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## Moderating Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on the Relationship between Social Dimensions and Business Growth of Small and Medium Manufacturing Firms in Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*Small and Medium enterprises today are realizing that social factors have a lot of bearing to their business performance in terms of pushing sales figures, profit margins and business growth. Entrepreneurs who embrace social dimensions in their business endeavours to quickly build a competitive edge against their competitors by equipping them with necessary skills and knowledge to effectively identify and utilise the opportunities in their areas of operations. However, manufacturing enterprises have stagnated in growth for the last two decades and some facing inordinate closure. The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible association between social dimensions and the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The study focused on manufacturing sector of SMEs in Nairobi County as indicated by role models, social capital and demographics factors and moderated by entrepreneurial education. The research used descriptive survey design. The target population for the study involved all the 600 registered manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County. A sample of 160 SMEs was selected. The SMEs were grouped into six strata because they were not homogeneous. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents from each stratum. Purposive sampling was used to pick on either the production manager or the customer care manager for each of the stratum. The study employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect primary data from the respondents. Data was analysed using SPSS version 20. Based on the findings, it was concluded that social dimensions were found to have significant effect on business growth among SMEs in Nairobi County. Entrepreneurship education as a moderating variable enhanced the growth of SMEs.*

**Keywords:** Social dimensions, business growth, entrepreneurship education

### **1. Introduction**

Entrepreneurship scholar's strife to explain performance by investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial education and firm performance (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005; Zahra & Garvis, 2000). The empirical evidence of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor project shows the existence of the relationship between education and entrepreneurial activities (Bosma & Harding, 2007). According to Chang et al, (2009) entrepreneurship education is a critical resource and can positively influence social dimensions in exploitation of resources towards business growth. This view is shared by Akpor-Robaro (2012) and argued that societies with high number of educated people are expected to produce more entrepreneurs compared to those societies with less number of educated people.

The static nature of the manufacturing sector particularly in Small and Medium Enterprises calls for empirical study to establish the root cause of poor performance. This has, in recent past invoked a substantial and growing interest on social dimensions to unearth entrepreneurial behaviour in relation to business performance (Urbano, Toledano, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2011). Social dimension is a relatively new concept composed of role models, social capital and demographics factors. There is convergence by various scholars that role models can exert social influence on individual's plans to become an entrepreneur (Urbano *et al.*, 2011).

Consistent with a study by Kibas and K'aol (2004) on the typologies of Kenyan entrepreneurs is the positive influence by the family to potential entrepreneurs. The current school of thought posits that entrepreneurship is an antecedent of growth, sustainable competitive advantage and excellence and can be learned through apprenticeship closely linked to role model (Zahra & Garvis, 2000; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Social networks are useful complementary resources and enabler to start-up businesses packaged in form of friendship and recreational activities that expose inexperienced entrepreneur to business world of opportunities (Baines & Wheelock, 1998). Entrepreneurs who consciously engage with social networks are at vantage position in terms of opportunity identification and business performance (Stam *et al.*, 2014). However, despite the proven positive influence of role models through the aforementioned studies, several studies express considerable doubt on the quality of management skills and entrepreneurial knowledge derived from role- modelling (Bird, 1989), (Chiliya & Lombard, 2013). Nevertheless, business owners in SMEs are unable to adequately exploit the wealth of social capital at their disposal to improve business performance which call for empirical research to address this gap (Agyapong *et al.*, 2017).

