

AN INVESTIGATION ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN-OWNED ENTERPRISES IN JUBA COUNTY, SOUTH SUDAN

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship literature asserted that the alignment of contextual and other individual and organisational factors enhances positive performance related outcomes of enterprises. This assertion needed to be empirically validated in South Sudan context where research studies on women entrepreneurship are limited and anecdotal. Against this backdrop, this study investigated the mediating effect entrepreneurial orientation has on the relationship between environmental factors and performance of women owned enterprises in Juba County, South Sudan. This study was anchored on Cultural Theory of Entrepreneurship. The study utilized descriptive and explanatory research designs. A target population of 107 women-owned enterprises registered under Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Juba County, South Sudan participated in the study. Census approach was adopted and the owners of the registered enterprises were the study respondents. Primary data were collected using a close-ended questionnaire. Data collected were quantitatively analysed using

multiple regression with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science. Multiple regression method was used to test the hypotheses at significant level of 95 percent. From the results of the analysis, entrepreneurial orientation was found to have a positive significant mediating effect on the relationship between environmental factors and performance of enterprises owned by women in Juba County, South Sudan. It was concluded the entrepreneurial orientation is a relevant and unique tool for analysing firm performance. This is because entrepreneurship orientation works hand in hand with other factors to create value in a firm. The study recommended that conducive policies that will enhance entrepreneurial orientation outcomes leading to the performance of women-owned enterprises should be initiated by Governments at different levels in South Sudan.

KeyWords: Environmental factors, entrepreneurial orientation, performance, women owned enterprises, Juba County, South Sudan.

INTRODUCTION

Contextual factors, as argued in literature may not only have a direct influence on firm performance, but may stimulate firm strategic behaviour which, in turn, enhances performance related outcomes. Scholars therefore argued from this point that entrepreneurial orientation may influence the outcome of environmental context of performance (Gudmundsson & Lechner, 2013).

Entrepreneurial orientation is a multidimensional construct that is conceptualised as an entrepreneur's or firm's entrepreneurial behavioural tendencies of innovativeness, risk-taking,

proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy. These behaviours are considered essential in facilitating entrepreneurial opportunities (Mwaura, Gathenya, & Kihoro, 2015). Marques, *et al.* (2012) argued that entrepreneurial orientation serves as a vector of motivation to create new ventures, pursue opportunities and innovations, and enables the deployment of resources so as to maximise benefits from such opportunities and innovations. Innovativeness attribute describes entrepreneurial behaviour that supports and encourages new ideas, and as well as experimentation and creativity. Risk taking orientation describes the attribute of an entrepreneur's, despite uncertainties surrounding success, and willingness to pursue opportunities. Proactiveness orientation measures entrepreneurial behaviour to exploit a new opportunity in an environment and also to anticipate future events. Autonomy measures entrepreneurial orientation in terms of independence in decision making and ability to organise and deploy resources to pursue opportunities, and competitive aggressiveness defines entrepreneurial orientation in term of ability and zeal to compete and outperform rivals in the business environment (Mwaura, *et al.*, 2015; Gudmundsson, & Lechner, 2013). Entrepreneurial orientation evidently serves as an antecedent of performance related outcomes (Mamun & Fazal, 2018; Keh, Nguuyen, & Ng, 2007).

A handful of studies have indicated that the relationship that entrepreneurial orientation has with performance is positive one (Mwaura, *et al.*, 2015), however it been argued that entrepreneurial orientation and performance relationship can also be mediated or moderated by array of variables (Gudmundsson, & Lechner, 2013). As remarked by Rosenbusch, *et al.*, (2013), performance and environment relationship may not be directly associated but made possible via the mechanism of firm-specific strategic behaviour such as entrepreneurial orientation.

In an attempt to unravel the effect entrepreneurial orientation has on the relationship between environmental context performance, Stanslaus, Shayo, Kapaya, and Jaensson (2017) argued that moderating factors such as cultural orientation, economic factor, political-legal factor, organisational structure may influence the applicability of entrepreneurial orientation, and hence performance. In the meta-analytic study of Rosenbusch, Rauch, and Bausch (2013), entrepreneurial orientation moderated the linkage between task environment and performance. Entrepreneur orientation is found to be directly associated with performance and functioned as outcome of environmental context; however, its mediating role in environmental context and performance relationship has been found to be statistically insignificant (Anggadwita, Luturlean, Ramadani, & Ratten, 2017).

