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<p>Omary Swallehe (Author) <i>Mzumbe University</i></p>	<p>Determinants for the entry modes choice into foreign markets by SMEs in Tanzania</p>
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Abstract

Purpose –This paper aims to investigate the determinants for the entry mode selection by SMEs in Tanzania. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the criteria these establishments use in selecting the entry mode overseas by SMEs in the country. **Design/methodology/approach** – In this study, a Stepwise Regression technique was employed through Minitab software. The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive design to collect and analyse data from 326 SMEs obtained randomly from Dar Es Salaam. **Findings** The findings reveal that; Form of ownership, resources, size, manager’s behaviour, Firm orientation, trust, networking, HR capability, Firm structure and proximity to the markets are critical in determining the entry mode choice by SMEs in Tanzania. These variables account for 54.0% of the variance in explaining the determinants for entry mode selection by SMEs in Tanzania.

Originality/value –The study has identified the critical determinants for selecting entry mode among SMEs in developing countries. The study will be used as a stepping stone for those aspiring to investigate the entry mode selection criteria in the future.

Keywords: Tanzania, SMEs, Determinants, Stepwise Regression, Entry mode, foreign markets, Minitab.

Introduction

The choice of entry modes into overseas markets is one of the strategic issues firms aspiring to compete in internationally will have to make. For Small and Medium-sized enterprises, the choices could be on the following entry modes; Exporting, licensing, joint venture and wholly owned subsidiaries or simply foreign direct investment. According to Hwang & Kim (1990); Contractor (2001), each of the entry above modes is linked to the varying commitment of resources, the level of control and associated risk.]

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises are recognised worldwide for enhancing entrepreneurship culture, job creation, and poverty reduction, contributing to economic development in advanced and developing economies (Abor & Quartey, 2010). From this fact, many countries have implemented policies and programs to promote SMEs in international and local businesses. In Tanzania, there are about 3 Million establishments in the form of SMEs employing a staggering 5 million. The reality is that the significance of SMEs for economic development is growing tremendously among countries in developed and developing economies. Because more and more SMEs are operating in international markets, studying the factors/determinants for the selection is paramount.

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Like in many other countries, SMEs in Tanzania face difficulties penetrating and increasing that penetration in international markets. The challenges arise due to needing more financial resources and those related to access to foreign markets. According to studies by Goedhuys & Sleuwaegen (2016), SMEs need help to analyse and meet the requirements in foreign markets. Increasingly, factors such as poor understanding of the foreign customer's demand, limited capacity to deliver the products within the specified period, unreliable delivery, and after-sell services, together with lack of networking, have been mentioned frequently as obstacles for SMEs to foray into foreign markets. Other researchers have pointed to the lack of appropriate policies to promote international business for small and medium-sized enterprises, problems associated with marketing costs and owner-manager experience in undertaking foreign markets (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2019).

Literature on entry modes selection has investigated the choice of a single entry mode from several options; however, in reality, several entry modes are employed by firms concurrently in many cases (Benito et al., 2011). Firms use multiple entry modes depending on their situations, the level of competition and the strategic orientations of the firms (Fletcher, 2001). Other studies have investigated factors determining the organisations' choice of entry, and some have gone further to explore the theories guiding the selection of the entry modes (Autio, 2017; Magnani et al., 2018).

The investigation into entry mode selection has attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners in the past 40 years, and it has ever since been regarded as an internationalisation process. Researchers such as Fletcher (2001) and Magnani & Zucchella (2019) contend that this area of study is one of the areas of international business where the researchers have dwelled much more in the last four decades than in any other site. Only recently, entry mode selection or an internationalisation process has been studied primarily on global and huge multinational organisations, of which small and medium-sized organisations need more regard for investigation (Jonson & Sandberg, 2008; Wright et al., 2007). The size of these establishments has been cited as the main barrier for them to operate globally or simply in international business due to resource constraints (Fink et al., 2008; Jansson & Sandberg, 2008).

The number of SMEs forays into overseas markets grows yearly in developed and developing economies (Nummela et al., 2006). In many countries, SMEs account for the more significant part of the enterprises; that being the case, they also play an essential role in the country's economic growth. Resultantly, the internationalisation of SMEs has attracted the attention of academia and government alike (Crick & Jones, 2000; McDougall & Oviatt, 1996; Nakos & Brouthers, 2002). Researchers and practitioners reveal that entry mode selection is vital for these establishments to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the overseas market. The study of entry mode selection has been attracting the attention of many researchers most recently (Agndal & Chetty, 2007; Musso & Risso, 2014; Sakarya et al., 2007).

International business is constantly changing, bringing challenges in selecting overseas markets to enter and the modes to penetrate these markets. More and more countries are getting into economic integrations, and corporations are forming the Strategic alliance, sharing information and development of science and technology have reduced these challenges significantly (Basle et al., 2018; Ferreira et al., 2018; Kraus et al., 2018). Studies conducted by Dai et al. (2014) and Knight (2001) revealed that proper entry mode selection had reduced the challenges encountered by firm operations in international markets. However, other studies found that many SMEs still

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need to be more willing to market their products and services due to their size and resource constraints. The lack of resources and size of SMEs have invariably affected the capability of these establishments, mostly from developing countries, to operate in overseas markets. Other researchers suggest that the study into the selection of entry modes into foreign markets should be studied from a strategic management angle (Kyvik et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2017).