The multi-dimensional nature of business performance motivates scholars to focus on the demographic aspects of owner – managers as the most important resource in a business in terms of commitment and vision carriers. (Smallbone et al., 1995; Mazzarol et al., 2011; Hansen and Hamilton, 2011). The social dimension cannot operate in vacuum and as such, the characteristics of owner- manager's age and education has an overall impact on entrepreneurial intention and business performance (Mazzarol et al., 1999). Research by Weber & Schaper, (2004) has shown that experienced entrepreneurs in age bracket (44-53 years) are successful in starting serial businesses compared with novice entrepreneurs due to accumulated financial, human and social capital over a time.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Manufacturing sector in Kenya is faced with many challenges ranging from general business management skills to social factors (Mutunga & Gachunga, 2013). Kenya has experienced a huge expansion in terms of new entries in manufacturing sector for the last two decades although, the survival rate of the start-up is reportedly low, only less than 40% live to celebrate their third birth day (KNS,2017). Numerous studies by different scholars (Zainol & Ayadurai, 2011, Mukherjee & Mahakud, 2012) concentrate on the importance of financial resources as most crucial in the growth and development of SMEs in Nairobi County, even though business continues to underperform facing inordinate closure. Entrepreneurs consume valuable time to access scarce resources that the firm need in order to grow (Gaudici, 2013). To develop the necessary resources, SMEs normally rely on external contacts to gather diverse resources and critical information for the development of business ideas (Bird, 1989). A normative question arises: could there be undercurrents of social dimensions' that have an effect on the growth of SMEs in Nairobi County? In order to develop a holistic solution to Small and Medium Enterprises facing inordinate closure due poor performance, a dissection of different social dimensions is necessary (Kibas & K'aol, 2004). The major concern of this study was to investigate the moderating effect of entrepreneurship education on the relationship between social dimensions and business growth of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To determine effects of social dimensions' factors on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County.
- To determine the moderating effect of entrepreneurship education on the relationship between social dimensions and performance of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County.

### 1.3. Hypotheses of the Study

- Social dimensions have no significant effect on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County.
- Entrepreneurship education has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between social dimensions and performance of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County.

## 2. Research Methodology

The philosophical paradigms of positivism that guides social science research was used to provide guidance on the most appropriate paradigm for the study. The positivist paradigm is a research orientation which assumes that useful research is based on theory, hypotheses and quantitative data. The quantitative approach involves data collection and the analysis of numerical data (Veal, 2005). This research therefore, adopts a quantitative or positivism paradigm. In addition, quantitative research design and in particular a cross-sectional survey is adopted in this study. In a cross-sectional survey, data is collected at one point in time from a sample to depict a population (Babbie, 1990). The cross-sectional survey design is most suitable for achieving the objectives of this study.

The target population for this study involved 600 registered manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County. The manufacturing SMEs were classified into six key sub sectors. The study targeted production managers of the manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County. The sampling frame involved a list of all the 600 registered manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County. Multi-stage sampling was adopted as the main sampling design by utilizing stratified sampling technique. The SMEs were grouped into six strata namely, chemical and Allied, Metal & Allied, Leather & Footwear, Paper & Board, Pharmaceutical & Medical Equipment and Plastics & Rubber. Simple random sampling was used to select the required sample from the list of each stratum since groups were heterogeneous.

The following formula by Slovin's (1960) was used to determine the sample size from the population of SMEs. The sample size was computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

$$\text{Thus, } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = \frac{266}{1+266(0.05)^2} = \frac{266}{1.665} = 160 \text{ SMEs}$$

To obtain the desired sample size from each stratum, the following formula was used;  $i = n(N/P)$ , (Kothari, 2011) used. Where:  $i$  is the number of SMEs in the stratum to be sampled,  $n$  is the sampled SMEs in the County (i.e.,160),  $N$  is the number of SMEs in each stratum,  $P$  is the total number of SMEs in Nairobi. This information is shown in Table 1.

Registered SMEs	Nairobi County	
	Population	Sample
Chemical & Allied	111	28
Leather & Footwear	54	15
Metal & Allied	63	17
Paper & Board	48	13
Pharmaceutical & Medical Equipment	59	17
Plastics & Rubber	265	70
Total	600	160

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

The study randomly selected 20 respondents from 10 SMEs to pre-test the validity and reliability of the instruments. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument. A Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.911 was realised which was adequate for this study and thus allowed the instrument for data collection. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data while the secondary data was sourced from published documents and literature related to research problem. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed in the analyses of the data. SPSS 20 software. Pearson's correlation coefficient 'r' was used to compute in order to assess the relationship between social dimension and entrepreneurship education as a moderating factor. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the individual contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable. The study used a general equation of the multiple regression model.

$$BG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \epsilon_0 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where: BG is the business growth (BG) and SD is the Social dimensions (SD). To determine the moderation effect of entrepreneurship education on the relationship social dimensions and business growth, the following model was adopted:

$$BG = \beta_{01} + \beta_{11} SD + \beta_{21} EE + \beta_{31} SD * EE + \epsilon_0 \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where: Y is business growth;  $\beta_0$  is the intercept term;  $\beta_i$  (i=1, 2,...) are the regression coefficients; SD is the social dimensions; EE is Entrepreneurship Education; and  $\epsilon$  is the random error term.