Entrepreneurial activities are viewed as young in South Sudan perhaps as a result of devastations occasioned from protracted civil war (Arok, 2019). Women participation in entrepreneurial activities is characterised with discrimination of all kinds. As remarked by Brown (2014), women constitute 50 per cent of the total population of South Sudan and their participation in leadership roles and entrepreneurial activities is meagre. The lack of confidence and self-esteem,

low-level of education, cultural norms, unwritten laws, and reproductive roles of women discriminate against women's participation and capacity in entrepreneurial activities and leadership role.

The post-war constitution in South Sudan contained a clause that allows for greater participation of women at all levels but the institutional apparatus lacked the capacity, resources, and skill to advance women's developmental issues (Brown, 2014). In addition, civil society groups and community organisations championing the participation of women's participation in leadership role and other activities have their structures and establishment dominated by male or managed by men (Brown, 2014). Research efforts on the participation of women in entrepreneurial activities and the impact of environmental context on development of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) has attracted limited attention from scholars in South Sudan context. Though women's capacity and ability in building bridges in terms of peace and crisis resolution in South Sudan has been acknowledged in literature (Poni, 2017), the performance of ventures created by women needs empirical assessment.

In entrepreneurship related literature, it has been asserted that the environmental context where a business operates may have both positive and negative significant effect on entrepreneurial activities (Gomezelj&Kušce, 2013). In respect to this assertion, evidence abounds in literature about inconsistency of effect of environmental context on entrepreneurship. Welsh and Kaciak (2018) registered evidence of significant effect of socio-cultural variables such as family supports on entrepreneurship performance. The study of Maziku, *et al.* (2014) found negative significant effect socio-cultural variables such as societal norms and values on women entrepreneurial activities. In a similar vein, Alhnity, *et al.* (2016) found that political-legal environment impacted significantly on performance of entrepreneurial activities. In addition, Adeoye and Elegunde (2012) affirmed the significant effect of economic environmental context on entrepreneurship performance. However, evidence from empirical studies has also shown insignificant effect of environmental context on performance of entrepreneurial activities across contexts (Hassan, *et al.*, 2016; Machuki&Aosa, 2011). The evidence of insignificant effect of environmental context on entrepreneurship performance supports the submission of Zhou (2009) that despite deficient formal institutions, many less developed economies still experienced high level of genuine entrepreneurial activities. The inconsistencies of findings of environmental context-entrepreneurship success linkage remained a gap that demands additional empirical examination.

Furthermore, in sub-Sahara Africa, studies on various factors influencing performance of enterprises owned by women have largely remained anecdotal and methodologically deficient. Ewoh (2013) conducted an exploratory study and observed that environmental factors ranging from social-structural problems, religion, culture, education, experience, and technology constituted factors that may affect the performance of businesses owned and developed by

women in five Africa countries-Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, and Ethiopia. In Kenya, Nwobobia (2012) observed that lack of finances, discrimination, problems with city council, lack of education, and lack of access to justice remain environmental factors affecting the performance of businesses owned and developed by women. As investigated by Igwe, *et al.* (2018), access to infrastructure, size of a firm, education and labour force, and business climate variables are found as factors influencing performance of businesses created and developed by women in Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Sudan, and Tanzania. These aforementioned studies were fraught with methodological lacunas ranging from designs to analytical tools. Therefore, a methodology gap has been created that needs empirical investigation.

Macro environment impacts on entrepreneurs equally but other studies have shown that the propensity of environmental impact is more on businesswomen than the businessmen (Stevenson & St-Onge, 2005). This propensity of environmental impact is yet to be ascertained as far women in venture creation is concerned in South Sudanese context. This also becomes a gap that needs empirical justification. In addition, environmental context may not only have direct impact on performance related outcomes but do so by influencing strategic behaviour at both individual and organisational level (Gudmundsson & Lechner, 2013). However, studies have remained scant in exploring entrepreneurial orientation to elucidate linkage between environmental context and performance of women owned enterprises. This became a gap that this study sought to address by investigating the pathway of environmental context and entrepreneurship performance relationship via entrepreneurial orientation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

This study was founded on Cultural Theory. Cultural Theory has its origin from the classic work of Max Weber (1930) which dated back to the oldest accounts of differences among the group in business enterprises. Cultural theory, as it applies to entrepreneurship research, holds that the requirement for venturing into successful entrepreneurship is hinged on cultural differences among group business performance emanate from group differences in cultural values and norms (Smith-Hunter & Boyd, 2004). In addition, the theory also holds that the need for higher achievement and the pursuit of economic independence constitutes the primary drive for the pursuit of self-employment in small business.

