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CULTURE AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study explored culture and female entrepreneurial intentions in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The major objective is to determine the cultural impediment to female entrepreneurial intentions in Benin City. The study adopted quantitative research method: exploratory and descriptive, which made the use of primary data imperative. The primary data were elicited through the use of questionnaire and oral interview. A sample of 150 female respondents were purposively selected in Benin City, which is a highly culture society. Twelve (12) research questions were developed covering Culture and female entrepreneurial intentions. The primary data were analyzed and presented using SPSS 2.0 statistical techniques. The study revealed that there is no cultural impediment to female entrepreneurial intentions in Benin City, female role in society is not a hindrance to female entry into entrepreneurship, there is no norms in Benin culture that serve as a barrier to women entry into entrepreneurship and that the female are hindered by self-limiting factors. It was recommended amongst others, the need to jettison all form of gender stereotype in our institutions, open up our political and economic space to be more inclusive, set up institutions that will train potential female entrepreneurs and encouraged our financial institution to set aside a percentage of their fund for female entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Culture, Entrepreneurial intention, Theories, Models, Gender.

Introduction

A culture is the behaviors, beliefs, values and symbols of a group of people that is either passed down from generation to generation or has the ability to influence successive generation to behave in that particular way. Most often the behavior of the people is influence by the culture or gender stereotype. Such behavior shape entrepreneurial attitude and intentions. Since gender typecasting is a global phenomenon, therefore entrepreneurial

attitude and intention may not necessarily shaped by individual culture but rather by gender. Gender is a social ascribed role which expects the male to be masculine, assertive, tough and focused on material success. This attributes push more of an entrepreneurial success in male than female whose social role are modest, tender and concerned for others. The individual culture gives credence to global gender stereotype, to that extent universal culture shapes global stereotype. Though religion is part of culture, but how much of conservative, societal tradition, shape entrepreneurial behavior? The Bini women are traditionally supportive to their men, in terms of farming, trading and they have been known to be industrious. A culture that encouraged women economic inclusiveness, how do such culture drives female entrepreneurial intentions? There is an empirical evidence that a woman's decision not to start a business depends on her socio cultural background (Ahl, 2006).

Considering the ratios of male to female entrepreneurs in Benin City, there is need to ascertain if culture or global gender stereotyping shape such behavior. The polygamous nature of the Binis induced competition among the wives which serve as a push factor for success. The Bini women are known to have transverse many societies for trade and craftwork. The intention not to be more entrepreneurial than male could be traced to their self- limiting factors than cultural. The male as the bread winners aspire more to be entrepreneurial than female who plays supportive role. If this is true, it will lead to higher productivity in male to pursuit entrepreneurship than the female. In this paper, we examined if culture shape female entrepreneurial intentions in Benin City. Such findings will help close the gap in knowledge as to why there are more male entrepreneurs than female in Benin City. Such findings will help policy makers initiate policy directives to motivate the female entrepreneurs and to deconstruct cultural impediment to female entrepreneurial intentions which could encouraged the female to be more entrepreneurial and boost female contribution to economy development of Nigeria and reduction of poverty in most families. To archive this, we intend to use primary data which is a questionnaire and observation to elicit the necessary information from female respondents. In the light of the above, the research question is whether there is a relationship between culture and female entrepreneurial intentions in Benin City. Accordingly, the research work would be organized into introduction which explained motivation for the research work, literature review; explained the theoretical and conceptual frame work, empirical review, methodology; which explained method of data collection and analysis, findings and discussion, implication, conclusion and recommendation.

Literature Review

Conceptual framework

Culture is a way of life of a group of people; the behaviors, beliefs, values and symbols that they accept generally without thinking about them and transferred from one generation to another. Culture greatly influence the way in which entrepreneurs develop their business initiatives, referring to prejudices, social roles and stereotyped vision of the gender. Ahl (2006) showed empirically that women's decision not to start a business depends on her socio-cultural background. Linan et al., (2010) found that female student entrepreneurial intentions and perceptions were more affected by the cultural context in which they live than those of men. Cultural values can also act to shape societal gender roles and stereotypes lead to gender typing of jobs as predominantly feminine or masculine (Heilman, 1983). National culture therefore consists of the underlying value systems that are specific to a group or society and motivate individuals to behave in certain ways (Hofstede,1998), such as stating a business.

