

Analysis of Entrepreneurial Competencies and It's relationship with Performance of SME's in Ethiopia with reference the Manufacturing industry in Kombolcha City

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between of entrepreneurial competencies and Performance of SME's in Ethiopia with reference the Manufacturing industry in Kombolach City. Performance can influence on the entrepreneurial competency areas including opportunity, relationship, organizing, strategic and commitment, competencies. Specifically, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and the Performance of SME's with reference the Manufacturing industry in Kombolach City. The sample survey conducted among the owners or managers in the manufacturing industry, SMEs in Kombolcha city. An empirical test carried out on the data gathered from questionnaires. The result indicated that all the competencies have a positive relationship with the firm performance that means all the competencies are required by entrepreneurs of manufacturing industry. The medium level of correlation was found between relationship, strategic competency and firm's performance. Relationship, and strategic competencies linearly correlate with firm's performance, as they have level of significance less than 0.05. Other competency areas I. e. opportunity, organizing and commissioning competencies are not significant for firm's performance, which seem improvable by training and experiences.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Competencies; Performance; Manufacturing industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro and small scale enterprise give a significant contribution to the developing countries GDP growth and total employment opportunities (Ayyagari, Beck and Demirgüç-Kunt, 2003). However, SMEs in developing countries face numerous barriers such as; relate to high administrative costs, high collateral requirements, lack of willingness of banks and micro finance institutions to lend to SMEs, inadequacy of availability of finances, poor business management skills, and poor marketing(Olomi, 2006; Bereket, 2010).

Ministry of urban development and construction in Ethiopia(2013) report on micro and small enterprises (MSEs) indicated that micro and small enterprises (MSEs) play significant roles in the creations of employment opportunities and generations of income. Similarly, Central statistics Authority(2007) shown that in Ethiopia, micro and small enterprise have the major role in industrial development, since their products being utilized in Medium or larger scale industries as semi-products or raw materials. They utilize and add value to local resources and are better positioned to meet local needs in small markets. The creation of more successful SME's could potentially create new jobs, increase trade, consequently, the GDP of the country (CSA, 2007; Bereket, 2010). However, their contribution is very low as compared to that of other countries and facing various challenges and issues such as insufficient skilled labor force

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that resulted in low productivity and low quality output, competition from global market low capability to meet the requirements of globalization standards and lack of management skills and expertise (CSA, 2007).

Entrepreneurial competencies could offer a realistic view of the know how of the running a business (Kiggudu, 2002). Though, SME's are still faced by lack of appropriate knowledge and skills and limited access to relevant information on technology. Moreover, SME has been difficult to ascertain why in similar situations, some entrepreneurs fail while others succeed, this study focuses on "entrepreneurial competencies" to offer a practical means of addressing the phenomenon.

In Ethiopia the research made by Shabudin, Ashenafi & Emnet (2016) on the challenges inhibiting the flourishing of entrepreneurial competencies of MSE's in Jimma Zone. The study found that sex, start-up experience, training, and education the major factors of competency. However, according to the researcher's knowledge, no studies have been carried out on the what the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies, which are opportunity, relationship, strategic, commitment and organizing competency with the firm's performance in manufacturing industry in the study area. Therefore, the objectives of the study are to examine the relationship between the entrepreneurial competencies and business success in SME's in different settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Entrepreneurial Competencies

The term entrepreneur competency has a number of definitions which depends on the specific task to be performed by individuals under different conditions. Entrepreneurial competency is defined as the individual characteristics of an individual that is casually related to criterion referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation(Kaur &Bains, 2013).

Entrepreneurial competencies also defined as behavioral and observable, and therefore are more closely linked to performance than any other entrepreneurial characteristics(Barney, 1991). It is ordinarily understood that entrepreneurial competency is a combination of knowledge, personality traits, skills, abilities and other characteristics which are required for successful job performance (Man, 2001). Hence, the entrepreneur's energy, creativity & motivation that trigger the production of superior product & services (Baum & Locke, 2004).