The study by Autio (2017) found that because of the growing concern about the international business environment and changes in the way companies operate in global markets, the need to investigate the selection of entry modes from a strategic management point of view is essential. This is because researchers need to develop theoretical conceptualisation to study the relationship between the company's characteristics (Magnani et al., 2018), the external environment, which is constantly changing (Dess et al., 2008), and the full range of strategic decisions to foray into overseas markets. Accordingly, very few studies have investigated the selection of the entry modes from a strategic viewpoint, as contended by Autio (2017), despite an abundance of literature and studies on SME internationalisation.

Quite a good number of studies have investigated determinants of entry modes selection for SMEs such as; Firm Strategy, Firm Structure, market orientations of the firms, human resources capability, networks, experience, level of trust, and size of organisations have shown to play a significant role in SMEs foray into overseas markets (e.g. Amal et al., 2013; Chaston & Sadler-Smith, 2012; Luo & Tung, 2007; Mendy & Rahman, 2019; Moreno-Menendez & Casillas, 2014). Additionally, studies have found that regional and economic development (see, for example, Benneworth, 2004; Huggins & Williams, 2011; Laukkanen, 2000) also contributes significantly to selecting expansion modes into foreign markets. However, due to smallness and resource constraints, many entrepreneurial firms still need to be more willing to sell their output in international markets. Such challenges have invariably affected the ability of SMEs from developing countries to compete in the global market (Kyvik et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2017). This article investigated the determinants for the internationalisation of SMEs in Tanzania. The study recognises that a handful of studies conducted in the area of SMEs internationalisation had concentrated on identifying the barriers to entering foreign markets by SMEs (See, for example, Fidrmuc & Fidrmuc, 2016; Chen, Yao, & Mallizard, 2017; Alaoui & El Makrini, 2014). Other studies reviewed focused on the size of organisations and entry Modes selection (Kyvik et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2017). A few studies investigated the criteria for entry mode selection (e.g. Amal et al., 2013; Chaston & Sadler-Smith, 2012; Luo & Tung, 2007; Mendy and Rahman, 2019; Moreno-Menendez & Casillas, 2014;), have been conducted in other countries with different economic and social well-being. Researchers contend that contextual and methodological issues contribute significantly to the findings of the studies (Mendy & Rahman, 2019; Swallehe & Mwilongo, 2021; Swallehe, 2022). That being the case, this article seeks to find an answer to the research question, "What are the determinants for the selection of entry modes among SMEs in Tanzania?"

2. Theoretical Review of Literature

2.1 Transaction Cost Theory-TCT

Transaction Cost Theory-TCT has frequently been employed in studies investigating the entry mode selection criteria (Zhao, Luo, & Suh, 2004). This theory is gaining a reputation and

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popularity in studies concerning small business management ((Majocchi, D'Angelo, Forlani, & Buck, 2018; Pollak, 1985).

TCT focuses on the uniqueness of an item to be sold into an overseas market which raises transaction costs (Dyer, 1997), which will result in making the market transactions less efficient and less competitive for the customers. The study by Corbetta, Chua & Sharma (2005) on family-owned businesses revealed that family control of business enhances the business assets' specificity. In this case, the form of ownership is critical regarding entrance mode selection (Corbetta & Salvato, 2004; Memili et al., 2017). Conversely, recent studies have shown the influence of business ownership forms and the choice of entry modes into overseas markets (Boellis et al., 2016; Kao, Kuo, Chang, 2013; Kuo, Kao, Chang, & Chiu, 2012). The findings from the studies highlighted above contradict, with some researchers claiming that the inherent nature of risk aversion leads to most of these establishments preferring Joint Ventures ahead of Whole Owned Subsidiaries overseas.

Also, the tendency of these establishments not to recruit an outsider would restrict access to foreign experience (Chrisman, Memli, & Misra, 2014). The form of ownership usually enhances the willingness of the owners/managers to share risk with a business partner, hence preferring a Joint Venture mode of entry ahead of other means of internationalisation (Kuo et al., 2012). Similarly, Boellis et al. (2016) found that a business owned in a family setting would prefer Greenfield investment over the acquisition of existing foreign organisations. In another finding, Abdellatif, Amann, & Jaussaud (2010) reveal that Family owned businesses prefer WOSs as the entry mode to JVs. The take-home here is that form of ownership plays a vital role in determining an entry mode into overseas markets.

H1=The form of ownership, Firm orientation, firm structure and strategy directly and positively determine SMEs' selection of an entry mode in Tanzania.

2.2 Contingent Theory

This theory assumes that deciding to enter a particular market overseas is not rational or one which can be predicted. The entry mode choice depends on an interface between a manager's behaviour and the prevailing market situation (Donaldson, 2001). Thus, neither local nor foreign markets may become a permanent option for a firm, small or large. As Otto Anderson argues, both internationalisation and expansion of businesses in new markets are contingent (Anderson, 1997). In this article, the decision to choose a particular entry mode dynamically depends on what is taking place in the foreign markets, like changes in the demand of the customers, level of competition and the level of resources committed in the international markets. However, focusing solely on the contingency approach might lead one to disregard long-term planning for business development and marketing objectives (Mendy & Rahman, 2019). It also impairs company owners' and organisations' capacity to make strategic decisions about market entry modes based on the present advantages.

