

## The Moderating Effect of Business Networking Skills on Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and the Growth of Youth Owned Enterprises in Kenya

Robert Maina Mwangi<sup>1</sup>, Patrick K. Ngugi<sup>2</sup> & Ephantus Kihonge<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Entrepreneurship, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

Corresponding email: Bobmuthua@gmail.com

**How to Cite:** Mwangi, R. M., Ngugi, P. K., & Kihonge, E. (2024). The Moderating Effect of Business Networking Skills on Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and the Growth of Youth Owned Enterprises in Kenya. *Journal Entrepreneurship and Project Management*, 4(3), 11-22.

### Abstract

**Purpose:** Youth businesses play a key role in poverty alleviation when run based on entrepreneurial orientation. However, these micro and small enterprises face a mix of achievement and frustration, with previous findings showing that three out of five companies fail within the first few long periods of activity, despite government efforts to improve the sector. This study aims to assess the moderating effect of business networking skills of communication, coordination, and relationship skills between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of youth-owned enterprises in Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study is supported by networking theory-Resource Based View. A stratified sampling technique was employed to obtain 397 SMEs from 55,300 SMEs registered by the seven selected counties in Kenya namely; Nairobi, Murang'a, Nakuru, Machakos, Mombasa, Kisii, and Isiolo counties. A cross-sectional survey methodology was utilized. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results:** The findings indicated that the association between entrepreneurial orientation and expansion of youth-owned businesses in Kenya was positively moderated by networking skills.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that networking skills, as measured by communication, coordination, and relationship skills lessen the overall influence of entrepreneurial orientation on the expansion of youth-owned businesses. The study suggests that founders of youth businesses should continue to hone their networking skills. In particular, they should be clear in communication just like other players in the market to effectively convey the right message, and apply relationship skills respectively.

**Keywords:** *Business Networking Skills, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Growth, Youth Owned Enterprises*

Received: 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Revised: 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Published: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

## 1.0 Introduction

Growth is evidence of an entrepreneur's sense of fulfillment and of a profitable venture for them. Young and small businesses must grow to survive, as growing companies are less likely to fail than non-growers. The new stream of growth refers to the motivations for and methods for implementing growth through proactive entrepreneurial actions and decision-making procedures (Gancarczyk, & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2015). Business expansion is the stage when a firm reaches a certain size and starts looking for new ways to increase revenues. Business life cycles, market growth patterns, and owners' desires to create equity value all influence how quickly an organization grows. The majority of small businesses have ambitions to expand and boost revenues and sales. However, there are specific techniques that businesses must employ when putting growth strategies into practice. An organization's strategy is greatly influenced by its financial situation, the competition, and even governmental rules. Market penetration, market expansion, product expansion, diversification, and acquisition are a few common firm growth tactics (Bushe, 2019).

Entrepreneurial orientation can be defined as the firm's procedures, practices, and decision-making activities used to improve the value of products and services in response to customer needs that may lead to enhanced performance (Nasution, Rafiki, Lubis & Rossanty, 2021). Further, Jebna and Baharudin (2015) expanded five scopes that differentiate the entrepreneurial orientation of a firm, and these are innovation, proactive steps, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. They also emphasized that entrepreneurial orientation is seen as decision-making with regards to the firm's strategy to embark on these dimensions. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a firm-level strategic orientation that captures an organization's strategy-making practices, managerial philosophies, and a firm's behaviors that are entrepreneurial (Anne, 2021). Entrepreneurial orientation has been considered a crucial element of a firm's competitive advantage, growth, and performance (Isichei, Agbeze, & Odiba, 2020; Lee, Zhussupova, & Khalid, 2019). In current competitive context, where product life-cycles are constantly shortened, entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has been depicted as a key ingredient to enhance relevant firm-level outcomes such as business performance and global competitiveness or corporate entrepreneurship (Lechner & Gudmudisson, 2014).

