



Motivational factors for women entrepreneurs in engaging in street entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurship is of recent origin although it is worldwide accepted as an economic lynchpin. Women in developing countries like Zimbabwe tend to gain from street entrepreneurship. The present study attempted to document motivational factors, which drive women entrepreneurs to engage in street entrepreneurship. Literature is abound with studies on women entrepreneurs but little attention given on the study of why women engage in street entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban of Zimbabwe. Of recent literature indicated that street entrepreneurship is becoming a key manifestation in many urban cities in developing countries. It is becoming a growing sector of the small-scale entrepreneurs. The present study was premised in the qualitative research paradigm and adopted a case study research design. Qualitative study provided an opportunity to describe intangible aspects about people's experiences to get meanings of their experiences. A purposive sample was used to generate data through interviews. To generate rich data for the study key informants were targeted. Results of the study showed that although there are innumerable factors that can drive women entrepreneurs to engage in street entrepreneurship, most dominant were that women could be driven by negative push factors such as loss of formal employment culminating to low income inflows to the family, passion for entrepreneurship and adequately capitalised. In recommendation, there is need for the government to support street entrepreneurship as it gives an alternative kind of employment to the women entrepreneurs. In addition, it is imperative to make policies that cater for the training of the women entrepreneurs in aspects of basic business management.

Key words: Motivational factors, women, entrepreneurs, street, entrepreneurship

Background to the study

Entrepreneurship has come of age now looking at its nurturing stages it has passed through. The area of entrepreneurship has been historically the domain of males than females. The current trend is experiencing a paradigm shift in the area of entrepreneurship. More women are participating in the advancement of taking risks and investing in ventures competing with their male counterparts. In Zimbabwe, the past trend has it on record that there was low participation in entrepreneurship by women. The role of women was confined to household chores and child bearing as opposed to the situation that is being experienced now. Entrepreneurship development of women is necessary (Pandey, 2013). Developing countries like Zimbabwe are supposed to embrace women entrepreneurship as a tool for economic development. Both human and physical resources at its disposal underpin economic growth and development of a country. Objective development of an economy is based on its ability to tap from human resources to their brimming exploitation and utilisation, which is anchored in industrialisation concept. Gradually, economies are starting to recognise women with entrepreneurship oriented minds as critical asset for national development. The move by governments setting up ministries and other agents to support women entrepreneurship is a clear testimony that women entrepreneurship is being accepted as a force of economic development.

According to Pandey, (2013) entrepreneurship brings new socio-economic order in the economy as it acts as a transformational agent.

Pandey (2013) concur that entrepreneurship is widely accepted as an aspect of economic dynamism. Involvement of women is of recently ascending and brings with it the much-needed self-economic independence of women entrepreneurs through initiating, establishing, and managing enterprises. The growing sensitivity in countries that there is hidden entrepreneurship potential that resides in women is gradually being tolerated and accepted. In the past women were relegated to household duties but now there is a paradigm shift where more and more women are joining the entrepreneurial ventures. With the changes that are taking place in the global business landscape the participation of women entrepreneurs is increasingly noticed (Kafor and Amalu, 2010, Dumbu, 2014). Economics of the world are shrinking in their formal employment creation due to unfavourable macroeconomic fundamentals that are not stable, (Dumbu, 2014). In Zimbabwe, the lack of supportive macroeconomics fundamental to creation of formal employment can be traced back to the time when the country adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The policy was meant to readjust government expenditure through rightsizing the civil service which was thought to be chewing the income for the government in terms of salaries. That marked the closure of many industries and many people found them joining the reserve army of labour as unemployed. Due to economic hardships, many people started to venture in to buying and selling. Because of this, more women entered the market as entrepreneurs starting their own green grocery stalls in the surrounding suburb streets.

