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Cultural effects on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in higher education institutions: A study of the polygamous family firm context in the Southern Region of Nigeria

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Cultural effects on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in higher education institutions: A study of the polygamous family firm context in the Southern Region of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines how cultural factors associated with women in plural families in the Southern parts of Nigeria affect the women's entrepreneurial behaviours in their family businesses – higher education institutions (HEIs). There have been studies on women entrepreneurship, and the associated barriers, in family firms. However, the non-existence of studies on how cultural factors may affect women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamous family firms poses a research gap. We seek to address this in this study, by using the term polygamous family firms in order to make a clear distinction from the traditional family firms that saturate several European countries and elsewhere. This study aims to understand how culture affects women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamous family firms. Specifically, it shows how family belief systems and shared cultural norms influence women's entrepreneurial behaviours in these firms. In this vein, we employed the case study strategy and used interviews and observations in our data collection process. Although polygamy is considered repressive in some cultures, this study's findings reveal that it is a natural practice in Nigeria and not a dying tradition. We contribute to the literature on family firms and female entrepreneurship by showing the cultural hindrances to women empowerment within the polygamous family firm context. We provide theoretical and practical implications as well as future research agenda to encourage more studies on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamous family firms.

KEYWORDS:

1. Polygamous family firms
2. Family business
3. Women entrepreneurship
4. Cultural factors

5. Higher education institutions
6. Southern parts of Nigeria

Introduction

Every society has its cultural values, belief systems and rules. Cultural practices influence people's way of life, and higher education institutions (HEIs) are not excluded (Mendie, 2015; Spillan & Rahman, 2020). HEIs are critical players in the growth and development of individuals and organisations (Dada & Fogg, 2016). Consequently, the influence of culture on family-owned and managed HEIs is pivotal towards promoting entrepreneurial activities. While culture impacts our everyday activities, and HEIs' survival, women appear to be significantly affected. Therefore, there is a need for an in-depth study on the cultural effects on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs, given the paucity of studies in this area among family firm researchers. Even as diverse cultural practices are critical drivers of entrepreneurial activities, cultural practices are subjective and contextual. In this vein, culture is "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour" (Spradley, 2012, p. 9). Culture is not a behaviour, but its application enables the understanding of behaviours in family firms.

Scholars agree that family firms are the predominant form of business enterprises in the world and are pioneering the Schumpeterian concept of innovation (Astrachan & Shanker, 2003; Craig & Moores, 2006; De Massis, Frattini & Lichtenthaler, 2013; Feranita, Kotlar & De Massis, 2017; Morck & Yeung, 2003; Poutziouris, 2001; Teixeira & Correia, 2020; Yanagisako, 2019). Family firms are well structured, old-styled and negate the tenet of corporate governance (Duran, Kammerlander, Van Essen & Zellweger, 2016; Peruffo, 2017).

In this vein, entrepreneurial behaviours in family firms are influenced by cultural factors. These cultural factors promote gender disparity and women's glass-ceiling. Nevertheless, women are visibly challenging these gender norms and carving entrepreneurial niches (Ajekwe, 2017; Duréndez, Madrid-Guijarro & García-Pérez-de-Lema, 2011; Minniti & Naudé, 2010).

Our study takes a different dimension by considering the diverse perspectives of family types, as there is a paucity of studies to explain the cultural implications and entrepreneurial behaviours of women in polygamous families in business. Nevertheless, polygamy is a way of life that has shaped entrepreneurial firms (Fenske, 2015). This chapter aims to understand how culture affects women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamously owned and managed HEIs. More particularly, we explore the societal perceptions of cultural factors on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs. Research shows that gender studies and women's entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs scantily exist in the literature (Ebersberger & Pirhofer, 2011; Fältholm, Abrahamsson & Källhammer, 2010; Liu & Dubinsky, 2000; Rothaermel, Agung & Jiang, 2007). In the context of this study, we view HEIs as commercial ventures aimed at maximising returns for the founders (polygamists) and their families while delivering services. We build our argument that, for HEIs to be genuinely entrepreneurial, individuals or groups should be creative in the traditional Schumpeterian sense of entrepreneurship rather than the social constructionist viewpoints that a particular gender is considered less innovative (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004). Even though gender is socially constructed and rooted in cultural norms and implications, women are rewriting the old-styled cultural norms through the practice of entrepreneurship, which is evident in societal development (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Mathew, 2019; Quadrini, 1999; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Van Stel, Carree & Thurik, 2005; Venkataraman, 2019; Yadav & Unni, 2016). Such growth is evident in the

