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Psychological Factors Influencing Perceived Entrepreneurial Success Among Nigerian Women in Small-Scale Businesses

By Benjamin Osayawe Ehigie and Ugonma Eme Umoren

Abstract

This paper considered self-concept, perceived managerial competence, work stress and business commitment as important psychological variables for perceived entrepreneurial success among female entrepreneurs. A study was conducted to examine these factors, using 213 female entrepreneurs. The results showed that although all the predictor variables jointly accounted for perceived entrepreneurial success only business commitment contributed significantly. But in the independent prediction of the variables, only self-concept and business commitment were significant. Additionally, number of children significantly influenced perceived success with females having 5 children and more, and those having 1 – 2 children reporting better success than those without children or having 3 – 4 children. However, marital status did not significantly influence perceived entrepreneurial success. The study concludes that success for female entrepreneurs relies on a high self-concept regarding their role in business, commitment to business and reduction of a conflict between home responsibilities and business. The authors also encourage women to attend training programs on business management.

Key Words: female entrepreneurs, psychology of work, Nigerian women.

Introduction

Work is an essential aspect of life. People work to live and to live is to work. To the psychologist, work is an important source of identity, self-esteem, and self-actualization, which provides a sense of fulfillment by affording the individual worker a sense of purpose and projecting his or her values to the society (Babalola, 1998). Work can also be a source of frustration, boredom, and can at times bring feelings of meaninglessness, depending on the character of the individual and the nature of the task (Arnold, Cooper & Robertson, 1995).

Onah (1994) has recognized two components of the work force; the formal and the informal. The formal work sector is sometimes referred to as the “organized” sector. It is a work organization with a set of goals and aspirations involving bureaucratic procedures with complex organizational structures in which there are routine, predictable tasks. The informal work sector is concerned with economic activities that are unregulated and without any formal mode of operation beyond the dictates of market forces. Self-employed workers are classified as being in the informal work sector; they may work in their homes or market stalls or their businesses may be well established (in terms of fixed public place of business and assets) (Babalola, 1998).

By the tradition of some cultures in Nigeria, like the Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, Bini, women are not expected to be involved in occupations that will take them outside their matrimonial home; they are rather expected to manage the family and “be submissive to their husbands” (Ehigie & Idemudia, 2000). Because women are increasingly expected to work when they complete their educational careers, there is a decline of domestic work as an occupation (Ehigie, 2000). Thus, the number and

percentage of wives and mothers in the labor force are increasing (Menaghan & Parcell, 1990). However, Ehigie (1997) opined that people opt for their wives to engage in less demanding occupations, especially non-career occupations. Hence, many now engage in small-scale businesses in Nigeria.

There is no legal or single clear-cut definition of what constitutes small enterprises in Nigeria (Ozigbo, 2000). And the classification of businesses into small, medium or large is a subjective and qualitative judgment (Ekpenyong & Nyong, 1992). Under the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) monetary and credit policy guidelines for 1996, as reported by Ozigbo (2000), small scale enterprise is defined as an enterprise with fixed assets excluding land, but including working capital not exceeding N10 million.

A small scale business, which could exist in the form of a manufacturing, processing or service industry, is one in which the general and functional management are in the hands of one or, at most, two or three people who also make all the important decisions in that business (Udeh, 1990). Akamiokhor (1983) sees small-scale business as a veritable vehicle for the achievement of national macroeconomic objectives in terms of employment generation at low investment cost and the development of entrepreneurial capabilities and indigenous technology. Hisrich (1990) argued that small businesses produce millions of jobs and almost half of the gross national product in a free market enterprise.

The person who risks time, effort and money to start and operate a business is called an entrepreneur (Udeh, 1990). Schumpeter (1954) sees entrepreneurship as synonymous with innovation, creativity and risk-taking. Carland, Hoy, Boulton and Carland (1984) defined an entrepreneur as an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of profit and growth. Entrepreneurs are also seen as people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather the necessary resources, to take advantage of them, and to initiate appropriate action to ensure success (Meredith, Nelson & Neck, 1982). The entrepreneur is able to recognize potentially profitable opportunities, to conceptualize venture strategies, and to become the key force in successfully moving an idea from the mind to the market place (Stanford, 1975).

From a personality point of view, Udeh (1990) sees an entrepreneur to be optimistic, moderate risk-taker, and believing in their ability to control their own destiny rather than just making money. He added that they are usually married, with minimum distractions caused by family life. Taking a more psychological approach, an entrepreneur is a person who is typically driven by certain needs (need to obtain or attain something, need to experiment, need to accomplish or need to escape authority of others). Generally, from discussions and writings about entrepreneurs it can be concluded that successful entrepreneurs possess distinctive qualities.

An entrepreneur desires and works towards success. However, entrepreneurial bids are not always success stories. Oshagbemi (1983) argues that a greater number of people who enter the business world in Nigeria every year fail than succeed. Attempts made by scholars to study the problems of self-employment have identified human capital and financial capital as barriers. The human capital is of interest in this paper. Writers like Akeredolu-Ale (1975), Olakanpo (1968), Omololu (1990) and others have, among other variables, recognized the impact of psychological factors on self-employment establishment and success.

