



DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE AMONG RURAL WOMEN: A CASE OF FUNYULA WOMEN IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Demographic factors can be associated with entrepreneurial performance of individuals. These factors include gender, age, marital status and number of children under the care of the women entrepreneurs. Funyula division located in Samia district of Kenya has over the years shown high poverty levels. Despite the fact that a number of development agencies have come up with various entrepreneurial activities in Funyula Division, a large number of income generating activities among Funyula women groups have failed to pick up after their establishments. This study therefore, sought to examine the demographic factors associated with entrepreneurial performance among rural women. The study was guided by McClelland's Needs-Based Motivational Theory. The study used a survey research design method. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents and key informants respectively. A sample size of 310 women entrepreneurs was drawn and data was collected by the use of observation, key informant interviews, and questionnaire administration methods. Data collected were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results indicated that there is a strong association between the ages of Funyula women entrepreneurs and venturing into business. To test whether there was association between age and women entrepreneurship, Yule's Q test was conducted and the results indicated that there is a strong association between the ages of Funyula women entrepreneurs and venturing into business. The majority (65%) were married with children while 15% were single with children. The study observed that majority of the women entrepreneurs (79%) had 4-6 children.

Keywords: Demographic factors, entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial performance, rural women

INTRODUCTION

Women confront a variety of challenges in developing and running a business (McKay, 2001) and many researchers argue that significant barriers still remain for women establishing and growing businesses (Carter, 1997). Literature does discuss a number of challenges faced by many female entrepreneurs, which prevent or hinder the development and growth of their enterprises. These challenges include acquiring appropriate training (Hirsch and Brush, 1984) obtaining capital (Buttner and Moore, 1997; Carter, 2000a,b) and gender discrimination (Kleiman, 1998).

Literature also suggest that it is often resistance from family that proves the greatest barrier for female entrepreneurs (Babaeva and Chirikova, 1997) as well as the problems of overcoming cultural conditioning (Oeltjen, 1992) as cited in McKay (2001). This is often the case in developing countries where a woman's primary role is as a wife and mother and traditional practices still restrict women to their maternal role and other family-bound tasks (McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003). Whereas Fielden *et al.* (2003) remarked that some women felt that the added burden of a family restricted what they could achieve in their business activities. Gender stereotypes are also seen as a significant growth obstacle facing female entrepreneurs (Still and Timms, 2000a,b) especially for women in male-dominated sectors of business.

McCormick (2001) noted significant differences in the performance of women's enterprises as compared to those of Kenyan men. Their enterprises are smaller, less likely to grow, less profitable, and begin with less capital investment than those owned by men. McCormick also noted that men are twice as likely as women to locate in trading centers, commercial districts or roadside locations while women are almost twice as likely to be operating from the home. McCormick (2001) isolated three factors that account for these differences in enterprise performance. Of importance to this study is the factor that; women spend less time in their businesses than men because they are expected to carry out their domestic responsibilities, including housework, food preparation and childcare. This explains why women are more likely to operate their business from the home. In Kenya, over 85 per cent of the enterprises owned by women do not have any employees except the owner. Of the 9,041 small enterprises (Kenya:1999) with 11-50 employees, it is estimated that women own fewer than 20 per cent; this amounts to less than 0.3 per cent of all women-owned Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). In developing countries a woman's primary role as a wife and mother and traditional practices still restrict women to their maternal role and other family-bound tasks (McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003). Researcher Neider (1987) referred to a "sense of guilt" among his sample of female entrepreneurs in Florida from neglecting their home life in preference for their business. Whereas Fielden *et al.* (2003) remarked that some women felt that the added burden of a family restricted what they could achieve in their business activities. Gender stereotypes are also seen as a significant growth obstacle facing female entrepreneurs (Still and Timms, 2000a,b) especially for women in male-dominated sectors of business.

