

# Gender Impact on Execution of Business Strategy for Effective Economic Performance in Nigeria

Titilola I. Egbuwe & Barisua F. Nwinee

## Abstract:

This paper explores the differences adduced in literature between the females and the males' sexes regarding their aptitudes in executing impactful business strategies to effectively advance economic performance in Nigeria. Extant literature produced significant gender variant strategies regarding policies execution in meeting with organizational objectives. However, this was reviewed to validate the proposition that performance is not limited to gender but an integration of some identified five taxonomies implicit in strategy execution; the dimensions of rules, emotions, initiatives, immediate action and integrity. We further explored the frontiers of gender management by examining specific factors of various dimensions of strategy execution in the context of whether or not gender has an impact on economic performance. Remarkably, attempts were made to obviate the inclination on gender as inappropriate in determining performance to organizational practices. Literature indicated that both women and men seemed individually inspired by a blend of push and pull factors. This study proves its contribution by stating that despite the empirical evidences in male-female differences in problem-solving abilities, analytical skills, competitive drive, enthusiasm, civility, or learning abilities. An integration of a proportionate gender synthesis will function more effectively in the execution of a business stratagem. The modern society thinking is therefore eroding on the earlier boundaries set between life style and achievement of both sexes.



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## Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been a remarkable improvement as to females' envelopment and subsequent impact in their entrepreneurial activities world over (Minitti, Arenius, & Langowitz, 2005). As such, women play substantial role in entrepreneurial development and advancement in professional concerns (Wilson, Kickul and Marlino, 2007; Mueller and Datoon, 2008). Literature hold that, women stand for more than one third of the world population actively involved in entrepreneurial activities and have better chances of contributing prospective function roles considering the informal sector of most economies (Minitti, Arenius, & Langowitz, 2005). Given the remarkable contribution emanating from women's endeavors, there appears to be unjust assessment of women's contribution across the world economic landscape, showing an aggregated contributions of the male folks over their female counterpart in entrepreneurial activities (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Reynold, Bygrave and Autio, 2004; Minitti, Arenius, & Langowitz, 2005; Bosma and Levie, 2009). Particularly, the 2005 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reports show that within the high-income and middle-income country class, entrepreneurial activities and business ownership attributions had differed considerably. Despite the ill-assessed acknowledgement, women entrepreneurial population and involvement had remained in the upsurge, making significant impact to innovation and common wealth creation in all the economies of the world; they had yet remained understudied.

A follow up on the empirical research dissertations focusing on women's experiences and entrepreneurial challenges that confront them, remains deficient (Low, 2001). Thesis on gender in management had been overtaken by differences in management complications and had rarely sufficed. Scholars have noted that women and men are unique in their stance and have hurdles in course of ascending to managerial or leadership positions (Linehan and Scullion, 2008; Tonge, 2008; Ezzedeen et al., 2009; Altintas et al., 2008; Lamsa and Hiillos, 2008; Fusun and Murat, 2008). Tonge (2008) categorized these hurdles in three forms as it is faced by women in management; psychological, situational and in social space. Yeganeh (2011) examined the effects of cultural values on the gender gap. Similarly, Ezzedeen et al. (2009) studied women's career progression with regard to career/family balancing and discovered some obstacles faced by women within work and family contexts. These obstacles however, have been identified and characterized in certain unique ways (Linehan and Scullion, 2008) in ascending to a top managerial position. A superfluity of literature had added to the debate on gender similarities and differences in leadership style and managerial behaviours (Vinnicombe and Cames, 1998; Phillips, 1995; Govender and Bayat, 1993; Cooper, 1992; Collard, 2001; Van Engen, Van der Leeden and Willemsen 2001; Burke and Collins, 2001; McColl Kennedy and Anderson, 2005). There appears to be an obvious dearth in literature on the effective economic performance of gender impact on execution of business strategy. This explores the frontiers of gender management by examining specific factors of various dimensions of strategy execution in the context of whether or not gender has an impact on economic performance. The objective of this research was to explore the impact of gender in the execution of their objectives leading to economic performance.