Based on the series of definitions given on who an entrepreneur is, it can be inferred that entrepreneurial success may be determined by psychological factors such as self-concept, managerial competence, work stress, and business commitment.

However, the variables considered in the present study; entrepreneurial success, managerial competence, work stress, and business are examined as perceived variables in their quantification, rather than how they exist in actual forms. This is given credence by the social action theory by Silverman (1970) that the goals of the individual, and the means selected and actions taken to achieve these goals, are affected by the individual's perception of the situation. Therefore, social action theory looks to the individual's own definition of the situation as a basis for explaining behavior. Thus, the individual female entrepreneur's perception of business success counts in determining her entrepreneurial behavior. Moreover, there are no defined psychological parameters for quantifying business success. There are rather individual differences in the perception of success and it is how an individual interprets success that will really determine whether she will be satisfied and then well adjusted to business performance. Mullins (1996) explains that we all see things in different ways and we may be influenced by our expectations so that we 'see' what we expect to see; this is what is referred to as the perceived view of reality.

Self Concept and Entrepreneurship

Self-concept is defined by Sabin (1954) as those ideas the individual has of himself or herself that he or she learned in relationship with others. If our self-concept is positive, we tend to act and perceive the world positively. If our self-concept is negative, we feel dissatisfied and unhappy (Rogers, 1980). The self and role we play interact. Since the self strives for consistency, it selects those roles compatible with the self-concept. When the role and self-concept are incompatible, conflict arises.

Sabin (1954) asserts that self-concept is a product of the social roles that an individual plays. Thus, the self-concept which females hold is determined by the social roles that they play. Marshall (1998) holds that females have a high self-concept of themselves and they believe in their capabilities and ability to accomplish any task. Ross and Lyle (1978) indicate that women can excel in any venture once they have a positive frame of mind. They further argued that females could assimilate to roles requiring high esteem and self-confidence.

In a contrary view, Fenn (1976) advanced that the socialization process for women stresses dependency, directedness, nurturance, sacrifice and caring which contributes to feelings of ambivalence about self worth. Females are believed to have a negative image of their self worth. They are constantly reminded that a woman's role is passive and non-assertive. To be accepted by society as 'normal', she has to subjugate herself. If she has intellectual ability, she has to under-utilize that ability in order not to be considered a deviant. The female subsequently has a low image of herself. According to Dipboye (1975), the female actually comes to believe and accept that in some manner, she is deficient and hence inferior. This is because the female role in relation to the male is differently evaluated by the society and the female status is regarded as inferior and subordinate to male status. Character traits such as high self-concept, managerial competence, high commitment to work, favorable perception of work stress, aggressiveness, emotional stability, vigor and self-reliance necessary for entrepreneurial success (Akeredolu-Ale, 1975; Carland, Hoy, Boulton & Carland, 1984; Meredith, Nelson & Neck, 1982; Olakanpo, 1968; Omololu, 1990; Onah, 1990; Schumpeter, 1954) are assigned by the society to males. It is therefore important to examine if a woman's self-concept, perceived managerial competence, work stress and business commitment would affect her perception of business success.

Business Commitment and Entrepreneurship

Work commitment is defined as the state of being obligated or emotionally impelled to work (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Commitment to business, among other factors, might influence entrepreneurial success or failure. This is because an individual's work commitment will determine the number of working hours which that individual will willingly put in, her persistence and also level of competence (Epstein, 1970). Theodore (1964) opined that females spend fewer hours at their work than do males. He attributed this to the fact that women have to allocate time among several roles; family and work. Rosenblatt, Turner, Patterson and Rottensson (1970) thus advanced that:

Women willingly come to prefer the primary attachment to their family to the attachment to their careers. They have been taught to seek fulfillment as mother and homemaker. They become less intrinsically committed to work than men, and less likely to aspire to a high level of specialized knowledge. Their work motives are more utilitarian and less intrinsically task oriented than those of men (P. 112.).

Ehigie (1997) observes that married women usually give up a lot in order to enhance their husbands' careers at the risk of jeopardizing their own career aspirations. Also, the arrival of children in the family, an occurrence that rarely affects the occupational involvement of the father, has a decisive effect on the career of the mother. Marshal (1994) explained that some women leave work for family reasons, especially to cope with having pre-school children. Studies on work commitment of females and family obligation have shown that females typically take time off work (Korabik & Rosin, 1990).

A study by Espinal and Grasmuck (1997) showed that single women and married women without children advance more rapidly in their chosen careers than those who marry and have children. They also observed that females who were successful in their careers were either single or widowed. Women recognize this mirage of family related problems, and therefore, many now opt for self-employment as a panacea. But the question remains if these problems would also not affect their involvement in business and therefore perception of success in business. However, Dipboye (1975) advanced that women are motivated to put in effort at work and display a great deal of loyalty to the organizations in which they are involved.

