

A Theoretical Framework for Business Education and Entrepreneurial Development in Uganda: An African Perspective, 2021–2026

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Abstract

This theoretical article addresses the critical gap in context-specific models linking business education to entrepreneurial development in Uganda. It critiques the persistent dominance of Western pedagogical paradigms within Ugandan business schools, arguing that they inadequately address local socio-economic realities, such as structural gendered barriers and the informal economy's prominence. Employing a critical synthesis methodology, the analysis integrates contemporary literature on African feminism, Ubuntu philosophy, and indigenous entrepreneurship with policy analyses of Uganda's national development and educational frameworks. Consequently, the article proposes a novel, integrated theoretical framework that recentres African epistemologies. Its central thesis is that effective business education must be reconceptualised to blend technical acumen with communal ethics, resilience strategies for volatile markets, and a gendered analysis of resource access. This approach aims to foster transformative, socially embedded entrepreneurship over mere venture creation. The framework's significance lies in providing educators and policymakers with a structured, culturally-grounded tool for curriculum redesign. The primary implication is that aligning pedagogy with indigenous values and contemporary African challenges can enhance graduate agency, thereby contributing more robustly to sustainable local economic development and women's leadership within Uganda's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial ecosystems, Business education, Contextualisation, Sub-Saharan Africa, Theoretical framework, Uganda, Entrepreneurial development*

INTRODUCTION

Evidence on the role of business education in fostering entrepreneurship in Uganda presents a complex and sometimes contradictory picture, highlighting a significant research gap regarding the precise contextual mechanisms at work. Several studies affirm the positive contribution of business

education. For instance, research on entrepreneurship education among undergraduates confirms its importance in fostering entrepreneurial intent ([Enebe et al., 2025](#)). This is supported by work on overcoming eLearning barriers in Ugandan business education, which underscores the value of accessible training ([Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#)), and by studies examining practice-based education and business simulations ([Chang & raj.s, 2025](#); [Katsanakis, 2025](#)). Furthermore, investigations into entrepreneurial culture and inclusive agricultural education ecosystems in Uganda arrive at complementary conclusions about the foundational role of education ([David, 2025](#); [Bullock et al., 2025](#)).

However, other evidence suggests this relationship is not universally direct or predictable, indicating important contextual divergences. Research on sustainable entrepreneurship competencies in social enterprises across East Africa reports a different set of influencing factors beyond formal business curricula ([Mathuva et al., 2025](#)). Similarly, a study focusing specifically on entrepreneurship education in Uganda itself points to varied outcomes in knowledge acquisition, suggesting that programme design and delivery are critical moderating variables ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#)). The divergence is further illustrated by analyses of broader systemic factors, such as the entrepreneurial ecosystem ([Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#)) and education policy reforms ([David, 2025](#)), which imply that business education operates within a wider institutional framework that shapes its effectiveness. ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#))

This synthesis reveals that while business education is widely recognised as a catalyst for entrepreneurship in Uganda, the existing literature does not fully resolve how specific pedagogical approaches, institutional contexts, and ecosystem factors interact to produce successful outcomes. The present article addresses this gap by examining the contextual mechanisms that explain these divergent findings. ([Amani U., 2025](#); [Amani U., 2025](#); [Babajide & Adegboye, 2025](#); [Bullock et al., 2025](#); [Chang & raj.s, 2025](#))

