

Women In Action: Challenges Facing Women Entrepreneurs In The Gauteng Province Of South Africa

Elizabeth Chinomona, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa
Eugine Tafadzwa Maziriri, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa

ABSTRACT

In today's post-modern era, the role of women entrepreneurs in economic development is inevitable and women are willing to take action in business and contribute to the nation's growth. Women are stepping up to own and run businesses in numbers that would have been hard to imagine a mere few decades ago. However, women entrepreneurs face a wide variety of challenges both in starting and in growing their business ventures. The objective of this paper is to investigate the challenges women entrepreneurs face in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Exploring the challenges that women entrepreneurs face in South Africa, is of paramount interest to potential women entrepreneurs, researchers, the government of South Africa and other stakeholders. The paper used a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews and focus groups. The findings were that the challenges were identified as impediments to women entrepreneurs, which comprises lack of education and training, lack of access to finance, gender discrimination, negative attitudes and inadequate resources. Recommendations were made to women entrepreneurs, to the government of South Africa and other stakeholders. Lastly, limitations of this paper as well as future research directions were enunciated clearly.

Keywords: Gauteng Province; Human Capital Theory; Innovation; Women Entrepreneurs; Women Entrepreneurship; Challenges

INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that women entrepreneurs now account for a quarter to a third of all businesses in the formal economy worldwide (Nxopo 2014). South African economic policy places high value on entrepreneurship (Van der Merwe 2008). Governments look to entrepreneurship as a critical driver of growth and job creation. Entrepreneurship has been a male-dominated phenomenon, but time has changed the situation and brought women as today's most memorable and inspirational entrepreneurs, even in traditionally male dominated sectors such as construction (Vinesh 2014). According to Das (2001), women are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as a way of coping with the 'glass ceiling' that seems to prevent them from reaching top managerial levels in organisations. Others have found that entrepreneurship provides them with greater satisfaction and flexibility. Akhalwaya and Havenga (2012) elucidate that women entrepreneurs in South Africa play a critical role in the economy of the country with regards to income and employment creation, as in any other African country. Women are now very active both mentally and physically in terms of business ventures. Women have realised that they can do what men do, or even better than them in terms of business ventures (Singh 2012). This paper will focus on women in micro enterprise businesses because women still tend to be concentrated in specific sectors, typically those with lower entrance requirements such as retail and service sectors.

Mandipaka (2014) explains that South African women entrepreneurs engage in survivalist activities such as sewing co-operatives, chicken farming, candle-making, gardening, arts and crafts. According to Akhalwaya and Havenga (2012), their contribution in business is mainly located in the areas of craft, hawking, personal services and

retail sectors. Maas and Herrington (2006) point out that only 41 percent of the adult women in South Africa are part of the active working population. The TEA index (total early-stage entrepreneurial activity index) measured the percentage of women entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 64, involved in starting a business, at only 4.83 percent for South Africa. This is below the average of 7.72 percent as calculated for all countries (Maas & Herrington, 2006:44). According to Singh (2012:46), in the process of entrepreneurship, women have to face various problems associated with entrepreneurship and these problems are doubled because of their dual role as a wage earner and a homemaker. To the best knowledge of the researchers, the challenges that women entrepreneurs face in the Gauteng province of South Africa have not been adequately studied and developed. Therefore, this research study focuses on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the Gauteng province of South Africa for government to take action to promote women entrepreneurs.

The female entrepreneur's role is evident in growth leadership, management, innovation, research and development effectiveness, job creation, competitiveness, productivity and the formation of new industries (Nxopo 2014). Van der Merwe (2008) asserts that female entrepreneurship is increasing rapidly and women are starting their own business to take control of their personal and professional lives. Nxopo (2014) emphasised that the role these women entrepreneurs play to eradicate poverty and unemployment in South Africa cannot be underestimated and there is a need for research on the contribution and development of women entrepreneurs at all levels of the South African economy. Meyer (2009) points out that women entrepreneurs increasingly are considered important for economic development and they not only contribute to employment creation, but they also contribute to the diversity of entrepreneurship in the economic process.