H2=The manager's behaviour and prevailing market conditions directly and Positively determine the choice of entry into the overseas markets.

2.3 Resources-Based View-RBV

In order to understand SME internationalisation, RBV has been extensively investigated (Brouthers et al., 2015; McDougall & Ovitatt, 2000; Lu & Beamish, 2006). This theory outlines how businesses may expand internationally and accumulate resources and capacities to gain a competitive edge domestically and abroad. RBV focuses on resources and capacities, which is one of the significant issues faced by many SMEs while intending to Reference, according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009) and Oviatt & McDougall (1994). An example of a context finding Singh et al. (2010) 118 Samoa SMEs 78 Fiji SMEs Samoa, Fiji The results show that it is challenging to evaluate the variables and the degree of their impact on the internationalisation of SMEs in Fiji and Samoa.

H3=The financial, Physical and Human Resources capabilities directly and positively determine the choice of entry mode into overseas markets

2.4 Networking Theory

This theory of internationalisation of SMEs is recognised as being motivated by social networks, as evidenced by earlier research (Lu et al., 2010; Oehme & Bort, 2015; Owen-Smith & Powell, 2008). Entrepreneurs can emulate the techniques of networking partners and effectively disseminate internationalisation practices through networking (see, for example, Milanov & Fernhaber, 2009; Zhou et al., 2007; Agndal & Chetty, 2007). According to Lu et al. (2010), a small firm's institutional capital and information acquisition capacity will benefit how well it performs internationally. Similarly, an economy's institutional framework can provide entrepreneurial businesses with resources and inputs for internationalisation (see, for instance, Peng et al., 2009; Wilkinson & Brouthers, 2006).

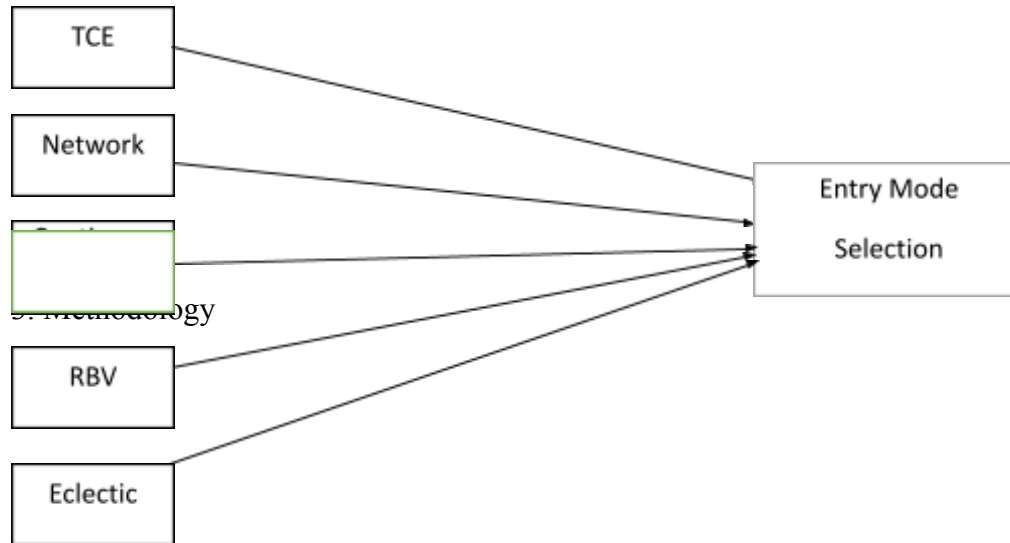
H4= The level of Networking and experience directly and positively determine the choice of an entry mode into the overseas markets

2.5 Dunning Eclectic Theory

Researchers have employed this theory as a theoretical lens to describe how enterprises internationalise (process) and choose their entry strategies (stages or leapfrog hopping). According to this paradigm, a company may internationalise by using the benefits of ownership, location, and internationalisation (Dunning, 1988). Researchers can better understand how entrepreneurship fuels economic progress in underdeveloped nations by examining the transnational motivations of entrepreneurs (Boso et al., 2017; Huggins & Williams, 2011; Kalagadda & Rao, 2019).

H5=Location and Level of SMEs' internationalisation directly and positively determine the choice of an entry mode into the overseas markets.

Figure 1: The study Model



Source: Researcher own construct-2023

In this study, we have developed the study model or conceptual framework based on the five prominent theories in determining entry mode choices. The theories employed are; Transaction cost Economies, Networking Theory, contingency theory, Resources Based View theory and Dunning Eclectic theory. The theories were further used to develop the five study hypotheses as above.

3. Methodology

This study uses a cross-sectional design to collect and analyse the data. The design is appropriate for determining the what, who, when and how much (Fraenken & Wallen, 2000). This design is suitable as the current study aims to investigate the determinants for SMEs’ selection of entry modes from Tanzania. Cross-sectional research looks at data collected from different parts of an area to give a picture of that population at one particular point. Results from the descriptive design approach should be quantified. The interesting population's descriptive cross-section. This design will better understand the study topic by defining the factors involved.

