



## Refugee Women's Entrepreneurship: A Concept Analysis

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** This paper aims to conceptually define refugee women's entrepreneurship in host countries, filling a literature gap on its gendered aspects and effects on well-being and integration. It seeks to clarify this concept and its impact on refugee women's empowerment, autonomy, and community contribution.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Employing the Walker and Avant (2011) method, this analysis methodically reviews literature on refugee women's entrepreneurship, identifying key attributes, antecedents and consequences of refugee women's entrepreneurship. The study grounds these findings in real-world cases and theory.

**Findings:** The analysis shows that refugee women pursue entrepreneurship to overcome employment obstacles, using their resilience and creativity. It provides a route to empowerment, independence, and integration, improving well-being and challenging gender norms, while positively impacting the host society's economy and social structure.

**Conclusion and implications:** This concept analysis uniquely deepens our insight into refugee women's entrepreneurship, offering an intricate conceptualization that bridges economic, social, cultural, and psychological facets. It positions entrepreneurship as a strategic response to displacement with profound implications for policy and practice. This concept analysis emphasizes the need for policies and programs that support refugee women's entrepreneurship, aiding their integration and enhancing host economies. It also underscores entrepreneurship's role in advancing gender equality, social inclusion, and community resilience, advocating for wider recognition of these entrepreneurs' societal contributions.

**Keywords:** *Refugee Women; Entrepreneurship; Concept Analysis; Walker and Avant*

## ***Introduction***

Refugee entrepreneurship has become a relevant concept in today's changing political and environmental landscapes, with violence, trauma, and destruction causing individuals to flee their home countries and seek asylum elsewhere (Abebe, 2023; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Senthana et al., 2021). In Canada, the number of immigrants has almost tripled in the past 15 years, with over a million new immigrants arriving between 2016 and 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022). Immigrants and refugees now comprise nearly a quarter of Canada's population (Statistics Canada, 2022). Despite this, immigrants and refugees face a significantly higher unemployment rate than Canadian-born individuals, particularly refugee women.

In addition, while over 50% of newly arrived immigrants and refugees are accepted under the precedent of "enhancing and promoting economic development", they experience an unemployment rate almost twice as high as native-born Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2022). Although the gap has narrowed slightly for immigrant men, it remains significantly larger and is increasing for immigrant women (Crossman, 2021). Upon arrival, refugees face numerous barriers to financial stability and settlement in their new countries, including a lack of recognized qualifications and training (Huq & Venugopal, 2021). Many individuals find that their lack of recognized qualifications and training can be a significant barrier to their success (Skran, 2020).

For refugees, this often means taking entry-level positions outside of their trained fields, which may lead to a range of difficulties, including financial instability, economic hardship, and unmet health and psychosocial needs (Abebe, 2023; Alkhaled et al., 2017b; Dijkhuizen, 2020). These challenges can have significant social consequences, such as a loss of independence, autonomy, and self-efficacy, making it even more difficult for refugees to establish themselves in their new homes (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022). However, it is worth noting that many refugees use these challenges as an opportunity to cultivate self-empowerment, autonomy, and eventually entrepreneurship (Alkhaled et al., 2017b; Ritchie, 2018; Skran, 2020). By pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams, refugees can achieve financial independence and stability, while also contributing to the economy and their new communities.

It has been noted that there is a lack of literature with fragmented and incoherent research, and standardized knowledge on refugee entrepreneurship, even though it is a common experience (Abebe, 2023). With conflicts continuing to arise in various regions, the number of refugees and those turning to entrepreneurship to establish financial stability has risen significantly (Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). However, the academic community has been slow to respond to the gendered aspect of this social phenomenon. Therefore, it is imperative to conceptualize refugee women's entrepreneurship and to generate extensive knowledge on this topic, to achieve the objective of saturation and conceptual adequacy (Cetin et al., 2022). Moreover, additional research to investigate the link between well-being and entrepreneurship, particularly in the refugee community is required to prioritize the success and wellness of entrepreneurial refugees, not just as an outcome or a component, but as the core focus (Cetin et al., 2022).

Thus, this paper aims to fill this gap and encourage scholarly vigor in future academic studies. Although the term "women entrepreneurship" is used in the business literature and economics, the aim is to explore the conceptual and operational meanings with its connection to refugee women's wellbeing and its impacts. Ultimately, this clarification should support gaining a better understanding of refugee women's entrepreneurship, wellbeing and psychological impacts, and the implications for refugee women's entrepreneurship to inform employment model and health care design and delivery.

### ***Background on the Concept***

In order to achieving conceptual clarity, it is imperative to examine the various definitions associated with refugee women's entrepreneurship concept, delineate the attributes that characterize it, and analyze how these elements collectively contribute to the overall utilization and intention of the concept as the existing literature lacks clarity and coherence in defining and operationalizing such an issue. Although the scholarship and research concerning refugee women's entrepreneurship have expanded in recent years, particularly in connection with resilience, empowerment, gender, and livelihoods' theoretical frameworks, this area of inquiry remains relatively nascent (Al-Dajani, 2022).

