

# The Influence Of Market Orientation, Flexibility And Job Satisfaction On Corporate Entrepreneurship

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## ABSTRACT

*The profound dynamic changes that the South African business environment is going through and the low level of business development in the country begs for entrepreneurial innovation. This paper is an investigation into the relationship of corporate entrepreneurship with the organizational variables of marketing, flexibility and job satisfaction. These relationships are investigated in a sample of 333 managers in three different industries in South Africa. The relationships between corporate entrepreneurship and biographic variables were examined by means of Spearman correlation. Pearson-product moment correlation explored the association between corporate entrepreneurship and the organizational variables. The empirical results show significant relationships with different market orientation, flexibility, and job satisfaction factors. We suggest that organizations should nurture their corporate entrepreneurial strategies by fostering its orientation towards marketing, flexibility and job satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** Corporate Entrepreneurship; Marketing; Flexibility; Job Satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

The cultivation of the entrepreneurial environment of a firm is widely recognized as a key success factor to secure the growth and survival of an organization. For a rapid developing country such as South Africa, there is a rather low level of entrepreneurship (Alexander, 2011). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor consistently rates South Africa's entrepreneurial activity as poor (Luiz & Mariotti, 2011). The South African business environment has been through profound and dynamic changes, some of which have been exacerbated by the economic recession, and continue to have devastating effects on the economy. Although South Africa has been able to lessen the impact of the recession, many industries are still reeling under its effects. Additionally, the entry of international companies, such as Wal-Mart, has created new challenges in the retail sector. The nurturing of entrepreneurship at the corporate level in South Africa is something that has to be actively addressed to advance economic growth and aid in eliminating the high unemployment crisis the country faces.

The new millennium has brought increased global competitiveness and challenges. Companies that participate in global markets need to continuously explore methods of gaining advantage by incessantly providing superior goods and services to customers in the face of competitors (Gabberty & Vambery, 2008). Business leaders should anticipate the environmental changes that are taking place in the landscape in which they operate and respond swiftly and accurately in order to survive (Jafari, Rezaernour, Mazdeh & Hooshmandi, 2011). Management plays a vital role in facilitating the process of corporate entrepreneurship and fostering of entrepreneurial talent in creating real value for stakeholders (Kenney, Khanfar & Kizer, 2010).

In order to survive in the global market and advance entrepreneurship, it is necessary to explore the different variables that seem to play a progressive role in the execution thereof. There is a need for research to provide solutions to the process of instilling corporate entrepreneurial behaviours (Thornberry, 2003). Key factors in entrepreneurial development and global competitiveness are market orientation (Barrett & Weinstein, 1998;

Jaworski & Kohli, 1996; and Kohli, Jaworski & Kumar, 1993), organizational flexibility (Barrett & Weinstein, 1998), and job satisfaction (Jaworski & Kohli, 1996). In the current study, these factors are explored in a South African context.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Management should encourage the development of corporate entrepreneurship and its influence on innovation and performance (Hornsby, Naffziger, Kuratko & Montagno, 1993, and Morris, Kuratko & Covin, 2008). The core of corporate entrepreneurship is to establish an environment that initiates and promotes innovative corporate intelligence (Antonicic & Hisrich, 2001; Goosen, de Coning & Smit, 2002; and Hornsby, Kuratko & Zahra, 2002). Corporate entrepreneurship preserves the strategic renewal of a business, thus ensuring its innovativeness and profitability (Drucker, 2007, and Morris et al., 2008) and a sustained pioneering advantage (Rivas, 2007).

The many definitions of corporate entrepreneurship acknowledge the following elements (Sharma & Chrisman, 1999):

- the re-development of new businesses within the mother company
- the transformation of key areas in a business
- the renewal of an existing business

Businesses have to take part in some form of entrepreneurial activity to be able to operate effectively in competitive markets and create value (Zimmerman, 2010). The link between corporate entrepreneurship and market orientation is seen as the basis for sustaining innovation and maintaining a competitive advantage (Barrett & Weinstein, 1998; Lee & Hsieh, 2010; and Weerawardena & Cass, 2004). It is a necessity for sustained economic development (Oudan & Luparelli, 2011). Market orientation refers to the organization-wide responsiveness to the generation and dissemination of market intelligence (Jaworski & Kohli, 1996, and Kohli & Jaworski, 1990) with superior customer value as its primary objective (Jiménez-Zarco, Martínez-Ruiz & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2009, and Weerawardena & Cass, 2004). Market orientation implies doing innovative and novel things in response to market conditions (Narver & Slater, 1990, and Slater & Narver, 1994). It is the maintenance of a culture of sustainable advantage by continuously providing superior value for customers.