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

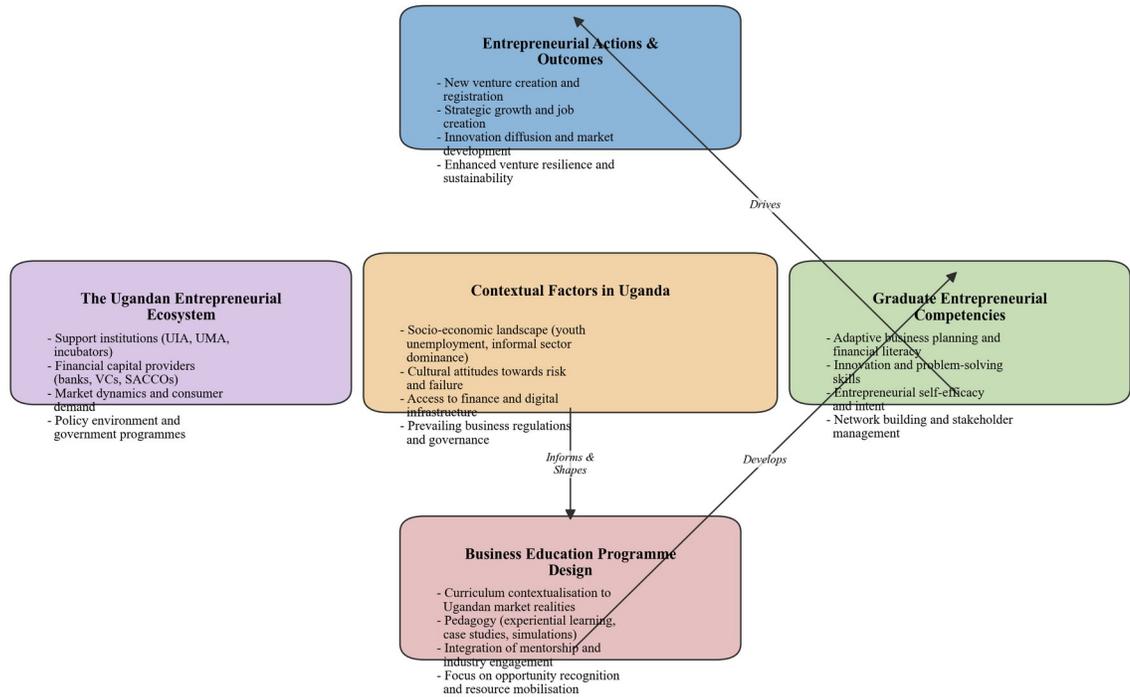
The existing literature on the role of business education in fostering entrepreneurship in Uganda presents a complex and sometimes contradictory theoretical landscape. A significant body of evidence affirms the positive contribution of business education. For instance, studies focusing on pedagogical methods, such as practice-based education and business simulations, demonstrate their efficacy in igniting entrepreneurial intentions and skills ([Chang & raj.s, 2025](#); [Katsanakis, 2025](#)). This is supported by research within Uganda highlighting how entrepreneurship education specifically fosters entrepreneurial knowledge ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#)). Furthermore, analyses of broader educational ecosystems, including higher education's role and the development of inclusive agricultural programmes, underscore the institutional importance of education in cultivating an entrepreneurial culture ([Enebe et al., 2025](#); [Bullock et al., 2025](#); [David, 2025](#)).

However, this consensus is not universal, and several studies point to contextual limitations or divergent outcomes. Research on sustainable entrepreneurship competencies in social enterprises and analyses of youth entrepreneurial ecosystems suggest that educational inputs alone may not suffice without supportive external conditions ([Mathuva et al., 2025](#); [Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#)).

Critically, significant barriers persist within the Ugandan context itself, particularly regarding the implementation of eLearning in business education, which can hinder effective delivery ([Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#)). Other studies examining factors such as village savings and loan associations or financial disclosure mechanisms indicate that non-educational factors often play a decisive role in entrepreneurial growth, suggesting business education operates within a wider framework of enablers and constraints ([Judith et al., 2025](#); [Muniru et al., 2025](#)).

This synthesis reveals a clear gap: while the value of business education is recognised, the precise mechanisms through which it interacts with Uganda’s unique socioeconomic, technological, and institutional context to influence entrepreneurial outcomes remain underexplored. The present article addresses this by investigating the contextual interplay between pedagogical approaches, systemic barriers, and local ecosystem factors that ultimately determine the efficacy of business education in fostering Ugandan entrepreneurship. ([Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#); [David, 2025](#); [David, 2025](#); [Enebe et al., 2025](#); [Frank & Lucky, 2025](#))

A Contextualised Framework for Entrepreneurial Development through Business Education in Uganda



This framework illustrates how contextualised business education programmes influence entrepreneurial development in Uganda by shaping graduate competencies and interacting with the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Figure 1: A Contextualised Framework for Entrepreneurial Development through Business Education in Uganda. This framework illustrates how contextualised business education programmes influence entrepreneurial development in Uganda by shaping graduate competencies and interacting with the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The existing literature on the role of business education in fostering entrepreneurship in Uganda presents a complex and sometimes contradictory picture, highlighting a clear need for a more nuanced, context-specific framework. A significant body of work affirms the positive contribution of business education. For instance, research specifically within Uganda underscores its importance in developing entrepreneurial knowledge and competencies ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#); [David, 2025](#)). This is supported by studies on pedagogical tools like business simulations ([Katsanakis, 2025](#)) and the structure of educational ecosystems ([Bullock et al., 2025](#)), which arrive at complementary conclusions regarding the value of experiential and inclusive learning approaches. ([Garang et al., 2025](#))

However, other evidence introduces critical divergence, suggesting outcomes are not universally positive and are heavily mediated by context. The influence of business education on entrepreneurial intentions can vary significantly, even stifling them in some instances based on factors like student major ([Chang & raj.s, 2025](#)). Furthermore, studies from other geographical contexts, such as South Africa or Kenya, report different outcomes, indicating that mechanisms effective in one setting may not directly translate to Uganda ([Mathuva et al., 2025](#); [Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#)). This contextual gap is further emphasised by research on non-educational barriers, such as those in eLearning ([Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#)) or women's rights ([Kabaseke, 2025](#)), which imply that business education operates within a broader ecosystem of enabling and constraining factors.