It has emerged from a diverse multidisciplinary foundation encompassing fields such as refugee studies, economics, and development (Al-Dajani, 2022), as opposed to originating from health disciplines and mainstream approaches. The meaning of the concept of refugee women's entrepreneurship is both under-addressed, poorly delineated, and fails to approach the issue from a gendered angle (Al-Dajani, 2022). As a result, the uniqueness of these refugee women's entrepreneurial experiences is overlooked.

Besides the importance of generating adequate research and literature on refugee experiences, the uniqueness of a women refugee's experience and the pursuit of entrepreneurial ventures must not be underestimated (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017b; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Ritchie, 2018; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). The current literature reflects a fragmented picture of the refugee women's entrepreneurship experience (Abebe, 2023), but most existing literature fails to incorporate the intersectionality of these concepts. As gendered context has an immense impact on a refugee woman's experiences, a holistic understanding requires the incorporation of this dimension of their identity (Ritchie, 2018; Senthanar et al., 2021). Especially under the circumstances of conflict, where men are often required to remain and fight, women may pursue asylum alone (often with their children, if applicable). This necessitates a unique consideration, especially with the challenges refugee women faced in a patriarchal society where the burden of livelihood and childcare may entirely fall on the matriarch. Often to achieve financial security, stability and settlement, individuals are forced to pursue professional opportunities outside of their trained field (Senthanar et al., 2021). As unemployment and financial insecurity are commonly encountered challenges of refugee women's entrepreneurship for this group has become more commonly accessed (Abebe, 2023; Cetin et al., 2022).

The notion of entrepreneurship has been subjected to various interpretations, with definitions predominantly centered on either operational and functional features; personal characteristics associated with achievement; elements tied to profit and growth; or reflections on ambition and executed operations (Anwar & Rashid, 2012). Regardless of the distinct attributes ascribed to the entrepreneur, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is universally acknowledged as vital to economic vitality, as it spurs job creation, new business formation, import reduction, export augmentation, and the stimulation of innovation and creativity, thereby catalyzing economic growth (Shmailan, 2016).

While there is an emerging body of literature on refugee entrepreneurship, there remains significant ambiguity regarding refugee women's entrepreneurship, the effective inclusion of this group in employment policy, employment program design, or funding decisions, and the inherent value, health and wellbeing impact of their entrepreneurship adventure. Thus, the lacking depth of literature and knowledge available on the topic is concerning and beckons further concept development and analysis. Development of literature on the refugee women's entrepreneurship concept may include the exploration of antecedents, attributes, and consequences of refugee women's entrepreneurial pursuit in host countries.

## Methodology

The process of discerning how concepts are formulated commences with the examination of the operational definitions attributed to the particular concept (Walker & Avant, 2011). This concept analysis was conducted using the Walker and Avant method as a systematic framework (Walker & Avant, 2011). The Walker and Avant method follows eight steps of conceptual analysis as below:

1. Select a concept
2. Determine the aims or purpose of the analysis
3. Identify all the uses of the concept
4. Determine the defining attribute
5. Identify model cases
6. Identify model, borderline, contrary, invented, and illegitimate cases
7. Identify antecedents and consequences
8. Define empirical referents

A search was conducted for “refugee women’s entrepreneurship” using the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary, and the Oxford Dictionary, resulting in no findings. The terms were therefore separated into “refugee” and “entrepreneurship”. All three sources had similar definitions, but The Merriam-Webster Dictionary rendered the most robust definition for the term “refugee” used as a noun and defined as; “*a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution*”(Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023b).

Using the same process of defining the term “entrepreneurship” all three dictionaries were searched and rendered a collection of the following definitions for the noun, “entrepreneurship”. The relevant definitions included “one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise”(Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023a), “A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture”(The American Heritage Dictionary, 2023) and “Activity, behavior, or attitudes characteristic of an entrepreneur or entrepreneurs”(Oxford Dictionary, 2023).

## Search Strategy

A comprehensive search strategy for this concept analysis begins with a broad search of the literature. Seven databases were searched for peer-reviewed articles published in English from 2011-2023 including (SCOPUS, CINAHL, PSYCINFO, Web of Science Core Collection, Business Source Complete, Google Scholar and Academic Search Complete). Search terms included: “*refugee women*” AND (“*entrepreneurship*” or “*Womenpreneur*” or “*women entrepreneurship*” or “*women entrepreneurs*”). The search terms were further refined by adding *concept analysis, definition, evaluation and host countries*. In the subsequent phase of this analysis, a search was conducted via Google Scholar without restrictions on publication dates yielding a total of 1780 articles and only 19 were relevant to the aim of this analysis.

Most of the article topics examined were extensive in scope and did not correspond with the specific focus of this analysis, particularly as they pertained to studies that either targeted a generalized refugee population or did not specifically address the subject of refugee women entrepreneurship.

Consequently, the substantial collection of articles was further refined and narrowed to those that incorporated the pertinent search terms within the title.

The final selection criteria involved a comprehensive screening process where articles were evaluated for their relevance to the concept of refugee women entrepreneurship. This evaluation was based on various elements such as titles, abstracts, reference lists, and the frequency of appearance in searches. This methodical process continued until a point of sufficient saturation was attained, culminating in a collection of 166 articles pertinent to the conceptual analysis (i.e., understanding the meaning or background of the concept). Out of these 166 relevant articles, 14 were identified as directly contributing to this particular analysis. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the search strategy employed.

