

Gender Diversity and Entrepreneurship Development: The Nigeria Perspective

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Abstract

This work explored gender differences attributed to the motivators a group of entrepreneurs in a Nigerian city have in opting to run their own business. It uses the existing theoretical framework of push and pulls factors to determine the motivation for male and female entrepreneurs to be in business and explore the potential gender differences that may exist within the entrepreneurial motivations. The study used a mixed research approach by bringing in qualitative and inductive reasoning. The study found that males were significantly different from females in their reasons for starting a business; as one example, more female entrepreneurs expected to enjoy their jobs compared with the men even though many of them expressed that they do not have other satisfying jobs. The results of this research work identified some differences which are peculiar to only Nigerian entrepreneurs; they should not be used to infer equivalent gender differences in other countries except where these studies are replicated.

Keywords: Gender, Diversity, Demographics, Entrepreneurship, Development

1. Introduction

Government efforts in many nations now place greater attention on the empowerment of its populace by redirecting the attention of its able-bodied men and women to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. These initiatives are most welcoming, particularly in the case of developing countries where women's place has been considered to be at home taking care of the family or parents Adesua-Lincoln (2009). Although women have responded positively to the government's efforts towards them and started joining the workforce either as a paid employee or self-employed, women are still an underrepresented group within entrepreneurship and within the higher positions in organisations (Patterson et al. 2012). Recently, the world recorded an upsurge in the number of women involved in entrepreneurial activities yet there is still a large gap between the two genders in what they are currently achieving in business (Kirkwood, 2009). It is acknowledged that a higher percentage of men are engaged in entrepreneurial activities in developed and developing economies for various reasons). Along this line, Zoltan et al (2011) argued that women may find it harder to get motivated for their business intentions in established institutions and are forced to be self-motivated through working in their enterprises. The self-employment option is echoed by several other researchers who suggest that self-employment may be the only available alternative to unemployment and this mainly because of dissatisfaction from previous jobs, difficulties to re-enter the labour market, the 'glass ceiling' and

family-related matters (Mattis, 2004). This wave of women joining the workforce has developed into serious issues that called the attention of researchers to look into gender differences across the world in various business disciplines including entrepreneurship.

Whether an economy is developed or not, the discrimination that surrounds the gender peculiarities of individual rights is always coming up (Verheul et al, 2006). The gender issue is a subject that can generate heated arguments and are most noticeable when discussants try to impress their opinion on others in areas of economic and social significance. One such economically significant theme that cannot be trivialised is when the male entrepreneur sees his female counterpart getting involved in an area meant for men alone. Some studies mention that women are behind men when it comes to socio-economic development; other studies point out women are living below the poverty line with the possibilities of getting the worst effect of economic recessions (Aigboje, 2000; Kargwell, 2012 & Abimbola, 2011). According to Aigboje (2000), this issue of gender inequality has been known to attract much attention because several reports evoke contradictory inferences about the effect of gender peculiarities on how men and women fare during economic adjustments. In connection to this, Hughes (2003) asked the questions 'Have workers been pulled into self-employment by a growing entrepreneurial culture and the desire for independence and autonomy? Or have they been pushed into such work, as restructuring, downsizing and

flexibility employment practices have eroded once secure jobs?' Dawson and Henley (2011) also raised the question relating to "whether women are more likely to report "push" motives to do with a desire for flexible work, whereas men are more likely to be motivated by financial and market-led concerns". According to Kirkwood (2009:) researchers have devoted "relatively little attention" in determining whether gender differences exist in the push and pull motivators for becoming an entrepreneur. There is unquestionably a lack of empirical research regarding gender differences and their association with entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The study is amongst the first of its kind to bridge this gap. Its purpose is to explore the motivational factors of women and men as entrepreneurs and determine whether gender differences exist and if so, the implications of the same. This study thus helps to provide some empirical and qualitative evidence on gender differences from the entrepreneurial sector in Nigeria

The Problem

There has been the challenge of having women as an entrepreneur because of the confidence of delivery and sensitivity to the business economy. There is also a concern about the successes and succession nature of women in business. In the bid to test the successful nature of women, it is important to determine the motives people have to be self-employed and join the entrepreneurial field accordingly irrespective of sex. Furthermore, the society throws up some key social-economic consequences which

need to be addressed around survival, belongingness and actualisation divides of Maslow hierarchical theory of needs. Hence the study will attempt to address the imbalance of women entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development.

