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GENDER AND ENTREPRENUERIAL ORIENTATION IN SOME SELLECTED SMALL BUSINESSES IN MAKINDYE DIVISION-UGANDA

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ABSTRACT
This study aimed at examining the entrepreneurial orientation of both male and female entrepreneurs with the view to finding out which among the two sexes is better. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted using a sample of 132 small businesses from Kabalagala, Kansanga, Bunga and Ggaba (all along Ggaba Road). The study developed and tested one hypothesis. The study found insignificant different between entrepreneurial orientation of male and female entrepreneurs and thus, it was concluded that gender variation have no significant influence on the entrepreneurial orientation in Makindye Division. Therefore equal assistance to entrepreneurs (in terms of workshops, tax relief, simplification of lending regulations etc) should be provided by the Department of Commerce and Industry.

Key words: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial orientation, free-market.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals who recognize market opportunities are free to use their capital, time, and talents to pursue those opportunities for profit. Entrepreneurship can therefore be defined as the mobilization of resources to take advantage of an opportunity to provide customers with new or improved goods and services (Dess Lumpkin and Eisner, 2010). The movement of entrepreneurship towards the business mainstream began in the early 1980s after Steve Jobs of Apple computer and other high tech entrepreneurs gained national attention by going public-that is, selling stock in the companies (Boone and Kurtz, 2002). Today's entrepreneurship are reaping the benefits of growing interest among investors and the application are made possible by new technology.

The globalization of business has created many opportunities for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are marketing their products abroad and hiring international talent. For instance among the fastest-growing small United States companies, almost two of every five have international sales (Kurtz and Green, 2009). The growth in entrepreneurship is a worldwide phenomenon.

The role of entrepreneurship is growing in most industrialized and in the emerging free-market countries even among industrialized nations. In a study of ten countries, the United States had the highest level of entrepreneurship, with one out of twelve people involved in starting or expanding a business (Ewing, 1999).

In Uganda, it is noticed that, women owned businesses are rapidly increasing. This may probably be due to unprecedented educational and financial opportunities now available. Most women starting business ten or more years ago lacked managerial experience and generally had worked in the more traditional female occupations such as retail sales, or teaching. Today, women entrepreneurs are more likely to match male entrepreneurs in terms of business performance. The question here is that, what is responsible for that? This study therefore attempts to compare the entrepreneurial orientation of male and female entrepreneurs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars in entrepreneurship have for long recognized the dimension of entrepreneurial orientation particularly for small firms. Lumpkin and Dess (1996), described entrepreneurial orientation as the process, practice and decision making activity that leads to new entry.

They delineated five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation including innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy, which underlies nearly all entrepreneurial process.

According to Certo et al (2009), innovations is an organization's tendency to engage in and support new idea, novelty, experimentation and creative processes that may result in new products, services or technological processes, as well as the pursuit of creative usual, or new solutions to problems and needs.

Risk-taking involves taking bold actions, by returning into the unknown, borrowing heavily, and /or committing significant resources to venture into un known environments (Margaret, 2012). Pro-activeness is an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective characterized by introduction of new products and services a head of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand (miller, 1983). Competitive aggressiveness is the intensity of a firm's effort to outperform rivals and is characterized by a strong offensive Posture or aggressive response to the actions of competitions (Lumpkin and Dess 2001). Autonomy is the independent action undertaken by entrepreneurial leaders or teams directed at bringing about a new venture and seeing it to fruition (Bird, 1989).

Existing research shows that each of these sub-dimensions may make unique contributions o the level of a firm's entrepreneurial orientation. This implies that each of these sub-dimensions of entrepreneurial orientations may have a differential relationship with entrepreneurial outcomes. For instance, according to Kressor et al (2002), risk taking have a curvilinear relationship with performance, while innovation has a positive and direct relationship with performance.

Given the importance of entrepreneurship to business performance, entrepreneurial orientation could be an important measure of the way a business is organized. The role of entrepreneurial orientation to the survival and performance of business firms has been acknowledged in the entrepreneurship literature (Smart and Conant, 194, Wikland) and Shepherded, 2005; Tat et al, 2007). Entrepreneurial orientation enhances the performance benefit of the resources of firms through focusing attention on the civilization of these resources to discover and exploits opportunities (Ibeh, 2004). This implies that entrepreneurial orientation can explain, in part, the managerial processes that allow some firms to be ahead of the competition.

women-owned businesses are one of the fastest growing sectors in many parts of the world. In parts this growth represents the orientation and a actions of a new group of women starting business (Kurtz and green 2009). In a related study carried by the same author, the performance of private business with of at least 50

percent female ownership increased by 20% in United States, and about 30 percent of all business are majority owned by women, with another 18 percent equally owned women and men.