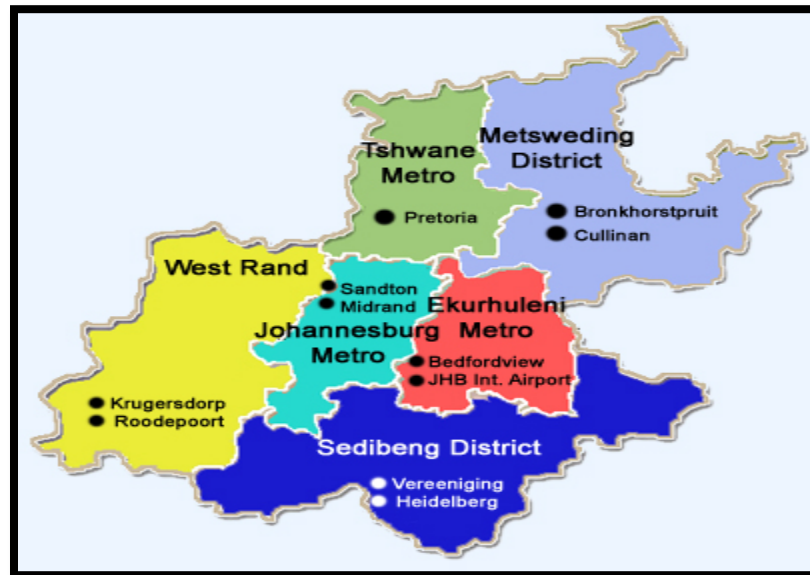
The international definition of an entrepreneur is that he or she is an enterprise builder, perceives new business opportunities, creates businesses where none existed before, directs these businesses by using his or her own and borrowed capital, takes the associated risks and enjoys profit as rewards for the efforts (International Labour Organization, 2015). The South African definition is the same as the international definition. Nieman and Nieuwenhuizen (2009:9) define an entrepreneur as a person who sees an opportunity in the market, gathers resources, creates and grows a business venture to meet customer needs. An entrepreneur is an individual with a skill, mindset and the vision to start up a high-potential venture and the typically more seasoned, risk averse professional with the ability to scale the enterprise (Timmons & Spinelli, 2009:4). An entrepreneur is, therefore, any individual who establishes a new firm, usually with considerable initiative and risk. These entrepreneurs play an indispensable role in ensuring that the economy continues to prosper and grow.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. First, the problem statement and objectives are clearly stated. Human capital theory is drawn upon to support the paper's proposition. Thereafter, the literature for each of the research constructs is reviewed. What follows is an account of the research's methodology as well as a discussion on findings. Lastly, inferences are provided.

Gauteng Province

This paper aims to gather information that can be applied in the development of women entrepreneurship within the Gauteng province of South Africa. Figure 1.1 presents a geographical map of the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Figure 1. Map of Gauteng



Source: <http://gauteng.placetosleep.co.za/> accessed date: 1 April 2015

Gauteng, which means place of gold in Sesotho, is South Africa's smallest yet most dynamic and productive province (Kalombo, 2005). According to Mwakikagile (2008) and Kgagara (2011), Gauteng is not only the economic hub of South Africa, which contributes heavily in the financial, manufacturing, transport, technology and telecommunications sectors among others, it also hosts, more than any other country on the continent, a large number of overseas companies requiring a commercial base in, and gateway to, Africa (Kalombo, 2005). Gauteng province in South Africa is situated in the north-central part of the country (Senatla 2011). According to Knight, Harland, Telgen, Thai, Callender and McKen (2012) Gauteng is the smallest province in South Africa with an area of 21,025km. Although Gauteng constitutes only 1.7 percent of the total area of South Africa, 18.5 percent of the total South African population reside in the province (Knight, Harland, Telgen, Thai, Callender & McKen 2012). Jogee and Callaghan (2014) are of the view that Gauteng is the most populous province, with the highest rate of urbanisation. Moreover, Senatla (2011) emphasises that although it is regarded as the smallest province in the country, it is the most famous province with approximately 10.5 million people (21% of the country's population) that occupy 3.175 million households. Despite being the smallest province, Gauteng is the powerhouse of the South African economy contributing a third of the country's GDP.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although women entrepreneurs significantly contribute to the success of an economy in various nations of the world, there are various challenges that hinder their entrepreneurial progress. According to Agbenyegah (2013), entrepreneurial activities in South Africa have shown a gradual decline over the years compared to other developing countries. Luiz and Mariotti (2011) state that South Africa has consistently ranked very poorly in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey in terms of entrepreneurial activity. It is clear that South Africa is not producing a sufficiently entrepreneurial economy and this needs to be addressed so as to create employment, expand markets, increase production and revitalise communities (Luiz & Mariotti 2011). Entrepreneurs are faced with many obstacles that limit their growth and survival (Nyamwanza, Mapetere, Mavhiki & Dzingirai 2012). In addition to this, women have to cope with negative prevailing social and cultural attitudes, lack of education and training, as well as gender discrimination (Akhawaya & Havenga 2012). Even though the small business sector within the Gauteng province provides opportunities for existing entrepreneurs and for new venture creation, the question arises as to what barriers, problems, challenges and constraints women entrepreneurs encounter within the Gauteng province. The reason for the study is to explore the problems facing women entrepreneurs within the selected areas of the Gauteng province of South Africa and additionally this paper will advance the understanding of the barriers

faced by women entrepreneurs within the Gauteng province of South Africa. The study will also look for possible solutions to minimise these challenges in the micro enterprises.

