

Entrepreneurial Characteristics that Influence Success Among Second Hand Motor Vehicle Dealers in Kenya: a Case Study of Ngong Road Area

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJAREMS/v2-i5/303> DOI:10.6007/IJAREMS/v2-i5/303

Published Online: September, 2013

Abstract

The contribution of second hand motor vehicle industry to the economic growth of the country is high in terms of gross domestic product and to self-employment. There is need to equip entrepreneurs with the most effective characteristic they can apply to influence success in motor vehicle dealership. This study therefore seeks to explore the characteristics that influence entrepreneurial success among second hand motor vehicle dealers; a case study of the Ngong road area. The research is informed by the trait model of entrepreneurial characteristics and adopts key trait as Need for achievement. The specific objective is to establish whether need for achievement is an ingredient of success among car dealers in Nairobi and to measure their level of entrepreneurial success. Descriptive research design was used for this study as it was most appropriate in meeting the needs of the researcher. The target population for this study was the showrooms of all second hand motor vehicle dealers in Ngong road Nairobi. The instrument used was a Questionnaire as well as an observation guide. The researcher found out that, even though second hand motor vehicle dealers find themselves operating in tough environment both internal and external, they do everything possible to get the odds in their favor, and they often avoid taking unnecessary risks. Successful car dealers also believe in themselves.

Keywords: Second Hand Motor Vehicle Dealers, Need For Achievement, Entrepreneurial Success

Introduction

The motor vehicle industry in Kenya is essentially made up of all those firms that are engaged in the supply of motor vehicles, parts and accessories to the final consumer. It also includes

firms engaged in maintenance and repair of those vehicles (Bennet et. al, 2002). Up until early 1990s, Kenya used to boast a growing vehicle assembly industry that supplied the country and the east Africa region. But with the liberalization of the motor industry, second hand imports flooded the market effectively killing the industrialization dream as far as vehicle assembly was concerned. (Bennet et. al, 2002)

The Japanese automotive industry has traditionally been viewed as the leading competitor for the United States auto industry in most regions of the world (Okun et, al. 2000). In 2001, Japanese automakers produced 8.1 million passenger cars and exported 44% of these vehicles.

In 2006, nearly 2.1 million cars were imported from Japan. According to the Kenya bureau of statistics in the year 2011 saw a record 205,841 cars registered by the Kenya revenue authority. Up to May 2012, a total of 64,598 motor vehicles were registered. This practically shows that Kenya thrives on second hand motor vehicles import from Japan.

The Mombasa Port is the entry point of all second hand motor vehicles destined for the whole East African Market. The number of second hand cars coming into the country continues to increase each year. According to Bennet et al, (2002) the domestic second hand vehicles in the market are 18,000 to 20000 annually. The Kenya auto Bazaar Association officials posit that there is a high demand for motor vehicles in the country. This could be the reason for the many upcoming entrepreneurs venturing in the sale of second hand motor vehicles. The Kenyan entrepreneurs have invested in showrooms where they display the second hand motor cars. The showrooms are easily accessible and visible to customers.

Statement of the Problem

The sudden opening up of the Kenyan economy caught some players in the Motor Sector unprepared to face the challenges. The fluctuating dollar, cases of fraud, natural calamities and instability in trading countries are some of the challenges dealers have to face in this industry.

Other high risks involving this venture are fraud from the Japanese sellers. These include the sale of stolen vehicles, illegally rebuilt units or even re-modeled vehicles (Mwenda, 2007). The tendency thrives on the known reputation for excellent quality and reasonable prices associated with Japanese used motor vehicles.