Objectives

1. To examine the influence of gender demography on entrepreneurial development
2. To examine the influence of gender diversity on entrepreneurship development.

2. Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Gender Issues in Entrepreneurship

Gender issues in entrepreneurship are known to have been of great significance to national governments since time immemorial (Abubakar, 2010; Abimbola et al, 2011; Adewusi & Boolaky, 2012, Zoltan et al, 2011). In a recent publication, Kargwell, (2012) probed the issues of gender equality as it affected the UAE. His interest was to probe the reasons for the reluctance of Emirati women to become entrepreneurs. It was suggested that religion may be a determining factor that precluded initiatives of the female gender from the actualisation of business innovations to that of child-birth and rearing, running a household and more. The study of Dana (2009) also viewed religion as one of the explanatory variables as to why people decide to choose an entrepreneurial path or not. He observes that religion provides a set

of values that influence in various ways the attitude towards entrepreneurial activities. Hence religion could affect the local views on entrepreneurship that the community finds it hard to imagine women as entrepreneurs and decision-makers in the process. In UAE, women are not expected to just pick any business but for those acceptable by culture and religion (Kargwell 2012). Thus culture also influences the path towards entrepreneurship; for instance, what importance men and women give to money and status. Thus there is a notable difference in how women source funds for their businesses and eventually distribute them by channels completely different from that of men because men are naturally expected to be independent where women are not (Adesua-Lincoln, 2011). In the same light Max and Ballereau (2013) opined that other things being equal, women are less likely to become an entrepreneur simply because of their gender. Similarly, Thebaud (2010) suggests that women find it harder to be involved in business ownership because of the structural disadvantage of women to acquire resources. As mentioned above, in the case of Nigeria that is viewed to be more masculine than feminine in terms of Hofstede's categorisation, men are supposed to live for work and make money to care for the family (Kabeer, 202;). The tendency for women to have a preference for their families could be a limiting factor to entrepreneurship but could also be a driving factor (Moult and Anderson, 2005).

If the government is to continue to invest in encouraging its citizens to become self-reliant and able to add to the economic

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health of society, the government needs to know the field of action for encouraging entrepreneurial initiatives and motivation. Becoming an entrepreneur avails every individual the impetus to actualise innermost imaginations about how to make a living and hence frees the government to find jobs for its population (Akpor-Robaro, 2012). This yearning to achieve something out of life is exhibited by all in a varying degree of ways, where some chose the path of taking employment in public or private enterprises and thus be employed; others chose the path of self-employment or entrepreneurship (Dawson et al 2009). In this self-employment option, several forms of motivation are reported in the literature; while some emerged with ideas that promote trading activities, others evolved with innovations that created new products and activities (Dana, 1997). Thus there have been several attempts to explain what entrepreneurship is all about and what it implies. Both male and female members of the population are in a position to accomplish the same although potential barriers exist and that might be specific to either the male or female entrepreneur. Olawale & Garwe (2010) attributed obstacles to the growth of entrepreneurship towards national development as highly dependent on lack of access to finances whereas Mayoux (2001) mentioned that gender restrictions can be traced to the mushrooming of women's participation in business activities.

Some studies have established that the "push" factors occasion entrepreneurial motives in the majority of cases: (McKenna,

1997; Hisrich and Brush, 1985, Kirkwood, 2009). Other studies oppose this view and conclude that the main motives for entrepreneurs to run an entrepreneurial venture are the “pull” factors (Orhan and Scott, 2001; Keeble et al., 1992). Interestingly, Watson et al (1998) found that the different pull and push factors do not have the same level of importance for entrepreneurs. The push factors, (i.e., people were 'pushed', out of necessity into entrepreneurial activities), that seemed to dominate were redundancy, unemployment, frustration with previous employment, and the need to earn a reasonable living whereas in as far as pull factors are concerned these were independence, being one's boss, using creative skills, doing enjoyable work and making a lot of money. Other studies disagree on the motives of male and female entrepreneurs to be in business. Some argue that men embrace the entrepreneurial path mainly due to pull factors (Birley and Westhead, 1994; Shane et al, 1991), whilst women tend to be pushed to take up entrepreneurial activities due to negative aspects of the corporate working environment, such as discrimination, limitations of the "glass ceiling" and inflexible schedules (Hisrich and Brush, 1985; Brush 1992).