Managerial Competence and Entrepreneurship

Griffins (1984) defines management as the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling an organization's human, financial, physical and information resources to achieve organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner. The ability to manage human and material resources effectively and efficiently to achieve entrepreneurial objectives is, thus, vital for entrepreneurial success. There is a widely held view that females are deficient in managerial competence; the reasons being that they are irrational, emotional and temperamental (Lirtzman & Wahba, 1973).

There is, however, considerable research evidence to support the fact that female entrepreneurs, psychologically, are not significantly different from their male counterparts and that they may possess even superior attributes and skills in some areas related to management effectiveness. Cunningham (1987), for instance, identified some skills considered required for effective management: communication,

negotiating, motivating, listening, involving people at all levels, counseling and appraisal skills, and delegation. He mentioned that these are more closely associated with women than men.

Rosener (1990) found that women are more likely than men to use transformational leadership, namely, motivating others by transforming their self-interest into goals of the organization. Also, women are much more likely than men to use power based on charisma, track record, and contacts (personal power) as opposed to power based on organizational position, title, and to reward and punish (structural power). O'Leary and Ryan (1994) argued that the new approach to management, called "participatory management" or "transformational leadership" is deeply rooted in women's socialization experience and represents an adaptive response on the behalf of women who entered the business world. By utilizing their unique socialization as a survival tactic in the work world, women have shifted behaviors of weakness that were once construed as liabilities into assets.

Perception of Work Stress and Entrepreneurship

Traditional social norms only permitted women to focus on family needs while allowing men to give primary attention to work. Presently, both men and women are being integrated in the economy of the household with high dependence on each other's labour for their livelihood. Udegbe and Omare (1994) suggested that women's experiences are probably different from those of their male counterparts at work. Women are increasingly getting involved in businesses and contributing financially to household requirements, in addition to their traditional roles as housewives. The extent to which wives are able to cope with these multiple role demands is likely to be a significant factor in their personal adjustment at work (Ehigie, 2000). Pamela (1994) opined that in the present dispensation, men continued their career without interruption while women are now involved in both labor and maternal responsibilities. Ehigie (1997) opined that with the fear that women's work will lead to a decline of housework as an occupation, people now opt for women to engage in less demanding occupations, especially non-career occupations like business, where they could have more control of the work situation. Nye (1963) found limited, but consistent support for the assertion that divorce and separation tend to be more prevalent in homes where the mother works full-time. All these contribute to the stressful situations women face, especially the stress of simultaneously attending to both occupational and marital needs.

The present study is anchored on two economic theories that seek to explain and predict labor patterns of women's employment. First, the human capital theory proposes that to have the benefit of choice in the workplace, individuals are required to make a substantial investment, like in education and training (Amsden, 1980). The theory predicts that women will acquire less schooling and training than men, and will have less time to reap rewards of their investment. Umoren (2000) reported that many professional women who go into small-scale business do so because their husbands disallowed them from practicing their elected careers.

The dual labor market theory argues that the labor market is divided into two separate markets: the primary market consisting of jobs with career prospects, high wages and stable employment; and the secondary market whose jobs are dead-end, low paid and with poor prospect. Research evidence shows that women are over-represented in the secondary market (Smith & Ward, 1984). Loveridge and Mok (1980) suggest that women comprise an 'out group' and are treated as such, and form the basis of an industrial reserve providing the source of additional labor when society

requires it. This might explain why husbands would prefer their wives to go into small-scale businesses rather than engage in more formal jobs, as reserve for the provision of additional revenue for the family. Since all these problems faced by women contribute to their involvement in small-scale business, it is essential to study the psychological and social variables that could interfere with their perception of success in business.

In summary, psychological variables like self-concept, managerial competence, work commitment and perceived work stress are of much importance in determining the success of female entrepreneurs. But to what extent are these functional among female entrepreneurs? Considering the fact that marital status of females and the number of children they have may hamper the manifestation of these psychological variables, research was conducted to determine the influences of all these variables on perceived entrepreneurial success.

Some hypotheses were formulated to guide the present research, based on the literature reviewed. It was proposed that:

1. Self-concept, business commitment, perceived managerial competence and work stress would jointly predict perceived entrepreneurial success among female entrepreneurs.
2. Self-concept, business commitment, perceived managerial competence and work stress would independently predict perceived entrepreneurial success among female entrepreneurs.
3. The number of children of female entrepreneurs will significantly affect their perceived entrepreneurial success.
4. The marital status of female entrepreneurs would significantly affect their perceived entrepreneurial success.

Research Method

Design

The authors employed surveys with the ex post facto design. On the one hand, the independent variables were self-concept, managerial competence, business commitment and perceived work stress, while the dependent variable was perceived entrepreneurial success. In another form, the independent variables were marital status and number of children while the dependent variables were self-concept, managerial competence, business commitment, perceived work stress, and perceived business success.