Objectives of the Study

The study investigates the relationship between demographic factors and entrepreneurship among rural women entrepreneurs in Funyula Division, Kenya. The specific objectives are;

1. To examine the demographic characteristics of Funyula women entrepreneurs
2. To determine the relationship between the demographic characteristics and entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Needs-based motivation theory as advanced by David McClelland (1961). McClelland pioneered workplace motivational thinking, developing achievement-based motivational theory and models, and promoted improvements in employee assessment methods, advocating competency-based assessments and tests, arguing them to be better than traditional Intelligent Quotient and personality-based tests. In the theory, needs are found to have varying degrees in all people, and this mix of motivational needs characterizes a person's or manager's style and behaviour, both in terms of being motivated, and in the management and motivation of others.

The need for Achievement (n-ach)

According to McClelland (1961), the n-ach person is 'achievement motivated' and therefore seeks achievement, attainment of realistic but challenging goals, and advancement in the task ahead. There is a strong need for feedback as to achievement and progress, and a need for a sense of accomplishment. McClelland argues that n-ach people with strong 'achievement motivation' make the best leaders, although there can be a tendency to demand too much of their staff in the belief that they are all similarly and *highly* achievement-focused and results driven, which of course most people are not.

The need for authority and power (n-pow)

McClelland (1961) indicates that the n-pow person is 'authority motivated'. This driver produces a need to be influential, effective and to make an impact. There is a strong need to lead and for their ideas to prevail. There is also motivation and need towards increasing personal status and prestige. A strong n-pow 'authority-motivation' will produce a determined work ethic and commitment to the organization, and while n-pow people are attracted to the leadership role; they may not possess the required flexibility and people-centered skills.

The need for affiliation (n-affil)

The n-affil person is 'affiliation motivated', and has a need for friendly relationships and is motivated towards interaction with other people, (McClelland: 1961). The affiliation driver produces motivation and need to be liked and held in popular regard. These people are team players. McClelland said that most people possess and exhibit a combination of these characteristics. Some people exhibit a strong bias to a particular motivational need and this motivational or needs 'mix' consequently affects their behaviour and

working/managing style. McClelland suggested that a strong n-affil 'affiliation-motivation' undermines a manager's objectivity, because of their need to be liked, and that this affects a manager's decision-making capability.

The need-achievement theory is ideal for the study in the sense that it logically operationalizes critical variables that define entrepreneurial behaviour and highlights the typical characteristics of an entrepreneur. By looking at the above stated tenets, it is possible to compare the ideal characteristics of an entrepreneur and the real characteristics observed among women in Funyula Division.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

The study embraced a cross-sectional survey design. A cross-sectional survey research according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) is a self-report study, which requires the collection of quantifiable information from the sample. It entails investigating population by selecting a sample to analyze its occurrences through statistical analysis. For the purpose of this study, the survey design was suitable for data collection and the ability to understand the nature of the situation, as it presented at the time of the study. The research design enabled the study in which a statistically significant sample of a population was used to estimate the relationship between an outcome of interest and population variables as they existed at that particular time. Both the outcome, that is the socio-cultural factors and the variables including the demographic factors were measured at the one time.

Sampling Procedure

It was established that there were 1033 women entrepreneurs registered in Funyula division of Samia district. 30% of women entrepreneurs from each of the seven locations were randomly picked translating into 310 respondents. This was done according to Mugenda and Mugenda's (1999) principle that 10-30% of a population is representative. For greater accuracy, the researcher took 30% of the 1033 women entrepreneurs. The choice of entrepreneurs was though simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was also used to choose the study population-women entrepreneurs, and the key informants.

Questionnaire Method

This was the main method of data collection that involved the use of a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 310 respondents. The questionnaire was structured to encompass the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The method was used because the study aimed at eliciting opinions from the women about their entrepreneurial status, as compared to their demographic factors. The questionnaire was distributed to 310 women entrepreneurs in the selected households. However, only 300 questionnaires were filled and returned giving a return rate of 96.8%. Questionnaires produced both qualitative and quantitative data. The main advantage of the instrument was that it allowed the researcher to control and focus responses to the research objectives. Thus, enhancing relevance of data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs

The researcher collected data to enable the development of the demographic characteristics of women entrepreneurs in Funyula Division. This was measured by analyzing the following variables: Age of the women entrepreneurs, marital status and number of children under the care of the women entrepreneurs.

