

# **ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

MSEs performance is observed as the long term well-being and strength of the enterprise relative to its competitors. When sufficient performance lacks, survival of MSEs in competitive business environment will be impossible. Whereas, the contribution of small enterprises in development is significant, there are several challenges that are faced by MSEs that limits their development and survival. In developing countries the failure rate of small businesses is much higher. The main purpose of the study was to establish the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to examine the effects of management skills, risk taking, creativity and opportunity seeking on performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya. The study will be anchored on trait entrepreneurship theory and schumpeter's theory. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Managers of MSEs were targeted; therefore, the target population was 5,624 respondents. The study selected a sample of 373 respondents. To obtain data questionnaires were employed. Data collected included primary data which was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. Inferential statistics and in particular Pearson correlation and regression analysis was also used. SPSS software was used for the computations. Tables and figures were used in presentation of results. The study

computed correlation analysis to test the association of the study variables and the outcomes were presented in tables. The study found that management skills have positive association with organizational performance of MSEs; risk taking has positive link with organizational performance of MSEs; creativity has positive, significant link with organizational performance of MSEs and opportunity seeking had a positive link with organizational performance of SMEs. The study therefore recommends managers of MSEs in Machakos County to make an effort to increase their skills, both technical and interpersonal. This can be achieved by enrolling in short entrepreneurial courses that would help them to enhance their skills. Entrepreneurs should conduct in-depth research before taking risks i.e. taking calculated risks. This would allow them to identify whether the risk is worth taking; it is important to ensure that the risk is manageable. They should embrace technology because it is through technology that creativity can be improved. It is also important for MSEs to seek new opportunities through creation of new products, venturing into new markets and being innovative. This means they should embrace change.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Entrepreneurial competencies, Management skills, Micro and small enterprises, Opportunity seeking, Performance, Risk taking

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) role in the economy is very important because it provides a larger production portion in dynamic business environment mainly because of its adaptability. MSEs contribute significantly towards the growth of the economy, social uplifting and political stability. The most unique aspect of MSEs is its flexibility nature. They are considered to be the pillar of any country's economy mainly because they can be developed for any kind of business activity (Amini, 2014). Because of the significant part they have in the economy development, most governments have put more efforts in their development (Khalique, Isa & Shaari, 2011).

In developed nations like the USA, Australia, China, the contribution of small firms to the growth of the economy have been tremendous mainly in area of employment, exports and GDP. Taking the case of United States of America (USA), small business ventures are considered to be the means through which the growth, innovation and economy are enhanced. For developing economies, small firms have become the bedrock of development, for example, in the Middle East and Asian regions. For example, in Iran the contribution of SMEs in industrial products is 62% and is responsible for creation of more than 75% employments. Similarly, in Israel, small and medium businesses made up more than 97% of all enterprises and employed half of employees in the country (United Nations, 2011).

For most of the countries in Africa, MSEs contribute around 90 percent of all private enterprises and creates higher than half of all employments and GDP. For example, in Ghana, MSEs are responsible for creation of approximately 85% of all jobs in the manufacturing industry. Also, its contribution towards country's GDP is approximated to be 70% and makes up 92% of all enterprises in the country. It is approximated that in South Africa, 91% of all formal businesses are MSEs (Fening, 2012). In Kenya MSE's growth have been increasing at a great rate from 13.8 percent in 1993 to 18 percent in 1999. The growth was at 25% in 2012 (Economic Survey, 2012). Growth and performance of any enterprise is influenced by entrepreneurial competencies (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). Strong entrepreneurial competencies is crucial for both global and local growth of MSEs. It is the personal effort of an individual who starts and grows business to develop entrepreneurial competencies. Success and survival of MSEs is dependent on continuous enhancement of entrepreneurial competencies; this is very important especially in the current competitive and dynamic business environment (Song & Kee, 2013).

