

**Women entrepreneurs in Cambodia:
Microfoundations of Surprises and Unexpected Events
in the Entrepreneurial Journey**

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship literature on women emerged in the late 1970s, but the topic has not been widely studied until the last few decades. Nevertheless, research on women entrepreneurship is still under-represented, despite its great significance on global employment and economies. In their entrepreneurial journey, women entrepreneurs face regular business challenges, with an increase of ambiguous and unexpected events. While the entrepreneurial challenges and uncertainty are widely studied, the unpredicted challenges are as yet under-discovered, especially for women entrepreneurs in developing countries. The literature on surprise largely focuses on those that are crisis-based, and in large organisational settings, resulting in a lack of understanding of surprises in small business, their impacts, and the frameworks and influential factors in relation to responding to those events. As a result, the purpose of this research is to address this literature gap using a microfoundations theoretical lens, to investigate how women entrepreneurs deal with surprises and unexpected events while operating their ventures in Cambodia.

The overarching research question of this study is “how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journey in Cambodia?” The study employed a qualitative method, by conducting semi-structured interviews with 12 Cambodian female entrepreneurs who had experience operating a small or medium enterprise. After analysing the obtained data using a thematic analysis approach, three main themes were generated: the characteristics of unexpected events, the impacts of unexpected events on business and entrepreneurs, and the microfoundations of dealing with unexpected events.

Some highlights of the findings include the sources of surprises, which can be from within the organisation, external environment, or a combination of both. Findings on the impacts of surprises on business and entrepreneurs’ mental and physical well-being extend the existing literature, which has explored surprises only in the context of crises. Furthermore, the results of the study illustrate the effectuation of cognitive frameworks applied by entrepreneurs when dealing with surprise, which is a new perspective, as this framework was investigated only in relation to uncertainty in creating new ventures. Additionally, the study demonstrates influential micro-level actions and factors, such as entrepreneurs’ personality traits, knowledge, skills and experience, and social capital. Interestingly, the

results present new insights into the social capital literature on the benefits of *guanxi* networks on responses to surprises, which also feature the cultural aspects of entrepreneurs' behaviours when dealing with unexpected challenges.

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signature:

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2020), entrepreneurial activities make a fundamental contribution to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is reported that more than 250 million women entrepreneurs worldwide are generating billions of jobs and revenues for the global economy (GEM, 2019). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines *entrepreneurs* as those (business owners) who seek to generate value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes, or markets (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2012, p. 23). Besides being economically beneficial, women's entrepreneurship also has positive outcomes for society (De Vita et al., 2014), as women entrepreneurs are more likely to start a business to make a difference and improve communities than acquire greater wealth (GEM, 2020).

Due to the significance of female entrepreneurship, the discipline has been increasingly investigated (Foss et al., 2019). It is worth mentioning that women's entrepreneurship emerged in the entrepreneurship literature in the 1970s, yet has been widely researched only since the 2000s (e.g., Ahl, 2006; Carter et al., 2003; De Bruin et al., 2006, 2007; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Piacentini, 2013; Roomi & Parrott, 2008; Tambunan, 2009). Nevertheless, research on women entrepreneurs is still under-represented; a review by Đalić (2019) found that female entrepreneurship was the least researched topic in academic entrepreneurship journals. Additionally, women's entrepreneurship is under-represented in both academic literature and business (Đalić, 2019; Foss et al., 2019). In comparison to male entrepreneurs, the number of female entrepreneurs is substantially lower, as they represent approximately ten percent of all entrepreneurs. Moreover, women are less confident in their abilities to become an entrepreneur than are men (GEM, 2019). Scholars have proved that in the process of operating their businesses, female entrepreneurs face a considerable number of challenges as business owners, as well in social, cultural, and religious aspects, especially if they are in developing countries, which dramatically impact their business performance and growth rates (Cho et al., 2020; De Vita et al., 2014; Panda & Dash, 2014; Prashar et al., 2018; Roomi & Parrott, 2008; Tambunan, 2009; Verheul et al., 2006). As a result, it is important to have an in-depth understanding of women entrepreneurs and their barriers to success, which can be used as a framework for improving future women's business performance.

Apart from daily business and personal problems, entrepreneurs regularly face challenges that occur unexpectedly and cause surprises to the business (Cunha et al., 2006; Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001). As they are inherently unpredictable, surprises jeopardise the business process, reputation, and financial resources (Doern, 2016; Gao & Alas, 2010; Irvine & Anderson, 2004; Rollo & Zdziarski II, 2007), which influence the business's future existence, requiring prompt solutions (Chattopadhyay et al., 2001; Loosemore, 1998). Furthermore, unexpected events affect the individuals themselves, because when they are confronted by a sudden problem, they experience feelings of shock and discomfort (Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003), impacting their mental well-being in the long term (De Mel et al., 2008; Doern, 2016). Despite their profound impacts on businesses and individuals, little is known about unexpected challenges (Cunha et al., 2006; Doern et al., 2019), although extensive literature can be found on entrepreneurial challenges (e.g., Cho et al., 2020; De Vita et al., 2014; Jennings & Brush, 2013; Machado et al., 2016; Panda, 2018; Prashar et al., 2018) and uncertainties (e.g., McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001; Townsend et al., 2018; Tsui, 1993). Moreover, previous scholars have mainly examined surprises in crisis-based (e.g., Schneider et al., 1998; Stanley, 2009; Timmerman, 1986), or project-based settings (e.g., Bechky & Okhuysen, 2011; Cunha et al., 2006), and largely in healthcare (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; McDaniel et al., 2003) and construction (e.g., Hällgren & Wilson, 2008; Loosemore, 1998). As a result, research in entrepreneurship on the dimensions of surprise is scarce (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019), and studies concerning women's entrepreneurship could not be found. Therefore, by providing detailed insights into unexpected entrepreneurial challenges, enables entrepreneurs to prepare themselves and their organisations, which can lessen the effects of surprises when they actually occur. This is particularly vital for female entrepreneurs, as they often have limited resources (Carter et al., 2003; Runyan et al., 2006), as their businesses are mostly small (GEM, 2019).

While there is an increase in surprises facing organisations, the ways in which responses are developed to continue the organisation processes, are little known (Cunha et al., 2006), particularly individuals' actions towards unpredicted events (Geraldi et al., 2010). Additionally, knowledge on responses to unexpected events in the field of entrepreneurship is obscure. Some studies could be found related to how individuals deal with surprises in catastrophes or projects in healthcare (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; McDaniel et al., 2003) and construction (e.g., Hällgren & Wilson, 2008; Loosemore, 1998). The measures taken to cope with unexpected challenges are found to be different (Geraldi et

al., 2010), and the decisions and behaviours of individuals are greatly influenced by their characteristics, propensities, beliefs, passions, and social relationships (Barney & Felin, 2013; Felin & Foss, 2005). The microfoundations of individuals' actions impact the organisational aggregated outcomes, so in order to understand organisation-level decisions, it is essential to have in-depth insights of micro-level phenomena (Barney & Felin, 2013; Foss, 2011). In entrepreneurship, especially in medium and small enterprises, the owners are often the managers, managing the business and making all the important decisions (Coviello et al., 2017; Del Giudice et al., 2017). As a result, the responses and behaviours of organisations facing surprises can only be understood when the individuals who manage the businesses are examined (Mahringer & Renzl, 2018; Williams & Wood, 2015). However, in the entrepreneurship research, within the notion of microfoundations, scholars have explored individuals' behaviours and decision-making processes concerning business strategies (e.g., Hatch & Dyer, 2004; Rahim et al., 2019), and firm performance (e.g., Abell et al., 2008; Bailey & Helfat, 2003; Teece, 2007), yet the processes that the owner-managers use to individually deal with challenges, particularly sudden events, have not yet been explored. One of the reasons unexpected events are understudied, is that they are perceived as managers' lack of ability to manage and control their business (Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003). Thus, investigating the entrepreneurs' decisions, behaviours, and actions toward surprises, as well as the factors influencing them, provides deep insights for both policymakers and entrepreneurs on the microfoundational frameworks in the context of entrepreneurial surprises.

Observing the lack of literature on women entrepreneurship, their challenges (particularly unexpected challenges) and the response frameworks used to cope with these events, this research aims to address the gaps in the literature by examining unexpected entrepreneurial challenges, their impacts, and the ways women entrepreneurs individually rise to address them. Results from this study will benefit other entrepreneurs and policymakers by providing them with a better understanding of surprises, the responding frameworks, and the personal and organisational resources they need in order to deal with them more effectively.

Study Context

Cambodia, officially called "The Kingdom of Cambodia," is located in the south-east Asia region, sharing borders with Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and the Gulf of Thailand. The capital of Cambodia is Phnom Penh, and the official language is Khmer (Ministry of

Tourism, 2020). The country has a total area of 181,035 square kilometres, with almost 16.5 million people (World Bank, 2020b). The national currency is Riel, although the American (US) dollar is also widely used. The average exchange rate of 2019 showed that USD1 was equal to KHR4045 (riel), while NZD1 was equal to KHR 2731 (National Bank of Cambodia, 2020). Cambodia is ranked as a lower middle-income country by the World Bank. From 1998 to 2018, the country had an average economic growth of eight percent, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world (World Bank, 2020b). The growth rate in 2019 was 7.1%, estimated to drop to -2% by the World Bank and -4% by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Asian Development Bank, 2020; World Bank, 2020a). In 2019, the total gross domestic products (GDP) were worth approximately USD27.09 billion, and the gross national income (GNI) per capita was around USD1,643. The top three sectors contributing to the economic growth were the tourism, garment and footwear, and construction industries (World Bank, 2019).

The small and medium enterprise (SME) sector is one of the key contributors to economic development and employment creation in Cambodia. In Cambodia, *SMEs* are defined as any enterprise with less than 100 employees with a maximum of USD500,000 in assets (International Finance Corporation, 2019). In the present study, microenterprises are included in the SMEs definitions, as the differentiation between micro, small and medium enterprises is not clear. Additionally, the conflicts of interests and bureaucratic complexity of registering a business might impact the business type identification (International Finance Corporation, 2019). In 2014, only 7.1% of enterprise establishments were registered with the Ministry (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). According to the national inter-censal economic survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) of the Ministry of Planning in 2014 (the most recent report), microenterprises accounted for 97.6% of the total 513,759 enterprises, the small and medium sizes represented around 2%, and the combined SMEs almost represents all the country's enterprises. The average number of employees per business is 3.6, and the major business sectors include wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, and accommodation and food service activities. Although more than 70% of the nation's population resides in the countryside, the capital city, Phnom Penh, is the business hub of the country, where the majority of SMEs (23%) are located.

Women's entrepreneurship plays an enormous role in Cambodia's economic growth, as the majority of all enterprises (61%) are owned by women (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). The International Finance Corporation (IFC) defined women-owned enterprises as those owned by a woman having at least 51% of the share, or at least 26% of the share and at least one female chief executive officer (CEO) or chief operating officer (COO). Most of the female-owned enterprises are small and informal, which is possibly due to the convenience of having a home business (a business operating at home or close to home), which accounts for almost 75% of the total enterprises (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). Compared to other countries in the east Asia and Pacific region, Cambodia has greater female firm ownership (47% and 29% respectively). In addition, in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2017) report, Cambodia was the only Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) country, whose working women were more likely to be self-employed (54%); the average regional rate was given as 30%. Nevertheless, it is challenging to assess the rate of women's entrepreneurship in Cambodia, as men have stronger network ties, so it is easier for them to register a business; women often let their spouse or male relatives register, even though they are actually the ones operating the business (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

Impressive data on women's entrepreneurship in a country does not necessarily mean that women have the same opportunities as men owning a business (International Finance Corporation, 2019). The gender gap still exists; for example, only 21% of large enterprises are owned by women. In terms of business profitability, men's enterprises have higher annual profits than do women's enterprises (USD4,929 and USD2,644 respectively) (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). Cambodian female entrepreneurs are still facing social and cultural barriers due to patriarchal traditions, such as *Chbab Srey*, (also known as the "women's code,") that encourage women to obey and respect their husbands and focus on their households (Anderson & Grace, 2018). These barriers prevent women from having access to education, entrepreneurial skills, market information, financial resources, and networking opportunities, due to the need to be close to home, and the precarious nature of support or approval of their spouse (Grant et al., 2018; International Finance Corporation, 2019; Ty et al., 2009). Female entrepreneurs report lower formal education levels than do males, and typically lack knowledge of leadership, markets, products, and business planning, which have negative outcomes on their business operations, management skills, and profitability (Asian Development Bank,

2015; International Finance Corporation, 2019). Their limited capabilities and resources make their businesses vulnerable to unprecedented events, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020a). Despite its great significance, and the vulnerability of women's entrepreneurship, little literature concerning them could be found. Thus, this research aims to investigate the unexpected challenges facing Cambodian female entrepreneurs, to provide a deeper understanding of their circumstances, and enable other entrepreneurs, organisations, and the Government, to develop a more effective framework to assist them in achieving their full potential.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to address the gaps in the literature related to women's entrepreneurship and unexpected events, particularly in Cambodia. This thesis aims to extend the literature by closely examining how female entrepreneurs deal with or manage surprises and unexpected events when operating a venture, by employing the microfoundations theoretical lens. The overarching research question of this study, is "how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?" This question is explored using three sub-questions to investigate in detail how the process of female entrepreneurs responding to unexpected events occurs.

1. How do women entrepreneurs conceptualise the surprises and unexpected events of entrepreneurship?
2. What are the impacts of these unexpected events on the entrepreneurs and their ventures?
3. What are the micro-processes involved in responding to unexpected events, and how do they help?

To address these research questions, the study employs a qualitative methodology, carrying out 12 semi-structured interviews with Cambodian female entrepreneurs in Phnom Penh. The data from the interviews were analysed following the thematic analysis method.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into five chapters as outlined next.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter provided a general and research background of female entrepreneurship, the rationale for conducting the research, the research context of Cambodia, and the purposes of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing literature concerning women's entrepreneurship, unexpected events and their impacts, and the microfoundations of entrepreneurship.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter discusses the research paradigm, research methodology, research methods, data analysis approach, ethics, and the trustworthiness of this research.

Chapter 4: Findings

The Findings chapter presents the results of the study from the data analysis, which includes three main themes: the characteristics of unexpected events, the impacts of unexpected events, and the microfoundations of dealing with unexpected events.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The final chapter discusses the three main themes by comparing the findings with those in previous research overviewed in the literature review, then illustrates the theoretical and practical implications of the research, the limitations, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review previous literature based on the study research question, “how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?” This chapter reviews and discusses the extant research concerning three related topics: women’s entrepreneurship, unexpected events and their impacts, microfoundations and microfoundations of entrepreneurship, and concludes by providing a summary of the topics and demonstrating the present study’s contribution to the literature.

Women Entrepreneurship

Definitions of *Entrepreneurship*

There are various definitions of *entrepreneurship* and *entrepreneur*. To give a context to the topic of this research, some definitions of *entrepreneurs* and *women entrepreneurs* are presented in the following paragraphs.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2020) defines *entrepreneurship* as “any attempt at a new venture or new business creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business” (p. 22). Shane and Venkataraman (2000) referred to *entrepreneurship* as a process of opportunities identifying, evaluating, and exploiting new business. Similarly, Hagedoorn (1996) described *entrepreneurs* as those who are innovative and creative, with the purposes of making a profit and having personal growth, initiating and strategically running an enterprise. They are also individuals who are establishing, owning, and operating a business for value-creating, by generating or expanding economic activities, through identifying new markets, innovating new products or services, and taking risks (Cho et al., 2020). According to Carland et al. (1984) *entrepreneurs* are similar to business owners; they are individuals who form and supervise a business for personal goals achievement which is connected to their personalities, desires, and family conditions. In addition, the business is their main source of income, and they invest most of their time and resources to manage it (Okhomina, 2010).

Women entrepreneurship is the act of possessing and operating an enterprise by women, which brings them economic independence (Chhabra et al., 2020). Similarly, Sharma (2013) defines *female entrepreneurs* as individuals with a high level of confidence, innovation, and creativity. They create and manage a business, while balancing the needs of their personal and social life. Lee-Gosselin and Grisé (1990) criticised definitions of women entrepreneurship in which the women were the company founders, emphasising that in a society of gender inequality, not many women can be inventors and managers. They expand the *women entrepreneurs'* definitions to those who found, bought, or inherited a business, and those who have at least one percent of the share and a major management role in the company. Likewise, the International Finance Corporation (2019) defined a women-owned enterprise as a venture owned by a woman who has more than 51% of the share, or managed by at least one female president or vice-president, or CEO/COO, and holding at least 26% of the total share. Some studies characterise women entrepreneurs according to their entrepreneurial intentions, such as *push* and *pull* factors. Most often, female entrepreneurs are considered those who are pushed into entrepreneurship due to the internal and external environment, such as poverty or career dissatisfaction, rather than being pulled, meaning that they choose and are motivated to be self-employed (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Tambunan, 2009). In addition, women entrepreneurs are those who have strong personality traits such as the self-efficacy, perseverance, and optimism (Maden, 2015; Mersha & Sriram, 2019) to deal with business and external challenges, such as family-life balance, and social, cultural, and religious barriers (De Vita et al., 2014; Panda, 2018; Verheul et al., 2006). Despite the challenges facing them, women's entrepreneurship is increasing, and contributes significantly to the global economy and job creation (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018). Thus, the following section demonstrates the significance of women's entrepreneurship, and the current situations of their entrepreneurial journey.

Importance of Women Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurial activities have been recognised as the underlying factor in creating future incomes and employment, as well as helping develop the world economy (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018). For developing countries, they are significant contributors to social problem solving, and the key

component in raising people's standards of living and reducing poverty (Longoria, 2018; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018; Saxena, 2012).

According to the GEM (2020) report, entrepreneurial activities are one of the primary components in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as “the SDG (1): end poverty in all its forms everywhere, SDG (2): promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all, and SDG (10): reduce inequality within and among countries” (p. 22). Furthermore, women entrepreneurship is undeniably a crucial contributor to reaching these goals. The Women Entrepreneurship Report of GEM (2019) identified approximately 252 million women entrepreneurs worldwide, who were actively adding to employment creation and global economic development. For example, in the United States, around 13 million female entrepreneurs were generating 9.4 million jobs and contributing to the country's revenue with USD1.9 trillion (American Express, 2019). Apart from being economically beneficial to their country, women entrepreneurs also help to enhance the social aspects of a nation (Cho et al., 2020). Research has found that most women business founders start their venture to be a part of solving problems and offering positive impacts on their communities (De Vita et al., 2014). In the GEM (2020) report, in terms of motives to become an entrepreneur, it was found that the majority of male entrepreneurs set up a business to accumulate greater wealth and income, or follow a family tradition. On the other hand, for female entrepreneurs, a large number of them had the motive of making a difference in society, along with the aim of making a living because of the scarcity of job opportunities.

Despite the enormous benefits provided by women business owners, the number of women involved in entrepreneurship globally is still significantly lower than of men. In the 2019 GEM women's entrepreneurship report, female entrepreneurs represent only 10.2% of total entrepreneurs. In this case, low female entrepreneurial activity means a country is not reaching its economic potential, as fewer economic and socially improved products and services are being developed (Terjesen & Amorós, 2010). In order to foster entrepreneurial activities, the entrepreneurial ecosystem needs to have social, cultural, and economic potential, which allows them to grow. In such an advantageous context, individuals are able to perceive opportunities and have the ability to grasp and exploit them (GEM, 2020). In particular for women, the social and cultural contexts, such as traditions, norms, religions, family, and communities, affect entrepreneurial opportunities

(Welter, 2011). In the GEM women's entrepreneurs report (2019), men and women were found to have different levels of positive opportunity perceptions. Male entrepreneurs perceived entrepreneurial opportunity slightly more positively than did women, at the rate of 47.3% and 42.1% respectively, which demonstrates a gender gap of 10%. According to the World Bank (2020), in order to increase the number and share of women entrepreneurs, higher education needs to be made available to women, better equality in the law, and easier access to bank accounts and loans.

In summary, despite the impressive growth of women entrepreneurs compared to that in previous years, the data still suggest that women entrepreneurship has not yet reached its potential, and there is more crucial work to be done to build a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem (GEM, 2020). Research on women's entrepreneurship is largely based on those in developed countries, whereas less is known about those in developing countries (Cho et al., 2020; Sequeira et al., 2016). Thus, it is vital to have knowledge of women entrepreneurs in different economies and cultures (Longoria, 2018).

Women Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries

Female entrepreneurship is an underlying mechanism of the economic advancement of a developing nation, by generating employment and contributing to reducing gender inequality and poverty (GEM, 2019). According to the World Bank, *developing countries* are those in low and medium income categories, while *developed countries* are those whose incomes are high. Low income countries have GNI per capita, less than USD1025, medium incomes from USD1,026 to 12,375, and high income countries have more than USD12375 (Khokhar & Serajuddin, 2015). In the last few decades, the central attention of women's entrepreneurship research was in countries with developed economies, and it was not until recently that the focus shifted to developing countries (Cho et al., 2020; Sequeira et al., 2016). Observing the research patterns of women entrepreneurs in developing nations, most studies explored them in two main disciplines: entrepreneurial intentions (e.g., Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Prashar et al., 2018; Solesvik et al., 2019; Stefanovic et al., 2010) and challenges (e.g., Panda, 2018; Panda & Dash, 2014; Sequeira et al., 2016; Tambunan, 2009).

At the start-up stage, women entrepreneurs are motivated to run their business for a wide range of reasons (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Solesvik et al., 2019). One of the well-known entrepreneur motivational theories is that of *pull* and *push* factors, which are used

to explain entrepreneurs' reasons for creating a business (Brush, 1992; Buttner & Moore, 1997). *Pull factors* are those that occur when an entrepreneur starts a business because of perceived potential opportunities, and are often based on their preferences and choices, such as wanting to become independent, both mentally and financially, or seeking a sense of accomplishment, or status, or power (Orhan & Scott, 2001; Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). In contrast, *push factors* are the forces from the internal and external environment direct an individual to become an entrepreneur, usually by necessity, such as the scarcity of employment, job dissatisfaction, financial problems, or poverty (Itani et al., 2011; Stefanovic et al., 2010; Tambunan, 2009). Research has shown a strong tendency for women to become entrepreneurs due to the push factors, while men are more likely to be pulled into entrepreneurship, especially in developing nations (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018; Orhan & Scott, 2001). For example, in Asian developing countries, factors leading women to set up a business are to financially support themselves and their family, to balance family responsibilities and low-paid jobs (Prashar et al., 2018; Tambunan, 2009). On balance, female entrepreneurs are likely become self-employed due to *push* factors, particularly those in developing countries where there are strong financial and cultural constraints (Panda & Dash, 2014; Prashar et al., 2018).

The entrepreneurial journey is especially difficult for women, and the circumstances are stronger in developing nations due to the absence of opportunities, limited resources, and unique social and cultural barriers, such as patriarchal systems, gender inequality, and work and family responsibilities (Panda & Dash, 2014; Verheul et al., 2006). Panda (2018) analysed 35 articles covering 90 countries with developing economies, to identify major constraints facing women entrepreneurs. The results revealed seven categories of common challenges facing female business owners in these nations, such as gender bias and discrimination, work and family life balance, financial access issues, poor infrastructure, unsupportive businesses, problematic economic and political environments, inadequate training and education programmes, and personality-based barriers (Panda, 2018). For instance, women entrepreneurs in the Middle East face difficulties in the start-up stages due to the patriarchal system of their countries, as they need permission from their husbands or extended family members before starting their business. Additionally, they face challenges in obtaining loans from a bank, as they may first need approval from their husbands or fathers (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010; Itani et al., 2011). Levels of education and insufficient collateral are also factors that may force

female entrepreneurs to depend on their personal savings to start or operate their business (International Finance Corporation, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2020; Yetim, 2008). Similarly, it was found that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria do not have enough support from their family, due to heavy family responsibilities, as the Nigerian women have, on average, five or six children. They also experience discrimination from the market and customers, as they are considered to have low status (Singh et al., 2010).

In addition to personal and family constraints, Sequeira et al. (2016) investigated the external factors that impact the success of women entrepreneurs' ventures in developing countries in relation to individual and institutional influences. Firstly, having social networks with experienced entrepreneurs boosts the women's business success rate, as their relationships bring knowledge, information, resources, and advice for making business decisions (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Mathews & Moser, 1995). Secondly, institutional factors such as social changes and agreements in trading are important; for example, supportive gender movements and taxes and tariffs reductions encourage entrepreneurial activities and achievements (Amine & Staub, 2009). Finally, cultural and governmental support, such as providing female entrepreneurs with an encouraging entrepreneurial ecosystem and training and education programmes, foster women-owned start-ups and businesses (Dana, 2000).

Overall, the literature on women entrepreneurship in developing nations predominantly focuses on two topics: entrepreneurial intention, such as pull and push factors, and the constraints facing the women. It is likely that female entrepreneurs start a business due to the necessity, rather than preference (Panda & Dash, 2014; Prashar et al., 2018; Tambunan, 2009). In their journey, they also experience barriers of gender inequality, work and family responsibilities, poor financial resources, and external environment factors (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2020; Panda, 2018; Sequeira et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2010). Furthermore, entrepreneurs regularly face extreme working conditions with high levels of ambiguity, complexity, and unexpected events (Stephan, 2018). The World Bank (2020a) advises that women entrepreneurs need to be ready and supported for unprecedented events. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, female entrepreneurs were found to be one of the most vulnerable groups, due to their limited capabilities and resources (Carter et al., 2003; Lindvert et al., 2017). Nevertheless, research related to unexpected challenges facing female entrepreneurs cannot be found.

Women Entrepreneurship in Cambodia

Women entrepreneurship in Cambodia is the key factor in the country's economic development, as the majority of entrepreneurs are female (61% of all enterprises) (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). However, this does not mean they have gender equality (International Finance Corporation, 2019). For example, only 26% of women entrepreneurs own large enterprises, and their business profitability is on average, lower than that of the men's businesses (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). In their entrepreneurial journeys, female Cambodian entrepreneurs encounter socio-cultural, financial, and legislative challenges (Asian Development Bank, 2015; Grant et al., 2018; International Finance Corporation, 2019; Ty et al., 2009).