Age of the Funyula Women Entrepreneurs

Age is normally associated with an individual's responsibility in life. Generally children between the ages 0 and 18 and adults who are above 60 years of age tend to depend on the active labour force who are normally between the ages 18 to 60. A survey of a sample of 300 women entrepreneurs in Funyula division revealed the following statistics.

Table 1: The ages of the Funyula Women Entrepreneurs

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
18-25	30	10
25-32	45	15
32-39	120	40
39-46	60	20
46-53	39	13
53-60	6	2
Total	$\Sigma f = 300$	100

From the above statistics, the most common age (modal age) was 36. Many of these female entrepreneurs were married and had children. A further investigation revealed that the majority of them did venture into business because of the need to generate income to support their families. Secondly, at the prime age of 36 years, an individual who is not incapacitated in one way or another is considered to be a person who can be actively engaged in the labour force whether in the formal or informal sector. However, given the high rate of unemployment in Funyula Division, 60% of the women entrepreneurs in the survey indicated that they were pushed into business because of lack of income to support their families.

For the younger female entrepreneurs who were aged between 18 to 25 years, most of them had either completed primary level of education or secondary level or had attended and completed formal education at tertiary level. These young women entrepreneurs had ventured into business immediately after completing secondary and/or college education when they found that there were no employment opportunities, hence started their businesses in order to survive. Majority of the young women entrepreneurs also indicated that they were also pushed into business in order to meet their basic needs.

To ascertain whether there is an association between age and women who engage in business, Figure 1 below indicates the results found.

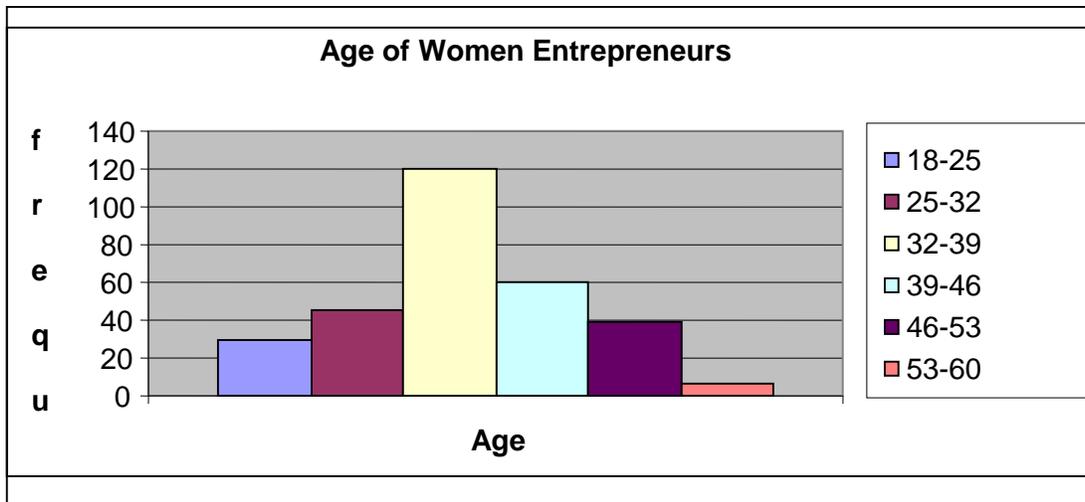


Figure 1: Age of the Funyula Women Entrepreneurs

The findings above tally with the finding of Otunga *et al.*, (1999) in a research done in Eldoret town. Otunga found that few women over the age 50 are found in informal sector as they have fewer responsibilities that would force them to exert themselves and aggressively search for sources of income.

