains, inventory procurement and controls such as buying resources in bulk at cheaper prices and storage is not addressed. Above everything, problem understanding based on research to deliver the solutions is not addressed. Although evolution of technological development such as artificial intelligence, robotics, are available, ineffective technological application is a huge issue based on limited knowledge and skills	<i>there is no documentation of local crop production in different regions of the country”.</i> <i>“Climatic conditions create some problems for agricultural businesses where only local rain is what is available. The ability to address the climatic challenges through technological process and procedures is limited”.</i> <i>“Open field farming is seasonal relying on annual rains but difficult to manage”.</i> <i>“There is limited investment in post-harvest technologies particularly if perishable products are not sold out”.</i>
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Although the access to financial start-up capitals is an encouraged opportunity through the stakeholders such as CEDA, the commercial banks have yet to deliver financial support associated with poverty stricken women development plans. It is assumed that training of women to create effective entrepreneurship strategic goals and related plans is also provided by the stakeholders including CEDA, LEA and the Botswana universities. However, women still struggle to create their viable project proposals. The effective delivery of business entrepreneurship programmes remains questionable. According to the need for gender equality entrepreneurship, viable training and development opportunities are necessary (Bobek et al., 2022; Mmereki, Hovorka & Gwebi, 2020).

Successful delivery of financial business start-up capitals, project proposal applications, and developmental loans based on impactful practical support and guidance remain unexplored. According to the participants, *“government loans are paid late because it takes between 2 to 6 months to settle invoices. This makes it difficult to operate as cash will have been taken up*

by servicing the government tender. This often leads to collapse of businesses.” This demonstrates very limited application of the government policies and related processes and procedures. Entrepreneurship empowerment to execute objectives and practical deliveries of relevant tasks to yield effective revenue management and valuable profit margins is yet to be effectively addressed. The biggest problem is poor level of educational literacy and hence training and development remains a huge challenge. Successful informal education before is necessary before women can address successful entrepreneurship. Educationally, basic language development knowledge, technical skills, strong values and attitudes including empowerment is necessary (Khupe, 2022; Rhudhumbu et al., 2020). Effective engagement with all the stakeholders including the male successful entrepreneurs is essential. This will yield collaboration and social development necessary for successful gender equality. One of the participants indicated that the *“absence of social capital makes it hard for entrepreneurs to lobby for effective policies as a group”*. Social capital is part of human development (Ratteen & Jones, 2023; Simba, 2023).

Financial management skills and knowledge to facilitate viable entrepreneurship were considered as huge challenges. Managing production costs and prices for instance, requires effective revenue management to yield significant profit margins. An example of poor financial management is demonstrated in this quotation: *“There is an oversupply of same agricultural produce and therefore prices go down. No documentation of local crop production in different regions of the country...”* are made available. This typically reflects poor management regarding plans, operational transformation, outputs and how they are marketed to yield the necessary revenue. Estrada & Schuber, (2022) and Sirimanne & Adhikari (2023), agree this argument constitutes the major entrepreneurship challenge. Effective budgeting, planning and availability of necessary resources and their development to facilitate effective management and operational outputs are therefore highly problematic. (Mmereki, 2023; Rudhumbu et al., 2022). Another finding indicates that gender equality entrepreneurship has *“...difficulties in securing retail space in supermarkets for SMME products. Shelf-space is also paid for and thus it becomes expensive for these entrepreneurs”*. This statement illustrates the inability to plan in advance, create appropriate budgets and deliver secure financial resource based management. Entrepreneurs should do this research in advance to create appropriate financial requirements as inputs before the transformation processes and procedures can yield the necessary revenue outputs. This is related to basic operational systems thinking management theory (Mmereki, 2023; Rudhumbu et al., 2022). Revenue management theories also reflect the need to budget and address necessary costs, prices and outputs (Estrada & Schuber, 2022; Sirimanne & Adhikari 2023; Samkange et al., 2023 and Sibanda et al., 2023). Financial management is a critical element of functional strategic and operational management hence effectively addressing such challenges is important not only in Botswana but SADC region and other global countries.