Entrepreneurship and Gender

Concerning gender comparison, views vary and include the fact that there are more similarities between the male and female entrepreneur's motives than differences (Buttner and Moore 1997; Kirkwood 2009). Kirkwood (2009) concluded that both men

and women have personal and legitimate dreams to own a business and become an entrepreneur and their primary aim is the same, that is, to achieve success in the business. Both male and female entrepreneurs search for independence, autonomy, higher income and the opportunity to be one's, own boss. However, differences are noted in the ranking of these reasons by both male and female entrepreneurs. For instance, Mattis (2004) observed that women rank the need for independence and need for greater flexibility first, as they have to balance work and personal life and this is reinforced by Marlow (2006) who found entrepreneurship to be a potential career opportunity for dependent mothers although self-employment did not bring an adequate income to meet their economic needs. Money lies in the third position for female entrepreneurs whilst male entrepreneurs rank money in the first position (Mattis, 2004). This is further acknowledged by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012) in a report revealing that women as entrepreneurs might adopt different behavioural patterns from men and have different expectations as they seem to pay more importance to balance the requirements of the profession and the demands of family life and pay less attention to profits.

Entrepreneurship and Women in Family Life

Various studies have reported the significance of entrepreneurship in family life and responsibilities (DeMartino and

Barbato, 2003). Some studies point in the direction that women prefer to work for themselves and from home to attend to family responsibilities whilst doing their jobs (Mattis, 2004). In Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, female entrepreneurs do not hesitate to convert a part of their house to perform as beauticians, hair-dressers, caterers, tailors, therapists and more giving them responsibilities for dual burdens as mothers and businesswomen (Lincoln, 2012). Likewise, men also try to use a plot in their yards to run a mechanic shop whilst others rent premises that they attend to from very early morning to late evening providing services to their customers (Ayanda and Laraba, 2011). These men proudly wear their uniforms while attending to their tasks and thus providing clear evidence of the status they derived from their job. It is not surprising to hear them utter the words such as it is great to be independent and not to have to abide by the regulations and exigencies of a salaried job. This rejoins the research conducted by Noble (1993) who finds that women see starting a new business as a life strategy while men start a business as a career strategy.

Empirical Review

Sarfaraz, Faghieh and Majd(2014) worked on The relationship between women entrepreneurship and gender equality. The work focused on the degree to which entrepreneurship affects the economy depends on numerous factors, including the quality, gender composition, and type of entrepreneurial activity. Gender equality and female entrepreneurship are key factors in economic development. To study the relationship between

gender equality and the rate of female entrepreneurship, the paper investigated how gender-related economic development and women entrepreneurial activity are related. They characterized the relationship between gender-related development indices (introduced by the United Nations) and different stages of women entrepreneurial activity (created by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, GEM) through a correlation analysis. The results suggested that female entrepreneurial activity is not significantly correlated with gender equality. The study revealed that gender does not correlate with what constitutes entrepreneurship success.

Bullough,.., Guelich,.., Manolova, T.S. et al(2021), carried out a study on Women's entrepreneurship and culture: gender role expectations and identities, societal culture, and the entrepreneurial environment. The paper argued that Women's entrepreneurship is increasingly important for creating new jobs and contributing to the social and economic growth of their societies, yet the interplay and nuances of women's entrepreneurship and culture are currently understudied. Eight empirical papers that delve into different aspects of the dynamic interaction between gender and culture in shaping women's entrepreneurship was used. A qualitative paper with, a framework for women's entrepreneurship and culture research to organize the empirical research herein into three interconnected themes was provided: gender role expectations and identities, societal cultural dimensions, and the entrepreneurial environment. This collection was an important step in integrating research on women's entrepreneurship and culture and further exploring these dynamic and complex interactions, in different economic and societal systems and across geographies. Recommendations were made along that line.

Theoretical Framework

The study is hinged on the push and pull factor theory.