Sample

The respondents for this study were 213 female entrepreneurs drawn within Ibadan metropolis. Among these, 11.7% were singles, 56.3% were married, 13% were divorced, and 18.8% were separated from their spouses. Also among them, 8.9% had no children, 25.8% had between one and two children, 40.8% had three to four children, while 24.4% had above five children. Those sampled owned businesses in the manufacturing or service sectors, like hairdressers, fashion designers and tailors, caterers and interior decorators, and traders. Most of the entrepreneurs had between 5-10 employees working with them.

Instruments

The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire that had six sections. These sections had questions on demographic information like marital status, number of children and type of business enterprise. The psychological variables on self-concept, managerial competence, business commitment, perceived work stress, and perceived business success were measured with scales. All the scales were standardized with significant validity and reliability coefficients.

The self-concept scale was adapted from Adanijo and Oyefeso's (1986) self esteem scale. The original scale consists of 15 items to which the respondents expressed their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The authors reported an internal consistency coefficient of $r = 0.79$ among bank officials Adanijo (1987) found an internal consistency coefficient of $r = 0.78$ for bank workers and $r = 0.76$ for government workers sample. Babalola (1998) found a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.58$ for his population of businessmen and women. For the present study, a reliability alpha coefficient of 0.70 and Spearman Brown reliability of 0.82 were obtained for the entire scale.

A managerial competence scale used was adapted from a sense of competence scale developed by Wagner and Morse (1975). Adanijo (1987) validated the scale for the Nigerian culture. She reported an internal consistency of 0.57 for competence, 0.71 for ability, and 0.66 for influence, among the bank sample. These three were factor components that emerged in their factor analysis conducted. Among the government employee sample the following were reported: 0.65, 0.79, and 0.56 respectively. The scale originally had 15 items but was reduced to 12 in the present study after item analysis was carried out. The 12 items that emerged had item-total coefficients of between .40 and .69 with coefficient alpha of 0.66 and Spearman Brown coefficient of 0.72. The convergent validity of the scale was 0.58 when scores in the new scale was correlated with that on the old scale. The factor analysis carried out resulted in two factors with five items significantly loaded under factor one and four other items significantly loaded under factor two. Three items were significantly loaded under the two factors. Response alternatives to the scale were in the 5-point Likert pattern ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The business commitment scale was adapted from the 15- item scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1990) for measuring organizational commitment. It is a five-point Likert type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Each of the original items was reworded to reflect business commitment. The items were administered to 10 lecturers in psychology and economics to indicate if the items suggested business commitment, as a way of establishing the content validity. They gave a Yes or No response. The percentage of yes for each item was computed and items that received less than 80% support were deleted. This exercise gave rise to the acceptance of 11 items. Item analysis carried out on the 11 items led to the acceptance of 10 items; the item-total correlation ranged between 0.47 and 0.88. The 10 items loaded significantly under three factors; in a factor analysis conducted using the principal component analysis and varimax rotation. A convergent validity of 0.62 was obtained when scores on the 10-item business commitment scale was correlated with the 15-item organizational commitment scale. The business commitment scale had a coefficient alpha of 0.64 and a Spearman Brown coefficient of 0.77.

The perceived work stress scale is a 15-item scale, with response alternatives in the 5-point Likert pattern ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Initially 22 items were generated that were reduced to 20 by experts in a content validation exercise. Item analysis carried out on these led to the acceptance of

15 items with item-total correlation ranging from 0.40 to 0.92. These 15 items were significantly loaded under two factors that were considered as work-related and home-related stress. The factor loading of items under factor one were between 0.40 and 0.63 while items under factor two had factor weight of between 0.44 and 0.69. The principal component analysis and varimax rotation methods were used to arrive at the items selection. The correlation alpha for the valid items was 0.71 while the Spearman Brown coefficient was 0.85.

The perceived entrepreneurial success scale was a 6-item scale developed for the purpose of this study and their content validity established like the perceived business commitment scale. All the six items were accepted as they received above 80% support from the same experts. The item analysis on the six items led to their total acceptance as the item-total correlation ranged between 0.56 and 0.70. The factor analysis carried out using the principal component analysis and varimax rotation gave one factor with the items having item loading of between 0.42 and 0.73. The scale correlated significantly with Babalola's (1998) perceived business success scale with $r = 0.66$ in a convergent validity established. The reliability coefficient alpha of the scale is 0.76 while the Spearman Brown coefficient for the entire scale is 0.83. The scoring procedure used for the 6-item scale was based on a 5-point Likert format.

Procedure

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to standardize the existing scales for use, and to develop items for new scales. The completely new scales were the perceived work stress and entrepreneurial success scales. In generating items for these new scales, literature search was made which guided the development of some items for the scales. Two focus group discussion sessions were also held with women in service and manufacturing businesses respectively. They were contacted in one of their association's meetings. There were seven women in each case. They were to identify what constitutes work stress for women in business and what women perceive as success in business. Their responses were content analyzed along with reports from the literature and were subsequently put in scale item forms. A total of 22 items emerged for perceived work stress scale and 6 items for perceived entrepreneurial success scale.