### 3. Findings

A total of 160 questionnaires were administered to production managers and the turned-in of 140 questionnaires yielded to a response rate of 87.5%. Reliability analysis was computed and a Cronbach's Alpha Values of 0.911 obtained for the variables hence all items were reliable and included in the study for further analysis.

The first objective was to determine the effect of social dimensions on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County. Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine the degree of relationship between the variables. The independent variable of the study- social dimensions correlated with sales, profit and employees. Results of correlation analysis between social capital variables and performance indicators show positive and significant results at .05 levels. This information is presented in Table 1.

Social Capital Variables		Performance Indicators		
		Sales	Profits	Employees
Role Models	Pearson Correlation	.410	.560	.746
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000
	N	140	140	140
Social Capital	Pearson Correlation	.765	.402	.553
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000
	N	140	140	140
Demographics Factors	Pearson Correlation	.397	.532	.594
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000
	N	140	140	140

Table 2: Correlation Analysis Results between Social Capital Variables and Performance Indicators  
Correlation Is Significant at the 0.05 Level

Results shown in Table1 indicate that the ability to enhance social dimensions is directly related to a firm's ability to generate relatively greater volume of sales, profits and employ greater number of employees.

In order to test the factor effect of the 13 items of social dimensions under investigation, factor analysis was undertaken. In order to improve the interpretability of factors, Varimax rotation was performed on the extracted component matrix. Factor analysis results produced three components with Eigen-values greater than unity accounting for 76.1 % of the variance. This is shown in Table 3.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.174	44.949	44.644	2.999	43.660	44.840
2	2.333	32.021	75.592	2.001	26.222	75.426
3	1.488	26.041	100.000	2.000	29.762	100.000
4	0.00	.000	100.000			

Table 3: Total Variance Explained by extracted factors

Three components were thus extracted. The new factors were re-named as Social Capital, Role Model and Demographic Factors. The three new components are described in Table 4.

Statements	Factor Loading		
	1	2	3
Employees who work in this firm trust each other	.74		
Employees who work in this firm share information freely.	.59		
Employees in this firm engages in communication with one another	.68		
Employees in the firm are committed to the goal of this firm	.56		
The firm employ people of any gender		.62	
Firm growth is influenced by parental occupation		.58	
Firm growth depends level of education of entrepreneur		.77	
Firm growth depends on the age of entrepreneurs		.81	
The mother has a great influence on the business growth			.77
Significant others have influenced the business growth			.61
Extended family members have an influence on business growth			.72
Reliability coefficient: Cronbach alpha(overall=.911)			

Table 4: Social Dimensions Rotated Component Matrix

Items loading greater than 0.5 for each component combined to create the three social dimension variables namely; Social Capital, Demographic Factors and Role Models respectively. The items under Social Capital measured the extent to which employees who work in firms trust each other, share information freely, engages in communication with one another, are committed to the goal of the firm and there is a common purpose. The result of findings indicated that SMEs in Nairobi County are influenced to some extent by social capital. The second component corresponds to 'Demographic Factors' which measured the extent to which gender and business growth depends on marital status of entrepreneur, age and level of education. Finally, the third component corresponds to Role Model and measured the extent to which the mother, significant others and extended family influenced business growth. The result of findings indicated that SMEs in Nairobi County are influenced by role models.

The multiple regression models of the five components assumed the form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{SC} + \beta_2 X_{DF} + \beta_3 X_{RM} + \epsilon_0$$

$$Y = \text{Business Growth}$$

$$X_{SC} = \text{Social Capital}$$

$$X_{DF} = \text{Demographic Factors}$$

$$X_{RM} = \text{Role Models}$$

Multiple Regressions was used to test the first hypothesis. The first null hypothesis that was tested stated:  $H_{01}$ : Social dimensions have no significant effect on business growth among MSEs in Nairobi County

The multiple regression models were summarized as:

$$\text{Business Growth} = Y = .204 + .401X_{SC} + .245X_{DF} + .323 X_{RM} + \epsilon_0$$

These results are summarized in Table 4.