Female entrepreneurship plays an important role in economic growth and poverty reduction of nations. Most essentially elevating the well- being of their families, particularly that of their children. Unfortunately empirical evidence shows that women are less likely to become entrepreneurs. Diaze- Garcia and Jimenez –Moreno (2010) posits that female tends to show lesser propensity toward entrepreneurial activities than male. This may be fuelled by the believed that entrepreneurship is a male domain. Thus gender typing entrepreneurship as masculine stereotype makes it more difficult for women to excel and promote women self - limiting behavior. Other female hindranceare cultural, social and economic environment, which are in favor of the male, lack of training and education and general lack of confidence with regards to succeeding (Davidson et al., 2010, Pathak et al., 2013 as in Mehtap et al.,2017). Weaker female intentions form the basis of behaviors and Bird (1988) posits entrepreneurial intention as a state of mind driving a person to reach a goal which is the creation of a new venture. This was further sustained by planned behavior theorem as opined by Ajzens (1991) theory of planned behavior that there is intention behavior link moderated by sex which in itself a socio role theory. Socially prescribe gender roles lead to gender stereotyping of jobs as predominantly feminine or masculine (Eagty et al.,2000, Heilman, 1983 as in Shinnar et al., 2017). Need for financial independent and support for the family are the motivating factors for entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, motivation mediates link between intention and entrepreneurial activity (Armitage and Conner, 2001). Motivation can boost morale and interest to succeed in business development. Vroom (1964) (as in Fenech et al., 2018) posits that expectancy theory of motivation can be the fulcrum in energizing female entrepreneurial intentions. The theory state that actions of an individual are driven by expected consequences. Actual behavior control refers to the extent to which a person has the skills, resources and other prerequisites to perform behavior in question.

Theories of entrepreneurial intentions

Shapero's model of entrepreneurial event

Shapero and Sokol (1982) defined intention as the interaction of cultural and social factors that can lead to a firm creation by influencing individual's perceptions. In this model, entrepreneurial intentions depend on three elements: (a) the perception of the desirability (attitude and social norms) (b) the propensity to act and (c) the perception of feasibility (self-efficacy). Shapero defined perceived desirability as the personal attractiveness of starting a business, including both intrapersonal and extra personal impacts. Perceived feasibility is the degree to which one feels personally capable of starting a business. Shapero conceptualized propensity to act as the personal disposition to act on one's decisions, thus reflecting volitional aspects of intention (I will do it).

Achievement theories

McClelland Achievement theory emphasized that the need for achievement is the impetus that forces the person to struggle for success and perfection (McClelland, 1987). Such impetus is based on conviction, hence Davidsson (1995) proposed an economic- psychological model that argued that the concept of conviction is the primary determinant of intention. Education in entrepreneurship is also believed to influence intention. Bird (1988) defines entrepreneurial intention as a state of mind driving a person to reach a goal which is the creation of a new venture. This was however supported by the theory of planned behavior which emphasize motivation to act for the intended behavior and self -efficacy which is a believed on ones disposition to carry out the act. According to Ajzen's theory of planned Behavior,

entrepreneurial intention is explained by three antecedents: attitude towards entrepreneurial behavior, perceived social norms and perceived behavior control in other words self- efficacy. Past experience and knowledge may affect evolution of intention. Shapero's model emphasized cultural and social factors impact on intentions but also point out that personal disposition has major impact which other achievement theories emphasized. The aforementioned theories will help drive this research to achieve its goal.