The contribution of this industry to Kenya's economy cannot be underestimated. A report by (Mwenda, 2007) notes that Kenya Motor Industry association estimates that new cars pay on average Kshs 1 million in taxes while imported second hand cars attract an average of Kshs. 350,000. The amount of taxes per car in relation to the number of cars registered per day clearly indicates this industry's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Should these challenges faced continue to hamper success to car dealers, the motivation to self-employment was die, consequently youth entrepreneurship, creation of adequate employment opportunities and poverty alleviation will never be realized. Need arises therefore to do an investigation on special characteristics that help entrepreneurs to become successful. The purpose of this study is therefore to explore the entrepreneurial traits that influence the success of second hand motor vehicle dealers in Nairobi Kenya the Ngong road area. The trait model adopts theory of need for achievement and the measure of success.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Entrepreneurship scholars have divided entrepreneurial characteristics into two different schools of thought: one based on the trait model and the other on contingency thinking. In the studies using the trait model, the basic objective is to answer the question why; certain individuals are successful as entrepreneurs, without looking in the context of the environment or the situations around the individual. This research was hence informed by this model. Entrepreneurship theory adopted in this research on the trait model is: McClelland's (1961) theory of the need for achievement. This theory emphasizes personal characteristics that define entrepreneurship. Personality trait: need for achievement has been reviewed and empirical evidence presented and has been found to be associated with entrepreneurial inclination (Landstrom, 1998). Coon (2004) defines personality traits as "stable qualities that a person shows in most situations".

Other characteristics or behaviors associated with entrepreneurs could not be used as variables in this research because they tend to be more opportunity driven (they nose around), demonstrate high level of creativity and innovation, and show high level of management skills and business know-how but not entrepreneurial.

Conceptual Framework

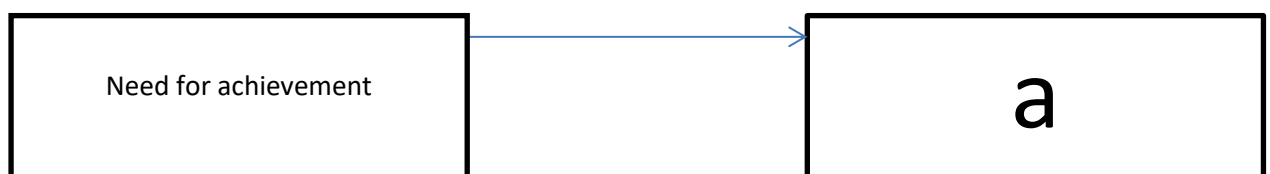


Fig 2.1 conceptual framework

Need for Achievement

The need for achievement theory espoused by Mc Celland (1961) explains that individuals have an innate desire to succeed, accomplish, thrive and achieve. Entrepreneurs are driven by this need to achieve. The need for achievement leads to creation of a business enterprise (Shaver & Scott, 1991). Need for achievement is a trait that makes one choose and endure in ventures that have a reasonable likelihood to succeed or a great chance of achieving personal contentment without an excessive risk of failure.

McClelland (1965) further says that culture and socialization has an influence in determining the degree of need for achievement. The needs are learned through socialization and not established biologically. According to McClelland (1965) high need for achievement is based on training from early childhood, training through to adulthood and experiences. This explains why some cultures have a greater need for achievement than others. A person with a great need for achievement will take individual responsibility in decision making, will make personal effort to achieve the set objectives and has a longing to get feedback. This is a trait that is high among to people beginning own enterprises. According to McClelland (1962) entrepreneurs experience a lot of challenges and need constant feedback to be successful. Entrepreneurs take responsibility to tackle problems and set goals and achieve them through personal effort.

Cooper and Gimeno-Gascon (1992) did studies that found there is a relationship between need for achievement and the success of small scale enterprises. Many studies also show that need for achievement is higher in people who start new organizations than managers

(Begley & Boyd, 1987). The personality factor is also related to company development (Miners *et al*, 1989). The study also showed that need for achievement fluctuate over time. According to Johnson (1990) there is a positive relationship between the need for achievement and entrepreneurship. A study done in Kisumu revealed a positive relationship between need for achievement and entrepreneurship (Ombok, 1990). The study also established that people with high need for achievement also have a high propensity to risk. However the study did not reveal a correlation between need for achievement with creativity and personal responsibility.

The numerous findings in the need for achievement bring out various indicators that were used to measure this characteristic. The need for precise goal setting was a determinant in evaluating level of need for achievement. Responsibility for own decision making was equally used to determine level of N-ach. Those who push themselves to work harder against all odds were deemed to possess this trait. Equally, choosing and enduring in ventures that have reasonable likelihood to succeed or great chance of achieving personal contentment without an excessive risk of failure were viewed as some of the determinants of need for achievement.