To test whether there was association between age and women entrepreneurship, Yule's Q test was conducted. 85 women who were between the ages of 32 and 60, and 120 women who were between the ages of 18 and 32 were randomly picked to find out if they had ventured into business or not. The table 2 shows the results of the survey;

Table 2: Women who had ventured into business and those who had not by their ages

Ages	32-60	18-32
Had ventured into business	75	40
Had not ventured into business	10	80

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Yule's } Q &= \frac{(75 \times 80) - (40 \times 10)}{(75 \times 80) + (40 \times 10)} \\ &= 0.875 \end{aligned}$$

The results show that there is a heavy predominance of positive pairs, that is, 87.5% of all pairs are positive. This indicates that there is a strong association between the ages of Funyula women entrepreneurs and venturing into business.

Marital Status of Women Entrepreneurs

Marital Status has also been associated with a sense of responsibility in one's life. As a result, the study deemed it necessary to find the marital status of women entrepreneurs. When women entrepreneurs were asked about their marital status, majority (65%) were married with children as shown in the Figure 2

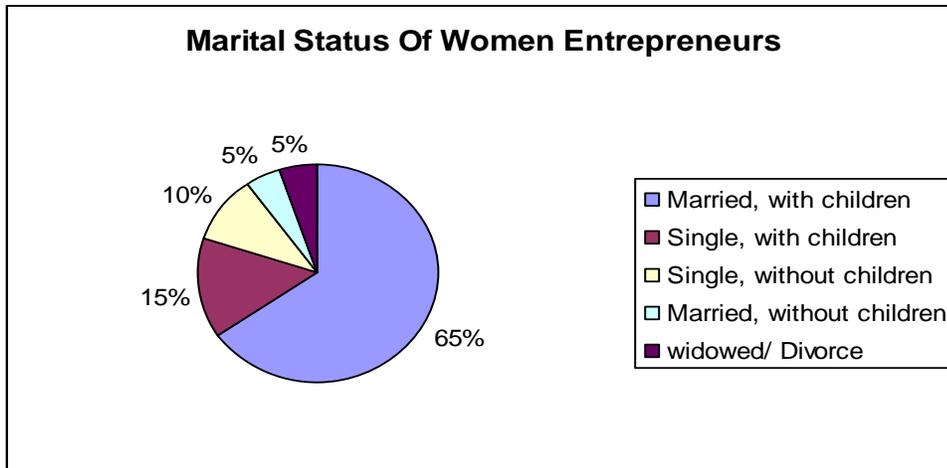


Figure 2: Marital Status of Women Entrepreneurs

Figure 2, shows that majority of women entrepreneurs are married with children. This is understandable from the context that married women with children are faced with more responsibilities of feeding and clothing their children, themselves and taking care of other members of their households. Furthermore, married women do ventured into business as a way of supplementing their spouses' incomes with a view of improving the standards of living of their families. From sample statistics, there was a revelation that 240 (80%) of the Funyula women entrepreneurs who were interviewed were either married or single and had children. as a result of the harsh economic conditions currently experienced in the country. A scrutiny of the above Figure 2 indicates that women entrepreneurs were mainly those with children despite their marital status. This is supported by 80% of women entrepreneurs sampled in this study. The 80% of women entrepreneurs were mainly those who were married with children and those who were single with children. Overall, for the case of women entrepreneurs who were single without children they ventured into business since they did not have any source of livelihood and had to earn a living. For the few women entrepreneurs who were widowed or divorced, they had no option but to take care of themselves hence venturing into business as a way of earning a living. For the case of the widowed entrepreneurs, they had mainly been affected by HIV/AIDS. Their spouses had succumbed to the disease leaving the women with no option but to start a small business to support their families.

Number of children belonging to the Funyula Women Entrepreneurs

The number of children that a woman has can also indicate the responsibilities that she has which can also translate to venturing into business as a way of meeting responsibilities at family level. The study observed

that majority (79%) had 4-6 children.

It was necessary to find out why the majority of these women entrepreneurs who had children ventured into business.