This study used a sample of 281 drawn from SMEs marketing their products and services in overseas markets. The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam, and the sample was drawn from 1650 SMEs. According to the literature, what makes a sufficient or appropriate sample needs a definitive answer (Fraenken & Wallen, 2000). These responders were expected to be suitable and reasonable because the study was quantitative. The proper sample size is taken into account in this investigation.

Based on the presumption that all other things being equal, the bigger the sample, the better the precision, 281 respondents were selected as a representative sample size. The size effect shows the intensity of the association between variables in the population. Assuming all other factors remain constant, the bigger the impact size, the more strongly a phenomenon will present itself (Fraenken & Wallen, 2000). Stepwise regression is the correct methodology when there are many

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variables and you want to find a valuable subset of the predictors. Minitab's usual stepwise regression method involves adding and removing predictors one at a time. When all variables not part of the model have p-values higher than a specific Alpha-to-Enter value, and when all. All survey results were subjected to Pearson Correlation analysis for significant correlation and Multiple Regression analysis to see whether they were linearly connected to the five hypotheses that served as independent variables. Finally, the researcher contrasted the study's findings with the existing literature. In that case, the results are described by the model, which is illustrated in the manner that;

$$\text{EMS} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ownership} + \beta_2 \text{size} + \beta_3 \text{networking} + \beta_4 \text{orientation} + \beta_5 \text{Structure} + \beta_6 \text{Strategy} + \beta_7 \text{Proximity} + \beta_8 \text{Experience} + \beta_9 \text{HRcapability} + \beta_{10} \text{Behaviour} + \beta_{11} \text{Trust} + e$$

Where by

EMS = Entry modes selection, β_0 = Constant factor

β_1 ownership = Forms of ownership of SMEs, β_2 size=Size of Firm, β_3 Networking= Firm networking in overseas markets, β_4 orientation=Firm orientation, β_5 Structure =Firm Structure, β_6 Strategy= Firm Strategy employed, β_7 Proximity=Firm distance to the market, β_8 Experience= Firm experience in the international Business, β_9 HRcapability=Human Resource Capability, β_{10} Behaviour= Manager's behavior, β_{11} Trust=Level of trust, e=error

4.1 Results and Discussion

The results of the current study are presented starting with SMEs' descriptive statistics regarding ownership, experience, business types, and size. The semi-structured self-completion questionnaires were designed and sent to 391 SMEs in the City of Dar es Salaam. Dar Es Salaam was selected as an area for this study due to its relevancy in having more SMEs operating in foreign markets than any other cities combined. Of the total 391 questionnaires sent to the respondents, the researcher managed to collect 326 responses, equivalent to 83.3% of the total questionnaires sent to the respondents. In this study, we have used Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table to determine an appropriate sample size. According to the table for a 1,655 study population, an appropriate sample would be 313. We sent 391, expecting some respondents to be unable to respond and return the questionnaire on time. However, 326 were filled correctly and returned, far enough than the required threshold 313.

Regarding the ownership structure of SMEs investigated, the study found that 179 out of the total 326 respondents were either family businesses or sole proprietorships. This is in line with the previous studies see, for example, Boellis et al. (2016); Kao, Kuo, Chang (2013); Kuo, Kao, Chang, & Chiu (2012), that the majority of SMEs in developing countries are in the form of family businesses or sole proprietorship. These studies investigated the form of ownership and choice of entry modes in overseas markets. Regarding business types, the study found that most respondents are SMEs engaging in marketing agricultural produce to overseas markets. The findings support the work of other researchers, such as Autio (2017); Magnani et al. (2018), regarding the nature and types of products from developing countries. This is to say that most SMEs are marketing unprocessed food products, and very few are manufacturing and marketing finished products. Furthermore, most of the investigated SMEs are small compared to medium-sized ones. The finding is not surprising as the majority of the establishments, around

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95%, are small businesses and the remaining 5% accounts for large and medium size establishments.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis-Stepwise Regression

The main objective of this investigation was to determine the critical determinants for the selection of entry modes into foreign markets by SMEs from Tanzania. Five theories were employed to develop 11 variables in the abovementioned hypotheses.

The findings reveal that, out of 11 variables, only ten were retained in the analysis as it was considered unnecessary in the stepwise regression analysis. In this technique, only important variables are retained, while those which are not necessary are excluded. The firm strategy was included, and our analysis remained with ten variables: Form of ownership, resources, size, manager’s behaviour, Firm orientation, trust, networking, HR capability, Firm structure and proximity to the markets.

Regression Equation

$$\text{EMS} = -2.256 + 0.2350 \text{ EMOWN} - 0.1225 \text{ RESOURCE} + 0.4512 \text{ SIZE} - 0.0634 \text{ MANAGE} + 0.5042 \text{ ORIENT} - 0.0941 \text{ Trust} + 0.0451 \text{ network} + 0.1920 \text{ HRCapa.} + 0.1412 \text{ Structure} + 0.1918 \text{ Proximity}$$

Furthermore, variables such as Manager’s Behaviour, level of Trust and Networking did not significantly impact the selection for entry modes. Although the three variables directly and positively impact the selection of entry modes, their impact is insignificant, as seen in Table 1 below. This is contrary to the findings from previous studies, see for example, Lu et al. (2010); Oehme & Bort (2015); Owen-Smith & Powell (2008) regarding the influence of social networking on the selection of entry mode; Donaldson (2001), on manager’s behaviour and the determination of entry mode, Boellis et al., (2016); Kao, Kuo, Chang, (2013); Kuo, Kao, Chang, & Chiu, (2012) on level of trust and selection of entry modes.