Entrepreneurial Success

Entrepreneurial growth is typical of business ventures. Success and growth of enterprises can be viewed in two ways: quantitatively or qualitatively. Quantitative growth is measured by size of the company (annual turnover, added value and volumes), the profitability of the company and shareholder value. Qualitatively growth includes an enterprises competitive position and customer service.

In determining a successful car dealer the researcher focused on among others growth, annual turnover, profitability, diversification and years in active operation. The researcher also focused on the annual turnover per shilling of a dealer. The researcher equally looked at the number of units a dealer has been able to sell in a year. Profitability was determined by the margin made from all the units sold by way of subtracting the initial buying cost from the selling price per unit.

Diversification was determined by the number of products a dealer offers a customer apart from selling cars. Success was also determined by among other the number of branches opened since inception and the number of sales people the yard attracts.

The stock a dealer currently has whether sold or not was a determining factor. For this study a motor yard that is above 3years or more shall be deemed successful under the guidance of Sessional paper no.2 of 2005 which posits that a business shall be deemed successful if it has celebrated its third birthday or more.

Critique of the Existing Literature

The personality trait approach has however been criticized as placing a lot of emphasis on a factor that is hard to assess (Eatwell *et al*, 1987). Personality factors have been criticized on both theoretical and empirical views. Further according to Kaufman and Dant (1998) there is no definite set of essential entrepreneurial characteristics that exist. Another criticism of the personality trait approach is still not supported by research evidence.

Need for achievement theory has been criticized for being as relevant to manager, marketers and other professional just as it is to entrepreneurs. Another criticism is that there is little or no research that attributes the need for achievement to the starting of a new venture. Even with this need for achievement remains a major factor contributing to the success of enterprises (Sexton and Bowman, 1985).

Research Design

According to Rubin and Babbie (1997) research design refers to all the choices done on how a study will be carried out. The descriptive research design was used for this study as it was more precise and accurate as per the needs of the research. The researcher finds descriptive research most appropriate since it is used to describe the characteristics of a population (Chandran, 2004). As (cooper and schindler, 2003) puts it, descriptive study is concerned with finding out who, what, where, when and how much. Hence it was used to describe the 'what' entrepreneurial characteristics are used by second hand motor vehicle dealers. The descriptive design was applied to the car dealers without manipulating anything within the environment where they operate

The target population for this study was the showrooms of all second hand motor vehicle dealers in Ngong road Nairobi. The current number of active motor yards stands at 175. Eighty three of these yards are situated along Ngong road. The researcher used cluster sampling technique. This is where the researcher picks an intact group (cluster) in a specific geographical area to represent the population that is scattered in an expansive area (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). For this study Ngong road area was used since it has the highest number of yards compared to other areas in Nairobi. Simple random sampling was then used to select the sample of 20 respondents used which clearly satisfies the rule of 10% of the population. Names and physical location of all the 83 showrooms was obtained from the Kenya Auto Bazaar Association and their contacts also obtained although a number of them have their contacts already listed in their official websites. A list of all the 83 motor yards was made and a random number assigned to each of them. Separate numbers was then placed in a box and randomly picked until required sample size was obtained. The preferred sample size was 20 motor yards. The selected yards were then subjected to investigation using appropriate instruments.

A questionnaire was used for this study containing both the open ended and the closed ended questions. Closed ended questions were used to analyze while open-ended questions permitted a greater depth of response (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Open ended questions were used to gather respondents' general information and the respondents' free opinion on the subject of the research. The closed ended questions were structured in such a way that they provided the respondent with multiple choices.

Observation was also used to confirm the correctness of the information given such as verifying the number of cars in a yard and the registration certificate which is usually framed and hanged on the walls at the premises. When given a chance the researcher talked to the customers in the yard to get a 360 degree feedback.