Different scholars explained different entrepreneurial competencies and its relationship with the business success in different ways, for example,Fatoki (2014) identified that owners' education and prior work experience of entrepreneurial a significant relationship with the firm performance. Baum & Locke (2004) also identified certain factors which are required by entrepreneur to give the success to the business. These factors are initiative, see and act on opportunities, persistence, knowing, concern for high quality of work, commitment to work contract, persuasion, efficiency orientation, systematic planning, problem solving, self-confidence, assertiveness, use of influence strategies, monitoring and concern of employee welfare. Man (2001) identified 10 clusters of entrepreneurial competency framework which is consist of ,opportunity, relationship, analytic, innovative, operational, human, strategic, commitment, learning, and personal strength competencies. Such competencies show both direct and indirect influences on the performance of SMEs. Ahmad and Seet (2009) also generated eight significant competencies that are recommended for further investigation, which include strategic, conceptual, opportunity, organizing, relationship, tech-

nical and personal competencies. Furthermore, Vijay and Ajay (2011) listed the major competencies that contribute to the performance of the firms such as: Initiative, sees and acts on opportunities, Persistence, information seeking, concern for quality of works, commitment to work contract, efficiency orientation, systematic planning, problem solving, self-confidence and assertiveness.

Other study conducted by Zahan & Kanti (2014) identified six groups of competencies including opportunity, organizing, relationship, strategic, commitment, and conceptual competencies and the study result shown that among them, opportunity, organizing, relationship, and strategic competencies have significant impact on the performance of the firms. Other two competency areas-commitment and conceptual competencies are not significant for firm performance. In a subsequent study, Chandler & Hanks (1994) found evidence of the direct relationship between the founders' entrepreneurial and managerial competencies and firm's performance. Tehseen & Ramayah (2015) also explicated the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on success of businesses and found that entrepreneurial competencies alone are not enough to ensure the survival and success of businesses. Since, SMEs have scarce resources of finance, skills, technology and knowledge; therefore SMEs sustainable business success highly depends on many other factors such as supplier's capabilities as well as customer's integration.

2.2. Domain of Entrepreneurial Competencies

1. Opportunity Competency

Opportunity competency refers to the ability to recognize the opportunities in the market through various means (Man, et al., 2002). One of the main characteristics of an entrepreneur is that they can see or recognize the opportunities where others cannot do so (Allison, Chell, & Hayes, 2000). Researchers operationalized opportunity competency by measuring various behaviors such as identifying the services or products needed by the customers, perceiving unmet needs of the customers, looking for beneficial product and services for the customers, and availing the best opportunities (Man, et al., 2002; Vijay & Ajay, 2011). De Koning (2003) also linked the opportunity competencies with the entrepreneur's ability to seek, explore, develop and assess better existing opportunities in markets.

2. Relationship Competency

It possesses and uses good interpersonal and communication skills, ability to influence others and gain support (Kaur and Bains, 2013). Relationship Competency defined as they negotiate with others, maintain a personal network, interact effectively with others, develop long-term trusting relationships with others and promote teamwork (Hazlina, Ramayah, Wilson & Kummerow, 2010).

A key success factor of an entrepreneur is his or her capabilities to work with others such as employees, business partners, family, friends and customers (Kaur and Bains, 2013).

3. Organizing Competency

Organizing competency is able to direct, lead, delegate, motivate, plan and schedule work, develop programs, prepare a budget. Entrepreneurs should have the ability to lead, coordinate, control, monitor, and organize internal and external resources of the business such as finance and human resources Kaur and Bains (2013).

Other studies also indicated that entrepreneur's are required to take a variety of tasks in different functional areas which demand the skills to plan and organize different resources by integration with internal

and external human, physical, financial and technological resources (Man, 2001; Hazlim, Abdul and Mohamed, 2010; Kaur and Bains, 2013; Zahan & Kanti, 2014).

In SMEs, business people have to deal with the employees. But in many cases, no any unit to manage their employees by human resource department like in big firms. As such, the ways SMEs ability to organize and lead would enable entrepreneurs to minimize the staggering rate of failures among SMEs (Hazlim, Abdul and Mohamed, 2010; Kaur and Bains, 2013).

4. Strategic Competency

Strategic Competency is the entrepreneurs' ability to develop a vision in mind for their business Develop vision and strategy, plan ahead, set goals and standards, sell ideas (Vijay & Ajay, 2011; Kaur and Bains, 2013). Man, Lau & Chan (2002) also explained this competency related to the establishing, evaluating and executing the strategies for the firm. Man (2001) operationalised this area of competency by measuring the following behaviors: (1) knowing clearly the expected directions and the impact of changes on the firm's performance (2) giving priority to work that aligns the business goals only (3) redesigning the firm to achieve the goal in a better way (4) linking or associating the current actions with strategic goals (5) observing the progress towards strategic goals (6) analyzing results against strategic goals.