Historically, Cambodian women were pushed into entrepreneurship, due to the loss of their husbands in the Pol Pot genocide from 1975 to 1979. The lack of males after the war required women to take part in economic activities (Bailey, 2007). The number of enterprises started to rise in the early 2000s, but most current businesses started after 2011 (National Institute of Statistics, 2014). The laws and policies related to SMEs in Cambodia are relatively new. Supporting initiatives such as tax policies and incentives, have been created to support and encourage entrepreneurial activities. However, the policies' clear structures and implementations are still lacking (International Finance Corporation, 2019). The Ministry of Women's Affairs is responsible in implementing gender policies and women empowerment programs. The ministry has created the Women Development Centres (WDC) and cooperated with other female business associations in offering training and non-financial services to women entrepreneurs, such as the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA), SHEinvestments, Federation of Associations for SMEs of Cambodia (FASMEC) and Young Entrepreneurs Association of Cambodia (YEAC). SHEinvestment is a well-known program in providing female entrepreneurs with micro- to medium-sized enterprises with incubators and accelerators programs, giving mentoring, networking, and financing services (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

In terms of entrepreneurial constraints, female Cambodian entrepreneurs face challenges related to the culture, finance, and legislation. Not much literature could be found related to women's entrepreneurship, except that of (Ty et al., 2009), although some information could be obtained from non-governmental organisations (Asian Development Bank, 2015; Grant et al., 2018; International Finance Corporation, 2019). Ty et al. (2009) found that

female entrepreneurs have difficulties in balancing their business and family responsibilities as housewives, and making independent decisions without the support of their family or business partners. Family, particularly spouses, have a strong influence on women entrepreneurs (International Finance Corporation, 2019; Ty et al., 2009). Cambodia is a patriarchal society, that is has women's codes of conduct known as *Chbab Srey*, encourages women to focus only on their households, and be obedient to their husbands (Anderson & Grace, 2018). Despite the efforts of the Government to remove *Chbab Srey* from the national curriculum, and raise awareness, the traditions are well embedded in the society. This eventually has negative impacts on Cambodian women in terms of access to the same opportunities as men have (International Finance Corporation, 2019). For instance, the rate of girls enrolled in education is lower than that of boys at primary, secondary and tertiary levels (UNESCO, 2020). Moreover, due to family responsibilities and cultural norms, it is inappropriate for women to travel far from home or participate in networking events after business hours. These limit women's opportunities to have access to training programmes and build relationships with business stakeholders and government officers, which impacts their business performance. Furthermore, women entrepreneurs have reported problems obtaining bank funds, having loans rejected by the bank due to insufficient collateral, and lacking confidence in presenting themselves and negotiating with banks (International Finance Corporation, 2019). Additionally, external factors such as laws and legislations have a strong influence on women's enterprises, and their businesses are largely unregistered. The processes of dealing with customs, trade regulations, and obtaining licences are complicated, especially with the low literacy rate of Cambodian women (Grant et al., 2018; International Finance Corporation, 2019).

In general, in a similar manner to women entrepreneurs in other developing countries, Cambodian entrepreneurs experience barriers related to culture, finance, and legislation (Asian Development Bank, 2015; Grant et al., 2018; International Finance Corporation, 2019; Ty et al., 2009). The literature related to women's entrepreneurship is very limited, especially concerning challenges facing them (Leahy et al., 2017). In order to provide a better understanding of women entrepreneurship, the following section reviews studies related to this topic.

Empirical Research on Women Entrepreneurship

The entrepreneurship literature emerged in the 1930s, with a central focus on male entrepreneurs (Yadav & Unni, 2016). It was not until the late 1970s that female entrepreneurship started to emerge as a sub-domain, and was not widely studied until the early 2000s (Jennings & Brush, 2013). The review studies of De Bruin et al. (2007) and Sullivan and Meek (2012) on female entrepreneurship show that the most common research themes include the relations between individuals' capabilities such as characteristics, abilities, networks, and financial capital, and the performance of their business in terms of strategies, growth rates and success. Jennings and Brush (2013) reviewed studies that compared men's and women's entrepreneurship, and pointed out that the research predominantly concentrates on the different rates of business ownership, access to financial capital, management styles, and venture performance. Despite the growing studies on women's entrepreneurship, De Bruin et al. (2006) claimed that the literature is still in the infancy stage. Reviews of research during the 2010s acknowledges the lack of entrepreneurial process investigation (Ahl & Nelson, 2010; Sullivan & Meek, 2012), such as decision-making mechanisms, which require continuing studies (Okhomina, 2010). Likewise, Ahl (2006) agreed that it is vital to have an in-depth understanding of the process of how individuals do entrepreneurship, rather than simply identifying who they are and what they do. Ahl (2006) further argued that research on gender entrepreneurship needs a more diverse methodological perspective, as it is mainly based on empirical and feminist traditions (Foss et al., 2019). Among the 52 women's entrepreneurship studies reviewed by De Bruin et al. (2007), the majority applied quantitative methods, while only about 17% adopted a qualitative approach. Therefore, there is a need to have more of a constructionist approach to increase the understandings of this gendered phenomenon (Hughes et al., 2012). Despite the increase in research on female entrepreneurship, the review study of Đalić (2019) analysing 393 entrepreneurship-related papers published between 2013 and 2018 in five academic journals, revealed that female entrepreneurship was the least researched topic after family businesses; the most studied topics of entrepreneurship were innovation and advanced technology, followed by education. Therefore, there is still limited women's entrepreneurship literature, particularly on the entrepreneurial process, which requires more in-depth study using paradigms such as constructivism and qualitative methods (Ahl, 2006; De Bruin et al., 2007; Hughes et al., 2012).

In conclusion, based on the literature reviewed, women's entrepreneurship research has progressed, yet is still at a low rate compared to other aspects of entrepreneurship (Đalić, 2019; De Bruin et al., 2006; Yadav & Unni, 2016). Firstly, there is a lack of understanding of the entrepreneurial process, as previously noted. Secondly, the literature predominantly focuses on women in developed countries, rather than on those in developing nations (Cho et al., 2020; Sequeira et al., 2016). Thirdly, in the context of developing countries, the most commonly examined topics on female entrepreneurs are their entrepreneurial intentions (e.g., Carsrud & Brännback, 2011; Prashar et al., 2018; Solesvik et al., 2019; Stefanovic et al., 2010) and the constraints facing them (e.g., Panda, 2018; Panda & Dash, 2014; Sequeira et al., 2016; Tambunan, 2009). However, notions of uncertainty and unexpected events that they increasingly face in are unknown (Cunha et al., 2006). Finally, literature on women entrepreneurship in Cambodia is scarce (Leahy et al., 2017), although some information can be obtained concerning their problems. Cambodia has never been included in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report (GEM, 2020; 2019). The World Bank (2020a) advised that women entrepreneurs need to be prepared for unpredicted challenges, as they often have poor education and limited resources. Nevertheless, research related to unexpected challenges facing female entrepreneurs is hard to find. In order to address this gap in the literature, this research aims to investigate Cambodian women's entrepreneurial journeys by taking the unexpected challenges as a theoretical framework for understanding the surprises they face, and how they cope with them. The following sections review and discuss these aspects in detail.

Unexpected Events

Definitions of Surprises

During operations, organisations face a variety of surprises, small and large, which impact projects in different ways (Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016; Stanley, 2009). These events might be anticipated or unanticipated by organisations, but are not predicted to occur at the time they occur, so catch them by surprise (Cunha et al., 2006; Geraldi et al., 2010). In business, unexpected events jeopardise progress and affect future goals, requiring prompt solutions (Loosemore, 1998). Although organisations try to control projects by generating sophisticated plans, or creating crisis management systems, surprises can still occur, as they are naturally unpredictable (Chattopadhyay et al., 2001; Geraldi et al., 2010).

Scholars have given various definitions to surprises or unexpected events, mainly based on their characteristics, sources, and outcomes (Bechky & Okhuysen, 2011; Cunha et al., 2006; Ford, 1981; Timmerman, 1986). *Surprises* are defined as events that occur unexpectedly while their timeframe, circumstances (Baiocchi, 2014), processes and outcomes, are unpredictable (Schneider et al., 1998). To be taken by surprise, individuals are hit by a sudden event they had not anticipated, causing them to feel shocked, amazed, astounded (Cunha et al., 2006), and sometimes discomfort, as surprises are considered negative and unfavourable (McDaniel et al., 2003).

Cunha et al. (2006) suggested four characteristics related to organisational surprises: routines, creeping developments, sudden events, and losses of meaning. *Routines* refer to the organisational process and events that can be controlled and predicted. *Sudden events* are the emergent issues that occur from existing processes and routines. *Creeping developments* are events emerging from the expected issues, and which drift in the routine processes, and *losses of meaning* are the novel unanticipated issues from the unanticipated processes (Cunha et al., 2006). Ford (1981) proposed two characteristics of crisis: (1) threats - the individuals' perceptions towards the events that make them feel that their goals are unachievable or losing value, and (2) time pressure - the feeling of having a limited amount of time to search for solutions and resources before goals are impacted. Additionally, Timmerman (1986) characterised surprises by their intensity scales: anomalies (minimal effects on the organisation), shocks (intense events that cause the organisation to respond inappropriately), epiphanies (surprises that make the organisation realise its useful characteristics), and catastrophes (unexpected events that damage the organisation before actions can be taken). In entrepreneurship, businesses increasingly facing surprises, yet they are still largely unstudied, causing a lack of understanding of entrepreneurship in this context (Cunha et al., 2006). Investigating surprises in entrepreneurship would provide insights into the existing literature, which mainly focuses on surprises as catastrophes (e.g., Schneider et al., 1998; Stanley, 2009; Timmerman, 1986) and in large organisation settings (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003). The next section explores research on surprises in different disciplines.

Research on Unexpected Events

Research on the sources of surprises primarily focuses on two components: internal and external. Surprises within an organisation, occur mainly due to a lack of information,

abilities such as knowledge and experience, and insufficient adaptive organisational systems (McDaniel et al., 2003), which lead to failures in recognising changes and making attempts to adapt or respond to events (Ford, 1981). When a deficient management team makes inappropriate decisions, a shock results for the organisation, and a freeze in the system (Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016; Timmerman, 1986). Unexpected challenges can also emerge from processes such as the new technology and system design, or develop from inadequate training or misinterpreted markets or stakeholders' demand (Atkinson et al., 2006). However, in many cases, organisations tend to underestimate situations (Kutsch & Maylor, 2011; Piperca & Floricel, 2012). Piperca and Floricel (2012) emphasised the stages of organisational prediction on surprises. Firstly, the intensity of surprises is more robust than predicted, resulting from the events' under or over-estimation by management (Kutsch & Maylor, 2011). Secondly, the unexpected events could have been predicted, but were not, due to miscommunications in the system or between management and the team. Finally, they can be unpredictable events, which are from the outside environment and absolutely could not be foreseen, such as natural disasters (Piperca & Floricel, 2012).

With regards to the external environment, which causes unexpected events, these are rare, but often give the biggest surprises to an organisation (Baiocchi, 2014; Piperca & Floricel, 2012). Changes in the broader environment, such as politics, economics, or nature, can lead to market swings or stock market crashes, causing severe crises to an organisation (Ford, 1981). For example, economic crises may cause a demand plunge and process disruption, which in turn, can result in bankruptcy (Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016). In the smaller context of a changing environment, surprises can be due to the shifts of customers' or stakeholders' preferences and consumption behaviours (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009), and the overreliance and lack of control on the stakeholders and agents (Piperca & Floricel, 2012).

Similar to surprises, uncertainties and risks have been extensively investigated, especially in entrepreneurship theory (Sarasvathy et al., 2014; Townsend et al., 2018). *Uncertainty* refers to a situation in which the knowledge or information of an event related to its process and consequences is incomplete, while the possibility of its occurring is unclear and subjective. The risk is known if an event has well-known characteristics, such as its timeframe and process, but the outcomes are uncertain, but may be predicted (Schneider et al., 1998). The main difference between uncertainty and surprise, is that uncertainty is

the state of being unsure, even though there is some information about an event, but to be surprised is to be completely unaware of the event (Cunha et al., 2006).

Research has increasingly focused more on the notion of surprise in organisation theory (Lampel & Shapira, 2001; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). The majority of studies are concentrated on general management fields, such as in healthcare (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; McDaniel et al., 2003) and construction (e.g., Hällgren & Wilson, 2008; Loosemore, 1998), project management, and responses to unexpected events (e.g., Cunha et al., 2006; Geraldi et al., 2010; Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016; Tukiainen et al., 2010). Scholars have also investigated responses to surprises for individuals (e.g., Chattopadhyay et al., 2001; Loosemore, 1998; Pearson & Clair, 1998), teams (e.g., Magni & Maruping, 2013), and organisations (e.g., Carmeli & Halevi, 2009; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Research has explored how individuals emotionally react and cognitively deal with unexpected events (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Furthermore, research has discovered team responses to unexpected challenges. For example, Magni and Maruping (2013) examined the influences of empowering leadership and improvisation-performance on 48 teams in two organisations, and showed that empowering team members through building shared goals and offering responsibilities and authority, increases the team's ability to deal with emerging issues. At the organisational level, scholars have studied crisis management systems, involving both internal and external stakeholders, in order to prepare for and cope with surprises (Carmeli & Halevi, 2009; Geraldi et al., 2010).

In entrepreneurship, unexpected challenges are as yet not researched, whereas similar frameworks such as uncertainty and risks are widely studied (Cunha et al., 2006). This may be because of the negative perceptions of surprises, which are seen as associated with a lack of capabilities and control (McDaniel et al., 2003). As the nature of surprises is unpredictable, they cause shock and impact organisations and their members negatively (Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003), indicating the importance of having a better understanding of their outcomes.

Effects of Unexpected Events

When taken by surprise, organisations' processes and their members' feelings are impacted (Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003). Nevertheless, research on the impacts of unexpected events, particularly related to entrepreneurship, has not yet been under-taken (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019). Existing literature on surprises is generally

around crises (e.g., Wang, 2009), and the impacts on crises on large organisations (e.g., Gao & Alas, 2010; Rollo & Zdziarski II, 2007) or individuals (e.g., Aytaç et al., 2015). Similarly, in the area of entrepreneurship, most research is crisis-based, such as that on natural disasters (e.g., Monllor & Murphy, 2017; Runyan, 2006) or economic recessions (e.g., Cowling et al., 2012; Williams & Vorley, 2015). While studies on internal crises are rare, knowledge of the impacts of such crises on organisations, especially on entrepreneurs, is even rarer (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019).

Impacts on business

Scholars have found that unexpected events have negative outcomes on firms' operations (Rollo & Zdziarski II, 2007), reputation (Coombs, 2004; Gao & Alas, 2010), human and financial resources (Doern, 2016; Irvine & Anderson, 2004; Runyan, 2006) and in the worst case, their continued existence (Irvine & Anderson, 2004). In particular, small businesses are more vulnerable than are large firms due to their insufficient resources, prevention systems, and teams (Runyan, 2006). For example, Irvine and Anderson (2004) studied the impacts of foot and mouth outbreaks on small tourism businesses in the United Kingdom (UK), and found that the pandemic considerably affected business sales, employee numbers and profits, and the majority of businesses took a year to recover. Similarly, a study of small business damages from the 2011 London riot by Doern (2016) pointed out that these events impacted firms either directly or indirectly, and most businesses suffered from reduced sales, team members, and a loss of investments. Unexpected events also impact the operational processes of projects, by disrupting business activities, causing delays, and increasing project costs (Coulon et al., 2013; Rollo & Zdziarski II, 2007). In addition, crises threaten a business's reputation. Once an unexpected event occurs, especially an accidental crisis, it affects the organisation's public image significantly (Coombs, 2004), as the history of crises or shortcomings is observed by the media and public, which worsens the damage (Coombs, 2004; Gao & Alas, 2010). The impacts of crises come as a domino effect; they cause reductions in human resources, which lead to decreased business productivity and service quality, impacting business operations and reputation, and causing profit and financial losses (Gao & Alas, 2010).

Impacts on entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs regularly face extreme working conditions with a high level of ambiguity, complexity, and unexpected events (Stephan, 2018). However, research on the impacts of unexpected events on entrepreneurs is scarce (Doern et al., 2019). Despite the ample literature on entrepreneurs' well-being (Stephan, 2018), only a few studies have investigated entrepreneurs' well-being in crises (Doern, 2016) and natural disasters (De Mel et al., 2008). For example, De Mel et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal study on the impact of a tsunami on small business owners, and found that individuals who had witnessed a tsunami, or suffered personal or economic loss, experienced greater effects on their mental health related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Additionally, Doern (2016) showed that business owners whose businesses were impacted by riots, reported psychological and emotional costs, which later negatively influenced their physical health. It has been suggested that personal traits, mindset, experience, and resources could reduce the vulnerability of entrepreneurs to the impacts of unexpected events (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019).

Outside entrepreneurship studies, scholars have explored the relationships of individuals' well-being and unexpected events, such as economic crises (Aytaç et al., 2015), daily life stressful events (Ryan et al., 2005), and the unexpected loss of family members (Burton et al., 2006). When facing crises, individuals' livelihoods can collapse and suddenly change, resulting in detrimental impacts on their mental well-being (Ryan et al., 2005). During the 2008 economic crisis, impacted individuals suffered from severe stress, depression, and physical health problems, such as sleeplessness, stomach aches, high blood pressure, and headaches (Aytaç et al., 2015). A study on the impacts of the tsunami in 2004 in the southern Thailand found that people affected by the disaster reported having a high rate of anxiety, depression, and PTSD, and these effects were more profound for women than for men (Van Griensven et al., 2006). Likewise, those facing daily life stressful events or the sudden loss of family members, had greater level of depression (Burton et al., 2006), and more physical symptoms such as shortness of breath and stomach problems (Ryan et al., 2005).

Although entrepreneurial challenges and uncertainty are widely studied, surprise challenges are not (Cunha et al., 2006). Additionally, a large amount of research is crisis-based, such as on natural disasters (e.g., Monllor & Murphy, 2017; Runyan, 2006) and economic recessions (e.g., Cowling et al., 2012; Williams & Vorley, 2015), and in large

organisation settings (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003). As a consequence, there is little literature on unexpected events in entrepreneurship, and studies examining the impacts of such events on businesses and entrepreneurs are even rarer (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019). In particular, small businesses are more vulnerable than are large firms, especially those owned by women, due to their insufficient resources and prevention systems (Runyan, 2006). Thus, the present research aims to fill this gap in the surprises literature, by exploring unexpected events facing women entrepreneurs, and the microfoundations of dealing with these events. It is vital to have an in-depth understanding of the process or how individuals are doing entrepreneurship (Ahl & Nelson, 2010; Sullivan & Meek, 2012), such as their decision-making frameworks, behaviours, and influential factors (Barney & Felin, 2013; Felin & Foss, 2005).

Microfoundations

Background of Microfoundations

The notion of microfoundations is not recent, as it emerged in the social sciences and economics literature in the 1960s (Janssen, 1993), and has been discussed in association with methodological individualism or reduction (Felin et al., 2012). Studies of microfoundations focus on individuals as fundamental components in social theories (Barnard, 1968; Weber, 1949), but in practice, they are the studies of the behaviours, beliefs, preferences, and interactions of individuals that build up social structures (Barney & Felin, 2013). There has been extended debate about the notions of micro and macro foundations, and methodological individualism and collectivism. Durkheim (1962) argued that macro or states level factors, including culture or religion, should be the core of social sciences and sociology. This collective study stressed the importance of a macro explanation and disregarded micro and individual-level factors. The debate later evolved across other disciplines such as economics, and organisation theory, management, and strategy research (Barney & Felin, 2013).

Even though the microfoundation phenomenon is viewed as a fundamental notion, it is crucial to understand its elements and the interactions that add up to a macro phenomenon. In other words, the study of collective factors such as culture, economy, organisations, or markets, can be explained when the underlying structures or origin components plus the interactions of the aggregated phenomena, are comprehended (Coleman, 1994;

Silberstein, 2002). That is, reductionism is necessary for any collective theories, whereby the behaviours, knowledge, skills, and cognitions of individuals are explored (Elster, 1989; Udehn, 2002), as they provide additional perspectives on the macrofoundations (Foss, 2011). Definitions of *microfoundations* have related to a wide range of constructs such as routines, capabilities (Felin et al., 2012), performance (Abell et al., 2008), dynamic capabilities (Lecler & Kinghorn, 2014; Teece, 2007), resource-based theory (Foss, 2011; Kaufman, 2015), strategic organisation (Felin & Foss, 2005), and entrepreneurship (Minniti & Bygrave, 1999). This variety results in misconceptions about microfoundations; to clarify this, Barney and Felin (2013) discussed four half-truths of this notion: “(1) that microfoundations are psychology, human resources (HR), or micro-organizational behaviour (OB), (2) that borrowed concepts constitute microfoundations, (3) that microfoundations lead to an infinite regress, and (4) that microfoundations deny the role of structure and institutions” (p.139). This research also emphasises microfoundations and aggregations, while the creation, dependency, and influences of individuals’ social interactions are the keys leading to the aggregate outcomes, particularly in organisational and social phenomena (Barney & Felin, 2013). Considering the discussion of microfoundations, the definition of *microfoundations* used for the purpose of this research is: the study of individuals, including their behaviours, mindsets, knowledge and skills, and relationships with others that build up their actions and decisions.

According to organisational theory, individuals play a vital role in the functions of organisations and systems (Barnard, 1968), which means in practice, that organisational performance can be assessed by thoroughly examining the nature of organisational members, their roles, and their social interactions (Barney & Felin, 2013). In order to have a complete organisational understanding, it is essential to have a full understanding of the basic characteristics, propensities, beliefs, and passions of its individuals and their choices and underlying reasons behind them (Felin & Foss, 2005). In management theory, microfoundational theory examines not just the individuals but also the processes, structures and interactions among the elements that contribute to the collective outcomes (Felin & Foss, 2009; Felin et al., 2012). Overall, the microfoundations literature has progressed remarkably in various fields, from organisational (e.g., Barnard, 1968; Barney & Felin, 2013; Felin & Foss, 2005) to management (e.g., Abell et al., 2008; Felin et al., 2012). However, scholars have called to extend the microfoundations notion in the field of entrepreneurship (e.g., Coviello, 2015; Forsgren, 2016; Jones & Coviello, 2005; Teece,

2007), as it is important to understand the micro-processes of firms' decision-makers (Coviello et al., 2017; Del Giudice et al., 2017).

Research on Microfoundations in Entrepreneurship

Despite its great significance, the notion of microfoundations is still understudied, and scholars have called for further research in various fields, from organisational (Gavetti, 2005) to strategic (Hatch & Dyer, 2004), management (Abell et al., 2008; Felin et al., 2012), and entrepreneurship theories (Alvarez & Barney, 2008; Minniti & Bygrave, 1999). Teece (2007) called for research on microfoundations in entrepreneurial management, as the roles of entrepreneurs greatly affect firm-level outcomes. Scholars have also called for studies on individuals' decision-making processes and the logic that shapes the systems and processes of an enterprise (Coviello, 2015; Forsgren, 2016; Jones & Coviello, 2005). For example, Coviello et al. (2017) argued that it was important to obtain insights into a firm's decision-makers, for example, the ways they behave or make decisions, and the reasons behind these. In other words, the behaviour of firm can be understood when the individuals who manage the firm, and their minds, are closely studied (Williams & Wood, 2015).

In the entrepreneurship literature, microfoundations have been studied in various contexts. Minniti and Bygrave (1999) studied the microfoundations of individuals' decisions to become entrepreneurs, which largely depended on their cultural traits and other entrepreneurs' choices, making this an interdependent process. Some research has focused on enterprise owner-managers, whose personalities traits and characteristics profoundly influence their enterprise's strategies and performances (Teece, 2012). For example, Hiller and Hambrick (2005), and Nadkarni and Herrmann (2010) found that a company's strategic orientation is mediated by the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO's) psychological attributes. Other research has examined the relations between individuals' knowledge and information resources, and firm processes (Barney & Felin, 2013; Felin & Hesterly, 2007). The research of Teece (2007) is well-known for explaining the dynamic capabilities in an enterprise that focus on individuals' abilities in sensing, seizing opportunities, and reconfiguring systems. To gain insights into this phenomenon, the roles of those who run an enterprise need to be examined (Mahringer & Renzl, 2018). It has been suggested that for an individual to be able to create and recognise opportunity, knowledge and access to information both inside and outside the organisation are needed (Nonaka & Toyama, 2007). This process requires creativity and the ability to learn and

interpret information. Besides this, the information and data gained from professional and social networks also needs to be accumulated and filtered to fit the organisation (Teece, 2007). Various scholars have also researched the effects of individuals' (particularly senior managers) behaviour and cognition on the organisation's behaviour and performance (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990; Porac et al., 1989). In behavioural theory, it was found that the decisions taken by individuals are affected by their values, goals, and passions (Gavetti, 2005; Jones & Coviello, 2005). Additionally, Adner and Helfat (2003) proposed three core components of managerial capabilities: managerial cognition, human capital, and social capital. Research has highlighted the significance of human and social capital on a firm's performance, as the skills and experiences of individuals shape their cognition, which in turn, contributes to a firm's decision-making processes (Bailey & Helfat, 2003; Coviello et al., 2017; Laviolette, 2019).

However, these studies mainly focus on the microfoundations of individuals on a firm's decision-making processes (e.g., Coviello et al., 2017; Hiller & Hambrick, 2005), strategies (e.g., Hatch & Dyer, 2004; Rahim et al., 2019) and performance in general (e.g., Abell et al., 2008; Bailey & Helfat, 2003; Teece, 2007), yet the ways in which micro-levels deal with challenges, particularly sudden events, have not yet been explored. Thus, this research aims to investigate the microfoundations of the individuals', particularly a firm's owners, responses to unexpected challenges.

Microfoundations of Entrepreneurship

In order to meet challenges, entrepreneurs need a wide range of resources to develop effective and efficient strategies to improve their firms' performance (Foss, 2011). The resource-based view theory of Barney (1991) stressed the significance of a firm's assets in building a company's competitive advantage and success. Research suggests that organisations need to explore, analyse, and control their internal and external resources in order to deal with their external environment threats (Wernerfelt, 1984). Foss (2011), Roxas and Chadee (2011), and Siemens (2010) found that successful entrepreneurs respond to issues by exploiting their available resources both within themselves, their firms, and their networks. The following sections discuss two main frameworks for understanding how entrepreneurs use their resources: individuals' internal abilities, and individuals' access to external resources.

Entrepreneurs' Internal Abilities

Individual Traits

Personality traits are characteristics that differentiate people's responses to similar situations (Leonelli et al., 2016; Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010). People can be defined by their personality, which might not change over a long period of time (Leonelli et al., 2019). In business, the success of a firm is influenced by the individuals' personality traits (Mersha & Sriram, 2019). Particularly for small and medium-sized businesses, the owners' characteristics have tremendous impacts on the venture's success (Caliendo & Kritikos, 2008). The characteristics found to be positive for firm performance include the need for achievement, an internal locus of control, good self-esteem, autonomy, risk-taking, resilience, and tolerance of ambiguity (Baum & Locke, 2004; Bullough & Renko, 2013; Kee & Chye, 1993; Kickul & Zaper, 2000). For example, Miller and Toulouse (1986) emphasised the crucial role of CEOs' personalities on their strategic decisions; while CEOs with an internal locus of control choose innovation, those with high needs for achievement prefer a strategic marketing plan. Research has also investigated the contribution of the big five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, introversion/extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) to business achievement (Miller, 2015; Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010). For example, Nadkarni and Herrmann (2010) conducted research on outsourcing companies in India by testing the linkages between the big five personality traits, strategic flexibility, and firm performance. They found that CEOs' openness, extraversion, and neuroticism, had an effect on the company's strategic flexibility, which then contributed to business performance.

A large body of research has examined the impacts of personality traits of entrepreneurs on their ventures, as there are close associations between an entrepreneur's personality traits and their enterprise success (Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Poon et al., 2006). Studies of entrepreneurs in east and south Africa confirm these positive connections, as they found that entrepreneurs who succeed in their business are determined, trustworthy, hard-working, extravert, proactive and risk-taking (Katongole et al., 2013; Kropp et al., 2008; Mersha & Sriram, 2019). Similarly, Maden's (2015) study of women entrepreneurs in Turkey suggested that successful female owners are persistent, patient, strong, and independent. Mersha and Sriram's (2019) research compared the different characteristics of male and female Ethiopian entrepreneurs in relation to their success. They reported that women entrepreneurs demonstrated lower levels of confidence, enthusiasm, and

perseverance, but higher degrees of fear of failure and external loci of control than those of men, which had a profound influence on their enterprises' performance and success. In terms of corporate entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial decisions are influenced by individuals' characteristics, goals, and the firm's environment (Mahringer & Renzl, 2018). Ambitiousness is one of the traits which motivates entrepreneurs to stimulate their business growth by fostering products and services development, and innovation (Hadi & Abdullah, 2018). Furthermore, locus of control, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy also profoundly impact a venture's growth (Baum & Locke, 2004; Lee & Tsang, 2001).

