

The Influence of Gender Role Socialization on Entrepreneurial Choices in 21st Century Africa: The Case of Cultural Ghana

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Abstract : Over the years, entrepreneurship has been promoted as an important tool for bridging the socioeconomic gap between the male gender and the female gender. In the face of the efforts to advance gender equity, however, there exist sociocultural factors whose influence on these efforts cannot be ignored or underrated. This study explored the influence of gender role socialization on entrepreneurial decisions in the male-dominated African society, with special focus on Ghana. The study essentially sought to find out whether gender role socialization in the Ghanaian culture affects the individual's entrepreneurial choices and/or ventures. And if it does, how? The study analyzed the common gender roles found in the Ghanaian culture and the perceptions about these gender roles. 2507 male and female Ghanaian entrepreneurs were randomly sampled and interviewed. One particularly interesting finding of the study is that, while some entrepreneurs have interests in other enterprises, they fear becoming challengers of societal norms, as those ventures have been assigned to the other gender by the culture. Additionally, most of these entrepreneurs fear low or no patronage from members of the society. The study, thus, revealed a significant relationship between culture, especially gender role socialization, and patronage of businesses, as well as the success and profitability of an enterprise. It was, thus, concluded that most entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial decisions or choices are influenced by the entrepreneur's gender role socialization. By extension, gender role socialization was found to influence and limit entrepreneurial ventures.

Keywords : gender, role, socialization, entrepreneur, culture, ghana

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