	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	.204	.343		.000
Social Capital	.401	.121	0.321	.000
Demographic Factors	0.245	.231	0.229	.000
Role Model	0.323	.178	0.144	.000

Table 5: Regression Analysis of the Effect of Social Dimensions Business Growth  
Significant at  $p=0.05$  levels;  $R^2=68.7\%$ ;  $F=5.232$ ,  $p=0.000$

The multiple regression model with all three predictor variables produced  $R^2 = .687$ ,  $F(7, 160) = 5.232$ ,  $p < .05$ . The results showed that Social Capital, Demographic Factors and Role Models showed a significant positive relationship with business growth. The results meant that all the three variables had a positive effect on business growth.

The null hypothesis that *social dimensions have no significant effect on business growth among MSEs in Nairobi County* was rejected.

The results showed that overall; the social dimensions had a positive effect on business growth among MSEs in Nairobi County.

The second objective was to determine the moderating effect of entrepreneurship education on the relationship between *social dimensions and business growth among MSEs in Nairobi County*. In order to confirm a third variable making a moderation effect on the relationship between the two variables, social dimensions and business growth, the study showed that the nature of this relationship changes as the values of the moderating variable changes. The hypothesis testing the influence of entrepreneurship education on the relationship between *social dimensions and business growth* was stated as: *Entrepreneurship education has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between social dimensions and business growth*. The results of the multiple regression analysis undertaken are presented in Table 5.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.675	.456	.452	2.741	.452	3.554	45	160	.000
2	.745	.555	.542	2.522	.341	5.041	6	160	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), entrepreneurship Education, Social Dimensions									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurship Education, Social Dimensions, Entrepreneurship Education * Social Dimensions									
c. Dependent Business Growth									

Table 6: Results for the Moderating Effect of Entrepreneurship Education on the Relationship between Social Dimensions and Business Growth

Table 6 shows that Model 2 with the interaction between entrepreneurship education and social Dimensions accounted for significantly more variance than just entrepreneurship education and social Dimensions alone,  $R^2$  change = .341,  $p = .000$ , indicating that there is significant moderating effect between entrepreneurship education and social Dimensions on business growth among MSEs in Nairobi County. In addition, the interaction process showed an enhancing effect on business growth. This meant that those SMEs owners in Nairobi County who had acquired basic entrepreneurship education showed more significant success in their businesses as compared to those without it.

Based on the research findings, *the hypothesis that Entrepreneurship education has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between social dimensions and business growth* was rejected. The results show that through entrepreneurship education the contribution of the enhanced variable to the effect on the dependent variable was significantly positive and improved. The new statistical model becomes:

$$Y_1 = \beta_{01} + \beta_{11} SD + \beta_{21} EE + \beta_{31} SD * EE + \epsilon_0$$

Where:

Y = Business Growth

SD = Social Dimensions

EE = Entrepreneurship Education

SD \* EE = A Product of Social Dimensions and Entrepreneurship Education

The multiple regression models were summarized as:

$$\text{Business Growth} = 1.033 + .427SD + 0.334EE + .569SD * EE$$

The result shows that the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable,  $F(5, 160) = 5.645$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Table 6 shows the summary of these results.

	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.033	1.343		.000
SD	.427	.043	.321	.000
EE	0.334	.055	0.201	.000
SD * EE	.569	0.203	.203	.000

Table 7: Summary of Regression Results Showing the Effect of Moderated Independent Variable on Dependent Variable  
Significant at  $P=0.05$  Levels;  $R^2=82.2\%$ ;  $F = 5.645$ ,  $P=0.000$

The results indicate that the combined effect of the social dimensions and entrepreneurship education, SD \* EE ( $\beta = .569$ ); is much greater than the effects of the individual predictors, social dimensions ( $\beta = .427$ ) and Entrepreneurship Education ( $\beta = 0.334$ ) on business growth.

#### 4. Discussion

Scholars have emphasized the importance of financial resources as most crucial factor in the business growth and development of SMEs and ignoring the role of social dimension on the growth (Bird, 1989; Kibas & K'aol, 2004; Kahando, Maina & Maina (2017)). However, social dimension cannot operate in a vacuum and characteristics of successful

entrepreneurs are heavily linked with such family type, age, gender and education. In addition, social capital is believed to have a considerable effect on the growth of SMEs (Agyapong *et al.*, 2017).