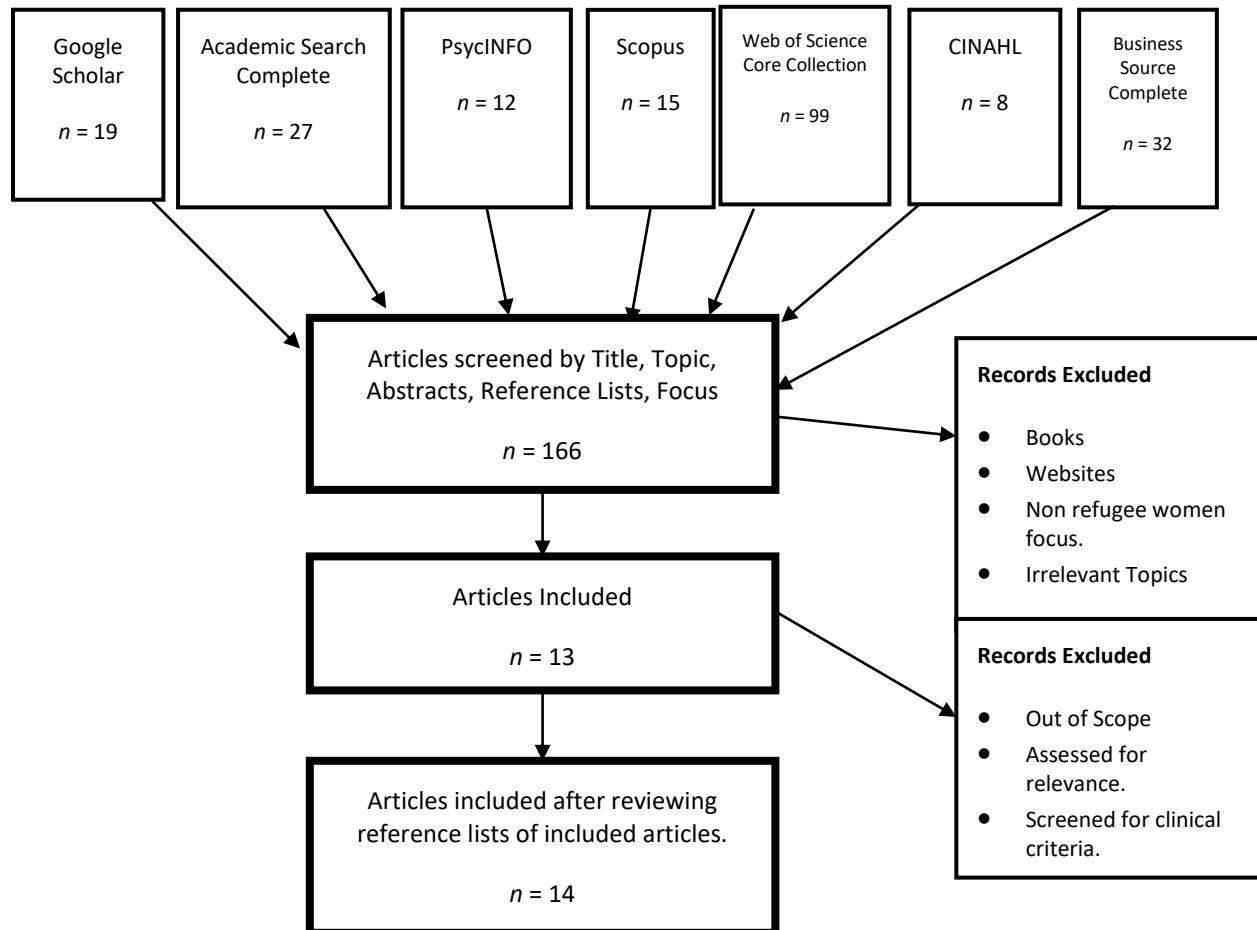


Figure 1: Search strategy for inclusion of articles

## Results

### Identify the Uses of the Concept

In scholarly literature, it is not uncommon to encounter a multiplicity of terms utilized interchangeably to denote a singular phenomenon. Terms such as "self-reliance," "livelihoods," "entrepreneurship," "womenpruners," and "enterprise" have been frequently observed in various works. Despite their shared thematic intent, these terms encapsulate distinct meanings. This divergence extends

to the chronological development of the concept, particularly its evolution across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The interplay between refugee women's autonomy, livelihoods, resilience and entrepreneurship has been explored. For refugee women, entrepreneurship fostered identity and merged purpose with community ties. Grasping how refugee status melds with one's pre-existing identity and converting that synergy into a foundation for enduring empowerment and resilience is crucial (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Shepherd et al., 2020).

The term "women entrepreneurship" foster self-reliance, economic self-sufficiency, and financial steadiness. In addition, they established a renewed sense of identity that elevated their social position beyond the marginalized tag of refugees (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022). In addition, "Bricolage" is introduced as a concept that encapsulates entrepreneurship, providing a theoretical framework to delve into refugee entrepreneurship. It also aims to explore the unique nuances of female refugee entrepreneurship. Notably, these women embarked on entrepreneurial journeys amidst crises, driven by urgency, needs and survival (Alkhaled et al., 2017a).