Table 1: Analysis of Variance

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Regression	10	238.011	23.8011	39.05	0.000
EMOWN	1	17.294	17.2935	28.37	0.000
RESOURCE	1	2.775	2.7752	4.55	0.034
SIZE	1	16.366	16.3661	26.85	0.000
MANAGE	1	0.502	0.5017	0.82	0.365
ORIENT	1	53.597	53.5965	87.93	0.000
Trust	1	1.675	1.6749	2.75	0.098
network	1	0.138	0.1375	0.23	0.635
HRCapa.	1	7.493	7.4925	12.29	0.001
Structure	1	3.208	3.2078	5.26	0.022
Proximity	1	14.704	14.7035	24.12	0.000
Error	314	191.392	0.6095		
Lack-of-Fit	219	166.725	0.7613	2.93	0.000
Pure Error	95	24.667	0.2596		
Total	324	429.403			

Source: Research study 2023

From Table 1 above, it can be observed that the form of ownership, resources, size of an organisation, firm orientation in overseas markets, HR Capabilities, firm structure and proximity to the markets directly, positively and significantly impact the selection of entry modes by SMEs in Tanzania. The findings of the current study are in line with the works of the previous researchers (see, for example, Amal et al., 2013; Chaston & Sadler-Smith, 2012; Luo & Tung, 2007; Mendy & Rahman, 2019; Moreno-Menendez & Casillas, 2014).

Table 2: Model Summary

Model Summary

S	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq(pred)
0.780722	55.43%	54.01%	51.97%

Source: Study findings 2023

The model summary above indicates that 54.01% of the variance in explaining the determinants for the selection of entry modes by SMEs in Tanzania can be expressed by ten variables, as indicated in the model. This is to say; there are other variables apart from those used in the current study that also plays significant roles in the entry modes selection. The findings of the current study are further supported by the correlation coefficient table 3 and Durbin Watson Statistics table 4 below;

Coefficients

Term	Coef	SE Coef	T-Value	P-Value	VIF
Constant	-2.256	0.376	-6.00	0.000	
EMOWN	0.2350	0.0441	5.33	0.000	1.22
RESOURCE	-0.1225	0.0574	-2.13	0.034	1.57
SIZE	0.4512	0.0871	5.18	0.000	4.35
MANAGE	-0.0634	0.0699	-0.91	0.365	2.57
ORIENT	0.5042	0.0538	9.38	0.000	1.55
Trust	-0.0941	0.0568	-1.66	0.098	1.56
network	0.0451	0.0950	0.48	0.635	4.67
HRCapa.	0.1920	0.0548	3.51	0.001	1.69
Structure	0.1412	0.0615	2.29	0.022	1.62
Proximity	0.1918	0.0391	4.91	0.000	1.27

Durbin-Watson Statistic

Durbin-Watson Statistic = 1.35086

d

5. Conclusion and direction for future studies

The findings of the current study reveal that. Form of ownership, resources, size, manager’s behaviour, Firm orientation, trust, networking, HR capability, Firm structure and proximity to the markets are the critical determinants for selection. Ten variables were used in this study, and the analysis technique-Stepwise regression, excluded one variable (strategy). Furthermore, variables such as Manager’s Behaviour, level of Trust and Networking did not significantly impact the selection for entry modes. Although the three variables directly and positively impact the

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selection of entry modes, their impact is insignificant. The model summary of the analysis reveals that the variables above account for more than 54% of explaining the variance of determinants for entry modes selection by SMEs in Tanzania. In other words, it can be said that there are other variables apart from those used in the analysis, which can be used to explain the remaining 46% or so of the variance in explaining the determinants. The limitation of the current study on the sample size, study area and cross-sectional research study employed to pave the way for future studies to investigate larger samples and application of panel data in studying the determinants for entry modes selection. There is a need to develop new theories for explaining the determinants of the selection of entry modes by SMEs in developing countries. Despite the limitations, the current study has opened Pandora's Box by investigating determinants for entry mode selection by SMEs in developing countries.

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Collins Darkwah Aboagye (Author) <i>Sgc Solutions Ltd</i>	Running Head: Global International Business and Marketing
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This paper presents an exploration of the dynamic field of global international business and marketing. It examines the challenges and opportunities that arise from conducting business in a global context, with a specific focus on the interconnectedness of markets and the importance of effective marketing strategies. The paper aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing insights into the current trends and best practices in global business and marketing.

The research methodology employed in this study is a comprehensive literature review, drawn from various scholarly articles, books, and reports. The analysis highlights key concepts, theories, and frameworks that guide international business and marketing practices. Special attention is given to the impact of globalization, cultural diversity, and technological advancements on international business operations.

The findings of this study underscore the significance of adapting business strategies to suit the global market landscape. Effective market entry strategies, such as market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, are crucial for organizations seeking to expand their operations internationally. Additionally, the importance of cultural sensitivity and understanding is emphasized, as cultural differences play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior and preferences.