Networking is defined as the extent of an entrepreneur's relationship cultivation with external entities that affect a firm's competitive advantage and performance (Su, Xie, & Wang, 2015). Entrepreneurs rely on networking to generate connections to potential new clients or business partners through their social ties to the other members of their same group (Abraham, 2020). Networking provides access to financial and non-financial resources and helps entrepreneurs leverage their resources in usable forms that provide sustainable competitive advantage (Anwar and Shah, 2020). Moreover, networking is considered a critical component of social capital within entrepreneurial ecosystems (Spigel, 2017). Social capital is created and maintained by networks. In addition, women entrepreneurs do not participate in networking with the same intensity that their male counterparts do (Manello, Cisi, Devicienti, & Vannoni, 2019; Ozkazanc-Pan & Muntean, 2018) due to limited self-confidence, discrimination issues, a perceived lack of competence relative to men and time and effort concerns regarding their progress within networking activities (Banihani, 2020). However, based on Friebel et al. (2017) argue that women's networking appears more stable, and path-dependent, and exhibits strong and less opportunistic-oriented links, compared to that of men.

Youth in Kenya face vital challenges in safeguarding formal employment. A large population of young people is without decent work and many more are involved either in informal sectors or with temporary low paying jobs. Youth make up 22% of Kenya's population. In 2019, the

rate of unemployment in Kenya was at 19% (KNBS, 2019). In 2015, World Bank data indicated that Kenya had the highest rate of unemployment in East Africa where 17% of young people eligible for work lacked jobs. Curbing unemployment continues to be one of the key policy challenges facing governments across the globe. Many scholars have acknowledged entrepreneurship as one of the possible resolutions to unemployment. Department for International Development (DFID) Generation Kenya Qualitative Report 2018, indicated that youth view entrepreneurship as a legitimate pathway to sustainable livelihood but have limited access to credit. This is despite the formation of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund and development agencies that seek to bridge the capital gap amongst young entrepreneurs in Kenya.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

The Kenya Youth Development Policy (2018) reports that a "youth" is someone who is 18 years old or younger and has not yet turned 35 (Muthee, & Scholar, 2010). A person between the ages of 18 and 34 is considered a youngster, whether they are male or female. To shift from dependency to independence, take charge of their life, and assume societal duties, people must negotiate a complex interplay of personal and socioeconomic changes during their youth, which is seen as a stage between childhood and maturity (RoK, 2018). Despite their importance, records show that in Kenya, three out of five small businesses run by young people fail within the first three years of operation, and 80% of small businesses operated by young people fail before their fifth year in business (Mutuma, 2015).

The Kenyan government established the Young Enterprise Growth Fund to encourage job creation, particularly through youth enterprise development (YEDF). But to succeed, a number of obstacles had to be overcome, including a lack of finance, a lack of entrepreneurial culture among young people, and a high default rate, particularly from financial intermediaries (GoK, 2016). The lack of innovative strategies especially in long-term product planning, operations and inability to transform new ideas and creative processes, lack of proactive action, such as intention to leave a comfortable position for new ideas, low competitive aggressiveness due to inability to face a competitive advantage over competitors, low risk-taking propensity and low growth, are all issues that hinder entrepreneurs from having as much of an impact on the growth of SMEs. Only 20% of the youth-owned businesses have been in operation for the past five years, despite the government's attempts to encourage young engagement in company growth (Ayeni-Agbaje & Osho, 2015). This category of companies was selected for the research considering the fact that young people continue to suffer from high unemployment, even though the government has invested heavily to encourage the development of youth-owned enterprises to solve socio-economic problems. According to Franklin (2017), of Kenya's 24 million people of working age, 1 in 6 young Kenyans are unemployed at the moment.

Moreover, as a way of promoting youth entrepreneurship, the government has heavily invested in technical skills among the youth through colleges and higher institutions of learning across the country. This is in a bid to promote entrepreneurial knowledge and technical skills thus encouraging to invest in the manufacturing sector which is among the Big 4 Agenda by the Kenyan government. Nevertheless, despite all these efforts, the youth-led SMEs continue to underperform and face a high mortality rate. This therefore creates a gap that raises a question of whether entrepreneurial orientation could be the missing point in the growth of Youth-led SMEs. This study sought to assess the moderating effect of business networking skills of communication, coordination, and relationship skills between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of youth-owned enterprises in Kenya.