From a wellbeing perspective, many scholars emphasize the need for more in-depth exploration of the relationship between well-being and entrepreneurship within the refugee sector and encourages future studies to center on the autonomy, self-sufficiency and well-being of entrepreneurial refugees rather than treating them as mere outcomes or aspects (Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Skran, 2020; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).

Individual drive and personality traits that lead to entrepreneurial achievements are especially valuable skill sets and are strong indicators of career growth, professional advancement and play significant roles as personal empowerment elements in the assimilation process of refugees (Obschonka et al., 2018). From a gender perspective, some studies emphasize the influence of gender roles on women's businesses and how the male-centric power hierarchy in the society frequently attempts to detach women from economic ventures and restrict such endeavors (Ritchie, 2018; Senthana et al., 2021). Encouraging women to become entrepreneurs without backing their ongoing business efforts risks presuming that every woman, especially within the refugee context, has always aspired for a work-centric life and feels complete once presented with such a chance (Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). Finally, it's essential to delve deeper into the intricate relationship between entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and well-being as well-being should be seen as a consequence of successful livelihoods and self-sufficiency stemming from entrepreneurial efforts (Skran, 2020; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).

The theoretical foundation on this topic is another area in which literature and knowledge are lacking (Anderson et al., 2019). Some of the theoretical applications used for existing research on refugee entrepreneurship and refugee women's entrepreneurship have included Alkhaled et al.'s (2017b) use of Bricolage as a theoretical lens, Abebe's (2023) application and proposition for the use of the Theory of Unplanned Behavior and Institutional Theory, Harkema & Popescu's (2015) integration of traditional learning theories, Ritchie (2018) and Senthana et al.'s (2021) inclusion of Feminist frameworks, and Adeeko & Treanor's (2022) incorporation of an intersectional approach.

The concept of refugee women's entrepreneurship plays a role in both descriptive and explanatory middle-range theories. Refugee women's entrepreneurship embodies a transformative concept that aligns with several nursing theories and frameworks, particularly those emphasizing empowerment, self-care, resilience, and community engagement. The Theory of Self-Care by Dorothea Orem (2001) posits that individuals are primarily responsible for their own care. In a nursing context, it's about empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills to care for themselves. This theory can be linked to refugee women's entrepreneurship by emphasizing self-efficacy and autonomy.

Since the inception of self-care theory, the notion of refugee women entrepreneurship has emerged as a focal point of scholarly discourse. Spanning over the past two decades, this concept has

been explored and debated across various disciplines, including the field of health science. Similarly, the theory of Transcultural Nursing by Madeleine Leininger with its focus on cultural care and diversity (Leininger, 2002) could be used to understand and guide care for refugee women entrepreneurs, recognizing the unique cultural context in which they live and work. In addition, the Health Promotion Model developed by Parsons et al. (2011) that focuses on motivating individuals towards health-promoting behaviors can be applied in the context of refugee women's entrepreneurship and could guide interventions to promote their mental and physical well-being in their new host countries.

Finally, the Theory of Resilience (Polk, 1997) offers insights into how individuals adapt and bounce back from adversity can be adopted and applied to refugee women's entrepreneurship to explain how resilience can be fostered within this specific population, leading to both economic and health gains. By fostering self-care, cultural diversity, resilience, economic independence and social inclusion, refugee women's entrepreneurship not only aligns with the principles of health equity and empowerment but also contributes to broader public health goals. By integrating these middle-range theories into the practice of caring for refugee women entrepreneurs, nursing can contribute to more tailored, effective, and empathetic care that takes into account not only the physical and mental health needs but also the economic and cultural dimensions of their lives. Therefore, integrating this concept within nursing practice and policy can offer a novel perspective on enhancing health outcomes and quality of life for refugee women entrepreneurs.

### **Defining Attributes**

In scholarly literature, attributes are identified as specific terms employed to delineate a concept, assisting in distinguishing it from other concepts that may bear resemblance (Walker & Avant, 2011). These attributes were gathered through the previously stated literature review and prioritized according to how fit or relevant the papers addressed refugee women's entrepreneurship in the host countries. Attributes included innovative creation, identity construction, power and change and thriving and economic security.

### **Innovative Creation**

For innovative creation and in the realm of entrepreneurship, innovation is recognized as a crucial driver of success, enabling entrepreneurs to making use of what's at hand in creative ways or "venture creation", identify new market opportunities and adapt to changing environmental conditions (Abebe, 2023; Harkema & Popescu, 2015). This attribute is particularly significant for refugee women entrepreneurs who often face unique challenges due to their displacement (Abebe, 2023; Cetin et al., 2022; Obschonka et al., 2018; Senthana et al., 2021), including limited access to resources (Dijkhuizen, 2020), socio-cultural barriers (Shepherd et al., 2020), and unfamiliarity with the host country's market dynamics (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a). For these women, innovative creation represents an avenue to overcome these obstacles by developing novel products, services, or business models tailored to their specific contexts (Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Senthana et al., 2021; Shepherd et al., 2020). Innovation, as an attribute of refugee women entrepreneurship, is not limited to technological advancements or groundbreaking inventions. It also encompasses the ability to adapt and respond to the specific needs of the market by developing new solutions, strategies, or business practices (Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Shepherd et al., 2020). This capacity for innovative creation is particularly important for refugee women, as it allows them to tap into their resilience, creativity, and resourcefulness to overcome the barriers they face (Shepherd et al., 2020). By doing so, they can not only build successful businesses but also contribute to the economic and social development of their host communities (Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Shepherd et al., 2020). Moreover, by fostering a culture of innovation within their entrepreneurial ventures, refugee women can inspire and empower other women,

both within and outside the refugee community, to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations and overcome the challenges they encounter (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Ritchie, 2018; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Shepherd et al., 2020).