Hypothesis

The study hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the entrepreneurial orientation of male and female entrepreneurs.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and data collection

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Standardized questionnaire was used to collect data. Variables in the questionnaire included background information and entrepreneurial orientation.

Most of the small businesses in Makindye Division are found along Ggaba road. This area was adopted as the study site. As such the population of this study was small businesses that were located along Ggaba road with clusters in Kabalagala, Kansanga, Bunga and Ggaba. Small businesses with at least 3 years business experience were selected. 132 questionnaires were distributed randomly, and requested the questionnaires to be completed by the owner managers. Out of the 132 questionnaires distributed, 92 responses were received which were used for the quantitative analysis. It represented a usable response rate of 69.7%. T-Test was used to analyze the data.

Measures

Entrepreneurial orientation; This study adopted the Namen and Slevin (1993) definitions of entrepreneurial orientation dimensions as follows. Innovativeness consists of three questions to measure: willingness to try new ways of doing things, willingness to encourage people to think and behave originally, and management responses to the adoption of new ways of doing things by main competitors. Risk-taking consists of three questions to measure: the willingness of the organization to borrow from lending institutions for further investment, large capital commitment to ventures with uncertain outcomes and willingness to venture into untested market. Pro-activeness consisted of two questions to measure: firm emphasis on Research and Development, and firms' ability to market a new line of product. Competitive aggressiveness consists of two questions to measure: firms' reaction to competitive trends and initiating actions to which competitors have to respond. Autonomy comprised two questions to measure; independent action by an individual as it aimed at bringing forth a business concept or vision and carrying it through to competition.

Demographic characteristics; this included gender measured as a binary variable with males assigned as one and female as two. Educational level was measured ranging from degree as 1 to certificates as 3 and others as 4. Industry type was measured as 1-=service, 2=retail and 3=manufacturing. Experience was measured as the number of years in business. Firm size was measured as the number of employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondent's Background.

Of the 92 respondents, 65.2% were males and the remaining 34.8% were females. Majority of the respondents aged between 26 years and 35 years (70.29%) followed by those 36 years and above with 22.7%. In terms of business experience, majority of the respondents started business not long ago. Those that have 5 years and below business experience contributed 44.7% and another 44.7% were those between 6 years and 10 years. 53.2% of the business offer services, 34% manufacturing, while others constituted 12.8%. 68.1% of the entrepreneurs were degree holders, 19.1% were diploma holders, 8.8% had certificates and others 4%.

Dependent variable

Entrepreneurial orientation was the dependent variable with five items namely: Pro-activeness, innovativeness; risk bearing; competitive aggressiveness; and autonomy. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of entrepreneurial orientation of respondents' via gender.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the items

Item	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pro-activeness	Male female	3.034 2.685	1.485 1.537
Innovativeness	Male female	3.800 4.344	1.495 0.769
Risk-bearing	Male female	4.000 2.282	0.864 0.768
Competitive aggressiveness	Male female	2.900 2.901	1.273 1.281
Autonomy	Male female	4.221 3.438	1.223 0.814

Source: Results of data analysis, 2022

Table 1 indicates that male entrepreneurs were better than female entrepreneurs in terms of pro-activeness, risk-bearing and autonomy (with means= 3.04, 4.00 and 4.221 respectively). While on the other hand, female entrepreneurs were better than males in terms of innovativeness and competitive aggressiveness (with means=4.344 and 2.901 respectively).

Testing of Hypothesis

To test the hypothesis that there are no significant differences between male and female entrepreneurs in terms of entrepreneurial orientations, student t-test was used, and the following results were obtained as shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Group Statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std.Dev	Std.Error Mean
Male	60	3.591	0.591	0.2642
Female	32	2.830	1.034	0.5245

Source: Results of data analysis, 2022

Table 3: Independent samples test

	F	Sig	t	dt	Sig (2-tailed)
Equal variance assumed	0.904	0.373	1.389	90	0.208
Equal variance not assumed			1.299	4.498	0.256

Source: Results of data analysis, 2022

Table 2 indicates that male entrepreneurs (with mean=3.951`) rated themselves slightly better than their female counterparts (with mean=2.830) at entrepreneurial orientation. However, since the calculated sig (2-tailed) value of 0.208 is greater than the level of significance (0.05), it means that the t-value is not significant enough and hence at 5% level of significant we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference between the entrepreneurial orientation of male and female entrepreneurs in Makynde Division, Kampala, Uganda.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, we concluded that gender variation did not influence the entrepreneurial orientation in Makindye Division. This means that the high business performance of the female entrepreneurs (as observed) was not as a result of entrepreneurial orientation differences, but rather some factors else (such

as business competencies) may be responsible. Therefore a continued research effort is needed to understand the influence of other factors on firms' performance.

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