

Fostering Entrepreneurship in Kenya: The Role of Association

Ngoze M. L. (DPhil)

Lecturer, Department of Business Administration and Management Science, School of Business and Economics, Masinde Muliro University of Science Technology.

Email: mngoze@mmust.ac.ke

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Abstract

This paper presents some empirical findings on fostering entrepreneurship through association, Sambut Self Help Group (SSHG) in Uasin Gishu in Kenya. Using a sample of fifty (n=50), the paper specifically hypothesizes, entrepreneurship among members of SSHG involves achievement need, autonomy, innovativeness, propensity for risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence; association such as SSHG promote entrepreneurship among its members; and associations such as SSHG are only organizations which promote entrepreneurship. A regression analysis between the entrepreneurship promotion and seven characteristics of entrepreneurship is then carried out to statistically test the correlation. The results attributed to this study denote that entrepreneurship involves attributes such as achievement need, autonomy, innovativeness, propensity for risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence); associations such as SSHG is to promote entrepreneurship among its members; and apart from associations such as SSHG, other groups foster entrepreneurship. Finally, the paper concludes by recommending that small associations should be given both financial and technical support to cater for their members effectively.

Keywords: Promoting/ Fostering Entrepreneurship, Association, Sambut Self Help Group, Kenya

1 Introduction

Promoting entrepreneurship in developing countries has gained popularity in the recent years. Entrepreneurship improves innovation, creates employment, generates income, and alleviates poverty (Kenya, 1992; World Bank, 2006). Kenya's studies exhibit more than 65 percent of employment growth originates from "Entrepreneurship sector" of the economy as well as contributing to the increase in innovation (ILO, 2002; Stevenson & St-Onge, 2005). With these achievements, many Pro- Entrepreneurship proponents have suggested a number of ways of promoting entrepreneurship (Beck et al, 2003). These ways include, promoting entrepreneurship through governments where the governments assumes a central role of providing support to the entrepreneurial ventures by giving them financing,

facilitating training, marketing and technology. The assumption underlying this promotion is that entrepreneurship sector stimulates innovation, provides employment and growth of the economy. Organizations such as donor agencies and non-governmental organizations also promote entrepreneurship on assumption that government which practices free market economy does not promote entrepreneurship.

Recent studies have shown that promoting entrepreneurship through associations is an innovative way (ILO, 2002). International Labour Organization (ILO) has been participating in the financing of association in third world countries specifically in micro credit schemes through group guaranteeing system (ILO, 2002). In Kenya, many scholars who have researched on entrepreneurship have discovered that associations play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurial activities (Kenya, 1992). These studies are enough evidence to support the fact that entrepreneurship being a key factor in the economic growth of a country is promoted through association.

Rather than relying on data from content analysis of documents, this paper uses responses from a survey of fifty (n=50) members of Sambut Self Help Group (SSHG) based in Uasin Gishu District, Rift Valley in Kenya to analyze the promotion of entrepreneurship through association. Specifically this research is to:

- Establish if entrepreneurship characteristics involve achievement need, autonomy, propensity of risk, innovativeness, locus of control, tolerance of ambiguity and confidence
- Identify if the role of association is to promote entrepreneurship
- Establish if associations are only the ones who promote entrepreneurship.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section two describes the problem statement. Section three states the prepositions. Existing literature and policy framework are presented in section four. Section five describes the research methodology. Empirical results are presented in section six. Section seven concludes

2 Problem Statement

Many researchers in the field of association have argued that the function of associations is to press for the improvement in the living standards of members (Chege, 1986). It is further stressed that associations are formed with a major role of promoting the welfare of its members. In both developed and third world countries, Kenya included literature on association and promotion of welfare employees in the formal sector have emerged. However, little consideration has been devoted towards exploring the nexus of the associations and promoting entrepreneurship. This paper empirically analyses promoting entrepreneurship through association.

3 Hypotheses

On the basis of the research problem above, the main research hypotheses are:

- H1: Entrepreneurship involves achievement need, autonomy, innovativeness, propensity for risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence
- H2: Role of association is to promote entrepreneurship among its members
- H3: Associations are only organizations, which promote entrepreneurship.

