

SHE WORKS HARD FOR THE MONEY: BLACK WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS BUSINESS NETWORKS AND FIRM PERFORMANCE

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THE PROBLEM:

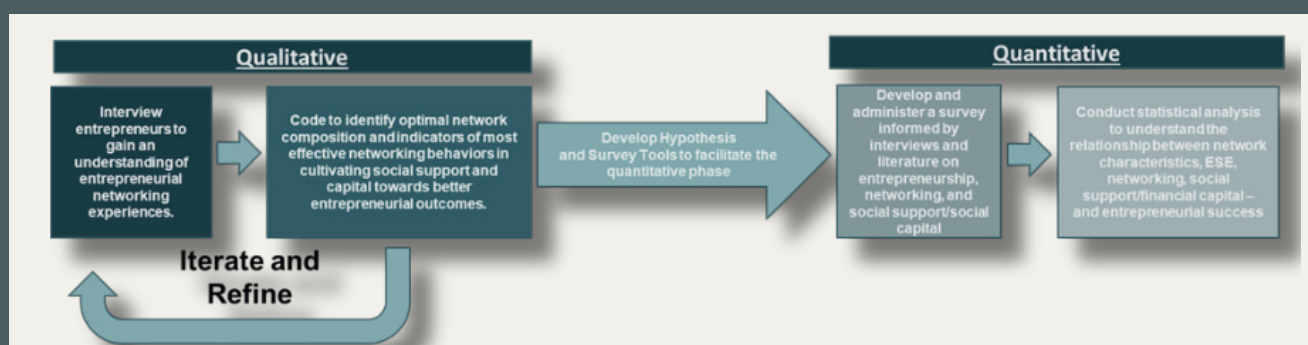
Black women in the U.S. launch businesses at a rate six times the national average, comprising 20% of the nation's 12.3 million women-owned enterprises. Despite this, these businesses often face considerable challenges—they are typically undercapitalized, generate less revenue, remain smaller in scale, and exhibit higher failure rates than other businesses.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

How does engagement in business networks influence the success of Black-Women-owned businesses?

METHOD

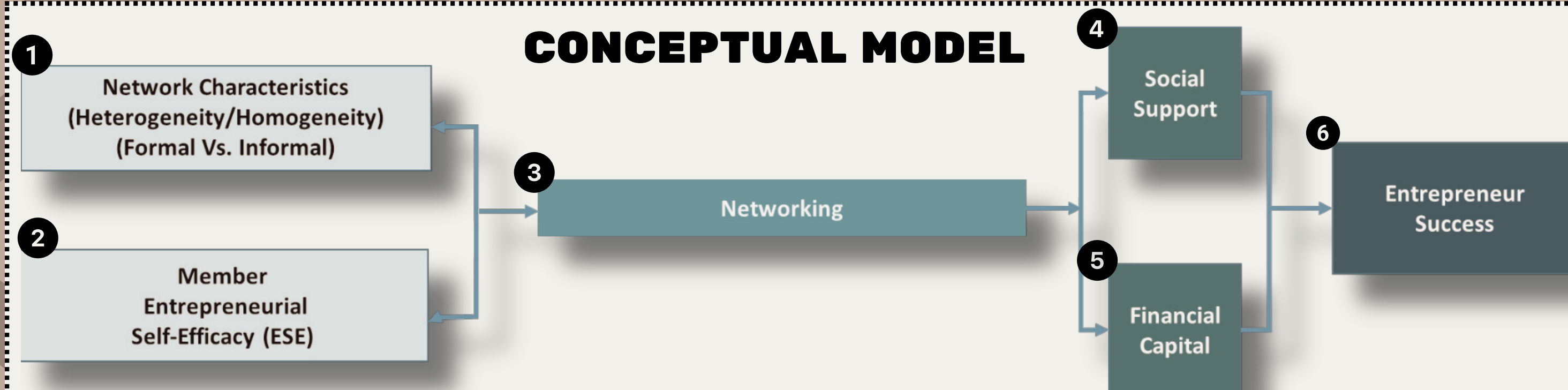
- Interpretive epistemology and intersectional feminist lens.
- Mixed methods exploratory sequential design with qualitative interviews to understand the experience and develop hypotheses followed by quantitative surveys to test hypotheses.



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CONCEPTUAL MODEL



- 1 Network Characteristics:** Attributes of network composition. (Ibarra, 1992; Somashekhar, 2014)
- 2 Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE):** One's belief in entrepreneurial abilities. (McGee et al., 2009)
- 3 Networking:** Behaviors engaged in while interacting in the network. (Wolff & Moser, 2006)
- 4 Social Support:** Emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support. (House, 1998)
- 5 Financial Capital:** Ability to invest, scale, and sustain business. (Jackson, 2021)
- 6 Entrepreneurial Success:** Business growth, financial stability, work-life balance, and ability to serve others. (Gorgievski & Stephan, 2016)

INITIAL INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Shared Identity and Community: Finding a tribe/community is crucial for emotional and informational support, fostering comfort and psychological safety.

- "...Because I can relate so well to Black women entrepreneurs because I don't scrub away the residue of my southern drawl, you know, or I wear my hair as it is, and I actually show up like this because I saw so many tech boys show up in a big t-shirt and some flip-flops on..."

- Stacey C., Interview Quote*

Faith and Spirituality: Religious faith and spirituality are central to developing ESE and resilience in the entrepreneurial journey.

- "I am a person of faith. So, for me, part of that confidence is really trust in the the path. You know that because I did not, I did not choose this. This is not what I envision for myself. So I have to believe that there is, you know, this divine intent for me to serve in this role."

- Lavonne R., Interview Quote*

Banking Challenges: Black women founders face difficulties with bank support, often resorting to bootstrapping.

- And we were with a large commercial bank ...when we were getting started. And so we went to them and we'd won, you know, maybe a couple hundred thousand dollars in contracts. So I was like ... I need at least, \$500,000 on a [line of] credit. Oh, we only give you a line of credit according to your revenue. So we're going to give you a credit card.

- Evelyn J., Interview Quote*

Black Tax and Woman Tax: Dual identity leads to extra labor, compounded by racism and discrimination.

- There is a tax that woman pay. There's definitely a tax that Black women pay for any job we have. You know, there's just something that we have to give to gain the success and it shouldn't be that way, but it is.

-Taylor V., Interview Quote*

*Pseudonyms used to protect anonymity

CONTRIBUTIONS:

Provides understanding as to how networks can provide the resources and support for Black women entrepreneurs to inform policy, business practice, and education.