When facing a changing environment in the entrepreneurial process, managerial personality traits are a key factor in the decision-making processes needed for such changes (Peterson et al., 2003). The literature indicates that three main characteristics contribute positively to dealing with uncertainty: tolerance to ambiguity, risk-taking, and resiliency. Coviello et al. (2017) and McMullen and Shepherd (2006) argued that in an uncertain situation, decisions are impacted by the level of individuals' tolerance to ambiguity. Individuals with a high tolerance of ambiguity find uncertain situations that are complex and lacking in adequate information to be desirable and fascinating and want to take up their challenges (Norton, 1975). An individual with low tolerance, on the other hand, finds such situations threatening, causing them to experience stress and anxiety, and avoid problems (Budner, 1962; Okhomina, 2010). Furthermore, tolerance for ambiguity is associated with generating creative ideas and innovating new products in response to changes (McGrath et al., 1992; Salvi & Bowden, 2020; Tegano, 1990).

In relation to tolerance for ambiguity, risk-taking is another component of problem solving, particularly in ambiguous situations (Salvi & Bowden, 2020; Tsui, 1993). Finkelstein et al. (1996) showed that the perceptions of CEOs towards changing circumstances were significantly affected by their comfort with risk-taking and their needs for control, which influence the type of strategic plan they developed for their organisations. In other words, taking risks in business means investing resources with unclear returns, involving embracing and confronting ambiguity in the form of entering a new market or innovating new products or services (Leonelli et al., 2019; Okhomina, 2010; Salvi & Bowden, 2020). Risk-taking enhances the focus of attention, and fosters the development of analytical processes, which in turn produce sophisticated and efficient problem-solving strategies (Salvi & Bowden, 2016; Wegbreit et al., 2012).

Studies have found that resiliency is another key contributor to the success of a business (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Margolis & Stoltz, 2010). Flexibility, motivation, perseverance, and optimism are the four main components of developing resiliency (Leonelli et al., 2019). Individuals with strong resiliency exhibit the ability to adjust to a changing environment, adversity, and the subsequent stress (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; De Vries & Shields, 2006). When facing life circumstances and personal problems, resilience acts as a dynamic process, enabling people to confront and overcome problems (De Vries & Shields, 2006; Richardson, 2002). Similarly, entrepreneurs who are resilient do not perceive danger as threats, as they have the ability to handle ambiguous situations, bounce back from them, and not let fear control them (De Vries & Shields, 2006; Leonelli et al., 2016), by putting extra efforts into dealing with adversity, and staying positive and optimistic (Fredrickson, 2001; Isen et al., 1988; Subramaniam et al., 2009). Overall, research shows that entrepreneurs' individual traits have profound influences on their behaviours, business performance, and success rate. Particularly when dealing with ambiguous situations, personality traits such as tolerance to ambiguity, risk-taking, and resiliency, contribute to the process of coping with those situations.

Entrepreneurial Competencies: Knowledge, Skills, and Experiences

It is widely acknowledged that the human capital of individuals plays a vital role in enhancing their organisations (Unger et al., 2011). The heterogeneity of individuals' knowledge, skills, and experience impacts the success of a business, especially when it is the owners' knowledge and expertise, as this influences business processes such as decision-making, strategic implementation of decisions, and choices of solutions (Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Robinson & Sexton, 1994; Siemens, 2010; Teece & Al-Aali, 2013). The following sections overview the components of skills, knowledge, and experience, in details.

Skills

There is a wealth of research on entrepreneurial skills, which have been related to the performance and success of a business (Chell, 2013; Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Jasra et al., 2011; Naqvi, 2011). The greater variety of skills an individual has, the greater their chance of launching start-ups and being successful, resulting from their diverse abilities to execute business plans and activities (Chen & Thompson, 2016; Lazear, 2004). Naqvi's (2011) study of entrepreneurs in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, demonstrated the substantial

impact of entrepreneurs' skills on SMEs. Similarly, Jasra et al. (2011) proved the positive relations between the success of small enterprises and the skills of the entrepreneurs. Additionally, Hadi and Abdullah (2018) found in a study on entrepreneurs in marble manufacturing, that managerial, resiliency, and strategic skills had remarkable effects on the business processes.

Entrepreneurial skills refer to the qualities used to respond to business demands, and include both innate and developed abilities, for example, those developed through learning and practice (Spenner, 1990; Vallas, 1990). Research has identified a wide range of essential entrepreneurial skills, such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and opportunity seeking (Baum & Locke, 2004). Furthermore, Loué and Baronet's (2012) study focused on the ability to recognise opportunities, manage human and financial resources, and formulate marketing and commercial plans. Similarly, Miles et al. (1978) confirmed that the relationships of a business and its environment are influenced by the entrepreneurs' strategic skills, which can be improved with information acquired both internally and externally, and the ways it is used (Hadi & Abdullah, 2018). A study of entrepreneurs in Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria by Benzing and Chu (2012) indicated that when facing issues, managerial and customer service skills are effective in rising to those particular challenges.

Research on the skills needed for launching and sustaining a venture reveals the importance of the skills for managing workforces and finance, monitoring markets and operations, and adapting to legal and bureaucratic regulations (Manev et al., 2005; Sriram et al., 2007). Mersha and Sriram (2019) compared the skills of male and female entrepreneurs, and found that men had better skills for managing a business, such as networking, analysing, planning, marketing, operation monitoring, and managing financial resources. These skills are critical to starting up, surviving, and succeeding in a venture (Mersha & Sriram, 2019).

Knowledge

The *knowledge movement* is known to be the studies of the knowledge construct across various management disciplines, ranging from knowledge on organisation and strategy, to that on innovation and technology management (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). It has been argued that business outcomes such as innovation and growth, are influenced by the knowledge of individuals within the organisation (Minniti & Bygrave, 1999; Teece et al.,

1997). Knowledge can come from, but is not limited to education (Almus, 2002; Carpenter & Loveridge, 2020), as it can also be information gathered from different areas (Lau & Chan, 2002). Knowledge acquisition is a continuing creation process, and becomes implicit knowledge when individuals' information and views are exchanged (Teece & Al-Aali, 2013). From the knowledge and capabilities-based theory, it is suggested that new value creation, and competitive advantage are established when knowledge has a role as the central resource (Barney, 1991; Felin & Hesterly, 2007; Grant, 1996).

The education level of business owners is vital for a business, as research has shown that those with higher education demonstrate greater impacts on their business (Carpenter & Loveridge, 2020; Kangasharju & Pekkala, 2002; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Unger et al., 2011). Moreover, research has also found positive connections between education, the owners' earnings (Robinson & Sexton, 1994), and business profitability (Jo & Lee, 1996). In addition to education, internal and external information is a form of new knowledge that entrepreneurs need to gather, as it strengthens their analytical and strategic skills, which in turn influence the success of their enterprise (Inkpen, 1998). For example, in a fast-changing market, individuals who acquire a large amount of market information, are able to take advantage of this knowledge and adapt their business to exploit the opportunities and make profit gains (Minniti & Bygrave, 1999). Lau and Chan (2002) conducted a study of small business owners in Hong Kong and the UK; they both highlighted the values of founders' knowledge of sales, marketing, and operations, which enabled them to direct their business effectively. This was particularly true of sales and marketing knowledge, as this plays a crucial part in increasing sales revenue. Furthermore, Chowdhury et al. (2019) discussed the roles of business process knowledge, including understanding how to design and carry out a strategic plan, and managing organisational resources which positively contribute to entrepreneurial outcomes (Man et al., 2008). Nevertheless, alongside all the useful knowledge entrepreneurs acquire, financial literacy is proven to have a direct link on SMEs performance, as it is essential for planning business strategies and making vital decisions (Klapper et al., 2013). However, studies also show that owners of SMEs have inadequate financial management knowledge (Klačmer Čalopa, 2017; Kono & Barnes, 2010).

Experience

Scholars have provided evidence of the significant relationship between prior experience and firm performance, and there are links connecting different types of experiences and successful businesses. For example, Stuart and Abetti (1990) reported the vital role of managerial experience, Reuber and Fischer (1994) indicated the value of start-up experience, Van de Ven et al. (1984) supported the advantages of industrial experience, and Vaillant and Lafuente (2019) confirmed the importance of prior entrepreneurial experience.

Experience is known for its close connection with knowledge. After completing their education, some people start their career straight away, becoming employed or self-employed, which enables them to build their expertise, and gain further knowledge and skills (Robinson & Sexton, 1994). Entrepreneurial learning is basically a process of stocking up knowledge from the experience entrepreneurs have gathered previously, which is beneficial for their future entrepreneurial path (Minniti & Bygrave, 2001). Lee and Tsang (2001) classified experience into three main categories: managerial experience, industrial experience, and entrepreneurial experience. *Managerial experience* refers to the experience of managing organisational resources, and is mostly related to firm strategies, such as developing strategic and business plans, and managing human capital and financial resources, which contribute more to performance than does administrative experience (Reuber & Fischer, 1994). *Industrial experience* is knowledge of the industry to which the individuals belong, such as operations, products, or markets, and links to the innovation of new products and services (Helfat & Lieberman, 2002). *Entrepreneurial experience* refers to the prior involvement in creating and running new ventures, which provides serial entrepreneurs with stronger abilities to gather and analyse information, recognise opportunity, and avoid potential risks (Cope, 2005; Valliere & Peterson, 2007; Westhead et al., 2005). Rather than obtaining one type of experience, Duchesneau and Gartner (1990) suggested acquiring a breadth of experience, combining different types. Reuber and Fischer (1994) acknowledged that it is beneficial to gain even a small amount of every type of experience rather than having a large amount of one specific experience.

Despite this considerable research, the association between experience and firm performance remains unclear. Robinson and Sexton (1994) argued that the effect of experience on self-employment is less significant than that of education; hence individuals should first pursue education, and then acquire experience. Lee and Tsang

(2001) agreed that experience in both management and industry has significant impacts on a venture, but not on an entrepreneurial experience. Jo and Lee (1996) disagreed with the positive influence of managerial experience, but accepted the strong effects of industrial experience on business performance. Thus, the current study aims to investigate the relationships between entrepreneurs' experience and the processes of coping with surprises, with a view to extending the entrepreneurial experience literature.

Cognition

Cognition has been investigated across various disciplines, including those of industrial and organisational studies (Hodgkinson, 2003), business and management research (Armstrong et al., 2012), and strategic management (Gary & Wood, 2011). In these studies, cognition was found to be a critical factor ruling individual behaviour and organisational outcomes (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). Despite the extensive research on entrepreneurial actions, the mindset processes that explain those actions are relatively unknown (Dweck, 2017; Eggers & Kaplan, 2009; Subramaniam & Shankar, 2020). A review by Grégoire and Cherchem (2020) pointed out that researchers should shift their focus on giving descriptive results of entrepreneurial actions, to providing justifications of the underlying reasons for those actions.

Cognition is defined as the mental activities performed by the human brain in gathering and analysing information (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). It is also known as a set of beliefs and knowledge that influences the psychological process of perceiving, behaving, making decisions, and problem-solving (Armstrong et al., 2012; Walsh, 1995). In entrepreneurial activities, cognition is referred to as the mindsets entrepreneurs hold for viewing difficult situations, and which shape their approaches and actions towards those situations (Laviolette, 2019; Siemens, 2010; Subramaniam & Shankar, 2020; Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000). In addition, cognitive ability is a flexible and on-going process used by entrepreneurs to adapt to ambiguous situations and make dynamic decisions (Haynie et al., 2010). This is related to the concept of entrepreneurial intelligence, which is the ability to make successful decisions by interacting effectively with the internal and external environments (Rahim et al., 2019). Scholars have identified different types of intelligence, such as creative, analytical, and practical intelligence (Sternberg, 2009), social intelligence (Gardner, 1983; Mayer et al., 2008) and cultural intelligence (Ang et al., 2007).

In the research on management theory, cognition is regarded as a critical influence on understanding managers' behavioural decisions (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015), as it is thought that entrepreneurial cognitive processes have a strong influence on business outcomes (Baron, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2007). Various studies have investigated the different types of cognitive processes that contribute to organisational outcomes. Gavetti and Levinthal (2000) proposed forward-looking and backward-looking cognitive frameworks. *Forward-looking* is the process of creating options by imagining subsequent future outcomes based on beliefs and knowledge. *Backward-looking* refers to when an individual is making future decisions based on past experience, in which the positive experiences are reinforced, and the negative ones are eliminated. Basadur and Hausdorf (1996) suggested a model of divergent and convergent thinking. *Divergent thinking* is the psychological process of producing a wide range of possible solutions to a problem, and *convergent thinking* is the development of fewer ideas, but based on logical and analytical reasoning to reach a definite solution (Chen et al., 2015).

Another cognitive process which is well-known in entrepreneurship theory, is the causation and effectuation process developed by Sarasvathy (2001). She defined the *causation process* as the procedure of making decisions based on goal-directed outcomes, then choosing the appropriate means to achieve those outcomes. *Effectuation* refers to the process of carefully selecting available means, and predicting potential outcomes generating from those means. She further explained that causation is best when it is used to pursue goals or plans, but the entrepreneurial journey is surrounded by contingencies, which cannot easily be planned or predicted. Hence, the effectuation process is more applicable to dealing with uncertainty.

In an effectuation decision-making process, entrepreneurs apply four main steps for dealing with ambiguous and changing environments (Fisher, 2012). They first search for available means by asking themselves (1) who am I, what are my personalities and preferences, (2) what do I know, what are my abilities, knowledge, and skills, and (3) who do I know, what are my social networks? (Sarasvathy, 2001). These refer to physical, human, and organisational resources when related to firm level (Barney, 1991). The second step is to assess the affordable loss, rather than the future profit. For example, when generating strategies using the available resources, entrepreneurs evaluate and set a limit on damage costs in case of failure, instead of trying to maximise their return. Thirdly, entrepreneurs build alliance strategies rather than competitive ones, which means

instead of challenging their stakeholders, they establish partnerships which enable them to use their resources to deal with contingencies. Fourthly, effectuated entrepreneurs leverage contingencies; they take advantage of unexpected events by turning them into profitable opportunities (Fisher, 2012; Sarasvathy, 2001). Thus, it is clear that effectuation is highly applicable when dealing with uncertain, non-linear and dynamic circumstances by using given means and exploiting social resources (Cui et al., 2019). However, this does not imply that effectuation is more effective than causation, and in a practical setting, the two processes can occur simultaneously (Sarasvathy, 2001).

In summary, there is a large body of research focusing on the positive relations of individuals' abilities: their traits (e.g., Baum & Locke, 2004; Leonelli et al., 2016), knowledge, skills, and experience (e.g., Chell, 2013; Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Robinson & Sexton, 1994; Unger et al., 2011), and cognitive competencies (e.g., Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Walsh, 1995) with regards to firm performance, growth, and success. Nevertheless, there is less research on how these factors contribute to dealing with unexpected challenges, especially regarding female entrepreneurs, although there are some studies on ambiguity (e.g., McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2001; Tsui, 1993). Thus, the current research aims to address this gap by examining the roles of women entrepreneurs' abilities, such as their individual traits, knowledge, skills, and experience, and cognitive processes for coping with unexpected problems. Moreover, it is vital to examine the role of others who influence women entrepreneurs' decisions, such as organisational human resources, and business stakeholders, as microfoundations is also the study of organisations' individuals and their relationships (Barney & Felin, 2013; Teece, 2007).

Entrepreneurs' Social Resources

Entrepreneurs' external resources are their social capital, and include the actual and potential resources that result from relationships with others, and the networks created by managers or entrepreneurs both within and outside their organisations to support their business processes (Acquaah, 2007; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Within the network circle, the connected members exchange trust, and have goodwill in their relationships, manifesting as (for example) giving access to their and their networks' intellectual, financial, and cultural resources (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Over the past few decades, scholars have investigated the influence of social capital on firm performance (Florin et al., 2003) in various domains, such as in corporate

entrepreneurship (Chung & Gibbons, 1997) and organisational transformation (Lindvert et al., 2017). Most studies agree on the positive impacts of social capital on business success (e.g., Acquaah, 2007; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Park & Luo, 2001; Stam & Elfring, 2008), specifically in SMEs (Okten & Osili, 2004). Early in the venture start-up process, it requires substantial resources, which entrepreneurs need to gather from their social networks (Lindvert et al., 2017). Social capital also has a positive effect on the production process, which improves the success of a business (Spence & Schmidpeter, 2003). The major significance of social capital is due to its benefit of having access to information, and financial, emotional, and legal support from social networks (Batjargal, 2003; Birley, 1985). Successful entrepreneurs spend time and effort interacting to build relationships with stakeholders such as business partners, customers, suppliers, employees, and their communities (Del Giudice et al., 2017; Duchesneau & Gartner, 1990). When facing uncertain circumstances with inadequate information, individuals seek additional information to reduce ambiguity and resolve problems (Daft et al., 1987), and first search their personal networks, and then their customers and employees (Fann & Smeltzer, 1989).

The topic of women entrepreneurs' social capital is under-researched (Runyan et al., 2006). Additionally, studies on the effects of social capital on their businesses, especially related to their social networking skills compared to those of male entrepreneurs, have varied results. Daniel (2004) emphasised that women have demonstrated stronger people skills and are better at compromising, which helps them build and foster harmonious relationships with others as compared to men. Nevertheless, Yetim (2008) asserted that female entrepreneurs' social capital is mainly personal networks of family members and other women, and that they lack professional networks such as those of financial providers, business consultants, and trade association members, whereas male entrepreneurs have stronger professional ties (Davidsson & Honig, 2003).

Regions with emerging economies such as Africa, the Middle East and Asia, where the culture of collectivism is powerful, social networking is predominant (Dar & Mishra, 2020). For example, Zhao and Aram (1995) studied Chinese companies and confirmed that firms whose managers have more extensive social networks, have higher growth rates than those whose managers have smaller networks. Similarly, Lee and Tsang's (2001) research on Singaporean entrepreneurs supported the positive links of social networking activities and firm growth, as the information gathered from communications provides the entrepreneurs with a better understanding of their business position. They further

extended their findings to the *guanxi* practices in the Chinese business culture, where social and personal networking is strongly valued and implemented (Lee & Tsang, 2001; Park & Luo, 2001). Research on social capital has been examined from different perspectives, exploring different business stages, genders, as well as geographical and cultural aspects. Due to the importance of this topic, the next sections examine the different types of social capital and their contributions to women's business.

Types of Social Capital

According to Acquaah (2007), the social capital of a firm is divided into two types: internal and external capital. The social capital within an organisation, acquired from its structures, members, and their networks, is referred to as *internal capital*. *External social capital*, on the other hand, refers to both formal and informal relationships generated outside the organisation. Both types of social capital are explained in the following sections.

Internal Social Capital

Research has demonstrated that business outcomes are mediated, both directly and indirectly, by internal social capital such as human capital (Barney & Wright, 1998; Foss & Lindenberg, 2013; Leana & van Buren, 1999; Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). In management studies, it is argued that by leveraging resources from the micro-level entities within an organisation and its established networks, owners/managers can improve the competitive advantage at the macro-level, which leads to more exceptional organisational capabilities and performance (Barney, 1991; Barney & Wright, 1998; Lee et al., 2001). For example, Florin et al. (2003) asserted that social capital provides significant advantages by utilising the efficiency of internal assets inside an organisation. *Internal social capital* refers to intra-human resources, and their relationships within the organisation, both formal and informal (Burt, 1997). Organisational members, including managers and employees, have a pile of mindsets, knowledge, skills, experiences, motivations, and networks from different sources, which can be exploited for aggregated outcomes for the organisation (Barney & Wright, 1998; Laviolette, 2019; Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Additionally, organisational flexibility, collective management, and intellectual development, are facilitated by social capital (Leana & van Buren, 1999).

Entrepreneurial activities begin at the individual level, then start to influence at the group level, by expanding across the organisation level (Burgelman, 1983). Teamwork is also a form of internal resource in which individuals build cooperation and undertake cross-level (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011) and cross-functional information and knowledge sharing (Hansen et al., 2005), as well as goal sharing (Foss & Lindenberg, 2013). When facing surprises and changing situations, team members actively utilise their intelligence to identify the immediate available resources, then put their efforts into combating the issues to achieve their common goals (De Clercq et al., 2013; Foss & Lindenberg, 2013). The capabilities of the team also allow them to form team improvisation which is the process of creative measure crafting and taking action spontaneously in order to respond to unexpected events (Crossan et al., 2005; Magni & Maruping, 2013). It is evident that social capital within an organisation plays a crucial role in enhancing business performance and collectively addressing organisational issues.

External Social Capital

Carter et al. (2003) categorised social network ties into three types: weak, strong and multiplex ties. *Weak ties* are formal and professional networks, such as service providers, advisors, and associations, while *strong ties* refer to family, friends and communities; *multiplex ties* are the combination of both (Yetim, 2008). Fann and Smeltzer (1989) found that the primary source of owners/managers' social capital is family and friends, then customers, and then employees. Birley (1985) stated that friends and family are more substantial contributors in gathering resources than are formal networks such as banks.

Research has proved the fundamental role of *strong ties* networks on enterprises' process and performance, as entrepreneurs with strong support from family are found to manage work pressures better and become more successful (Berrone et al., 2014; Neneh, 2017). Family is a valuable source of capital, offering entrepreneurs labour, financial, emotional and instrumental support (Mari et al., 2016; Welsh et al., 2016). Notably, financial help without interest and mortgage fees is vital for a firm's survival in the critical start-up stage (Siemens, 2010). Additionally, families support entrepreneurs by providing paid and unpaid labour, as well as instrumental support such as offering ideas, consulting, and giving advice and feedback in all phases of business growth (Kim et al., 2014; Matzek et al., 2010). Most importantly, family members' emotional support is recognised as one of the most crucial types of support for entrepreneurs, especially women. Vadnjal and Vadnjal (2007) stressed that emotional support contributes more significantly to female

entrepreneurs than does household support. In critical business periods, emotional support keeps entrepreneurs going, and challenging their problems (Welsh & Kaciak, 2019). For married entrepreneurs, their spouses provide fundamental emotional and financial support, and are actively involved in business activities, and important decisions (Matzek et al., 2010; Neneh, 2017; Siemens, 2010). Moreover, fear of judgement from family and community is a problem for women entrepreneurs, so support from family members reduces pressures on them, enabling them to focus on and grow their businesses effectively (Imbaya, 2012).

Professional networks acquired by entrepreneurs, contribute to the success of their firms (Del Giudice et al., 2017). Scholars agree on the importance of owners'/managers' professional relationships with others outside the organisations such as with other firms' owners/managers, stakeholders (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000; Yli-Renko et al., 2001), and the government (Acquaah, 2007; Park & Luo, 2001). Through building connections with other firm's owners/managers, entrepreneurs can access resources, information, knowledge, and expertise, which are advantageous for dealing with ambiguous situations (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000; Yli-Renko et al., 2001). Furthermore, relationships with business stakeholders such as customers, partners, and suppliers, enable owners/managers to acquire, create and exploit knowledge and information, which helps achieve company goals to meet the needs of stakeholders (Coff & Kryscynski, 2011). Surprisingly, Park and Luo (2001) pointed out that it is beneficial for a business to establish relationships with competitors, as this results in knowledge and valuable information sharing, and cooperating to respond to problems and uncertainties. Furthermore, Acquaah (2007) showed that in countries with developing economies such as in sub-Saharan Africa, networks with government and bureaucratic officials, and with politicians, allow business owners to access to scarce information and resources to help reduce ambiguity in their business environment (Park & Luo, 2001).

It is worth noting that the concept of building professional network is very similar to the concept of *guanxi* networking in China and other countries influenced by the Chinese or by Confucian philosophy (Dinh & Hilmarsson, 2020). In fact, *guanxi* is the social capital of developed countries, where resources are exchanged through connections (Hwang, 1987; Xin & Pearce, 1996). Park and Luo's (2001) well-known research on *guanxi* culture defines it as "the concept of drawing on a web of connections to secure favours in personal and organizational relations. [...] Guanxi is an intricate and pervasive relational network

that contains implicit mutual obligations, assurances, and understanding” (p. 455). There are two types of *guanxi* networking: horizontal networks concerning organisational activities such as customers, suppliers, and competitors, and vertical networks related to the government and legal agencies. *Guanxi* has positive effects when dealing with uncertainties, by bridging the gaps of resources and alleviating organisational flaws and danger (Park & Luo, 2001). In Asian countries where power distance is high and laws and legal prosecutions are weak, vertical *guanxi* with governmental officials and influential people is vital for business survival (Dinh & Hilmarsson, 2020; You & Du, 2012). This context is also applicable to Cambodia, where for centuries, the Chinese business and social cultures were established when the southern Chinese first immigrated to the country (Willmott, 1967). Now, they have assimilated and become Cambodian Chinese who carries mixed traditions, language abilities, and business styles. In Phnom Penh, which is the Cambodian Chinese entrepreneurs’ centre, “Chineseness” is embedded in their business operating and management styles, and *guanxi* is naturally part of this. Connections within their entrepreneurial circles, government, and influential figures, are essential to their business processes (Verver, 2012). However, no research has yet examined the relationship between *guanxi* and unexpected challenges.

According to the literature, social capital, both internal and external, has enormous impacts on business performance and in dealing with problems and uncertainties. However, economically developed countries have more research on this topic compared to those less developed (Dar & Mishra, 2020), particularly regarding women-owned businesses (Yetim, 2008). In addition, very little is known about the effects of social capital on business when dealing with unexpected events (Geraldi et al., 2010; Magni & Maruping, 2013). Social capital in different socio-cultural contexts, such as *guanxi* networking, has similarly not been investigated. Thus, the current research aims to investigate how women entrepreneurs use their internal and external social capital, particularly *guanxi* networks, in dealing with unexpected events.

Summary

In conclusion, reviewing and discussing literature on women entrepreneurship, unexpected events, and the microfoundations of entrepreneurship, revealed several research gaps. First of all, there is a lack of knowledge about women entrepreneurship in developing countries (Cho et al., 2020; Sequeira et al., 2016), particularly concerning unexpected challenges (Doern et al., 2019) and the entrepreneurial process such as the

frameworks for dealing with those challenges (Ahl, 2006; De Bruin et al., 2007; Hughes et al., 2012). Secondly, studies on unpredicted events in entrepreneurship predominantly focus on crisis-based events (e.g., Monllor & Murphy, 2017; Runyan, 2006) and in large organisation settings (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; Cunha et al., 2006; McDaniel et al., 2003), resulting in a paucity of research on unexpected events in small business settings, and their impacts on the businesses and entrepreneurs (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019; Runyan, 2006). Thirdly, the framework and factors that contribute to responses to surprises, such as entrepreneurs' individual traits, knowledge, experience, and cognitive abilities, are not known. Studies to date have mainly focused on the relationships between these components and business performance (e.g., Baum & Locke, 2004; Coviello, 2015; Forsgren, 2016; Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Jones & Coviello, 2005) and problems and uncertainties (e.g., Magni & Maruping, 2013; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Townsend et al., 2018). Likewise, little is known about the effects of social capital on business when dealing with unexpected events (Geraldi et al., 2010; Magni & Maruping, 2013), and social capital in a different cultural context, such as *guanxi* networking, is unexplored.