Personal discussion was the most preferred (Cooper &Schindler, 2003); it helped establish rapport with the respondents, get a first-hand story behind the entrepreneur and collect the questionnaire immediately after they were completed. The target respondents for this study were the owners of showrooms and senior managers. Pilot testing was undertaken by administering the questionnaire to owners of four motor yards. These tests were conducted concurrently. As a result of the pilot study some items were altered while others were dropped.

Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze and present the data by use of tables, percentages, averages graphs and charts among others. Based on the analysis of the entrepreneurial traits driving forms success were highlighted and the strength of the relationship was determined.

Research Findings and Discussions

Need for Achievement

This variable sought to find out an entrepreneur’s main goal of starting the business, how they like their business, whether as usual or they go out of their way to prove to themselves that they can do it. Those who would settle at nothing less than the best and taking accountability for personal decisions were considered to have a high need for achievement.

Table 4.1
Main Goal of Starting The Business

Main goal of starting the business	Frequency	Percent
To avail good quality cars at minimum cost	1	4.8
Earn a living	8	38.1
Expand capital base	3	14.3
Create employment	1	4.8
Achieve customer satisfaction	3	14.3
To be the best in the industry	3	14.3
Self-employment	1	4.8
Total	19	100.0

From the findings, the researcher found out that the majority of the dealers (38%) main goal in starting the venture was to earn a living. About 14% started the venture to expand their capital base while a similar percentage started the business in order to achieve customer satisfaction and to be the best in the industry. Another 5% started the showroom to be self-employment, for display, to create employment and to avail good quality cars at minimum cost.

How do you like business?



Figure 4.1: how do you like business?

The data from the table above shows that 36.8% of the respondents make decisions with little uncertainty of success to prove to themselves that they can do it while 21.1% are sure to some extent about their success. Approximately 16% indicate that they do not mind low challenge decisions and another 10.5% like business as usual.

I take responsibility in decision making and I am accountable to them

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they take responsibility in decision making and whether they are accountable for them.

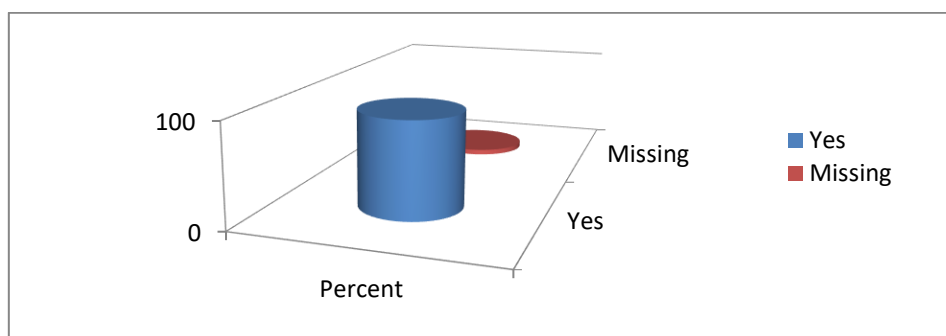


Figure 4.2: take responsibility in decision making and I am accountable for them

From the results above almost all (94.7%) of the respondents take responsibility in decision making and are accountable for them. Another 5.3% did not respond to the question. The respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 (where 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-uncertain, 2-strongly disagree and 1-strongly disagree) the extent to which they agreed with the listed statements in the table below. The findings were then summarized using the mean score

Table 4.2:
N Ach Statement Table

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
I choose and endure ventures that was bring personal satisfaction	52.6% 10	47.4% 9	-	-	-	4.526
Business success comes when I do my best	36.8% 7	57.9% 11	5.3% 1	-	-	4.316
There is nothing more important than great achievement in my business	42.1% 8	36.8% 7	5.3% 1	15.8% 3	-	4.052
I thrive on turning circumstances to my advantage	21.1% 4	47.4% 9	5.3% 1	21.1% 4	5.3% 1	3.579

Majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they chose and endured ventures that bring them personal satisfaction. There were similar results when the

respondents were asked whether business success comes when they do their best. About (69%) strongly agree and agree that they thrive on turning circumstances to their advantage.