These items along with items on modified business commitment scale and managerial competence scales were administered to 10 lecturers in psychology and economics who served as experts for the content validation of the scales. The experts were to indicate whether or not each item measures what it purports to measure, with responses in Yes or No form. Only items that received 80% acceptance were considered as valid. This led to the acceptance of 20 items for the perceived work stress scale, 6 items for the perceived entrepreneurial success scale, 15 items for business commitment scale, and 15 items for managerial competence scale.

The four scales and some others like the Adanijo (1987) sense of competence scale, Meyer and Allen (1990) organizational commitment scale and Babalola (1998) perceived business success scale, used for convergent validity were put into a questionnaire form. The scales were divided into two to make two sets of questionnaires because of the length of the total items and administered to 120 female entrepreneurs (60 females for each set) who were randomly drawn from the membership list of the Cooperative Investment and Credit Society (CICS). This Cooperative is exclusively for female entrepreneurs, with over 500-membership in Ibadan City where the study was conducted. Membership is spread across zones, and the female entrepreneurs belong to the zones closest to their business enterprises.

Meetings are held every first and last Wednesday of the month. All members are expected to attend meetings punctually and failure to do so attracts a fine.

Two zones were randomly selected for the pilot study through balloting, while four zones were selected for the main study. The cluster sampling technique was therefore utilized in selection, as the respondents existed in zones. Responses from the respondents in the pilot study were used to standardize the various scales whose psychometric properties have been reported.

For the main study 240 questionnaires were distributed and 60 copies were assigned to each of the four-selected zones, which are Dugbe, Aleshinloye, Bodija and Mokola. The administration was made during the first meeting of the month and collected during the last meeting, thus giving respondents two weeks to fill. However, 213 questionnaires were retrieved.

Results

The first hypothesis was tested with the multiple regression analysis to determine the joint influence of the predictor variables on the criterion variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Multiple Regression Showing The Joint Prediction Of Perceived Entrepreneurial Success Of Female Entrepreneurs By Self –Concept, Perceived Managerial Competence, Work Stress And Business Commitment

| VARIABLES | R | R ² | β | t | P |
|---------------------------------|------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| SELF CONCEPT | 0.23 | 0.053 | -0.09 | -1.04 | NS |
| PERCEIVED MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE | | | 0.04 | 0.53 | NS |
| PERCEIVED WORK STRESS | | | 0.06 | 0.81 | NS |
| BUSINESS COMMITMENT | | | -0.18 | -2.09 | < .05 |

The results show that self-concept, business commitment, perceived managerial competence and work stress jointly predicted perceived entrepreneurial success significantly $F(4, 208) = 2.82; p = .05$ with $R = .23$ and $R^2 = .053$. Thus, the four-predictor variables jointly accounted for 5.3% variation in perceived entrepreneurial success. However, only business commitment contributed significantly in the joint prediction ($T = -2.09; p < .05; \beta = -0.18$) but contributed negatively and accounted for 18% variance in the criterion variable. The contribution of each of the other predictor variables was not significant.

The second hypothesis was tested with Pearson r and partial correlation to test the independent prediction of the predictor variables on the criterion variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Inter-correlation And Partial Correlation Of Perceived Entrepreneurial Success, Self –Concept, Perceived Managerial Competence, Work Stress And Business Commitment among Female Entrepreneurs

| VARIABLES CONTROLLE | VARIABLES CORRELATE | - | SD | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------|---------------------|---|----|---|---|---|---|
|---------------------|---------------------|---|----|---|---|---|---|

| D | D | X | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------|------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| NONE | Self-concept (1) | 26.63 | 6.84 | 0.49** | -0.08 | 0.23* | -0.19* |
| | Competence (2) | 19.72 | 3.58 | - | 0.34** | 0.52** | 0.31** |
| | Work Stress (3) | 40.85 | 3.72 | | - | 0.45** | 0.16* |
| | Commitment (4) | 16.45 | 7.98 | | | - | 0.09 |
| | Success (5) | 20.15 | 3.41 | | | | - |
| COMMITMENT | Self-concept (1) | | | 0.22** | -0.31** | | -0.09 |
| | Competence (2) | | | - | -0.01 | | 0.02 |
| | Work Stress (3) | | | | - | | 0.08 |
| | Success (5) | | | | | | - |
| WORK STRESS | Self-concept (1) | | | - | | 0.55** | -0.17* |
| | Competence (2) | | | 0.41** | | 0.43** | -0.07 |
| | Commitment (4) | | | - | | - | -0.21* |
| | Success (5) | | | | | | - |
| MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE | Self-concept (1) | | | | -0.25** | 0.41** | -0.16* |
| | Work Stress (3) | | | | - | 0.11 | 0.06 |
| | Commitment (4) | | | | | - | -0.19* |
| | Success (5) | | | | | | - |
| SELF-CONCEPT | Competence (2) | | | | 0.14* | -0.29* | 0.0001 |
| | Work Stress (3) | | | | - | 0.26* | 0.02 |
| | Commitment (4) | | | | | - | -0.13* |
| | Success (5) | | | | | | |