### **Identity Construction**

Identity construction is a critical attribute of refugee women's entrepreneurship, as it encompasses how these entrepreneurs perceive themselves, how they are perceived by others, and how they negotiate these perceptions within their entrepreneurial endeavors (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). Refugee women often find themselves navigating complex and multifaceted identities, shaped by their past experiences, cultural backgrounds, and current circumstances (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022). The process of identity construction can serve as a powerful tool for these entrepreneurs to assert their agency, define their roles, and establish their legitimacy in the host country's business landscape (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Obschonka et al., 2018; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). By actively constructing and managing their entrepreneurial identities, refugee women can challenge stereotypes, overcome socio-cultural barriers, and build social capital, which can, in turn, enhance their entrepreneurial success (Senthana et al., 2021; Shepherd et al., 2020).

Identity construction in the context of refugee women entrepreneurship is not a static or linear process, it is shaped by the continuous interplay between the entrepreneurs' self-perceptions (Obschonka et al., 2018), their interactions with others including the broader socio-cultural and institutional environment (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Senthana et al., 2021). This dynamic process can have significant implications for refugee women's entrepreneurial outcomes (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022). For example, by aligning their entrepreneurial identities with the values and expectations of their host communities, refugee women can gain access to valuable resources, networks, and market opportunities. Conversely, by challenging prevailing norms and stigmatized identities (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022), they can carve out unique market niches, foster innovation, and drive social change (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Senthana et al., 2021).

### **Power and Change**

Power and change are integral attributes of the refugee women entrepreneurship concept, as they reflect the potential for these entrepreneurs to influence their surroundings and effect transformative change within their communities (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Senthana et al., 2021; Shepherd et al., 2020; Skran, 2020). Power, in this context, is not merely the ability to exert control over others, but rather the capacity to overcome barriers including unemployment, and realize one's entrepreneurial aspirations (Obschonka et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2018). By asserting their agency, these entrepreneurs can challenge prevailing norms, build social capital, and create opportunities for themselves and others (Obschonka et al., 2018). In doing so, they not only enhance their entrepreneurial outcomes but also contribute to the empowerment of other marginalized groups within their communities (Ritchie, 2018; Senthana et al., 2021).

The attribute of power and change in refugee women entrepreneurship encompasses the potential for these entrepreneurs to drive broader social, economic, and institutional change within their host communities and beyond (Abebe, 2023; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Harkema & Popescu, 2015). By creating successful businesses, refugee women can challenge stereotypes (Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020), foster social integration and contribute to the economic development of their host countries (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Skran, 2020). In this sense, power and change serve as both the means and the ends of refugee women



entrepreneurship, reflecting the potential for these entrepreneurs to effect transformative change within their communities and contribute to the broader goals of social justice and sustainable development.

### Thriving and Economic Security

Thriving and economic security are essential attributes of the refugee women entrepreneurship concept, encompassing both the capacity to achieve sustainable entrepreneurial success and the ability to attain stability in one's financial and personal life (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Obschonka et al., 2018; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). For refugee women entrepreneurs, who often grapple with significant challenges due to their displacement, achieving thriving and economic security is crucial for their empowerment (Alkhaled et al., 2017b; Cetin et al., 2022), the well-being of their families (Dijkhuizen, 2020), and the prosperity of their communities (Huq & Venugopal, 2021). Thriving entails not only financial success but also personal fulfillment (Cetin et al., 2022; Obschonka et al., 2018), empowerment (Ritchie, 2018; Senthanaar et al., 2021), positive social impact and a stable income (Skran, 2020). By achieving these attributes, refugee women can challenge stereotypes (Cetin et al., 2022; Obschonka et al., 2018; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020) and foster social integration (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020). Moreover, by attaining economic security, they can mitigate risks associated with displacement, such as poverty and social exclusion (Abebe, 2023; Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017a; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Huq & Venugopal, 2021). Achieving thriving and economic security underscores the importance of a supportive and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that enables refugee women to overcome challenges and realize their entrepreneurial aspirations (Obschonka et al., 2018), contributing to broader goals of social justice and sustainable development.

### Model Case

In the fifth stage of the Walker and Avant methodology for concept analysis, a model case is created to depict an ideal example of the concept as it might manifest in a real-world context. This model case should encompass all of the attributes unearthed during the analysis (Walker & Avant, 2011). What follows is a representative model case of refugee women's entrepreneurship in a new host country. To maintain coherence and lucidity, all instances presented in this analysis adhere to examples of refugee women's entrepreneurship in their respective new host countries.