As a consequence, the current research aims to address these research gaps by examining the surprises in women's entrepreneurial journeys and the microfoundations of their coping with these challenges in a country with a developing economy, and influenced by Chinese business culture such as in Cambodia (Verver, 2012). To achieve this, the study's research question is "how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?" The next chapter discusses the research purposes and data analysis methods used to answer the research question.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter describes the methods used to investigate the research question, “how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?” The chapter begins with an explanation of the research purposes, paradigm, philosophical stances, and justification for the chosen qualitative research methodology. Then, the research methods selection and data collection and analysis procedures are discussed, before finishing with a description of ethical considerations and research trustworthiness.

Research Purposes

The purpose of this research is to address the literature gaps identified in Chapter 2, concerning Cambodian female entrepreneurship and the microfoundations of dealing with unexpected challenges. This research aims to closely examine how women entrepreneurs deal with surprises and unexpected events when managing a venture, by employing the microfoundations theoretical lens.

The overarching research question of this study, is “how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?” This research question is addressed with three sub-questions to explore in detail how women entrepreneurs respond to unexpected events:

1. How do women entrepreneurs conceptualise surprises and unexpected events in entrepreneurship?
2. What are the impacts of these unexpected events on the entrepreneurs and their ventures?
3. What are the micro-processes involved in responding to unexpected events and how do they help?

Research Paradigm

It is important to understand the paradigm of a study as this shapes its philosophical background and influences the ways the research is going to be conducted (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). A *research paradigm* is a system of fundamental beliefs, presenting the picture of a worldview to its holder, and which can serve as a conceptual framework,

guiding the researcher's behaviours in conducting the research (Jonker & Pennink, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012). There are two main philosophical stances which mediate the research paradigm: ontology and epistemology (Gray, 2018).

According to Crotty (1998), "Ontology is the study of being. It is concerned with 'what is,' with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such" (p. 16). Realism and relativism are the two dimensions of ontology. While realists hold the view that reality is independent, without the interference of any consciousness, relativists hold the belief that reality is dependent on consciousness and varies between people (Crotty, 1998; Scotland, 2012). There is a strong tendency to consider that ontology and epistemology stances emerge together. While *ontology* provides an understanding of "what is," *epistemology* seeks to understand "what it is to know." In other words, the epistemology offers a philosophical background against which to judge the legitimacy and adequacy of the acquired knowledge (Gray, 2018).

In terms of epistemological stances, there are various types; of these, objectivism, constructivism, and subjectivism are commonly discussed (Crotty, 1998). *Objectivists* believe that the existence of reality is separated from consciousness, which means that the research is conducted to discover the objective reality "out there." That is to say, the researcher's emotions and values are excluded from the research process (Gray, 2018). *Constructivists* refuse the objectivist's view, believing that truth or meaning is constructed, not discovered, through our mind and through engagement with the external world. In other words, there is a difference in meaning between people or subjects concerning the same phenomenon, as meaning is constructed in different ways (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In contrast, *subjectivists* believe that meaning is not constructed from interactions between the subject and object, but occurs when the object is acted upon by the subject. They believe meaning is created from somewhere else, usually from collective unconsciousness such as dreams or religious beliefs (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2018).

There is a relationship between the epistemological stance of researchers and their theoretical perspectives, which affect the chosen research methodology and data gathering methods (Gray, 2018). Theoretical perspectives are philosophical stances embedded in the epistemology underpinning the research, and explain the choices of methodology (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2018). Among many theoretical perspectives, positivism and interpretivism are arguably commonly used (Gray, 2018).

Positivism was the primary paradigm in the social sciences between the 1930s and 1960s. Positivism is aligned with a realist ontology and objectivist epistemology (Scotland, 2012). It argues that reality is externally available and tangible, that is, it can be seen, smelt, and touched, and observation can be used as a tool to measure it (Gray, 2018). Positivists investigate the assumed independent “object,” using an empirical inquiry; values and perceptions are prevented from impacting the results. The researcher’s consciousness does not influence the object’s discovery nor is influenced by it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Wahyuni, 2012). Post-positivism developed after positivism, as a paradigm based on a critical realism ontology and objectivist epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012). Post-positivists believe that reality exists independently, but observations can be false, so there is only a near truth, rather than an absolutely perfect one (Gray, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In both positivism and post-positivism paradigms, theories are tested by forming hypotheses and mainly conducted with quantitative techniques (Wahyuni, 2012).

Interpretivism is the opposite of positivism; it adopts a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology (Gray, 2018). Interpretivists believe that the knowledge or meaning of the social world is constructed and closely connected to people’s consciousness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). People react and build meanings in different ways according to their backgrounds and experiences (Crotty, 1998). In other words, the understandings provided by individuals are extracted from meanings which are influenced by their histories and engagement with others. It is a bottom-up type of research paradigm, in which people’s perspectives build up common themes and finally, common knowledge (Creswell, 2009).

Accordingly, the interpretivist paradigm following a relativist ontological and constructivist epistemological stance, is well matched to the purpose of this research, which explores how women entrepreneurs deal with or manage surprises and unexpected events in creating a new venture, by employing a microfoundations theoretical lens as they focus on the individual level. It is opposite the realist ontology and objectivist epistemology, which perceive that there is only one single truth and results need to be protected from being influenced by people’s minds and feelings (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2018). Hence, this researcher believes that there are multiples truths related to unexpected events that women entrepreneurs face and the ways they deal with these challenges, and that those truths are strongly connected to their personal feelings and minds. In addition,

as the study adopts a constructivist epistemology, it holds the view that social interactions between women entrepreneurs and their external world construct their meaningful truths each and differently (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Instead of proposing hypotheses and making generalisations, which are the underlying philosophies of positivism (Lee, 1999), following an interpretivist paradigm, this research seeks to acquire in-depth understandings of individual women entrepreneurs based on their backgrounds, experiences, and histories.

Research Methodology

According to the theoretical perspectives this research study employs, a qualitative methodology is the most suitable approach, as the interpretivist paradigm follows a constructivist epistemology and relativist ontology. Qualitative research is usually conducted in a real-life setting; it enables the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the overall concept of the study, which is often shaped by the participants' everyday interactions among their groups, communities, and organisations (Gray, 2018; Miles et al., 2013). Intense, interacting, and contextual, are the main characteristics of qualitative research (Gray, 2018). The aim of a qualitative study is to deeply understand phenomena from the different viewpoints of the participants and comprehend the ways they act and the underlying reasons of those actions (Bryman, 1988; Sale et al., 2002).

In entrepreneurial research, a qualitative approach is often used to discover hidden information and conduct a thorough investigation into an entrepreneurial environment (Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007). Additionally, a qualitative approach is used to obtain insights into problematic experiences that can reveal hidden issues such as gender stereotyping or marginalising. The participants' perceptions, emotions, and reactions towards these circumstances can only be gathered via this approach (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Tracy, 2013). These cannot be acquired through quantitative research, which employs empirical instruments such as surveys and experiments, mainly to answer descriptive questions, while critical questions such as "how?" and "why?" are usually missed. Furthermore, quantitative research aims to make observations and generalisations from the results (Gray, 2018; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The purpose of this research is to thoroughly investigate how women entrepreneurs overcome unexpected challenges, the interactive factors contributing to them, and the reasons behind those actions. Participants' perceptions, emotions, histories, and experiences are highly valued, so a qualitative methodology is in close alignment with the purpose of this research.

Research Methods

“Research methodology” and “research methods” are two distinctive terms. While *research methodology* refers to the research paradigm, which is influenced by theoretical and epistemological stances, *research methods* are the tools used for data collection and analysis in order to address the research questions or hypotheses (Grant & Giddings, 2002). In qualitative research, in particular, four main research methods are used for data gathering: in-the-setting participation, direct observation, interviews, and document and material culture analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Sampling criteria and techniques, interviews, and data collection process are discussed in this section.

Sampling Criteria and Technique

This research employs a purposive sampling technique, as this works well with qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This technique aims to learn about a particular phenomenon that has occurred to different individuals within a specific context, place, and period (Gray, 2018). It simply means it enables the researcher to select the sample to meet a purpose, on the basis of the problems addressed, so those who are selected impact significantly on the quality of the research (Silverman, 2014). The purpose of this method is not to make any generalisations from the results, but to produce vibrant and in-depth findings.

This research therefore applies a purposive technique to select female entrepreneurs in Cambodia who have faced unexpected challenges. First, I developed selection criteria based on the purpose of this research, for example, women entrepreneurs who were currently running or who had run a business in Cambodia, and experienced and managed unexpected events (See selection criteria in Table 1). Next, I started to identify potential participants through my personal and professional networks, which were built through my family business and some entrepreneurship events I had been involved with. I then invited them to participate in the research. I sent them an invitation along with my research advertisement (See Appendix B), information sheet (Appendix C) and consent form (Appendix D) in both English and Cambodian (Khmer) languages. Following this technique, the snowball sampling method was adopted to identify other potential participants through existing participants (Gray, 2018; Patton, 1990). After interviewing the women entrepreneurs identified through my personal and professional networks, I asked them to refer and forward the recruitment documents, such as the research

advertisement, information sheet, and consent forms in both languages. These were sent to contacts whom the participants thought would meet the selection criteria. After this, any interested candidates who were willing to participate in the study contacted me directly, to set the date and location for the interview.

Table 1: Selection Criteria for Participants

- A female entrepreneur of any age who is currently or has had experience of running a business in Cambodia
- Their enterprise must be at least one year old to ensure sufficient information related to entrepreneurial experiences could be collected
- The business must be in the small to medium size category. According to the International Finance Corporation (2010), small and medium sized enterprises in Cambodia are those employing up to 100 employees with maximum start-up capital of USD500,000.
- The participant must have faced and managed unexpected events

It is worth pointing out that in qualitative research, the sample size has become irrelevant; the focus of this study is not to test a hypothesis, which requires a large sample, but to seek meaningful and rich information, which can be obtained from a small group (Slevitch, 2011). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) also suggested that a qualitative research sample size should not be too large nor too small, as a too large sample would lead to being overwhelmed by data and difficulties with data extraction, while a too small sample prevents the researcher from achieving data saturation. *Data saturation* refers to the stage at which the researcher concludes the data collection process as they believe that the limit for extracting new information or themes has been reached (Gray, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this research, 12 Cambodian women entrepreneurs were interviewed, as this number was found to be sufficient to reach data saturation. Studies on theoretical saturation by Guest et al. (2006) and Mason (2010), found that data saturation occurs at a very early stage; in this research, it started to occur as early as the sixth interview, then at the twelfth interview, it reached saturation, as no new themes were generated.

Participants' Profiles

Among the 12 women entrepreneurs who were interviewed, the majority were married and aged from 27 to 40 years old. Nearly all had attended university and had bachelors' degrees in various fields of specialisation. One participant had a master's degree, and one quit her study in secondary school. Most had previous working experience before starting their business, but only a few had experience related to their current business. Their businesses varied, and ranged from tourism, to food and beverage, health, education, construction, and fashion, to household and living products and services. All of the businesses were small and medium-sized enterprises, employing between three and 80 employees, and had been operating from one to 16 years. The majority had fewer than 20 employees, while three businesses had more than 50 employees. To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, their names were replaced with pseudonyms derived from Cambodian flower names. Table 2 presents more details of the participants' information and their business profiles.

Interviews

Interviews are the primary method adopted in qualitative studies (Gray, 2018). They are a process whereby information is exchanged between a researcher and participant through asking and answering questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The focus of this technique is other people's interesting stories, as it seeks for better understandings of their lived experience by letting them reflect on their meaningful experiences and tell their stories (Seidman, 2013). There are two main types of interview techniques, that is, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews (Gray, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were adopted in this research. In a semi-structured interview or non-standardised interview, a list of specific questions is used as an interview guide by the researcher. Nevertheless, it is unnecessary to cover everything, so the nature of this technique is to provide the researcher with the freedom to edit, add, or delete any questions as needed (Gray, 2018).

For the participants of the research, semi-structured interviews enabled them to explain or broaden their answers, which could lead to new concept discoveries not expected in the researcher's original plan (Rowley, 2012). Moreover, when compared to unstructured interviews, in which only a few leading questions or themes are given to participants to discuss, semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to verify or re-direct the answers to meet the research objectives. This is unlikely to be done in an unstructured interview,

Table 2: Participants and their Business Profiles

N	Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Education	Work Experience	Business	Founding Year	Employees
1	Champeï	40	Married	Bachelor of Management	N/A	Sanitary products company	2005	More than 50
2	Chanthou	38	Married	Bachelor of Accounting	Restaurant	Restaurant	2014	40-50
3	Chhoukroth	28	Married	Secondary school	N/A	Online fashion & cosmetics	2017	Under 10
4	Chompa	29	Single	Double Bachelor's degree in English literature and International relations	Business development	Event planner	2013	Under 10
5	Kesorkol	29	Married	Bachelor of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development	Freelance research project	Café & coffee roastery	2014	30-40
6	Kolab	39	Married	Bachelor of History	Development field with an NGO	Café shop	2018	10-20
7	Krovan	39	Single	Diploma in Development	Handicrafts project with an NGO	Handicraft Shop (Fairtrade)	2014	Under 10
8	Malis	38	Married	Bachelor of Information and Technology	Reproductive health with an NGO	Installation company	2016	Over 50
9	Mealadeï	38	Married	Bachelor of Finance and Banking	Handicrafts project with an NGO	Handicraft shop (Fairtrade)	2004	Over 50
10	Nakri	34	Single	Master of Education	Furniture production business	International school	2018	10-20
11	Nounsrey	27	Married	Bachelor of Communications	Hotel management	Furniture store	2019	Under 10
12	Romdul	38	Married	Bachelor of French literature with Teaching and Tourism major	Tour company	Tour company	2008	10-20

as the participant in this tends to take the leading role in the process (Bryman, 1988; Rowley, 2012). In addition, unstructured interviews are challenging and time-consuming for a novice researcher, as skill and experience is required for conducting the interview, as well as to compare and integrate the large amount of generated data (Flick, 2014; Rowley, 2012). As a result, the semi-structured interview technique was found to be suitable for this research, as it offered flexibility for gathering data related to how women entrepreneurs combated unexpected problems, but did not strictly limit responses to what the researcher expected.

Interview Process

The interviews were held in Phnom Penh, between 30 December 2019 and 24 January 2020. There were 12 female entrepreneur participants in the study; the time and location were agreed according to the participants' availability and convenience. The majority of interviews were conducted during office hours at the participants' offices, and some were done at a café. All were conducted in Khmer (the official Cambodian language), and lasted from 55 to 80 minutes. With the participants' consent, the interviews were voice recorded using a mobile phone.

Interviews started with a friendly self-introduction to make the participants feel more comfortable (See Appendix E, Interview Questionnaire). Before the interviews began, I reminded them of the research background and purpose, and most importantly, that their confidentiality and consent would be respected. They were also reminded that they did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable, and could withdraw from the research at any time. These steps were crucial for rapport building, as they offered participants a sense of trust, encouraging them to answer more candidly (Seidman, 2013). Then the interviews continued to the background questions to gather demographic data of the respondents and their businesses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The next step covered their life history, exploring participants' background and experiences in the context of the study (Seidman, 2013). Questions were predominantly open-ended to allow for detailed descriptions from respondents (Creswell, 2007). I asked about and listened attentively to descriptions of their experiences dealing with unexpected challenges, as it was essential to be interactive and responsive. Follow-up and probing questions were also used for further exploration and to clarify interviewees' answers (Creswell, 2007; Gray, 2018).

Pilot interviews were conducted prior to the formal interviews to practise simplifying the questions, getting familiar with them and revising as needed (Slevitch, 2011). Throughout the formal interviews, notes taken on important elements such as the process of the interviews and the feelings and reactions towards them (Gray, 2018). At the conclusion of each interview, the participants were thanked and given the opportunity to offer feedback or raise concerns, which enabled me to reflect on the interview process and revise questionnaire if necessary.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process in which new characteristics and understandings can be discovered through consolidating, reducing, connecting, and interpreting the data. It is a time-consuming and complex procedure of trying to make sense out of data by moving back and forth between sets of data, extracted codes and themes produced (Gray, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a widely employed method in qualitative research, and used for patterns or themes identification and analysis in data. Thematic analysis not only helps provide a detailed description of the data set, but also interprets different aspects of the data. This study adopted the thematic analysis approach following the six phases of data analysis suggested by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The detailed actions taken in each phase were presented in Figure 1. NVivo is computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) and was also used to assist in the data analysis process. NVivo is useful for systemising administrative tasks in the data analysis process, particularly for organising data, codes, and themes effectively. It is more efficient than a manual process (cut and paste), as it is less time consuming for categorising data and codes, which can lead to more codes being produced (Welsh, 2002). Thus, this research used NVivo version 12 as a program to analyse the interview data.

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data

Before the data analysis began, transcribing interviews into written form was needed. The transcribing process is known to be time-consuming and emotionally draining, but it plays an important role in the early stage of data interpreting and meaning creating (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Due to time constraints, I transcribed three interview recordings to gain more understandings and start familiarising myself with the data (Lapadat &

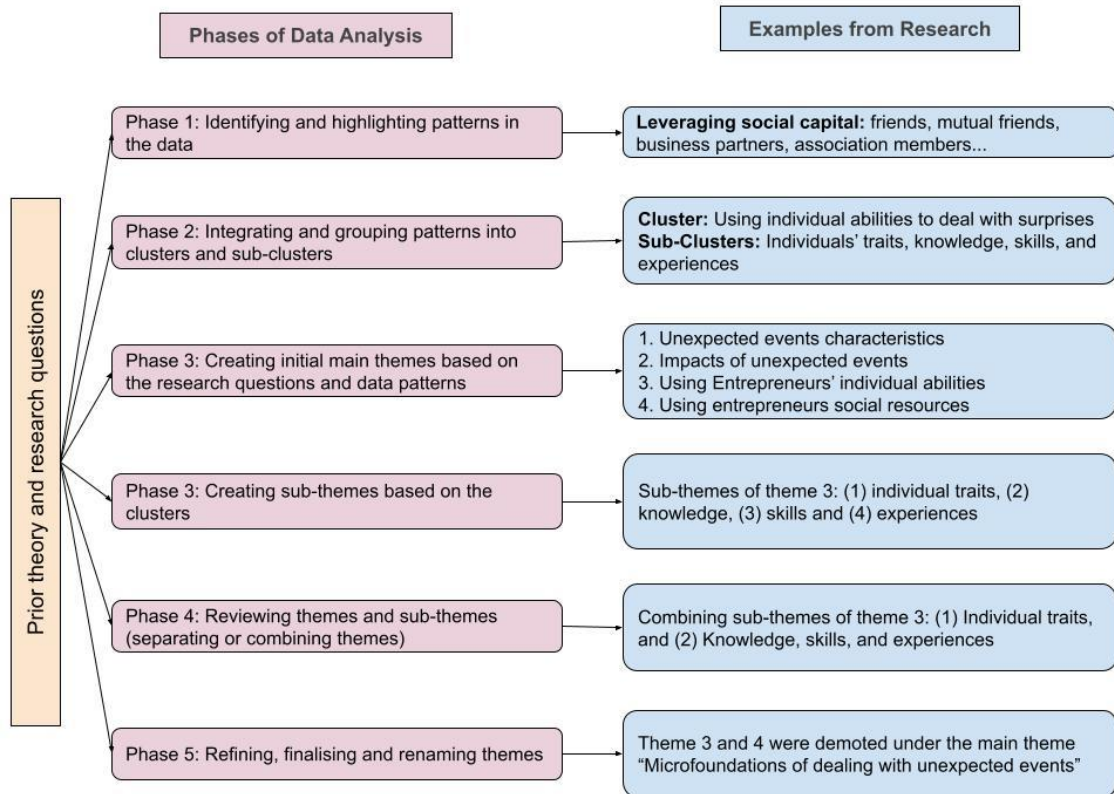


Figure 1: Diagram of data analysis

Lindsay, 1999). The remaining nine interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber, who was well aware of the participants' privacy protections and signed the confidentiality agreement (See Appendix F). For accuracy, the transcribing files done by the transcriber were checked against the audio files. As a bilingual researcher, I then translated the transcribing documents into English, which helped me to familiarise myself with the data.

The next step was to immerse myself in the data, which was a process of reading and re-reading the transcripts to become familiar with the breadth of the contents (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When a researcher embraces the data as containing something they would like to know more about, with repetitive readings, the vital information constantly sifts through their mind (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). While following this iterative process, I also took notes of ideas and drew patterns, which helped the process of coding and identifying key themes. It was crucial to start reflecting on the types of key themes for the report, which can be drawn from the interview questions and key information such as the processes, actions, people, behaviours or perceptions, as illustrated in Figure 1. After this step, I was ready to begin the second step of more formal coding.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

In this step, a set of initial patterns and ideas is created, as the researcher becomes more acquainted with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase, basic codes, which refer to interesting data features, can come from various sources such as the research questions, literature review, or patterns in the data. During this process, clusters of data or patterned sequences become sentimentally and concomitantly apparent to the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I first performed open coding manually by making notes and highlighting to identify codes on the transcribed hard copies. The codes were then entered into the NVivo software program for data matching and to develop future themes. In this step, it was essential to ensure that as many codes were generated as possible, and clusters and sub-clusters were also searched and identified (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To illustrate, when dealing with surprises some of the recurring patterns from entrepreneurs' responses were seeking help from friends, business partners, and association members, which were categorised under the "leveraging social capital" cluster and coded in NVivo accordingly.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

Phase three began after the process of data coding and collation. In this stage, fundamental and overarching themes were formed, while data and codes were grouped and put under those themes. Some codes were placed into the main themes, while others appeared in the sub-themes, and some were not related to any themes, and put in the "miscellaneous" theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For an example, initially four main themes were generated based on the research questions and prior literature, including unexpected events characteristics, impacts of unexpected events, using entrepreneurs' individual abilities and using entrepreneurs' social resources. Then, sub-themes were formed based on the data patterns linking to the main themes. For instance, individual traits, knowledge, skills and experiences were created as sub-themes of the "using entrepreneurs' individual abilities" theme.

During this process, I took breaks to give me time to reflect on the created codes and themes and look for possible relationships between them (Welsh, 2002). Wolcott (1994) encouraged memos writing, which is the practice of noting down emerging key concepts, reflective thoughts and insights from the analysis process, and provides the researcher with valuable insights for the write-up stage. Accordingly, reflections were made and

noted down throughout this process. For instance, during the coding process related to unexpected events, one memo was made and noted related to the patterns of sources of surprises, and the plans of categorising them, such as the surprises occurred from entrepreneurs' mistakes, and outside their control. The required next steps were also marked, including the areas needed further research.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

After some candidate themes were developed in the previous stage, reviews were needed for themes refinement. Themes that were too wide were separated into two themes, while some small themes were combined into one central theme. It is important to ensure data coherence in each theme and distinctions between different themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To achieve this, two major steps were taken; firstly, themes were reviewed at the data extract level. This was a process of making sure that data within a particular theme formed a meaningful pattern, and if not, data extracts were moved to a different theme, or the theme itself was refined. The second step was to compare the themes to the data set to ensure accuracy and valid relationships between them. After this phase, the researcher can recognise the distinctions, connections and the underlying story in the themes. For instance, after reviewing data and codes in each theme, the four sub-themes (entrepreneurs' individual traits, knowledge, skills and experiences) were found to be slightly small, resulting in the three highly related themes knowledge, skills and experience being combined.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

This phase was a further step of defining and refining themes continuing from the previous stage. It was also the beginning of writing a detailed analysis of each theme, focusing on its importance, interesting insights, and the reasons for these, in relation to the research objective or question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rowley, 2012). A further step of refinement was also taken, in which themes were reconsidered, in terms of whether they were still the main themes or should be reclassified as a sub-theme. To illustrate, after reading back and forth the codes, sub-themes, and themes with the consideration of existing literature and the research questions, two main themes (using entrepreneurs' individual abilities and using entrepreneurs' social resources) were demoted as sub-themes under the main theme "Microfoundations of dealing with unexpected events". After this, quotes from different interviewees were included to support the themes. The

names of each theme were also revised to be more concise and succinct (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rowley, 2012).

Phase 6: Producing the report

This final phase is the stage of analysing the findings and writing them up to form a report. The aim was to deliver a fair and valid description of the complex results from the data analysis. It was crucial to ensure the conciseness, coherence, and rationality of the data within and between the themes. This was achieved not just by including descriptions and supporting evidence, but also the analytic and critical aspects of the findings related to prior literature or research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rowley, 2012).

Reflection on the research process

During this research process, although clear activities plans and timeframe were made, some challenges occurred, including the data collecting and analysing processes. Regarding the data collection, it was conducted in Cambodia for about a month. Prior departure, I have already contacted some entrepreneurs in my close network circles and asked my friends and family to share the research advertisement. I have as well tried to contact the women entrepreneurs' associations such as Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association and SHEinvestment, but they could not be reached by email. As soon as I arrived, I contacted their office numbers, unfortunately, to obtain their members' contacts a formal administrative letter would be needed, and the process would be time-consuming due to the bureaucratic culture in Cambodia. As a consequence, I tried to reach out to more participants through my own and friends' networks. With their great helps and through the snowball sampling technique, I was able to have 12 entrepreneurs for the interview.

After making the appointments, interviews were conducted. During the interviews, I have learnt that rapport building was extremely significant in building trust and a comfortable environment for entrepreneurs. Additionally, the comprehensiveness of my research purposes and key terms' explanation such as surprises/unexpected events, strongly affected the quality of the participants' answers. As the concept of unexpected challenges is relatively new in Cambodia, it was challenging to detailly explain the participants the research purposes and questions, without limiting the possible responses. Notes were

taken as well during the interviews, mainly regarding participants' emotions such as nervousness and level of confidence.

The recordings were transcribed and translated into English, which helped me to get familiar with the data and be able to conceptualise similar patterns between participants. Then the data analysis began from coding on hard copies to transferring into NVivo programs. Sub-themes and overarching themes were identified and refining over and over again before finalising them. These processes were time-consuming and extremely challenging, as they involved reading and analysing words to words between the extract data, sub-themes and main themes back and forth. I also noticed that reflecting and referring to the literature was crucial throughout the data analysing process, as it offered insights into the themes' meanings and relations, which guided the findings interpretation. It was worth mentioning that the literature related to Cambodian women entrepreneurs was obscured, resulting in difficulties in trying to relate and interpret the data in the Cambodian business and cultural context. Nevertheless, the final overarching themes were finalised after reviewing and refining repeatedly to ensure they produce meaningful and coherent insights.

Ethics and Trustworthiness

Ethical Considerations

It is important to adhere to strong ethical principles, and conduct the research with responsibility and integrity. The main protection researchers need to offer to participants is avoiding harm to participants, by obtaining informed consent, and avoiding privacy violations and deception (Gray, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this research, in which the interview technique was applied, various steps were taken to ensure no harm or privacy issues occurred in relation to the participants.

- **Ethics approval:** Before commencing the data collection, an ethics application was submitted to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK). The ethics application was approved on 22 November 2019 with approval number 19/394 (Appendix A).
- **Recruiting participants:** The research advertisement (Appendix B), information sheet (Appendix C) and consent form (Appendix D) in both English and Khmer languages were sent to the potential participants to make sure they understood the

purpose of the research and their rights to join or withdraw from the research. The documents assisted their decision-making by providing all essential information and what the participants could expect from participating. Participants contacted the researcher once they decided to join the study, and were required to read and sign the consent form before the interview commenced.