## Literature Review

### Gender impact on execution of Strategy:

Strategy execution has been quite dichotomous, an inexact term that lies within the borders of the subject indistinct conceptualization. Strategy execution is the process of manipulating patterns of resource allocation and market interactions indirectly within the context of

business in a bid to achieve set goals. MacLennan, (2010) noted that Strategy execution involves the use of a well thought framework designed to accomplish certain objectives. Bossidy, Charan and Burck, (2011), jointly posited that strategy execution involves getting things done through diverse sets of behaviors and techniques familiar to organizations to compete auspiciously. Sabourin (2009), Richard and Sabourin (2009), Sabourin (2009), Ayandé and Sabourin (2010) have remarkably noted five taxonomies implicit in strategy execution; the dimensions of rules, emotions, initiatives, immediate action and integrity.

**The rules Taxonomy:** The rules Taxonomy is explicated on a strategy that is centered on a realistic analysis of a prevalent situation in order to determine a more coherent and rational structure. This however, results to a more robust business model ensuring an analytic and rational consideration (Sabourin, 2009). Regarding the clarification of objectives and in determining a more coherent and rational structure, men have been reported to have higher self-perceived ability than women in the performance of complex tasks (Busch, 1995b), difficult tasks with uncertainty and few opportunities for feedback (Heilman, 1994; Lenney, 1977) in some decisions making platforms (Barber and Odean, 2000; Barber and Odean, 2001; Biais et al., 2005; Gysler et al., 2002; Jones and Tullous, 2002; Prince, 1993). Studies have however shown that self-efficacy is more exact with task experiences and objective performance feedback (Bandura and Jourden, 1991; Bandura and Schunk, 1981; Bandura and Wood, 1989; Wood et al., 1990). Jones and Tullous (2002) found that male entrepreneurs accounts for a good number of those who display a higher confidence than female entrepreneurs in their ability to make certain decisions. In reality however, the male entrepreneurs appear to be self-assured than their female counterparts. Research however, has not been able to reconcile the axioms between women and men with respect to accuracy and confidence in their estimations (Endres, 2008).

**The emotions Taxonomy:** The second Taxonomy encompasses emotions and has to do with individual obligation and developing employees' convictions within the context of strategy execution (Sabourin, 2009). Van der Boon (2003) postulated that women handle emotions and relationships even responsibilities differently than their male contemporaries. Women's empathetic dispositions and insights are getting into the boardroom as business owners are beginning to realize that in an ever-evolving global world, these attributes are indispensably so required because of how they often get attached to affections. In this Taxonomy, a relevant topic focus is placed on the emotional insinuation in the construction of network relations. Jodyanne (2009) submitted that both women and men seemed individually inspired by a blend of push and pull factors. Caldwell et al. (2009), examined the main effects of the differences among workers regarding gender, combining relevant contextual factors that moderate these main effects on individuals' procedural ethics choices. It was found that women and men share some barriers to networking however; women folks perceive themselves as facing more than twice as many challenges as their male contemporaries, which may consequently; increase their reluctance to engage in networking activities (Tonge, 2008).

**The initiatives Taxonomy:** this Taxonomy relies on passionately carrying out tests of initiatives, actualization of projects and expansion of the existing undertakings (Sabourin, 2009). It is the creative aspect human endeavor, ideas with associated initiatives and subsequent implementation. Scholars have shown that, the will to take proactive decision inevitably; delegation depends on the needs of time and gratification we seek in attaining set

objective (Jodyanne, 2009; O'Brien et al., 2010). Titus and Roger (2003) found that women bosses delegate less than their men contemporaries and display no differences between directive, consultative and participative leadership styles. Sarah et al. (2005) examined the impact of gender in management on the subordinates they supervise and found that women with female supervisors have meaningfully higher levels of job autonomy and work absences than did women with male supervisors or men with either male or female supervisors. The question here is; do women really value their relevance? Do they think they are worth comparison with their male counterparts? Why do they not think that better job could be done with their fellow women? "For Adler, there was no "normal" life style. Every life style was adequate, until life presented it with an assignment for which it was not prepared; it was at those times that its "weak points" emerged." If women must make a change and create the necessary impact to be reckoned with at the global scene, they must be seen as their own change agents, by showing support to the woman course. Armenakis et al. (2009) stated that one of the important factors related to organizational changes is the active participation of the change recipient in the change effort.