fact that entrepreneurship is gender blind; that is, both men and women contribute (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004). Consequently, this study examines the following research question: How does culture affect women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamous family firms? The study contributes to the literature on family firms and female entrepreneurship by showing the cultural hindrances to women's empowerment within the polygamous family firm context.

In the following section, we provide a review of relevant prior studies on entrepreneurship and HEIs in general, before introducing the concept of polygamy. Then, we present the methodology section, followed by our research findings. After that, we discuss both the theoretical and practical implications and set a future research agenda.

Literature review

Entrepreneurship in higher education institutions

Foresightedness and innovation are hallmarks of entrepreneurship (Lewis, 2006); hence, the acceptance of entrepreneurship in HEIs has revolutionised and repositioned the sector (Audretsch & Keilbach, 2008; Bekkers & Freitas, 2008; Dada & Fogg, 2016; Dada, Jack & George, 2016). Entrepreneurship in HEIs takes diverse forms and has consequently increased spin-off within the sector (Dada, Jack & George, 2016). Shane (2004, p. 4) refers to a university spin-off as "a new company founded to exploit a piece of intellectual property created in an academic institution." In line with this, our usage of spin-offs here entails any new corporate entities/startups within the parent business (HEI) to generate an additional stream of income. These new streams of income are the manifestations of entrepreneurs' ability to innovate and encourage strategic renewal (O'Shea, Chugh & Allen, 2008; Pinchot, 1985). As Gartner (1988) suggests, to promote entrepreneurial abilities, organisations should be viewed from a behavioural perspective rather than a trait-based perspective; that is, by looking at entrepreneurship in terms of the creation of new, or the renewal of existing, organisations. Such enterprising firms must carve a niche for themselves and maintain a family or business culture (Duréndez, Madrid-Guijarro & García-Pérez-de-Lema, 2011). As suggested by Klofsten (2000), HEIs should create a business culture that surpasses gendered norms. Therefore, for survival and growth, HEIs should build a thriving and conducive environment for entrepreneurial activities, which is not gendered (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Mathew, 2019; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Van Stel, Carree & Thurik, 2005; Venkataraman, 2019).

Fostering entrepreneurial activities in universities has positive multiplier effects (Dada, Jack & George, 2016). Furthermore, Audretsch (2017, p.10) argues that "the link between universities and entrepreneurship is anything but straightforward." Meyers and Pruthi (2011, p. 351) proposed several reasons why HEIs should consider entrepreneurship as a core unit of operation; these include the following: "1. Because it helps universities put teeth into their innovation and mission. 2. Because it is a way for universities to demonstrate to their stakeholders that they are adding value and creating an impact beyond their walls. 3. Because it expands commercialisation revenues and fills the technology transfer pipeline beyond traditional technology-based ideas, inventions and discoveries."

Whilst entrepreneurship in HEIs has cultural implications, Alsos and Ljunggren (2017) assert that entrepreneurial behaviours are not gendered; instead, the narrative that women are less entrepreneurial is socially constructed. Nonetheless, today's women champion breakthrough innovations and contribute to the growth and sustainability of organisations (Ahl, 2006;

Alkhaled, 2020). Hence, this study examines the influence of some elements of cultural practices, including patriarchy, belief, and polygamy on women's entrepreneurial activities in HEIs.

