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The Impact of Entrepreneurial Orientation on the Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises in Selected Towns in Namibia

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Abstract:
This research aimed to analyse the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the growth of small and medium enterprises in selected towns in Namibia. The research approach was quantitative; the researchers used a closed-ended questionnaire for data collection whereby 200 questionnaires were distributed to the five towns in Namibia. Data generated from the study was analysed using various techniques such as inferential statistics, specifically the chi-squared method, regression, correlations, and ANOVA was used to check the goodness of fit. To answer the research question, two hypotheses were tested.

The findings from the regression analysis revealed that certain aspects of innovativeness of the Owners/Managers such as attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects and old ways of doing things have a positive relationship with SME growth and, risk-taking has a weak positive relationship with SME growth in the five selected towns in Namibia. The results from the hypothesis tested revealed that all the variables such as innovation, pro-activeness, and risk-taking have a relationship with SMEs' growth in the five towns in Namibia. Recommendations were made based on the findings.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial orientation, SMEs' growth, innovation, pro-activeness, risk-taking*

1. Introduction

According to Rauch, Wiklund, Lumpkin, & Frese (2009), entrepreneurial orientation is the strategy-making process that offers organizations a source for entrepreneurial decisions and actions. Entrepreneurial orientation is a gauge that shows how well an organization has a propensity to be entrepreneurial. Neneh and Zyl (2017) pointed out that EO has five dimensions which include innovativeness, pro-activeness, risk-taking, independence and competitive aggressiveness. These researchers expanded EO to five dimensions which were formally three dimensions of EO developed (Miller, 1983). Miller maintained the three dimensions work together as a coherent whole by ensuring that a firm is provided with the strategic orientation that it needs for its success and the researcher further stated that the three-dimension should be seen as a one-dimensional measure in entrepreneurship study. This paper will explore the first three dimensions of EO which include innovativeness, pro-activeness and risk-taking. These EO dimensions are chosen to be used in this study because they have been broadly used by earlier studies and confirmed to be significant (Neneh & Zyl, 2017; Anderson & Eshima, 2013; Gurbuz & Aykol, 2009).

The importance of SMEs in the development of a country's economy cannot be overemphasized. SMEs provide employment opportunities, generate income and help in poverty alleviation. Thaddeus (2011;376) points out that entrepreneurs use SMEs as the business model to enable them to be involved in the development of the economics of their location through the improvement of the employment rate and poverty alleviation. In India, Pawar, and Sanguitkar (2019) state that SMEs play an important role in its economic growth history, engaging 40% of the country's labor force, following only the agricultural sector. It was further stated that the SME sector can extend industrial growth throughout the country and can be the main partner to assist accelerate the process of complete growth. In South Africa, SMEs are attributed to about 91% of formal enterprises contributing about 57% to the GDP and offering almost 60% of the country's job opportunities (Kongolo, 2010).

In Ghana, the SME sector is seen as the main employer of labor in the economy of the country. Amoah and Amoah, (2018) indicate that SMEs employ a larger percentage of the working population in both rural and urban communities in the country. SMEs also play an important role in Namibia as a nation. Presently in Namibia, there are serious income differences between the rich and the poor and a high rate of joblessness. SMEs, however, contribute to productivity by partaking in the mainstream economy and by generating jobs, especially for the jobless youth. Mwatange (2017) states that SMEs in Namibia are known to contribute about 12% to the country's GDP and employ about 20% of the country's workforce. SMEs offer jobs and revenue to almost 1, 60, 000 people (Ogbokor, 2012). The current evaluations indicated

that the small business sector provides full-time job opportunities for about 1, 60, 000 people, placing it together with Government which is the country's biggest employer (Mwatange, 2017).

Despite the importance of SMEs to the development of the economics of countries of the world, SMEs in Namibia and across the globe are faced with challenges that hamper their growth. It is on this background that this paper seeks to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial orientations such as innovation, pro-activeness, and risk-taking on the growth of Small and medium enterprises in Namibia. Several studies have been done on the impact of entrepreneurial characteristics on SMEs' growth in Namibia but no study has been conducted on the impact of the three dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation on the growth of SMEs in the selected towns in Namibia which include Otjiwarongo, Rehoboth, Oshakati, Rundu and Katima Mulilo. Therefore, this paper aimed at investigating the effect of entrepreneurial orientations such as innovation, pro-activeness and risk-taking on the five selected towns in Namibia. The following hypothesis was tested to determine the significance of this paper.