4 Existing Literature And Policy Framework

4.1 Existing Literature

4.1.1 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been defined in terms of the entrepreneur traits or characteristics. Cunningham and Lischeron, (1991) opine that entrepreneurs can be distinguished from non-entrepreneurs by personality characteristics. Caird, (1988) mentions a good nose for business, the desire to take risks, the ability to identify business opportunities, correct errors effectively and grasp profitable opportunities as characteristics of entrepreneur. The characteristics typical of a successful entrepreneur are the ability to take risks, innovativeness, knowledge of how the market functions, manufacturing know how, marketing skills, business management skills and the ability to cooperate (Casson, 1982). Littunen (2000) distinguishes between two schools of thought in entrepreneurship that include the trait model (personality traits of certain people make them successful entrepreneurs regardless the prevailing situation) and contingency thinking (the entrepreneurs' characteristics must be bound up with the firms' environment and the prevailing situation). The latter category is consistent with the findings of Gilad and Levine works of 1986. In this research seven personality characteristics were used to define entrepreneurial profile of entrepreneurs. These seven entrepreneurial traits or characteristics encompass achievement need, autonomy, propensity for risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity, innovativeness and confidence.

Need for achievement is a unitary disposition that motivates a person to face challenges in the interest of attaining success and excellence (Mc Clelland, 1961; Grote & James, 1991). Achievement motive is expressed by behaviours such as undertaking a difficult job, facing uncertainty and taking personal responsibility for consequences of one's performance (Sagie & Elizur, 1999). Need for autonomy means that individuals make their own choices independent of others. People who value autonomy strive for a state of independent self-determination (Gelderen et al, 2003). Prior studies (e.g. De Carlo & Lyons, 1979) have shown that entrepreneurs have a higher need for independence, i.e. autonomy, than the general population. Thus autonomy refers to the degree of independence and discretion individuals have over their work. Autonomy implies to actions undertaken by individuals or teams intended to establish a new business concept, idea, or vision (Lyon et al, 2000), or to do things without regard to what others may think and avoid responsibilities and obligations (Lee et al, 1997). Buildings on some different authors, Morgeson, et al, (2006) categorize three benefits of an increased autonomy in an organization: First, increased autonomy is motivating, resulting in greater effort on the part of team members. Second, increased autonomy allows team members to self manage. Third, increases in autonomy allow an organization to tap into the existing knowledge of the workforce as well as fostering further learning.

Confidence, coming from long experience, refers to a feeling or consciousness of one's powers or reliance on one's circumstances. This confidence stresses faith in an individual acts in a right, proper, or effective way and be able to succeed. According to Gurol et al. (2006) argue that entrepreneurs are typically described as having self-confidence, because they seek out and complete demanding tasks it is unlikely that they could do this successfully if they had low confidence.

Innovativeness emphasizes creation of new commodities and technologies. It refers to attempts to embrace creativity, experimentation, novelty and technological leadership, in both products and processes (Lyon et al, 2000). Innovativeness relates to perceiving and

acting on business activities in new and unique ways (Robinson et al, 1991). Many scholars (for instance, Schumpeter, 1934; Mueller & Thomas, 2001) have discovered innovativeness as one of the essential enduring characteristics of entrepreneurs and the focal point of entrepreneurship.

Risk taking can be conceptualized as the willingness to undertake actions that can jeopardize something of value but that can increase the value of something (Ben-Ari et al, 1999), or pursue opportunities that have a reasonable likelihood of producing losses or significant performance discrepancies (Morris & Kuratko, 2002). In other words, it focuses on the willingness of a firm to commit available resources to opportunities that might be in conjunction with a chance of costly failure (Liu et al, 2002). According to Morris and Kuratko, (2002), entrepreneurship does not entail reckless decision-making. It involves a realistic awareness of the risks involved. By engaging in numerous experiments, testing markets, and trail runs, the entrepreneur is better able to determine what works and what does not.

Locus of control is defined as an individual's general expectancy of the outcome of an event as being either within or beyond his or her personal control and understanding (Rotter, 1966). Entrepreneur's locus of control internality has been reported to be positively related with, for instance, short and long term financial performance, organizational survival, growth, profitability, planning and innovative strategies (Boone et al, 2000; Zahra, 1996; Mueller & Thomas, 2001).