Operational managerial and leadership development challenges

Limited management practices demonstrating poor design and development of transformative business and functional levels generate a humongous problem. Unpacking entrepreneurship strategies demands relevant operational management objectives,

functional processes and procedures to facilitate the acquisition of appropriate resources and transforming them into effective entrepreneurship outputs (Rudhumbu et al., 2022, Sibanda, et al., 2023). Unrefined operational managerial skills and knowledge resulting in limited unpacking of strategic goals, will persistently hinder service quality management. An example of the point raised through discussion is that *“Open field farming is seasonal relying on annual rains but difficult to manage”*. This quotation indicates limited skills and knowledge to address managerial problems. The other problem includes an *“oversupply of same agricultural produce and therefore prices go down...”*. Managing product costs is a major operational issue in this case which is endorsed by Samkange et al., (2023) and Sibanda et al., (2023). The need for more effective managerial and leadership skills and knowledge will yield effective enterprise revenue management outcomes.

The other major challenge identified is linked to limited design and development of appropriate servicescape facilities not well managed. Developing the right business organisations including addressing internal and external outlooks is critical. Appropriate facilities and equipment linked to the products and service outputs to be delivered based on customer needs and interests, demands leadership and managerial practices. According to the participants *“Climatic conditions create some problems for agricultural businesses where only local rain is what is available.”* This is an example of failure to manage the servicescape from an environmental, climatic and cultural situation (Fernández, 2021; Ratteen & Jones, 2023). The design and development of the organisational and related facilities demands unique technical skills and knowledge. If not addressed, then the entrepreneurship situation remains unmanageable. Failure to create an understanding of current and future trends regarding the challenges to be anticipated is a managerial problem. Prevention of issues based on risk management (Estrada & Schuber, 2022; Sirimanne & Adhikari 2023; Samkange et al., 2023; Sibanda et al., 2023) and appropriate development of solutions is essential to yield the necessary outputs. This is what operational management entails. A wide range of such challenges are currently linked to technological evolution (Ratteen, 2023). Using relevant technologies including virtual reality, artificial intelligence and robotics for example, will facilitate problem management. This is why transformation is important, However, according to the participants, this remains a challenge because there is very *“limited investment in post-harvest technologies particularly if perishable products are not sold out”*. The technological challenges continue to emerge as current and future trends (Ratteen 2023). Unfortunately, many entrepreneurs are not in a position to research and examine the risky trends and how they will impact their managerial situations. The discussion of recommendations suggests creating problem solving situation through CEDA and LEA including private stakeholder institutions.

Participant Recommendations

Table 5: Recommendations from research participants

Theme	Key findings.	Some key quotations
Theme 4 Recommendations		
Recommendations including training and development	What can be done to address the challenges? A centralised system that can help to disseminate information about products, services and effective management and financial access, is needed. The creation of women entrepreneurship empowerment is overdue. Providing relevant and well-timed entrepreneurship support and guidance to yield effective operational leadership and managerial systems is essential. Although strategic rules and regulations are evident, the need to put them into practice is essential. Effective access to entrepreneurship viable financial support during start-ups and later as part of developments is important and needs to be addressed urgently. The need to deliver effective local and global practice including technological developments plans and practices is critical. There is need to develop effective collaboration between entrepreneurs at national and global level. Appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver effective marketing and operational management should be provided as critical skills and knowledge	<i>“Create a platform for the relevant stakeholders to address the challenges. Develop a framework for building/developing social capital.”</i> <i>“Consultation in policy formulation and commitment towards application to promote growth of small businesses.”</i> <i>“Develop a Facebook page or a formalised IT system that the ministry can operate.”</i> <i>Creation “of a platform for the relevant stakeholders to address the challenges. Develop a framework for building/developing social capital</i>

The challenges identified can be addressed if effective communication with the stakeholders and delivery of strategic goals is effectively executed. Regulatory bodies need to improve themselves. Participants suggest the creation *“of a platform for the relevant stakeholders to address the challenges.”* There is need to *“develop a framework for building/developing social capital”*. The delivery of support and guidance through relevant stakeholders is necessary. Government policies and procedures should be addressed effectively from a practical angle. Training and development of individual entrepreneurs to empower them and provide basic literacy and organisational skills, knowledge and related values and attitudes needs to be addressed effectively (Moilwa, 2023; Must, 2022). Exemplary, some