The objectives of this paper are to explore the problems that women entrepreneurs face in their day to day activities, to come up with solutions to the problems that women entrepreneurs are encountering, to explore the areas in which government and the private sector can intervene to assist women entrepreneurs with regards to the problems and to suggest practical recommendations of how to alleviate challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is need for a clear understanding of the challenges hampering the growth and development of these small ventures if meaningful solutions are to be implemented. Although some research has been conducted on entrepreneurship, it remains important to investigate challenges faced by women entrepreneurs operating in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Human Capital Theory

This paper adopts the human capital theory as its theoretical framework; this is because the human capital theory can be considered as critical to the formation of entrepreneurial ventures by women entrepreneurs within the Gauteng province of South Africa. According to Olabisi and Olagbem (2012), human capital has been considered as crucial to women entrepreneurial development. According to Kyalo and Kiganane (2014), the term human capital was used originally by Nobel economist Gary Becker, to refer to the stored value of knowledge or skills of members of the workforce. It has also been referred to in terms of the time, experience, knowledge and abilities of an individual household or a generation, which can be used in the production process (Heckman 2000:3). Human capital theory suggests that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising the workers' future income and life time earnings (Olabisi & Olagbem 2012). This theory is based on the principle that the more workers invest in education and training the higher their earnings (Jones, Macpherson & Thorpe 2010). Based on the authors' explanations it can be noted that the human capital theory proposes that the level of education, area of education, previous entrepreneurial experience, previous business experience and business skills, which influence the type of venture started. If the human capital theory is taken into consideration it can enhance the development of the entrepreneurship field, stimulate entrepreneurial attitudes and activities of the working population within the Gauteng province of South Africa. Human capital theory can help women entrepreneurs to be very active in business, thereby uplifting their living standards.

Innovation

In today's highly competitive global environment an entrepreneur's ability to introduce innovations is a key success factor for sustaining competitive advantage. In an increasingly interconnected world, national economies face stiff competition for markets, resources and skills. Consumers in turn are more demanding of originality and innovation (Heckman 2000). Similarly, Dess, Lumpkin and Fisher (2007:96) describes innovation as using new techniques to transform organisational processes or create commercially viable products and services. In simpler terms, innovation is the process of making improvements by introducing something new. Price, Stoica and Boncella (2013:3) define innovation as a process that begins with an invention, proceeds with the development of the invention, and results in the introduction of a new product, process or service to the marketplace. It has been described as the successful implementation of creative ideas, which can lead to solutions to problems that can have a potential impact on revenues of a firm, industry sector effectiveness, and the prosperity of nations (Price, Stoica and Boncella, 2013). Therefore, from the authors' definitions of innovation, it can be concluded that to be innovative indicates the ability to be creative, having successful use of an idea that adds value to the customer and commercial return for the creator and lastly, innovation is the process that renews something that exist or the birth of something new.

Women Entrepreneurs

Although women entrepreneurs have become important players in the entrepreneurial landscape, it is imperative to clarify what are women entrepreneurs. Iyiola and Azuh (2014) define a woman entrepreneur as a female who plays a captivating part by repeatedly interacting and keenly adjusting herself with financial, socio-economic, and support spheres in society. According to Manerkar (2015), women entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organise and operate a business enterprise. Women entrepreneurs start, own, operate, manage and take risks in their business (Thuaiaba Azlah, Rozeyta, Hisyamuddin & Noorizwan 2007). From the authors' definitions of a woman entrepreneur it can be concluded that a woman entrepreneur is the female front-runner of a business who takes the initiative of introducing a new venture, who accepts the associated risks and who is effectively responsible of its day-to-day activities. The most common aspects in the definitions is that women are involved in the operation and running of the business.