## 1.2 Research Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant moderating effect of business networking skills of communication, coordination, and relationship skills on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of youth-owned enterprises in Kenya.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

According to resource-based view theory, when a firm acquires some immobile and non-duplicable resources and capabilities, this will add value to the firm's performance (Wernerfelt, 1984). The firm capitalizes on these resources only when it strategically uses them to gain the upper hand against competition when the latter cannot copy these resources and capabilities. SMEs can tap into SME network members' resources only if they join a network. These resources extract sustainable competitive advantage for the network members, if they possess the potential values that are transferable between the strategic alliance members, and only when these values are used to execute invaluable strategies with a lower chance of imitation by others outside the network. The resource-based view states that a firm's sustainable competitive advantage stems from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Therefore, managers should seek to develop and exploit firms' resources that possess these characteristics, such as capital, human, or organizational resources (Barney, 1991; Dhanaraj & Beamish, 2003). The resource-based view has been inclined to focus on the heterogeneity of resources (Welbourne & Pardo-del-Val, 2009) and a firm's ability to provide competitive advantages to the organization and its strategic business decision-making process.

Dyer and Singh (1998) relational model view proposed that the potential a firm has to create competitive advantage depends not just on its resources, but also on its relational assets that is to say, its relationships with other key firms. Following the resource-based view, inter-firm linkages can also be idiosyncratic and thus a source of relational rents and competitive advantage (Sepulveda & Gabrielsson, 2013). In addition, relational capital is path-dependent and firms are limited by the boundaries of their network, in the sense that they may be unable to take advantage of some opportunities because their relationships do not provide access to the appropriate resources to do so (Meiseberg & Ehrmann, 2013; Park, Mezias, & Song, 2004). Therefore, the boundaries of social capital also create opportunity costs (Cowan & Jonard, 2009; Dyer & Singh, 1998; Welbourne & Pardo-del-Val, 2009). A few researchers (Barney & Mackey, 2005; Peteraf, 1993) have strongly argued that measuring the resource-based view theory is problematic. The arguing that resource-based empirical work has to gauge the implications of a firm's resource capabilities, rather than simply examining the resources directly. According to Barney and Mackey (2005), resources have the potential to create economic value for the firms, if and only when firms realize and use the resources to create and implement strategic decisions. These resources generate a sustainable competitive advantage that is costly for competitors or potential entrants to the industry to imitate. The availability of resources can create some competitive advantage within the organization, which is transferable to its core competencies. Networks bring resources to their members so that the members can benefit and translate their success into the organization's performance (Zahra & Das, 1993). However, the available resources are advantageous to the SME and its network members only when the resources have the potential to execute incomparable strategies.

This brings the discussion to the resource-based view theory and its application to validate the arguments that evaluate networking. Resource-based view concedes that an organization seeks to form a strategic alliance when there is a possibility of gaining valuable resources and

knowledge in order to be competitive in the industry, and where those resources are imperfectly imitable (Zaheer & Bell, 2005; Zahra & Das, 1993). The resource-based view of the firm lies in its emphasis on the transferability of the resources and capabilities to implement some strategic plan of action and have a sustainable competitive advantage over the competitor (Barney, 1991). This approach suggests that competition leads to competencies where firms learn how to overcome specific competitive challenges and develop potentially valuable resources and capabilities. It is possible to measure a firm's resources and capabilities, and thus test empirically the effect of these competencies on a firm's strategic options. SMEs in this kind of situation can align themselves with a network to tap into these resources. These resources and capabilities, in turn, can give firms important competitive advantages in subsequent competitive settings advantages that are not available to firms that did not have to respond to the original competitive threats, and thus did not develop the relevant competencies (Barney & Zajac, 1994). This theory underpins the moderating variable of networking skills in the study.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Obiero (2018) conducted a study on the role of social networks on the performance of women-owned small and medium enterprises in Migori County, Kenya. The study findings came up with conclusions; that social network diversity is positively correlated with performance of women-owned small and medium enterprises in Migori county; that woman uses social network strength mostly for strategy analysis, objective analysis, and problem analysis; and finally concluded that structure describes level of closeness or ties existing within a social group among the members, which could be assessed by the frequency of their meetings or interactions. A research study conducted by Kariuki (2020) wanted to find out the moderating effect of social media on relationship between entrepreneurial networking and performance of youth-owned agro-processing SMEs in Kenya. The study revealed that entrepreneurship networking has a significant effect on the performance of the agro-processing SMEs owned by youths. Wanambisi (2022) conducted a research study on entrepreneur networking and growth of small and medium enterprises in Kenya. Entrepreneurial networking was found to have positive significant influence on growth of small and medium enterprises in Kenya.