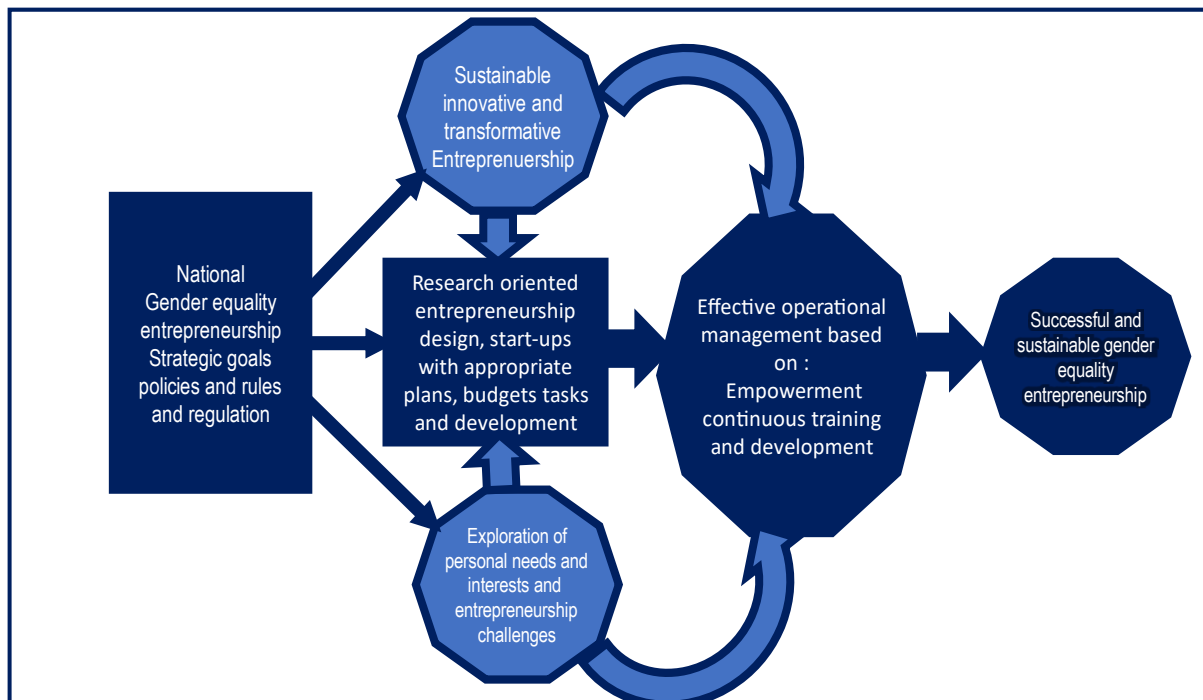
“Consultation in policy formulation and commitment towards application to promote growth of small businesses”, should be part of the training and development process.

Participants also encouraged stakeholders to deliver improved financial access, marketing and operations management techniques and practices. Creating opportunities to determine the personal needs and interests and providing the empowerment of women to deliver successful gender equality entrepreneurship is recommended. This is highly supported by many research studies (Bobek et al., 2022; Mmereki, Hovorka & Gwebi, 2020). The need for creating educational literacy to understand a number of issues and facilitate effective training and development solutions is argued as critical. This will facilitate addressing of entrepreneurship pitfalls (Estrada & Schuber 2022; Sirimanne & Adhikari 2023; Samkange, et al., 2023 and Sibanda et al., 2023). The training and development should also be more innovative and transformative to address business technological and sustainable development issues (Ratteen 2023). According to a participant quotation, stakeholders should, *“develop a Facebook page or a formalised IT system that the ministry” can operationalize*, The development of technological skills and knowledge is therefore important going forward. According to successful entrepreneurship delivery in other countries, digital entrepreneurship should therefore be addressed (Ramkissoon, 2022; Ratten, 2023; Samkange, et al., 2021).

Training and development including empowerment of women is what is essential in ensuring gender equality entrepreneurship. Training and development should be continuous and focus on relevant concepts, contexts and practices related to financial, technological, collaborative, and marketing managerial techniques (Sirimanne & Adhikari 2023; Simba et al 2023; Sibanda 2023).

