

Behavioral Competence On Enterprise Success Of Women Entrepreneurs In Bungoma, Kenya

Mary Nyiva Mwaniki

Department of Entrepreneurship and Quantitative Skills

Dr. Benard Nassiuma

Department of Entrepreneurship and Quantitative Skills

ABSTRACT

Women represent more than a one third of the world population and their contribution to the development and transformation of a country in terms of value creation and job creation. Behavioral competencies are critical in ensuring enterprise success for women entrepreneurs. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of behavioral competencies on enterprise success of women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County, Kenya .Competence based theory provided a theoretical basis for the study. The study adopted a post-positivism research. The study design was explanatory survey, whose target population and Sample size was adopted from a thesis.Data was analyzed quantitatively using Structural equation modeling techniques. The study found a significant relationship between behavioral competence and enterprise success ($\beta=0.16$, $CR=2.402$; $p=0.016$), however behavioral competence had strong effect on success of women entrepreneurs.In conclusion, Women entrepreneurs must pay attention to behavioral competencies if they are to be successful in business. The study recommends replication of this study in other areas such as SMEs and micro enterprisers as well in other regions in Kenya.

KEYWORDS: Behavioral Competence, Enterprise, Success, Women Entrepreneurs

BACKGROUND

Global competition, rapid technological change,unstable and ever changing business environment present challenges in which it is difficult not only to succeed andsurvive but also to sustain business performance (Kraus, Rigtering, Hughes, &Hosman, 2012). It is reported that, entrepreneurs operate in a competitive and dynamic business environment and as the environment becomes more complex, owner/managers encounter many challenges which interfere with their chances of success.

Some of the challenges as noted by scholars and researchers include ineffective behavior and competencies of founder owners (Ahmad &Seet, 2009). At the macro-level, small businesses are the back born of most global economies and when the owner/manager lacks the knowledge, skills and competencies to operate the enterprise successfully, then the venture may face difficulties leading to its failure (Fatoki&Matema, 2014).

In Kenya, reports indicate that three out of five enterprises fail within the first few months of operation (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2007). Even though a lot of efforts have been made to support SMEs via government training, grants, and the provision of consultative services, interestingly, the failure rate still remains high, this has been attributed to lack of entrepreneurial competencies, lack of skills in business management and abilities; and lack of professional management action among those who hold key positions in the ventures (Beaver and Jennings, 2005; Griffin, 2012; Kambwale, Chisoro&Karoda, 2013).

Specifically, many women' entrepreneurs encounter barriers because they lack the requisite skills, training, and background knowledge. This in turn prevents them from being successful in their businesses (Lee & Stearns, 2012). Furthermore, women usually perceive themselves as incapable of becoming successful entrepreneurs due to lack of knowledge, skills, abilities (competencies) and support among other constraining social factors (Kyrgidou and Petridou, 2013).

Specifically, lack of technical skills, confidence, strong individual involvement and the unwillingness to take risks are some of the constraints identified as impediments to success of women enterprises (GEM, 2006; 2008) in Kenya. Therefore, the study sought to investigate the influence of behavioral competencies on entrepreneurial success of women entrepreneurs in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was anchored on competence-based theory. The competency based theory has its origin in the seminal work of Penrose (1959). The theory was later popularized by Boyatzis, (1982) and later by Bird (1995). This theory is an extension of the resource based theory of the firm and views organizations as bundles resources including skills, assets, attitudes, knowledge and capabilities. In particular, it emphasizes competencies to be important in obtaining sustainable competitive advantage. The theory interprets the differences in firm's performance and profitability to be as a result of possession of different competencies (Nelson & Winter, 1982).

According to the competency theory, business firm are viewed as bundle of competencies (Nelson & Winter, 1982) and therefore entrepreneurs must be competent in different areas such as attitudinal, intellectual, behavioral and managerial competencies (Aruni, Akira and Yagi, 2014) that provide a firm with competitive advantage which ultimately ensures that they are to achieve success. The theory emphasizes competencies as important elements for ensuring enterprise success. The competencies of the firm are by nature collective to the organization and primarily maintained in form of routines representing entrepreneurial competencies (Man et. al., 2002) which include the possibility of achieving higher rate of value creation and success to the business (Teece, Pisano and Shnea, 1990).

