

Entrepreneurial Behaviors and Competitive Advantage of Small Businesses in Ogun State

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Abstract

This work looked at the relationship between entrepreneurial behaviours and competitive advantage of small businesses in Ogun State. Survey research design was adopted in the study and the study population was 2,044 small business owners in Ogun State with 322 as sample size using Krejcie and Morgan sampling size determination table. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was the statistical tool used to test the four hypotheses. The findings exposed to us that there is relationship between the entrepreneurial behaviours dimensions and competitive advantage measures used in this study among small businesses in Ogun State. Therefore, it was recommended that government should intensify their efforts in encouraging the need for independence and achievements among the young graduates to be involved in small businesses.

Keywords: Entrepreneur; Entrepreneurial behaviours; Competitive advantages; Need for achievement; Need for independence/locus of control; Differentiation; Cost leadership.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurs have been describes in so many ways. Some were described based on their financial capabilities, some based on their staff strength and so on. But it is essential to note that an entrepreneur is anybody that was able to identify a general/common need that they are lacking in an area and try to provide a succor in form of product/service for those people in need in order for that to be his/herself source of employment/income. The general thinking of every entrepreneur is to be a provider of need that is generally lacking and as such, most times, they end up innovating/developing new idea/product/service. Behaviour can also be described as a notable attribute, attitude, action or reaction to situations around a particular individual. Note that the emphasis is on notable that is, repeatedly done by the person in similar situation/issue. Wikitionary described behaviour in different ways but the one that catch the attention of the authors in relation to this study are those ones that said behaviour can be “human conduct relative to social norms”; “the way a living creature behaves or acts generally”; and “an instance of the way a living creature behaves”.

Entrepreneurial behaviours, therefore, can be described as those attributes and qualities that can be used to describe entrepreneurs. Better still, those attributes and qualities that can be used to distinguish entrepreneurs from other forms of business owners in the society. Middleton (2010), said that entrepreneurial behaviour can best be described as “behaviour of individuals engaging in a process of creating new ventures, where the process includes units of actions which can be observed by others”. Getting involved in entrepreneurial business is getting strictly involved in decision making constantly. Again, getting involved in decision making might have been motivated by certain factors as decision making has been confirmed to be a hectic task. But according to Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012) said that the motivating factors for deciding to be involved in rigorous decision making are desire for independence, tendency for higher risk, higher need for achievement, need for internal control and also, higher level of preference for innovation. However, for the purpose of this study, we will consider the need for achievement and independence asserted by Onuoha (2008) and Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012).

Furthermore, it has been asserted by different Scholars that business environment is complex, multidimensional, ever changing, affect business strategies, partially controllable and therefore, delicate to control (Onuoha, 2015). Business environment is today volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) White, 2013 as cited in Esievelo *et al.* (2019) and also agreed on is the fact that small and medium scale entrepreneurs constitute the main force/driver of all nations economy (Kraja and Osmani, 2013; Onuoha, 2008). In Nigeria, the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo once reiterated that “MSMEs are the bedrock of Nigeria’s industrialization and inclusive economic development; and the most important component of industrialization as set out in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan” MSMEs report, 2017.

This singular assumption that they are the main force successfully driving almost every nation’s economy as well as the bedrock of industrialization and inclusive economic development has subjected them to serious rivalry competition by other forms of business owners. But the survival of entrepreneurs has basically been due to certain competitive advantages they enjoy over and above other business owners. Some of the competitive advantages strategies enjoyed and utilized according to Lynch, 2002 as cited in Kraja and Osmani (2013) are differentiation,

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lower cost, niche marketing, high performance/technology, quality, vertical integration, service, synergy, culture, leadership and style. Note that competitive advantage should be a base and objective of good strategy which must at all times be scrutinized with (SWOT) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analyzed. This is essential in order to do things, activities and actions in a different manner and give them an edge above and compared with their competitors. For the purpose of this study the two main competitive advantages posited by Porter, 1985 as cited in Kraja and Osmani (2013) will be used and they are differentiation and lower cost or cost leadership.

1.1. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to establish the relationship between the entrepreneurial behaviours and competitive advantages of small businesses in Ogun State. In order to establish the aim on a solid ground, the following specific objectives would be considered.

1. Knowing the relationship between the need for achievement and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State.
2. Establishing the relationship between the need for achievement and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State.
3. Ascertaining the relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State.
4. Finding out the relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State.