5. Commitment Competency

It demonstrates strong motivation to compete, drive to see to venture through to fruition, capacity to make an impact and dedication (Kaur and Bains, 2013 and Man, 2001).

2.3. Entrepreneurial Competencies and Firm Performance

The most recent approach to understanding how an individual's behavior might impact upon business outcomes focuses primarily on competencies (Man and Lau, 2005). Man (2001) argues that entrepreneurial competencies are closely associated with the firm's performance and competitive capacity building. Another study made by Sarwoko, et al., (2013) also argues that entrepreneurial characteristics have a significant influence on business performance. It is also highly correlated with business growth and success. A study made by Man (2002) suggests that entrepreneurial competencies are more important during the start-up phase, while managerial competencies are more significant at the growth stage. According to de Koning (2003) shown that opportunity recognition and development is at the heart of entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurs to develop strategies that allow them to transform recognized opportunities into profitable outcomes (Stokes, 2006).

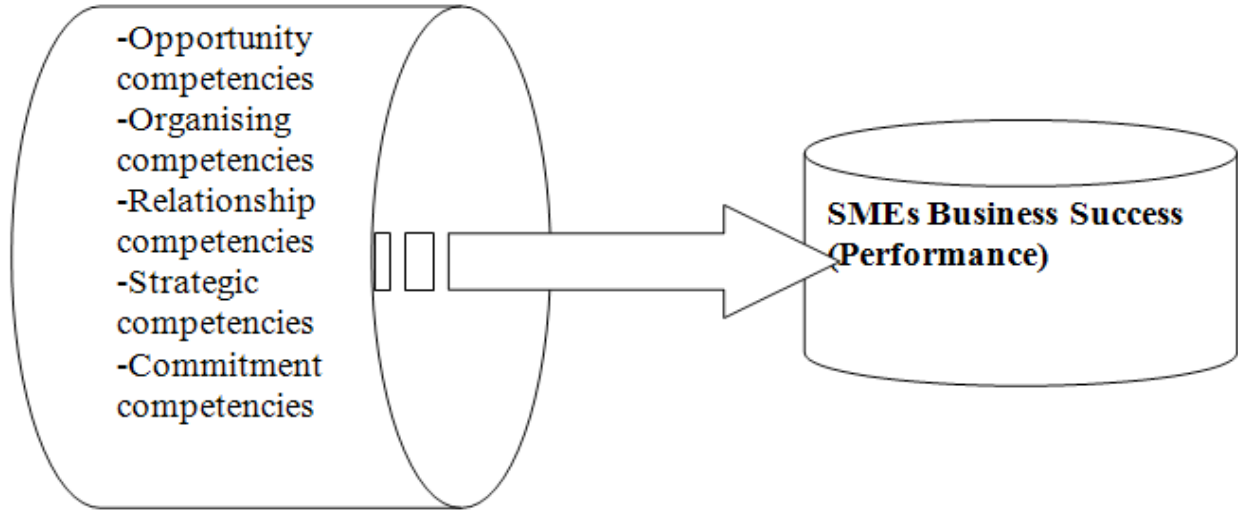
2.4. Conceptual framework

As this study aims to investigate the relationship entrepreneurial competencies with the success of SME entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, particularly Kombolcha city. The conceptual model for this study consists of one main independent variable entrepreneurial competencies and one main dependent variable success (Firm performance).

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

(Entrepreneurial competencies)



3.Methodology

3.1. Research Design and approach

This research relies on quantitative types of research approach. The quantitative type is used more to explore the status of entrepreneurs’ competence that the SME owners and managers have in the manufacturing industry in Kombolach City. Then it was identified whether there is any relationship between the competency areas and firm’s performance through correlation Analysis. Furthermore, the researchers were used cross-sectional data which would be collected in the year 2017. It studied the relation between variables at a point in time.

3.2. Sampling design and Data Collection Tools procedures

The target population of the study is all the SME owners, managers or their representatives in manufacturing industry in Kombolcha city, which accounts (296). Out of the target population, the researchers were selected 170 sample size using the Slovin’s formula. Simple Random Sampling (SRS) technique was used to select the sample. Since it’ aimed at giving every SME in the target population have an equal chance of being selected.