The competency based approach offers major theoretical framework for analysis of entrepreneurial firms by providing insights into studying the firm's ability to coordinate its resources (competencies, skills and Knowledge). It provides a set of competencies organized into small clusters or specific purposes. The model also provides a detailed description of behaviors required to perform a task effectively (Mansfield, 1996) and is regarded as a set of success factors which contribute to achievement of higher performance and concrete results (Wu, 2009). The possibility of additional profits and therefore success to business is sustainable as long as the competencies are imperfectly imitable and durable. Namusonge, (2014) used these theory in a study on linking competencies with strategies among SMes involved in export business in Kenya. The theory is important since it provides a roadmap for a range of competencies and behaviors that produce excellent business performance (lee, 2008).

THE CONCEPT OF ENTERPRISE SUCCESS

In business life, success is a key term and the major purpose of setting up a business is to achieve success. Success is the ultimate direction of any entrepreneurial effort (Ahmed and Seet, 2006) hence no one can rule out success when talking about business because a business is often evaluated and measured by the amount of success it achieves. Successful entrepreneurs are important to the development of society because they contribute to the

creation of employment opportunities, and to the advance of economic growth (Wu, 2009). Furthermore, Ahmad et. al., (2011) argued that financial measures are appropriate in measuring performance and success. Although data concerning financial success indicators can be gathered from objective accounting and financial market information, studies indicate that their actual availability in entrepreneurial settings is limited because most of them are not public, and are rarely available to researchers (Richard et. al., 2009). On the other hand, majority of entrepreneurs fear revealing financial data (Dej, 2010).

Study by Ahmad et al., (2011) used both financial and non-financial indicators to measure business success arguing that use of non-financial measures is a clear indication that success is more than money and the pursuit of financial goal. The significant emphasis given by entrepreneurs, especially those in small firms are on non-financial objectives (Kuratko et al., 1997). However, financial measures are considered the best indicators of a firm's performance and success (Man & Lau, 2005, Hashim, 2008) since businesses are only viable if they are financially solvent (Ahmed & Seet, 2009). Moreover, the main objective of a firm is financial achievements. Base on this argument, the current study used financial measures to measure enterprise success. Financial measures used include growth in market share, profitability, sales turnover, return on investment and sales growth. The current study used financial measures to measure enterprise success. Financial measures used include growth in market share, profitability, sales turnover, return on investment and sales growth.

THE CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE

Entrepreneurs require different types of resources ranging from financial to behavioral resources (Barazandeh, Parvizian, Alizadeh and Khosravi, 2015) which can help them to operate their business successfully. Though most of the resources are found in the environment, others relate to internal factors and are crucial to venture success. Competency is a term that that can be used to explain these internal factors or resources.

The term competence has been widely used and discussed in management Boyatzis, (1982) and lately in entrepreneurship. Maojab et al., (2011); Smith & Morse, (2005), define competencies as measurable patterns of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics (KSAOs) that differentiate high from average performers (Rudmann, 2008). According to McLarty and Dousios (2006), skills, competence, proficiency, attributes, and the ability to do something well are related to knowledge, expertise, and capability. Even though there exists confusion from indiscriminate use of terms skills, knowledge, and abilities, alongside competencies, Hayton & McEvoy, (2006) argue that it is important to understand that competencies are interactional constructs and unique in nature; they have three parts namely individuals' differences, situationally defined behavior, and socially designed criteria for performance and therefore are distinct from knowledge, skills, and abilities. They are not only attributes of individuals, but also depend on situation and social definition (Hayton & McEvoy, 2006).

Study by Man et al. (2002) held the opinion that entrepreneurial competencies are higher-level characteristic that reflects the total ability of the entrepreneur to perform a job role successfully. At the same time, they identified six entrepreneurial competencies namely opportunity, relationships, conceptual, organizing, strategic, and commitment competencies. These entrepreneurial competencies were later used by Phelan & Sharpley, (2011) in their study. Nassif, Andreassi, Tonnelli & Fleury, (2012) in their in depth qualitative study on the entrepreneurial competencies that characterize female entrepreneurs in Brazil identified cognitive and affective competencies as essential competencies which supported female entrepreneurs in development of their businesses.