Women Entrepreneurship

Since entrepreneurship is both a complex and controversial concept, in order to comprehend the concept of women entrepreneurship it is imperative to start by noting or observing what entrepreneurship means. According to Chinomona, Maziriri and Moloji (2014) entrepreneurship is defined as the act of initiating, creating, building, expanding and sustaining a venture, building an entrepreneurial team, and gathering the necessary resources to exploit an opportunity in the marketplace for long-term wealth and capital gain. From the authors' definition, it can be seen that entrepreneurship is a capacity and willingness to develop, organise and manage a business venture in order to make a profit. Arakeri (2006:2) points out that women entrepreneurship comprises of an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman and having a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. From the definitions given it is possible to conclude and appreciate that women entrepreneurship is the process whereby an individual develops a new venture or business unit. This can include an entrepreneurial individual acquiring an existing business or firm that is owned and controlled by a woman. Women in action in this paper merely mean women have been enlightened economically to be active in business but there are still some challenges that they face (Iyiola & Azulu 2014).

Challenges

According to Stevenson (2010:287), a challenge is a situation that tests someone's abilities and points out that a challenge is a thing, action or situation that causes an obstruction; it blocks or hinders progress. Nani (2011:03) is of the view that a challenge is something needing great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully. Challenges could be analogous to barriers. In line with this thought, Horn, Huygen, Woodward and Smith (2009:90) define barriers as obstacles that prevent movement or access. For the purpose of this paper, challenges will refer to those hurdles that hinder women entrepreneurs in their businesses, requiring them to use great mental effort. Additionally, challenges will be viewed as hurdles that make a woman entrepreneur's business not run effectively and efficiently.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The government of South African has been unable to solve the socio-economic issues of high unemployment and poverty reduction because of the constraints that hamper entrepreneurship (Agbenyegah 2013). Since the rise of democracy in 1994, the South African government has been placed under pressure to correct the socio-economic imbalances resulting from many decades of apartheid (Pooe, Mafini & Makhubele 2015). In addition to this, Sibanda, Mishi and Tsegaye (2015) point out that since 1994, the South African economy has not managed to create sufficient employment opportunities, as evidenced by a relatively high average unemployment rate of 25.49 percent for the period 2000-2012.

It is imperative to understand the constraints facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries and specifically within the Gauteng province of South Africa. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (1994) has indicated that poverty, inequality and unemployment have been identified as the three most serious constraints to economic development in South Africa and these three constraints are affecting females more than men. The

colonial system and the regime rendered women entrepreneurs irrelevant. In South Africa, the birth of democracy brought changes in the business landscape. The Small Business Act of 1996, as reviewed by government, brought in some initiative to promote women entrepreneurs and deal with the challenges.

According to Phillips, Moos, Nieman (2014), since 1994 the government has devoted considerable resources to supporting small enterprises. They remark that although there have been dramatic changes in South Africa since 1994, particularly in the business environment; there are still not enough women entrepreneurs. Chiloane and Mayhew (2010) point out that in 2001 President Mbeki stated that the struggle for the rights of women continues after the long period of colonialism and apartheid, imposed oppression and exploitation, especially on black women. Research all over the world has shown that many interventions need to be made to fast-track the development of women entrepreneurs (Sarri & Trihopoulou 2005).

The following are some of the challenges that women entrepreneurs face.

Limited or No Access to Finance

O’Neil and Viljoen, (2001) point out that the most crucial of these barriers is finance. Finance is regarded as “life blood” for any enterprise, be it big or small (Singh 2012:51). Wasileczuk and Zieba (2008: 160) believe that financial barriers are one of the most important obstacles women have to face when setting up and developing a business. Phillips, Moos & Nieman (2014) point out that women entrepreneurs in South Africa have been particularly disadvantaged in the past as they do not own any property, which can be used as collateral on loans and need their husbands’ permission to enter into financial arrangements. It is clear that women entrepreneurs suffer from inadequate financial resources and working capital and they are not able to acquire external financial assistance due to the absence of tangible security and credit in the market (Phillips et al. 2014).

Gender Bias or Gender Discrimination of Women Entrepreneurs

Sex discrimination, gender-bias or gender stereotyping is a challenge, which is faced, by most women entrepreneurs and being discriminated against in a male-dominated society hinders women entrepreneurs from being successful. Discrimination can be defined as distinguishing unfavourably or the detection of the difference between one thing and another (Mandipaka 2014). In South Africa, gender inequality is a big problem and South African women are still having problems being able to have the same rights and advantages as South African men (Mandipaka 2014). Mitchell (2004) posits that besides the risks entrepreneurs face, women face additional problems of being a woman in a male-dominated society. The core difficulty lies with the unwillingness of banks to grant credit, lack of support, the negative socio-cultural attitudes and sex discrimination or gender bias (Valla, 2001). Sinha (2005) propounds that although women entrepreneurs operate in the same environment as men entrepreneurs, there are gender biases embedded in society, which limit women from active economic participation and access to business and development services.