From table 2, it is evident that women with more children ventured into business. This can be explained in the light of responsibilities that go along with the number of children a woman has. Women entrepreneurs with more children confided that it was their obligation to feed the many “mouths” they had and since they considered their spouses’ incomes not sufficient enough they were forced to go into business in order to supplement their spouses’ incomes. However, the majority of these female entrepreneurs acknowledged that many children were a constraint to their businesses because almost all the profit made in their businesses went into sustaining members of their families in the form of food, clothing, education, health and other basic needs.

The Histogram below shows the number of children belonging to the women entrepreneurs.

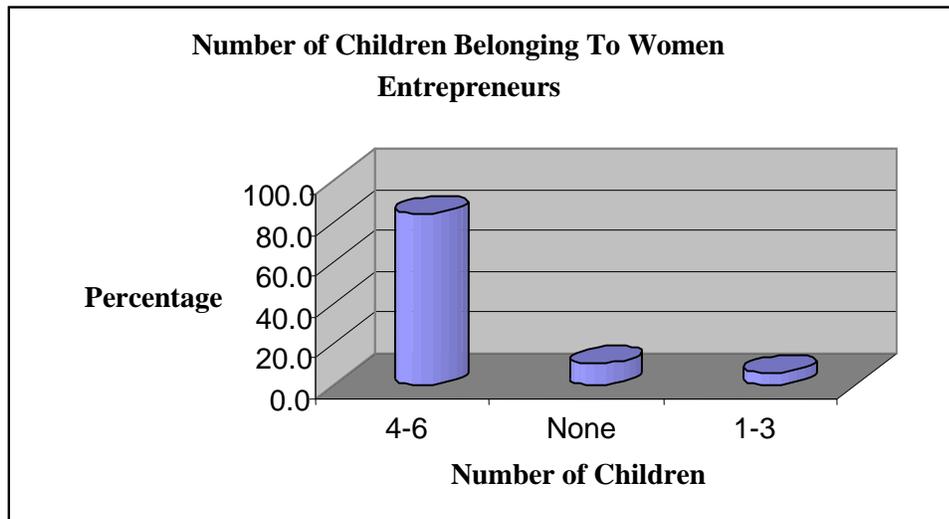


Figure 3: Number of Children under the care of Women Entrepreneurs

The finding of the study is consistent with earlier reports on demographic profiles of female entrepreneurs. Most of the female entrepreneurs were in their prime working age of between 32-39 years. Majority of them were married with children between 4-6 children. It is the burden of maintaining children, together with provision of their basic needs that many women venture into business. A study by Ngau and Keino (1996) on women’s social background and entrepreneurship in Nairobi revealed that the largest group of women entrepreneurs were supporting 3-4 children overall. This implies that a slight difference in the number of children between women in Funyula and those in Nairobi existed as a result of differences in the cost of living. It is very expensive to sustain a big family in Nairobi than in the rural Funyula.

CONCLUSION

The most common age (modal age) of women entrepreneurs was 36. Many of these female entrepreneurs were married and had children. A further investigation revealed that the majority of them did venture into business because of the need to generate income to support their families. This is supported by 80% of women entrepreneurs sampled in this study. The 80% of women entrepreneurs were mainly those who were married with children and those who were single with children. Furthermore, married women indicated that they ventured into business as a way of supplementing their spouses’ incomes with a view of improving the standards of living of their families. These results have a connection with past research as indicated; Fielden *et al.* (2003) remarked that some women felt that the added burden of a family restricted what they could achieve in their business activities. In developing countries a woman's primary role as a wife and mother and traditional practices still restrict women to their maternal role and other family-bound tasks (McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003). Researcher Neider (1987) referred to a “sense of guilt” among his sample of female entrepreneurs in Florida from neglecting their home life in preference for their business.

Whereas Fielden *et al.* (2003) remarked that some women felt that the added burden of a family restricted what they could achieve in their business activities. Gender stereotypes are also seen as a significant growth obstacle facing female entrepreneurs (Still and Timms, 2000a,b) especially for women in male-dominated sectors of business.

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