Sony and Iman (2005) categorized entrepreneurial competencies into four dimensions namely: management skills, industry skills, opportunity skills and technical skills while Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010) measured competency by taking into account competency on an individual level, competency as a trader, business intelligence and competency management, competency skills and relationships. In yet another study on entrepreneurial competencies of women entrepreneur, Mitchelmore & Rowley, (2013) categorized entrepreneurial competencies into four areas; personal and relationship competencies; business and management competencies; entrepreneurial competencies; and human relations competencies. Kochadai, (2012) developed behavioral competence scale that is used in this study.

BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES

Behavior refers socially observable human action influenced by individual processes of cognition, decision and intention (Bird and Schjoedt, 2009). Another distinguishing competencies for the entrepreneur is the Behavioral related competency. According to Bird (1995), competencies are behavioral and observable characteristics of an entrepreneur related to his/her ability to create business opportunities, to evaluate business opportunities, to network business, to identify and resolve problems, and to communicate effectively (Li, Huang & Tsai, 2009).

Behavioral competencies have been categorized to include initiative, opportunity seeking, persistence and assertiveness (Osman & Rahim, 2014). They have also been found to include the entrepreneurs' actions in the process of identifying and exploiting business opportunities, activities related to enterprise promotion, assembling inputs from different sources, undertaking a moderate risk, innovations for strategic survival and success, creating, developing and maintaining human resources and establishing harmonious relationships in the business (Kochandai, 2012).

Entrepreneurial competency attributes such as behavioral competencies have a significant effect on business performance (Choe & Loo, 2013). Ahmad et al. (2011) reiterate that the firm's survival or growth results from basic characteristics such as generic, knowledge, motives, and skills. High entrepreneurial competencies and high managerial competencies are linked to satisfaction with financial performance (Kang, 2009). Entrepreneurial competence play an influential role has a direct effect on firm performance (Sanchez, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an explanatory survey research design which was cross-sectional in nature. The target population was 3495 women entrepreneurs in selected towns in Bungoma County. The sample size constitutes 358 respondents. Simple random and purposive sampling technique was employed. The researcher collected primary data using a self-administered questionnaire. Out of 358 sampled respondents, 296 were returned completed satisfactory. This gave 82.7% successful return rate. Data analysis was based on descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling by AMOS ver 21. The researcher used principle component analysis with varimax rotation to identify factors with higher loading that were used for further analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.882) measure of sampling of adequacy was above the recommended value of 0.6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (296) = 2173.403, P < .05$). This indicated that data was appropriate for factor analysis. Factor analysis led of extraction of two factors where it was observed that statements that loaded highly on factor one seemed to relate to behavioural competencies while those that loaded on factor two focused on enterprise success.

ANALYSIS BY DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Results presented in Table 1 revealed that women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County always sought new way to improve their business performance (Mean=4.12, SD= 0.679). This means that they are results-oriented in the sense that they are concerned about the outcome of their entrepreneurial activities and that results-orientation influences their enterprise success. On the other hand the item “I assume an aggressive posture to combat trends that may threaten the survival and competitive position of my business’ had the lowest mean score (3.94).

The overall mean score of behavioral competence was 4.03, standard deviation was .534 and variance 0.285. The small value of variance (.285) shows that the response points were clustered around the mean. On the other hand, the mean (4.03) was higher than the average (3) on a five-point scale indicating that most of the respondents were in agreement that behavioral competence influenced enterprise success of women entrepreneurs.

The minimum value of 2 indicates that there are a number of respondents who disagreed with the statement while a maximum value of 5 points to the fact that a number of respondents strongly agreed with the fact that behavioral competencies contribute to enterprise success. This shows that women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County agreed that behavioral competencies played a key role in ensuring success of their enterprises. This provided evidence that behavioral competencies were relevant to enterprise success and ought to be encouraged among women entrepreneurs.