The Push factors are attributed to the need for earning a living because of insufficient alternative income or finding it hard to get a job, flexibility at work to take care of family life and responsibilities and dissatisfaction for various reasons with a salaried job (Islam, 2012; Ismail et al, 2012; Ghosh and Cheruvalath, 2007; Dawson and Henley, 2012; McClelland et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2004; Wilson et al., 2004). There are recorded cases of women leaving their positions in larger enterprises to run their businesses for lack of promotion and equal treatment with men in their previous organisations (Orhan and Scott, 2001; McClelland et al., 2005). On the other hand, pull factors relate more to the higher-level needs of human beings as suggested by Abraham Maslow and these relate to self-actualisation such as being one's boss or self-esteem in terms of independence, self-fulfilment and earning more than an average person (Idemobi, 2011; Benzing and Hung, 2009; Segal et al., 2005). This study uses the concepts of push and pulls factors as differentiating ones for why some prefer to pursue an entrepreneurial career instead of enjoying the safety of a well-paid or secure job. It is worth taking into consideration that in term of Hofstede's cultural values (Hofstede et al, 2010), Nigeria is more a collectivist society where long term commitment and loyalty prevail although it has become relatively more individualist since Hofstede's study (Iguisi, 2009). The

Nigerian society also has a preference for avoiding uncertainty, has a short term orientation culture (implying great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save, strong social pressure to keep up with the Joneses, impatience for achieving quick results), is a more masculine society whereby work is valued and competition is seen as positive and logical (The Hofstede Center, 2013)

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy

The concept of entrepreneurial self-efficacy is derived from Social Learning Theory. Self-efficacy is based on individuals' perception of their skills and/or abilities and their competence to perform particular tasks, and it reflects a person's confidence in his/her own ability to succeed in such tasks (Bandura, 1989, Kickul et al., 2008). In an entrepreneurial context, self-efficacy can be defined as an individual's confidence in his or her ability to succeed in entrepreneurial roles and tasks (Chen et al., 1998). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy influences choices, aspirations, and effort, as well as perseverance when entrepreneurs face difficulties (Boyd and Vozikis, 1994), and it plays an important role in the development of an intention to establish and manage a new venture (Kickul et al., 2008, Mueller and Dato-On, 2008). This theory further justifies the pull and push factor in the Nigerian environment which suggests that entrepreneurship is the key and not the gender. Similarly, all that concerns success is dependent on the entrepreneur and not the gender classification of any sought.

Methodological application

This study a review of the literature used a combination of empirical and qualitative scholarship studies to address the investigation. It systematically reviewed the relationship between entrepreneurship and women. It has used a database, widely recognized in the scientific community, and other secondary data to address this study.

4. Discussions

The study was motivated by the important role of women's entrepreneurship for economic, societal, and environmental value creation worldwide. This is in support of the motivational and entrepreneurial roles of women as cited by Humbert & Drew(2010)/ It is widely recognized that women face gender-specific opportunities and challenges in their entrepreneurial endeavours. Yet, research on how gender and culture dynamically interact; how culture affects women's entrepreneurship at multiple levels (i.e., individual, team, company, region, and society as a whole); and how women's entrepreneurial activity, in turn, affects social norms, values, and practices, has so far been fragmented and scattered across multiple theoretical platforms., Akpor- and Robaro (2012).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to both theoretical and practical aspects of factors influencing the motivation of people to join the entrepreneurial sector. It reveals that people in Nigeria have different motives to choose the entrepreneurial path and this

includes both intrinsic factors such as finding enjoyment and job satisfaction in being self-employed and extrinsic factors such as finding a job through entrepreneurship, earning money and having to care for the family. The study further shows that there is no significant difference between male and female entrepreneurs as far as demographic profiles such as age, experience and education are concerned, thus showing irrespective of such factors men and women having these profiles are equally pushed or pulled into self - employment. However, slightly more women compared to men were observed to choose entrepreneurship because it offers them flexibility and a job they enjoy. Although men also enjoy their self-employment, more would be willing to join entrepreneurship because of push factors such as not having any other job and having a family to take care of but the difference between male and female in as far as push factors are concerned is not found to be statistically significant. The same applies to pull factors as there seems to be no significant difference between males and females in their motivation to join the field of entrepreneurship. The main implication of this finding is that both male and female join entrepreneurship for more or less the same reasons. Hence equal opportunities must be given to both to pursue an entrepreneurial path to contribute further to the economic and social development of the country. However, there must be no ambiguity between “push” and “pull” factors as this is important in the design of entrepreneurship policy, especially during a recession. Further

work is needed to provide this clarity to inform policy design.

6. Recommendations

1. Women involvement in the corporate arena should be encouraged devoid of cultural practices
2. The right and enabling environment should be created in the realisation of the uniqueness of entrepreneurship which society and culture promote.

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