Cultural theory aids the understanding that certain cultural features such as acceptance of risk, economical living, dedication to hard work, solidarity and loyalty, and among others can facilitate and encourage entrepreneurship behaviour and support self-employment (Volery, 2007). In entrepreneurial research scholars have employed theoretical lens of cultural theory to underpin studies and support hypotheses formulation. According to Volery (2007), a theoretical framework on ethnic entrepreneurship was anchored on cultural theory. The study on

comparison of white and minority business owners was theoretically supported on the tenet of cultural theory (Smith-Hunter & Boyd, 2004).

In entrepreneurship research, studies have asserted that the element of social systems and culture can impact both positively and negatively on entrepreneurial emergence, behaviour and performance (Akhter&Sumi, 2014), and therefore this assertion is in tandem with the tenet of cultural theory. Cultural theory is seen as important in this present study because its theoretical lens was used to underpin the influence that environmental contextual factors has on the development of entrepreneurial orientation as a strategic behaviour leading to performance of entrepreneurial activities.

Empirical Literature Review

In a sub-Saharan Africa context, entrepreneurial orientation has been fronted in studies as a construct to explain how entrepreneurial performance outcomes can be generated (Mwaura, *et al.*, 2015; Stanslaus, *et al.*, 2017). The statistics in respect to living standard in South Sudan indicates that 50.6 per cent of people are living below or less than one US Dollar in a day. The Government of South Sudan has formulated policies focussing on stimulating new businesses so as to reduce unemployment and eradicate poverty across levels (Government of South Sudan, 2018; Lugga&Zewotir, 2012). Despite the policy to enhance better performance for small and medium-sized enterprises, women who are recognised as having entrepreneurial potentials and also an important resource for economic growth and development have been largely excluded from participating in entrepreneurial activities (Brown, 2014). While very few studies have been fronted to investigate the determinants of business success or failure in South Sudan context, studies relating to environmental context on performance of ventures created by women have attracted anecdotal attention from scholars in South Sudanese context.

Stanslaus, *et al.* (2017) explored the assessment of the moderating factors that have effects on entrepreneurial orientation and performance in Tanzania. The study was completely exploratory and the term entrepreneurial orientation was conceptualised and the various moderating factors such as socio-cultural, political, legal and economic orientations were explored. The study confirmed the link among the moderating factors and the effect on performance of SMEs. This study is characterised with a number of limitations: firstly, it is not clear whether the identified environmental variables served as moderating or mediating constructs in the conceptual model. This study reported significant effect of moderation and the statistical evidence in relation to that in the study. The study, having reported significant effect claimed that future research was needed to test the empirical model. This present study found the various inconsistencies in the Stanslaus,'s *et al.*, (2017) study as gaps to be filled by carrying empirical inquiry that is quantitative in nature to determine mediating effect of entrepreneurship orientation.

Rosenbusch, Rauch, and Bausch (2013) carried out meta-analytic study on the mediating role that entrepreneurial orientation exerted on the link between task environment and firm performance. The meta-analysis was performed on research studies conducted for the past 30 years on task environment-performance relationship and entrepreneurial orientation. The findings from the analysis established entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating factor in the link between task environment and firm performance. The findings of the study indicated that entrepreneurial orientation can indirectly explain task environment-performance relationship; however, evidence of significant effect in a meta-analytic study, as argued in the literature, does need empirical investigation for validation and generalisation of findings. This present study sought to carry out empirical inquiry on environmental context-entrepreneurial performance relationship with entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating mechanism.