Several studies, (Okafor and Amalu, 2010; Panchal and Dua, 2013; Raman, Anantharaman and Ramanathan, 2013) have documented a lot about women entrepreneurship in big cities and advanced economies. The research gap that has been left open is that of investigating the factors that motivate women into entrepreneurship in the streets of the suburbs. Women participation in entrepreneurship is increasing evidenced by the number of vendors in the streets and an open space in the suburbs. Every street has market stalls for vegetable, fruit and many other items mostly operated by women. The business seems to thrive from midday to late evening. The entrepreneurship has an advantage to the residents because it is able to break bulk the good sold. Some of the clients of these women entrepreneurs do not have large families such that they demand small quantities of the items sold at the women entrepreneurs in the streets. Saeed, Malik, Sohail, Tabassum and Anwer, (2012) argued that women entrepreneurship oils the transactions in the economy from larger ones to smaller quantities which customers can manage. Many countries are stepping up support for actively promoting women entrepreneurs as ways of accelerating economic development and empowerment of women. Jesurajan and Gnanadhas (2011) opined that women are importantly considered as entrepreneurs who have the untapped force to move economies forward. The ability of women establishing the small businesses solves a number of challenges in the economy such as reduction of frustrations due to economic hardships individuals may be facing. Women entrepreneurship is a confident, innovative and creative business activity which brings with it economic independence on women entrepreneurs (Zhou, Xie, Zhang and Suresh, 2013). The increased influx of women entrepreneurs on the streets motivated the present study to desire to investigate the factors that are motivating women entrepreneurship in Masvingo urban area.

Statement of the problem

Women entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as a veritable vehicle for economic development. Inclusion of women into entrepreneurship is important because it affords an opportunity to tap business acumen from women entrepreneurs. Women are increasingly entering participating in taking risks in starting new enterprises. The present study investigated the factors motivating women into entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban

Research objectives

The present study was guided by the following objective:

- To establish the factors that motivate women to engage in entrepreneurial activities in the streets
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Research questions

The study attempted to answer the following research question:

- Why women entrepreneurs engage in entrepreneurial activities in the streets?

Literature review

Street vending is a global phenomenon in cities and towns throughout the world (Adhikari, 2011). With modernisation of retailing where more complex departmental stores and shopping malls are sprouting in many cities and town, one is tempted to see a complete varnishing of street vending. More and more people are accustomed to buying from the well-established businesses where the service is marked to be customer centred. With that in mind, one is forced to think that one day street vending will disappear in the modern day arrangement of businesses. Despite all odds, street vending is increasing at an alarming rate with more cases of women participating in this new arrangement of entrepreneurship. Diwakar and Anand (2014) opined that street vending is booming regardless of presence of more and more sophisticated spacious shopping malls. Gamiendien and Van-Niekerk (2017) recently noted that street vending has become one of the key manifestations of urban cities especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe. It is becoming a growing sector of small-scale entrepreneurs.

A number of studies have been carried on street vending and a plethora of findings is available in literature. Many researchers such as Zhou, Xie, Zhang and Suresh, 2013; Saeed, Malik, Sohail, Tabassun and Anwar, 2014; Meyer and Landsberg, 2015 and Hani, 2015, have documented intense literature on street vending and attributed this entrepreneurship activity to linked to women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurship is proving to be a prominent element of today's economies. Economic disparity and unemployment are the twin devils bedeviling developing countries and Zimbabwe is not spared at all. Entrepreneurship is recognised as a panacea to those economic challenges that are inherently present in developing countries (Jesurajan and Gnanadhus, 2011).

Other studies such Mhadeva and Keshavamurthy, (2015); Husain, Yasmin and Islam, (2015), Kabir, Hou Akther, Wang and Wang (2012), have place street vending as largely an entrepreneurship activity commonly dominated by women. Their argument is that vending is done largely by the women and continued to qualify that those women who engage in street vending are the economically and socially backward entrepreneurs. Although street vending is an urban phenomenon that is visible at different places in both stationary and moving forms (that is operators do not have permanent premises or structures to conduct their business), beneficiaries of it argue that it is a reliable, convenient, and competitive way of doing business (Hani, 2015). Street vendors capitalise on the concept of breaking bulk, which in turn allow all potential customers to afford buying their goods. Street vending are actually into further downstream of retailing where smaller and smaller quantities of good are packaged for the customer to match with the low and affordable prices. The combination of braking bulk and lower prices that are not astronomic to the street buyers make street vending viable entrepreneurship. The idea of identifying opportunities in terms of needs of the habitants of an area is very strong in street vending. That skill is one of the most important requirements for entrepreneurship.