1.2. Research Questions

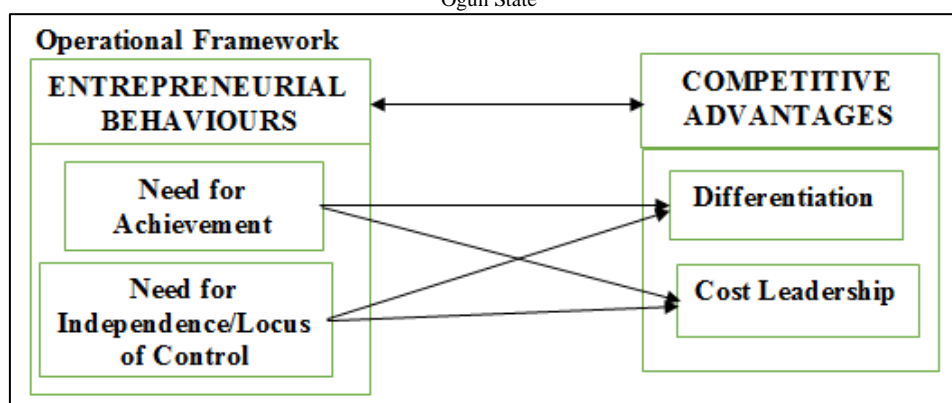
1. What is the relationship between the need for achievement and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State?
2. What is the relationship between the need for achievement and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State?
3. What is the relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State?
4. What is the relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State?

1.3. Research Hypotheses

1. There is no relationship between the need for achievement and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State.
2. There is no relationship between the need for achievement and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State.
3. There is no relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State.
4. There is no relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State.

2. Literature Review

Fig-1. Operational Framework showing the relationship between entrepreneurial behaviors and competitive advantages of small businesses in Ogun State



2.1. Concept of Entrepreneurial Behaviors

Entrepreneurial behaviour can be described as the combination of actions exhibited by the entrepreneur. This actions continue adjusting and defining the opportunities and position such behaviour as acceptable to the market which in turn brings about a new venture (Middleton, 2010). Bird and Schjoedt (2009) as quoted in Cavus *et al.* (2014) said “it is the study of human behaviour involved in identifying and exploiting opportunities through creating and developing new ventures as well as exploring and creating opportunities while in the process of emerging organisations”.

Therefore, in accomplishing new ventures, entrepreneurs usually exhibit certain personality trait according to McClelland (1987) as quoted in Cavus *et al.* (2014) like high need for achievement, low need to conform, persistence, high energy level and risk taking tendency. Apart from the high need for achievement, other entrepreneurial personality trait highlighted in Cavus *et al.* (2014) will be summed up to be the need for independence/locus of control. The entrepreneurial behaviours will thus be discussed under two main headings – need for achievement and need for independence/locus of control.

2.1.1. Need for Achievement

The term need for achievement (N-Ach) according to Worlu and Alagah (2016), can be said to be “an individual’s desire for significant accomplishments, such as mastering of skills, being in control, or achieving high standards.” Need for achievement can either be *intrinsic* when it is driven by a strong determination for accomplishment and *extrinsic* if the pressure that is mounted by the expectations of others.

Need for achievement (N-Ach) can be seen in those entrepreneurs that are growth-oriented in nature and have constant need to succeed, to achieve and to accomplish challenging tasks (Cavus *et al.*, 2014). McClelland (1961) as quoted in Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012) “*the need for achievement has been associated with entrepreneurial behavior. This need prompts a strong desire to do things well, or better than others, including those with authority. People with a high need for achievement likely make plans in advance. They also enjoy taking personal responsibility and prefer quick, specific feedback about their actions. Empirical studies recognize the need for achievement in the form of the entrepreneurial intentions of a given population, as well as in retrospective studies of the attitudes and characteristics of existing entrepreneurs. Regardless of the approach, many studies thus highlight the importance of a need for achievement as a characteristic of entrepreneurs and an influence on business success.*”

This is an entrepreneurial behavior that helps change the mindsets of proprietors and workers by directing work behaviors to business results. This is a practice as opposed to McClelland (1967) as quoted in Akhmiokhor (2017) need for achievement that is a psychological characteristic of an individual. The plans of the firms are according to the objectives and have to be continually re-evaluated. The development of the business plans involves identification of the size of the market segments making a market plan, personnel requirements, production plan, and financial requirements and positioning strategy for entry, Balunywa (1994) as quoted in Akhmiokhor (2017).