- Interview process: Prior to the interview, the participants were reminded again about their privacy and confidentiality protections. They were free not to answer any of the questions if they did not feel comfortable to do so. Additionally, participants also had the chance to review their transcripts and delete specific parts or withdraw from the research in a set timeframe of the project. The voice recording started only after the participants had agreed to it.
- Participants' privacy and confidentiality: It is the researcher's responsibility to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondents. To ensure this, participants' personal information was not collected, except basic information about their enterprises and years of experience. Their information was kept confidential as the collected personal or organisational data were not disclosed, and pseudonyms replaced their names. Additionally, their data and responses were accessible to only the researcher, and stored in a secure area. After the data analysis was complete, the data were stored on the primary researcher's hard drive with a secure password for permanent deletion after six years.
- Researcher's safety: To ensure the researcher's safety during the data collection process, a research safety protocol was followed. Data collection was not conducted at the participants' homes or in unfamiliar places, but at the offices of participants by invitation, or in a café in Phnom Penh City. Furthermore, a support person was informed of the data collection activities and was aware prior to any meetings with participants.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or *rigour of research* refers to the extent of certainty which the data, interpretation, and methods can offer (Polit & Beck, 2014). The transparency of the ways research is conducted impacts the value and integrity of the research results (Cope, 2014). There is a variety of criteria for evaluating and developing qualitative research rigour, the most common of which are those introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility,

dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Thus, this research employed these criteria to assess and enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility has a key role in building research trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). *Credibility* describes the accuracy of data, participant perspectives, and how they were interpreted and presented (Polit & Beck, 2014). To ensure credibility, it is necessary that well-established research methods and triangulation of different data sources are employed (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the semi-structured interview technique and thematic analysis method, which are widely used approaches in qualitative research, were adopted (Gray, 2018). Triangulation of the selected informants was applied by differentiating the sectors women entrepreneurs were involved in, to verify their responses against each other.

Dependability refers to the state of being consistent with the data over a time period or study conditions (Polit & Beck, 2014). If the study replicates the findings of a study using similar participants and situations, dependability is assured (Cope, 2014). Dependability can also be assured by giving a detailed report of the research processes, resulting in other researchers being able to simulate the work in the future (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, this study has explained the research design and implementations such as its philosophical stances and steps of data collecting and analysing for the use of future researchers.

Confirmability is ensured when the research findings are made on the basis of participants' views and not on the researchers' ones (Polit & Beck, 2014). In this study, confirmability was demonstrated by providing an in-depth methodological illustration and thorough explanation of how the data interpretations and conclusions emerged. Quotes from participants' response were also used to demonstrate the developed themes in order to show the locations from where the findings emerged (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

Lastly, *transferability* is the degree to which other groups of participants or readers in a different setting can relate to the findings based on their own context and experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Giving a thick description is one way of enforcing research transferability. This study provided a detailed demonstration of the research context, procedures, participants and conditions, and offers the readers profound understandings, thus enabling them to associate with the research information (Creswell, 2007; Morrow, 2005).

Summary

The main research question of this study was “how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?” To address this question, three sub-questions were employed. This research adopted a qualitative methodology, as its paradigm follows interpretivism using a constructivist epistemology and relativist ontology. To collect the data, semi-structured interviews with 12 Cambodian women entrepreneurs were conducted. The samples were selected through the purposive sampling technique to enable the researcher to choose samples based on their potential to offer quality data addressing the research problem (Silverman, 2014). The snowball sampling and recruitment method was also adopted to identify other potential participants through existing participants (Gray, 2018; Patton, 1990). The interview process was conducted with consideration to the participants’ feelings and rights to privacy. The obtained data were then transcribed and translated before analysing with the NVivo program, following the thematic approach. Lastly, this research was conducted with careful ethical considerations of the participants’ rights and privacy protection, and the four criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were applied to ensure research trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Findings

The rationale for conducting this research study was to explore the experiences of Cambodian women entrepreneurs to address the research question of this study, “how do women entrepreneurs in Cambodia individually respond to unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys?” The study adopted a qualitative methodology by carrying out semi-structured interviews with 12 Cambodian female entrepreneurs, and interview data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. This chapter is presented in three main sections based on the main themes generated from the data analysis: the characteristics of unexpected events, the impacts of unexpected events, and the microfoundations of dealing with unexpected events.

Characteristics of Unexpected Events

Unexpected events or surprises are events that occur unexpectedly, and their timeframe, circumstances (Baiocchi, 2014), process and outcomes are unpredictable (Schneider et al., 1998). This study revealed that the underlying causes of surprises were from within or outside the organisations, or a combination of both, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Entrepreneurs’ Sources of Surprises

Sources of Surprises	Sub-categories	Number of Participants
Internal	Insufficient Abilities: Lack of knowledge and experience	3
	Inadequate management systems	3
External	Organisational level: Stakeholder related	3
	Country Level: Political and economic related	2
Combination of both	Insufficient abilities and stakeholders related	1

Surprises from within the Organisation

Insufficient abilities of entrepreneurs and inadequate management systems in the organisation lead to the failure of recognising surprises or responding to them (Ford, 1981; McDaniel et al., 2003).

Data in this study showed that surprises were associated with newness to a business, inadequate knowledge and experience of entrepreneurs related to the business process

limits on their abilities to foresee future problems or consequences of their decisions. Chhoukroth, a novice entrepreneur who ran an online fashion and cosmetics company mainly operated from a Facebook page, described the unexpected challenges she faced.

Selling clothes is seasonal; at first I did not know about this, I only knew how to sell. Later, I realised Cambodians buy clothes according to seasons and celebrations. When I did not update my products, the sales slowed down, and then we got stuck with [no] money.

Two months ago, due to the lack of my knowledge of technology and social media, I lost my business Facebook page¹. We had gained a lot of customers already, but I did not know since when they hacked and stole my page. (Chhoukroth)

Chantou mentioned the consequences of her lack of technical understandings when constructing her restaurant. She did not expect a problem until the day the sewage system was suddenly blocked, and her kitchen needed to be closed.

When we built the sewage system at our restaurant kitchen, we did not do it well, or according to the standard. We did not know they need the grease trap before the wastewater flowing to the sewer, in order to prevent the oil from getting stuck in the sewer pipe. (Chanthou)

Insufficient market knowledge also could stimulate unexpected problems for entrepreneurs, as they can misinterpret the customers' and markets' demand, which to them are unpredictable due to the false information they perceive. Nounsrey, who owned a furniture store, explained her business surprise:

When I first started the business, I ordered the wrong products, which cost me about USD50,000. The products were beautiful with high quality. However, in the Cambodian market, there was no demand for it, since we are competing with online businesses, where customers purchase products based on the pictures. I was shocked; I did not expect that customers still believed in pictures, and not consider quality. (Nounsrey)

It is also worth mentioning that robust management systems are essential for preventing a venture from unexpected events. For example, a system that manages human resources

¹ The numbers of Facebook users in Cambodia has climbed sharply in the past few years. By September 2020, there were more than 11 million Facebook users, which is almost 66.7% of the country's population (NapoleonCat, 2020). Over the years, businesses have used Facebook as their customer channels to promote and sell their products through Facebook posts and live videos. The top three business pages have on average three million fans each, with an average of 2300 fans growth per day (Socialbakers, 2020).

and promotes their interactions, enables communication of information and knowledge between organisational members. Thus, a less robust or (in the worst case) absence of organisational systems makes a business vulnerable to surprises. A few women entrepreneurs mentioned that challenges happened unexpectedly related to their employees, which affected their business processes. This could be because most of their businesses were small or medium sized, in which systems to manage human resources are generally basic and traditional. Kesorkol explained the surprise caused by her manager, who was mainly responsible for her business operation.

We depended on a manager to set up the human resource system. We did not have any connections with the staff. He hired employees for us, from the kitchen to the services. Later, his personal life affected our business...the manager always went out and became careless in managing our business. [...] When he resigned, he brought most of the staff with him. (Kesorkol)

Due to the absence of a comprehensive organisational system, unexpected resignations of staff disrupted business processes. Nakri described a sudden departure of her staff member:

We already had a shortage of teachers. One teacher who was responsible for three classes suddenly needed to leave, due to family issues. When she suddenly resigned, everyone had to run. (Nakri)

Overall, the internal sources of surprise arose from the insufficiency of entrepreneurs' abilities in business operation, and management system, especially the human resources management, which prevented entrepreneurs from foreseeing and preparing for surprises.

Surprises from Outside the Organisation

Challenges from the external environment could have a small context or be at the organisational level such as changes from partners, agents, or customers (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009; Piperca & Floricel, 2012), or in a broad context which could be at the country level, such as are political, economic or natural phenomena (Ford, 1981).

Participants mentioned unexpected events arising from the circumstances of stakeholders such as suppliers, contractors and partners. In most cases, they had little control over their stakeholders' decisions and operational processes. If a stakeholder made changes in decisions or operations, it resulted in unexpected consequences impacting the entrepreneurs' businesses. For instance, Mealdei, who owned a souvenir shop, said she

had had her business planned for seven years, but the sudden decision of the property owner caused her to move location.

We had a very clear plan of renting. Our rental contract was for seven years, but all of a sudden, the house owner decided to sell the house and gave us a three-month notice. Even though they compensated us, we needed to move and redecorate the new store, plus we had spent a lot on decorating the old place. It was very unexpected. (Mealadei)

Similarly, Malis, who owned an installation company, illustrated the surprises she encountered, which were usually from business partners such as suppliers and transport agents.

Some work was unpredictable. For example, we planned to finish the work in four months, but our supplier partners were late, so it delayed the work. [...] There was also once when the glass materials were transported from Vietnam, but when they changed the truck, which was not suitable for transporting glass, all the glass got broken. (Malis)

At a national level, the Cambodian women entrepreneurs also faced unexpected events from political and economic changes in the country. In a politically unstable country such as Cambodia², political news and rumours affect the country's economic activities, which impact the markets of the businesses, especially small ones. Kolab, who had a restaurant and café in a property development area, explained how political situations affected her business and how she had no power to anticipate them.

Our challenge is that our customers changed according to the political and economic development of Cambodia. When the economy was good, and property sales went well, many people were coming around here. And recently, after rumours of the return of the opposition party leader, everything became quiet...it was tough for these kinds of political and economic problems since we are at the grassroots level; we did not have any prior information. (Kolab)

Krovan, who managed a souvenir shop in a tourist hub of the city complained that when the government shifted its focus to attract more Chinese tourists, the numbers of Western

² Human rights in Cambodia have long been ignored. In 2019, there was an increase in the number of political prisoners, as well as the arresting of the opposition party leaders, leading them to be in home detention or seek asylum in another country (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

tourists, who were her target customers, decreased dramatically³. These policy changes caused surprises, as they were often made without informing small businesses like hers.

We had our sale targets which were set at a certain amount on a monthly or annual basis. However, this year, the European tourists suddenly dropped.[...] There was nothing I could do; I could not go to tell our government to stop the Chinese tourists and only attract the European tourists. (Krovan)

While the literature focuses on identifying the sources of unexpected events either from within an organisation or outside it (Ford, 1981; McDaniel et al., 2003; Piperca & Floricel, 2012), studies have neglected the possibilities of events emerging from both sources concurrently. The unanticipated characteristic of surprises in this study, was that of surprises that arose from the combination of inadequate management skills and changes in the external environment.

For Champei (a sanitary products company owner), the unexpected event she encountered was due to both her inability to anticipate problems as well as the changes in customers' perceptions and behaviours. She described her surprise challenges as follows:

In our sanitary pads, we use super absorbent polymers (SAP), but people did not know the benefits of high liquid absorbency and irritation reduction and thought they were jelly and somehow could cause cancer. SAP is the most expensive part, but necessary for producing thin sanitary pads.[...] This was very unexpected because I did not think that our people would still not understand this basic health concept. [...] This rumour suddenly went viral on social media, causing our products to be rejected all over the country. (Champeï)

On balance, the characteristics of external surprises are factors beyond control of the entrepreneurs such as their suppliers, partners, and customers. Entrepreneurs mostly had limited or sometimes absolutely no control on the external factors, for example, political and economic shifts. The unexpected event could also be from the combinations of the internal and external circumstances. These events had severe impacts on the entrepreneurs' well-being and their businesses operations.

³ Based on the reports of the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism, in the first nine months of 2019, Cambodia received approximately 1.8 million Chinese tourists, a 29% increase on the previous year. In 2018, Chinese tourist numbers rose to 67% higher than that of the previous year, while the tourists from the UK dropped to -5.1% (Ministry of Tourism, 2019).

Impacts of Unexpected Events

To be taken by surprise, individuals must be hit by a sudden event not previously anticipated, impacting their psychological and emotional well-being, also their business profitability (Cunha et al., 2006; Doern, 2016). This section describes the impacts of unexpected events on both Cambodian female entrepreneurs and their business, to illustrate this.

Impacts on Business

Unexpected challenges have adverse effects on a business, such as on its operational processes, reputation, and financial performance. For operations, surprises cause disruption, delays, and pause business growth until the situations are improved. For instance, the unexpected challenge of a human resource system impacted Kesorkol's restaurant and café operating process. She elaborated on this as follows:

That time our business was not growing, we had an argument with our manager. We told the employees to do this, but the manager said “no.” The staff were caught in the middle and not sure who to follow. [...] Our operation got stuck, as we had internal conflicts. (Kesorkol)

Similarly, Nakri talked about how the sudden resignation of her staff member affected her school processes and other staff.

We combined two teaching classes into one, but the teachers started to complain about their workload and wanted to resign as well. They could not handle it anymore, but we had no better options. (Nakri)

In addition to the impacts on business processes, unexpected events also tarnish a venture's reputation and company branding. As Chhoukroth's business industry was fashion, unexpected problems severely impacted her business branding process.

It impacted our branding process. It made our brand unpopular because people thought we only have the same styles. Even in posts on social media, we need to update them too, in order to show a variety of products for our customers. (Chhoukroth)

Champey's products were defamed with a cancer rumour, which completely ruined her company's image, causing her products to be rejected by the market.

Oh dear, throughout the country, when our products reached the market, they pushed them back to us, and the money they owed us, they refused to

return as well. [...] After 10 days of the news, our staff started to panic. Can you imagine that all our products in the market were sent back to us? However, we needed to accept it to avoid causing any conflicts. (Champeï)

The business's processes interruption and reputation loss inevitably brought financial losses. The surprise events cost the entrepreneurs money and time immediately, or later, in the process of dealing with them. In the following examples, Malis and Mealadei offered brief explanations of how unexpected problems caused them financial losses.

We lost our profit and time. We got a penalty because in our contract with the customers, there is an article saying they will fine us for late construction completion. For example, they would multiply it by a certain percentage each day. (Malis)

First of all, in the packing and moving process, 50% of our inventory, such as fabric, was damaged. Secondly, when we stored them at the new place, the construction and decoration also ruined our products. Thirdly, when we suddenly went to a new store, our sale revenues dropped, but we still needed to fully pay our staff, because we could not terminate them for three months. These were all unpredictable. (Mealadei)

In general, it was expected that surprises cause financial difficulties for businesses. It is confirmed in the findings that unexpected challenges not only impacted the business's financial state, but also its operational processes, and reputations.

Impacts on Entrepreneurs

As Cunha et al. (2006) stated, when taken by surprise, especially by unfavourable surprises, individuals experience feelings of wonder, shock, astonishment, and discomfort. From the participants' interviews, we found that not only did the unexpected challenges affect their feelings and mental well-being, but also the process of addressing those challenges. Then, mental unwellness consequently had negative influences on entrepreneurs' physical well-being.

All the female entrepreneurs experienced stress when facing unexpected issues. However, the extent to which they were suffering from it varied. For example, in Kolab's case, the unpredicted issue undoubtedly made her unhappy and stressed, but it was manageable.

It had impacts on my feelings, but it did not make me depressed or lose hope that I could think of solutions. I was just upset, but at the same time, I also was looking for strategies to attract our customers. We did not stress too much over it. (Kolab)

For Chompa, a surprise event had strong negative effects on her feelings and confidence.

Yes, it affected me quite strongly. As I was young too, it made me scared to deal with people after this. I was afraid of being good with people, as doing so somehow built my expectations to receive it too. It caused me stress, overthinking, upsets and I questioned myself about what I did wrong to deserve it and eventually lost my self-confidence. (Chompa)

Some participants encountered feelings of depression, anxiety, panic attacks, discouragement, tiredness, and mood swings. Kesorkol and Champei shared their experiences as described here:

As a result, I was very stressed. I could not sleep and didn't have time to sleep. I almost slept at the restaurant if I could. [...] I was unwell mentally. That was when I knew people suffer from depression because they are shocked by problems and do not have the ability to solve them, so we become stressed and depressed. I also became aggressive, after when I was shocked by the sudden problem. I was very aggressive, and anyone who got in my way, had to leave. All the staff were scared of me when they saw me. (Kesorkol)

I was frightened. I did not want to face the problem. I did not want to pick up my phone calls. When the phone rang, I got fearful, and my body was trembling. [...] It hit me very hard, that my brain was always running, my arms and legs were shaking, and I couldn't control myself. (Champei)

When encountering mental problems such as stress, overthinking, depression, or anxiety, participants also experienced sleeplessness, changes to their diet, and fatigue. For instance, Nakri said that instead of being like those people who lose their appetite under to stress, she, in contrast, tended to eat more.

When the problems suddenly came all together, it did not cause me to lose my appetite, but increased it. [...] I ate double or triple my usual portion, and yet still felt hungry. I also drank more coffee up, to three or four times a day, then I could not sleep at night. (Nakri)

Chanthou added that in the event of a problem like this, she experienced restlessness, despite being extremely fatigued.

My brain kept telling me there was still a lot more work to be done, I could not rest yet. Even though I was very tired, I still could not close my eyes. (Chanthou)

In overall, when surprises affected the business, they also impacted the entrepreneurs, causing them negative feelings such as stress, depression, anxiety, discouragement, and mood swings, which, in turn, influenced their physical well-being, including sleeplessness, changes to their diet, fatigue and restlessness.

Microfoundations of Dealing with Unexpected Events

This study investigates the microfoundations of Cambodian women entrepreneurs dealing with unexpected challenges in their entrepreneurial journey, by examining the factors influencing their decisions and behaviours. The data suggest that in order to respond to these surprise events, the entrepreneurs employed various strategies, seeking and exploiting the available resources within themselves, their firms, and their networks. The following sections describe in detail, the cognitive framework of dealing with unexpected events, the entrepreneurs' abilities, and their social capital contributing to solving unpredicted problems. The analysis using this micro-process approach is also used to generate theory in relation to how women entrepreneurs respond to unexpected events and surprises.

Cognitive Framework of Dealing with Unexpected Events

The overarching pattern emerging from the data analysis across all 12 cases, is labelled "Effectuation of dealing with unexpected events." This pattern illustrates the cognitive process of Cambodian women entrepreneurs seeking for solutions and means, and the components influencing their choices when responding to the surprises, and modelled on the effectuation framework depicted in Figure 1. In Sarasvathy (2001) effectuation decision-making process, entrepreneurs applied four main steps in dealing with uncertainty: (1) start with means by asking themselves "who am I?" "what do I know?" and "who do I know?" (2) apply affordable loss rather than expected return, (3) leverage relationships instead of competition, and (4) embrace and exploit contingencies.

In the process of dealing with unpredicted problems, participants analysed the problems, searched for resolutions, and evaluated the most efficient and effective ones, through their knowledge, skills, and the resources gathered from their social capital. It was at this stage, when the effectuation developed, as presented in Figure 2 and Table 4, that the entrepreneurs started cultivating their readily available resources both within themselves and through their social relationships. The facts of who they were, the knowledge and skills they had acquired, and the people they knew, had an enormous impact on their behaviours and decisions. To illustrate, Nounsrey mentioned that the measures she took to respond to surprises needed to follow her work principles, which were being ethical and truthful to her customers, as presented in Table 5.

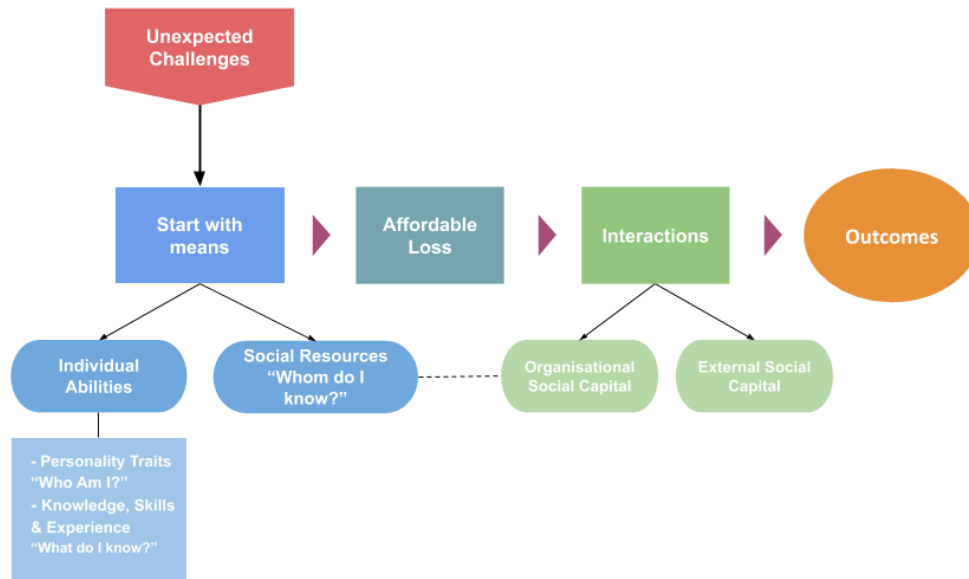


Figure 2: Effectuation of Dealing with Unexpected Events

Secondly, entrepreneurs sought for the resources they possessed, such as their knowledge and skills, and made use of them in the process of dealing with their problems, as evidenced in Chhoukroth’s description of the importance of her sales skills. Thirdly, participants also explored the resources within and outside their organisations, which were beneficial in contributing to solutions, usually as a substitute for their knowledge or skills deficiency. In Malis’s case, when a technical problem prevented her project from finishing on time, she had to exploit her employees’ abilities to deal with customers, as her technical knowledge was inadequate. This stage is highly relevant to the third step of the effectuation process, “strategic alliance,” meaning entrepreneurs prefer to build strong relationships with their stakeholders to improve their business, rather than competing with them. For example, Nakri and Chompa elaborated on the significant roles of their networks, which they had established to help them cope with surprises, by providing support and advice.

After taking advantages of the available means, ten of the 12 entrepreneurs employed the strategy of “affordable loss,” which basically refers to conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis of their options in terms of the financial and human resources, and time required for the proposed measures. The distinctive feature of this behaviour, was the entrepreneurs’ willingness to lose in worst-case scenarios, rather than visioning future returns or profits from their decisions. For instance, Malis and Romdul explained that the

Table 4: Effectuation Behaviours of Entrepreneurs when Dealing with Unexpected Events

Effectuation Behaviours	Champeï	Chanthou	Chhoukroth	Chompa	Kesorkol	Kolab	Krovan	Malis	Mealadei	Nakri	Nounsrey	Romdul
Starting with means: “Who am I?” “what do I know?” and “who do I know to uncover resources?”	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Affordable loss: Evaluating and setting a limit of damage costs in case of failures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leveraging strategic relationships: Building partnerships rather than doing systematic competitive analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓
Exploiting contingencies: Embracing unexpected events and turning them into profitable opportunities / building business strengths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5: Summary of Entrepreneurs' Effectuation Behaviours

Stage	Supporting Quotes
Start with means	<p>Nounsrey: <i>I think what made my team and customers believe in me the most is that I have strong business ethics. I never lie to our customers, which is also our workplace ethic for our staff to follow. We focus on quality.</i></p> <p>Chhoukroth: <i>Regarding skills, you can say that I have great sales skills. I can sell my products without giving them the feeling that I am selling my products. I observed that some business owners frankly promoted their products, and their behaviours showed their desire to get their products sold.</i></p> <p>Malis: <i>Honestly, I do not have much construction and technical knowledge. When we had technical problems, we depended on our technical team to explain things to the customers. As the management, we had the roles of facilitating and ensuring smooth communication for our employees.</i></p>
Affordable loss	<p>Malis: <i>If our negotiation did not go well, we needed to add extra benefits for them, because we were late finishing the project. For instance, an extra cleaning service, which we could afford and not spend too much. Yes, that was to avoid large compensation.</i></p> <p>Romdul: <i>First, we needed to stay calm, then started to think of possible solutions. [...] What are the options like 1, 2, 3 and so on. Then we chose what was the best option and had the least negative impacts. Some solutions might cost too much money, human resources, or time. So, we chose the one that was cost-effective, and quick, because taking too long would expand the problem.</i></p>
Strategic alliance	<p>Nakri: <i>We looked at the problems and thought about how to solve them. Sometimes, I checked through my phone to see if there were any friends or teachers I could ask for help.</i></p> <p>Chompa: <i>I have some entrepreneur friends, who were senior in running the business. I shared my problems and discussed with them. They gave me comfort and suggestions.</i></p>
Exploiting contingencies	<p>Champey: <i>I did not use anger against people because Cambodian people value relationships. [...] My policy is to gracefully respond to the people and problems. All I knew is that problems would happen, so I had to solve them, and turn them into opportunities. Every time I faced problems, I always converted them into opportunities, through my choices of actions and responses.</i></p> <p>Kolab: <i>With this type of political and economic problem, they happen all of sudden. However, we still could manage and adjust ourselves to them. We could instantly change our target customers and business plan. We changed to focus on students, families, or people who work and come to work around our area.</i></p>

solutions offered to their stakeholders were based on the least negative impacts they had on their businesses.

Finally, the women embraced the unexpected events, untangled them, and took advantages of them by turning them into profitable opportunities and increasing their business strengths. Instead of predicting the unpredictable outcomes of surprises, the entrepreneurs focused on the resources they had acquired, and took control of the events, which led them to discovering new business opportunities or features to strategically advance their business performance. In Kolab's case, the unexpected challenges shifted her target customers into different groups, which increased her business demands. However, the stages of this procedure are not explicit, as shown in Figure 1 as there was iteration and moving back and forth between stages.

As illustrated in Table 4, the majority of female entrepreneurs exhibited effectuation behaviours in the process of coping with the unpredicted challenges. Nevertheless, there were a few cases for which the data did not demonstrate whether the entrepreneurs adopted the practices, such as in the *affordable loss* strategy. Noticing the crucial importance of entrepreneurs' individual abilities and their social resources, contributed to solving unexpected problems. The following sections describe how the entrepreneurs were practically involved in the process.

Entrepreneurs' Individual Abilities

As briefly explained in Chapter 2, entrepreneurs' internal abilities such as their traits, knowledge, skills, and experience, influenced their decision-making process (Baum & Locke, 2004; Chell, 2013; Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Leonelli et al., 2019; Robinson & Sexton, 1994; Unger et al., 2011). The personality types, and fields of knowledge and experiences of the women had resulted in the identification of distinct characteristics in the actions they took to respond to unexpected events effectively, and in a timely manner. In this section, we examine what drives the decisions of entrepreneurs through examining their individual abilities.