Furthermore, the paper explores the role of technology in facilitating global business and marketing. It examines the influence of digital platforms, social media, and e-commerce on reaching a global customer base. Strategies for leveraging technology and digital marketing tools are discussed to enhance international market penetration and brand visibility.

The implications of the study extend to both academia and practitioners in the field of international business and marketing. The insights provided can guide future research endeavors and assist organizations in developing effective global marketing strategies. By embracing the opportunities and addressing the challenges presented in the global marketplace, businesses can maximize their potential for growth and success.

Keywords: Global international business, marketing, globalization, market entry strategies, cultural diversity, technology, digital marketing.

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<p>Adadu Michael Ushie (Author) <i>Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an China</i></p>	<p>Sustainable environmental performance and top-level managerial environmental commitment: The role of corporate environmental ethics and financial resource slack</p>
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Abstract

Does top-level managerial environmental commitment drive corporate environmental ethics (CEE) as an important signal in emerging economies? Building on signaling theory, this study helps to understand how top-level managerial environmental commitment drives CEE to enhance environmental performance. Specifically, we investigate how CEE and financial resources slack simultaneously influence the link between top-level managerial environmental commitment and environmental performance. Using sample data from 327 Chinese firms and analyzed through SPSS version 21, we tested the proposed hypotheses through moderated mediating analyses. The findings indicate that firms with a high top-level managerial environmental commitment achieve better environmental performance. Our findings further show that the moderating role of financial resource slack and the mediating role of CEE positively enhance the relationship between top-level managerial environmental commitment and environmental performance. These findings suggest that top-level managerial environmental commitment to corporate ethics provides critical signals in driving environmental performance. Hence, our study advances environmental management and strategy literature by showing that top-level managerial environmental commitment is the most important strategy for firms that pursue environmental performance in an unstable business environment.

Keywords: Sustainability; environmental performance; top-level managerial environmental commitment, corporate environmental ethics; financial resource slack.

<p>Sukhjeet Kaur Matharu (Author) <i>Prestige Institute of Management and Research, Indore, MP, India</i></p>	<p>Saukhyam: Empowering women through eco-friendly strategies.</p>
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Introduction

- In this study, we have endeavored to assess the influence of social enterprise on empowering marginalized segments of society.
- Our research delves into the role of social enterprises as a transformative force, particularly in enhancing the socio-economic standing of women in rural areas.
- Furthermore, we examine a specific case study that exemplifies the implementation of a circular economy model, which has effectively uplifted the financial well-being of rural women.
- Additionally, this paper investigates the sustainable solution provided by the social enterprise, specifically tailored to address the needs of women in rural India.

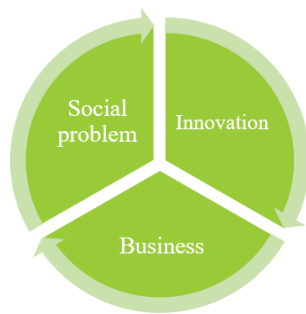
Literature review

- The term "Social Entrepreneurship" was first coined in 1980 by Bill Drayton of Ashoka, the world's leading international association of social entrepreneurs.
- According to Chege (2014), businesses focus on social benefits to be able to meet social needs, improve the environment, promote equity, and improve the living standards of the community.
- Social entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a valuable approach for addressing social issues. The intention to engage in social entrepreneurship is seen as a crucial factor in establishing a social enterprise (Kruse, P., Wach, D., & Wegge, J. 2021).
- Given that social entrepreneurship is a relatively recent field in India, it is crucial to comprehend the ecosystem and the government's role in fostering such enterprises. Entrepreneurship inherently entails risk and uncertainty, and social entrepreneurship is no different in this regard (Swain, S., & Patoju, S. K. S. 2022).

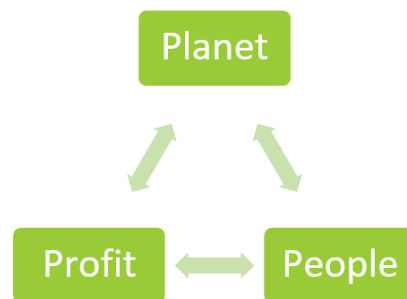
- Social enterprises aim to achieve a social mission while also employing a well-developed income strategy. As a result, they are often perceived as hybrid entities that integrate elements of both traditional non-profit organizations and for-profit enterprises (Kruse, P., & Rosing, F. 2023).

Social Entrepreneurship & Social Enterprises

There are three dimensions to Social Entrepreneurship



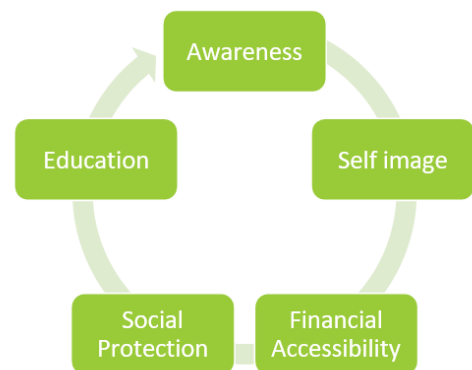
There are three 'P's to Social Enterprises



Women Empowerment

- Enabling them through increased awareness and skill development.
- Enhancing the representation and self-image of women within communities by challenging traditional norms that impede women's participation.
- In rural areas, patriarchal structures often prevail, necessitating the creation of easily accessible financial resources.
- Insufficient attention to maternity leave and menstrual hygiene has contributed to the decline in the female workforce in rural regions.
- Numerous rural families face challenges associated with inadequate family planning and

poverty, which hinder their access to formal education. A prevalent issue among rural women is menstrual hygiene, leading to a significant number of school dropouts among girls in rural areas of India.