Ambiguity, dealing with new or complex situations, refers to an uncertain about an outcome or result due to insufficient convictional data, information or knowledge. This term refers to a person's tolerance to uncertainty. Tolerance of ambiguity can be effectively conceptualized as the ability to respond positively to ambiguous situations...an individual's orientation toward taking chances in decision making state and the tendency to perceive ambiguous situations as desirable (Budner, 1962; Gurol & Atsan, 2006). Ambiguous situations are defined as a lack of sufficient information, and this lack emerges in three contexts: Firstly, a complex new situation in which there are no familiar cues. Secondly, a complex situation in which there are a great number of cues to be taken into account and lastly, a contradictory situation in which different elements or cues suggest different structures. Entrepreneurial managers are generally believed to tolerate ambiguity better than do conservative managers, because the entrepreneurial ones face a less structured, more uncertain set of possibilities and actually bear the ultimate responsibility for decision (Entrialgo et al, 2000). Risk and uncertainty are elements of the entrepreneurial behaviour since entrepreneurs' decisions result in actions that are innovative and original (Cromie, 2000). Generally, entrepreneurs tend to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and learn how to manage risks for themselves and others. They treat failure of a project as a learning experience, not a personal tragedy (Gurol & Atsan, 2006).

4.1.2 Association and Entrepreneurship Promotion

The plight of associations and entrepreneurship promotion in both developed and developing nations emerged in early 1990s through the World Bank Report on 2001 Review of Small Activities and International Labour Organization Recommendation No. 189 on Job Creation in Small and Medium Size Enterprises on Association Building (World Bank, 2001; ILO, 2001).

Entrepreneurs associations play a key role in providing information, training investment advisory services, sourcing for channels and marketing outlets for products, sourcing for credit, technology development and dissemination (Kenya, 1992; ILO, 2001; Ayiamba et al, 2001). Organizing entrepreneurs into associations is a primary vehicle for

social intervention since members are organized and linked to formal institutions usually financial or business development services. Social interventions are strategies that entail special efforts to integrate poor men and women into formal financial markets and product markets and services that enhance access to resources, skills and opportunities to improve their wellbeing and productivity (De Soto, 1989). Entrepreneurs' associations are also vehicles through which social capital is developed as group members bond and become a source of mutual support to one another (De Soto, 1989; Ayiamba et al, 2001).

4.2 Policy Framework

The policy framework used in this paper is the Pro-Entrepreneurship policy framework. The policy is based on three core arguments (World Bank, 2002). First, pro-entrepreneurship advocates argue that entrepreneurship enhance innovation and competition, and hence have external benefits on economy wide efficiency and aggregate productivity growth. From this perspective, direct promotion through associations, government and donor agencies support of entrepreneurial activities will help countries exploit the social benefits from greater innovation and competition. Second, proponents of entrepreneurship argue that entrepreneurship sectors are general more productive, but financial, training, market and other institutional failures impede these sectors from developing. Thus pending training, financial and institutional improvements to these sectors can boost economic development.

Finally, some argue that entrepreneurship sectors are more labour intensive. From this perspective, subsidizing entrepreneurship sectors may represent means of them developing thereby becoming tool for alleviating poverty. While associations, governments and donor agencies channel a large and growing amount of aid into subsidizing entrepreneurship sectors two sceptical views question the efficacy of this policy (Biggs, 2002).

First, some authors stress the merits of large enterprises and challenge the assumption underlying the pro-entrepreneurship view. Specifically, large enterprises may exploit economies of scale and more easily undertake the fixed costs associated with research and development with positive productivity effects (Pagano et al, 2001). Also some hold that large enterprises provide more stable and therefore higher quality jobs than small enterprises (Rosenzweig, 1988; Brown et al, 1990).

A second set of sceptical views directly challenges the assumptions underlying pro-entrepreneurship argument. In particular some researches find that small enterprises are either more labour intensive, or better at job creation than large enterprises (Little et al, 1987). Furthermore, research done before find that lack of underdeveloped financial, training and legal institutions does not only hurt small enterprises entrepreneurs. Indeed, research finds that underdeveloped institutions constraint enterprises from developing to their efficient sizes (Kumar et al, 2001; Beck et al, 2002).

5 Research Methodology

5.1 Data

The data used in this paper came from fifty members of Sambut Self Help Group (SSHG) in Uasin Gishu District, Rift Valley Province in Kenya.

5.2 Research Design

A research design is an overall framework or plan for an investigation (Singleton et al, 1988). A descriptive design was used because it enables generalisation and prediction of data to be made and also allows use of questionnaire to gather data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

5.3 Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used to gather data from members of Sambut Self Help Group.