The current situation in Zimbabwe is characterised by street vending in both residential areas and cities. A street vendor is described as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without entrepreneurial structures to work from such as permanent buildings and other important business facilities (Ismail et al, 2012). Street vendors can be either stationary or mobile vendors carrying their load. In the present study, the street vendor is regarded as either mobile or stationary working from premises with no proper infrastructure to depict formal entrepreneurship. A number of women have invested small capitals in order to earn a livelihood from street vending. There is a phenomenal rise in the number of street vendors who are generally regarded as economically as self-employed workers in the informal sector (Chicho-Matenge and Ongori, 2013). A study by Ismail et al (2012) on stimulating factors on women entrepreneurship intention showed that street entrepreneurship is highly associated with women. The study also indicated that street vending is beneficial to lower income group of the population who spend large portion of their income on goods sold by vendors. Street vending ranges from selling green vegetables on a vegetable stall to a number of other items that are found on the streets today. With the mind view that many countries are stepping up support for actively promoting

women entrepreneurship as a way of accelerating economic emancipation, there is need to study those factor that motivate women entrepreneurs into engaging in entrepreneurship activities in Zimbabwe. Women are importantly considered as entrepreneurs who have the untapped force to economic impetus. Thus understanding women entrepreneurship has a significant impact on the general welfare of the economy. The question, which remains unanswered, is what motivates the individual women entrepreneurs to spend hours of the day on the street vending?

Research methodology

The study is deeply rooted in qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research is one, which is systematic in the manner it inquires seeking to have a better understanding in a narrative or descriptive way a particular phenomenon under study. Qualitative studies are grounded in interpretivism position concerned with how or why the phenomenon of study is interpreted, understood, or constituted (Astalin, 2013). To buttress this, Creswell, (2013) opined that the aim of qualitative study is to provide illumination and understanding of complex phenomenon under study to gain useful answers to why and how questions of a phenomenon. This justifies the grounding of the study in qualitative form to tap the reasons for women entrepreneurs engaging in street entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban. Ishak and Bakar (2014) argued in favour of qualitative research saying that the strength of it is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions about people's experiences in a given research issue. In qualitative research, the researcher can deal with those intangible factors, which may not be readily apparent. To that, end researchers will be able to interpret and give meaning and better understanding of complex realities of a given situation.

Research design

In line with the research, philosophy explained above the research design was case study. Case studies are used in qualitative research for their ability to afford the research to examine the phenomenon under investigation in depth. Roller (2011) argued that case studies are important in qualitative research, as researchers are interested in getting meanings of experiences of the subjects themselves rather than generalisation. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real life context (Zainal, 2007) in a systematic way with the aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest (Zucker, 2009). This was the desire of the present study to inquiry on the real life context of the women entrepreneurs giving out reasons why they engage in street entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban. Case study design may demand the inquiry of one case to multiple cases depending on the phenomenon and situation of the studied (Sedgwick, 2013). In this study, multiple cases were appropriate to gain more insights about the reasons why women entrepreneurs engage in street entrepreneurship.

Sample and sampling method

To generate data meant to better understanding of the reasons women entrepreneurs engaged in street entrepreneurship, a purposive sample of five women street entrepreneurs was used. Gutterman (2015) and Marshal, Cardon, Poddar and Fontenot (2013) said that to understand the essence of an experience in qualitative research where case study design is used a sample of five participants can form a sample. The sample size was like that, as the researcher used the interviews as data generation instrument. Camic, Rhodes and Yardley (2003) agreed that when one is using interviews as data generation method about five informants could be a representative sample that will accord the researcher to interview only key informants. Purposive sampling is a deliberate choice of research informants based on the qualities that the informant possesses (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, (2015). In the present study, the researcher resides within the same area with the purposively selected informants. The informants have been in street vending for a long observed period in the area. With their experience and resilience in street entrepreneurship, the sampled informants were regarded as key informants possessing rich information about the phenomenon under study. Use of key rich informants is the basis for obtaining accurate data in qualitative researches using case study design (Gentles, Charles Ploeg and McKibbin, 2015; Benoot, Hannes and Bilsen, 2016).

Data generation method

Interviews are a common method that is suitable in qualitative research matching with case study design. The present study used the open interviews to generate data. The research informants were interviewed at their market stalls to gain insights into why they are engaging in street entrepreneurship. Interviewing allowed the informants to spell out in as much more relaxed manner as the interviewees were allowed to continue serving their clients during the course of the interviews. The purpose of this was not to rush the interviews. Ashenqeeti (2014) argues that interview is a natural and socially accepted method of generating data and can be used in various situations. The advantage of interviews in generating data in qualitative research is that it facilitates obtaining direct explanations from humans' actions through a compressive speech interaction (Turner, 2010). Thus, the study used the conversational interview whose purpose was to gather reasons why women entrepreneurs engage in street entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban. Conversational interview gathers in-depth information from the real interviewees without distortions as it take a one-on-one interaction (Alshenqeeti, 2014; Cho, 2014).