According to Camuffo, Gerli and Gubitta (2012), it is very important for owners of MSEs to be equipped with diverse skills, be imaginative, knowledgeable and be able to identify emerging opportunities. Performance of MSEs is affected by those factors throughout their existence (Camuffo *et al.* 2012). As suggested by Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013), the success of any

business is ascertained by existence or absence of strategic planning. In addition, a strategic plan is considered to be a continuous process where strategic business goals are monitored and evaluated. The goals of the venture (vision, mission and objectives), like identification of short and long term issues, opportunities and challenges make up a strategic goal. This proves that enhanced company performance can be achieved through entrepreneurial competencies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

MSEs performance is observed as the long term well-being and strength of the enterprise relative to its competitors. When sufficient performance lacks, survival of MSEs in competitive business environment will be impossible. Whereas, the contribution of small enterprises in development is significant, there are several challenges that are faced by MSEs that limits their development and survival. In developing countries the failure rate of small businesses is much higher. In Machakos County, statistics have shown that out of every five businesses, three of them fail within the few operating months (KNBS, 2016). Failure to plan and be creative, fear of taking risks, lack of proper financing, and mismanagement have been identified as the main challenges leading to poor performance (Mbogo, 2015). Because there is link between entrepreneurial abilities and business performance, it is vital for entrepreneurs to be more attentive in enhancing competencies.

According to the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2018), 50,000 SMEs fail every year in Machakos County. In 2016 and 2017 approximately 100, 000 SMEs were closed due to challenges in operation, financing, management and a lack of creativity. According to Abor and Quartey (2015), the entrepreneurial spirit is a major motivator for MSEs. Lack of efficient management through processes has an impact on an MSE's capacity to expand and may ultimately result in business collapse. The key elements that define a company venture's success are the entrepreneur's core competencies and supply chain relationships. They also stress how crucial it is for an entrepreneur to hire management professionals to oversee the organization's essential functions and direct its expansion strategies. They point out that poor management would jeopardize the company's performance.

Sánchez (2015) evaluated entrepreneurial capabilities on SMEs performance in Spain. In South Africa, Zizile and Tendai (2018) evaluated benefits of entrepreneurial competencies on women entrepreneurs performance. Kimeu (2017) researched on entrepreneurial competencies influence on senterprise performance using the case of KPA. Mwangi (2018) studied the association of entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurship performance of graduates with physical challenges in Kenya. The studies were conducted in diverse contexts a covered different concepts. Therefore, the current study sought to establish the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to establish the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. To examine the effect of management skills on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya
- ii. To determine the effect of risk taking on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya
- iii. To establish the effect of creativity on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya
- iv. To examine the effect of opportunity seeking on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya

## **Theoretical Literature Review**

### **Trait Entrepreneurship Theory**

The theory was initiated by Gartner (1989). This theory contends that a person's psychological make-up largely dictates how they will behave when engaging in entrepreneurial activity. A necessity for high success, risk-taking, foresight, aggression, proactiveness, and inventiveness are among the psychological attributes. High intelligence, decisiveness, sound judgment, and environmental awareness are a few more. The theory also explains that enterprises that are developed based on the concept that individuals are considered to be visionaries with some attributes and qualities which equip them with thoughts relating with production and pursuing new ventures. The significant qualities liable for the development of enterprise are said to be: inventive and creative aptitudes, inclination to face challenges, capacity of expanding and overseeing it viably diligence, and predictability.

Entrepreneurs are also renowned for being opportunity-driven, inventive, and creative, for having excellent management abilities, for being upbeat, dedicated, and persistent, and for thriving in a competitive environment where they want to succeed. They are transformational, dynamic, visionary, people of integrity, unsatisfied with the current quo, and they use failure as a launching pad for success. A person is innately suited to become an entrepreneur. This theory explains the effects of management skills, risk taking creativity and opportunity seeking on performance of MSEs.

