

Motherhood Factors Influencing the Business Growth of Women-Owned Sewing Businesses in Lagos, Nigeria: A Mixed Method Study

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Abstract : The debate about factors influencing the business growth of women-owned businesses has been a topical issue in business management. Currently, scholars have identified the issues of access to money, market, and management as canvassing factors influencing the business growth of women-owned businesses. However, the influence of motherhood (household/family context) on business growth is inconclusive in the literature; despite that women are more family-oriented than their male counterparts. Therefore, this research study considers the influence of motherhood factor (household/family context) on the business growth of women-owned sewing businesses (WOSBs) in Lagos, Nigeria. The sewing business sector is chosen as the fashion industry (which includes sewing businesses) currently accounts for the second largest number of jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa, following agriculture. Thus, sewing businesses provide a rich ground for contributing to existing scholarly work. Research questions; (1) In what way does the motherhood factor influence the business growth of WOSBs in Lagos? (2) To what extent does the motherhood factor influence the business growth of WOSBs in Lagos? For the method design, a pragmatic approach, a mixed-methods technique and an abductive form of reasoning are adopted. The method design is chosen because it fits, better than other research perspectives, with the research questions posed in this study. For instance, using a positivist approach will not sufficiently answer research question 1, neither will an interpretive approach sufficiently answer research question 2. Therefore, the research method design is divided into 2 phases, and the results from one phase are used to inform the development of the subsequent phases (only phase 1 has been completed at the moment). The first phase uses qualitative data and analytical method to answer research question 1. While the second phase of the research uses quantitative data and analytical method to answer research question 2. For the qualitative phase, 5 WOSBs were purposefully selected and interviewed. The sampling technique is selected as it was not the intention of the researcher to make any statistical inferences, at this phase, rather the purpose was just exploratory. Therefore, the 5 sampled women comprised of 2 unmarried women, 1 married woman with no child, and 2 married women with children. A 40-60 minutes interview was conducted per participants. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Thereafter, the data were analysed using thematic analysis in order to unearth patterns and relationships. Findings for the first phase of this research reveals that motherhood (household/family context) directly influences (positively/negatively) the performance of WOSBs in Lagos. Apart from a direct influence on WOSBs, motherhood also moderates (positively/negatively) other factors-e.g., access to money, management/human resources and market/opportunities- influencing WOSBs in Lagos. To further strengthen this conclusion, a word frequency query result shows that 'family,' 'husband' and 'children' are among the 10 words used frequently in all the interview transcripts. This first phase contributes to existing studies by showing the various forms by which motherhood influences WOSBs. The second phase (which data are yet to be collected) would reveal the extent to which motherhood influence the business growth of WOSBs in Lagos.

Keywords : women-owned sewing businesses, business growth, motherhood, Lagos

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