McClelland concluded that the relationship between need for achievement and entrepreneurship meant that need for achievement was essential to economic development, and that any country that wished to accelerate economic progress should be interested in raising levels of need for achievement within its borders McClelland, 1961 as quoted in Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012). “Researchers found spurious correlations between need for achievement and economic growth...” through cost leadership.

Individuals with a high level of need for achievement exhibit a strong desire to assume personnel responsibility, to set and a strong desire to assume personal responsibility, to set and meet moderately difficult goals, and to receive performance feedback. McClelland believed that need for achievement was critical to economic development and advocated providing developing countries with achievement training rather than financial assistance Cherrington, 1994 as quoted in Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012). Again, Worlu and Alagah (2016) opined that “the need for achievement inspires individuals to succeed in competition s, as well as in whatever they are out to achieve.”

2.1.2. Need for Independence/Locus of Control

Locus of control can either be internal or external in an individual according to Worlu and Alagah (2016). Worlu and Alagah (2016) emphasized that it is said to be internal if “an individual has a conviction that he/she can control his/her life or external when a person have a deep conviction that his/her decisions and life are influenced by certain environmental features that are beyond them; this situation may be accidental or through providence.” This shows that those with formal or internal control believes that everything happening to them is as a result of their action like their personal drive or level of hard work. Those with external locus of control shift the blame on the external forces around them like the environment.

Ability to control one’s work life like control over your own time and work, making independent decisions, having flexibility to combine work with one’s personal life. Aziz, et al., 2013 as quoted in (Stephan *et al.*, 2015). Entrepreneurs with locus of control or need for independence are those that believe in the control of their destiny. Rotter (1966) developed the notion of locus of control of reinforcement” otherwise seen as need for independence (Chell, 2008).

Though, it is not actually a trait but behavioural response according to Chell (1985a:47) as quoted in (Chell, 2008). “The locus of control is understood as a determinant of the expectation of success” Westhead, et al., 2011:61-61 as quoted in Chavez (2016). Entrepreneurs that possess high level of locus of control normally look at themselves to possess more power, innovativeness ability and more discretion Zhang & Bruning, 2011:87 as cited in Chavez (2016). Locus of control commences from feeling of having control over your environment and finally, your fate.

Again, Hale, a blogger according to Worlu and Alagah (2016) tries to know which of the locus of control is more beneficial to an entrepreneur and concluded that entrepreneurs that are in business requires “high internal locus of control since their greatest motivator is the desire to achieve real success by making things happen”. Worlu and Alagah (2016), went further to assert that without external locus of control, the entrepreneur might “disregard the

influence he/she has over happenings; this invariably may result in the individual's inability to make the necessary adjustments that are required."

2.2. Concept of Competitive Advantage

Generic strategies was as a result of Porter's research in 1980. These generic strategies are ways of gaining competitive advantage by developing the "edge" that facilitate sale of goods and services away from your competitors. There are two categories of business strategies which are competitive and cooperative strategies (Onuoha, 2015). Competitive strategy is to rub shoulder with your competitors in the industry while cooperative is for forming alliance with other competitors in the industry. Here we are concerned with competitive strategy which Porter said can be subdivided into differentiation and cost leadership or focus (Onuoha, 2015). Porter (1989) as cited in Kaya (2015) asserted that "under certain conditions, generic (competitive) strategy may be appropriate in the SME's". Generic (competitive) strategy, development have been seen towards gaining sustainable competitive advantage by combining the approaches of differentiation and cost leadership with adding value" Miller & Dees.996; Amoako-Guampah & Acquah, 2008 as cited in Kaya (2015).

2.2.1. Differentiation

This is an effort by any organisation to remain unique and different from other competitors in the industry. According to Onuoha (2015) "differentiation strategy involves concrete efforts to remain on top through provision of unique or highly valued products". Again, "differentiation involves making your products or services different from and more attractive than those of your competitors" Mindtools. This can be in any form but the essential and important aspects of differentiation is that whatever the organisation want to use must be something that cannot be easily imitated as it was submitted in the resource based theory. A very good example in Nigeria brewery industry is the uniqueness of Guinness stout. So many stouts had been produced and being produced in Nigeria but still they have not been able to get the actual taste of Guinness stout.

Successful implementation of differentiation depends on the organisation's industry nature and the design, packaging, features, brand image accepted by your customers and after sales service. Again, "to be successful, differentiators need to strong marketing skills, creative flair, product engineering and strong coordination between functional areas" Porter, 1980 as quoted in Kaya (2015). It asserted that "differentiation help in improving small business performance Dadzie, Winston & Dadzie, 2012 and Ortega, 2010 as quoted in Kaya (2015). Kaya (2015) concluded specifically that differentiation strategy has affected the (entrepreneurs') performance positively."