## **3.0 Methodology**

The research design used a cross-sectional survey strategy combining both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The target population included 55,300 youth-led micro and small enterprises in Kenya. A sample size of 397 youth-led micro and small enterprises was used. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires consisting of closed questions. Research assistants delivered the questionnaires to the respondents. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

## **4.0 Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

#### **4.1.1 Networking Skills**

The respondents were asked for their thoughts on claims made about networking skills. Here is how the Likert Scale was used: (1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4- agree, and 5-strongly agree). The results show that the majority of respondents (82%) agreed that there is good communication between employees and customers in their businesses; 90% of respondents said that their businesses provide a communication channel that employees can use to convey their feedback; 91.7% said that the information they receive on daily basis only



comes from their managers; 79.2% said their ideas are directly communicated to the top-level management; and 93.1% said they can stay organized to keep track of tasks and deadlines.

The respondents also concurred that bringing in strong problem-solving skills which in turn helps them anticipate potential issues before they arise, 94.1%, do allow honest dialogue about their business expectations and goal to find a common ground, 92.6%, 93.4% of those who have good relationship with their customers, suppliers and business networks led to growth in their businesses; while 86.5% work closely with their team and stakeholders to build business success was always a priority; and finally, 88.3% strive to maintain strong connection with their suppliers to stay aligned and produce effective results.

The majority of respondents agree with the claims concerning networking skills, as evidenced by the total average score of 4.5. An all-around standard deviation of 0.8 denotes a close response. This shows that not everybody agreed with the statement concerning networking skills. Consequently, any value of standard deviation below 2 illustrates those who deviated from the mean were few since the deviation was low. This suggests that most respondents generally agreed with the claims made about networking skills. These statements correspond to the suggestion by Abraham, (2020) who claims that entrepreneurs rely on networking to generate connections to potential new clients or business partners through their social ties to the other members in their same group. Moreover, networking is considered a critical component of social capital within entrepreneurial ecosystems (Spigel, 2017). The descriptive results are illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Networking Skills**

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
There is good communication between employees and customers in my business.	3.8%	2.4%	11.8%	31.8%	50.2%	4.2	1.0
My business provides a communication channel that employees can use to convey their feedback.	1.0%	2.4%	6.6%	30.1%	59.9%	4.5	0.8
The information I receive on a daily basis only comes from my manager.	0.3%	4.8%	3.1%	19.4%	72.3%	4.6	0.8
My ideas are directly communicated to the top-level management.	8.3%	6.9%	5.5%	23.5%	55.7%	4.1	1.3
I can stay organized to keep track of tasks and deadlines.	0.7%	2.1%	4.2%	24.9%	68.2%	4.6	0.7
I do bring in strong problem-solving skills which in turn help me anticipate potential issues before they arise.	0.7%	0.7%	4.5%	23.2%	70.9%	4.6	0.7
I do allow an honest dialogue about our expectations and goals to find a common ground.	0.4%	2.8%	4.2%	24.9%	67.7%	4.6	0.7
My good relationship with my customers, suppliers, and business	0.0%	1.0%	5.5%	33.9%	59.5%	4.5	0.7

networks has led to growth in my business.								
Working closely with my team and stakeholders to build my business success is always a priority.	0.0%	3.1%	10.4%	34.9%	51.6%	4.4	0.8	
I strive to maintain strong connections with my suppliers to stay aligned and produce effective results.	0.3%	2.1%	9.3%	23.9%	64.4%	4.5	0.8	
Aggregate mean						4.5	0.8	