The study findings show that when considering business growth, the three antecedents of social dimensions are important variables.

The first component of social dimensions was Social Capital. Majority of the respondents agreed that most of the business in Nairobi County was influenced by social capital. These findings are in congruent with Yu-Shu *et al.* (2015) who observed that social capital is a resource which reflects the character and attributes of individuals within a business and supported by collective and mutual trust with a view to achieving set goals. In addition, Social network, inherent resources and other network structures, foster ties, support, trust, communication, information sharing and collaborations.

The second component corresponded to Demographic Factors. The results of findings showed that Demographic Factors such as age, gender and level of education had positive effect on businesses. Bird (1989) argue that time is a measure of life and it is hinged to age of an entrepreneur in terms of milestone achieved especially to individuals inclined to entrepreneurial activities. In addition, gender-specific barriers ranging from the need to balance family and the business to wage employment explain business pattern (Minniti *et al.* (2005). The study findings also revealed that parental occupation is an important determinant of business growth. There is a striking convergence in studies conducted in different areas resonating on the fact that parents who are already entrepreneurial parents are more likely to impact on their children to become entrepreneurs (Kibas & K'aol (2004).

The third and final component corresponded to Role Model. Role models can exert social influence on individual's plans to become entrepreneurs (Urbane, Toledano & Ribeiro- Soriano, 2011). Findings in this research indicate a positive significant relationship between role models and business growth. These finding are in agreement with reviewed literature that the presence of successful role models in a society will encourage more business growth (Kibas & K'aol, 2004).

The study findings also indicate that majority of businesses with enhanced growth had acquired some notable levels of education. Thus, the model with the interaction between entrepreneurship education and Social Dimensions accounted for significantly more variance than just entrepreneurship education and social Dimensions alone,  $R^2$  change = .341,  $p = .000$ , indicating that there is significant moderating effect between entrepreneurship education and social Dimensions on business growth among MSEs in Nairobi County. This implies that a unit change in any of the moderated variables will yield a corresponding greater change in business growth compared to any of the un-moderated variables

## 5. Summary

The study investigated the influence of social dimensions on the growth of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County, however, it is assumed that the effect is similar in all counties in Kenya. Entrepreneurship education moderated the relationship between social dimensions and business growth. Using factor analysis, items loading greater than 0.5 for each component combined to create the three social dimension variables namely; Social capital, demographic factors and role Models. The result of findings indicated that SMEs in Nairobi County are influenced to some extent by social dimensions. The multiple regression models were summarized as:

$$\text{Business Growth} = Y = .204 + .401X_{SC} + .245X_{DF} + .323 X_{RM} + \epsilon_0$$

The multiple regression model with all three predictor variables produced  $R^2 = .687$ ,  $F(7, 160) = 5.232$ ,  $p < .05$ .

The results showed that all the predictor variables revealed a significant positive relationship with business growth. The null hypothesis that *social dimensions have no significant effect on business growth among SMEs in Nairobi County was rejected*.

In order to confirm a third variable on the relationship between social dimensions and business growth, the study showed that the nature of this relationship changes as the values of the moderating variable change. Based on the research findings, *the hypothesis that Entrepreneurship education has no significant moderating effect on the relationship between social dimensions and business growth was rejected*.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the summary of the findings, it was concluded that social dimensions were found to have significant effect on business growth among SMEs in Nairobi County. Further analysis as discussed earlier in a section of this study showed that the association was positive. However, the association was enhanced with the introduction of entrepreneurship education. The interaction of a third variable accounted for significantly more variance than just entrepreneurship education and social dimensions alone,  $R^2$  change = .341,  $p = .000$ , indicating that there is significant moderating effect between entrepreneurship education and social dimensions on business growth among SMEs in Nairobi County. The study introduced a new statistical model to accommodate a positive linear relationship between the moderated independent variable and dependent variable. This model is of the form:  $Y_1 = \beta_{01} + \beta_{11} SD + \beta_{21} EE + \beta_{31} SD * EE + \epsilon_0$

Where:

Y = Business Growth

SD = Social Dimensions

EE = Entrepreneurship Education

SD \* EE = A Product of Social Dimensions and Entrepreneurship Education

The multiple regression models were summarized as:

$$\text{Business Growth} = 1.033 + .427SD + 0.334EE + .569SD * EE$$

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