Empirical Review

Esfander and Altinay(2019) developed integrated structural model approach to understand entrepreneurial intentions. The primary objectives of the study, is to develop the pioneering version of Krueger's (2009) integrated model of entrepreneurial intention (E.I) and to empirically test the new model in explaining individual intentions of entrepreneurial activities. The data were collected by the self -reported in person and electronic questionnaire from a population of tourism students from several universities in Iran. The result of the partial least squares estimations indicate that desirability is the main determinant of entrepreneurial goal intention (EGI), followed by self- efficacy, feasibility, opportunity, attitude and collective efficacy while social norms do not influence EGI. Also, EGI strongly influence entrepreneurial implementation intention. Concerning the modification effect, the impact of perceived opportunity on EGI tends to increase when an individual has a high propensity to act. Hou et al., (2019) studied model of the entrepreneurial intention of university students in the pearl River Delta of China. The paper attempts to explore entrepreneurial intention from three perspectives including individual, family and school, and constructs an integrated model that includes entrepreneurial passion, role models, entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial self -efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. The results show that entrepreneurial passion, role model and entrepreneurial education could have different effects on entrepreneurial intention, additionally, entrepreneurial self -efficacy plays an important mediating role. Peng et al., (2012) surveyed university students in Xian China on entrepreneurial intentions and its influencing factors. Based on a survey of 2,010 senior university students from nine universities in Xian, China, the results show that the perceived objective norm of university students has significant positive influence on their entrepreneurial intentions significantly. Agic and Pasic-Mesihovic (2020) studied entrepreneurial intention of students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study investigated the impact of perceived formal, informal and regulatory support on entrepreneurial intention. In addition, entrepreneurial capacity and fear of failure are analyzed as predictors of the propensity toward entrepreneurship. An informal support, perceived as support of family and friends exert a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions. Fear of failure has a significant adverse impact on entrepreneurial intentions while entrepreneurial capacity enhances entrepreneurial intention. The negative relationship between the fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention is moderated by informal support. In other words, support by family and friends dampen the negative relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention.

Yu et al., (2021) studied factors influencing entrepreneurial intention specifically among the foreigners in Kazakhstan and highlight the role of government support in general and under COVID-19. The study conceptualized the extended TPB + moderator (GS) model. The hypotheses were tested on a sample of 362 new and established foreign entrepreneurs in Kazakhastan by means of descriptive analysis, pearson's correlation analysis, and

multipleregression analysis. The study found that foreigners personal attitude(PA)toward entrepreneurship was the strongest factor motivating their entrepreneurial intention followed by their perceived behavioral control (PBC) as the strongest factor. Most of the research works are mostly based on attitudes but paucity of research work exist of cultural impact Benin City. The cultural impact may have been developed in societies influenced by religious beliefs and other environmental factors, there is need to establish such assertion in Benin City which is greatly influence by culture because of its empire status. This work seeks to know the extent to which Bini culture drives female entrepreneurial intentions.

Methodology

The study adopted quantitative research method and the research design is both an exploratory and descriptive. The use of explorative is stem from the need to have an in-depth insight into female entrepreneurial intentions. The survey approach involves studying a purposive selected sample taken from the population, which was based on convenience of the field workers sent to different areas in Benin metropolis. Edo State(Binis) is a strong empire state with deep cultural influence otherwise refers to as ancient City of Benin. This attribute made the choice of Benin City imperative.

The techniques used by the researcher to obtain data for analysis is questionnaire, interview and personal observation. Formulated question relevant to the subject matters were used and there were adequate instructions to guide the respondents, which enable them to express their opinions. Sample of one hundred and fifty (150) females were purposively selected. The research instrument is made up of two sections: Section A and B. Section A sought information on demographic issues while section B contains 12 questions that will address the research question raised. The internal consistency was done using the Cronbach's Alpha test. The reliability figure is 59.1%.