Individual Traits

From the interview data, it was found that personality traits influenced the Cambodian entrepreneurs' decisions on solutions to cope with unexpected challenges. Individual

traits such as tolerance to ambiguity, resilience, risk-taking, need for achievement, and perseverance, were found to be positively related to solving unexpected problems.

The entrepreneurs demonstrated remarkable tolerance of ambiguity, exhibiting great flexibility and readiness for changes. Nounsrey described her attitudes when dealing with an unexpected challenge as follows:

My principles are to take feedback, and always be ready for change, and be flexible all the time. [...] We used this strategy. We did not only choose one option, but we tried everything, taking the ones that worked and changing the ones that did not. We worked fast, responding quickly to the situations. (Nounsrey)

Moreover, resiliency and perseverance were pointed out by the female entrepreneurs as crucial mechanisms that pushed them forward to confront the issues, by overcoming their fear and being prepared for uncertain results. Chompa talked about how resiliency helped her to continue with her venture.

I had to stay strong, telling myself it was going to be okay, and I would solve the problem. It was due to my strong resiliency, because at that time it felt like they kicked us out of the way. [...] I told myself it was important to be positive, stay strong and keep doing this when facing the problem. It could be difficult, and there were no good results yet, but if I did not do it, it would not improve, and I would get scared. (Chompa)

Furthermore, participants revealed that their high need for achievement and their risk-taking personalities influenced their chosen actions to respond to surprises. With a high need for achievement, entrepreneurs strived to succeed in solving problems by employing all available means, even if they were risky. Risk-taking is a trait that involves bravery in investing resources for unclear returns. Chhoukroth and Kesorkol explained that despite the possible consequences of their chosen measures, they were prepared to embrace them.

For me, I did not sit and be upset about it, but I started to look for someone who could help me. All I knew was all my efforts in these three years, so why quit now? [...] I instantly decided to buy a new page. I did not care where they got it from, the most important thing was to have a Facebook page for my sales channel. You can say I was parachuting (i.e. taking risks). (Chhoukroth)

Related to this problem, what made me go through it was my internal motivation. I run this cafe, not for the money but confidence. [...] I decided to fire the manager. I already made up my mind. Although I had to close down my place, I would not let someone threaten me. You could say it is my natural trait. (Kesorkol)

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Knowledge, skills, and experience, are interrelated components. Knowledge and skills can be gathered and developed from education, exchanged information, and experience. The participants' responses showed the profound significance of knowledge, skills, and experiences in the ways the Cambodian women entrepreneurs confronted unexpected problems. Nevertheless, the sources whereby they obtained knowledge could not be clearly identified in the data. Only three participants mentioned the use of knowledge from formal education. For example, with a master's degree in education, and knowledge of the Mandarin language, Nakri was able to take part in teaching and fill the vacant positions at her school.

Education is important. Because I studied Mandarin, I was able to teach the class. [...] It was all of a sudden. ... I was teaching, and at the same time, being the receptionist. (Nakri)

Similarly, Kesorkol pointed out the benefits of language study on her abilities to acquire extra information about her business issues.

Education helped me a lot. If I did not know English, I would not have known how to search for my restaurant's problems on the internet. For example, I could read about the restaurant red flags, analyse my situations, and how to improve them. That was how the language helped me. (Kesorkol)

Champeï revealed that her knowledge of her products, marketing, and management, was self-taught. These types of knowledge contributed to the strategies she employed to manage surprises.

We studied our inputs before producing a product. Every year, there were updates in pads-producing technology. So, we had to study everything, we visited factories, learning about their materials, and productions. [...] I educated myself in marketing through a marketing book. I also learnt from movies, as I selected those that were related to management. (Champeï)

In terms of skills, most participants stressed the importance of interpersonal skills such as communication, networking, and negotiation. Facing problems naturally involves a business's stakeholders such as customers, partners, agents, or suppliers. Thus, interpersonal skills are critical for working together to find effective solutions for all parties. Malis and Romdul described how communication and negotiation played vital roles in managing their unpredicted challenges:

When we faced an unexpected problem like that, we needed to negotiate. [...] It was a part of our mistake, so we needed the communication skill to discuss and cooperate with them to minimise the impacts. (Malis)

Firstly, we negotiated with them for the step-by-step payments. [...] Suppliers are important people, so we needed to build a good relationship with them. [...] Because of our good relationship, we could negotiate the payment process. (Romdul)

Experience that the entrepreneurs had acquired previously, generated knowledge that was beneficial for their future entrepreneurial paths. For example, Mealadei said that her previous experience of relocating her store provided knowledge of how to manage the unpredicted relocation with the minimal possible damage.

The previous experience helped us in the process for about 90%. It was not the first time we moved the store, just previously we had the plan and time. Since this was unexpected with less time, we knew we would have some loss, but we could still manage it. (Mealadei)

In a similar way, Kesorkol mentioned how the experience of growing up in a business family helped her go through a difficult time when facing surprises.

Yes, the experience did contribute to the solution. I am thankful for the experiences I got, growing up in a business family. [...] Hard work is not a problem for me. [...] I am also not shy of doing any type of work as long as it is the right things. (Kesorkol)

On balance, personality traits, knowledge, skills, and experience of entrepreneurs influenced their behaviours and decisions towards unexpected events. Tolerance to ambiguity, resilience, risk-taking, need for achievement positively contribute to responding to surprises. Entrepreneurs with these traits are perseverant, flexible, brave to overcome their fear and uncertainties, which enabled them to successfully cope with surprises. Entrepreneurial knowledge, interpersonal skills, such as communication, networking, and negotiation, and business-related experiences allowed female entrepreneurs to search for strategies, evaluated them to minimise the impacts and resources needed.

Entrepreneurs' Social Resources

Acquaah (2007) suggested that there are two main categories of firm social resources: internal and external social capital. *Internal social capital* refers to organisational capital, such as its human resources, structures, and networks. *External social capital* is built from

the formal and informal networks outside an organisation. From the interview analysis, it was evident that the Cambodian women entrepreneurs used their social resources extensively, especially their social capital, which is overviewed in the following section.

Organisational Social Capital

In a venture, each employee has a package of knowledge, skills, experience, and networks beneficial for dealing with unexpected events. Participants revealed that when facing surprises, their teams played crucial roles in the process of searching for solutions and acting on these. Kolab explained how her teams from different departments came together, using their knowledge, skills, and information they had gathered, to make strategic plans to overcome the difficult situations caused by surprises.

When the numbers of our customers started to drop, our teams, including the drinks, food and service teams, they had meetings to make improvement plans. [...] They analysed our weaknesses, the problems they faced, and how to fix them. [...] Our chefs discussed ways to update a new menu to attract more customers. We always had meetings to look for solutions. (Kolab)

Mealadei mentioned the contributions of her staff's intelligence, labour, and motivation to solve a problem.

I called for a staff meeting, putting our problem on the table, and asking for their contributions because I, of course, could not move the store alone. [...] They are very intelligent, in here we did not only depend on my opinion. They also have a role the same as the business owner, which is to make the business run. (Mealadei)

Chanthou also pointed out the advantages of leveraging from her employee's social networks.

Firstly, I discussed with my staff and let them find solutions through their contacts. (Chanthou)

External Social Capital

One of the most significant findings of this study is the vital importance of entrepreneurs' social capital in responding to unexpected events. All participated female entrepreneurs heavily exploiting their social capital both professional networks and informal networks such as friends and family to seek for support in terms of information, financial, capital, and emotional.

Informal Networks

Participants explained that when facing surprises, their family and friends were valuable sources of capital, who provided them with labour, financial, emotional, and instrumental support, without fees or interest charges.

Unexpected problems arrived without notice and affected their firms' financial performance. At this critical stage, the entrepreneurs needed instant financial resources to improve their circumstances. Romdul described this situation as follows:

I have my family who was my backup. When we got the problem with our cash flow, we needed to immediately pay our suppliers. So, we borrowed the money for a short period from my family. They supported me, and we just had to pay them back. (Romdul)

Families supported entrepreneurs by offering paid and unpaid labour. For instance, when facing a serious shortage of staff, Kesorkol primarily depended on her family and relatives to help by working at her café.

I gathered everyone from my family and relatives; my parents, parents-in-law, siblings, aunts, and uncles, to help. We had only four staff left, and we put them working at the front of house. Then the rest of us worked as baristas, cashiers, cooks, and cleaners. (Kesorkol)

Moreover, when unexpected challenges occurred, entrepreneurs' feelings were impacted, causing them to feel lost and get stuck when seeking appropriate solutions. As a result, their family members gave them emotional and instrumental support, such as encouragement, ideas, and advice. Nounsrey and Champei talked about the times when their families helped them through catastrophes.

My mother is like my shareholder. We, two women, managed the store. She is very clever, especially in relocating our resources. We combined our ideas together, my modern ideas and her traditional business experiences. (Nounsrey)

When the challenge hit me hard, I could not even eat, but my family supported me. My husband held my hand and told me if today I faced this problem and could not continue, what if in the future there would be more of it? How was I supposed to achieve my big dreams? He encouraged me to look at my life plan and goals. It gave me the energy to keep going. (Champeï)

Professional Networks

Park and Luo (2001) introduced the concept of *guanxi*, which is a system of creating networks with organisational stakeholders, other firms' management teams, and government officers, bringing scarce information and resources. *Guanxi* is not only in China, but also in other Asian countries influenced by the Chinese philosophy, such as Cambodia. In this study, 75% of participants identified as Cambodian-Chinese, and 50% were born and grew up in a family business environment.

The results suggest that the *guanxi* network is a strong influence on Cambodian business culture, and the ways in which entrepreneurs use the culture to deal with problems. All participants acknowledged the necessity of networks for their business, particularly when facing surprises. Krovan and Chanthou mentioned that their fellow entrepreneurs took part in searching for solutions, developing their products and strategic plans by exchanging their skills, knowledge, and information.

I have a business partner in Australia who is also a designer, so I worked together with them to create new designs. [...] We also worked on my business strategic plan, since I was facing difficulties, to step ahead, and improve the shop in the future. (Krovan)

Networks are very important when we start our business, they help us a lot. [...] For example, when I faced my problem, firstly, I contacted my close friends, and the store next door, then they referred me to their friends who had faced a similar issue. There are so many business networks nowadays in Cambodia...I am trying to join them to know more people. (Chanthou)

Chhoukroth revealed that her networks gave her valuable information to help her get a new customer channel, which was essential for her business's survival.

I asked myself what the root causes of the problem are, and where I could go to seek help, meaning first, we needed to look for the connections. [...] For example, at the time I lost my Facebook Page, it was difficult to look for a seller, and it was done secretly. I asked for help from a professional and made them a witness in the buying contract. (Chhoukroth)

Romdul talked about the value of all her business stakeholders, stressing their contributions to solving her problems and her business growth.

Our customers, suppliers, or any stakeholders are important to us. For example, suppliers are beneficial to us. When we have a good relationship with them, they give us the best service. Or the tour guides, when we are close to them, they take

extra care of our customers. Or with the payment, when we have good credit, we can negotiate for some more time. (Romdul)

No participants mentioned using networks with government officers, local authorities or important figures, when dealing with surprises. However, the significance of these types of networks was acknowledged as part of the general business operating process.

Overall, social resources, including organisational capital and external capital from both informal and professional networks supported entrepreneurs when dealing with unexpected events. Organisational members together actively used their intelligence, knowledge, and resources to search for solutions and take actions on surprises. Entrepreneurs also sought for external resources such as labour, finance, and emotional support from their family members and spouses, while professional or *guanxi* networks with other entrepreneurs and business stakeholders enabled them to acquire the lacked information, and resources in order to cope with surprises.

Summary

Three main themes emerged from the data analysis process of the 12 entrepreneurs' interviews: the characteristics of unexpected events, their impacts on entrepreneurs and their businesses, and the microfoundations of dealing with unexpected challenges. It was found that the sources of surprises were from within the organisations, such as newness to the business, inadequate knowledge and inexperience of the entrepreneurs, and a lack of management systems in the organisations. Unpredicted problems also arose from outside the businesses; for the organisational level: a lack of control on their stakeholders, and for a national level: political or economic changes. In some cases, surprises emerged from a combination of both sources. Secondly, the unexpected challenges were detrimental to the organisations as well as to the entrepreneurs themselves. They disrupted business operations and damaged the business reputations and finances, which affected entrepreneurs' mental well-being, eventually impacting on their physical health. Finally, the analysis identified a framework of entrepreneurs dealing with surprises by employing effectuation decision-making process. Individual abilities such as traits, knowledge, skills, and experiences, influenced entrepreneurs' behaviours when responding to challenges. Additionally, leveraging resources through social capital from employees, family, and professional and *guanxi* networks were found to be essential when

dealing with unexpected events. The next chapter discusses these findings in detail in comparison to findings of previous studies reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to examine the microfoundations of how Cambodian women entrepreneurs manage unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journey. In the previous chapter, three main themes were presented which were the results of the data analysis of 12 interviews with the entrepreneurs, and include the characteristics of unexpected events, their impacts on entrepreneurs and their business, and the microfoundations of dealing with unexpected challenges. This chapter discusses these three key themes by comparing them with research described in Chapter 2. This chapter first discusses the findings, their similarities, differences, and contributions to existing literature, then illustrates the theoretical and practical implications of the research. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and general conclusions.

Characteristics of Unexpected Events

The findings suggest that the sources of surprises were from within the organisations, outside the organisations, or a combination of both. The unexpected events occurred due to the inadequacy of the entrepreneurs or the organisation's capabilities, such as being new to the business, the inadequate knowledge and inexperience of the entrepreneurs, and a lack of management systems in the organisation. A possible explanation to this is that the organisations' human resources assets, including the management and their people, were the fundamental components needed to increase the abilities of the organisation to predict and respond to surprise (See Geraldi et al., 2010).

These results reflect those of Ford (1981), Głodziński and Marciniak (2016), and McDaniel et al. (2003), who also found that deficiencies in management's abilities increased the organisations' vulnerability to surprises. The lack of information, knowledge, and experience, led to failures in sensing or recognising the evolving patterns and relationships of different elements that turned into unexpected challenges (Ford, 1981; McDaniel et al., 2003). Chhoukroth, a participant in this study, mentioned that the surprises she faced were mainly due to her inexperience in and lack of knowledge of her business. This finding supports those in the research of Atkinson et al. (2006), which highlighted the relationships between novelty in business in technical and human resources management, and surprises. Similarly, Nounsrey made the wrong decision in

purchasing her products, by misinterpreting her market demands and preferences. This factor was similar to the results of Atkinson et al. (2006) and Głodziński and Marciniak (2016), who found that insufficient management knowledge results in wrong decisions such as misinterpreting stakeholders' expectations. Another source within organisations causing surprises was the lack of management systems, particularly in human resources management. This result is consistent with findings of previous studies that found that a lack of a control system later manifests as human resources problems, especially around information and skill exchanges, and communications (Holzmann & Spiegler, 2011; McDaniel et al., 2003).

The second source of unexpected events was changes in the external environment such as with stakeholders, or political or economic shifts. In terms of surprises from stakeholders, sudden fluctuations in users' or customers' choices, changes of partners' behaviours, decisions, or support, were all core components of the events (Aaltonen & Sivonen, 2009). This finding supports the work of Baiocchi (2014), which stated that third-party factors usually cause the most surprise, as organisations are often cautious with their direct risks. Some participants faced unexpected challenges because of the lack of power over their stakeholders' decisions, which is consistent with the research of Aaltonen and Sivonen (2009) and Piperca and Floricel (2012). They found that surprises occurred because of an organisation's dependency and over-reliance on its agents. Another significant factor that caused surprises was changes in the broader environment, such as political and economic shifts. This finding was also reported by Ford (1981) and Piperca and Floricel (2012), who emphasised that surprises are generated from the sudden occurrence of macro-level phenomena such as political and national security crises, or market crashes. Piperca and Floricel (2012) asserted that this type of surprise is rare, nevertheless, this is not the case in a country with only moderate political stability such as Cambodia has. The World Bank's political stability index, which measures countries' possibility of political instability, violence, and terrorism, ranging from -2.5 to 2.5, ranked Cambodia as -0.1 in 2019, illustrating the country's potential to have political instability (World Bank, 2020c). In this study, two participants encountered unexpected challenges caused by politically related conditions. This could be explained by the research of McDonald et al. (2008), which showed that national security events, news, and rumours, influence a country's economy, particularly its financial markets.

The third category of surprises' sources in this study was of events evolving from both within and outside organisations. While the literature on sources of unexpected events primarily focuses on identifying that they are either from within the organisation or from the outside environment (e.g., Ford, 1981; Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016; McDaniel et al., 2003; Piperca & Floricel, 2012), the possibility of events emerging from both sources was not recognised. The distinct characteristics of surprises in this study were those stimulated by a combination of inadequate management abilities and changes in stakeholders. However, this result is consistent with the work of Timmerman (1986), who argued that unexpected events can erupt from or into an organisation, bypass an organisation, or develop from the organisation and its external environment.

Impacts of Unexpected Events

The present study's findings suggest that unexpected events have damaging impacts on a business such as on its operations, reputation, and financial position, and as well on entrepreneurs by affecting their mental and physical well-being. These results extend the existing literature on the impacts of unexpected events, by adding the aspects of surprise caused within an organisation, as previous research predominantly examined the impacts of surprise caused by the external environment (e.g., Cowling et al., 2012; De Mel et al., 2008; Doern, 2016; Irvine & Anderson, 2004; Runyan, 2006).

Regarding the impacts on the ventures, surprises affected operations by causing disruptions, delays, and pauses in business growth. This was especially noticeable for small businesses, that were more vulnerable than large firms due to their insufficient resources, prevention systems, and teams (Runyan, 2006). Participant entrepreneurs pointed out that unpredicted challenges reduced their staff numbers and interrupted their business operations. These results are consistent with those of existing studies (e.g., Coulon et al., 2013; Doern, 2016; Irvine & Anderson, 2004; Rollo & Zdziarski II, 2007), which found that crises impacted small businesses severely, impacting on staff members and reducing productivity. Moreover, participants mentioned that reputational damage of a company was caused by unexpected events. The impact on branding expanded beyond their companies to their business partners. These findings were also reported in previous research (e.g., Coombs, 2004; Gao & Alas, 2010). Additionally, in accordance with the literature of Doern (2016), Irvine and Anderson (2004), and Runyan (2006), this study found that a business's process interruptions and reputation loss inevitably brought

financial loss. The impacts of unexpected events have a domino effect, as human resources problems negatively influenced business productivity and service quality, which affected business reputation, causing financial loss (Gao & Alas, 2010).

With regards to impacts on entrepreneurs, this study provides a new understanding of the negative outcomes of unexpected challenges in the human context, as previous research has investigated only economic (Doern, 2016) and natural crises (De Mel et al., 2008). The findings suggest that entrepreneurs' mental well-being was negatively impacted when the unexpected events occurred, as well in during the process of dealing with them. Entrepreneurs experienced feelings of stress, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, discouragement, tiredness, and mood swings. These results are consistent with those of De Mel et al. (2008) and Doern (2016). The degree to which participants suffered from these mental problems varied between individuals. This may be explained by consideration of the fact that personal traits, mindset, experience, and resources, moderate the degree of entrepreneurs' vulnerability to the impacts of unexpected events (Doern, 2016; Doern et al., 2019; Stephan, 2018). Moreover, mental unwellness consequently affected participants' physical well-being, as demonstrated by some entrepreneurs who experienced sleeplessness, changes in diet, fatigue, and restlessness. This could be because when facing problems, entrepreneurs work extremely hard and long hours, in order to address complex and high-risk issues (Stephan, 2018). This finding broadly supports the work of Doern (2016), linking entrepreneurs' mental with physical well-being.

Microfoundations of Dealing with the Unexpected Events

Another fundamental finding of this research is that of the microfoundations of Cambodian women entrepreneurs' responses to unexpected events. The results demonstrated the ways in which entrepreneurs individually rose to these challenges, by seeking and exploiting the available resources within themselves, their firms, and their networks. Three important domains of this finding include: the effectuation framework of dealing with unexpected events, entrepreneurs' individual abilities, and entrepreneurs' social resources.

Effectuation Framework of Dealing with Unexpected Events

This study identified the adoption of the effectuation decision-making process of Sarasvathy (2001) by entrepreneurs, when seeking and evaluating responses to surprises. This consists of four main steps: (1) start with means by asking “who am I?” “what do I know?” and “who do I know?” (2) apply affordable loss rather than expected return, (3) leverage relationships instead of competition, and (4) embrace and exploit contingencies.

This effectuation framework provides a novel perspective of dealing with unexpected events, demonstrating the cognitive process and factors influencing it. Previous literature has examined effectuation only in the context of uncertainty (e.g., Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001), particularly in new venture launching (e.g., Grégoire & Cherchem, 2020; Sarasvathy, 2001), new products or services innovation (e.g., Berends et al., 2014), and internationalisation (e.g., Chetty et al., 2015; Kalinic et al., 2014). In addition, this process extends the cognitive literature, as it mainly focuses on entrepreneurial actions, yet the cognitive processes which explain those taken actions are relatively little known (Dweck, 2017; Eggers & Kaplan, 2009; Subramaniam & Shankar, 2020).

In terms of prior literature on dealing with surprises, scholars have investigated how individuals (e.g., Chattopadhyay et al., 2001; Loosemore, 1998; Pearson & Clair, 1998), teams (e.g., Magni & Maruping, 2013), and organisations (e.g., Carmeli & Halevi, 2009; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001) respond to events. Nevertheless, a framework that illustrates the interactive process of how decisions were made was not previously offered. However, studies by Bechky and Okhuysen (2011) and McDaniel et al. (2003) explored the notion of bricolage employed by teams when dealing with unexpected challenges, through role changing, restructuring work, and reordering routines. However, this study was unable to detect evidence of the use of bricolage by entrepreneurs when dealing with unpredicted events.

In the process of applying the effectuation framework, participants started by collecting their resources and making do with what was available. In SMEs, the available resources were limited, resulting in firms seeking support from their environment (Berends et al., 2014; Siemens, 2010). In addition, instead of predicting their future profits, participants applied the concept of affordable loss, by crafting their strategies to limit negative effects and the amount they could afford to spend. Furthermore, participants embraced the unpredictable future and exploited this, by turning surprises into benefits, strengthening

their business strategies and expanding their target markets. These results corroborate the findings of a large body of previous work (e.g., Berends et al., 2014; Kalinic et al., 2014; Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001; Sarasvathy, 2001). Another stage of effectuation found was that of strategic alliance, in which entrepreneurs leveraged their built relationships with stakeholders rather than being competitive, to acquire information, knowledge, skills, and support, as a way to deal with surprises. Even though this step follows the effectuation process, the context of dealing with surprises slightly differs from Sarasvathy's (2001) original concept. The dissimilarity is in the new venture creation, firms use strategic partnerships to commercialise their products or ideas to gain pre-commitments to collaborate from stakeholders to reduce uncertainty in their future market (Dew & Sarasvathy, 2007; Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001; Sarasvathy, 2001; Ye, 2016). While strategic partnerships in surprises were used to access stakeholders' resources, no pre-commitments from the stakeholders were required in the process of responding to the events.

Entrepreneurs' Internal Abilities

In the effectuation process of dealing with unexpected challenges, entrepreneurs first started with their own means by asking "who am I?" "what do I know?" and "who do I know?" The first two questions are referred to in this study as *internal abilities*, which include entrepreneurs' personality traits, knowledge, skills, and experience. The findings suggest that participants' abilities had a profound influence on their behaviours when responding to surprises. Prior research has examined the advantages of managerial capabilities on firm performance (e.g., Kangasharju & Pekkala, 2002; Lee et al., 2001; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Teece & Al-Aali, 2013) and the process of dealing with general business challenges (e.g., Bullough & Renko, 2013; Salvi & Bowden, 2020), and uncertainty (e.g., McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Tsui, 1993), yet very rarely on the notion of surprises (Geraldi et al., 2010). Thus, this study provides a fresh perspective on the benefits of entrepreneurs' abilities, traits, knowledge, and skills in addressing unexpected issues.

In terms of individual traits, it was found that tolerance to ambiguity, resilience, risk-taking, need for achievement, and perseverance, affected choices of means taken by entrepreneurs. These results extend the psychology literature on the attributes of entrepreneurs when dealing with surprises, which little is known, as existing studies have

focused on events such as catastrophes, and in project-based settings (e.g., Gerald et al., 2010; Loosemore, 1998; Pearson & Clair, 1998). The findings related to the positive contributions of personality traits such as tolerance for ambiguity, high need for achievement, risk-taking, and resiliency, are in accord with those of previous studies, indicating that individuals with these traits dare to embrace the challenges and take actions towards unclear returns (see Ayala & Manzano, 2014; De Vries & Shields, 2006; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Salvi & Bowden, 2020). Participants who possessed a high need for achievement and had risk-taking personalities, worked hard to search for solutions, and employed strategies to meet unexpected challenges, despite the ambiguity and high risks involved in the situations. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies by McMullen and Shepherd (2006), Salvi and Bowden (2020), and Tsui (1993). In terms of resiliency, participants reported that it required a great deal of resiliency to be able to confront the circumstances, control their fear, and bounce back to the problems, as the sudden problems severely impacted them and their business. These results broadly support the work of Ayala and Manzano (2014), Bullough and Renko (2013), and De Vries and Shields (2006), which investigated the importance of entrepreneurial resiliency in problem-solving.

The present research also suggests that entrepreneurs' knowledge, skills, and experience, contributed to their dealing with unexpected events. These three components are interrelated and could be developed from education, exchanged information, and prior experience. From reviewing the literature, it was clear that scholars have demonstrated the positive relationships between education and business performance (Carpenter & Loveridge, 2020; Kangasharju & Pekkala, 2002; Unger et al., 2011). However, this study found little direct evidence of formal education benefits in solving unexpected problems, as only three participants mentioned this. However, among the 12 participants, 11 had a bachelor's degree or higher qualification. This finding reflects that of Lee and Tsang (2001), who found that the effects of education are more valid for large-sized firms than for smaller firms, as they engage in international markets, and require strong knowledge of technology and e-commerce. These results, therefore, need to be interpreted with caution. Participants explained that their products, market, and management related knowledge, helped them to address unpredicted issues. This finding is consistent with those of Chowdhury et al. (2019) and Lau and Chan (2002), who proved the crucial roles of sales, marketing, and operations knowledge of entrepreneurs in designing business strategic plans.

In addition to knowledge, the findings revealed the significance of entrepreneurial skills such as communication, networking, and negotiation. Perhaps when facing challenges, entrepreneurs somehow involve stakeholders such as customers, partners, agents, or suppliers, and as a result, these interpersonal skills are critical in the negotiating and collaborating process of finding effective solutions. These results are consistent with those of previous studies (e.g., Baum & Locke, 2004; Benzing & Chu, 2012; Stefanovic et al., 2010). A further factor contributing to responding to surprises was the experiences entrepreneurs had gathered from their prior work and when operating their business. Mealadei said that her previous experience in relocating her store gave her knowledge of how she should manage the unpredicted relocation with the least possible damage. This finding is in agreement with that of Baiocchi (2014), who showed that experience in operating a business reduces the size of surprises, by enabling individuals to recognise them quickly, and take effective solutions to address them. However, the present study has been unable to demonstrate the relationships of entrepreneurial experiences on tackling unexpected issues, as none of the participants had prior experience of running a business. This does not support the research of Vaillant and Lafuente (2019) and Westhead et al. (2005). Nevertheless, the results matched those of Lee and Tsang (2001), who found that both management and industrial experiences have strong impacts on the venture, but not on the entrepreneurial experience. When comparing the contributions of knowledge, skills, and experience, the findings suggest that entrepreneurs used more of their knowledge and skills than of their experiences, in the process of dealing with unexpected events. This finding was previously reported by Reuber and Fischer (1994), who indicated that owners' expertise, such as business strategic planning and network building, is more associated with firm performance than with owners' experience.