*“Sarah, an educated Syrian refugee woman, faced trauma and socio-cultural and economic barriers in her host country. Displaced and struggling to find meaningful employment, she turned to entrepreneurship to regain control and challenge her stigmatized refugee identity. She opened a "Family Kitchen" serving Mediterranean food, despite financial challenges and limited resources. Sarah's drive for power and risk-taking helped her overcome adversity. Leveraging her strengths and cooking skills, she pursued her entrepreneurial vision of economic security and personal growth. Despite her engineering background, she found no meaningful employment opportunities, reinforcing the need for alternative paths. Sarah built language and financial skills to thrive in her business, gaining self-reliance and contributing to her community. Her entrepreneurial journey empowered her to create her own identity, challenge stigmas, and effect positive change. Achieving autonomy, dignity, and power, Sarah experienced wellbeing, success, and self-worth. Her thriving business brought purpose, satisfaction, pride, and ownership. Sarah's personal growth, sustainability, and self-sufficiency helped her build resilience and navigate her host country's landscape, fostering successful integration and career flourishing.”*

Sarah's story exemplifies the transformative potential of entrepreneurship for refugee women. By harnessing her strengths, challenging societal norms, harnessing her cooking skills and potentials and embracing economic opportunities. Refugee women like Sarah can achieve independence, socioeconomic autonomy, and a sense of empowerment. Through entrepreneurship, refugee women like Sarah can

cultivate new identities, thrive, and contribute to the economic and social fabric of their host communities. The journey of a refugee woman entrepreneur not only brings personal success but also highlights the importance of building language skills, financial literacy, and customer service abilities. These skills enable her to interact effectively with customers, stakeholders, and support networks. This acquisition of knowledge and skills further contributed to her self-reliance and sense of ownership.

### Contrary Case

A contrary case serves to illustrate an example that is opposed to the model case (Walker & Avant, 2011); in this context, it would signify the opposite of refugee women's entrepreneurship in a new host country. Below is a presentation of such a contrary case, offering a contrasting perspective on the concept of refugee women's entrepreneurship within the host country.

*“Sophia, a refugee woman from Ukraine, fled to Canada with her two children after Russia's 2022 attack. Having lost contact with friends and family and leaving her husband who had been forced to enlist, Sophia faced the daunting task of starting over. Although she arrived with hopes of a better future, she quickly realized the challenges of resettlement. Struggling to find a place to stay and work, she found herself competing with local, well-educated job applicants. As a teacher, Sophia found it difficult to secure employment in her field without a Canadian education. After weeks of searching, she accepted a cleaning job that paid \$200 a week in cash, requiring long hours away from her children. The future she hoped for seemed unattainable, as every opportunity seemed to lead to another obstacle. Her will and ambitions were crushed, and she faced an overwhelming sense of worthlessness.”*

Sophia's story illuminates the harsh realities faced by many refugee women. Many of those fleeing wars or traumatic climates in their home countries struggle to find meaningful employment or stable housing. Many also experience food insecurity and struggle to feed their families without the support of food banks and shelters. Further, additional challenges are often experienced by individuals competing with non-refugee counterparts for jobs in their trained fields. Those who arrive with their children also struggle to balance the roles of provider and parent while simultaneously seeking meaningful self-development and fulfilling opportunities. The experiences of individuals like Sophia are often described as surviving, and “just scraping by”, rather than satisfying or sustainable. Unfortunately, Sophia's story is not uncommon and experienced by many.

### Borderline Case

A borderline case represents a situation where only some of the attributes of the concept are present. The following is an illustration of a borderline case pertaining to refugee women's entrepreneurship in the context of the host country.

*“Raja, an Afghan refugee woman, fled to Canada due to violence in her home country. In Afghanistan, she owned a successful restaurant and had a passion for hospitality and cooking. After settling in Canada, she found it challenging to find meaningful employment in her field. Most positions available to her were low-paying, with limited growth opportunities. Raja's dream was to open a restaurant in Canada, but she faced financial and bureaucratic challenges. Despite the risks and her limited savings, she decided to pursue her dream, drawing on her previous experience and the support of her community. Raja struggled with permits and unfamiliar business regulations but persevered. She felt a growing sense of empowerment and well-being as she worked towards her goal. Despite the long road ahead, Raja was confident she had made the right choice.”*

Raja is an exemplary case of the potential challenges a refugee woman seeking professional autonomy in a host country may face. Even with experience in the field, and previously owning a business, challenges are met at every corner. Some of the obstacles entrepreneurial refugee women may encounter include insufficient qualifications, complex legislation and permit attainment processes, financial demands, and social constraints. Often the process of attaining true ownership, success and independence requires immense sacrifice and involves taking significant risks. However, Raja is the perfect example of how entrepreneurship can provide an opportunity to take back control over one's reality and future and establish dignity. Her story is an illustration of the shift from surviving to thriving. Despite the obstacles and boundaries to opening a business, Raja chose to remain hopeful and persistently pursue her goals. This resilience is not unique to Raja and is commonly noted in the perseverance and strength of entrepreneurial refugee women.