Self-concept of female entrepreneurs significantly predicted perceived entrepreneurial success ($r = -0.19$; $df = 211$; $p < .05$) when other predictor variables were not controlled. When work stress and perceived managerial competence were partial out, the relationship were $r = -0.17$; $p < .05$ and $r = -0.16$; $P < .05$ respectively. In all the three, the correlations were negative, suggesting that the lower a female entrepreneur's self-concept the higher the perception of success in business. However, when business commitment was partial out, though the relationship was still negative, but it was not significant ($r = 0.09$; $df = 211$; p ns). This suggested that the consistent significant relationship between self-concept and perceived entrepreneurial success was a function of the female entrepreneur's commitment to their business. This is supported by the fact there were consistent significant positive correlation between self-concept and business commitment, with $r = 0.23$; $df = 211$; $p < .05$ when there was no variable control. When work stress was partial $r = 0.55$; $p < .01$, and when perceived managerial competence was partial $r = 0.41$; $p < .01$.

The positive correlation existing between the self-concept and business commitment show that the lower the female entrepreneur's self-concept, the lower is their commitment to business. There was, however, significant negative relationship between business commitment and perceived entrepreneurial success when self-concept was partial out ($r = -0.13$; $p < .05$), when managerial competence was ($r = -0.19$; $p < .05$) and when work stress was partial out ($r = -0.21$; $p < .05$). The negative

correlation consistently obtained suggest that the lower the commitment to business, the higher the perception of success and vice versa. This explains why the lower a female entrepreneur's self-concept the higher their perception of entrepreneurial success because their business commitment is low.

Because a significant relationship existed between business commitment and perceived entrepreneurial success when self-concept was partial ($r = -0.13$; $p < .05$), it implies that self-concept is not a positive, necessary factor for business commitment to predict perceived entrepreneurial success. However, commitment is a necessary factor for self-concept to predict perceived entrepreneurial success as there was no significant relationship between self-concept and perceived, entrepreneurial success when business commitment was partial out ($r = -0.09$; p ns). Perceived work stress is also not a positive necessary factor for business commitment to predict perceived entrepreneurial success as significant relationship existed between the duo when perceived work stress was partial out ($r = -0.21$; $p < .05$). This also was the case when perceived managerial competence was partial out ($r = -0.19$; $p < .01$).

The presence of the control variables tends to encumber a significant relationship between perceived business commitment and entrepreneurial success as a significant relationship did not exist when there was no control of any variable ($r = 0.09$; p ns). The fact that there was no significant relationship between business commitment and perceived entrepreneurial success when none of the variables was controlled might be because each of the other variables correlated significantly and positively with business commitment, with self-concept ($r = 0.23$; $p < .05$), managerial competence ($r = 0.52$; $p < .01$) and work stress ($r = 0.45$; $p < .01$).

However, work stress did not correlate significantly with perceived entrepreneurial success when business commitment ($r = 0.08$; p ns), managerial competence ($r = 0.06$; p ns) and self-concept ($r = 0.02$; p ns) were controlled. But when none of the other variables was controlled a significant positive relationship existed ($r = 0.16$; $p < .05$). This means that the higher stress level perceived in business by female entrepreneurs the better success is perceived in business. Self-concept and work stress exist independently when there was no control of other variables under study ($r = -0.08$; p ns) but when business commitment was controlled ($r = -0.31$; $p = .01$) and when perceived managerial competence was controlled ($r = -0.25$; $p < .01$) there were significant negative correlation between the two variables. This shows that the lower a female entrepreneur's self-concept the higher work stress is experienced and vice versa, hence better entrepreneurial success is perceived by females with low self-concept.

Perceived managerial competence correlated significantly and positively with perceived entrepreneurial success only when other variables were not controlled ($r = 0.31$; $p < .01$). This means that higher competence goes with perceived better success. Managerial competence also correlated significantly and positively with business commitment ($r = 0.52$; $p < .01$) and work stress ($r = 0.34$; $p < .01$), implying that high competence relates with high commitment and therefore perception of higher work stress in business.

The third hypothesis was tested with a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the influence of number of children on perceived entrepreneurial success. The results are in Table 3.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA Showing The Influence Of Number Of Children On Perceived Entrepreneurial Success

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| SOURCE | SS | DF | MS | F | eta | P |
|----------------|---------|-----|--------|-------|------|--------|
| Between Groups | 409.38 | 3 | 136.46 | 13.86 | 0.41 | < .001 |
| Within Groups | 2057.81 | 209 | 9.85 | | | |
| Total | 2467.19 | 212 | | | | |

The result shows that there is a significant influence of the number of children of female entrepreneurs on perceived success $F(3,209)=13.86$; $P < .001$. The eta coefficient showing the strength of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is 0.41; implying that number of children accounted for 17% variance in perceived entrepreneurial success.