Table 1. Perception on Behavioral Competence

Item/Indicator	Item code	mean	Std.Dv	Var	Min	Max
I keep on trying to make sure I achieve my business goals.	b1	4.07	.695	.484	2	5
My business places strong emphasis on new and innovative products.	b2	4.01	.711	.505	1	5
I am open to new ideas.	b3	4.00	.720	.519	1	5
I look for business assignments with extra responsibility.	b4	4.00	.699	.488	1	5
I like working in my business that get so involved to an extent that I forget other things	b5	4.06	.704	.495	1	5
I willingly consider new ideas, procedures or processes to address a business situation	b6	4.07	.719	.516	1	5
I always seek new way to improve my business performance	b7	4.12	.679	.457	2	5
I assume an aggressive posture to combat trends that may threaten the survival and competitive position of my business	b8	3.94	.648	.420	2	5
Mean BC_		4.03	.534	.285	2	5

Source: Research Data, (2017)

FINANCIAL SUCCESS INDICATORS

Enterprise success was measured using financial success indicators. Respondents were required to evaluate their level of satisfaction with the success measures. A set of five statements for measuring enterprise success were presented to the respondents who were required to indicate their level of satisfaction based on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (not at all satisfied). Results presented in Tables 2 show that the mean

value for the variable 'Enterprise success' was 2.70, standard deviation of .668 and a variance of .446. Generally, the results on enterprise success indicated that the respondents were moderately satisfied with most of the items.

The mean value was below but close to the average of the scale which indicated that majority of the respondents were moderately satisfied with the success they had achieved in business. The minimum value of 1 shows that there are a number of respondents who were very satisfied with the success of their enterprise while a maximum value of 5 indicated that there were other respondents who were not at all satisfied with the success of their enterprise.

Table 2. Perception on Enterprise Success

Item/Indicator	Item code	Mean	Std.Dv	Var.	Min	Max
Growth in market share.	f1	2.69	.977	.954	1	5
Profitability.	f2	3.27	.939	.881	1	5
Sales Turnover.	f3	2.56	1.006	.1013	1	5
Return on Investment.	f4	2.72	1.027	1.055	1	5
Sales Growth.	f5	2.24	.830	.690	1	5
Mean Enterprise Success		2.7	.668	.446	1	5

Source: Research Data, (2017)

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Results shown in Table 3 show that factor loadings for the extracted factors were above 0.50 meaning that unidimensionality and construct validity were satisfied. It was further observed that the statements that loaded highly on factor one were inclined towards behavioral competencies while those that loaded on factor two were measuring enterprise success. The items were used for further analysis. Total variance explained showed that factor one accounted for 47.44% of the variance while factor two accounted for 22.27 variance.

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

	1	2
I look for business assignments with extra responsibility (B4)	.904	
I am open to new ideas (B3)	.893	
My business places strong emphasis on new and innovative products(B2)	.875	
I like working in my business that I get so involved to an extent that I forget other things (B5)	.867	
I keep on trying to make sure I achieve my business goals (B1)	.821	
I willingly consider new ideas, procedures or processes to address a business situation (B6)	.820	
I always seek new way to improve my business performance (B7)	.784	
Profitability (F2)		.821
Sales turnover (F3)		.800
Growth in market share (F1)		.793
Return on Investment (F4)		.768

Source: Research Data, (2017)

The results in Table 3 revealed that the two factors accounted for 69.71% which is a good indicator for proceeding with further analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.882) measure of sampling adequacy was above the threshold of 0.6 (Keith, 2006; Ananda, 2011; Hair et al., 2010; Sanja, 2017: p162) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity which tests the overall significance of correlation within the correlation matrix was significant ($\chi^2 (296) = 2173.403, P < .05$). This

indicated that the set of data was appropriate for factor analysis. Also, results of the anti-image correlation matrix as shown in Table 4, ranged between 0.779 and 0.924. The values were above 0.5, supporting the inclusion of each item in the factor analysis (Tabachnick&Fidell, 2013).