Entrepreneurs' Social Resources

From the interview analysis, it was evident that the Cambodian women entrepreneurs extensively used their social resources, especially their external social capital. *External social capital* refers to entrepreneurs' formal and informal networks built outside the organisation, such as family, friends, and professional networks, while *internal social capital* is the organisational capital, such as its human resources, structures, and networks.

Organisational Social Capital

The results demonstrated that when facing surprises, employees played a crucial role in the process of searching for strategies, and forming actions through their internal motivation, resources, and networks. This result may be explained by the fact that organisational members, including managers and employees, have a package of mindsets, knowledge, skills, experiences, and motivations, all from different sources, and which can be exploited for the aggregate outcomes of the organisation (Barney & Wright, 1998; Laviolette, 2019; Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). This finding supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., Barney & Wright, 1998; Florin et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2001). In addition, Kolab explained that her teams in different departments came together to make strategic plans to overcome the difficult situations caused by surprises. Prior studies found that when sharing a common goal, team members put their efforts into confronting the issues to achieve their goals, by actively utilising their intelligence to identify the immediately available resources (De Clercq et al., 2013; Foss & Lindenberg, 2013). In accordance with this, the existing literature has demonstrated that team improvisation is vital for an organisation to deal with surprises, as the teams' capabilities allow them to form creative strategies, and together respond to the events (Crossan et al., 2005; Magni & Maruping, 2013).

External Social Capital

Another significant finding of this study was the profound influence of entrepreneurs' social capital in responding to unexpected events. All participating female entrepreneurs heavily exploited their social capital of both professional networks and informal networks such as family and other entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs spend time and effort building relationships with other company owners/managers, business partners, suppliers, and customers, who hold a wide range of resources, such as transferrable knowledge, skills, and networks, which helps them to reduce business uncertainties (Batjargal, 2003; Birley, 1985). Due to the important role of social capital, a large body of literature has investigated its connection to venture start-ups (e.g., Lindvert et al., 2017), dealing with ambiguity (e.g., Birley, 1985), or to business success overall (e.g., Acquah, 2007; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Park & Luo, 2001; Stam & Elfring, 2008). However, the impacts of individuals' social capital on the process of rising to unpredicted challenges have not been

reported in previous studies (Geraldi et al., 2010). Thus, the present research presents new insights into the social capital literature on the notion of dealing with unexpected events.

Informal relations, including family and friends, were valuable sources of capital for the women entrepreneurs, providing them with labour, financial, emotional, and instrumental support to combat problems. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work on the relationships between family support and the success of women entrepreneurs (e.g., Mari et al., 2016; Neneh, 2017; Welsh & Kaciak, 2019; Welsh et al., 2016). Family provides financial help for entrepreneurs, often without interest or mortgage fees, and also labour inputs, which are necessary for entrepreneurs in a critical business stage (Kim et al., 2014; Matzek et al., 2010). Unexpected problems arrived without notice and affected the women entrepreneurs, resulting in the need for emotional and instrumental support. For example, Nounsrey and Champei talked about the times when their families (especially their husbands who played a crucial part) had helped them by offering business advice, and motivated them to stand up and confront their problems. This is also in accord with the reviewed literature, which showed the vital role of emotional support given by women entrepreneurs' families, particularly their spouses (e.g., Matzek et al., 2010; Neneh, 2017; Siemens, 2010; Vадnjal & Vадnjal, 2007; Welsh et al., 2016).

Besides searching for support from their families, the Cambodian women entrepreneurs looked into their professional networks for resources, for instance, into their entrepreneurial circles, and to business stakeholders. In this process, the connected networks exchanged trust, and with goodwill devoted time to their relationships, such as giving access to their and their networks' intellectual, financial, and cultural resources (Adler & Kwon, 2002). These essential roles of social capital were also previously reported in studies in different countries, such as Ghana (Acquaah, 2007), Russia (Batjargal, 2003), Turkey (Yetim, 2008), China (Zhao & Aram, 1995) and Singapore (Lee & Tsang, 2001).

The concept of networking has been extensively discussed in the Asian culture, as is known as *guanxi*, which is the process of building networks and giving favours in the Chinese culture and countries influenced by the Chinese or Confucian philosophy, as is Cambodia (Chua & Wellman, 2015; Dinh & Hilmarsson, 2020). In this study, a large percentage of participants are Cambodian-Chinese, and all of them acknowledged the

necessity of relationships and building networks for their businesses, particularly when facing challenges. This result is not surprising, as the terms “Chineseness” or “Chinese business” have become a template for business practice (Dahles & Ter Horst, 2012; Verver, 2012). Thus, the findings of this study confirm Park and Luo’s (2001) study of *guanxi* culture, indicating the positive effects of both horizontal networks (managers, stakeholders, competitors) and vertical networks (government and legal agencies) on business performance. Firms use *guanxi* networks to have access to scarce resources and information and alleviate organisational flaws and danger (Dinh & Hilmarsson, 2020; Park & Luo, 2001). Consistent with the literature, this research found that participants were able to deal with unpredicted challenges, by having access to obscure information. For example, Chhoukroth revealed that through her network, she could have access to internal market information, that helped her purchase her new customer channel. This finding also extends the study on Cambodian Chinese entrepreneurs by Verver (2012), by amplifying the importance of *guanxi* in women’s entrepreneurial journeys, especially when dealing with unexpected challenges. However, concerning the vertical networks with the government officers, local authorities, and important figures, the present study was unable to identify the usage of these relationships in dealing with surprises, so does not support the prior research by Park and Luo (2001). Nevertheless, the research by Acquah (2007) on Ghana’s business firms also reported that the relationships with government officials were less significant than those with senior managers at other firms. This could be due to the informality of the business culture in Cambodia, as a large proportion of the women-owned SMEs are unregistered (International Finance Corporation, 2019), showing their minimal connections with the formal and public sectors (Birley, 1985; Yetim, 2008). However, the present research is the first to examine the importance of *guanxi* in the context of surprises.

Implications of the Research

The findings of this study have several practical and theoretical implications concerning the microfoundations of women entrepreneurs dealing with unexpected events. This section outlines the practical implications for women entrepreneurs, organisations and associations, and government and policymakers in Cambodia, and theoretical implications for the wider literature on women entrepreneurship, microfoundations, and unexpected events.

Practical Implications

This research has analysed the responses of women entrepreneurs dealing with unexpected events. The results offer practical implications for women entrepreneurs both within and outside Cambodia and supporting agents such as entrepreneurs' organisations, the government, and policymakers.

First of all, this study provides a deep understanding of Cambodian women's entrepreneurial journeys, which is beneficial for Cambodian women who aspire to be entrepreneurs and those who are already entrepreneurs. Male entrepreneurs could also benefit from this study, as surprises do not discriminate, and are inherently unpreventable. Entrepreneurs from other countries could use information from this study as well. To illustrate, the characteristics of unexpected challenges play a vital role as a reminder for current and future entrepreneurs of the sources of these events. As a result, entrepreneurs could develop a prevention plan against similar problems, through forming strategic plans, and a robust system to respond to them. The impacts of surprise on businesses and women entrepreneurs themselves, raises awareness for future individuals and helps them prepare for similar experiences and search for resources to cope with them. Most importantly, this study provides a response framework of how participating entrepreneurs dealt with surprises, and the factors involved from their internal abilities and networks. Future entrepreneurs could search and evaluate their resources for their effective in their business context. The findings of this study are also advantageous for the participating female entrepreneurs in this study, as it offered them the opportunity to reflect on the unexpected challenges and measures taken, assessing what could have done better, and developing a more robust strategic plan and responsive process to deal with future events.

Secondly, this research provides in-depth insights into the unexpected challenges for entrepreneurs' supporting agents such as entrepreneur organisations, associations, governments, and policymakers. When facing sudden problems, women entrepreneurs need support, intellectually, financially, and mentally. Providing prompt access to supporting resources could enhance the firms' abilities to cope better and faster with problems, minimise the negative impacts on their business. For example, to advance entrepreneurs' abilities, organisations or government bodies could offer training or education programmes to enhance entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. In relation to social capital, agents could establish more associations or networking events for

entrepreneurs to improve their strategic alliances and network circles. In addition, governmental policies play a crucial role in creating policies and regulations to support entrepreneurs in dealing with surprises. Knowledge of the characteristics of surprises from this study can enable policymakers, in collaboration with entrepreneur associations and organisations, to establish prevention frameworks and policies to keep other entrepreneurs from facing the same challenges.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this research regarding unexpected challenges and the ways Cambodian women entrepreneurs coped with them, offer three theoretical implications for the wider literature on women's entrepreneurship, microfoundations, and unexpected events.

Women Entrepreneurship

The findings of this research have theoretical implications for the literature on women's entrepreneurship concerning unexpected challenges. In their entrepreneurial journeys, entrepreneurs regularly face unexpected events. While entrepreneurial challenges (e.g., Panda & Dash, 2014; Sequeira et al., 2016; Verheul et al., 2006) have been widely studied, the surprises challenges have not (Cunha et al., 2006). This could be because of the negative perceptions of surprises, which are seen as arising from a lack of capability and control (McDaniel et al., 2003). In addition, the literature on women's entrepreneurship in developing countries focuses strongly on social-cultural barriers (e.g., Akehurst et al., 2012; Machado et al., 2016; Maden, 2015; Prashar et al., 2018; Roomi & Parrott, 2008; Sharma, 2013; Tambunan, 2009). Therefore, by exploring the surprise challenges facing women entrepreneurs, highlights new aspects of entrepreneurial barriers, such as the impacts of surprises, and ways to cope with them, as it is vital to have an in-depth understanding of the processes of how individuals are doing entrepreneurship, rather than simply identifying who they are and what they do (Ahl, 2006).

This study also contributes to the women's entrepreneurship literature relating to unexpected events in Cambodia. Until now, there was no research exploring responses to surprises for Cambodian female entrepreneurs, as literature on entrepreneurship is scarce (Leahy et al., 2017). Similarly, few studies could be found on entrepreneurial challenges and opportunities (Ty et al., 2009), although some information and data was gathered from independent organisational reports (e.g., Asian Development Bank, 2015;

International Finance Corporation, 2019; World Bank, 2008), and investigated in combination with literature from neighbouring countries (e.g., Ardrey IV et al., 2006; Leahy et al., 2017). Therefore, this research makes a significant contribution to the entrepreneurship literature in Cambodia by providing insights into Cambodian women's entrepreneurial journeys, and the unexpected problems they faced. It offers a better understanding and explanation of individuals' behaviours, cognitive processes, abilities, and social resources, when dealing with surprises, as well the cultural and social perspectives shaping their decisions and behaviours.

Microfoundations

Through the microfoundational theoretical lens, this study provides detailed insights into how female entrepreneurs individually deal with unexpected events. By examining the micro-level actions taken by entrepreneurs in responding to surprise, this research responds to Teece's (2007) call for research on entrepreneurial microfoundations. As owners as well managers operating a business, entrepreneurs' decisions, behaviours, and abilities, greatly affect their firms' outcomes (Coviello, 2015; Forsgren, 2016; Jones & Coviello, 2005). Prior studies have investigated the microfoundations of individuals on firms' decision-making processes (e.g., Coviello et al., 2017; Hiller & Hambrick, 2005), strategies (e.g., Hatch & Dyer, 2004; Rahim et al., 2019) performances (e.g., Abell et al., 2008; Bailey & Helfat, 2003; Teece, 2007), and uncertainty (e.g., McMullen & Shepherd, 2006), yet the ways in which the micro-levels deal with the challenges, particularly the sudden events, have not yet been explored. As a result, this research has made significant contributions to the microfoundations literature, by offering a better understanding of factors such as cognition, personality traits, knowledge, skills, and social capital, that influence entrepreneurs' decisions and actions when rising to unpredicted challenges.

In addition, this study explored the effectuation cognitive framework of entrepreneurs when making decisions in response to unexpected events. This contributes to the causation and effectuation process theory of Sarasvathy (2001). When seeking and evaluating responses to surprises, entrepreneurs applied the four main steps of effectuation: starting with their own means, then applying the affordable loss concept, followed by leveraging relationships with stakeholders, and lastly, embracing and exploiting contingencies. The previous literature has examined effectuation only in the context of uncertainty (e.g., Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001), particularly in new venture

launching (e.g., Grégoire & Cherchem, 2020; Sarasvathy, 2001), new products or services innovation (e.g., Berends et al., 2014), and internationalisation (e.g., Chetty et al., 2015; Kalinic et al., 2014). Thus, this research extends the effectuation irrational process of Sarasvathy (2001) in the dimension of surprises.

Moreover, the results present new perspectives on the social capital literature in terms of dealing with unexpected events. A large body of literature has investigated its connection with venture start-ups (e.g., Lindvert et al., 2017), dealing with ambiguity (e.g., Birley, 1985), and on business success overall (e.g., Acquaah, 2007; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Park & Luo, 2001; Stam & Elfring, 2008). However, the impacts of individuals' social capital on the process of rising to unpredicted challenges have not been reported in previous studies (Geraldi et al., 2010). A remarkable finding in terms of social capital in this study, is the benefits of *guanxi* networks on responses to surprises, extending the work of Park and Luo (2001). This research also provides the cultural aspects of entrepreneurs' behaviours when dealing with challenges. It amplifies the "Chineseness" or "Chinese business" contexts in the business environment in Cambodia, expanding on the prior studies of Dahles and Ter Horst (2012) and Verver (2012), particularly on the importance of *guanxi* in women's entrepreneurial journeys, especially when dealing with unexpected challenges.

Unexpected events

This study contributes to the literature on surprises and unexpected events by adding characteristics of these events, identifying the sources and impacts of surprises, particularly in entrepreneurship. This is a distinct addition, as previous studies largely focused on surprises as catastrophes (e.g., Schneider et al., 1998; Stanley, 2009; Timmerman, 1986), and in project-based settings (e.g., Bechky & Okhuysen, 2011; Cunha et al., 2006), mainly in healthcare (e.g., Baiocchi, 2014; McDaniel et al., 2003) and construction (e.g., Hällgren & Wilson, 2008; Loosemore, 1998). While the literature identified sources of surprises as either from the organisation and their management (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2006; Ford, 1981; Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016; McDaniel et al., 2003) or from outside control of the organisations such as in the case of national disasters or economic recession (e.g., Ford, 1981; Piperca & Floricel, 2012), this study extends the existing literature by identifying surprises occurring as an integrating process from both the organisation and environment.

Furthermore, this research has important implications for theory, by providing a new understanding of the impacts of an unexpected event in a human context, as previous research investigated entrepreneurship surprises only in relation to major crises (e.g., Coombs, 2004; Doern, 2016; Gao & Alas, 2010) such as economic crises (e.g., Cowling et al., 2012; Williams & Vorley, 2015) and natural disasters (e.g., De Mel et al., 2008; Irvine & Anderson, 2004; Monllor & Murphy, 2017; Runyan, 2006). That is, the present study examined the impacts of surprises in venture-based businesses, occurring from different sources, such as inadequate entrepreneur and organisation capabilities, and changes in the external environment. The results from this study also extend the existing literature on the impacts of crises on the organisations and entrepreneurs themselves, and particularly the impacts on the entrepreneurs, as prior research primarily concentrated on ordinary individuals and their livelihood (e.g., Aytac et al., 2015; Burton et al., 2006; Van Griensven et al., 2006).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research has several limitations, including the samples and the studied area. First of all, 12 female entrepreneurs were interviewed and selected using the purposive sampling technique, which began from the researcher's personal and professional networks. This was followed by the snowball sampling method to refer other potential participants. As a result, the selected participants tended to have similar backgrounds and types of business, despite the fact that efforts had been made to diversify the business industries. Secondly, the study was conducted in Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh, where the majority of SMEs are based. However, more than 70% of Cambodia's population resides in rural areas (International Finance Corporation, 2019), where various types of enterprises can be found. Entrepreneurs in different areas might encounter different types of unexpected events and be impacted on a different scale. In particular, their responses towards problems could be dissimilar, resulting from differences in their socio-economic and cultural circumstances. Therefore, the study could have included more entrepreneurs and from a variety of regions. However, this was not possible, due to the time and resources constraints in the scope of writing a thesis. As a consequence, the findings should not be generalised to the entire population of Cambodia, or globally, although the study provides a better understanding of the participant entrepreneurs and their businesses.

This exploratory study has identified several avenues for future studies. Firstly, future research could be conducted with a larger sample size, and more diverse business fields and locations. Unexpected challenges may be stronger for rural women entrepreneurs, as they have limited resources and information (Yetim, 2008). As a result, scholars can diversify the backgrounds of their participants, such as in their ages, genders, ethnicities, and locations, to gather more comprehensive data. Additionally, studies could compare different groups of entrepreneurs and their experiences and responses when encountering surprises. Moreover, future studies could take the sizes of the businesses into account, by exploring the unexpected events and their impacts on large-sized business, and the factors that contribute to solutions. Beside diversifying the types of enterprise, scholars could also narrow down the focus to investigate surprises in a single type of business, such as technology, human resources, manufacturing, or construction, and compare the differences between firms. Lastly, future research could examine unexpected events as a longitudinal study and compare the entrepreneurs' thoughts and experiences in different phases of facing surprises, such as prior, current and post events.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the microfoundations of the ways in which Cambodian women entrepreneurs managed unexpected events in their entrepreneurial journeys. To achieve this, the research employed a qualitative methodology by interviewing 12 Cambodian female entrepreneurs. Interview data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Three main themes emerged from this analysis: the characteristics and sources of unexpected events, their impacts on the ventures and entrepreneurs' mental and physical well-being, and the microfoundations of dealing with the unexpected events, by exploiting entrepreneur's abilities and social resources. This study has profound significance for the wider literature on women's entrepreneurship and unexpected events, as previous studies have focused mostly on the entrepreneurial challenges (e.g., Panda & Dash, 2014; Sequeira et al., 2016; Verheul et al., 2006), while those in developing countries largely investigated the dimensions of socio-cultural barriers (e.g., Akehurst et al., 2012; Machado et al., 2016; Maden, 2015; Prashar et al., 2018; Roomi & Parrott, 2008; Sharma, 2013; Tambunan, 2009). This research also extends the literature on unexpected events (e.g., Atkinson et al., 2006; Ford, 1981; Głodziński & Marciniak, 2016; McDaniel et al., 2003), by identifying different sources of events and their impacts on the businesses and entrepreneurs. Understandings of this

are very limited because the majority of research in this area concentrates on unexpected events as crises (e.g., Coombs, 2004; Cowling et al., 2012; De Mel et al., 2008; Doern, 2016; Gao & Alas, 2010; Irvine & Anderson, 2004; Monllor & Murphy, 2017). In addition, this study substantially contributes to the microfoundations literature regarding entrepreneurship (e.g., Abell et al., 2008; Bailey & Helfat, 2003; Coviello et al., 2017; Hiller & Hambrick, 2005; Teece, 2007), by offering a better understanding of factors influencing entrepreneurs' decisions and actions when rising to unpredicted challenges. It also provides a cognitive framework of dealing with surprises, by adopting Sarasvathy's (2001) effectuation framework of entrepreneurial uncertainties (Sarasvathy & Kotha, 2001). Lastly, this research provides a cultural context of influencing responses to unexpected events, *guanxi* networking (Park & Luo, 2001), which is deeply embedded in the Cambodian business culture and has become a template for business practice (Dahles & Ter Horst, 2012; Verver, 2012).

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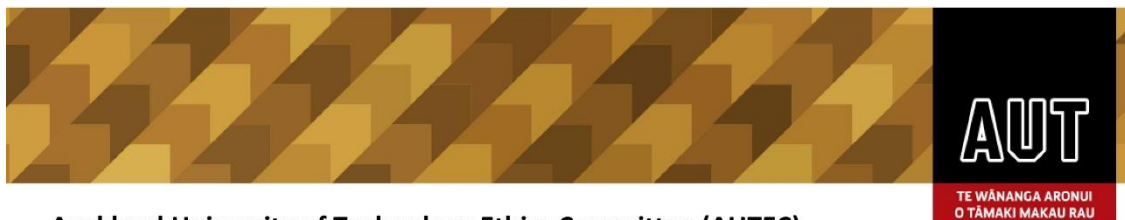
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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

22 November 2019

Marcus Ho
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Marcus

Re Ethics Application: **19/394 Women entrepreneurs in Cambodia: Microfoundations of surprises and unexpected events in the entrepreneurial journey**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 22 November 2022.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted. When the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all ethical, legal, and locality obligations or requirements for those jurisdictions.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: chetnachea@gmail.com

Appendix B-1: Research Advertisement (English)

Dear respected women entrepreneur,

I am a postgraduate student enrolling in the Master of Business in Management at the Auckland University of Technology located in New Zealand. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project which aims to explore the Cambodian women's entrepreneurial journeys and the micro level actions they took in responding to unexpected events within the journey. Your participation in this research will help me to complete my thesis and master's degree.

Research Title:

“Women entrepreneurs in Cambodia: Microfoundations of surprises and unexpected events in the entrepreneurial journey”

Background:

In the journey of starting and running an enterprise, women entrepreneurs face issues, which usually take them by surprise and disrupt their business progress. The process of responding to the challenges differ greatly between individuals according to their characteristics, abilities, cognition, or behaviours. Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore closely how women entrepreneurs deal with or manage surprises and unexpected events in creating a new venture, by employing the microfoundations theoretical lens as they focus on the individual (micro) level.

This study will utilise interview technique to have an in-depth study on the underlying causes of this particular phenomena in relation to female entrepreneurs' experiences and thinking. By conducting this research, insights will be offered into women entrepreneurs in Cambodian society, who have not been examined widely until now. Implications from findings of this study can offer a better understanding of the unexpected challenges and the actions which were taken to advise current and future women entrepreneurs. Additionally, it is hoped that our study will be able to explicate the micro level actions responding to unexpected events in the entrepreneurial journey, allowing further theoretical, practical, and policy recommendations to be made for this important field.

The findings of this research will be presented in my thesis for my qualification and may be used for academic publications, presentations, and conferences.

For more detailed information about the research, please see the documents:

- Participant Information Sheet (see attached)
- Consent Form (see attached)

If you are willing to help Chetna in her research, please email Chetna Chea (chetnachea@gmail.com) to show your expression of interest.

Participants may request a summary report on the findings by requesting it from the researcher.

Kind regards,

Chetna Chea

Appendix B-2: Research Advertisement (Khmer)

សូមគោរពជូន សហគ្រិននារី ជាទីរាប់អាន,

នាងខ្ញុំជានិស្សិតថ្នាក់អនុបណ្ឌិតផ្នែកធុរកិច្ច ជំនាញគ្រប់គ្រង នៅសាកលវិទ្យាល័យអាកឆេននៃបច្ចេកវិទ្យា (AUT) នាប្រទេស
ណូវែលហ្សឺឡង់។ នាងខ្ញុំមានកិត្តិយស សូមអញ្ជើញលោកស្រី/អ្នកនាង/កញ្ញា ចូលរួមក្នុងគម្រោងសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវមួយ ដែល
មានគោលបំណងក្នុងការស្វែងយល់អំពីកិច្ចដំណើរការសហគ្រាសរបស់សហគ្រិនស្ត្រី និងដំណោះស្រាយ ដែលពួកគាត់បានប្រើ
ប្រាស់ ដើម្បីដោះស្រាយបញ្ហាកើតឡើងដោយឥតព្រៀងទុកនៅក្នុងដំណើរនៃជំនួញនេះ។ ការចូលរួមរបស់អ្នកនៅក្នុងការសិក្សា
នេះ នឹងជួយនាងខ្ញុំក្នុងការសរសេរនិក្ខេបបទ និងឈានទៅការបញ្ចប់ការសិក្សាថ្នាក់អនុបណ្ឌិតរបស់នាងខ្ញុំ។

ឈ្មោះគម្រោងសិក្សា

«សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីនៅកម្ពុជា៖ មីក្រូមូលដ្ឋាននៃព្រឹត្តិការណ៍ឥតព្រៀងទុក នៅក្នុងកិច្ចដំណើរនៃសហគ្រិនភាព»

ព័ត៌មាននៃការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវ៖

នៅក្នុងដំណើរការនៃការចាប់ផ្តើម និងប្រតិបត្តិការសហគ្រាសមួយ សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីតែងជួបប្រទះបញ្ហាជាច្រើន ដែលជាទូទៅកើត
ឡើងដោយឥតព្រៀងទុក ហើយបង្កការរាំងស្ទះដល់ដំណើរការជំនួញរបស់ពួកគាត់។ ដំណើរការនៃការដោះស្រាយទៅនឹងបញ្ហា
ទាំងនោះមានលក្ខណៈខុសៗគ្នា យោងទៅតាមបុគ្គលិកលក្ខណៈ សមត្ថភាព គោលគំនិត ឬអាកប្បកិរិយារបស់បុគ្គលនីមួយៗ។
ហេតុដូច្នេះហើយ ទើបការសិក្សានេះ មានគោលបំណងក្នុងការធ្វើការស្រាវជ្រាវដោយហ្មត់ចត់ទៅលើវិធីសាស្ត្រ ដែលសហគ្រិន
ស្ត្រីបានប្រើប្រាស់ដើម្បីដោះស្រាយ ឬគ្រប់គ្រងព្រឹត្តិការណ៍/បញ្ហា ដែលឥតព្រៀងទុក ក្នុងកំឡុងពេលកសាងសហគ្រាសថ្មី ដោយ
ការសិក្សានេះនឹងប្រើប្រាស់ទ្រឹស្តីមីក្រូមូលដ្ឋាន ដែលផ្តោតទៅលើថ្នាក់បុគ្គល (កម្រិតមីក្រូ)។
ការសិក្សានេះនឹងប្រើប្រាស់វិធីសាស្ត្រសម្ភាស ដើម្បីទទួលបានការសិក្សាស៊ីជម្រៅ ទៅលើបុគ្គលនៃហេតុការណ៍នេះ ដែល
ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងបទពិសោធន៍ និងការយល់ឃើញរបស់សហគ្រិនស្ត្រី។ តាមរយៈការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ ទស្សនវិស័យនឹងត្រូវ
បានផ្តល់ដល់សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីនៅកម្ពុជា ដោយវិស័យនេះមិនត្រូវបានគេសិក្សាទូលំទូលាយនៅឡើយ ដល់សព្វថ្ងៃ។ លទ្ធផលទទួល
បានពីការសិក្សានេះ គឺអាចផ្តល់ការយល់ដឹងបន្ថែមទៅលើបញ្ហា/ព្រឹត្តិការណ៍កើតឡើងដោយឥតព្រៀងទុក និងដំណោះស្រាយ
ដើម្បីទុកជាជំនួយដល់សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីបច្ចុប្បន្ន និងនាពេលអនាគត។ បន្ថែមពីនេះ យើងរំពឹងថាការសិក្សានេះ នឹងអាចពណ៌នា
ពន្យល់អំពីដំណោះស្រាយថ្នាក់បុគ្គល ដែលបានឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងបញ្ហាខាងលើនៅក្នុងការដំណើរការសហគ្រាស ដែលអាចផ្តល់
ជាអនុសាសន៍ និងប្រើប្រាស់ជាទ្រឹស្តី ការអនុវត្ត និងគោលនយោបាយផ្សេងៗ នៅក្នុងវិស័យដ៏សំខាន់នេះ។ លទ្ធផលទទួលបាន
ពីការសិក្សានេះ នឹងត្រូវបង្ហាញនៅក្នុងនិក្ខេបបទថ្នាក់អនុបណ្ឌិតរបស់នាងខ្ញុំ និងអាចត្រូវប្រើប្រាស់ក្នុងការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយជា
លក្ខណៈសិក្សា បទបង្ហាញ ឬសន្និសីទផ្សេងៗផងដែរ។

សម្រាប់ព័ត៌មានលម្អិតអំពីការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ សូមអានឯកសារ៖

- ព្រឹត្តិបត្រព័ត៌មានសម្រាប់អ្នកចូលរួម (មានភ្ជាប់ជូន)
- ទម្រង់បែបបទព្រមព្រៀង (មានភ្ជាប់ជូន)

ប្រសិនបើអ្នកស្ម័គ្រចិត្តជួយចូលរួមការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវរបស់នាងខ្ញុំ សូមផ្ញើរ email មកកាន់នាងខ្ញុំដើម្បី បង្ហាញពីការចាប់
អារម្មណ៍របស់អ្នក តាមរយៈ: chetnachea@gmail.com។

អ្នកចូលរួមអាចស្នើសុំរបាយការណ៍សង្ខេបអំពីលទ្ធផលនៃការសិក្សានេះ ពីអ្នកសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវបាន។

ដោយក្តីរីករាយ និងការគោរពពីនាងខ្ញុំ
ជា ចេតនា

Appendix C-1: Participant Information Sheet (English)

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

07 November 2019

Project Title

“Women entrepreneurs in Cambodia: Microfoundations of surprises and unexpected events in the entrepreneurial journey”

Invitation

Hello, My name is Chetna Chea and I enrolled in the Master of Business in Management at the Auckland University of Technology. I am conducting research to discover women entrepreneurs’ unexpected journey, and how they took micro actions to deal with those events. As a result, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. Your participation is voluntary and choosing to participate or not in this study will neither advantage nor disadvantage you.