## Antecedents and Consequences

The identification of antecedents and consequences is instrumental in elucidating the necessary conditions for a concept to happen and the ensuing outcomes stemming from the application of the concept. Antecedents and consequences serve as valuable tools for uncovering underlying assumptions that may be connected with the concept (Walker & Avant, 2011). In the specific context of refugee women's entrepreneurship within host countries, the antecedents are as follows:

- Refugee women's entrepreneurship often arises from the inability to secure meaningful employment in host countries. Faced with barriers to formal employment, these women leverage their entrepreneurial spirit to create opportunities for themselves and their communities (Abebe, 2023; Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Senthana et al., 2021; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship represents a pursuit of power and agency, enabling these women to overcome barriers and assert control over their lives. By seeking power through entrepreneurship, refugee women can challenge stereotypes, foster self-reliance, and contribute to their host communities (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Ritchie, 2018; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship serves as a platform to challenge and defy stigmatized identities and gender norms. By taking on entrepreneurial roles, these women can break down stereotypes, assert their agency, and redefine their place in society (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Shepherd et al., 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship is fueled by their inherent strengths, untapped potential, and personal ambitions. Despite facing numerous challenges, these women harness their resilience, creativity, and aspirations to build successful entrepreneurial ventures (Abebe, 2023; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Huq & Venugopal, 2021).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship is shaped by the diverse circumstances that precede their entrepreneurial journey, including displacement, trauma, socio-cultural barriers, and financial challenges. These experiences, while often difficult, can also provide unique insights and perspectives that inform and enrich their entrepreneurial endeavors (Dijkhuizen, 2020; Ritchie, 2018; Senthana et al., 2021; Skran, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship is driven by their entrepreneurial intentions, readiness to seize opportunities, and willingness to take risks. Despite the challenges they face, these women display remarkable determination, preparedness, and courage in pursuing their entrepreneurial

goals (Alkhaled et al., 2017b; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Obschonka et al., 2018; Senthana et al., 2021; Skran, 2020).

Consequences for refugee women's entrepreneurship within host countries are as follows:

- Refugee women's entrepreneurship fosters autonomy, dignity, and empowerment, enabling these women to regain control, self-respect, and agency in their lives (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Alkhaled et al., 2017b; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Ritchie, 2018; Senthana et al., 2021; Skran, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship promotes self-reliance and financial stability, allowing these women to achieve economic independence (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Shepherd et al., 2020; Skran, 2020; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship enables them to cultivate a new identity, transforming their narrative from mere survival to thriving, self-worth, self-efficacy and self-sufficiency (Adeeko & Treanor, 2022; Cetin et al., 2022; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Obschonka et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2018; Skran, 2020; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship enhances their wellbeing, instills a sense of success and self-worth, and fosters life satisfaction and resilience (Cetin et al., 2022; Dijkhuizen, 2020; Harkema & Popescu, 2015; Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Obschonka et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2018; Senthana et al., 2021; Shepherd et al., 2020; Skran, 2020; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship facilitates both personal and professional development, fostering growth, skill acquisition, and self-fulfillment (Huq & Venugopal, 2021; Obschonka et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2018; Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Senthana et al., 2021; Shepherd et al., 2020; Skran & Easton-Calabria, 2020).
- Refugee women's entrepreneurship contributes to successful integration, enabling refugees to become active, valued members of their host communities (Obschonka et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2018; Shepherd et al., 2020).

### Empirical Referents

The final stage of a concept analysis entails the identification of empirical referents, which are manifestations of the actual phenomenon that permit the measurement of the concept (Walker & Avant, 2011). Concept analysis facilitates the development and testing of tools and models that incorporate the concept. Despite the absence of validated scales for evaluating refugee women's entrepreneurship across diverse host countries, the existing body of research on this topic is characterized by fragmentation and inconsistency (Abebe, 2023). This lack of coherence is primarily attributed to the multidisciplinary nature of the research and the context-specificity of the findings.

Although there is a lack of validated scales to assess refugee women's entrepreneurship across various host countries, several scales exist to explore refugee entrepreneurship. Notable examples of such scales are: Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) scale (Wilson et al., 2007), the ESE scale was further modified and enhanced by (Pushkarskaya et al., 2021) and the Entrepreneurial Fear of Failure scale (Cacciotti et al., 2020). Utilizing these tools to assess refugee entrepreneurship experiences can provide insights that inform evidence-based practices for effective refugee entrepreneurship strategies. This approach is more desirable than the extant literature that often categorizes refugee women entrepreneurs as a homogeneous group. However, this classification is not accurate, as these entrepreneurs exhibit significant heterogeneity in their experiences and characteristics (Street et al., 2022).

While these scales are crucial for exploring refugee entrepreneurship experiences, there is no empirical evidence supporting the notion that measurements of readiness of refugee women to engage in entrepreneurship across different host countries. Consequently, it is not clear whether the context of the host country significantly influences refugee women's entrepreneurship and the outcomes associated with their entrepreneurial ventures. A limitation in assessing these outcomes is the inability to empirically establish a link between refugee women's readiness for entrepreneurship and the outcomes associated with their entrepreneurial journeys. Future research could potentially explore factors that affect refugee women's readiness, the correlations between refugee women's readiness to engage in entrepreneurship and the resulting outcomes.