Lack of Education and Training

Running a business is very risky for any entrepreneur, even more so for women entrepreneurs who not only have to survive in a male-dominated environment but also often lack the education and training in this field (Phillips, Moos & Nieman 2014). According to Ascher (2012:100), many women in developing countries remain illiterate and live in poor communities. Matiwane (2005) states that women entrepreneurs are ill-equipped educationally and financially. In a study conducted by Orford, Wood, Fischer, Herrington and Segal (2003) on the main obstacles faced by several South African entrepreneurs, the results of which indicated that the most recurrent weakness is lack of education and training among entrepreneurs. According to Jalbert (2000) for the woman entrepreneur, the process of operating a business can be very difficult in both the formal and informal sector because she often lacks the skills and education. Based on these authors’ elucidations, it is clear that many women entrepreneurs lack training and education, which create problems for women in the setting up and running of business enterprises.

GENERAL SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Finance

In order to alleviate the financial challenge facing women entrepreneurs, it is imperative for the government of South Africa to acknowledge the importance of women entrepreneurs to the South African economy as well as giving them the financial support they need in order to prosper. Gangata and Matavire (2013) point out that the government should play its role in enabling entrepreneurs to obtain funds at affordable interest rates, for example by reducing the rates charged by financial institutions or creating special funds, which can be accessed by entrepreneurs without too much red tape. The government can provide group loans for the poor and marginalised rural people to develop income-generating activities (Gorora & Mago 2013).

Nyanga (2013) explains that it is imperative for the local government and financial institutions to come forward to help the entrepreneurs to have easy access to loans. According to Gangata and Matavire (2013), the government should also provide training to entrepreneurs in areas like financial and strategic management, to ensure proper management of these important entities and the government should also look at the possibility of opening a bank to cater for the needs of entrepreneurs. Ochieng and Sije (2013) state that people should be encouraged to learn how to write business proposals in order to access credit. When designing a proposal, women are expected to come up with realistic, attainable and measurable goals (Ochieng & Sije, 2013). Valla (2001) postulated that financial institutions need to be seen as more supportive of the initiatives of female entrepreneurs and they need to ease the administrative procedures for the establishments and operation of women entrepreneurs as well as revisit their assessment criteria of women's application for loans. They may have to include other "softer" assessment criteria than the traditional ones in connection with lending to women (Valla, 2001:100).

There are many ways in which women entrepreneurs can gain financial support. According to Greve (2009), financial support might take the form of grants, subsidised loans or loan guarantees to credit providers, tax credits and exemption from business registration fees. Therefore, the government can provide woman entrepreneurs with special subsidies, funds, enterprise centers, entrepreneurship awards, counselling and advisory support (Nxopo 2014). Iwu and Nxopo (2015:10) point out that although government has tried to put in place policies and institutions with an aim of improving access to finance by female entrepreneurs; their success has been minimal. Therefore, it is imperative that management capability and financial management acumen be regarded as key to access funding by the entrepreneurs themselves and the parties involved in supporting and promoting them (Iwu & Nxopo 2015). Cupido (2002) points out that most applicants do not know what is expected of them when making application to financial institutions for assistance and the Department of Trade and Industry has a business referral and information network website to assist entrepreneurs in this area. The institutions that have been outsourced to act on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry are:

- Khethani Business Finance (Khula RFI)
- Landelike Onwikkelings Maatskappy
- Nations Trust (Khula RFI)
- New Business Finance.

Moreover, since most women do not have easy access to credit for their entrepreneurial activity, the Government of South Africa together with financial institutions can introduce micro-credit schemes. Idris and Agbim (2015:124) assert that micro-credit is a small loan usually given to the working poor, most often for the purpose of income-generating employment. Yogendrarajah (2011) conducted a study with the prime objective of identifying the role of micro-credit programmes in empowering women in Jaffna region under post-war development. The results showed that there is a positive correlation between micro-credit and women empowerment. Similarly, Nkpoyen and Bassey (2012) conducted a study to assess micro-lending as an empowerment strategy for poverty alleviation among women in Yala LGA of Cross River State, Nigeria. The results revealed that increased savings, promotion of local cooperative societies and creation of self-employment opportunities are related significantly to poverty reduction. Therefore, micro-credit can act as a powerful economic development enabler and an important tool in alleviating the challenge of not having access to finance among women entrepreneurs within the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Fostering Entrepreneurship Education and Training Among Women Entrepreneurs