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Case Selection Criteria

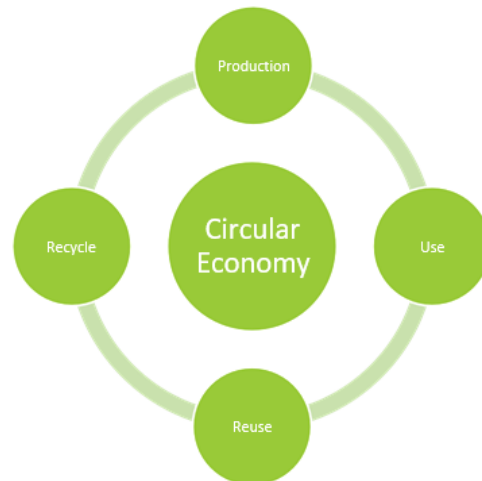
- **Saukhyam Reusable Pads** is led by Women Social Entrepreneurs, who have played a crucial role in its journey from inception to the present day. Women's participation has been an inherent and essential component at every stage.
- **Saukhyam Reusable Pads** was established with the primary objective of empowering women in rural and marginalized communities of India through education and enhancing their livelihoods. With the integration of circular economy principles and sustainable innovations, this social enterprise has achieved remarkable social outcomes.
- By successfully creating employment opportunities in the rural sector of India, it has made a significant impact, demonstrating its commitment to women's empowerment and economic advancement.

Saukhyam Reusable Pads

- India holds the distinction of being the world's largest banana producer, resulting in abundant and affordable supply.
- **Saukhyam's** revolutionary reusable sanitary napkins utilize banana fiber, a naturally absorbent material, making them the first of their kind globally.
- Remarkably, the banana fiber takes 152 days to decompose and transform into compost, embodying an eco-friendly approach.
- The implementation of a multi-level participation model in an inclusive environment fosters awareness and education, ensuring a holistic

approach to development.

Circular Economy



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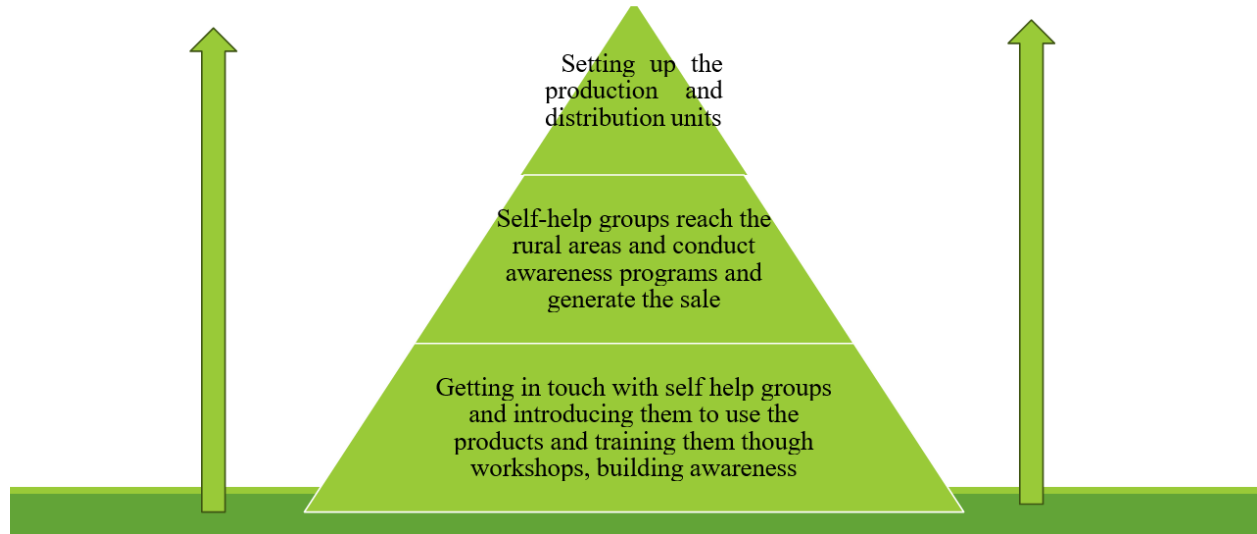


Saukhyam Business Model

- **Saukhyam** adopts the SEED (Stakeholder Engagement in Questionnaire Development and Prioritization) approach, which combines participatory modelling and question development with a review of the evidence available.
- Step 1: Conducting awareness, training, and educational workshops to equip women with knowledge and skills.
- Step 2: Mobilizing women who have already benefited from the product and received training to visit rural areas, collaborate with Self Help Groups, and organize awareness events to generate sales and expand outreach.
- Step 3: Establishing the production unit after generating sufficient awareness, ensuring a solid foundation for the enterprise.