The Scheffe multiple comparison analysis was used to determine the direction of significant influence and the results are shown in Table 4. From the results, it is revealed that females with 1-2 children ($X=20.56$) perceived success significantly better than those without children ($X=18.00$). Female entrepreneurs with 5 children and above ($X=22.21$) perceived success significantly better than those without children and those with 3-4 children ($X=19.13$). Thus, there is no linear relationship between number of children and perception of success in business.

Table 4: Scheffe Mean Comparison Showing the Influence Of Number Children On Perceived Entrepreneurial Success

| NO OF CHILDREN | N | X | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 AND ABOVE |
|----------------|----|-------|--------|-------|-------------|
| NONE | 19 | 18.00 | -2.56* | -1.13 | -4.21* |
| 1-2 | 55 | 20.56 | - | 1.44 | -1.65 |
| 3-4 | 87 | 19.13 | - | - | - 3.09* |
| 5 AND ABOVE | 52 | 22.21 | | | |

The fourth hypothesis was also tested using a one-way ANOVA, with results presented in Table 5. The results show that there is no significant influence of marital status on perceived entrepreneurial success $F(3,209)=1.19$; P ns. The eta coefficient is 0.17 implying that marital status is accounting for just 3% variance in perceived entrepreneurial success, which is not significant.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA Showing Influence Of Marital Status On Perceived Entrepreneurial Success Among Female Entrepreneurs

| SOURCE | SS | DF | MS | F | eta | P |
|----------------|---------|-----|-------|------|------|----|
| Between Groups | 41.37 | 3 | 13.79 | 1.19 | 0.17 | NS |
| Within Groups | 2425.83 | 209 | 11.61 | | | |
| Total | 2467.20 | 212 | | | | |

Discussion and Implication of Findings

In some cultures in Nigeria, like the Yoruba, Bini, Igbo, and Hausa women are expected to take care of all domestic functions and maintain the husband and children, and to some extent be responsible to the extended family (Ehigie & Idemudia, 2000). The Islamic religion that is most prominent with the Hausa culture, for instance, does not allow the woman to be seen outside her residence.

However, some women do engage in some extra-matrimonial jobs for the purpose of raising funds to assist the family and meet personal financial obligations (Ehigie, 1997). In fact, some other cultures in Nigeria, like the Urhobo, encourage women to engage in labor, especially farming, for the sustenance of the family. The encouragement of women into labor has therefore led many women into small-scale businesses (Umoren, 2000). The present study was therefore designed to identify the psychological and social variables that could influence female entrepreneur's feelings of self-fulfillment (Babalola, 1998) in such businesses, especially now that more women are getting into labor (Menaghan & Parcell, 1990). This feeling of self-fulfillment is what has been labeled "perceived entrepreneurial success" in this study. This is based on the fact that work can be a source of frustration, boredom, and can at times bring feelings of meaninglessness (Arnold, Cooper & Robertson, 1995). So there might be some variables that could enhance female entrepreneur's perception of business success in Nigeria, and invariably feelings of fulfillment.

The report by Oshagbemi (1983) that many who go into business in Nigeria are not successful should not deter the females from business but rather spur research into identifying factors of importance for business success. The results obtained from the present study show that all the psychological variables of self-concept, perceived managerial competence, work stress and business commitment jointly predicted perceived entrepreneurial success significantly, but only the contribution of business commitment was significant in the joint prediction. The analysis of the independent prediction of each of the predictor variables when other variables were partial out also confirmed the importance of business commitment in the prediction of perceived entrepreneurial success. However, the role of business commitment is discovered to be negative in both the regression and correlation analysis. This implies that the less committed a female entrepreneur is, the better success is perceived in business. Business commitment involves the number of hours the entrepreneur is willing to put on the business (Epstein, 1970).

Mullins (1996) explains that we may be influenced by our expectations so that we 'see' what we expect to see. A female entrepreneur who knows she is less committed to business would not expect much from her business. These low expectations may actually make her satisfied with whatever outcome achieved, no matter how small; therefore, she perceives more success in business than those more committed who expect much more, and who therefore are more likely to be disappointed. Brassington and Pettit, (1997) have suggested that satisfaction with one's product is a function of expectations; this is invariably applicable in this context. Because the female entrepreneur spends her time, not only on business but also on domestic duties (Epstein, 1970) they may be psychologically gratified at their level of business performance and feel successful with less commitment. This is especially the case when the female is more attached to the family than her business. According to Rosenblatt, et al (1970), these women derive self-fulfillment from their ability to meet the needs of their families, and they carry over such feeling to their business accomplishments as well, since there is justification for whatever business

performance level is achieved, although this has some implications for actual business performance.