5.4 Regression- Entrepreneurship Promotion

The research analysed promoting entrepreneurship through association. To analyse the relationship between promoting entrepreneurship by association and characteristics of entrepreneurship notably, achievement need, autonomy, propensity for risk, innovativeness, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence were used to generate a multivariate regression (Greene, 2000).

$$\text{Entrepreneurship Promotion} = f(\text{Entrepreneurship Characteristics}) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$E_{Pij} = a + bE_{ij} + U_j \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where E_{Pij} refers to Entrepreneurship Promotion by Sambut Self Help Group i in Uasin Gishu District j . Seven independent variables (Entrepreneurship Characteristics) used in the analysis – members response to the questions on whether association promote entrepreneurship through: achievement need, autonomy, propensity for risk, innovativeness, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence represents entrepreneurship characteristics- are limited dependant variables (Clarke et al, 2001). These variables can take three discrete values in ascending order, corresponding to Promote, Not Promote, and Uncertain. Since the responses to the questions about perceptions are ordered, but not actual count data, this model is estimated as an ordered response model (Greene, 2000). E_{ij} denotes Entrepreneurship Characteristics promoted by Sambut Self Help Group i in Uasin Gishu District j . U_j is the disturbance term.

The member of a Sambut Self Help Group classifies entrepreneurship characteristics as being in class “ k ” (e.g. Not Promote) if $a_{(k-1)} < \text{Entrepreneurship Characteristics } ij < a_k$. Where the a_k 's are a series of nuisance parameters that are estimated along with the coefficient vector (i.e. a). It is assumed that the disturbance term, which includes differences in individual member's perceptions about what constitutes “Promoting” or “Not Promoting” entrepreneurship characteristic, has a normal distribution (Greene, 2000). Positive coefficients on variables indicate that increases in that variable make members more likely to rate the entrepreneurship characteristic as to be Promoted (i.e. it increases the likelihood that they rate the entrepreneurship characteristic as to be “Promoted”).

5.5 Data Analysis

The data gathered was analysed using a package called Statistica in which inferential and descriptive statistics were obtained. Inferential statistics were presented in form of beta coefficients which came from a regression analysis done between dependent variable entrepreneurship promotion and independent variables, seven characteristics of entrepreneurship. Both these beta coefficients and prepositions were tested at five percent significance level. Descriptive statistics were presented in form of frequencies and percentages.

6. Empirical Results

6.1 Demographic Factors

The descriptive statistics reported in Table I indicate the demographic factors of members of Sambut Self Help Group. The dominant gender is female with a tally of 30 (60 percent). The results are obvious because many males do not subscribe membership in many associations. The mean age was 33.5 years. Majority of members are married. Furthermore, Table I indicates that many members of SSHG have attained secondary level of education.

Table I:
Demographic Characteristics of Members¹

Variable	Frequency/Percentage
Frequency Distribution	
Gender	
Male	20 (40 percent)
Female	30 (60 percent)
Age	
Up to 25 years	06 (12 percent)
26 – 35 years	26 (52 percent)
36 – 45 years	10 (20 percent)
46 + years	08 (16 percent)
Mean Age 33.5 years	
Marital Status	
Married	40 (80 percent)
Single	02 (04 percent)
Divorced	01 (02 percent)
Widowed	07 (14 percent)
Education Level	
Primary	10 (20 percent)
Secondary	26 (52 percent)
Tertiary	14 (28 percent)

¹ The Demographic Characteristics of Members are given to indicate the social background or profile of members of Sambut Self Help Group (SSHG)

6.2 Entrepreneurship Promotion

This part presents the descriptive and inferential statistics of entrepreneurship promotion characteristics gathered from fifty members of SSHG in Uasin Gishu District in Rift Valley Province, Kenya. In particular, respondents were required to respond to question such as, "Using (a three point scale) can you please tell in turn whether association promote entrepreneurship through the Entrepreneurship characteristics, (achievement need, autonomy, propensity for risk, innovativeness, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence). The scores are: 1. Show "Promote"; 2. Show "Not Promote; and 3. "Uncertain"

6.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics results in Table II denote the ratings of members on whether association promote entrepreneurship or do not promote entrepreneurship or uncertain. Innovativeness is highly rated with an actual score of 46 or 92 percent. Members perceive that SSHG promote innovativeness. The other characteristics are rated in the following order: Autonomy, 43 (86 percent); Confidence, 42 (84 percent); Propensity for Risk 41 (82 percent); Achievement Need, 40 (79 percent); Locus of Control, 38 (76 percent); and Tolerance for Ambiguity, 35 (70 percent). Most of these statistics are above average suggesting that members of SSHG regard them as main characteristics that determine entrepreneurship process advocated by the association, SSHG. These characteristics of entrepreneurship have been featured widely in most of entrepreneurship literatures (Mc Clelland, 1961; Schumpeter, 1951; Morris & Trotter, 1990; Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; Boone et al, 1996; Lyon et al, 2000).