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, which contains personal information, company information, entrepreneurial competencies, and firm’s performance. The subjects given the questionnaire in their place of work. Instruction on how to fill the questionnaire given by the researcher. The questionnaire also translated into local languages for the sake of clarity and to easily understand by the respondents’.

3.3. Method of Data Analysis

In order to analyze data collected from the sample; the obtained data is processed in the way that is appropriate for analysis for the whole survey operation. Besides, the researchers were applied mean, standard deviation and Correlation analysis with the help of software packages such as SPSS.

4. Data Analysis and Finding

In this study from the total 170 distributed questionnaires for manufacturing enterprise owners, 150 questionnaires were collected and the remains of them had not returned. The response rate was 88.24%.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Respondents

Table 4.1 below depicts about Demographic Characteristics of Sample Respondent. The result of the study revealed that from total 150 sample 102 (68%) were male and 48 (32%) of the respondent were female. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were male. This implies that Women entrepreneurs are rare and less common in entrepreneurship on manufacturing industry especially in Kombolcha city. The study shows that the ratio of male to female among these owners is 102 (68%) to 48 (32%) which reflected the more deviation among the two genders engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

From the same table, related to the educational level, 32 (21.3%) of the respondents were primary school, 59(39.3%) were secondary and preparatory school completed, 39 (26%) of the respondents were Technical and Vocational college completed and the remain 20 (13.3%) of the respondents were first degree University graduated and above completed. This indicated that the majority of the respondents in the study area were Secondary and Preparatory School completed.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that the mean age group of the respondent was 37.33. This indicated that the average age groups of the respondents were adult entrepreneurs who are working in the study area.

Table 4. 1. Gender and educational level of the Respondents

Response		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	102	68.0
	Female	48	32.0
Total		150	100.0

		Frequency	Percent
Educational level	Primary School	32	21.3
	Secondary and Preparatory School	59	39.3
	Technical and Vocational college	39	26.0
	University and above	20	13.3
	Total	150	100.0

(Source: Own Survey, 2017)

4.2. Entrepreneurial Competency Analysis

Table 4.2 below shown that the analysis of entrepreneurial competency of the respondents responded based on descriptive statistics on the mean and standard deviation.

According to the table the strategic competencies and opportunities competency have lower mean and the standard deviation which was (3.056, .70956) and (3.11 and 0.681420 respectively. This implies that the respondents responded about to the ability to setting, evaluating and implementing the strategies of the firm and recognize the opportunities and in the market through various means in these averages. However, as compare to other entrepreneurial competency, entrepreneurs has the lower ability to ability of setting, evaluating and implementing the strategies of the firm and recognize the opportunities and in the market. That is why the standard deviation higher and which is shown there is a lack of consistency among the answers of respondents and they are widely dispersed from the mean.

On the other hand organizing competencies and relationship competencies has the highest mean (3.430 and 3.4267) and the lower standard deviation, (0.56619 and 0.62293) respectively. This implies that there is a consistency among the answers of respondents and they are narrowly dispersed from the mean.

In general, as compare different entrepreneurial competency of the respondents based on mean and standard deviation. All of the them have a slightly similar mean and standard deviation. However, the researchers ranked which entrepreneurial competency more influenced the entrepreneur by showing their mean and standard deviation. Among them, organizing competencies has the highest mean, followed relationship competencies, commitment, opportunity and strategic competencies respectively.

However, as compared based on the standard deviation strategic competencies of the entrepreneurs have highest (0.70956) deviation from the mean as compared other entrepreneurial competency. This implies that there is a lack of consistency among the answers of respondents and they are widely dispersed from the mean. Therefore the researchers conclude that the entrepreneurs who are existing in the study area respondents have lack of strategic competencies related to setting, evaluating and implementing the strategies of the firm. Similarly, opportunity competencies have the second highest standard deviation, which is (0.68142). This indicated that the majority of the respondents have deviation about understanding what people want, that's why mean is 3.11 and the standard deviation is 0.68142, that means there is a lack of consistency among the answers of respondents and they are widely dispersed from the mean.

Actually the entrepreneurs have said that, they can understand what people want, but they cannot satisfy the customers always. They have to consider the cost, number, ability, and availability of employees. So they need to develop the products according to their ability.