Although the role of self-concept was not quite pronounced in the joint prediction it was when the independent influence of the predictor variables were considered. Self-concept had significant negative influence on perceived entrepreneurial success, meaning also that the lower self-concept a female entrepreneur possesses, the better success is perceived in business. This finding is opposed to the view by Rogers (1980) that if our self-concept is positive, we tend to act and perceive the world positively and if our self-concept is negative, we feel dissatisfied and unhappy. However, Sabin (1954) asserts that self-concept is a product of the social roles that an individual plays. It is likely therefore that the female entrepreneurs who hold a low self-concept might have been more impacted by their socialization as women. According to Dipboye (1975), women in this category actually come to believe and accept that in some manner, they are deficient and hence inferior. This feeling might be translated to the business world so that they are satisfied with any performance level in business.

Moreover, the inter-correlation results from the present study consistently showed a positive correlation between self-concept and business commitment. Meaning that the lower a female entrepreneur's self-concept the lower is her business commitment and vice versa. McFarlin and Blascovich (1981) showed that high and low self-esteem persons prefer to succeed, but people with high self-esteem expect to succeed more than do people with low self-esteem, so people of low self-esteem exert less effort to work so as to justify their poor performance. It is likely that because of their low commitment to business these women tend to be satisfied with whatever outcome they get from the business and therefore high perception of entrepreneurial success as obtained in the study.

The definition of an entrepreneur given by Carland, et al (1984), Meredith et al (1982), and Stanford (1975) suggests that managerial competence can be relevant for the success of any business. This was examined in the present study. The result was however not encouraging, in both the joint prediction and the independent prediction results. The multiple regression results showed that the contribution of perceived managerial competence was not significant. Also the inter-correlation results showed that, with the exception of when other variables were not controlled, there was consistently no significant relationship between perceived managerial competence and perceived entrepreneurial success. Because perceived managerial competence correlated significantly with all other predictor variables when there was no statistical control, this suggests that the significant correlation obtained between managerial competence and entrepreneurial success must have been accounted for by the other predictor variables. It can safely be concluded that managerial competence is not an important variable for female entrepreneur's perception of business success.

Perception of managerial competence may not be significant in business success for women¹ because the new approach to management, called "participatory management" or "transformational leadership" is deeply rooted in women's socialization experience and represents an adaptive response on the behalf of women who entered the business world (O'Leary & Ryan, 1994). By utilizing their unique socialization as a survival tactic in the work world, women have shifted behaviors that have been considered by male dominated society as weaknesses into assets. Thus, the variable itself, which is built on androcentric notions of management renders the variable insignificant in predicting perceived business success, because it is considered unimportant by women.

Pamela (1994) contended that men have been able to continue their careers without interruption while women who are involved in both productive and reproductive labor often interrupt their career paths during childbearing years, or face conflicts with their husbands regarding devotion to their careers. As a result it was hypothesized that work stress will significantly affect female entrepreneurs' perceived entrepreneurial success. The findings from the present study show that just like managerial competence, its role in the joint prediction results was not significant and its role in the independent prediction was only significant when other variables were not controlled. But when other predictor variables were controlled, its influence was suppressed. This again signifies that the role of business stress in influencing business success is a function of the activities of the other predictor variables. The result of the correlation coefficients between business stress and the other variables were significant and positive, except for self-concept. It suggests that business stress per se cannot influence perceived success in business. Ehigie (1997) stated that with men's fear that women's work will lead to a decline of domestic duties as an occupation, there is pressure from men for women to engage in less demanding occupations, especially non-career occupations like business, where they could have more control of the work situation. Women also make such choices when faced with conflicting pressure. Such control invariably reduces feeling of stress in business.

The results of the research also show that the number of children a female entrepreneur has influences perceived entrepreneurial success. However, there was no uniform pattern on these results. Among the four classifications of females, on number of children (i.e. none, 1-2, 3-4 and, 5 and above), females without children perceived business success least. This further confirms the view of Rosenblatt, et al (1970) that females derive self-fulfillment in their ability to meet the needs of the family, which include child bearing, and they carry over such feeling to accomplishments in the business. Surprisingly female entrepreneurs with 5 children and above had the highest level of perceived entrepreneurial success, followed by those with 1 – 2 children. It is possible that those just beginning to have babies and those retiring from having babies are most satisfied with their business outcomes because both categories – women at the beginning of their childbearing lives and those at its close -- perceive less of a conflicting burden from family responsibilities.

The results of the influence of marital status (single, married, divorced, and separated) on perceived entrepreneurial success was not significant. This implies that marital status is not significant in perceived business performance, an interesting and perhaps contradictory outcome, given the dual stress women feel from home and career commitments.

Some preliminary conclusions may therefore be offered: given the transition women are making from the home to the workplace, women entrepreneurs require encouragement in their businesses from training programs that recognize the double burden of work that women suffer. Businesses can fail because of poor commitment to them; however, poor commitment to business may also be a function of undo stress from gender socialization and expectations. The husbands of such female entrepreneurs could also be of assistance in domestic duties so that their wives would still have some time for their business as such achievement would enhance their psychological adjustment.

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Notes

ⁱ Some discriminatory views toward women have been proffered to suggest that women are deficient in managerial competence because they are irrational, emotional and temperamental (Lirtzman & Wahba, 1973).