In generating the required data for analysis, a response scale research instrument was used because it allows the respondents indicate how close their feelings match the statement on a rating scale. The scale 5-1 was used for each of the questions. The questions were scored on a likert scale from strongly agreed (S.A), agreed (A), neutral (N), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (S.D), which were allocated scores 5-1. The statistical package for social science (SPSS 22.0) software was used. This statistical tool was used because it is suitable means of breaking down and analyzing the generated data into percentage and frequencies.

Findings and Discussion

This section captures items in the questionnaire relating to culture and female entrepreneurial intentions.

Table1: culture and female entrepreneurial intentions

S/N	Statement of Questions	N	S.A	A	N	D	S.D	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Female role in society do not allow ladies into entrepreneurship	150	9 (6%)	41 (27.3%)	15 (10%)	50 (33.4%)	35 (23.3%)	2.59	1.275
2	Is not culturally acceptable for	150	5 (3.3%)	32 (21.3%)	24 (16%)	58 (38.7%)	31 (20.7%)	2.48	1.139

	women to be entrepreneurs								
3	Societal norms negatively affect women involvement in entrepreneurship	150	14 (9.3%)	59 (39.4%)	20 (13.3%)	40 (26.7%)	17 (11.3%)	3.09	1.220
4	Religious belief of the people affect entry into entrepreneurship	150	9 (6%)	21 (14%)	19 (12.7%)	72 (48%)	29 (19.3%)	2.39	1.129
5	My family would discourage me entry into entrepreneurship	150	3 (2%)	7 (4.7%)	7 (4.7%)	57 (38%)	76 (50.6%)	1.69	.912
6	Gender does not determine the intention of an entrepreneur	150	54 (36%)	56 (37.3%)	7 (4.7%)	21 (14%)	12 (8%)	3.79	1.286
7	Lack of relevant technical known how /expertise hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship	150	26 (17.3%)	78 (52%)	22 (14.7%)	17 (11.3%)	7 (4.7%)	3.66	1.042
8	Lack of confidence in personal skills prevented female from entry into entrepreneurship	150	23 (15.3%)	70 (46.7%)	20 (13.3%)	28 (18.7%)	9 (6%)	3.47	1.139
9	Scare of financial risk hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship	150	29 (19.3%)	76 (50.6%)	25 (16.7%)	16 (10.7%)	2 (2.7%)	3.73	.981
10	Lack of capital/money hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship	150	50 (33.3%)	79 (52.6%)	13 (8.7%)	7 (4.7%)	1 (0.7%)	4.13	.808
11	Social exclusion of female by Nigerians hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship	150	32 (21.3%)	64 (42.7%)	25 (16.7)	27 (18%)	2 (1.3%)	3.65	1.050
12	Lack of institutional support for	150	27 (18%)	96 (64%)	10 (6.7%)	15 (10%)	2 (1.3%)	3.87	.869

	female hindered female entrepreneurship								

Source: Researcher's field work, 2021

Table 1 shows that the statement referring to female role in society does not allow ladies into entrepreneurship. It was observed that strongly disagreed and disagreed responses 85 (56.7%) were greaterthan those for agreed and strongly agreed 50 (33.3%) while 15 (10%) respondents were neutral. The calculated mean value of respondents of 2.59 was lower than the bench mark of 3.21 and standard deviation of 1.275 which suggest that greater percentage of the respondents disagreed that female role in society do not allow ladies into entrepreneurship. It also shows that a total of 89 (59.4%) respondents do not believed that is not culturally acceptable for women to be entrepreneurs. 37 (24.6%) believed that is not culturally acceptable for women to be entrepreneurs. 24 (16%) respondents were neutral. Outcome of the calculated mean value of 2.48 was lower than the bench mark mean value of 3.21 with a standard deviation of 1.139. Such huge variation difference is skewed toward disagreed.