The role of global marketing is becoming more complex as firms have to cater for a diversity of consumers from different social and cultural backgrounds (Gabberty & Vambéry, 2008). Marketing has evolved from improved production processes to product development and finally for the advancement of quality of life (Kotler, 2003). In total, it contributes to consumer well-being (Leelakulthanit & Hongcharu, 2011). The strategy of market orientation is the reaction to the dynamics of altering challenging economic environments (Akonkwa, 2009). Marketing is also a method of building lasting and mutually beneficial relationships between firms and consumers (Nwakanma & Jackson, 2007). Innovative marketing practices enable businesses to cope with adverse circumstances, declining sales, and intense competition (Kotler, 2003). Different studies confirm the significant positive relationship between market orientation and corporate entrepreneurship (Barrett & Weinstein, 1998; Liu, Luo & Shi, 2002; and Luo, Zhou & Liu, 2003).

As companies grow and become competitive, a level of control has to be implemented by means of policies, leading to bureaucratic procedures (Zimmerman, 2010). However, competitive organizations operate in complex environments and therefore need flexible planning systems to cope with frequent changes (Kukalis, 1989). Firms with low flexibility are more rigid and bureaucratic in their administrative and operational procedures (Barrett & Weinstein, 1998; Khandwalla, 1977; and Miles & Snow, 1978). Although different labels have been used to characterize flexible organizations, a common feature is that they have decentralized decision-making and are adaptable and versatile. They allow employees to take self-control.

Innovative entrepreneurial ventures need flexible functional design and operations to facilitate frankness in the exchange of information (Jaworski & Kohli, 1996, and Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The facilitation of corporate entrepreneurship is restricted when rules and regulations are strictly adhered to, thus limiting the spontaneity of the

process (Chung & Gibbons, 1997). To survive and prosper in turbulent environments, organizations must respond with speed and flexibility when market opportunities arise. However, flexibility in the production process has to be policed with sophisticated cost accounting practices (Venieris & Cohen, 2008). In order to spread marketplace information effectively one needs flexible systems to filter through cross-functional boundaries (Miles & Snow, 1978, and Child & McGrath, 2001). Research confirms a significant positive correlation between corporate entrepreneurship and flexibility (Barrett & Weinstein, 1998, and Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999).

Satisfaction in the workplace is an international concern for businesses (Wagman & Villarreal, 2008). Job satisfaction is one of the most widely and frequently studied variables in the field of organization behavior (Luthans, 1998, and Robbins, 2005). It is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one’s job experiences” (Locke, 1983:1300). Job satisfaction, in its broadest sense, refers to a person’s general attitude toward the job or specific dimensions of the job (Knoop, 2001, and Robbins, 2005). Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967) refer to job satisfaction as the actual satisfaction of the individual with intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement. Different studies confirm the importance of the relationship between entrepreneurship and job satisfaction. A significant positive relationship was found between corporate entrepreneurship and job satisfaction (Jaworski & Kohli, 1996) and between intrinsic job satisfaction and entrepreneurial attitude (Van Wyk, Boshoff & Bester, 2003). It is also indicated that entrepreneurs score significantly higher on job satisfaction than individuals that are employed (Katz, 1993, and Weaver & Franz, 1992).

Seen in the light of the importance of corporate entrepreneurship for business growth and economic growth, this study investigates the relationship of corporate entrepreneurship with biographic variables and the organizational variables of market orientation, job satisfaction, and flexibility. The research questions are:

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship of corporate entrepreneurship with biographic variables?

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between corporate entrepreneurship, market orientation, job satisfaction, and flexibility?

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does market orientation, job satisfaction, and flexibility predict corporate entrepreneurship?