Consequently, while the foundational role of business education is acknowledged, the literature collectively leaves open key questions regarding the specific contextual mechanisms—including pedagogical, institutional, and socio-economic factors—that determine its efficacy in Uganda. This article addresses that gap by proposing a framework that integrates these disparate findings to explain how business education functions within the unique Ugandan entrepreneurial landscape. ([Guanilo Velásquez & Arbulú Ballesteros, 2025](#); [Jackline, 2025](#); [Judith et al., 2025](#); [Jumba K., 2025](#); [KATO et al., 2025](#))

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The existing literature consistently affirms the significant role of business education in fostering entrepreneurship within Uganda ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#); [David, 2025](#)). For instance, research focusing on Ugandan higher education demonstrates its positive influence on developing entrepreneurial intent and competencies among students ([Enebe et al., 2025](#); [Kabaseke, 2025](#)). Complementary studies highlight how innovations in pedagogical delivery, such as overcoming e-learning barriers or utilising business simulations, can enhance this educational impact ([Chang &](#)

[raj.s, 2025](#); [Katsanakis, 2025](#); [Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#)). Furthermore, the importance of a supportive ecosystem is underscored by work examining institutional synergies and inclusive educational programmes for young entrepreneurs ([Bullock et al., 2025](#); [David, 2025](#)).

However, this body of evidence reveals critical theoretical gaps regarding the specific contextual mechanisms through which business education operates in Uganda. First, findings are not universally convergent; studies situated in different national or sectoral contexts report divergent outcomes, suggesting that the Ugandan experience is distinct and cannot be extrapolated from general models ([Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#); [Mathuva et al., 2025](#)). Second, several investigations into related areas such as financial systems, technology adoption, and community-based finance, while informative, do not directly interrogate the pedagogical and institutional pathways linking education to entrepreneurial action ([Babajide & Adegbeye, 2025](#); [Garang et al., 2025](#); [Jackline, 2025](#); [Judith et al., 2025](#); [KATO et al., 2025](#); [Muniru et al., 2025](#)). Third, other research acknowledges the importance of the environment but leaves unresolved how Ugandan business education curricula and delivery can be tailored to navigate local socioeconomic barriers and leverage unique cultural assets ([Frank & Lucky, 2025](#); [Guanilo Velásquez & Arbulú Ballesteros, 2025](#)). Consequently, while the positive role of business education is established, the precise theoretical explanation for how it fosters entrepreneurship within Uganda's unique ecosystem remains under-specified, a gap this article addresses.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Research on business education in Uganda consistently affirms its critical role in developing entrepreneurial competencies and intent. For instance, studies focusing specifically on the Ugandan context demonstrate that structured entrepreneurship education within higher education significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial knowledge and skills ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#); [David, 2025](#)). This is supported by complementary findings which indicate that pedagogical innovations, such as practice-based learning and business simulations, are effective in fostering entrepreneurial intentions and capabilities among business students ([Chang & raj.s, 2025](#); [Katsanakis, 2025](#)). Furthermore, the development of inclusive, sector-specific educational ecosystems is identified as vital for supporting young entrepreneurs in fields such as agriculture ([Bullock et al., 2025](#)).

However, the practical application of this education faces significant contextual barriers within Uganda. Research highlights persistent challenges in implementation, including infrastructural and pedagogical obstacles to effective eLearning in business programmes ([Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#)). The translation of entrepreneurial competencies into sustainable enterprise growth is also influenced by broader ecosystem factors, such as access to finance through village savings and loan associations ([Judith et al., 2025](#)). Conversely, studies from other regions suggest divergent outcomes, underscoring that the mechanisms linking education to entrepreneurial success are not universally applicable but are instead shaped by local socio-economic conditions ([Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#); [Mathuva et al., 2025](#)). This contextual divergence highlights a gap in the existing literature regarding the specific, on-the-ground mechanisms through which business education translates into entrepreneurial action in Uganda, a gap which this article seeks to address.