Entrepreneurial success

Duration in operation

The researcher sought to find out the duration the enterprises have been in operation. The findings from the study are shown in the figure below.

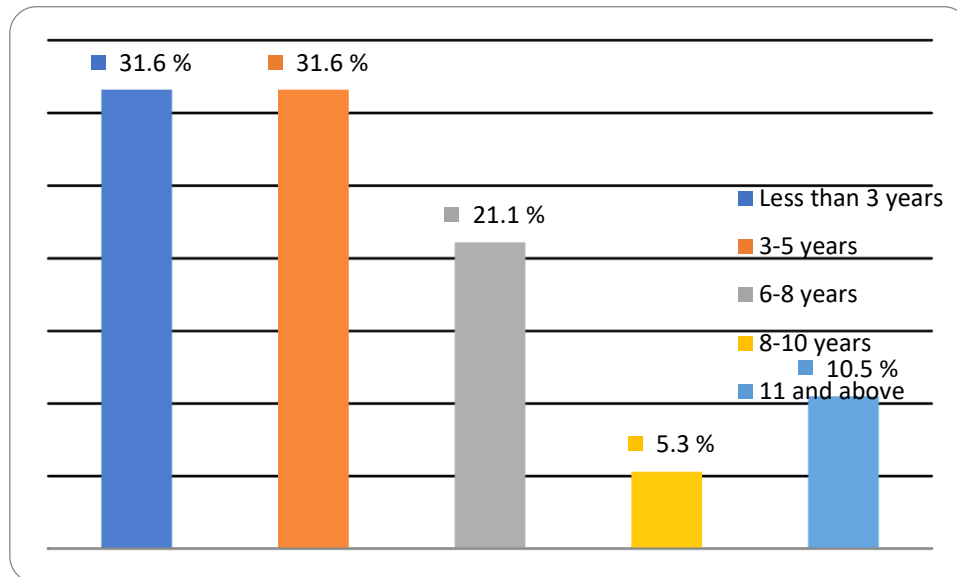


Figure 4.3: Duration in operation

The analysis revealed that 31.6 percent have been in operation for less than 3 years. A similar percentage has been operation for between 3-5 years. A significant number of 21.1 percent had worked with the organization for the period of 6-8 years. Another 10.5% have been operation for between 11 years and above while only 5.3% had been operating for 8-10 years. This data was important as it helped the researcher to know the experience that the respondents had in the second hand motor vehicle industry. The duration in the industry is an indication of success.

Table 4.3

How Many Sales People do you have?

	Frequency	Percent
How many sales people do you have		
1-5	14	73.7
6-10	2	10.5
11-15	1	5.26
16-20	1	5.26
Missing	1	5.26
Total	19	100.0

From the table above, it is clear that the majority of show rooms (73.7%) have 1-5 sales people, 10.5 % reported that they have 6-10 and another 5.26% had 11-15 sales people. results also indicate that 5.6% had 16-20 sales people. The number of sales people could be an indicator of the number of employees in the enterprise. The findings could be an indication that the car dealers fall in the small and medium enterprise category. This categorization is according to the National Baseline Survey (1999).

Table 4.4
How many cars did you start with?

How many cars did you start with	Frequency	Percent
1	7	35
2	2	10
3	2	10
4	1	5
5	2	10
6	1	5
15	1	5
20	1	5
Missing	1	5
Total	20	100.0

From Table 4.5 above, majority (35%) of the car dealers started with between 1 car while 10% started with 2 cars. The analysis also indicates that another 10% started with between 3 cars and another 10% started with 5 cars and 5% began with 4 vehicles. Another (5%) started with 6 vehicles, 5% with 15 vehicles and a similar percentage had 20 vehicles. From the findings it can be concluded that majority of the entrepreneurs started with a small number of vehicles probably to gauge the market or build a capital base and to increase stock with time.

Table 4.5
How Does the Yard Hold Currently?