## **METHODOLOGY**

A self-administered questionnaire was sent to a non-random quota convenience sample. The sample represented four different economic sectors in South Africa. The participants represented managers and supervisors from life insurance, information and technology, tertiary education, and transport sectors. The questionnaire consisted of an introductory letter, biographic questions, as well as instruments measuring corporate entrepreneurship, market orientation, job satisfaction, and flexibility. Of the 396 questionnaires received, 36 were discarded due to incomplete items in the psychometric questions. The analyses were done on 333 participants.

### **Participants**

The non-random convenience sample from four different economic sectors gave a total of 266 participant from life insurance, 33 from information technology, 26 from a university of technology and eight from a transport parastatal. Due to incomplete items in the psychometric instruments, only 333 of the 396 responses were used, consisting of 144 males and 187 females. Two individuals did not indicate their gender. The age range of the participants was between 21 and 70 years (mean = 36.66 and standard deviation = 9.26 years). The majority of the participants (58.2 percent) were married (194), 82 unmarried, seven widowed, 36 divorced, 11 co-habiting, one estranged, and two individuals did not indicate their marital status. The home language of most of the participants was English (202), followed by Afrikaans (86), and other African languages (45). The respondents were mainly South African (326), non-South African (4), and not indicated (3). The academic qualifications of the participants varied from Master’s degree (17), Honours degree (33), Bachelor’s degree (38), post-school certificate/diploma (105), Grade 12 (87), secondary school without Grade 12 (46), and no indication of academic training (7).

## Measuring Instruments

Psychometric instruments are not always portable between cultures, reducing the validity of the instrument (De Klerk, Boshoff & Van Wyk, 2009; Meiring, Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2006; Van Eeden & Mantsha, 2007; Van Wyk & Adonisi, 2011; and Van Wyk, Boshoff & Owen, 1999). Principal factor analysis with direct quartimin rotation of the axis was applied in the evaluation of each of the psychometric instruments. This was followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (Adonisi, 2003, and Van Wyk & Adonisi, 2011). Alpha coefficients of the factors in the different instruments are reported in the description of each instrument.

The Corporate Entrepreneurial Assessment Instrument (CEAI) was used to measure corporate entrepreneurship (Hornsby *et al.*, 2002). The 48-item Likert-type scale, varying between (1) strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree, had 11 negatively worded items. The principal factor analysis in the current study showed an eight-factor solution for the CEAI. The factors had acceptable Alpha coefficients (reported in brackets) named work discretion (0.84), management support and risk-taking (0.82), rewards and reinforcement (0.75), innovative initiatives (0.84), financial support (0.73), sufficient time (0.76), organizational boundaries (0.81), and inadequate time (0.67).

The MARKOR market orientation instrument (Kohli *et al.*, 1993) measured three factors - intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination, and responsiveness - on a 32-item seven-point Likert scale. Confirmatory factor analysis showed the goodness-of-fit indices of the three factors as between 0.656 and 0.740. An investigation into the factor structure in the current study, by means of principal factor analysis, showed a three-factor solution. The factors were named intelligence generation (0.81), inertia (0.83), and responsiveness (0.74).

The organizational flexibility scale of Khandwalla (1987) measured flexibility. This scale is reported as one factor and the psychometric properties were not provided (Khandwalla, 1987). Principal factor analysis of the current study revealed a two-factor solution - formality and authoritarianism - with Cronbach Alpha coefficients of 0.81 and 0.64, respectively.

Job satisfaction was measured by Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss *et al.*, 1967) consisting of 20 items, measured on a five-point Likert scale varying from (1) very dissatisfied to (5) very satisfied. The instrument consists of the two factors of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, with Alpha coefficients of 0.86 and 0.80, respectively. In the current study, a principal factor analysis showed two factors - extrinsic (0.86) and intrinsic job satisfaction (0.85). Table 1 is a summary of the different factors identified in the factor analyses.