#### 4.2.2 Growth of Youth SMEs

The respondents were asked what they thought of assertions made on the growth of fledgling SMEs. The Likert Scale was applied in the following manner: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The findings show that the majority of respondents agreed that their businesses have managed to maintain the workforce for the last three years, (89.3%), always ensure that most of their workers are under a contract of 1-2 years, 83%, ensure that part-time employees are the majority in their businesses, 78.2%, that their ability to take risk in new opportunities has led to increased market share thus raising profits, 79.9%, and their good relationship with customers and suppliers has led to increased sales of product/services, 89.3%.

The participants also concurred they do plan to open new branches to meet customers demand to improve on profit, 86.9%, that continued acceptance of the products and services has increased market size, 86.5%, that new product development has led to the increase of revenue, 87.9% that favorable and affordable price for my products has enabled the business to increase sales volume, 87.9%, and using market segment have increased sales in their businesses, 79.2%.

According to the total average score of 4.3, most respondents concur with the statement about growth. When the common standard deviation is 1.1, the solution is likely to be near. This demonstrates that not everyone agreed with the claim regarding the expansion of young SMEs. Therefore, any value of standard deviation below 2 indicates that the number of individuals who deviated from the mean was small because the deviation was small. This suggests that most respondents generally agreed with the remarks regarding growth. This is similar to the assumption by Bouazza, Ardjouman, and Abada (2015) who declared that the sales these SMEs make act as indicators of how well the company is doing. Thus, increases in total sales volume, production volume, use of raw materials, power, and more personnel are indicators of growth. Profits also affect growth of a company (Yeboah, 2015). The descriptive results are illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Growth of Youth SMEs**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev
My business has managed to maintain its workforce for the last three years.	2.8%	6.9%	1.0%	29.1%	60.2%	4.4	1.0
Most of my workers are under the contract of 1-2 years.	3.5%	6.6%	6.9%	26.6%	56.4%	4.3	1.1
Part-time employees are the majority in my business.	5.9%	6.6%	9.3%	29.4%	48.8%	4.1	1.2
My ability to take risks in new opportunities has led to increased market share thus raising my profits.	8.3%	6.9%	4.8%	29.4%	50.5%	4.1	1.3
My good relationship with my customers and suppliers has led to increased sales of my products/services.	2.4%	4.8%	3.5%	26.3%	63.0%	4.4	0.9
I do plan to open a new branch to meet customers demand to improve on profit.	3.5%	7.6%	2.1%	23.2%	63.7%	4.4	1.1
The continued acceptance of my products and services has increased the size of the market.	1.4%	7.3%	4.8%	29.4%	57.1%	4.3	1.0
New product development has led to an increase in revenue.	3.8%	8.0%	1.4%	32.9%	54.0%	4.3	1.1
Favorable and affordable prices for my products have enabled the business to increase sales volume.	3.1%	6.6%	2.4%	29.1%	58.8%	4.3	1.0
Using market segments has increased sales in my business.	3.5%	9.7%	7.6%	29.4%	49.8%	4.1	1.1
Aggregate mean						4.3	1.1

The respondents were questioned about how much their company's growth had improved during the previous five years. According to Table 3, the average growth in terms of annual profits for youth SMEs was 21-40% throughout the measurement period (2015-2019). The average growth in terms of number of customers for youth SMEs was less than 20% during the study period. Further, the average growth in terms of sales for youth SMEs was less than 20% during the study period. Finally, the average growth in terms of annual expenses for youth SMEs was less than 20% during the study period. The findings imply that most youth SMEs experienced slowed growth in the past five years.