On the other hand, organizing competencies has less deviation from the mean about organizing competencies which are the ability to direct, lead, delegate, motivate, plan and schedule work, develop programs, prepare a budget. According to table below organizing competencies mean is 3.43 and the standard deviation is 0.56619 which is less or small standard deviation as compared to other entrepreneurial competencies, that means there is a consistency among the answers of respondents and they are narrowly dispersed from the mean. This implies that the almost all entrepreneurs in the study area have ability direct, lead, delegate, motivate, plan and schedule work, develop programs, prepare budget and have the ability organize internal and external resources of the business such as finance and human resources.

Table 4.2. Entrepreneurial Competency of the Respondents

Descriptive Statistics			
Entrepreneurial Competency	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Opportunity competencies	150	3.1100	.68142
Relationship competencies	150	3.4267	.62293
Organizing competencies	150	3.4300	.56619
Strategic competencies	150	3.0567	.70956
Commitment competencies	150	3.2850	.62258

(Source: Own Survey, 2017)

4.3. Correlation Analysis of Entrepreneurial Competencies and Firm performance

Table 4.3 below shown that the correlation among competencies and estimated turnovers (sales) growth of the firm. The researchers were using the Spearman’s rho coefficient. It has shown that there is a significant level of correlations among variables.

From the table, the highest level of correlation is found between firm performance and strategic competency by which (0.315) correlation coefficient. The variables those are included under strategic competencies are developed the long term direction of the firm, align the current actions with the strategic goals, monitor progress toward strategic goals, and evaluate results against strategic goals. The entrepreneurs gave a positive opinion for most of the variables. That means they think that they have those abilities that are needed for setting, evaluating and implementing the strategies of the firm. So obviously it has positive and significant at 0.01 level on the performance of the firm.

The second highest correlation is found between relationship competency and firm performance by the correlation coefficient 0.247. Under relationship competency there are interacting and negotiating with others, and maintaining long term relationship with them. The entrepreneurs have said that they need to interact frequently with other firms and customers and without it, they cannot grow their business. Though some small businesses have limited interaction with others, they consider relationship building has a positive influence on firm performance. In the study area also have a positive and significant relationship at 0.01 level of significance with the performance of the firm. This indicated that interacting and negotiating with others, and maintaining long term relationship with them have strived influence on firm performance.

The rest of entrepreneurial competencies have no significant relationship with firm performance. According to the result, there is positive relationship between opportunity, organizing and commitment competency with firm performance, but it is not significant because of the high level of p-value.

Table 4.3. Correlation among Competencies and Firm Performance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Firm performance	1.000					
2.Opportunity Competency	0.158	1.000				
3. Relationship competencies	0.247*	0.196	1.000			
4. Organizing competencies	0.146	0.134	0.118	1.000		

5. Strategic competencies	0.315*	0.083	0.053	0.148	1.000	
6. Commitment competencies	0.048	0.072	0.046	0.296*	0.169	1.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

5. Conclusion

The understanding of the relationship between contextual entrepreneurs competencies and their performance in the field of manufacturing industry in Kombolcha city. In researchers were asked the respondents for determining their level of performance in five competency areas including opportunity, relationship, organizing, strategic and commitment, competencies. The result indicated that all the competencies have a positive relationship with the firm performance that means all the competencies are required by entrepreneurs of manufacturing industry.

The mid um level of correlation was found between relationship, strategic competency and firm’s performance. Relationship, and strategic competencies are linearly correlated with firm’s performance, as they have level of significance less than 0.05. Other competency areas i.e.opportunity, organizing and commitment competencies are not significant for firm’s performance, which seem improvable by training and experiences. The relationship and strategic competencies affected critically the firm performance. Therefore, enhancing the relationship and strategic competencies of entrepreneurs should be an efficient measure to get better firm performance.

Meanwhile, the high level of p value of the other competencies of the entrepreneurs and to the firm’s performance indicated that changing of these entrepreneurial competencies had no great impact on the firm’s performance in the context of manufacturing industry in Kombolcha city at the moment of conducting this research.

6. Limitations and Further Research

The sample of this study was chosen from among the SME entrepreneurs in Kombolcha, Ethiopia. Further comparative works may be conducted across different industries, regions in Ethiopia, and countries/ cultures. In addition, as this study is a cross-sectional quantitative study, which employs only correlation analysis at a point of time, our understanding of the phenomenon under examination could be improved by engaging a longitudinal qualitative-quantitative research employing more sophisticated statistical techniques.

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