What is the purpose of this research?

In the journey of starting and running an enterprise, women entrepreneurs face issues, which usually take them by surprise and disrupt their business progress. The process of responding to the challenges differ greatly between individuals according to their characteristics, abilities, cognition, or behaviours. Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore closely how women entrepreneurs deal with or manage surprises and unexpected events in creating a new venture, by employing the microfoundations theoretical lens as they focus on the individual (micro) level.

The findings of this research will be presented in my thesis for my qualification and may be used for academic publications, presentations, and conferences.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified as a potential participant because you are (or were) an entrepreneur (either who has had the experience running your own ventures or are currently running your own venture). You may have also been invited to participate in this research through someone in your personal or professional networks suggesting a pool of potential people who might be interested in participating in the research; or through the advertisement for this research sent to the organisation or association you are a member in.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

To participate in this research, you will be required to complete, sign and return the Consent Form which has been attached in this email. Your participation is entirely your choice and you are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

The research project aims to gather rich information of your experiences in taking micro actions in respond to the unexpected events you have met in your entrepreneurial journey. You will be interviewed by me for approximately 45-90 minutes on a day that is convenient for you. Please be advised that the interview will be held either at a coffee place, or your office based on your feasibility. This interview will be recorded by my phone and transcribed by an authorised transcriber to whom your or your organisation's identity will not be disclosed, and a pseudonym would be used instead. The data gathered through this interview will then be analysed by me and will be securely stored in a password locked hard drive.

What are the discomforts and risks?

While there are no discomforts or risks expected in this project, I acknowledge that there may be instances where some of the questions may provoke some discomfort feelings during describing of your unexpected challenges in the past while running your business.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Please be reminded that your personal and business data will not be revealed in the study. Moreover, your participation in the research is based on a voluntary basis, as result, you can choose to not answer any questions if you do not feel comfortable or withdraw from the research if needed. Furthermore, to ensure the accuracy of data, you will be provided with the interview transcript for confirmation, or to advise any changes or additions you wish to make before the interview data is analysed.

What are the benefits?

It is hoped that my study will be able to provide benefits to the entrepreneur community especially women, the study results could provide a better understanding of the unexpected challenges and the actions which were taken to advise future women entrepreneurs. Additionally, the findings might offer the government and policy makers insights into how women entrepreneurs respond to challenges that could help in developing future policies or framework to provide support to the entrepreneurs. For the entrepreneur participating, it will allow you to reflect on the past micro actions which found to be effective for your business and develop future strategies to solve them more effectively or prevent the same or similar problems in the future. Finally, this study will contribute to the completion of my Master of Business degree as well.

How will my privacy be protected?

As has been mentioned above, your privacy will be protected by maintaining confidentiality. Your name and your organisation's name will not be disclosed, and pseudonyms will be used at all stages of the research.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Please understand that the only costs associated to participation in this research is your precious time. However, I understand that you must be very occupied hence I will manage the interview such that it takes no more than the required time, that is, between 45-90 minutes.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Given the limited timeframe of the research project, you will have two weeks to confirm your participation in this research by responding to the email and returning the filled, and signed consent form.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, you may request to receive a summary of the research findings upon completion of the research.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Marcus Ho, marcus.ho@aut.ac.nz, and 09 921 9999 Ext: 5448.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the researcher as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Name: Chetna Chea

Email: chetnachea@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Name: Marcus Ho

Email: marcus.ho@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 22 November 2019, AUTEK Reference number 19/394.

Appendix C-2: Participant Information Sheet (Khmer)

ព្រឹត្តិបត្រព័ត៌មានសម្រាប់អ្នកចូលរួម

ធ្វើនៅថ្ងៃទី ០៧ ខែវិច្ឆិកា ឆ្នាំ២០១៩

ឈ្មោះគម្រោងសិក្សា

«សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីនៅកម្ពុជា៖ មីក្រូមូលដ្ឋាននៃព្រឹត្តិការណ៍ឥតព្រៀងទុក នៅក្នុង កិច្ចដំណើរនៃសហគ្រិនភាព»

លិខិតអញ្ជើញ

សូស្ត្រី! នាងខ្ញុំឈ្មោះ ជា ចេតនា ជានិស្សិតថ្នាក់អនុបណ្ឌិតផ្នែកធុរកិច្ច ជំនាញគ្រប់គ្រង នៅសាកលវិទ្យាល័យ អាក្លែននៃបច្ចេកវិទ្យា (AUT) នាប្រទេសណូវែលហ្សឺឡង់។ នាងខ្ញុំកំពុងធ្វើការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវទៅលើកិច្ចដំណើរ ការនៃសហគ្រាសរបស់អ្នកជំនួញស្ត្រី ដែលតែងជួបបញ្ហាឥតព្រៀងទុក និងវិធីសាស្ត្រ ជាលក្ខណៈបុគ្គល (កម្រិត មីក្រូ) ដែលពួកគាត់បានប្រើប្រាស់ដើម្បីដោះស្រាយបញ្ហាទាំងនោះ។ ហេតុដូច្នេះ នាងខ្ញុំសូមគោរពអញ្ជើញ លោក ស្រី/អ្នកនាង/កញ្ញា ចូលរួមនៅក្នុងការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ។ ការចូលរួមរបស់លោកស្រី/អ្នកនាង/កញ្ញា គឺជាការស្ម័គ្រ ចិត្តទាំងស្រុង ហើយការសម្រេចចិត្តចូលរួម ឬមិនចូលរួមក្នុងការសិក្សានេះនឹងមិនផ្តល់ការប៉ះពាល់ដល់អ្នកឡើយ។

តើអ្វីជាគោលបំណងនៃការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ?

នៅក្នុងដំណើរការនៃការចាប់ផ្តើម និងប្រតិបត្តិការសហគ្រាសមួយ សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីតែងជួបប្រទះបញ្ហាជាច្រើន ដែល ជាទូទៅកើតឡើងដោយឥតព្រៀងទុក ហើយបង្កការរាំងស្ទះដល់ដំណើរការជំនួញរបស់ពួកគាត់។ ដំណើរការនៃការ ដោះស្រាយទៅនឹងបញ្ហាទាំងនោះមានលក្ខណៈខុសៗគ្នា យោងទៅតាមបុគ្គលិកលក្ខណៈ សមត្ថភាព គោលគំនិត ឬ អាកប្បកិរិយារបស់បុគ្គលនីមួយៗ។ ហេតុដូច្នេះហើយ ទើបការសិក្សានេះ មានគោលបំណងធ្វើការស្រាវជ្រាវដោយ ហ្មត់ចត់ទៅលើវិធីសាស្ត្រ ដែលសហគ្រិនស្ត្រីបានប្រើប្រាស់ដើម្បីដោះស្រាយ ឬគ្រប់គ្រងព្រឹត្តិការណ៍/បញ្ហា ដែល ឥតព្រៀងទុក ក្នុងកំឡុងពេលកសាងសហគ្រាសថ្មី ដោយការសិក្សានេះនឹងប្រើប្រាស់ទ្រឹស្តីមីក្រូមូលដ្ឋាន ដែលផ្តោត ទៅលើថ្នាក់បុគ្គល (កម្រិតមីក្រូ)។

លទ្ធផលទទួលបានពីការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ នឹងត្រូវបង្ហាញនៅក្នុងនិក្ខេបបទថ្នាក់អនុបណ្ឌិតរបស់នាងខ្ញុំ និងអាច ត្រូវប្រើប្រាស់ក្នុងការបោះពុម្ពផ្សាយជាលក្ខណៈសិក្សា បទបង្ហាញ ឬសន្និសីទផ្សេងៗ។

តើអ្នកស្វែងរកខ្ញុំដោយវិធីណា ហើយហេតុអ្វីអញ្ជើញខ្ញុំអោយចូលរួមក្នុងការសិក្សានេះ?

អ្នកត្រូវបានអញ្ជើញចូលរួមក្នុងការសិក្សានេះ ដោយសារអ្នកជាអ្នកចូលរួម ដែលមានសក្តានុពល និងជាសហគ្រិន ស្ត្រីម្នាក់ (អាចជាសហគ្រិនដែលធ្លាប់មានបទពិសោធន៍ធ្វើជំនួញ ឬកំពុងដំណើរការមុខជំនួញណាមួយ)។ អ្នក ប្រហែលជាត្រូវបានអញ្ជើញចូលរួមតាមរយៈបុគ្គលណាម្នាក់ នៅក្នុងបណ្តាញផ្ទាល់ខ្លួន ឬការងាររបស់អ្នក ដោយពួក គាត់បានណែនាំបន្តនូវសហគ្រិន ដែលមានសក្តានុពល ហើយអាចនឹងចាប់អារម្មណ៍ក្នុងការចូលរួមការសិក្សានេះ ឬ តាមរយៈការផ្សព្វផ្សាយ ដែលនាងខ្ញុំបានផ្ញើទៅកាន់ស្ថាប័ន ឬសមាគមសហគ្រិនណាមួយដែលអ្នកជាសមាជិក។

តើខ្ញុំត្រូវផ្តល់ព័ត៌មានក្នុងការយល់ព្រមចូលរួមការសិក្សានេះដោយរបៀបណា?

ដើម្បីចូលរួមក្នុងការសិក្សានេះ សូមអ្នកបំពេញ ចុះហត្ថលេខា និងផ្ញើទម្រង់បែបបទព្រមព្រៀង ដែលត្រូវបានភ្ជាប់ ក្នុង Email នេះ។ ការចូលរួមរបស់អ្នកក្នុងការសិក្សានេះ គឺជាជម្រើសរបស់អ្នកទាំងស្រុង ហើយ អ្នកមានសិទ្ធិក្នុងការ ដកខ្លួនចេញគ្រប់ពេល។ ក្នុងករណីនេះ អ្នកអាចមានជម្រើសរវាង លុបចោលទិន្នន័យណាមួយដែលអាចសន្និដ្ឋានថា ទាក់ទងនឹងអ្នក ឬនៅបន្តអនុញ្ញាតអោយប្រើប្រាស់ទិន្នន័យនោះ។ យ៉ាងណាមិញ នៅពេលដែលលទ្ធផលសិក្សាត្រូវ បានបញ្ចប់ ការលុបចោលទិន្នន័យនឹងមិនអាចប្រព្រឹត្តទៅបានឡើយ។

តើការសិក្សានេះ នឹងប្រព្រឹត្តទៅដូចម្តេច?

ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ មានគោលបំណងក្នុងការប្រមូលព័ត៌មាន ដែលទាក់ទងទៅនឹងបទពិសោធន៍របស់អ្នក ក្នុងការដោះស្រាយបញ្ហា ដែលឥតព្រៀងទុក ហើយបានកើតឡើងក្នុងកំឡុងពេលដំណើរការសហគ្រាសរបស់អ្នក។ អ្នកនឹងត្រូវបានសម្ភាសន៍ដោយនាងខ្ញុំផ្ទាល់ ក្នុងរយៈពេលរវាង ៥៥ ទៅ ៩០នាទី នៅថ្ងៃណាមួយ ដែលសមស្របសម្រាប់អ្នក។ កិច្ចសម្ភាសន៍នេះអាចនឹងត្រូវធ្វើឡើងនាហាងកាហ្វេណាមួយ ឬការិយាល័យរបស់អ្នកផ្ទាល់ ទៅតាមជម្រើសរបស់អ្នក។ កិច្ចសម្ភាសន៍នេះនឹងត្រូវថតជាសម្លេងដោយទូរស័ព្ទដែលរបស់ខ្ញុំផ្ទាល់ និងត្រូវចម្លងជាអក្សរដោយអ្នកបកប្រែ និងចម្លង ដែលត្រូវបានអុយធាត និងមានវិជ្ជាជីវៈច្បាស់លាស់។ ក្នុងករណីនេះ ព័ត៌មានរបស់អ្នក និងសហគ្រាសរបស់អ្នកនឹងមិនត្រូវបានបើកបង្ហាញ ហើយឈ្មោះក្លែងក្លាយ នឹងត្រូវបានប្រើប្រាស់ជំនួសឈ្មោះពិតរបស់អ្នក។ ទិន្នន័យដែលប្រមូលបាន នឹងត្រូវបានវិភាគដោយនាងខ្ញុំផ្ទាល់ បន្ទាប់មកនឹងត្រូវទុកដោយមានសុវត្ថិភាពនៅក្នុងកុំព្យូទ័រ ដែលរក្សាដោយលេខសម្ងាត់។

តើការសិក្សានេះអាចផ្តល់នូវការរំខានផ្លូវចិត្ត ឬហានិភ័យដល់ខ្ញុំដែរ ឬទេ?

បើទោះជាគ្មានការរំពឹងថា នឹងមានការរំខានផ្លូវចិត្ត ឬហានិភ័យ ណាមួយកើតឡើងដល់អ្នក នៅក្នុងគម្រោងស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ ប៉ុន្តែនាងខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថាអាចនឹងមានករណី ដែលសំណួរខ្លះអាចផ្តល់ការរំខានផ្លូវចិត្តតិចតួច ដូចជាសំណួរ ដែលតម្រូវអោយអ្នកពណ៌នានូវបញ្ហា កើតឡើងឥតព្រៀងទុក ក្នុងកំឡុងពេលដំណើរការជំនួញរបស់អ្នក។

តើការរំខានផ្លូវចិត្ត ឬហានិភ័យនេះ អាចកាត់បន្ថយតាមវិធីណា?

សូមបញ្ជាក់ថាព័ត៌មានរបស់អ្នក និងសហគ្រាសរបស់អ្នកនឹងមិនត្រូវបានបើកបង្ហាញនៅក្នុងការសិក្សានេះឡើយ។ បន្ថែមពីនេះ ការចូលរួមរបស់អ្នកក្នុងការសិក្សានេះ គឺជាការស្ម័គ្រចិត្ត ហេតុដូច្នេះ អ្នកមានសិទ្ធិក្នុងការឆ្លើយ ឬមិនឆ្លើយនៅសំណួរណា ដែលអ្នកមានអារម្មណ៍មិនល្អក្នុងការឆ្លើយតប ឬអ្នកអាចដកខ្លួនចេញពីការសិក្សានេះ ក្នុងករណីត្រូវការ។ លើសពីនេះ ដើម្បីធានាពីភាពសុក្រិតនៃទិន្នន័យ អ្នកនឹងទទួលបានកំណត់ត្រានៃកិច្ចសម្ភាសន៍ដើម្បីផ្ទៀងផ្ទាត់ ឬធ្វើការកែប្រែ ឬបន្ថែមព័ត៌មាន ទៅតាមដែលអ្នកចង់បាន មុនពេលទិន្នន័យត្រូវបានវិភាគ។

តើការសិក្សានេះ មានអត្ថប្រយោជន៍អ្វីខ្លះ?

យើងសង្ឃឹមថា ការសិក្សានេះនឹងផ្តល់អត្ថប្រយោជន៍ដល់សហគមន៍សហគ្រិននៅកម្ពុជា ជាពិសេសស្ត្រី។ លទ្ធផលនៃការសិក្សានេះអាចនឹងផ្តល់ ចំនេះដឹងបន្ថែមអំពីបញ្ហាឥតព្រៀងទុក និងដំណោះស្រាយ ដែលបានប្រើប្រាស់ ដែលនេះអាចរក្សាជាជំនួយសម្រាប់សហគ្រិនស្ត្រីនាពេលអនាគត។ បន្ថែមពីនេះ លទ្ធផលទាំងនេះអាចនឹងផ្តល់នូវទស្សនវិស័យ ដល់រដ្ឋាភិបាល និងអ្នកចងក្រងច្បាប់ ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងវិធីសាស្ត្រ ដែលសហគ្រិនស្ត្រីបានឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងបញ្ហា ដែលការណ៍នេះអាចប្រើប្រាស់ក្នុងការអភិវឌ្ឍគោលនយោបាយ ឬគម្រោងការងារ ដើម្បីផ្តល់ការគាំទ្រដល់សហគ្រិននាពេលអនាគត។ សម្រាប់សហគ្រិន ដែលចូលរួមផ្ទាល់ ការសិក្សានេះនឹងដើរតួជាការឆ្លុះបញ្ចាំង ទៅលើសកម្មភាព និងដំណោះស្រាយផ្ទាល់ខ្លួន ដែលអ្នកបានប្រើប្រាស់ ហើយមានប្រសិទ្ធភាពនៅក្នុងដំណើរការសហគ្រាសរបស់អ្នក ដែលអាចអភិវឌ្ឍជាគោលការណ៍យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ ដើម្បីដោះស្រាយបញ្ហាទាំងនោះអោយមានប្រសិទ្ធភាពជាងមុន ឬបង្ការបញ្ហាដដែល ឬស្រដៀងគ្នា កុំអោយការកើតឡើងនាពេលអនាគត។

តើការសម្ងាត់របស់ខ្ញុំ នឹងត្រូវបានការពារយ៉ាងដូចម្តេច?

ដូចបានបញ្ជាក់ពីខាងលើ ព័ត៌មានផ្ទាល់ខ្លួនរបស់អ្នកនឹងត្រូវបានការពារ ដោយការសម្ងាត់ត្រូវបានរក្សាយ៉ាងពេញលេញ។ ឈ្មោះអ្នក និងសហគ្រាសរបស់អ្នកនឹងមិនត្រូវបានបើកបង្ហាញ ហើយ ឈ្មោះក្លែងក្លាយ នឹងត្រូវបានប្រើប្រាស់ជំនួសឈ្មោះពិតរបស់អ្នក។

តើមានការចំណាយអ្វីខ្លះ ក្នុងការចូលរួមការសិក្សានេះ?

ការចំណាយតែមួយគត់របស់អ្នកក្នុងការចូលរួមការសិក្សានេះ គឺជាពេលវេលាដែលមានតម្លៃរបស់អ្នក។ នាងខ្ញុំទទួលស្គាល់ថាអ្នកពិតជាមានការងាររស់ច្រើន ហេតុដូច្នោះនាងខ្ញុំនឹងព្យាយាមរៀបចំកិច្ចសម្ភាសន៍នេះមិនអោយលើសពីរយៈពេលរវាង ៤៥ ទៅ ៩០នាទី។

តើខ្ញុំមានរយៈពេលប៉ុន្មាន ក្នុងការសម្រេចចិត្តលើការអញ្ជើញនេះ?

ដោយរយៈពេលនៃគម្រោងសិក្សានេះមានកំណត់ អ្នកមានពេល ២សប្តាហ៍ក្នុងការបញ្ជាក់ពីការចូលរួមរបស់អ្នកក្នុងការសិក្សានេះ ដោយធ្វើការបំពេញ ចុះហត្ថលេខា និងផ្ញើទម្រង់បែបបទព្រមព្រៀង ដែលត្រូវបានភ្ជាប់ក្នុង Email នេះ ត្រលប់មកវិញ។

តើខ្ញុំនឹងទទួលបានការព័ត៌មានពីលទ្ធផល ដែលទទួលបានពីការសិក្សានេះដែរ ឬទេ?

ចាំ ក្នុងករណីចង់បាន អ្នកអាចធ្វើការស្នើសុំនូវលទ្ធផលសង្ខេបពីការសិក្សានេះ បន្ទាប់ពីការសិក្សានេះបានបញ្ចប់។

តើខ្ញុំត្រូវធ្វើដូចម្តេច បើខ្ញុំមានកង្វល់ទាក់ទងនឹងការសិក្សានេះ?

ក្នុងករណីអ្នកមានកង្វល់ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងគម្រោងនេះ អ្នកអាចទាក់ទងដោយផ្ទាល់ទៅកាន់ អ្នកត្រួតពិនិត្យគម្រោង៖ បណ្ឌិត Marcus Ho, Email: Marcus.ho@aut.ac.nz , លេខទូរស័ព្ទ 09 921 9999 Ext: 5448

ក្នុងករណីអ្នកមានកង្វល់ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងការប្រតិបត្តិការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ សូមទាក់ទងទៅកាន់ លេខាធិការប្រតិបត្តិការនៃគណៈកម្មការ AUTECH៖ Kate O'Connor, Email: ethics@aut.ac.nz , លេខទូរស័ព្ទ 921 9999 Ext: 6038

តើខ្ញុំត្រូវទាក់ទងតាមវិធីណា ដើម្បីទទួលបានព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមពីការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ?

សូមរក្សាព្រឹត្តិបត្រព័ត៌មាននេះ និងច្បាប់ចម្លងនៃ ទម្រង់បែបបទព្រមព្រៀង ទុកជាឯកសារយោងនាពេលអនាគត។ អ្នកក៏អាចទាក់ទងអ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវដោយផ្ទាល់ តាមវិធីដូចខាងក្រោម៖

លេខទំនាក់ទំនងអ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវ៖

ឈ្មោះ៖ ជា ចេតនា
Email: chetnachea@gmail.com

លេខទំនាក់ទំនងអ្នកត្រួតពិនិត្យគម្រោងសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវ៖

ឈ្មោះ៖ Marcus Ho
Email: marcus.ho@aut.ac.nz

បានបញ្ជាក់ និងយល់ព្រមពីគណៈកម្មការក្រុមសីលធម៌នៃសាកលវិទ្យាល័យអាកឡេននៃបច្ចេកវិទ្យា ចុះនៅថ្ងៃទី ២២ ខែ វិច្ឆិកា ឆ្នាំ ២០១៩ លេខឯកសារយោងពីAUTECH ១៩/៣៩៤។

Appendix D-1: Consent Form (English)

Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

Project title: *“Women entrepreneurs in Cambodia: Microfoundations of surprises and unexpected events in the entrepreneurial journey”*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Marcus Ho and Dr. Betty Ofe-Grant*

Researcher: *Chetna CHEA*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 07 November 2019.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant’s signature :

.....

Participant’s name:

.....

Participant’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **22 November 2019**,

AUTEC Reference number **19/394**.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D-2: Consent Form (Khmer)

ទម្រង់បែបបទឧប្បត្តិស្នេហា

ស្រី

«ស

នភាព»

ឥ Marcus Ho

ឥ Betty Ofe-Grant

○

○

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(ជា ខ)

○

○

○

(ស្រី ឈ្មោះ) បាទ/ចាស ○

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ម (ស្រី)

.....

.....

ឯកសារ AUTECH ១៩/៣

Appendix E: Interview Questionnaire

Indicative Questionnaire

HISTORY OF ENTREPRENEUR AND VENTURE

1. Can you please tell me about yourself, your education, your family and so on?
2. Can you describe your career/ business path which leads you to running your current enterprise?
3. How long have you started your business/enterprise?
4. What inspired you to start this business?
5. How would you describe your business?
6. How competitive is your business industry, and what are your business special features to compete in this challenging industry?
7. Who are your major business stakeholders? What are the significant roles they play in your business process?

SURPRISE AND CHALLENGES

1. Can you tell me about a time in your entrepreneurial journey when you have faced an organisational unexpected problem/challenge which affected your enterprise?
2. Describe me what made this such a surprise/unexpected event?
3. How did it impact yourself and the organisation? What are the actions you took to solve this problem? What were the resources which helped you to arise from the challenges?
4. Do you think an individual's characteristics have effects on the ways they solve problems? In your case, which of your characteristics do you think contribute to the responding to the problems above? Can you elaborate how they took part in solving the problems?
5. In terms of your knowledge and skills, do you think they contribute to the solving of the problems as well? If yes, can you explain what are the roles they played in dealing with these issues?

6. How does your network/social interactions influence the effectiveness of organisational solutions towards the problems? In your case, can you describe how your internal networks assisted the process of addressing the problems?
7. Do you think an entrepreneur's vision/cognitive shapes the culture and strategies of the organisation? If yes, can you give an example of your beliefs/perceptions toward the unexpected events in the earlier mentioned. (How did you view and feel about the problems and how did it impact the undertaken actions).
8. Do you think there are other contributors of an individual which take part in making changes in the business/enterprise?

CAMBODIAN CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT

1. Are there any legislative or political issues you had to deal with or that you have to take into account when you started your company?
2. What cultural, or social pressures shaped the way you started your company?
3. Do you think these pressures/challenges would be different for male entrepreneurs?
4. What are the things you think would have been done differently if you had been a man?
5. Do you think you would have been more successful if you were a male entrepreneur?

SURPRISE/UNEXPECTED EVENTS AND WELL-BEING

1. From your journey, can you think of how you managed your health and wellbeing in the process of managing the surprise/unexpected event?
2. How do you feel now about handling those surprises/unexpected events?
3. How much of that particular (difficult) event helped you with future surprises and unexpected events?
4. What would you advise people in those situations?
5. Do you have anything to add at the end of this interview? Or do you have any further questions related to this interview?

Appendix F-1: Confidentiality Agreement (English)

Confidentiality Agreement

For someone transcribing data, e.g. audio-tapes of interviews.

Project title: *“Women entrepreneurs in Cambodia: Microfoundations of surprises and unexpected events in the entrepreneurial journey”*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Marcus Ho and Dr. Betty Ofe-Grant*

Researcher: *Chetna CHEA*

- I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber’s signature:

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Transcriber’s name:

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Transcriber’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

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Date:

Project Supervisor’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

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Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **22 November 2019**,

AUTEC Reference number **19/394**.

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix F-2: Confidentiality Agreement (Khmer)

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Marcus Ho

Betty Ofe-Grant

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