- H_o 1: There is no relationship between entrepreneurial orientation namely innovativeness, pro-activeness and risk-taking and SME growth
- H_a 2: There is a relationship between entrepreneurial orientation namely innovativeness, pro-activeness, risk-taking and SME growth

2. Literature Review

2.1. Firm Growth Measure

Isaga (2012) maintained that there is no consensus on which measure is best to decide a firm's growth. Any of the measures which include sales, assets, market shares, employment, profit, and physical output can be used; so, researchers have the right to select and use any best measure they feel like using, or come up with a multiple measure index or use different measures separately. Furthermore, due to this gap, several scholars looked at growth measures that are easy to gather information instead of looking at variables that are important (Isaga, 2012). Shepherd and Wiklund (2009), cited in Isaga (2012), indicate that many studies failed to explain their choice of one given growth measure instead of choosing the others; as a result of that, there have been diverse results established in the study of the growth of the firm.

Shepherd and Wiklund (2009), in their quest to give a clear understanding of firm growth measures, revealed sales growth to be the most popular measure for the growth of the firm. However, in this study, change in sales in terms of percentage growth in sales in five years was used as a measure for growth.

2.2. Innovation and SMEs' Growth

Johansson (2008) defined innovation as the process that encompasses product design, production system, product introduction process, and beginning of production. Mirela (2008) revealed that innovation plays an important role in ensuring the survival, growth and success of a firm. Cosh, Fu and Hughes (2012) investigated organisational structure and innovation performance in UK small and medium enterprises. The study revealed that new firms found in the high technology area, whose businesses are not registered, have more influence on innovation. Empirical studies in countries around the world show that innovation has a positive correlation with the performance and growth of SMEs. In Indonesia, a study by Terziouski (2010) investigated the relationship between innovation and the performance of wooden furniture manufacturing SMEs and revealed that innovation has a positive impact on firms' performance. Ndalira, Ngugi, and Chepkulei (2013) indicate that innovation is very important for SMEs to become and continue to be competitive in the international market. Similarly, Al-Ansari, Peran & Xu (2013) found that innovation enhances the quality of products which, in turn, contributes to firm performance and ultimately to a firm's competitive advantage.

2.3. Pro-activeness and SMEs' Growth

In the aspect of pro-activeness, Rauch *et al*. (2009: 763) mentioned that 'pro-activeness is an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective characterized by the introduction of new products and services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand.' Brownhilder, Neneh and Van-Zyl (2017) define pro-activeness as stepping forward, predicting and carrying new opportunities, and generating new market or engaging in developing ones. Studies have shown that pro-activeness influences the performance, success and growth of SMEs. Brownhilder and Johan (2017) indicated that pro-activeness has been considered by many researchers as an essential element for improving business growth. Amaka, Paul, and Innocent (2018) found out that pro-activeness exerts a positive and insignificant correlation with SME performance. Similarly, Arisi-Nwugballa, Elom and Onyeizeugbe (2016) investigated the entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of Micro, Small, and Medium scale enterprises in Ebonyi state, Nigeria, and found that pro-activeness had a significant relationship with customer performance.

2.4. Risk-Taking and SMEs' Growth

Ogunsiji and Kayode (2010) defined risk-taking as 'the capacity of the entrepreneur to perceive risk at its inception and to find avenues to mitigate transfer or share the risk'. Etebang, Harrison and Ernest (2010) indicate that for firms to be able to seize opportunities in the marketplace, they have to embrace risk-taking to enable them to take bold actions such as going into unfamiliar markets, pledging a significant amount of resources to projects with undefined results, as well as the propensity to borrow money to a great degree hoping to gain high returns. In addition, managers and organisations are faced with three types of risk-taking, such as business risk-taking (which means attempting the unknown without knowing the likelihood of success), financial risk-taking (which involves a company borrowing to a great

degree or pledging a large share of its resources to achieve growth), and finally, personal risk-taking (the risks that an executive undertakes to hold in favour of a strategic course of action). Several studies have provided mixed results on the impact of risk-taking on the performance, survival, and growth of SMEs. Jalali, Jaafa, Talebi and Halim (2014) revealed that risk-taking had a strong positive relationship with firm performance and growth profitability. Wambugu, Gichira, Wanjiau & Mung'atu (2015) investigated the relationship between risk-taking and the performance of small and medium agro-processing enterprises in Kenya and revealed that risk-taking has a positive influence on the firm performance of agro-processing SMEs in Kenya. Furthermore, risk-taking firms can gain larger growth and long-term success in contrast to risk-avoider firms (Ahimbisibwe & Abaho, 2013).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach and Study Design

The research method used for this study was the quantitative research method. This method was adopted because of its importance in allowing the researcher to cover a wide range of problems. The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design was considered important for this study since it enables the researcher to ascertain if the characteristics of the target population are accurate.