**Table 3: Improvement in Growth of Youth SMEs**

Indicators	Average growth
Annual profits	21-40%
Number of customers	<20%
Sales	<20%
Annual expenses	<20%

## 4.2 Regression Analysis

Results (Table 4) show that the interaction term (X5Z) had a significant and beneficial impact on the growth of youth businesses once the moderator (networking skills) was added to the



model ( $\beta = .292$ ,  $P = 0.044 < 0.05$ ). Additionally, the findings show that entrepreneurial orientation, when combined with networking skills, accounts for 39% ( $R^2 = .386$ ) of all variations in the growth of youth businesses. A comparison between the  $R^2$  without moderation and the  $R^2$  with moderation shows that  $R^2$  has decreased from 43% to 39%, implying that entrepreneurial traits slightly undermine the power of entrepreneurial orientation in explaining youth enterprise growth in Kenya.

The results were contrary to those of Sarwoko, Surachman, and Djumilah (2013), who asserted that strong networking skills of SME owners have an impact on business growth. Ganyaupfu (2013) also established that networking skills have statistically significant positive effects on SMEs' success.

### Model with Moderation

$$Y = 6.413 + 0.292 X5 * Z - 1.14Z - 0.628X5$$

Y = Growth of youth enterprises

$X5 * Z$  = (Entrepreneurial orientation \* networking skills)

Z = Networking skills

X5 = Entrepreneurship orientation

**Table 4: Multiple Regression Model with Moderation**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.622a	0.386	0.38		0.38205	
a Predictors: (Constant), X5Z, X5, Z						
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.838	3	8.613	59.008	.000b
	Residual	41.015	281	0.146		
	Total	66.853	284			
a Dependent Variable: Y						
b Predictors: (Constant), X5Z, X5, Z						
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.413	2.7		2.375	0.018
	X5	-0.628	0.665	-0.514	-0.944	0.346
	Z	-1.14	0.592	-1.136	-1.926	0.055
	X5Z	0.292	0.144	2.076	2.023	0.044

a Dependent Variable: Y

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) stated that the link between entrepreneurial orientation and the expansion of youth-owned businesses in Kenya would not be significantly moderated by networking skills. The p-value of 0.044 (Table 4), which is less than 0.05 and denotes that the

null hypothesis is rejected, supports the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, the link between entrepreneurial orientation and the expansion of youth-owned firms in Kenya is significantly moderated by networking skills.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The study's finding was that networking skills negatively impacted the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of youth-owned enterprises in Kenya. The study concludes that networking skills, as measured by communication, coordination, and relationship skills lessen the overall influence of entrepreneurial orientation on the expansion of youth-owned businesses.

## 6.0 Recommendations

The study also found that networking skills negatively impacted the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of youth-owned enterprises in Kenya. This implies that business owners of youth companies should assess their networking skills. The study suggests that founders of youth businesses should continue to hone their networking skills. In particular, they should be clear in communication just like other players in the market to effectively convey the right message, and apply relationship skills respectively.

## References

- Abraham, M. (2020). Gender-role Incongruity and Audience-based Gender Bias: An Examination of Networking among Entrepreneurs, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 65(1), 151-180.
- Anwar, M., & Shah, P. (2020). The nexus of government incentives and sustainable development goals: is the management of resources the solution to non-profit organizations? *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 26(6), 1284-1310.
- Ayeni-Agbaje, A., & Osho, A. (2015). Commercial banks in Financing Small Scale Industries in Nigeria. *European Journal of Accounting of Entrepreneurship*, 5(2), 1-14
- Banihani, M. (2020), "Empowering Jordanian women through entrepreneurship", *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 22(1), 133-144.
- Barney, J. 1991. Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99-120.
- Bouazza, B., Ardjouman, D., & Abada, O. (2015). Establishing the Factors Affecting the Growth of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Algeria. *International Journal of Social Science*, 4(2), 101-115.
- Bushe, B. (2019). The causes and impact of business failure among small to micro and medium enterprises in South Africa. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 7(1), 1-26.
- Cowan, R., & Jonard, N. (2009). Knowledge Portfolios and the Organization of Innovation Networks. *Academy of Management Review*, 34(2), 320-342
- Dhanaraj, C., & Beamish, P. (2003). A resource-based approach to the study of export performance. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 41(3), 242-261.
- Dyer, J. H., & Singh, H. (1998). The relational view: Cooperative strategy and sources of inter-organizational competitive advantage. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(4), 660-679.