Results and discussion

Street entrepreneurship is a visible section of informal sector that engulfed the economies of developing countries like Zimbabwe. Many streets are currently occupied by stationary or mobile street entrepreneurship and most of them are women entrepreneurs. The study examined the reasons why women in particular engaged in street entrepreneurship in Masvingo Urban. The practicing street women entrepreneurs why they end up in street entrepreneurship shared out a number of reasons. Data collected were put into themes as they were generated by frequency of being said by the informants. That means common reasons were grouped together to form a theme. It came out in the study that aspects of divorce or widowed, negative push factors, passion, and self-independence dominated the reasons why women entrepreneurs engaged in street entrepreneurship.

Push by negative factors

Women entrepreneurs practicing street entrepreneurship indicated that sometimes one is forced into engaging into street trading because of several factors that are negative in one's life. People are forced into street entrepreneurship as a last resort economic activity after risk of unemployment. If one becomes economically redundant in formal employment would still expect an inflow of income. The only quick way to satisfy that desire would force the individual to engage in street entrepreneurship. The reason is that street entrepreneurship is associated with minimum costs of entry and the activity is so flexible for women who may have other chores to do. The flexibility and low entry barriers quicken the pace at which women engaged in street entrepreneurship. One of the informants lamented that she lost her job during the time when companies were folding operations due to economic meltdown experienced in Zimbabwe during 2008 and until now, she cannot find a job. After loss of the job, there were no other possible alternative sources of income to pay rent, schools fees and buying food. Life became so difficult to manage and the last resort was to engage in street entrepreneurship. The other informant submitted that, *"the last option at my disposal was to start an income generating enterprise which did not demand a lot of income to start and which did not require a license."* What this implied is that women entrepreneurs engage in street entrepreneurship because it does not demand large capital outlay. A small capital can make someone start the business. There are also no hassles of trying to obtain a trading licence. This makes street entrepreneurship palatable to women entrepreneurs who are generally affected by negative push factor of loss of formal employment. When one loses a formal employment stress of loss of income become common and forces one to think about ways of circumventing this challenge.

Again, when the spouse loses formal employment that triggered women to engage in street entrepreneurship because that meant a reduced income inflow to the family. The gap had to be financed from somewhere somehow. Thus, the aspect of insufficient inflow of income to the family remained the leading factor driving women entrepreneurs in to street entrepreneurship. The easier target because of its nature and flexibility would be joining street entrepreneurship to try to boost family income. It is easy for women than men to start open space trading in most cases because they can start from the house until the business develops that it needs a bigger market then they move to

open space and trade. In addition, women are entrepreneurially and socialising and would be able to attract customers that way.

Another negative factor that forced women entrepreneurs into street trading was because of neither divorce or one is widowed. Many of the street entrepreneurs who responded to the interviews were single mothers. When asked why they chose to be trading in the street they reiterated that it was because they had nothing to do as their marriages broke down. The only way to make a living was to trade in the street to irk a living out of it. Without street trading, it is difficult to have food rent and other basics, submitted one of the informants. Therefore is one is divorced or widowed, the bottom line is that the inflow of income shrinks. Financing that gap would demand one to be enterprising and hence these women engaged in street entrepreneurship. It implies that if things are all right in terms of income the desire to join entrepreneurship train would be absent in many women. Thus, what drives them into street entrepreneurship may not be desire but being forced into it by negative push factors like loss of formal employment, divorce and being widowed.

Driven by passion for entrepreneurship

Street entrepreneurship has many pitfalls, challenges and in many cases disasters along the road to success. One of the informants indicated that besides being pushed by negative factors to join street entrepreneurship, passion is the greatest factor that pushes one. The relaxed barriers to entry, which can be overcome easily by many women, support the passion to business ownership and management drives women into street entrepreneurship. Over this aspect, one of the informants submitted that:

If you do not have passion for what you are doing, you quickly lose interest and your business fails.

What it indicated is that some street women entrepreneurs are driven by passion for owning and running their own businesses. The issue of independence inspired individuals to become entrepreneurs. Independence drive coupled with passion for entrepreneurship can drive women into entrepreneurship. Passion and independence are in abundance in street women entrepreneurs. In business management, most business owners who are driven by passion and independence lead successful enterprises. Although street entrepreneurship is associated with a number of challenges like risk of the police, city council officials, roadside accidents that might result in one losing the trade wares, for those who have passion it answers for every challenge. Street women entrepreneurs who are driven by passion and desire for independence find solutions for each challenge encountered leading them to be very successful business leaders who avert disaster and turn adverse situations to their advantage. That is the drive for many women entrepreneurs to deal with challenges and exploit opportunities that are untapped by other entrepreneurs in their local vicinity.