Ali, Abdullah, and Gorondutse (2017) explored the literature and investigate whether entrepreneurial orientation, market orientation, total quality, and organisational culture are linked to performance of SMEs. Relied on extensive review of literature, the study concluded and developed a conceptual framework to explain the webs of relationship that may exist entrepreneurial orientation-performance of SMEs linkage. The proposed relationships in the conceptual framework of the study are mere propositions that need to be supported via empirical investigation. The present conducted empirical investigation register the effect that entrepreneurial orientation exerted in the explanation of the re environmental context-entrepreneurship performance linkage in South Sudan context.

In Hoque's (2018) study, entrepreneurial orientation and performance of SMEs in Bangladesh with organisational culture as the mediating construct was examined. The data were analysed using SEM-AMOS and results showed that entrepreneurial orientation significantly related to SMEs performance and organisational culture significantly mediated the relationship. The study findings showed that entrepreneurial orientation served as an antecedent of SMEs performance but what determines entrepreneurial orientation as a strategic behaviour needs to be empirically investigated. This present study poised to empirically investigate both and antecedent and an outcome of entrepreneurial orientation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The designs used in this study were descriptive and explanatory in nature. The target population of the study comprised the women owners of registered SMEs in Juba County South Sudan. According to the ministry of Trade and Industry and Juba Chamber of Commerce, there were one hundred and seven (107) dully registered SMEs owned by women in Juba County, South Sudan as of 2018 (Juba Chamber of Commerce, 2018). Primary data were obtained via the use of self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in a way that was easy and acceptable by the participants. A questionnaire as a method of data collection is adjudged easier to be administered and crop of scholars has employed it in literature as a data collection instrument (Saunders, *et al*, 2009).

This study made use of analytical tool of Statistical Package for Social science (SPSS) to manage the data that were collected. Descriptive analysis was done using parameters such as mean and standard deviation for explanation and presentation of results. The relationship between the constructs of this study was determined by subjecting the data to multiple regression analysis. Through the regression analysis, the hypotheses of significant effects formulated in this study were tested and inferences were obtained for appropriate generalisation. Prior to the analysis via multiple regression statistics, the fit between the data collected and the multiple regression statistics were ascertained via diagnostic analysis.

This study sought to establish the mediating effect of entrepreneurial and therefore the empirical model for determining this hypothesis was obtained following three-variable regression model suggested by MacKinnon, *et al.* (2002). The models are expressed as follows:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1EF + \epsilon_i \dots\dots\dots (i)$$

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_2EF + \beta_3OF + \epsilon_i \dots\dots\dots (ii)$$

$$EO = \beta_0 + \beta_4EF + \epsilon_i \dots\dots\dots (iii)$$

Where:

- EP = Entrepreneurship performance
- EF = Environmental context
- EO = Entrepreneurial orientation
- β_0 = Intercept terms
- β_1 - β_4 = regression coefficients

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics

Entrepreneurial orientation was investigated as a moderating variable in this study, and participants were requested to respond to questions addressing the composite construct of Entrepreneurial Orientation. Entrepreneurial orientation was investigated in this study as mediating variable to explain the linkage between environmental factors and performance of women-owned enterprises in South Sudan.

Table 1 Analysis of Responses on Entrepreneurial Orientation

| Entrepreneurial orientation: Items | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|
| My risk taking ability enhances my entrepreneurial potentials | 1.6047 | .94904 |
| I always take advantage of identifying business opportunity and ideas in the environment | 1.8372 | 1.06119 |
| I make unilateral decisions that often encourage and promote my business ideas | 1.8140 | 1.19323 |
| I always have the urge to bring new idea on the table and create new things | 1.5581 | .92805 |
| I like to engage in healthy competition within the market environment | 1.5349 | .90356 |
| Average Score | 1.6698 | 1.0070 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As indicated in Table 1 the scores of the overall mean and standard deviation were 1.6698 and standard deviation and 1.007 respectively. The aggregate mean score was approximated to 2 (agree) indicates that the participants agreed on the questions addressing entrepreneurial orientations. The standard deviation score also indicates low variability of responses and this thus portends that the sample mean reflects as a valid estimator of the population. Inferring from the descriptive analysis it was concluded that entrepreneurial orientation characterized enterprises owned by women in Juba County, South Sudan.