The statement, societal norms negatively affect women involvement in entrepreneurship has a mean index value of 3.09 and standard deviation of 1.22o which implied that 73 (48.7%) respondents believes that societal norms negatively affect women involvement in entrepreneurship. 57 (38%) however disagreed with the opinion and 20 (13.3%) respondents were neutral. Furthermore, 101 (67.3%) respondents disagreed that religious belief of the people affect entry into entrepreneurship, 19 (12.7%) respondents were neutral while 30 (20%) respondents agreed to the opinion. On the statement my family would discourage me entry into entrepreneurship, 133 (88.6%) respondents do not believes that their family would discourage them entry into entrepreneurship, 10 (6.7%) believes their family would discourage them entry into entrepreneurship while 7 (4.7%) respondents were neutral. With a calculated mean of 1.69 and standard deviation of 0.912, such skewed difference is a clear indication that family would not discourage people entry into entrepreneurship. 110 (73.3%) respondents (strongly agreed and agreed) were of the views that gender does not determine the intention of an entrepreneur, 7 (4.7%) respondents were neutral while 33 (22%) respondents disagreed. The calculated mean index value of 3.79 which is greater than the bench mark mean value of 3.21 and standard deviation of 1.286 implies that a large proportion of the respondents agreed that gender does not determine the intention of an entrepreneur.

As to the statement whether lack of relevant technical known how/expertise hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship, 106 (69.3%) respondents believes that lack of relevant technical known how/expertise hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship, 22 (14.7%) respondents were neutral while 24 (16%) respondents do not believes the opinion . Such variation is reflected in the mean of 3.66 and standard deviation of 1.042.

The statement lack of confidence in personal skills prevented female from entry into entrepreneurship, 93 (62%) believes that female lack of confidence in their personal skills prevented them from entry into entrepreneurship, 20 (13.3%) respondents were neutral while 37 (24.7%) respondents do not believes the opinion. Such variation is reflected in the mean index calculation 3.47 which is greater thanthe bench mark mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 1.139.The statement that scare of financial risk hindered female from entry into

entrepreneurship, 105 (69.9%) believes that female are scared of financial risk, 25 (16.7%) of the respondents were neutral while 18 (13.4%) respondents disagreed on the opinion. This is further corroborated with the calculated mean value of 3.73 and standard deviation of 0.981. Such huge skewedness to agree and variation allude to the fact that scare of financial risk hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship.

The statement as to whether lack of capital/money hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship, 129 (85.9%) believes that lack of capital/money hindered women from entry into entrepreneurship, 13 (8.7%) respondents were neutral while 8 (11.7%) respondents disagreed on the opinion. The calculated mean value of 4.13 is far greater than the bench mark mean value of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.808. Such skewed variation is a pointer to the fact that lack of capital/money hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship. The statement as to whether social exclusion of female by Nigerians hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship, 96 (64%) respondents believes that social exclusion of female hindered them from entry into entrepreneurship, 25 (16.7%) respondents were neutral while 29 (19.3%) respondents disagreed with the opinion. The calculated mean value of 3.65 is greater than the bench mark mean value of 3.21 and standard deviation of 1.050. Such huge variation is a pointer that the female are socially excluded by Nigerians.

The statement as to whether lack of institutional supports for female hindered female entrepreneurship, 123 (82%) believes that there is lack of institutional support for female, 10 (6.7%) respondents were neutral while 17 (11.3%) respondents disagreed with the opinion. The calculated mean value of 3.87 is far greater than the bench mark mean value of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.869. Such huge variation and skewedness is a pointer that Nigerians do not give institution support to female.