3.2. Population and Sample size

The target population for this study was owners/managers operating in selected towns in Namibia. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) defined sampling as the process of choosing the right individual, objects, events, or representation for the population. Sample selection and identification process is a fundamental process in research design. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 213), cited in Lekhanya (2016), indicated that sampling techniques can be divided into two types which include probability (representative sampling) and non-probability (judgmental sampling). Probability sampling deals with random selection techniques, while non-probability sampling deals with the judgmental procedure.

For this study, a non-probability sampling technique in the form of a convenience technique was applied. According to Welma, Kruger and Mitchell (2007), a convenience sample entails participants that are willingly available when the researcher goes into the field. Therefore, 200 registered SMEs from five towns in selected regions in Namibia were chosen as a representative sample of all the registered SMEs in Namibia.

3.3. Research Instruments

The study used a close-ended questionnaire for data collection whereby primary data was collected from the 200 SMEs functioning in the five towns in Namibia. A close-ended questionnaire was considered important for this study because it makes it simple for the researcher to get information from the participants. The closed-ended questionnaire also makes it simple for the researchers to compare the responses of different respondents and responses from the questionnaire are simple to code and statistically analyse.

3.4. Data Analysis

The correlation was done to define the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables; furthermore, a linear regression approach was conducted to ascertain the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The hypothesis was also tested to ascertain the impact of demographic characteristics on the growth of small and medium enterprises in the selected towns in Namibia.

4. Findings

4.1. Relationship between Entrepreneurial Innovativeness and SME Growth

Four items were used to measure the innovativeness of the SMEs owners from the questionnaire. The correlation of the items was done and the result shows that the variables are statistically significant at 0.01(2 tailed) and 0.05 (2 tailed) levels of significance which gives a strong basis for continuing with the analysis.

Correlations

		Attitude towards original ways of performing a task	Attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects	Creating new ideas	Old ways of doing things
Attitude towards original ways of performing a task	Pearson Correlation	1	.376**	.187*	.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.010	.072
	N	189	189	189	189
Attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects	Pearson Correlation	.376**	1	.244**	.244**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.001
	N	189	189	189	189

Correlations					
		Attitude towards original ways of performing a task	Attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects	Creating new ideas	Old ways of doing things
Creating new ideas	Pearson Correlation	.187*	.244**	1	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.001		.186
	N	189	189	189	189
Old ways of doing things	Pearson Correlation	.131	.244**	.097	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.001	.186	
	N	189	189	189	189
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

Table 1: Correlation between Factors Related to Entrepreneurial Innovativeness and SME Growth

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4923.46	4	1230.865	2.609	.037[b]
	Residual	86811.21	184	471.8		
	Total	91734.67	188			
a. Dependent Variable: SME growth rate						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude towards original ways of performing a task, Attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects, Creating new ideas and old ways of doing things.						

Table 2: ANOVA

Test of goodness of fit was conducted using ANOVA and the P-value found showed that there was the goodness of fit of the model and regression analysis could be continued.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.232[a]	.054	.033	21.721
a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude towards original ways of performing a task, Attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects, Creating new ideas, and old ways of doing things.				

Table 3: Model Summary

The adjusted R square results indicate that 3.3% of SME growth is contributed by entrepreneurial innovativeness.

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21.153	12.319		1.717	.088
	Attitude towards original ways of performing a task	-1.423	2.426	-.046	-.587	.558
	Attitude towards inventing new uses for daily objects	1.475	2.211	.054	.667	.506
	Creating new ideas	-5.738	1.863	-.229	-3.080	.002
	Old ways of doing things	.628	1.399	.033	.449	.654
a. Dependent Variable: SME growth rate						

Table 4: Regression Analyses of Innovativeness and SME Growth

Table 4.4 above shows that there is a negative relationship between attitude towards original ways of performing a task and SME growth. A value of -0.46 shows that the entrepreneur growth and the attitude toward original ways of performing a task do not affect each other positively. This means that a rise in the business owners' attitude towards original ways of performing a task will lead to a fall in the growth of SMEs. Attitude toward inventing new uses for daily objects has a positive relationship of 0.54 with SME growth which means an increase or rise in the attitude of owners of the business toward inventing new uses for daily objects will lead to an increase in the growth of SMEs. A negative

relationship was also found between creating new ideas and SME growth. Respondents indicated that -0.229 of their growth does not result from creating new ideas. A positive relationship of 0.033 was found between old ways of doing things and SME growth.