Alberti, Sciascia and Poli (2004) stress that entrepreneurship education aims at building the so-called entrepreneurial competencies, which are considered as combinations of different entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes. Arogundade (2011:27) described entrepreneurship education as structured to enable individuals to be self-employed and self-reliant; enable people to be creative and innovative in identifying business opportunities; serve as a catalyst for development and economic growth; reduce the level of poverty; create employment opportunities; reduce rural-urban migration; empower tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management and to inculcate the spirit of persistence in people, which will enable them to persist in any business venture. According to the ILO latest update cited by Stevenson & Onge (2005), if young women are encouraged to obtain higher levels of education, they will be better equipped to receive guidance, retraining and re-direction in the pursuit of more productive and growth-oriented businesses. Daynard (2015) suggests that in order to foster female entrepreneurship it is imperative to ensure that all children complete mandatory education and young women are encouraged to pursue higher education.

Van der Merwe (2002:48) elucidates that it is imperative to focus on the training of entrepreneurs, particularly the development of previously disadvantaged individuals, specifically women entrepreneurs. According to Bajpai (2014), women entrepreneurs require pre-entrepreneurial training to plan an organised business venture successfully. Botha (2006:146) argued that there is a need for training programs designed specifically for women entrepreneurs. The literature confirms that skills training and business education have a positive effect on enterprise performance (Akanji, 2006; Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; Kuzilwa, 2005).

Additionally, Botha (2006:146) advised that a women entrepreneurship program should include the following areas of importance: financial assistance, management assistance and training as well as networking, mentoring and counseling. Based on the authors' descriptions, if entrepreneurship education and training is nurtured among women entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurship activity rate will rise without any difficulties in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Gender Bias or Gender Discrimination.

Since the common perception is that women confront stereotypical attitudes on a daily basis in their contacts with banks, clients and suppliers in the management phase of their business it is imperative to find strategic ways of alleviating gender bias. Ascher (2012:110) suggests that in order to alleviate gender bias, policy-makers should perceive female entrepreneurs as a special group that deserves special attention, as well as promoting equal opportunities. In order to alleviate the challenge of gender discrimination, women entrepreneurs need to be empowered. Empowerment is a process by which individuals and groups gain power, access to resources and control over their lives (Budeli, 2012). Vérias (2015:52) defines women's empowerment as their ability to make strategic life choices, where this ability had been denied previously. Women are still economically and socially disadvantaged in many countries, so the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is one of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (Vérias, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

This paper employed an interpretative, qualitative methodology to examine the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the Gauteng province. Furthermore, field researches investigated the views and opinions of entrepreneurs directly and indirectly by means of in-depth interviews, focus groups and observations. Therefore, this paper adopted a data triangulation approach. The researcher interviewed thirty (30) women entrepreneurs in the Gauteng province, whose businesses are registered according to the laws and regulations of South Africa. The list of registered companies was obtained from the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) database. The researchers interviewed 10 women from Vanderbijlpark, 10 from Vereeniging, and 10 from Roodepoort in the urban areas of the Gauteng province. A convenience sampling method was used to select the respondents. The respondents were chosen for the purpose of providing inside information about challenges they are facing as women entrepreneurs. The researchers managed to conduct the interviews while at the same time recording the interviews and taking short notes for future coding. The general observation was that each interview would trigger the necessity

for another interview as the themes began to unfold. The convergent in-depth interviewing used in this study allowed the researcher to develop, clarify, verify and refine the core issues of the interview protocol. Unlike in quantitative research, qualitative research views literature review as an ongoing process and serves as a source of data (Bryman 2004).

Document exploitation was also done in this paper to authenticate the findings. As put forward by Cooper and Schindler (2011), the literature from documented material should be viewed equally, the same as field notes. The same point was buttressed by Wilson (2010) who referred to documented literature as “everything is data” and Strauss and Corbin (1990) who asserted that a “cache of archival material” is equivalent to a collection of interviews and field notes. For confidentiality reasons, the identity of respondents was not disclosed. Conclusion, limitations of the study and suggestion of future research direction conclude the current study.