How many cars do you have so far	Frequency	Percent
1-10	5	27.8
11-20	4	22.2
41-50	4	22.2
51-60	2	11.1
61-70	2	11.1
71-80	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

From the responses, majority (27.8%) of the car dealers have between 1-10 cars while 22.2% have 11-20 cars. The results also indicate that another 22.2% now have between 41-

50 cars and another 11.1% have 51-60 cars and 11.1% have 61-70 vehicles. A minority (5.6%) currently have 71-80 vehicles. From the findings it can be concluded that majority of the entrepreneurs have increased the number of cars they are now selling.

Table 4.6

What extra services do you offer at your show room to customers?

	Frequency	Percent
What extra services do you offer at your show room to customers		
Installation of alarms	10	15.6
Car cleaning services	11	11.2
Car identity	8	12.5
Fixing alloy reams	4	6.25
Trade in services	12	18.8
Organizing for financing	11	11.2
Importation	2	3.1
Tracking	1	1.6
Connecting sellers and buyers in Japan	1	1.6
None	2	3.1
Total	64	100.0

Out of the sampled respondents 18.8% offer trade-in services while 15.6% install alarms for their clients and 11.2% offer car cleaning services. From the results 11.2% organize finances for their clients while 6.25% fix alloy reams for their clients. The table above also indicates that 3.1% of the dealers do not offer additional services to their customers while 3.1% offer importation services. A minority (1.6%) of the dealers connect buyers to car sellers in Japan. Offering the extra services is a way of attracting and retaining customers.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

Need for achievement

Majority of motor vehicle dealers started their ventures to earn a living and create employment for themselves. This is also a big motivator for survival since without the income them they would not be able to meet their needs. Hence many make decisions to prove to themselves that they can make it and are accountable for them. Cars dealers chose and endured ventures that bring them personal satisfaction, hence a high need for achievement in an ingredient for the success. There were similar results when the respondents were asked whether business success comes when they do their best. About (69%) strongly agree and agree that they thrive on turning circumstances to their advantage.

Entrepreneurial success

73.7% had less than five employees as sales men in their yards; this indicates that the most second hand motor vehicle dealer's fall in the small and medium enterprise category. From the findings it can be concluded that majority of the entrepreneurs started with a small number of vehicles probably to gauge the market or build a capital base and to increase stock with time.

However with time most have grown and added the number of cars they are now selling and offer an assortment of other services such as trade-in services, installing alarms for their clients, car cleaning services, organizing finances for their clients, fixing alloy reams and connecting buyers to car sellers in Japan. Offering these extra services is a way of attracting and retaining customers who are key in business success.

Conclusions

Successful car dealers also believe in themselves. They do not believe the success or failure of their venture will be governed by fate, luck, or similar forces. They believe their accomplishments and setbacks are within their own control and influence and they affect the outcome of their actions. This attribute is consistent with a high-achievement motivational drive, the desire to take personal responsibility, and self-confidence.

Successful car dealers are self-starters who appear to others to be internally driven by a strong desire to compete, to excel against self-imposed standards, and to pursue and attain challenging goals. Research also revealed that people with high need for achievement have a strong desire to solve problems on their own, enjoy setting goals and achieving them through their own efforts and are highly motivated. They also demonstrate high level of creativity and innovation, and show high level of management skills and business know-how. They were also found to be optimistic, (they see the cup as half full than as half empty), emotionally resilient and have mental energy, they are hard workers, show intense commitment and perseverance, thrive on competitive desire to excel and win, tend to be dissatisfied with the status quo and desire improvement, entrepreneurs are also transformational in nature, who are lifelong learners and use failure as a tool and springboard.

Recommendations

Trust in motor vehicle dealing as in any other business dealing must be cultivated for economic growth of any country. The government should therefore put measures to seal the loopholes that create mistrust in whichever step of the transaction, be it between buyer and seller, the cash handling institution or the Kenya revenue authority (KRA).

Since motor vehicle import largely involves use of internet, there is need to encourage motor vehicle dealers by availing affordable internet access from the providers. The government should establish an enabling environment at the domestic level, through policy reforms to be supportive to actors in the motor vehicle industry. Since the motor vehicle industry is equally friendly to youth and women, there should be effort to encourage more of them to venture in this industry. This is a field in which they can excel and earn good profits to change their livelihoods and that of their families.

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