According to the points raised in this research, developing entrepreneurship projects especially among women needs to be addressed based on contextual and conceptual theoretical models. Theoretical models should be applied to yield successful gender entrepreneurship from a sustainable transformative and gender equality perspective as reflected in figure 4

Figure 2: Gender equality entrepreneurship strategic goals implementation: Conceptual theoretical framework (Source: authors)



Although the government is creating very high levels of corporate strategic goals policies and rules and regulations (Jallow, 2023; Koboyatau, 2023; Mtsweni et al., 2023; SADC 2016), human and gender equality development is statistically low. People responsible for delivering strategic goals should create an understanding of the business and functional elements. These three levels of development are linked to each other and need to be understood. The stakeholders need to practically and effectively deliver appropriate gender equality entrepreneurship training and development to facilitate the design and develop project entrepreneurship strategies linked to government economic growth and development (SADC 2016). Creating the necessary plans, budgets and understanding of financial, human, material, technological and sustainable resources is important. This can be done by pursuing research to create and explore personal entrepreneurship development needs and interests. The challenges likely to happen should also be identified and then addressed before the start -up entrepreneurship project development. Appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should be developed to ensure effective innovation and transformative development of entrepreneurship gender equality. Sustainability, and other linked environmental, economic and community oriented SDGs to create viable gender equality entrepreneurship start -ups should be addressed. The stakeholders such as CEDA and LEA (Mamabolo & Lekoko, 2021; Rhudumbu et al., 2020) should play a significant role in addressing these issues. Other SADC regions and African countries can also follow suite.

Once an entrepreneurship project is created, continuous training and development to ensure viable entrepreneurship plans, objectives and functional operational practices should be delivered efficiently. Training and development will empower the entrepreneurs and ensure successful economic development outputs. This argument is supported by (Sibanda et al., 2023; Rudhumbu et al., 2022). This will include effective revenue management, viable profit margins, and ability to deliver even more transformative goals going forward to

enhance their business growth. This will deliver sustainable, transformative and gender equality entrepreneurship towards yielding economic human and community development (Samkange et al., 2023). This crucial to ensure that both women and men will create effective gender equality not only in Botswana but other SADC regions and African countries. Reduced inequality, equality development, no poverty and zero hunger SDGs are now globally important. .

Conclusion

The research examined human and gender equality development, economic gender equality strategic goals, policies and rules and regulations and how they are being implemented in Gaborone, Botswana. Research demonstrates the need to deliver sustainable and transformative entrepreneurship to enhance economic development (Mamabolo & Lekoko, 2021; Sibanda et al 2023. Ratteen 2023; Rhudumbu et al., 2020). The qualitative data collected was based on purposive and conveniently selected participants.

Key research findings highlight the acknowledged strategic development goals evident in Gaborone. Strategically, the goals are linked to economic development focusing on gender entrepreneurship development (Jallow, 2023. Koboyatau, 2023: Mtsweni et al., 2023; SADC 2016). The development of women and improved income generation is a critical part of the strategies not only in Botswana but globally. Economically, gender equality goals policies, rules and regulations are especially connected to government stakeholder institutions including CEDA and LEA. Strategically, the goals are linked to SDGs including gender equality, no poverty, zero hunger and reduced inequality (Fernández, 2021; United Kingdom 2018; Zielinski, 2023). Unfortunately, the strategic implementation at business and functional levels, leave a lot to be desired. This is also reflected in SADC and other African countries. Entrepreneurs indicated that operational managerial problems, poor financial access and ineffective training and development are huge development challenges limiting successful gender equality entrepreneurship. This implies that the economic and human development strategies are yet to genuinely impact the empowerment of women and eliminate inequality, violence and poverty, between men and women in Gaborone. Effective engagement with government legal protocols, rules, regulation and processes and procedures is critical. Effective practical engagement with government and private stakeholders to deliver sustainable managerial, financial including training and development is overdue as reflected in Iceland for instance (Bobek at al., 2022; Moilwa, 2023; Must, 2022; Mmereki, Hovorka & Gwebi, 2020). Empowerment of women in Botswana, SADC, Africa and other global countries, should therefore be highly prioritised (Hassan & Ramkissoo, 2023) to yield successful gender equality entrepreneurship based on sustainable, innovative and transformative functionality (Estrada & Schuber 2022; Samkange, et al., 2023; Sibanda at al., 2023; Sirimanne & Adhikari 2023). A conceptual gender equality entrepreneurship theoretical model was generated and its contextualised delivery is a huge theoretical contribution for this research. Future research to be pursued will test this theoretical model from a contextualised practical entrepreneurship project orientation. Practical gender equality entrepreneurship implementation to achieve the prestigious government development economic goals, rules and regulations will be research-pursued going forward.

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