Implications

The questionnaires reveals that female role in society is not a hindrance to female entry into entrepreneurship. The implication is that gender stereotype of female do not prevent them from entry into entrepreneurship. This is possible because there is no individual culture that shape global gender stereotype, to that extents, global gender stereotype is not a limitation. 89 (59.4%) respondents disagreed that is not culturally acceptable for women to be entrepreneurs. Such huge variation is a pointer that there is no cultural impediment to women becoming entrepreneurs. Decision not to be is subject to other female limiting factors. The implication is that any female can aspire to any heights in entrepreneurship. In Benin culture, the female are encouraged to be industrious to support the family because of the polygamous culture. 75 (48.7%) respondents were of the view that social norms negatively affect women involvement in entrepreneurship, while 57 (38%) respondents disagreed with the opinion. The implication is that the so called societal norms are neither here or there. There is no norms in Bini culture that serve as a barrier to women entry into entrepreneurship. Believes in such social norms and regulation of female by families are personal perception, it has nothing to do with societal norms. Religion is not also an impediment to female entry into entrepreneurship in Benin, evident from 101 (67.3%) respondents. 133 (88.6%) respondents believes that families in Bini do not discourage female in entry into entrepreneurship. Female in Bini are encouraged by various families to learn skills that will usher them into entrepreneurship. Hence Edo State government skill acquisition center is headed by female and there are other numerous skill acquisitions for female in the state like India renaissance.

110 (73.3%) respondents believed that gender does not determine the intention of an entrepreneur. The implication is that any person in Bini culture can aspire to be anything in terms of entrepreneurship. The decision not to be is a personal perception. Because the incentive of Edo State to entrepreneurs has no gender coloration and regulation in the state about entrepreneurship has no gender bias. There is no law limiting any gender.

Lack of relevant technical known how/expertise , lack of confidence in personal skills, scare of financial risk and lack of capital evident from 104 (69.3%), 96(62%), 105 (69.9%) and 129(85.9%) respectively. The implication is that the female are hindered by self-limiting factors which is not a cultural issue. The decisions not to be because of these limiting factors are personal perception and have nothing to do with the culture of the Binis. 96 (64%) respondents believe that social exclusion of female by Nigerians hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship. This may be responsible for less female showing interest in entrepreneurship. Social exclusion has the ability to shut out the intelligence of the female which constitute major part of Nigeria population not to contribute their quota to the development of Nigeria State.Such deprivation, reduces their exposure, finance and influence that would have enhance their entrepreneurial ability. The government must relax all social exclusion to give equal opportunity to all citizens to contribute to the development of the economy which will lead to growth of the gross domestic product and capacity utilization and invariably emancipation from poverty. 123(82%) respondents believe that lack of institutional support for female hindered female entrepreneurship. This may be mere perception because the various institutions in support of entrepreneurship have no gender coloration. Since these questionnaires were filled by females, it may be their perception, which does not represent reality. But such thought could hinder female entry into entrepreneurship. This may account for low level of female participation in entrepreneurship. There is need for campaign and enlightenment on the part of government to deconstruct such thinking.

Conclusion

The questionnaire reveals that 73 (48.7%) believes that societal norms negatively affect women involvement in entrepreneurship. The government must make deliberate efforts to remove all encumbrances that limit the female or promote gender stereotype. 96 (64%) respondents believed that social exclusion of female by Nigerians hindered female from entry into entrepreneurship. The government and various institutions must be more open to social inclusion. Attempts to shut out potential of some persons in society retard the growth of such system. The government must open up the political space, make government business transparent and more inclusive and the various institutions must as a matter of urgency give all a sense of belonging. This remains the only way we can enhance the growth of the society and bring about abundant prosperity to our nation.

There is need to set up institution that will train the female in entrepreneurship. This will boost their technical known how/expertise and instill confidence on the female entrepreneurs that success in entrepreneurship has no coloration. Our financial institutions should set aside a percentage of their lending to female entrepreneurs to enable them start up.

It was established that there is no cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship. Therefore the low percentage of female participation is due to self- limiting factors and personal perception. There is need for deliberate policies to eradicate such factors. This research was

limited to Benin City and respondents are limited to 150 persons. It is the researcher opinion that the number of respondents can be expanded and wider coverage suggested to test whether culture actually impedes on female entrepreneurial intentions in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The need to jettison all form of gender stereotype in our institutions, open up our political and economic space to be more inclusive, and set up institutions that will train potential female entrepreneurs and encouraged our financial institution to set aside a percentage of their funds for female entrepreneurs.

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