**The immediate action Taxonomy:** the taxonomy of immediate action is carried out through instantaneous actions which allows for immediate implementation activities on a moderate level to obtain results fast and adjusting outcome on the basis of feedback (Sabourin, 2009). Davis et al. (2010) examined the effects of chief executive officers' (CEO) gender on market orientation and performance of small and medium-size service businesses and found that in a female-led service in the Small and Medium scale businesses perform substantially better due to their strong market orientation as compared to their male counterparts. Other studies have indicated some distinguishing facts about gender sensitivity in business and note that women had more trust in male than in fellow female supervisors (Jeanquart-Barone and Sekaran, 1994). Although Kabacoff (2002) argue that women in decision-making roles comparatively tend to be as oriented to strategic thinking as the men and are willing to take similar risks as men would.

**The integrity Taxonomy:** The taxonomy of integrity deals with working within the confines of the expected values, ethics and good conscience to achieve set objectives as defined by the organization. In meeting objectives, exhibiting integrity would mean acting without compromising the existing values and principles. Neal-Smith and Cockburn, (2009) noted that the capacity to innovate and attain expected performance level correlates with a more comprehensive philosophy that improves the working culture for women and the varieties that women bring to an organization. Literature generally suggests that females are more principled than males, hence engaging and encouraging females in their careers would certainly promote a more decent environment (Gill, 2010). Accordingly, Females appear to demonstrate uncommon thoughtfulness in ethical issues than their counterpart would.

## GENDER IMPACT AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

According to Adler's theory of Individual Psychology, there are multiples of goals we dare to pursue in our lives, and how we prioritize these goals, according to Adler, is based on self-ideal which is often referred to as the higher-order goal (Adler, 1945, 1946 & 1956). Self-ideal is our beliefs, our culture and the ideal person we want to be referenced as, which we form at the childhood stage. This self-ideal perception according to Adler, navigates us towards striving for superiority, which is the ultimate drive behind human behavior. Obviously, we habitually aspire to advance on our supposed ration in life, to be valuable in our acclaimed

position. As Adler puts it, "the material of life has been constantly bent on reaching an advantage from a disadvantaged situation." This assertion is built on courage mustered by the actor or actress on whom the action lies. Adler wrote that "Courage," "is not an ability one either possesses or lacks, it is the willingness to engage in a risk-taking behavior regardless of whether the consequences are unknown or possibly adverse. We are capable of dauntless behavior provided we are willing to engage it." (Adler) The issue of gender had been a prominent factor that can undeniably alter the performances of certain employees as it has been universally perceived due to the differences in their somatic and psychological makeup. Some studies indicate that different stratification in gender is in variance from 1990s (Kimmel, 2000) and the argument had yet advanced that the modern life style of both genders may not have shown a remarkable difference. Arguably, nowadays men and women are seen and treated equally in all ramifications (Moore, 1999) and organizations are no exception as both contend and compete for the same job position. If both sexes have equal opportunity to access societal resources, it is expected that they both would behave alike (Unger and Crawford, 1992), in terms of productivity outcomes. Naturally, there exists little differences in the way men and women function. For example an average woman may not work at the same capacity level as compared to the male folks. Studies indicate that the men and women are psychologically different (Golman, 1995) as modern management studies indicate that organizational performance of a typical employee depends on their emotional intelligence (Goalman, 1995). Although many studies have indicated that there are notable differences between the male and female personnel (Brush, 1992), some have in the contrary proven that there are no variances in their productivity (Ahl, 2002). Joan et al. (2009) made remarkable attempt to obviate the inclination on gender as inapt in determining performance to organizational practices. Though, Ahl, (2002) argues that a person's gender (masculinity or femininity) is based on differences in their social experiences (Bem, 1993; Korabik, 1999) hence sex may not completely determine gender with respect to performance (Fischer et al., 1993). Granting it has been researched that the career growth of women is often subdued in essentially structural ways (Acker, 1990). Emerging studies however indicate that nowadays there is a gender convergence rather than divergence, the discrepancies are obviously closing in gaps than they were some decades ago (Kimmel, 2000). This is because even from the childhood the male and female of extant generation access the same opportunities in all walks of life and the society seldom discriminates between them. The modern society thinking has started eroding on the earlier boundaries set between the life style of both the sexes.