2.2.2. Cost Leadership

Cost leadership could be achieved by selling at reduced cost that will bring profit. This can be achieved through selling at industry-average prices. Cost leadership could also be achieved by using what is known as penetrating price to increase your market share. This is done by charging or entering the market with relatively lower price that will still attract reasonable profit despite your selling at reduced price.

It is essential to note that cost leadership as a strategy is to minimize the cost of getting product and/or service to the consumers/buyers. Cost control is not unique to an organisation because every other organisation can do such too. But to be successful in using cost leadership strategy, there is need to embrace the Japanese Kaizen philosophy of "continuous improvement". The philosophy according to Mindtools established that "everything can be improved". This means that there is no status quo, continuous effort to improving everything within the organisation must be applied at all times. According to Porter (1980) quoted in Onuoha (2015) that "a firm must formulate a business strategy that incorporates either cost leadership ... or focus in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success in its chosen areas of industries."

Options that can be pursued to achieve cost leadership through cost efficiency and leadership according to Onuoha (2015) are "increased capacity to attain economies of scales; riding on the experience curve to attain efficiency; stringent cost control and minimization measures; avoiding wastes and scraps; and marginal contribution analysis to know whether it is cheaper to make or buy".

3. Methodology

The research design used for the study was survey research method. The population of the study consisted of all registered small businesses in Ogun State according to Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Krejcie and Morgan sampling size determining table was used for selecting the sample size. As such, the primary data for the study was collected from the business owners. Simple Random sampling method was used in administering the questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was the statistical tool used in analyzing the hypotheses.

However, questionnaire was adopted because it was affirmed in the MSMEs 2017 report that 51 percent of small and medium enterprise owners have attained either a Bachelor or Master degree as such the problem associated with the use of questionnaire can be reduced. Administration of the questionnaire was done in three major town Mowe, Sango-Ota and Abeokuta; strictly on business owners with a registered name and address. Relying on MSMEs 2017 report, Ogun State have less than 3,007 small and medium enterprises and we, therefore, assume it to be 2,800 and take 73 percent of the figure to be for the small businesses which gives us 2,044 small businesses in Ogun State. Again, using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table, our sample size was 322. Same were later administered on small business owners and 301 copies of those retrieved were found to be fit for analysis.

4. Hypotheses Testing

The decision rule is to reject the null hypotheses where $p < 0.05$ significant level and accept the null hypotheses where $p > 0.05$. All hypotheses were tested in the null form.

4.1. Testing of Hypothesis One (H₀₁)

H₀₁: There is no relationship between need for achievement and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State.

Table-1. Relationship between Need for Achievement and Differentiation

		Need for Achievement	Differentiation
Need for Achievement	Pearson Correlation(r)	1	.632**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	301	301
Differentiation	Pearson Correlation(r)	.632**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	301	301

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Coefficient of Correlation (r²) = 0.40

Source: SPSS Output, (2019)

Table 1 – Need for Achievement and Differentiation: The result of the data analysis shows medium relationship. The $r = 0.632$, showing a positive medium correlation between the variables. The findings reveal medium relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

4.2. Testing of Hypothesis Two (H₀₂)

H₀₂: There is no relationship between the need for achievement and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State.

Table-2. Relationship between Need for Achievement and Cost Leadership

		Need for Achievement	Cost Leadership
Need for Achievement	Pearson Correlation(r)	1	.677**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	301	301
Cost Leadership	Pearson Correlation(r)	.677**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	301	301

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation (r²) = 0.46

Source: SPSS Output, (2019)

Table 2 –Need for Achievement and Cost Leadership: The result of the data analysis shows medium relationship. The $r = 0.677$, showing positive medium correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a medium relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

4.3. Testing of Hypothesis Three (H₀₃)

H₀₃: There is no relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and differentiation of small businesses in Ogun State.

Table-3. Relationship between Locus of Control and Differentiation

		Locus of Control	Differentiation
Locus of Control	Pearson Correlation(r)	1	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	301	301
Differentiation	Pearson Correlation(r)	.667**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	301	301

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation (r²) = 0.45 Source: SPSS Output, (2019)

Table 3 –Locus of Control and Differentiation: The result of the data analysis shows a medium relationship level. The $r = 0.667$, showing positive medium correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a medium relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

4.4. Testing of Hypothesis Four (H₀₄)

H₀₄: There is no relationship between the need for independence/locus of control and cost leadership of small businesses in Ogun State.