Adequately capitalised

All forms of businesses require capitalisation despite size. In order to get into business there is need for an effort to raise the required capital and other important resources. Street entrepreneurship has to be done by individuals who have capital to meet the demanding challenges associated with the activity. Therefore, to engage in street entrepreneurship requires capitalisation. Many studies (Adhikari, 2011; Ismail et al, 2012; Saeed et al, 2014; Diwakar and Anand, 2014, Husain et al, 2015; Mahadeva and Keshavamurthy, 2015) have documented about street entrepreneurship and concluded that most of those engaged in it are women mostly driven by poverty. The studies argued that women engaged in street entrepreneurship are socially and economically backward individuals of the society. The current study established a result that is interestingly different from the above finding in previous studies. It emerged in the study that because one has to be capitalised in order to be able to risk the investment into the uncertainty situation of the business environment. The women indicated that being in streets does not mean that they are socially and economically disadvantaged. One has to have sufficient capital to start up the enterprise, which is associated with high risks. The desire to take risk where opportunities to satisfy the market demand prevails, one has to be backed financially. Today street entrepreneurship is no longer for the socially and economically marginalised. The working class and high-income individuals of the society who are coming in to revamp and expand markets for their products have invaded the trade.

One of the factors driving the working class and high-income groups to engage in street entrepreneurship is the flexibility associated with the activity. Flexibility in terms of doing it after hours of work and continuing into the dark hours of the evening allowed the women entrepreneurs to exploit the niche market which larger suppliers may not find profitable to serve. Street trading allowed the women entrepreneurs to flex their muscles to reach out to the unreached markets with their new products, which are conveniently packaged and sold out. Clients find it cheap and affordable to buy from the street entrepreneurs, lamented one of the informants. Therefore, what drives the individuals into street trading is ability to capitalise the business and desire to expand the market. Some of those people who are in street are part of bigger trading names that are advancing strategies for increasing sales and competing in the competitive business environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that women entrepreneurs in Masvingo urban of Zimbabwe are motivated by factors such as facing economic hardships through loss of formal employment to engage in street entrepreneurship. Informants indicated out rightly that loss of formal employment has downstream effects on expected inflow of income to the family that is crucially important for meeting the necessities of life. Without inflow of income, one is forced to be entrepreneurial to cover the finance gap created by loss of formal employment leading one to enter street entrepreneurship that is found to be easy to enter with no or few barriers to entry that can be prohibitive. In addition, street entrepreneurship was found to be flexible to women. Women enter in to street entrepreneurship because of divorce and sometimes being widowed. The two devils in society contribute to downward inflow of income to the family and the option left to scrounging for income was to enter the street trading as alluded to by the women entrepreneurs.

Besides the negative push factors, women entrepreneurs were motivated by passion to engage in street entrepreneurship. Passion for something has greater push for one to be an entrepreneurial person. Women entrepreneurs suggested that they were driven into the streets by passion for owning and running their own ventures, which gave them opportunity of autonomy and independence economically. It was also concluded that women who were adequately capitalised were driven into street entrepreneurship to expand the markets for their products to practice market diversification and coming closer to the clients. The finding is disputing the previous findings by other researchers that street entrepreneurship was a domain for the socially and economically marginalised women entrepreneurs. In the present study, it was concluded that those with surplus resources were well positioned to enter in to street entrepreneurship to expand their market shares and be visible to a variety of customers. Those factors pushed women entrepreneurs to engage in street entrepreneurship.

The study recommended that policy makers have a task to incorporate in their policies adequate attention towards revamping and reorganisation of street entrepreneurs focussing attention on the women entrepreneurs who should be accorded the opportunity to be economically autonomous and independence. Such policies would have an impact on developing women entrepreneurship in the country, as women are the backbone of economic development in any country in the world. Women entrepreneurship needs to be supported by programmes that are meant to enhance the business management facet in women entrepreneurs. One of the factors that affected women entrepreneurship is the lack of business management. Basic business management courses can be organised by higher learning institutions like universities and Polytechnic colleges to those women who are trading in the street. This can be done in form of short courses that are flexible to the women entrepreneurs' working times. More researches can be carried along the area of why women entrepreneurs ply the streets as their trading ground to find more reasons for that.

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