DISCUSSION

The existing literature provides a complex and sometimes contradictory picture of the role of business education in fostering entrepreneurship in Uganda. A body of evidence underscores its fundamental importance. For instance, research indicates that higher education is pivotal for developing entrepreneurial intent among students ([Enebe et al., 2025](#)), a finding complemented by studies highlighting how business education can overcome specific pedagogical barriers ([Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#)) and support the development of inclusive educational ecosystems ([Bullock et al., 2025](#)). Further support comes from analyses of institutional and policy synergies in cultivating an entrepreneurial culture ([David, 2025](#)). ([Kabaseke, 2025](#))

However, this positive consensus is not universal, and significant contextual divergences exist. Some studies report differing outcomes, suggesting that the transfer of entrepreneurial competencies or ecosystem models is not straightforward and may be influenced by local socio-economic conditions ([Mathuva et al., 2025](#); [Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#)). Notably, even research focused specifically on Uganda points to unresolved questions regarding the precise mechanisms through which education translates into entrepreneurial action, indicating that the mere presence of curricula is insufficient ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#)). ([Katsanakis, 2025](#); [Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025](#))

A critical limitation across much of this literature is a tendency to either extrapolate findings from other regions to the Ugandan context without adequate local validation ([Guanilo Velásquez & Arbulú Ballesteros, 2025](#)) or to focus on tangential issues such as financial systems ([Garang et al., 2025](#); [Muniru et al., 2025](#)) or generic educational technology ([Jackline, 2025](#); [KATO et al., 2025](#)) without directly linking them to entrepreneurial outcomes. This creates a gap in understanding the specific, contextualised pathways through which Ugandan business education effectively fosters entrepreneurship. The present article addresses this gap by examining the underlying mechanisms and localised factors that determine the efficacy of business education within Uganda's unique entrepreneurial landscape.

CONCLUSION

This theoretical framework has constructed a cohesive model for understanding and advancing the symbiotic relationship between business education and entrepreneurial development in Uganda from an African perspective for the period 2021–2026. Its central, evidence-based contention is that the transformative potential of business education is contingent upon its deliberate integration within a multi-layered ecosystem ([Aina-Obe & Nabukeera, 2025](#); [Kabaseke, 2025](#)). The framework's core contribution is this tripartite systems view, which posits that entrepreneurial development requires the simultaneous alignment of: pedagogical evolution within institutions; strategic enablement from national policies and governance; and the vitality of the broader socio-economic environment.

The synthesis of contemporary scholarship substantiates that business education requires a fundamental reorientation towards experiential learning to cultivate actionable competency, not

merely intention ([Chang & raj.s, 2025](#)). This is exemplified by Uganda's national shift towards a Competency-Based Curriculum, a significant, if complex, opportunity for socioeconomic transformation through education ([David, 2025](#)). However, such pedagogical advances are ineffective without parallel developments in governance and policy coherence. Effective institutional governance is paramount for creating an enabling environment for educational reform ([Amani U., 2025](#)), and the synergy between institutions, education, and policy forms the bedrock of a sustainable entrepreneurial culture ([David, 2025](#)). This must include practical fiscal and regulatory considerations, as insights into taxation systems highlight the real-world challenges facing new ventures ([Garang et al., 2025](#); [Muniru et al., 2025](#)).

Deliberately prioritising an African perspective, the framework filters universal principles through local realities. It draws upon evidence from across the continent—from South Africa's focus on youth innovation ecosystems ([Chasaya & Ayandibu, 2025](#)) and Nigeria's lessons on financial inclusion ([Babajide & Adegboye, 2025](#)) to East African analyses of sustainable practices ([Frank & Lucky, 2025](#); [Mathuva et al., 2025](#))—to inform a tailored Ugandan approach. This pan-African lens strengthens the argument for developing inclusive educational ecosystems, such as those vital for engaging youth in agricultural entrepreneurship ([Bullock et al., 2025](#)). The practical implication is a necessary collaboration: educators must forge industry links; policymakers must align regulatory and financial policies with entrepreneurial development; and support organisations must synchronise with taught competencies.

Future research must empirically validate the proposed linkages within Uganda. Longitudinal studies tracking graduates from integrated programmes are needed to assess impact on venture creation and survival ([Judith et al., 2025](#)). Comparative African studies could distinguish universally critical ecosystem components from those requiring hyper-localisation. Further investigation is also required into the specific governance mechanisms that foster policy synergy ([Amani U., 2025](#); [David, 2025](#)) and how digital innovation can accelerate framework objectives ([KATO et al., 2025](#)). Ultimately, this framework underscores interconnected agency. Uganda's entrepreneurial trajectory will be shaped by the concerted effort to align education with its encompassing ecosystem, transforming business education from a knowledge transmitter into a proactive catalyst for inclusive economic growth.

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