Risk taking is one of the items measuring entrepreneurial orientation in this study and the descriptive analysis showed a mean score of 1.6047 which indicates a strong agreement by majority of the respondents on the study scale adopted. This score shows that women in enterprises in South Sudan are risk takers. They improve on their businesses through experimental learning. Pro-activeness was measured with an item explaining taking advantage of business opportunities and ideas in the environment, and as indicated in the mean score of 1.8372 the majority of the respondents strongly agreed to the items. This mean score indicates that enterprises in South Sudan are proactive. Proactiveness is related to other contextual factors because it involves acting in anticipation of growing markets. Innovativeness is an attribute of entrepreneurial orientation and this was measured with an item indicating creating new ideas and new things, and therefore the mean score of 1.5581 reflects that the study participants strongly agreed to the item based on the scale adopted in this study. The mean score further indicates that women-owned entrepreneurs in South Sudan are departing from norm by trying out new things amid a very harsh environment.

Items measuring autonomy as an indicator of entrepreneurial orientation showed a mean score of 1.8140 which indicates that the respondents strongly agreed that the kind of autonomy enjoyed with having enterprises influenced their desire to engage in new venture creation. Autonomy leads to better business performance but it also depends on environmental configuration. Competitiveness was measured as an attribute of entrepreneurial orientation and respondents were asked if they liked engaging in healthy competition in the market. The respondents agreed with a mean score of 1.5349 which indicates strong agreement on the adopted scale in this study. The results of this study support the findings in the previous literature that entrepreneurial orientation played a role of influencer in formation of entrepreneurial activities (Hoque, 2018; Ali, *et al.*, 2017).

Inferential Statistics

In order to establish the mediating effect of entrepreneurial orientations on the relationship between environmental factors and performance of women-owned enterprises, the three-variable model as specified by MacKinnon, *et al.* (2002) was employed via a regression statistical method. The first step was to find the relationship between the composite variable of

environmental factors and performance of women-owned enterprises and the regression equation to establish this step is given as follows:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EF + \varepsilon$$

Table 2 Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .184(a) | .034 | .022 | 3.36997 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As shown in Tables 2., and 3 respectively, the regression parameters indicate that there was a prediction of performance by the composite variable of environmental factors as the $p = 0.049$ ($p < 0.05$). This regression results for the composite variable of environmental factors justify the results of the multiple regression for the test of direct hypothesised relationships.

Table 3 ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 33.574 | 1 | 33.574 | 2.956 | .049(a) |
| | Residual | 953.961 | 84 | 11.357 | | |
| | Total | 987.535 | 85 | | | |

As indicated in Table 3 the ANOVA table indicates a significant F-value ($p < .049$), and this therefore means that there is a fit between the regression model and the data collected. Based on the explanation provided by MacKinnon, et al. (2020), the condition satisfying the mediation effect was met.

Table 4 Coefficients

| Model | 1 | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 7.661 | 1.605 | | 4.772 | .000 |
| | envfa | .047 | .028 | .184 | 1.719 | .049 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

The second step under the three-variable model was to establish whether the introduction of the mediating variable (entrepreneurial orientation) with the composite variable (environmental factors) will predict performance of women-owned enterprises. The regression model to address the second step is specified as follows:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_2 EF + \beta_3 EO + \varepsilon$$

Table 5 Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .506(a) | .256 | .238 | 2.97534 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As indicated in Tables 5 and 6, the regression parameters indicate that the model is significant with both the environmental factors and entrepreneurial orientation jointly explained 25.6

percent variation in performance of women-owned enterprises. These results indicate that both environmental factors and entrepreneurial orientation jointly predicted performance of women-owned enterprises in Juba County, Kenya.