### **Schumpeter's Theory**

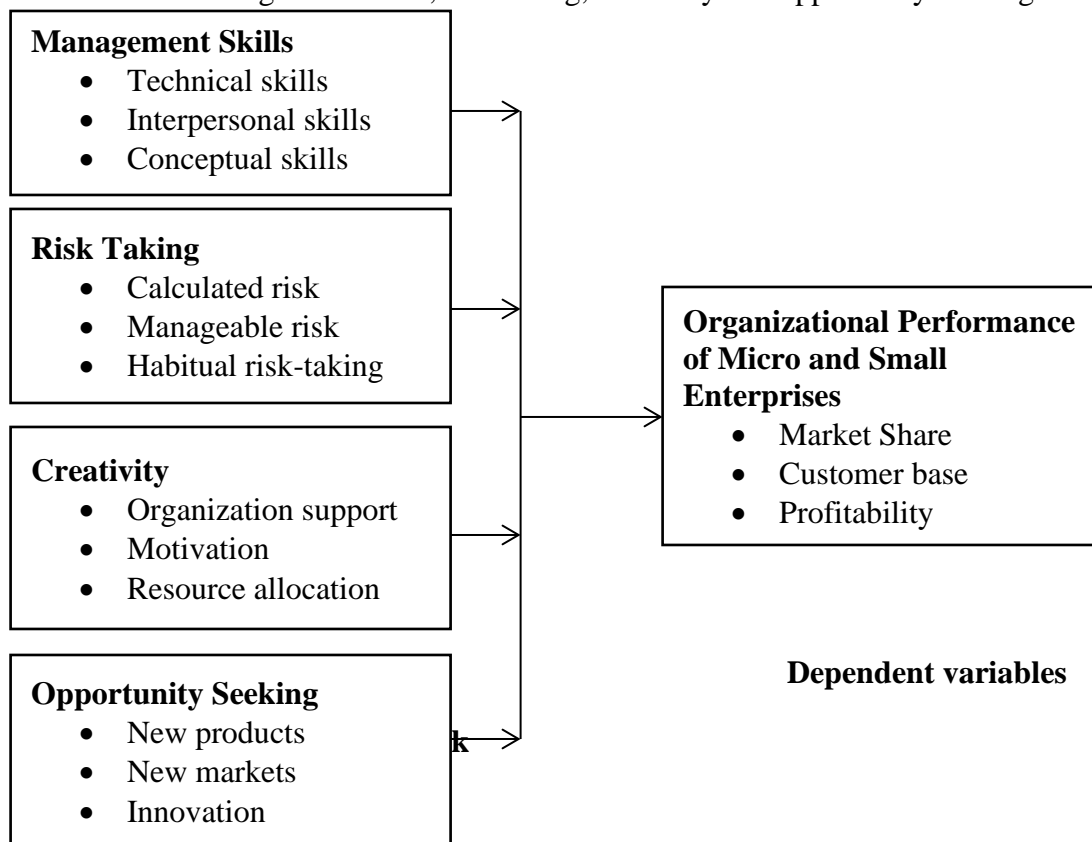
The development of this theory was by Schumpeter (1934). Schumpeter spearheaded an enterprising vision of people who embodied advancement and are the genuine drivers of developments. These individuals, the business visionary, look for vulnerabilities and dangers and in addition examine the potential advantages of innovation. Enterprising activities are the most

essential elements for development of the economy and cannot be achieved without them. These activities are presentation of new great or new quality, new strategies for production, new market, new materials and new business organization.

This hypothesis is pertinent for this investigation in light of the fact that the MSEs depend on managers who are human asset component in maintaining the everyday business. An entrepreneurial manager requires having imperative administrative abilities, be a daring person and imaginative and opportunity searcher to prompt business positive performance. From Schumpeter's hypothesis, acceptable innovative abilities can help improve execution and advancement of the firm.

### Conceptual Framework

Through a conceptual framework portrays an integrated view of a research problem. Its arrangement is done logically to visually represent how ideas relate with each other (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). A conceptual framework can be presented graphically or in prose and shows the main constructs being investigated and how they relate with each other. In this study, the variables being investigated are presented in a diagrammatical form and show both the dependent and the independent variables. The predictor variable is organizational performance and the response variables are management skills, risk taking, creativity and opportunity seeking.



## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey design and explanatory research design were adopted. The descriptive survey design helped to determine significant link amid variables. The main focus of the design is to answer the question of what, how and who of a situation (Kothari, 2014). The study was conducted in MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya. According to a report from Machakos County government (2018) there are 5,624 MSEs in the County. Managers in the MSEs formed the target population. This was 5,624 respondents. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. A sample of 373 was selected. The respondents were identified using the simple random sampling approach; this approach allowed each member of the study fair opportunity to be chosen. Data that was used was gathered by use of questionnaires. Collected data was cleaned and coded using SPSS. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential analysis. Correlational and regression analysis was applied to determine the relationship of variables. The regression equation is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (organizational performance),  $\beta_0$  is the regression constant,  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ ,  $\beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are the coefficients of independent variables,  $X_1$  is management skills,  $X_2$  = risk taking,  $X_3$  = creativity and  $X_4$  = opportunity seeking. The significance level of the model was determined through ANOVA. The study interpreted the findings on the basis of data collected on the field and conclusions drawn were based on the findings.