6.2.2 Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics inform of beta coefficients in Table II were as a result of regression analyses between entrepreneurship promotion and seven characteristics of entrepreneurship indicated in the equation (2) of regression of entrepreneurship promotion. The results indicate that members of SSHG have greater achievement need, higher autonomy, higher propensity to take risk, greater innovativeness, more internal locus of control, greater tolerance for ambiguity and more self-confidence.

To test for association and correlation, a multivariate regression analysis is conducted. At five percent significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the results in Table II indicate that those who are members have significantly greater need for achievement ($p = 0.19$), higher need for autonomy (independence) ($p = 0.18$), higher propensity to take risk ($p = 0.25$), more internal locus of control ($p = 0.14$), greater tolerance of ambiguity ($p = 0.16$), greater innovativeness ($p = 0.13$) and self confidence ($p = 0.12$).

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of all the seven characteristics of entrepreneurship yielded a value of 0.56, implying that 0.56 or 56 percent of the variability in the dependent variable – entrepreneurship promotion can be accounted for the seven independent variables, notably the characteristics of entrepreneurship- achievement need, autonomy, propensity for risk, innovativeness, locus of control, tolerance of ambiguity and confidence.

Table II:
Descriptive and Inferential Statistics and Entrepreneurship Characteristics²

Variable	Promote	Not Promote	Uncertain
Achievement Need	40 (79%)	02 (04%)	08 (16%)
Autonomy	43 (86%)	05 (10%)	02 (04%)
Propensity for Risk	41 (82%)	06 (12%)	03 (06%)
Innovativeness	46 (92%)	05 (10%)	03 (06%)
Locus of Control	38 (76%)	06 (12%)	06 (12%)
Tolerance for Ambiguity	35 (70%)	08 (16%)	07 (14%)
Confidence	42 (84%)	03 (06%)	01 (02%)
Beta Coefficients*			
Achievement Need		0.19	
Autonomy		0.18	
Propensity for Risk		0.25	
Innovativeness			0.13
Locus of Control		0.14	
Tolerance for Ambiguity		0.16	
Confidence		0.12	
R ²		0.5600	
R ² Adjusted		0.4800	

*All Beta values are significant at 5 percent significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$)

² Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of members of SSHG

The above results enable the testing of the three propositions namely: 1. Entrepreneurship involves achievement need, autonomy, innovativeness, propensity for risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence. 2. Role of association is to promote entrepreneurship among its members. 3. Associations are only organisations, which promote entrepreneurship. Propositions one and two were accepted at five percent significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The study identified that achievement need, autonomy, innovativeness, propensity for risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence were main characteristics of entrepreneurship according to the opinions of most members of SSHG. Thus SSHG promotes entrepreneurship among its members. However, the third proposition was not accepted at five percent significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), because other organisations apart from associations promote entrepreneurship. Members of SSHG indicated that other organisations assisted the associations. For instance, it was discovered that SSHG had been receiving aid from Kenya government courtesy of Ministry of Agriculture, Embassies such as United States of America Embassy based in Nairobi and International organisations such as International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE).

7. Conclusion

This paper investigated whether association promoted entrepreneurship among its members. Specifically, it investigated if SSHG in Uasin Gishu District, Rift Valley in Kenya promoted entrepreneurship among its members. Rather than relying on the content of analysis of documents, the research used responses from fifty members of SSHG to investigate if SSHG promote entrepreneurship. From these responses it was discovered that the process of entrepreneurship involves achievement need, autonomy, innovativeness, propensity of risk, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity and confidence. Further, the study discovered that the role of association such as SSHG is to promote entrepreneurship among its members by advocating for the entrepreneurship characteristics. However, the research discovered that not only associations such as SSHG promote entrepreneurship, but other organisations such as government, foreign embassies and donor agencies also participate in this promotion through financial and technical assistance. Finally, it was discovered that since associations play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship among its members, they should be allowed to operate and given assistance both financially and technical.

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