- Relationship between pro-activeness and SME growth

Correlations				
		Availability of product ahead of demand	**Withdrawal of the faulty product**	**SME growth rate**
Availability of product ahead of demand	Pearson Correlation	1	.359**	-.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.053
	N	189	189	189
Withdrawal of any faulty product	Pearson Correlation	.359**	1	-.171*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.019
	N	189	189	189
SME growth rate	Pearson Correlation	-.141	-.171*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	.019	
	N	189	189	189

Table 5: Correlations between Pro-Activeness and SME Growth
***. Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)*
**. Correlation Is Significant at the 0.05 Level (2-Tailed)*

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3342.564	2	1671.282	3.517	.032
	Residual	88392.102	186	475.226		
	Total	91734.667	188			
a. Dependent Variable: SME growth rate						
b. Predictors: (Constant), withdrawal of any faulty product, availability of product ahead of demand.						

Table 6: ANOVA

Test of goodness of fit was conducted using ANOVA and the P-value found showed that there was the goodness of fit of the model and regression analysis could be continued.

Model Summary									
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	.191[a]	.036	.026	21.800	.036	3.517	2	186	.032
a. Predictors: (Constant), withdrawal of any faulty product, availability of products ahead of demand.									

Table 7: Model Summary

The adjusted R square results indicate that 2.6% of SME growth is contributed by entrepreneurial pro-activeness.

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.727	8.634		2.401	.017
	Availability of products ahead of demand	-2.085	1.750	-.092	-1.191	.235
	Withdrawal of any faulty product	-3.569	2.001	-.138	-1.784	.076

Table 8: Regression Analyses of SME Growth and Pro-Activeness

The table above shows that there is a negative relationship between the availability of products ahead of future demand and SME growth. A value of -0.092 shows less than 1% effect which is insignificant. There is a negative relationship between the withdrawal of any faulty products and SME growth. A value of -13.8% shows a strong negative relationship. This result shows that pro-activeness based on the items used as a measurement scale is insignificant in explaining the growth of SMEs in the Five Towns in Namibia.

- Relationship between risk-taking and SME growth

Correlations				
		SME Growth Rate	**Attitude Towards Risk-Taking**	**Capacity to Undertake Calculated Risk**
SME Growth Rate	Pearson Correlation	1	.028	.155*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.704	.034
	N	189	189	189
Attitude towards risk-taking.	Pearson Correlation	.028	1	.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.704		.391
	N	189	189	189
Capacity to undertake calculated risk	Pearson Correlation	.155*	.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.391	
	N	189	189	189
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

Table 9: Correlations between SME Growth and Risk-Taking

Correlations are statistically significant and research must be continued.

ANOVA						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	2224.234	2	1112.117	2.311	.102
	Residual	89510.433	186	481.239		
	Total	91734.667	188			
a. Dependent Variable: SME growth rate						
b. Predictors: (Constant) capacity to undertake calculated risk, attitude towards risk-taking.						

Table 10: ANOVA

There Is a Goodness of Fit between the Variables

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.156[a]	.024	.014	21.937

Table 11: Model Summary

The results show that risk-taking contributes a very low percentage to SME growth as it contributes 2.4%.

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig.**
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-16.948	7.722		-2.195	.029
	Attitude towards risk-taking	.307	1.221	.018	.251	.802
	Capacity to undertake calculated risk	3.708	1.753	.154	2.115	.036

Table 12: Regression Analyses of SME Growth and Risk-Taking

Attitude toward risks taking contributes 1.8% to SME growth. The capacity to take calculated risk contributes 15.4% to SME growth.

H_a 1.1

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 50					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Attitude toward inventing new uses for everyday objects	-783.762	188	.000	-45.868	-45.98	-45.75
Creating new ideas	-711.533	188	.000	-45.661	-45.79	-45.53
Attitude toward risk-taking	-489.841	188	.000	-46.783	-46.97	-46.59

Table 13: One-Sample Test

Reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial orientation such as innovativeness, pro-activeness, and risk-taking and SME growth.

5. Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the relationship between innovation and SMEs' growth; four items from the questionnaire were used to measure the innovativeness of the entrepreneurs. The result from the finding from the correlation analysis shows that all the items are statistically significant. The hypothesis tested revealed that there is a relationship between innovativeness and SME growth. The adjusted R squared results indicated that 3.3% of SMEs' growth is contributed by entrepreneurial innovativeness. The regression result revealed a positive and negative relationship between the items used to measure the innovativeness of the owners/managers and SMEs' growth. The finding revealed that a negative relationship exists between attitude towards original ways of performing a task and SME growth; this result is surprising because idea generation is relevant for entrepreneurs to grow their business. A study by Ware (2020) points out that creative thinking can also result in innovation that will grow your business through increased productivity. This means that attitude toward original ways of performing a task does not contribute significantly to the growth of their business.

A positive attitude toward inventing new uses for daily objects has a positive relationship with SME growth. It is clear from the findings that the majority of the SME owners knows the importance of innovation to the growth of their business and as a result, makes effort to always invent new uses for everyday objects. This finding is also consistent with the study Al-Ansari, Peran & Xu (2013) which showed that innovation enhances the quality of products which, in turn, contributes to firm performance and ultimately to a firm's competitive advantage.

Creating new ideas to become a market leader has a negative relationship with SME growth. This result is surprising because idea generation is important in business. Coming up with new ideas for the same line of business makes firms stand out among their competitors. Ndesualwa and Kikula (2016) indicate that companies with the ability to innovate can respond faster to challenges and exploit new products and market opportunities better than companies that are not innovative. Innovation allows owners of businesses to become market leaders in their respective lines of business. Purcell (2019) also argues that organisations that truly stand out from the pack today as clear leaders within their industries are organisations that embrace innovation.

Finally, a positive relationship was found between old ways of doing things and SMEs' growth. This finding is not in agreement with a study by Ngungi (2013) which indicated that the probability of owners to involve in new ideas, originality, testing, and creative processes results in new product services and technological processes which has a great effect on the performance and growth of SMEs. This study suggests that those SME owners with a high level of innovativeness achieve a higher level of performance for their companies than those with a low level of innovativeness. In the aspect of pro-activeness, the results from the correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between pro-activeness and SMEs' growth. The adjusted R square result indicates that 2.6% of SMEs' growth is contributed by entrepreneurial pro-activeness. The hypothesis tested shows that there is a relationship between pro-activeness and SMEs' growth. The regression result of the items used to measure pro-activeness from the questionnaire revealed that there is a negative relationship between the availability of products and SME growth. There is also a negative relationship between the withdrawal of any faulty products and SMEs' growth. This implies that pro-activeness does not matter in explaining the growth of SMEs in the five towns in Namibia. This finding is in contrast with a study by Brownhilder and Johan (2017) who indicated that pro-activeness has been considered by many researchers as an essential element for improving business growth. Finally, in the aspect of risk-taking, the findings revealed that there is a correlation between risk-taking and SME growth. The hypothesis tested revealed a relationship between risk-taking and SME growth. The R square result shows that risk-taking contributes a very low percentage (2.4%) to SME growth. The regression result of the two items used to measure risk taking revealed that attitude towards risk-taking contributes 1.8% to SME growth. The capacity to take calculated risk contributes 15.4%. Therefore, risk-taking has a weak positive relationship with SME growth. The finding from this study is not in agreement with a study by Jalali, Jaafa, Talebi, and Halim (2014) which revealed that risk-taking had a strong positive relationship with firm performance and growth effectiveness.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that among the entrepreneurial orientation, innovation and risk-taking have a positive impact on the growth of SMEs. In the aspect of innovation, certain items were used to measure the innovativeness of the entrepreneurs in the questionnaire and the study found out that attitude toward inventing new uses for daily objects and the old way of doing things have a positive impact on SMEs' growth. Risk-taking was found to have a weak positive impact on SMEs' growth. Therefore, among the three dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, (innovation, pro-activeness and risk-taking) this study concludes that certain aspect of innovativeness has a positive relationship with SMEs' growth and risk-taking has a weak positive impact on the growth of SMEs in the five towns in Namibia. Based on these findings, this study, therefore, recommends that the SME owners should collaborate with companies that are highly innovative to learn innovative skills, and also the government should facilitate training for emerging entrepreneurs by collaborating with other countries like China, Japan, and India. Furthermore, risk-taking is also an aspect of entrepreneurial orientation that was found to have an impact on the growth of SMEs. Organisations that take risks grow their business faster. The study recommends that the government or non-governmental institutions should offer training to SME owners on how to take the risk for their business that will help their business to grow.

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