Bottom Up Approach



Social Impact

- *Saukhyam's* approach of training and engaging women in the production and marketing processes has enabled them to effectively reach a larger customer base while creating livelihood opportunities.
- Through consistent training, a strong social media presence, and outreach efforts, *Saukhyam* has significantly increased public awareness regarding menstrual hygiene and the health of adolescent and young women.
- The impact of their initiatives is evident, with 500,000 women having transitioned to using *Saukhyam Reusable Pads*.
- This transition has resulted in the prevention of 2000 tons of CO2 emissions annually and the elimination of 43,750 tons of non-biodegradable menstrual waste since the inception of the project.

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Economic Advantage and Sustainability

- Disposable pads rely on cellulose fibre, sourced from the cutting down of trees. In contrast, *Saukhyam* pads utilize banana fibre obtained from agricultural waste.
- The banana trees are harvested once they have borne fruit, and the fibre is extracted from the already cut trees.
- Considering that India is the largest global producer of bananas, this approach maximizes the utilization of available resources in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Empowering Women In Rural Sector

Saukhyam Reusable Pads are contributing to the creation of sustainable livelihoods in several ways:

- **Employment generation:** *Saukhyam* collaborates with women's self-help groups in various states of India, providing them with opportunities to produce and market the reusable pads. This partnership creates employment opportunities for women, especially in rural areas where economic opportunities may be limited.
- **Skill development:** By engaging in the production and marketing of *Saukhyam Reusable Pads*, women in self-help groups acquire valuable skills such as stitching, quality control, inventory management, and marketing. These skills not only enhance their employability within the context of pad production but also enable them to explore other income-generating avenues.

Empowering Women In Rural Sector

- **Entrepreneurship and empowerment:** *Saukhyam* supports women in self-help groups to establish their own enterprises and become entrepreneurs. By producing and selling reusable pads, these women gain financial independence, decision-making authority, and a sense of empowerment within their communities. This fosters sustainable development and uplifts the overall socio-economic status of women.

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- **Economic stability:** The production and sale of *Saukhyam Reusable Pads* provide a stable source of income for women in self-help groups. This stability improves their financial well-being, contributes to poverty reduction, and reduces dependence on uncertain and low-paying jobs in the informal sector.
- **Environmental sustainability:** *Saukhyam Reusable Pads* are eco-friendly alternatives to disposable pads. By promoting their use, *Saukhyam* helps reduce the environmental impact caused by disposable sanitary products. This emphasis on sustainability aligns with the growing global demand for eco-conscious products, expanding market opportunities for the reusable pads and enhancing the long-term viability of the livelihoods it supports.

Conclusion

- This study delves into the realm of women-led social enterprises within India's dynamic landscape. Through a discerning lens, it examines the entrepreneurial journeys of these social entrepreneurs, unveiling the diverse decision-making logics employed in establishing their businesses.
- Notably, women social entrepreneurs draw inspiration from social issues that directly affect women, such as menstrual hygiene. However, they encounter specific challenges during the scaling and collaboration phase, as they must navigate socio-cultural barriers inherent in their challenging environment.
- One noteworthy example is *Saukhyam Reusable Pads*, which has made a substantial social impact, particularly in the rural sector. This enterprise not only empowers women through income generation but also provides a platform for them to voice their thoughts and accomplishments. By offering a circular economic solution, *Saukhyam* has successfully implemented a sustainable approach to address a pressing societal problem, thereby fostering a positive ripple effect for future generations.
- In addition to tackling menstrual hygiene issues, *Saukhyam* actively promotes women's empowerment and economic independence. Through their innovative endeavors, they have exemplified the transformative potential of social enterprises in India.

Theoretical Contribution

- This research contributes to the field of entrepreneurship and gender studies in several ways.
- This research contributes to the field of entrepreneurship and gender studies in several ways. We explore effectiveness by describing how female social entrepreneurs switch between effectiveness and causal logic at different stages of corporate development to create inclusivity at the level of consumption and influence.
- This study provides evidence of how women entrepreneurs use inclusive strategies, especially during the opportunity-grabbing phase. Organize education and training camps, create job opportunities, and build local ecosystems. It also shows that it is of utmost importance to involve truly disadvantaged consumers in the product development stage. Women social entrepreneurs adopt a bottom-up approach that offers a wide range of co-creation opportunities for disadvantaged clients. Furthermore, the results also show that women were an integral part of the growth in this case, regardless of the company's development stage.

Limitations and Further Research

- Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the current study may have limitations in terms of sample size or geographic scope. Expanding the sample size and including a wider geographical range could enhance the study's generalizability.
- Moreover, while the perspectives of manufacturers are valuable, it is crucial to incorporate the viewpoints of other stakeholders such as retailers, healthcare professionals, and end users. Incorporating these diverse perspectives would provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the subject.
- Furthermore, the study's temporal limitations should be considered, and conducting long-term studies to track the performance and durability of *Saukhyam reusable pads* would provide valuable insights.
- To further the research, investigating the social and economic impact of *Saukhyam reusable pads* on women in rural and disadvantaged communities would be beneficial.

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This could involve in-depth research into women's economic empowerment through the production and distribution of these napkins, as well as examining the overall improvements in menstrual hygiene practices and health outcomes.

- Additionally, conducting comparative studies with other brands of reusable pads and alternative menstrual hygiene products would yield valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of *Saukhyam Reusable pads* in comparison to competing options.

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