

Assessing the success of female hydroponic entrepreneurs in Mauritius.

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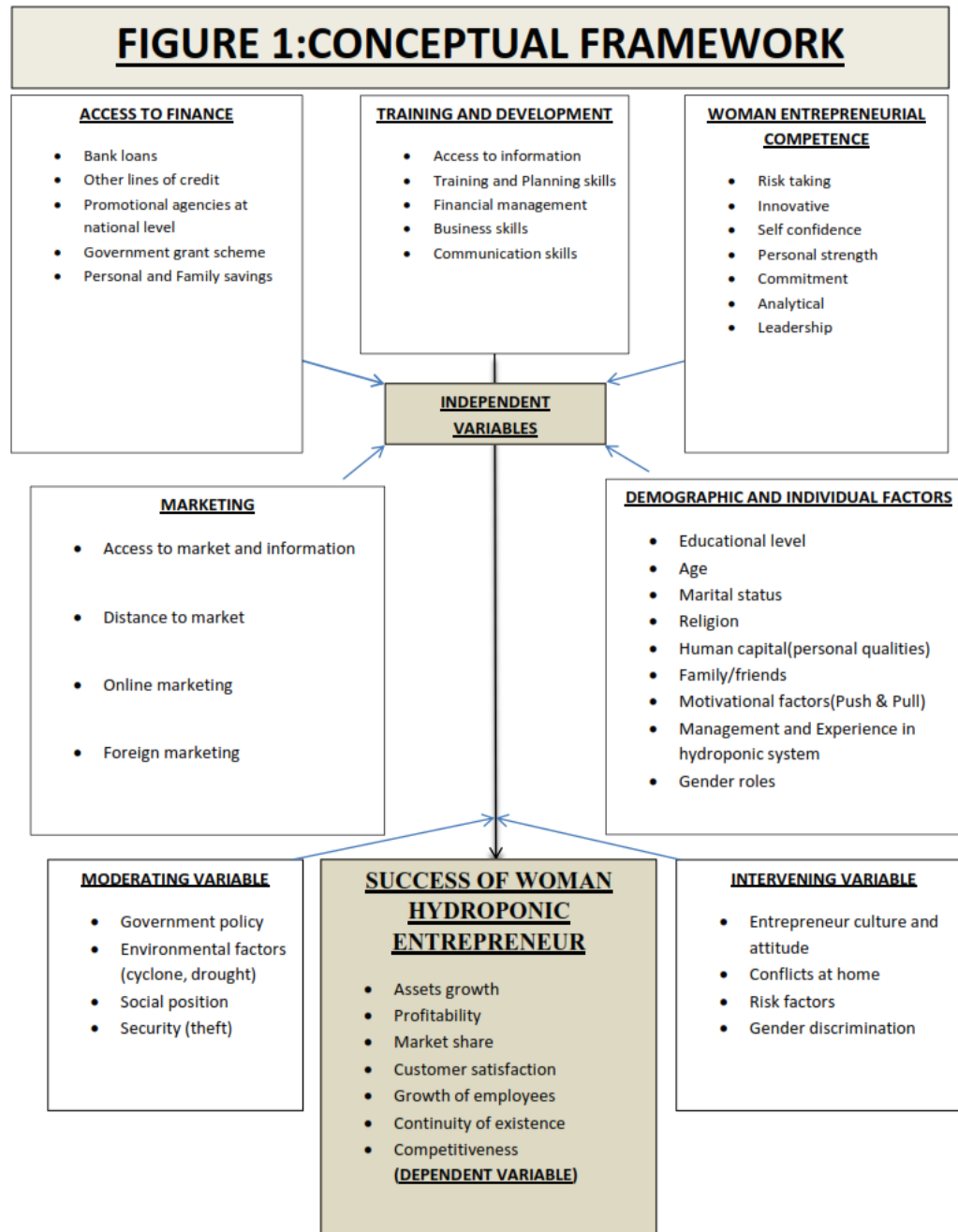
Extended Abstract:

Purpose – An increase in literatures’ publication of women entrepreneur is due to an exponential interest of women entrepreneurships from various backgrounds. Women sought entrepreneurship to establish recognition and self-esteem in the society. Although a number of studies were undertaken to examine factors that influence women entrepreneurs in the developed world (DeLollis, 1997), a limited number of studies have been undertaken to investigate these factors in Mauritius in the hydroponic sector. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, this study will be the first that addresses factors that influence the success of women hydroponic entrepreneurs in the Mauritius. While numerous studies have examined women entrepreneurs (Aldrich, 1989; Brush, 1990) most of these studies were conducted in developed and Western cultural spaces. Even though there are some common factors that impact women entrepreneurs in both Western and Middle Eastern countries, it is important to recognize the different countries’ “specificities of socio-cultural and political processes and their impact on gender

systems” (Metcalf, 2008, p. 86). As Minniti (2009) mentions, dissimilarities exist across women entrepreneurs in various countries.

To address the gap of little empirical research that exists on institutional explanations for women’s success in the hydroponic sector, the purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the factors impacting on the success of women hydroponic entrepreneurs in Mauritius.

Conceptual framework – The conceptual framework is the product of factors that has been contributing to the success of women entrepreneurs in existing literature review. Figure 1 illustrates the five independent variables comprising the study’s framework derived from the related studies: demographic and individual factors, access to finance, training and development, woman entrepreneurial competence and marketing. This study will therefore establish the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable which is success of woman hydroponic entrepreneur.



Source: Authors

Design/methodology/approach – This paper addresses women hydroponic entrepreneurs. The purpose of this Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Creswell & Plano Clark 2003) is used to explore the motivation, opportunities, obstacles, challenges, performance and success of woman hydroponic entrepreneurs in Mauritius. The first phase of this study will be

exploratory of seven successful woman entrepreneurs involved in hydroponic for which data from observation and focus group discussion will be collected. Focus group discussion is a technique where a researcher assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from the complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of the participants through a moderated interaction (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Morgan, 1988). These focus group discussions will explore the demographic characteristics, factors, motivations, challenges of women hydroponic entrepreneurs that lead them to success.

From the analysis of the explorative phase data sets, the following five categories can be emerged: (a) demographic and individual factors (b) marketing factors, (c) woman entrepreneurial competence, (d) financial access and (e) training and development (as per literature review). These categories served as the five headings for the large-scale sections within the instrument. Comprising these categories are themes and codes that will be derived from the explorative phase data sets, which served as individual survey items. It is important to note that not all codes will be represented as survey response items. Only the items that will be most represented in the explorative phase data sets will be selected as survey response items so that the survey remain as short as possible and measured only the most salient constructs. For the selection of the participants, the researcher will use the catalogue book available at the Organisation of Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) of Mauritius. The two criteria that will be used while selecting the respondents for the interview are as follows:

First, women hydroponic entrepreneurs will have to complete at least three years of their hydroponic entrepreneurial career. The three continuous years of running a business gives an idea that the owner has developed enough capabilities of handling the hydroponic enterprise.

Second, women entrepreneurs will have to be involved in various type of crops production. The research will try to include a variety of crop production and the involvement of women in it. Those women entrepreneurs who fulfill the above two criteria will have equal chances of the selection. The participants will take part in the census survey at their respective unit of hydroponics, in order to assess the business performance. Data from both phases will then mixed in the final analysis to provide a more complete description of the factors and motivations that evaluate the rate of success of woman hydroponic entrepreneurs in Mauritius.

Research limitations/implications – The main limitation of the study is the restricted local of the sample. A more extensive study is needed and future research should be more diverse – including widening the selection of respondents, agricultural industries and countries. However, women involvement in developing their hydroponic enterprise provides job opportunities and ensures that women are taking active part in the development of the national economy.

Practical implications – The outcome of this study will be used by researchers, government, non-governmental organizations, civil society, local community and policy makers to formulate effective policy that motivate more women to become entrepreneurs in the hydroponic sector. Moreover, for the women hydroponic entrepreneurs, the outcome of this study has implications for understanding the sources of the challenges they face by providing insights on the importance of the interplay of both individual and societal factors that impact on their enterprise. It is also expected to provide insights into the gender specificities of entrepreneurial culture in Mauritius.

Originality/value – This paper will be the first to provide empirical evidence on factors that influence the success of women hydroponic entrepreneurs in Mauritius with exploratory phase and quantitative method both within the same study.

Keywords – Hydroponic, Women Entrepreneurs, Mauritius, Success factors

Paper type – Conceptual Research Paper

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