The study conducted a focus group of 10 female entrepreneurs from the 3 in Roodepoort, 3 in Vereening and 4 in Vanderbijlpark for different cities in the Gauteng province. For convenience reasons and to cut some costs, the focus group was conducted in Vanderbijlpark because Vereening is close to Vanderbijlpark and the researchers used a venue at the university at no cost. A focus group is a form of quantitative research in which a group of people are asked questions about their opinions, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept or idea (Bradley 2007; Wilson 2010). Bryman (2004) and Cooper and Schindler (2011) defined a focus group as an interview conducted by a trained interviewer among a small group of respondents. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting, where participants are free to give views from any aspect and talk with each other. A focus group allows interviewers to study people in a more natural conversation pattern than typically occurring in a one to one interview. A tape recorder was used to record the conversation. The researcher then wrote everything down listening to the tape recorder, including pauses. However, there is the disadvantage of observer dependency raising questions of validity unless the interviewing of the focus group is repeated several times (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2010). This helped a lot in singling out the challenges that are faced by women entrepreneurs in the Gauteng province and the solutions they think might help them in the long run. The researcher singled out that there is a great need for women to be assisted to enable them to excel and become more active in research and the most important challenge that was singled out was lack of financial resources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2013:32), the South African education system remains in a state of transformation as the government is in a process of grappling with legacies of the past, whilst balancing risks and opportunities for the future. South African students score poorly in literacy and numeracy tests when compared with students from other African countries and when considering what should be expected almost 20 years after the achievement of democracy (Human Sciences Research Council, 2012). In South Africa, two out of ten learners drop out of school after Grade 3, four out of ten after Grade 9, six out of ten after Grade 10 and 7.3 after Grade 11; this means that less than a quarter of learners who begin Grade 1 complete Grade 12 (Pather, 2011). According to the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) (2009), South Africa has a high-cost, low-performance education system that does not compare favourably with education systems in other African countries, or in similar developing economies. Mbenzi (2011:25) points out that holding a tertiary qualification significantly increases the probability that an individual will be an owner or a manager of a business. Therefore, a lot needs to be done to have efficient and effective education, which results in global competitiveness. This issue of education problems affects women the most and government and the community should do something. If more women are educated this can improve the image of South Africa at all angles, be it economically, socially, politically or technologically. However, it is worth noting that the levels of tertiary education for South African women are rising steadily. Increasing numbers are obtaining qualifications in traditionally male fields such as engineering (Mbenzi, 2011; Akhalwaya & Havenga, 2012). The narrowing of the gap in tertiary studies could in time help to generate more women entrepreneurs in these fields.

The findings of this study also indicated that lack of education and training is a challenge hampering the success of women entrepreneurs living in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The results of this research paper are in consistence with literature. Herrington and Wood (2003) explained that education and training system is regarded as the number one limiting factor for entrepreneurship in South Africa. Fatoki and Garwe (2010) also

confirm that entrepreneurship education is still one of the prime factors limiting the growth of the economy in South Africa.

The findings of this study also revealed that women entrepreneurs living in the Gauteng province of South Africa experience some hardships in obtaining start-up capital. The interviewed women entrepreneurs emphasised that access to finance is one of their biggest challenges and as a result they end up using their own meagre funds to start up business ventures. Other women entrepreneurs were of the view that commercial banks were reluctant to offer loans to them because banks are not confident in the abilities of women to manage businesses. This is in line with Pretorius and Shaw (2004) and Atieno (2009) findings that access to start-up capital is a major stumbling block to venturing in a new business. Additionally, Akhalwaya and Havenga (2012) confirm that the inability to obtain external finance from sources such as commercial loans and equity, including sources of external bootstrapping from customers and suppliers poses a barrier for women entrepreneurs.

Data from the study revealed that most women entrepreneurs experience gender discrimination and this limits women from active economic participation and access to business and development services. This is in line with Adeel-Anjum, Khan, Naz, Raza and Fatima (2012) who emphasised that gender-based discrimination is one of the major factors restraining women from business.

The findings also prove that negative perceptions and attitudes from the members of the community as well as family members hinder them from successfully operating their businesses. Moreover, these results also agree a quantitative study conducted by Akhalwaya and Havenga (2012) to investigate the barriers that hinder the success of women entrepreneurs in Gauteng province, South Africa. The results indicated that negative attitudes discourage women from taking risks in business and the social environment deters them from pursuing career paths in science, engineering and technology.

Lastly, women entrepreneurs, especially those who are running businesses in the line of sewing, knitting, printing and fast foods, emphasised that inadequate resources or equipment obstruct them from succeeding in the entrepreneurial ventures. These results are in line with works of Jebadurai (2007) who revealed that entrepreneurs cannot produce quality products due to lack of standardised equipment and poor quality of raw materials.

CONTRIBUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The paper has both theoretical and practical contributions. This is the first paper to the best knowledge of the researcher that applied the Human capital theory in entrepreneurship literature. Which means the theory added new knowledge to the existing literature on entrepreneurship. The paper has a practical contribution to women to be active in entrepreneurship both physically and mentally through education and hard working.

There is need to instil a spirit of entrepreneurship in the Gauteng province, especially among women. A lot needs to be done to have efficient and effective education, which results in global competitiveness. Universities alone cannot do the change in terms of grooming women entrepreneurs; it requires participatory approach from all angles. High quality education and high standards and relevance of education can lead to institutions of higher learning having quality graduates who can be employable and have a sustainable advantage everywhere. The current study is an attempt to undertake a research in an often neglected area but yet an important sector of the South African businesses. The findings of this empirical study are expected to provide fruitful implications across all stakeholders in South Africa's tertiary institutions to put more emphasis on entrepreneurship as it brings money to the government, provides employment and alleviation of poverty, for women in particular. All stakeholders need to be involved in decision-making, including the parents, for efficacy to be realised and change how people view women entrepreneurs. But there is need to provide adequate resources for this dream of uplifting women entrepreneurship to be realised. Kayamba (2007) asserts that government policy-makers in South Africa have put in place programmes to improve the situation of women in business. Therefore, it is imperative for women entrepreneurs living in the Gauteng province of South Africa to be aware of entrepreneurial support schemes, which are organised by the government of South Africa; for example the Khula Enterprise Finance, Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). It is best for the South African government to focus on providing equipment and developing infrastructure to support women entrepreneurs. The

South African government should strive to improve intellectual capacity among women entrepreneurs on entrepreneurship education by expanding and strengthening tertiary education. Verheul, Van Stel and Thurik (2004) are of the view that the government can provide female entrepreneurs with special loans, subsidies, funds, enterprise centres, entrepreneurship awards, counselling, training, advisory support, information products and web portals. Therefore, the South African government should come up with a considerable dedicated fund especially for women entrepreneurs in order to support their entrepreneurial activities.

The key recommendations to the women entrepreneurs living in the Gauteng province of South Africa include the following: Women entrepreneurs should raise confidence, empower themselves through entrepreneurial education, which is one of the initiatives that can be designed to enhance skills and knowledge in entrepreneurship. It is recommended that women entrepreneurs should acquire skills that will help to break the stereotypes and value systems that hinder them from participating in everyday activities. Women entrepreneurs should form partnerships with individuals from different areas of knowledge and expertise in order to learn from one another.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In spite of the contributions of this paper, it has its limitations, which provide avenues for future researches. First and most significantly, the present research is conducted from the entrepreneurs in Gauteng province. Perhaps if data collection is expanded to include other provinces, findings might be more insightful. Future studies should, therefore, consider this recommended research direction. The research was also conducted in urban areas only, future research might focus on both urban and rural areas. There is also the problem of common method bias because qualitative research was used in this study. It would have been more robust if the study included both qualitative and quantitative methods. All in all, these suggested future avenues of study stand to immensely contribute new knowledge to the existing body of entrepreneurship literature, a context that happens to be less studied by researchers in Africa.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the five key words, namely women entrepreneurship, innovation, women entrepreneurs, challenges, Gauteng province. Many authors have tried to define these most important concepts differently. For positive change to be realised around these five aspects there is need for all people to come together and have an input to ensure that all views are included in decision making for women empowerment. It is important to note that students, especially women, should be afforded opportunities and resources to make decisions and learn about entrepreneurship. The greatest challenge facing entrepreneurs in the Gauteng province is lack of resources. There is need for government to allocate more financial resources to women entrepreneurs especially those still at the introductory stage. Government should allocate more funds to micro businesses operated by women because financial problems is one of the greatest issue that is affecting women to be in action in terms of entrepreneurship.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Elizabeth Chinomona is a married woman with three children. Her first degree is from the University of Zimbabwe and her Masters with National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan. Currently she is working as a lecturer at Vaal University of Technology in the Logistics Department, South Africa and is also studying towards her PHD at the same university. Research is her passion as she has always learned a lot from it and also disseminate knowledge to others. Research areas include entrepreneurship, marketing, supply chain and human resources management. Email: chakubvae@hotmail.com.

Eugene Tafadzwa Maziriri is single and is Zimbabwean by birth. On an academic level, he holds a Bachelor of Technology Degree in Business Administration from the Vaal University of Technology. Currently he is studying towards his Master's Degree in Business Administration at the same university. He is an emerging researcher interested in researching in areas of entrepreneurship, retail management, marketing, and human resources management. Email: euginemaziriri@yahoo.com.

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