Table 6 ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 252.767 | 2 | 126.384 | 14.276 | .000(a) |
| | Residual | 734.767 | 83 | 8.853 | | |
| | Total | 987.535 | 85 | | | |

As also indicated in Table 7, the regression results also indicate that entrepreneurial orientation was statistically significant with $\beta = .504$, $t = 4.976$, and $p = 0.000$. This therefore means that entrepreneurial orientation as a mediating variable was statistically significant. However, the regression results also indicate that environmental factor is not statistically significant with $\beta = .014$, $t = .560$, and $p = 0.557$. This therefore means that entrepreneurial orientation had a significant effect on performance of women-owned enterprises in Juba County, South Sudan

Table 7 Coefficients

| Model | 1 | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | (Constant) | 5.338 | 1.492 | | 3.578 | .001 |
| | envfa | .014 | .025 | .055 | .560 | .577 |
| | Ent. Orientation | .504 | .101 | .489 | 4.976 | .000 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

The third step to under the three-variable model for determining mediating effect is to regress the mediating variable (entrepreneurial orientation) on independent variable (environmental factors). The regression model to determine this step is specified as follows:

$$EO = \beta_0 + \beta_4 EF + \varepsilon$$

Table 8 Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted Square | R | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-----------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | .265(a) | .070 | .059 | | 3.20429 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As also indicated in Table 8, the condition satisfying mediation effect, as specified by MacKinnon, et al. (2002) was met as evidence showed that significant linkage between environmental factors and entrepreneurial orientation was found. The results showed that a relationship existed between entrepreneurial orientation and environmental factors

Table 9 ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 65.066 | 1 | 65.066 | 6.337 | .014(a) |
| | Residual | 862.469 | 84 | 10.267 | | |
| | Total | 927.535 | 85 | | | |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As thus shown in Tables 8 and 9, the regression parameters ($R^2 = .070$, F-value = 6.137, & $p = 0.014$) indicate that environmental factors significantly predicted entrepreneurial orientation.

Table 10 Coefficients

| Mode 1 | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 4.606 | 1.526 | | 3.018 | .003 |
| | envfa | .066 | .026 | .265 | 2.517 | .014 |

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As also presented in Table 10 the test of hypothesis of significant effect of environmental factors on entrepreneurial orientation was statistically significant. Therefore, the result means that given one increase in environmental factor, there is 0.66 unit increase in entrepreneurial orientations.

Having established the conditions justifying the three-variable step for determining mediation effect, the decision criteria set by MacKinnon, *et al.* (2002) were followed to ascertain the magnitude of the mediating effect in the explanation of the relationship between the independent and dependent constructs of this study. As presented in Table 7, the condition for declaring full mediation effect holds that if the coefficient of the mediating variable when it was introduced to the model is significant alongside with the insignificant coefficient of the independent variable, then a full mediation exists. Therefore, drawing from the analysis of mediating effect in this study, the condition of full mediation is met as the coefficient of mediating variable-entrepreneurial orientation was statistically significant and the coefficient of the independent variable-environmental factor was insignificant ($\beta_3 = .504$, $p = 0.000$, $\beta_2 = 0.014$, $p = 0.577$). It can be concluded that entrepreneurial orientation mediated the relationship between environmental factors and performance of women-owned enterprises in Juba County, South Sudan. The results of the mediating effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the relationship between environmental factor and performance related outcomes is in variance with previous that found evidence of insignificant effect (Anggadwita,*et al.* 2017). In addition, the results of this study also corroborated previous studies that registered a linkage between entrepreneurial orientations and performance related outcomes (Mamun & Fazal, 2018; Mwaura, *et al.*, 2015).

Conclusion

The conclusion arrived in this study is that the attributes of entrepreneurs (entrepreneurial orientations) remain the major determinants of performance of women entrepreneurs in Juba County, South Sudan. In general, it is concluded that entrepreneurial orientation serves as antecedent of performance of entrepreneurial activities and as well as outcome of environmental forces in Juba County, South Sudan. It can also be concluded that Entrepreneurial orientation is a relevant and unique tool for analysing firm performance. This is because Entrepreneurial orientation works hand in hand with other factors to create value in a firm.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of this study, there is a need for the Government of South Sudan to initiate and implement policies that address the main economy so as to boost economic sector in the country. That the Government of South Sudan should identify and implement 'upstream' factors that influence the development of Entrepreneurial orientation among entrepreneurs. Policies relating to the larger contextual environment such as tax systems, accessibility to finance, provision of infrastructure, and interests rate need to be fair and just as these will really enhance entrepreneurial activities leading to the betterment of the economy in terms of improved GDP, poverty reduction, and employment opportunities. The government of South Sudan needs to make friendly economic policies that will create a virile environment promoting entrepreneurial activities.

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