### **Research Findings And Discussions**

Out of the 373 issued questionnaires, only 331 were returned. A response rate of 88.7% was obtained from the returned questionnaires. Forming response of 70% or higher, per Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), is exceptional. Based on Mugenda's assertions, the study's rate of response was deemed exceptional and was adopted for more reporting and analysis.

### **Correlation Analysis**

Correlation analysis was applied in determining the level and the direction of the relationship between two variables.

**Table 1: Correlations**

		Organizational Performance	Management Skills	Risk Taking	Creativity	Opportunity Seeking
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	331				
Management Skills	Pearson Correlation	.702**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	331	331			
Risk Taking	Pearson Correlation	.672**	.178**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001			
	N	331	331	331		
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	.736**	.261**	.074	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.177		
	N	331	331	331	331	
Opportunity Seeking	Pearson Correlation	.812**	.275**	.206**	.076	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.167	
	N	331	331	331	331	331

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data (2020)

The findings in Table 1 show that management skills and organizational performance had strong, positive and significant association ( $r=0.702$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); risk taking had a positive significant association with organizational performance ( $r=0.672$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); creativity is also observed to had a strong positive and significant association with organizational performance ( $r=0.736$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); and opportunity seeking is observed to have a strong positive significant link with organizational performance ( $r=0.812$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). These results show that the independent variables (opportunity seeking, creativity, risk taking, and management skills) had strong positive relationship with organizational performance.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

The study calculated multiple regressions will be done to establish the effects of entrepreneurial competencies on performance of micro and small enterprises in Machakos County, Kenya. The results were presented in three tables presented and explained in sub-sections that follow.



### **Model Summary**

The study computed model summary to determine the level of variation in organizational change due to changes in opportunity seeking, creativity, risk taking, and management skills.

**Table 2: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.763 <sup>a</sup>	.582	.577	.39130

a. Predictors: (Constant), Opportunity Seeking, Creativity, Risk Taking, Management Skills

*Source: Survey Data (2020)*

The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value was 0.577 which suggests that 57.7% variation in organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya can be explained by changes in opportunity seeking, creativity, risk taking, and management skills. The remaining 42.3% suggest that variations observed in organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County can be explained by other aspects that were not discussed in this study. The results also show that R (correlation coefficient) is 0.763 implying that the variables included in the model have a strong positive relationship.

### **Analysis of Variance**

The significance of the developed model was determined using ANOVA. The 5% level of significance was chosen.

**Table 3: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	69.630	4	17.407	113.686	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	49.917	326	.153		
Total	119.546	330			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Opportunity Seeking, Creativity, Risk Taking, Management Skills

*Source: Survey Data (2020)*

Result in table 3 show that the p-value gotten (0.000) was less than the chosen significance level (0.05). This is an indication that the model was significant and may be adopted in predicting organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County. The results further established that the f-calculated value (113.686) was more than the f-critical value ( $F_{3,180}=2.399$ ). These results suggest that opportunity seeking, creativity, risk taking, and management skills significantly influence organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

### **Beta Coefficients of the Study Variables**

Beta coefficient values were fitted in the regression model and formed the regression equation as follows;

$$Y = 0.713 + 0.218 X_1 + 0.102 X_2 + 0.334 X_3 + 0.181 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = organizational performance;

X<sub>1</sub> is management skills,

X<sub>2</sub> = risk taking,

X<sub>3</sub> = creativity and

X<sub>4</sub> = opportunity seeking; and

ε = Error term.

From the equation above, it is seen that holding opportunity seeking, creativity, risk taking, and management skills variables to a constant zero, organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County will be at a constant value of 0.713. Table 4 presents the findings.