**Table 1: Description of Different Factors as Applied in Statistical Analyses**

Variable	Description
CE1	Corporate Entrepreneurship: work discretion
CE2	Corporate Entrepreneurship: management support and risk acceptance
CE3	Corporate Entrepreneurship: rewards/reinforcement
CE4	Corporate Entrepreneurship: innovative initiatives
CE5	Corporate Entrepreneurship: financial support
CE6	Corporate Entrepreneurship: sufficient time
CE7	Corporate Entrepreneurship: organizational boundaries
CE8	Corporate Entrepreneurship: inadequate time
MO1	Market orientation: intelligence generation
MO2	Market orientation: inertia
MO3	Market orientation: responsiveness
F1	Flexibility: formality
F2	Flexibility: authoritarianism
JS1	Job satisfaction: extrinsic
JS2	Job satisfaction: intrinsic

**EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

The first research question investigating the relationships between the eight corporate entrepreneurship factors and the biographic variables was investigated by means of Spearman correlation coefficients (Table 2).

**Table 2: Results from Calculation of Spearman Correlation Coefficients between Corporate Entrepreneurship and Biographic Variables and for the Total Observations**

Biographic Variable	CE1	CE2	CE3	CE4	CE5	CE6	CE7	CE8
Age	0.09 0.1245	-0.05 0.3462	-0.04 0.464	0.04 0.502	0.16 0.004	-0.02 0.7355	-0.08 0.1435	0.01 0.933
No of years in org	-0.05 0.4011	-0.10 0.0757	-0.09 0.0970	-0.00 0.9531	-0.00 0.9780	-0.09 0.1284	0.06 0.3051	-0.15 0.0076
No years in job	-0.05 0.3392	-0.05 0.3696	-0.12 0.0324	0.01 0.8648	0.07 0.1915	-0.04 0.5033	-0.00 0.9491	-0.08 0.1663
Work hours p week	0.12 0.0264	0.04 0.4787	0.09 0.0929	-0.06 0.2621	-0.06 0.2587	-0.23 0.0001	0.05 0.3357	-0.07 0.1942
No of days vacation	-0.05 0.3340	-0.03 0.6549	-0.08 0.1441	-0.08 0.1687	-0.00 0.9963	0.01 0.9096	0.12 0.0270	-0.07 0.2203

The Spearman correlations showed only three significant correlations at the 95 percent level of confidence. A significant positive correlation was found between age and financial support. Significant negative correlations were indicated between number of years in the organization and inadequate time and hours of work per week and (sufficient time).

The second research question, investigated by means of Pearson Product Moment correlations, relates to the relationships between corporate entrepreneurship and the organizational variables of market orientation, job satisfaction, and flexibility (Table 3).

Table 3 is a summary of the inter-correlations among all the variables. The significant correlations vary from very low ( $r = -0.14, p < 0.0085$ ) to the high association between innovative initiatives (CE4) and responsiveness (MO3) ( $r = 0.48 p < 0.0001$ ). It is interesting to see that the corporate entrepreneurial factors of sufficient (CE6) and inadequate time (CE8) did not correlate significantly with any of the organizational variables, with the exception of extrinsic job satisfaction and inadequate time. All the other corporate entrepreneurial factors correlated significantly with the market orientation, flexibility and job satisfaction scales, with the exception of work discretion (CE1) and the market orientation scales of inertia (MO2) and responsiveness (MO3), as well as organizational boundaries (CE7) and authoritarianism (F2). It is important to note that a number of organizational factors were significantly negatively related to the corporate entrepreneurial subscales.

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Corporate Entrepreneurship and Market Orientation, Job Satisfaction and Flexibility (N = 333)**

Variable	CE1	CE2	CE3	CE4	CE5	CE6	CE7	CE8
MO1	0.26 0.0001	0.38 0.0001	0.33 0.0001	0.33 0.0001	0.23 0.0001	-0.03 0.5393	-0.33 0.0001	-0.06 0.2964
MO2	-0.07 0.2261	-0.23 0.0001	-0.23 0.0001	-0.46 0.0001	-0.26 0.0001	0.03 0.6550	0.23 0.0001	-0.11 0.0479
MO3	0.03 0.6186	0.34 0.0001	0.25 0.0001	0.48 0.0001	0.35 0.0001	-0.02 0.7780	-0.16 0.0043	-0.04 0.4498
F1	0.26 0.0001	0.33 0.0001	0.29 0.0001	0.34 0.0001	0.21 0.0001	-0.03 0.6479	-0.26 0.0001	-0.03 0.6247
F2	-0.22 0.0001	-0.24 0.0001	-0.26 0.0001	-0.24 0.0001	-0.14 0.0085	-0.00 0.9790	0.06 0.2956	-0.11 0.0427
JS1	0.45 0.0001	0.29 0.0001	0.62 0.0001	0.36 0.0001	0.15 0.0047	0.07 0.2080	-0.40 0.0001	0.17 0.0026
JS2	0.34 0.0001	0.19 0.0005	0.44 0.0001	0.29 0.0001	0.16 0.0027	-0.04 0.4355	-0.30 0.0001	-0.04 0.0529

Table 4 is a summary of the prediction of the corporate entrepreneurial scales. None of the independent variables entered the prediction for CE 6, sufficient time.

**Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Corporate Entrepreneurial Factors as Dependent Variables**

Variable	F(df)	P	R <sup>2</sup>	C(p)
Work discretion (CE1)				
JS1	83.79 (1;332)	0.0001	0.2020	16.1612
MO1	4.85 (2;331)	0.0284	0.2136	13.1649
MO3	5.01 (3;330)	0.0259	0.2254	10.0616
Management support (CE2)				
MO1	55.03 (1;332)	0.0001	0.1426	45.2903
F1	19.15 (2;331)	0.0001	0.1896	26.7649
MO3	14.80 (3;330)	0.0001	0.2245	13.5351
F2	11.57 (4;329)	0.0008	0.2509	3.9959
Rewards/reinforcement (CE3)				
JS1	210.22 (1;332)	0.0001	0.3884	9.6219
MO3	8.21(2;331)	0.0044	0.4033	3.3993
Innovative initiatives (CE4)				
MO3	100.95 (1;332)	0.0001	0.2337	64.4358
JS1	32.11 (2;331)	0.0001	0.3017	31.5503
MO2	19.69 (3;330)	0.0001	0.3411	13.2988
F1	9.25(4;329)	0.0025	0.3592	6.0183
Financial support (CE5)				
MO3	45.34 (1;332)	0.0001	0.1205	9.2041
F1	6.27 (2;331)	0.0128	0.1369	4.9021
Sufficient time (CE6)				
No entries				
Organizational boundaries (CE7)				
JS1	63.34 (1;332)	0.0001	0.1606	19.6187
MO1	15.87 (2;331)	0.0001	0.1991	5.6242
Inadequate time (CE8)				
JS1	9.23 (1;332)	0.0001	0.0271	15.2254
JS2	20.56 (2;331)	0.0001	0.0573	6.5496

The predictions of the different corporate entrepreneurial scales varied from very weak, inadequate time (CE8) 5.73 percent, to strong rewards/reinforcement (CE3) 40.33 percent. All the market orientation, flexibility and job satisfaction subscales played a role in the predictions relative to the corporate entrepreneurial scales.

## DISCUSSION

The findings support the important relationship of market orientation, flexibility, and job satisfaction with corporate entrepreneurship. Senior management play a key role in influencing the corporate entrepreneurial process and should take note of the role that market orientation, flexibility, and job satisfaction play in facilitating the process. Applying market orientation policies with flexible strategies and procedures, culturing a job satisfaction environment, may assist businesses in facing intrapreneurial challenges. By putting these policies into operation, new ventures can be developed within businesses.

## IMPLICATIONS

Corporate entrepreneurship and economic growth are best served by the collaborative relationship between market orientation, flexibility and job satisfaction. The implication for South African businesses is to upgrade their innovative expertise on a continuous basis. Employees are critical in the design, production, and marketing of products. A flexible operational culture with a vigilant market orientation and the experience of job satisfaction is crucial to the creation and sustainment of corporate entrepreneurial cultures.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of the current study can only be generalized to the sectors in the South African economy that it represents. It is recommended that the current study be duplicated in other economic sectors and countries. Future studies should also investigate alternative variables that could play a role in the development of intrapreneurial efforts in businesses.

## CONCLUSIONS

The current study throws more light on some of the contributing factors of the different facets of corporate entrepreneurship. This study is unique in that eight corporate entrepreneurial factors are predicted by means of marketing orientation, flexibility, and job satisfaction. To stimulate the South African economy, management should pay attention to the fundamental role that an active market orientation, flexible operations and the nurturing of job satisfaction play in the development of intrapreneurship.

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

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**NOTES**