Ahl (2002, p. 108) argues that "The female underperformance hypothesis" did not hold when put to rigorous tests, accounting for structural factors" and if preferences are taken into account there appears to be no support for the proposed gender differences in entrepreneurial performance. Consequently the study of (Ahl, 2002, p. 125) indicates that the feminine gender is increasingly becoming the "engine of economic growth". As compared to men, women in the western countries have a better chance of succeeding and excelling in businesses due to their better performance dispositions (Blom, 2004). A good point in case is David Cameron's reneged in the heat of Brexit while Theresa May mounted the podium. May promised to press harder with her Brexit campaigns in spite of attempts to force the government to re-negotiate with Brussels. By this, she had made remarkable attempts to avoid detrimental Brexit that will upset businesses and living standards, using it as a catalyst for economic revolution. In her words "It was never going to be easy or straightforward and the final stage was always going to be the toughest," "But we have in view a deal that will work for the UK and let no one be in any doubt - I am determined to deliver it." Solem &

Blekesaune (2005) state that women have more often than men, declared that work is very important to them hence they produce better performance. Though Morrison (2017) evidenced that when women attain the peak of a corporate ladder, they are frequently not remunerated as their male counter parts. In Nigeria, Folorusho Alakija who according to Mfonobong (2014), Forbes list of successful women in 2014 was the richest female of African ancestry in the world. Alakijasecured a license to run an Oil Mining Lease bloc that had been rejected by several high profile male administrated oil companies and turned it to a ten million dollar a day success (Mfonobong, 2014). Some studies have further claimed that there is no performance discrepancy between men and women as appears to be gender convergence rather than divergence in rating, than they were some decades ago (Kimmel, 2000). Inmyxai and Takahashi (2010), conducted a study to examines and compare the performance contrast of male and female headed firms. This research found that differences exist between male and female headed firms in terms of determinants factors of firm performance. Fauzilal Salleh et al, (2012) however, conclude that there are no significant differences between sales performance and business traders' gender. Though other opposing studies had emerged, Orser and Foster (1992); Heck et al. (1995) and Coleman (2000) identified gender differences in the performance of annual sales and profits and found that there were important differences on performance of small firms run by men and women. Similarly, Coleman, (2000); Minoo and Charles (2003) revealed that gender has a significant impact on the performance of micro businesses. According to Hyde, (1981), William and Bedward (2001) there are no unswerving male-female differences in problem-solving ability, analytical skills, competitive drive, motivation, sociability, or learning ability.

## Conclusion

The Global Leadership Forecast 2011 revealed that organizations with more effective talent management philosophies may have had a higher percentage of women at all levels but, most particularly, at the executive level. Organizations that have shown effectiveness in their management culture appear to have had 40 percent more female leaders than organizations with a less effective culture (e.g. The Global Leadership Forecast 2011). The authors of "Why Women Mean Business" point out that gender is no longer a "women's" issue; it is a business issue (Wittenberg-Cox & Maitland, 2009). DDI's Global Leadership Forecast 2011 (Boatman & Wellins, 2011) revealed that the quality of managerial aptitude in an organization associates firmly with performance against competitors. More specifically, organizations that have collective values, committed to bottom-line growth, and that allow some level of authority to those who place priority to value innovation rather than status quo were more likely to have women leaders in positions. This gap is worrisome because evidence had shown that women, especially at the senior level, help organizations perform better. However, an integration of a proportionate gender synthesis will be more efficacious in the execution of a business stratagem for effective economic performance in Nigeria.

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