**Table 4: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.713	.149		4.785	.000
Management Skills	.218	.058	.188	3.764	.000
1 Risk Taking	.102	.023	.187	4.503	.000
Creativity	.334	.034	.480	9.955	.000
Opportunity Seeking	.181	.034	.229	5.333	.000

a. Response Variable: Organizational Performance

Source: Survey Data (2020)

The first research hypothesis was **H<sub>01</sub>** Management skills do not have a significant effect on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

From the findings, management skills has a positive connection with organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya (β = 0.218, P = 0.000). Management skills had a positive relationship with performance of MSEs. This implies increasing management skills by a single unit resulted to an increase in organizational performance of micro and small enterprises. So the null hypothesis is rejected and the study concludes that management skills have a significant effect on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

The second research hypothesis was **H<sub>02</sub>** Risk taking do not have a significant effect on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

Risk taking was found to statistically and significantly explain firm performance of MSEs in Machakos County (β = 0.102, P = 0.000). Findings demonstrate that risk taking has positive link with performance of MSEs. Based on the findings, a rise in risk taking would result to positive rise in organizational performance of MSEs. So, the null hypothesis was rejected and concluded that

risk taking significantly affects on firm performance of micro and small enterprises in Machakos County.

The third research hypothesis was **H<sub>03</sub>** creativity do not have a significant effect on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

Creativity was found to statistically and significantly explain organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County ( $\beta = 0.334$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). This indicates that creativity has positive, significant relationship with organizational performance of MSEs. From the findings it can be deduced that increasing creativity would lead to a rise in performance of MSEs. The study therefore fails to uphold the null hypothesis and concluded that creativity have significant effect on organizational outcomes of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

The final research hypothesis was **H<sub>04</sub>** opportunity seeking do not have a significant effect on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

From the results, opportunity seeking has a positive link with performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya ( $\beta = 0.181$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). Opportunity seeking had a positive relationship with organizational performance of MSEs. This shows increasing opportunity seeking by a unit resulted to an increase in organizational performance of MSEs. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the study concluded that opportunity seeking has significant effect on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya.

## **Conclusions**

The first goal was to evaluate the effects of management skills on organizational performance MSEs. It was revealed that management skills had a positive connection with performance of MSEs in Machakos County. Management skills were also found to have positive link with firm performance of MSEs. Hence, it is concluded that increasing management skills by a unit resulted to a rise in organizational performance of MSEs.

The second goal was to determine the effects of risk taking on organizational performance of MSEs. The study established that risk taking statistically and significantly explains organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County. The outcomes also indicated that risk taking has positive link with MSEs performance. The study therefore concluded that an increase in risk taking will result to positive rise in organizational performance of micro and small enterprises.

The third objective was to determine the effects of creativity on performance of MSEs in Machakos County. It was found that creativity was found to statistically and significantly explain organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County. This indicates that creativity has positive, significant connection with organizational performance of MSEs. From the findings the

study concluded increasing creativity will result to an increase in organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County.

The final research goal was to determine the effects of opportunity seeking on organizational performance of MSEs in Machakos County, Kenya. It was found that opportunity seeking has a positive link with performance of MSEs. Opportunity seeking had a positive link with organizational performance of MSEs. Therefore the study concludes that increasing opportunity seeking by a unit resulted to a rise in organizational performance of micro and small enterprises.

## **Recommendations**

Management skills positively influences on organizational performance. The study therefore recommends managers of MSEs in Machakos Country to make an effort to increase their skills, both technical and interpersonal. This can be achieved by enrolling in short entrepreneurial courses that will help them to enhance their skills. They can also attend seminars and other workshops that are prepared to help entrepreneurs enhance their skills and learn from other successful entrepreneurs.

Risk taking was found to enhance organizational performance. The study suggests owners of MSEs to be risk takers because this is the only way they can get to improve performance. Further, entrepreneurs should conduct in-depth research before taking risks i.e. taking calculated risks. This will allow them to identify whether the risk is worth taking; it is important to ensure that the risk is manageable.

Creativity enhances organizational performance. The study recommends MSEs to embrace technology because it is through technology that creativity can be improved. Managers of these enterprises are also encouraged to think outside the box; avoid traditional ways of doing business and think of other ways they can execute the same task or offer the same service.

Increasing opportunity seeking was found to increase performance. The study thus recommends MSEs to seek new opportunities through creation of new products, venturing into new markets and being innovative. Any opportunity that arises in the market they should be the first to identify how they can utilize this opportunity to improve their business. This means they should embrace change.

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