## Discussion

For the value of refugee women's entrepreneurship in various host countries to be recognized, its impact needs to be measurable. As such, the next logical step in knowledge development is to define empirical referents clearly (Walker & Avant, 2011), enabling the establishment of an evidence base on the effectiveness of refugee women's entrepreneurship. The existing literature has predominantly focused on the entrepreneurship decisions of refugee women themselves, providing limited evidence to inform frameworks and approaches to refugee women's entrepreneurship at systemic decision-making levels (Abebe, 2023). Although the interpretation of refugee women's entrepreneurship may vary across disciplines, the implications for nursing practice remain consistent (Senthanar et al., 2021), with policy work benefiting a wider population. Facilitating mutual understanding between refugee women entrepreneurs and healthcare professionals for improved outcomes for these women, their experiences, and the healthcare system is crucial (Senthanar et al., 2021) and should inform future refugee women's healthcare models and initiatives.

Achieving conceptual clarity regarding refugee women's entrepreneurship is essential for furthering this crucial work. Without it, the same concept may be used to represent widely differing processes, leading to confusion and loss of meaning. Based on the findings of this analysis, the concept of refugee women's entrepreneurship has reached a point where a theoretical definition is needed to elevate its usability. Such a definition would incorporate the attributes of innovative creation, identity construction, power and change, and thriving and economic security, providing a solid foundation for a unified approach. According to Walker and Avant (2011), a theorist typically presents the key attributes of a concept through theoretical definitions, which are often abstract and may not be measured.

**Refugee Women's Entrepreneurship** is conceptually defined as: *"a comprehensive process beyond just survival or self-employment, arising from limited formal employment opportunities and livelihood needs in host countries. It integrates economic, social, cultural, and psychological elements, and is fueled by a refugee woman's desire for self-reliance, innovation, creation, and challenging stigmatized identities. It offers a path to empowerment, stability, and societal contribution despite endured challenges."*

Proceeding towards conceptual clarity enables the creation of validated tools for assessing refugee women's entrepreneurship in their host country and promoting further research. This, in turn, offers the potential to genuinely validate the existing knowledge about this concept. Because refugee women entrepreneurship is a unique experience, a mixed methodology approach may yield a richer description of the phenomenon, enhance understanding, contribute to the body of knowledge, and provide useful information for clinical practice to improve these women's health, wellbeing and outcomes in their new host country.

## **Study Implications**

This concept analysis illuminates the intricate dynamics between refugee identity, displacement, and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds often utilize their ventures as platforms to reconstruct their identities, achieve empowerment, and facilitate social integration. Importantly, these endeavors are not solely about economic survival; they play a pivotal role in the mental and emotional wellbeing of refugees, offering avenues to combat trauma, stigmatization, and the psychological challenges of displacement. Policymakers and support organizations must recognize this dual role of entrepreneurship. By offering comprehensive support that addresses both economic and mental wellbeing, we can foster healthier, integrated, and more resilient refugee communities within host nations. Furthermore, as these entrepreneurs succeed, they can also drive broader social change, challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity, which contributes to the overall wellbeing of the entire community.

## **Study Strengths and Limitations**

This concept analysis serves as a foundation for future research, tool and policy development, and supports initiatives aimed at fostering refugee women's entrepreneurship and maximizing its positive outcomes. By analyzing the concept, one develops an appreciation of its complexity. By examining the various components of refugee women's entrepreneurship, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by these entrepreneurs, as well as the potential impacts of their ventures on their personal lives and their host communities. It is essential that we continue to explore and support the entrepreneurial efforts of refugee women, recognizing the value they bring to their host societies and the transformative potential of their ventures. Refugee women's entrepreneurship is described by numerous disciplines. Various contextual and intersectional factors including discipline, host country and time limit the identification of all of its uses. This review is not comprehensive and in no way exhaustive.

## **Conclusions**

This concept analysis of refugee women's entrepreneurship has provided a comprehensive exploration of the key antecedents, attributes, and consequences associated with this phenomenon. We have identified that refugee women often turn to entrepreneurship as a response to their inability to gain meaningful employment, and that their strengths, potentials, and personal ambitions, along with the diversity of circumstances preceding their entrepreneurship, serve as critical antecedents. The attributes of innovative creation, identity construction, power and change, and thriving and economic security are central to their entrepreneurial endeavors. The consequences of such entrepreneurship include autonomy, dignity, empowerment, self-reliance, financial stability, cultivation of a new identity, well-being, personal and professional development, and successful integration into their host societies.

This concept analysis offers significant insights into the multifaceted nature of refugee women entrepreneurial endeavor. It's imperative that scholars, policymakers, and practitioners recognize the depth and breadth of refugee women's entrepreneurship and provide supportive models, initiatives, frameworks and environments to nurture and amplify their efforts. This concept analysis serves as a foundation for future empirical studies, tool development, policy formulations, and interventions aimed at fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of refugee women.

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### ***Declaration of Conflicting Interests***

The authors assert that there are no conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this paper. They have fully disclosed any possible conflicts of interest and confirm that the manuscript's content is entirely the result of the authors' efforts and does not reflect the official stance of any associated organizations or funding bodies.

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