Table 4 Anti-Image Correlation Matrix

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	F1	F2	F3	F4
B1	.924a	-0.364	-0.003	-0.042	-0.112	-0.026	-0.247	-0.019	0.07	-0.043	-0.052
B2	-0.364	.919a	-0.185	-0.275	-0.023	-0.1	0.049	0.047	-0.037	0.067	-0.091
B3	-0.003	-0.185	.874a	-0.627	0.021	-0.145	-0.075	0.046	-0.024	0.043	-0.058
B4	-0.042	-0.275	-0.627	.847a	-0.281	0.052	-0.023	-0.118	-0.017	-0.064	0.168
B5	-0.112	-0.023	0.021	-0.281	.920a	-0.346	-0.18	0.059	0.034	0.036	-0.077
B6	-0.026	-0.1	-0.145	0.052	-0.346	.920a	-0.256	-0.027	0.045	-0.01	-0.086
B7	-0.247	0.049	-0.075	-0.023	-0.18	-0.256	.927a	0.028	-0.068	-0.044	0.099
F1	-0.019	0.047	0.046	-0.118	0.059	-0.027	0.028	.795a	-0.345	-0.172	-0.219
F2	0.07	-0.037	-0.024	-0.017	0.034	0.045	-0.068	-0.345	.779a	-0.3	-0.2
F3	-0.043	0.067	0.043	-0.064	0.036	-0.01	-0.044	-0.172	-0.3	.798a	-0.286
F4	-0.052	-0.091	-0.058	0.168	-0.077	-0.086	0.099	-0.219	-0.2	-0.286	.780a

a. Measure of Sampling adequacy

Source: Research Data, (2017)

Similar study done by Keith (2006) contend that a Factor loading is the same as a standardized coefficient (β), also suggested by Ananda (2010), whose study contend that (β) less than (.05) suggests a negligible effect; a standardized coefficient of .05 to .10 suggests a small but meaningful effect; a standardized coefficient of .10 to .25 means a moderate effect, and a standardized coefficient of above .25 represent a large effect. Study by Sanja, (2017, p168) asserts the importance of a standardized coefficient (β), which is also known as factor loading, is generated with special ranges as indicated the study by Sanja, (2017, p168), adding that standardized coefficient scales normally follow a mathematical series of coefficient with expressions: Negligible effect ($\beta < .05$), Low effect ($\beta = .10$ to $.40$) moderate effect ($\beta = .40$ to $.55$), Strong effect ($\beta = .55$ to $.70$) and Excellent ($\beta = < .80$). Basing on the above the factor loading in this study are all above the threshold, hence all are said to be Strong effect and perfectly Excellent effect.

EFFECT OF BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES ON ENTERPRISE SUCCESS

The researcher tested the direct effect of behavioral competencies on enterprise success of women entrepreneurs. On examination of the hypothesized model, there was need to use modification indices so as to improve the model fit. Therefore, e3 and e4; and e5 and e6 were co-varied. Figure 1 presents the results.

Results further indicate that behavioral competencies (BCC) were positively related to enterprise success with a standardized path coefficient of 0.16 (16%) and an R^2 of 3% which indicated the variability of enterprise success that could be accounted for by the behavioral competencies.

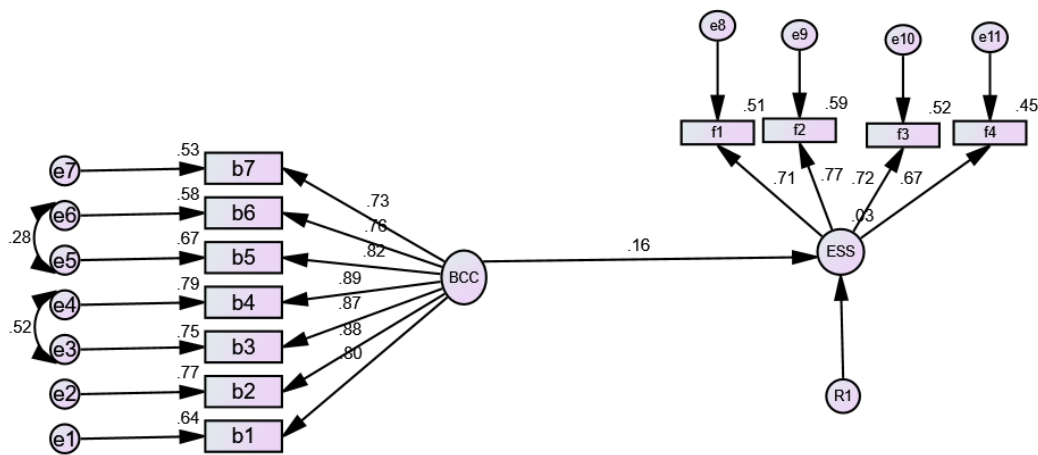


Figure 1. Measurement model for behavioral competence and enterprise success
Source: Research Data, (2017)