- Franklin, S. (2017). Kenya Economy Groans under Weight of its Jobless Youth. *The Standard Digital*, 25.
- Gancarczyk, M., & Zabala-Iturriagoitia, J. M. (2015). The process of the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 11(4), 3-24.
- Ganyaupfu, E. M. (2013). Teaching methods and students' academic performance. *International journal of humanities and social science invention*, 2(9), 29-35.
- Isichei, E., Agbaeze, E., & Odiba, M. O. (2020). Entrepreneurial orientation and performance in SMEs. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 15(6), 1219- 1241.
- Jebna, A., Baharudin, S. (2015). The impact of entrepreneurial orientation on manufacturing SME performance with the contingent effect of e-commerce in Malaysia. *Advances in Environmental Biology*, 9(5), 24-27
- Lechner, C., & Gudmundsson, S. (2014). *Entrepreneurial orientation, firm strategy, and small firm performance*, *Int. Small Bus. J.*, 32 (2014).
- Lee, H., Zhussupova, B., Khalid, N., & Ahmed, U. (2019). Impact of innovation Capability and Competitiveness on entrepreneurial orientation Regarding the entrepreneurial education in Business Performance among South Korean Firms. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 20(2), 358–367.
- Manello, A., Cisi, M., Devicienti, F., & Vannoni, D. (2019). Networking: a business for women, *Small Business Economics*, 1-20.
- Meiseberg, B., & Ehrmann, T. (2013). Tendency to Network of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises: Combining Organizational Economics and Resource-based Perspectives. *Managerial and Decision Economics*, 34(3-5), 283-300.
- Mutuma, L., (2015). *Entrepreneurial Factors Influencing Performance of Youth Run Agro-Based Enterprises in Ngoliba Ward, Kiambu County, Kenya*. *The Strategic Journal of Business and Change Management*, 2(99), 1458-1482.
- Nasution, M. D. T. P., Rafiki, A., Lubis, A., & Rossanty, Y. (2021). Entrepreneurial orientation, knowledge management, dynamic capabilities towards e-commerce adoption of SMEs in Indonesia. *Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management*, 12(2), 256-282.
- Ozkazanc-Pan, B., & Clark Muntean, S. (2018). Networking towards (in) equality: Women entrepreneurs in technology. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 25(4), 379-400.
- Park, K., Mezas, J. M., & Song, J. (2004). A Resource-based View of Strategic Alliances and Firm Value in the Electronic Marketplace. *Journal of Management*, 30(1), 7-27.
- Peteraf, M. (1993). The cornerstones of competitive advantage: A resource-based view. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(3), 179-191.
- Sepulveda, F., & Gabrielsson, M. (2013). Network development and firm growth: A resource-based study of B2B Born Global. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 42(5), 792-804.
- Spigel, B. (2017). The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 41(1), 49-72.
- Su, Z., Xie, E., and Wang, D. (2015). Entrepreneurial orientation, managerial networking, and new venture performance in China, *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53(1).

- Welbourne, M., & Pardo-del-Val, M. (2009). Relational Capital: Strategic Advantage for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (SMEs) Through Negotiation and Collaboration. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 18(5), 483-497.
- Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5(2), 171-180.
- Yeboah, A. (2015). Determinants of SMEs Growth: An Empirical Perspective of SMEs in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana. *The Journal of Business in Developing Nations*. 14(1)1-31.
- Zaheer, A., & Bell, G. (2005). Benefiting from network position: Firm capabilities, structural holes, and performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 26(9), 809-825.
- Zahra, A., & Das, S. (1993). Building competitive advantage on manufacturing resources. *Long Range Planning*, 26(2), 90-101.