Table-4. Relationship between Locus of Control and Cost Leadership

		Locus of Control	Cost Leadership
Locus of Control	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	.789**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	301	301
Cost Leadership	Pearson Correlation(r)	.789**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	301	301

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Coefficient of Correlation (r^2) = 0.62

Source: SPSS Output, (2019)

Table 4 –Locus of Control and Cost Leadership: The result of the data analysis shows low relationship. The $r = 0.789$, showing positive low correlation between the variables. The findings reveal low relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

5. Findings

5.1. Need for Achievement and Differentiation

The result of need for achievement and differentiation (Hypothesis One) analysis shows that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables. This is an indication of strong correlation between the variables. However, the coefficient of determination (r^2), therefore, indicate that $r^2 = 40\%$. This implies that need for achievement accounted for 40% of competitive advantage (differentiation) of small businesses. The findings align with that of McClelland (1961) as quoted in Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012) “the need for achievement has been associated with entrepreneurial behavior. This need prompts a strong desire to do things well, or better than others, including those with authority and also, that of Kaya (2015) which said that “specifically that differentiation strategy has affected the (entrepreneurs’) performance positively.”

5.2. Need for Achievement and Cost Leadership

The analysis of need for achievement and cost leadership (Hypothesis Two) revealed that there is 46% level of positive relationship between need for achievement and competitive advantage (cost leadership) of small businesses in Ogun State with $r^2 = 46\%$. The result established that 46% increase in the competitive advantage (cost leadership) was accounted for by need for achievement. The bivariate analysis of the relationship between need for achievement and competitive advantage (cost leadership) reveals a positive medium relationship. The findings, therefore, align with the words of Porter (1980) quoted in Onuoha (2015) that “a firm must formulate a business strategy that incorporates either cost leadership ... or focus in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success in its chosen areas of industries.” As well as the submission of McClelland, 1961 as quoted in Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2012) that “Researchers found spurious correlations between need for achievement and economic growth...” through cost leadership.

5.3. Locus of Control and Differentiation

The result of locus of control and differentiation (Hypothesis Three) analysis shows that there exist a noteworthy (medium) relationship between locus of control and differentiation. This is evidence, given that $r^2 = 45\%$. The analysis revealed that 40% total variation in locus of control accounted for competitive advantage via differentiation strategy. This signify that for every increase in the level of locus of control, there is a corresponding 45% increase in the level of competitive advantage (differentiation) of small businesses in Ogun State. This means that there is medium relationship between locus of control and differentiation strategy for competitive advantage of small businesses in Ogun State. The findings conform to the assertion of Zhang & Bruning, 2011:87 as cited in Chavez (2016) that entrepreneurs that possess high level of locus of control normally look at themselves to possess more power, innovativeness ability and more discretion. And also, the submission of Kaya (2015) which concluded specifically that differentiation strategy has affected the (entrepreneurs’) performance positively.

5.4. Locus of Control and Cost Leadership

The analysis of locus of control and cost leadership (Hypothesis Four) shows low relationship with $r^2 = (62\%)$, which points to the fact that for an element of locus of control, there is 62 percent increase in the level of competitive advantage (cost leadership) of small businesses in Ogun State. This shows a high relationship between need for independence/locus of control and competitive advantage (cost leadership). This means that independence/locus of control accounted for 62 percent of competitive advantage (cost leadership) of small businesses. This finding is in tandem with that of Porter (1980) quoted in Onuoha (2015) that “a firm must formulate a business strategy that

incorporates either cost leadership ... or focus in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success in its chosen areas of industries.

6. Conclusion

With all the null hypotheses rejected, one can conclude that there exist relationship between entrepreneurial behaviours (need of achievement and need for independence/locus of control) and competitive advantage (differentiation and cost leadership) of small businesses in Mowe, Sango-Ota and Abeokuta as by generalization the entire Ogun State.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, our recommendation is that entrepreneurial behaviours like need for achievement and need for independence/locus of control should be encouraged among the young graduates to encourage self-employment through small businesses ownership before any other entrepreneurial behavioural like financial incentives and loan accessibility, perhaps, it can lead to generational business (family business) now seen among some few Eastern Nigeria businessmen. This is to buttress the point in the submission that "need for achievement was critical to economic development and advocated providing developing countries with achievement training rather than financial assistance" (Cherrington, 1994 as quoted in [Barba-Sanchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo \(2012\)](#))

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