Further results indicated that the normed chi-square was statistically significant ($\chi^2 / df = 2.235$; $p < 0.000$). Other fit indices GFI=.949; AGFI= 0.918 which was acceptable; CFI= 0.976; RMSEA= 0.065; PCLOSE=.084 which were within the acceptable threshold above 0.9(Keith , 2006 ;Ananda, 2011 ; Hair et al., 2010;Sanja , 2017 : p162).The results indicate that the fit indices are satisfactory.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

To test the hypothesized relationship of the proposed study model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used. Path analysis was used to check the relationship between behavioral competence and enterprise success. Results of the proposed model provided satisfactory fit indices. Statistics, of particular interest in the analysis were the path significance indicated by the standardized regression estimate (β values), which assesses the effect of one variable on another; the significance level ($p < .05$) and R^2 . Maximum likelihood estimates were used to test the hypothesis using regression weights of the Amos output. From the results the p-value showed that the hypothesized model was significant. The study hypothesized that high levels of behavioral competence will positively and significantly have an influence on enterprise success of women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between behavioral competence and enterprise success of women entrepreneur .

The study found out that there was a positive and significant relationship between behavioral competencies and enterprise success of women entrepreneurs ($\beta = .162$, t-value (CR) = 2.402, $p = .016$), hence null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted . The beta value indicates that, for a unit increase in behavioral competence, enterprise success is predicted to increase by 0.162. The results indicate that the alternative hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis that there is on significant relationship between behavioral competence and enterprise success was rejected. The study thus affirms that behavioral competence are somehow important to enterprise success. It is therefore necessary for women entrepreneurs to embrace behavioral competencies and undertake business activities with an aim guided towards enhancing the success of their businesses.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The study found that there is a significant relationship between behavioral competencies and enterprise success of women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County, Kenya. The results are in agreement with past researchers who revealed a significant relationship between

competencies and business success. Rambe&Makhalemele, (2015) found that competencies were critical to improved performance of small internet businesses. Al Mamun (2016) examined the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on performance of micro-enterprises owned by women in Malaysia and found out that competencies had a positive and significant effect on micro enterprise Performance. Wiechelea, & Talik, (2012) found that competencies were predictor of success. The researcher is therefore of the view that competencies and specifically behavioral competencies enhance success and performance and help women entrepreneurs to achieve success in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between behavioral competence and enterprise success of women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County, Kenya. In support of the expectations of the study, findings indicate that behavioral competences had a significant influence on success of women entrepreneurs. The hypothesis of the study suggested that there is a significant relationship between behavioral competencies and success of women entrepreneurs. The results of the analysis found a significant relationship between behavioral competences and success of women entrepreneurs. Path analysis results also indicated that behavioral competence had some effect on enterprise success of women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County, Kenya

Based on the above results it can be inferred that the finding shed some light that behavioral competence has significant effect on success of women entrepreneurs. However, as indicated by other empirical studies, behavioral competencies alone is not a guarantee to the success of women entrepreneurs and there is need to focus on other resources that could influence success and women in business are encouraged to pay attention to the various resources including managerial, attitudinal competencies, mentoring support and a focus on owner/manager characteristics to enhance their business success.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The study advances theoretical argument for the use of competence theory in entrepreneurship research. By empirically confirming the study hypotheses, this study significantly contributes to competence theory by predicting and understanding the contribution of behavioural competencies to enterprise success among women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County. The study offers new insights to women entrepreneurs by reinforcing the need to not only act entrepreneurially but to also see the benefit of focusing on behavioral competencies with an aim of enhancing venture success. Results above indicated that the factor loading in this study are all above the threshold, hence all are said to be Strong effect and Excellent effect. At policy level, the study provides valuable information for the government and those who formulate and deliver entrepreneurial programs aimed at increasing enterprise success among women entrepreneurs. Based on the results it can be inferred that the finding shed some light that behavioral competence has significant effect on success of women entrepreneurs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study looked at the influence of behavioral competencies on success of women entrepreneurs in Bungoma County, Kenya. The researcher recommends replication of this study in other areas such as SMEs and micro enterprisers as well in other regions in Kenya and Eastern Africa region to demonstrate the universality and significance of behavioral competencies and enterprise success in general. Since the study was quantitative further studies on the same should use mixed method approach.

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