The concept of polygamy

The legal status of polygamy varies around the world. Simply put, the marriage of one man to multiple women at a time is illegal in several countries; hence, this may explain the paucity of studies relating polygamy to business and entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, this neglect poses a research gap as polygamy exists till date in Sub-Saharan Africa (Brooks, 2009; Todd, 2000; United Nations, 2011), and influences everyday social activities of the inhabitants (Mwambene, 2017; Reynos, 2019). This ancient practice could take different forms, such as polyandry or polygyny. Polyandry is the direct opposite of polygyny – the latter is our focus. Polygyny (herein, we use polygamy or polygamous for the purpose of this study) is typical in many African cultures like Nigeria, where a man, especially with a considerable amount of influence and income can decide to marry more than one wife (Reynos, 2019). This gesture is considered acceptable and appreciated, not just traditionally or culturally, but also religiously, by some.

The Kenyan parliament has given its legal backing to polygamous marriages, under the Kenyan Marriage Act of 2014 (BBC Africa, 2014). Furthermore, in Mali, polygamists dominate the male population (Dissa, 2016). By legalising this ancient practice, it is assumed that polygamy may enable marriages for single women, multiplication of children and reduction in the level of divorces. These unique complexities, when manifested in the business environment, could create multilevel effects. Therefore, we rely on the resource-based view to unravel the complex effects of culture on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamously owned and managed HEIs. Universally, the role of the resource-based view in reshaping performance is acknowledged (King & Zeithaml, 2001; MacIntosh & Maclean, 1999; Madhani, 2010). The resource-based view is positioned strategically to interpret the internal and idiosyncratic resources within family firms (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; Madhani, 2010). These resources, if well utilised, can facilitate growth and boost competitive advantage within the firm (Barney, 1991; Barney, 2001; Wernerfelt, 1997). Despite its wide usage, little is known about the applicability of the resource-based view in the context of this research study.

Cultural perspectives on polygamy

The importance of culture in business cannot be overemphasised. Culture influences people's way of life (Mendie, 2015; Spillan & Rahman, 2020). Bearing in mind that culture is an embedded factor in business survival, DeBerry-Spence, Dadzie, Darley and Blankson (2008, p. 379) argue that "African culture should influence organisational behaviour and management practices in Africa." Although the principles of management are universal, both organisational and national cultural practices are inherent. Therefore, the business practices of polygamously owned and managed firms may be a product of cultural influences occasioned by the rationality and mutuality of the people. Polygamy has a significant influence on societies. Additionally, it has shaped family firms in the Southern parts of Nigeria. DeBerry-Spence, Dadzie, Darley and Blankson (2008) argue that cultural practices in Africa are rooted in belief systems that encourage collective participation and altruism. These belief systems may be extreme, ancestral and religiously adhered to within families and societies, shaping the business environment.

Therefore, for the survival and growth of family firms in Nigeria (including those that are HEIs), polygamy as a sub-unit of cultural practice needs consideration.

Methodology

We adopt the qualitative methodology because it is theoretically interesting, combines different data sources, focuses on the relevant issues and are systematic yet non-linear (Kammerlander & De Massis, 2020). Before commencing on the data collection, there was self-questioning to ensure that the stated objectives will be achieved.

Data collection

The data for this study were obtained from sixteen individual participants from two HEIs in Nigeria, that is, KingPele University and Godwin Governor University (see Table 1). All individual participants and institutions are anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

KingPele University was solely conceived, founded and funded by the proprietor. The proprietor, who is a polygamist with three wives and multiple children, acts as the Chancellor and the “father” of the University. KingPele University is privately owned and recognised by the National Universities Commission (NUC) of Nigeria as a degree-awarding institution. As of the 2019/2020 academic session, the student population is about six thousand and twenty-five on full-time courses and one thousand and twenty on part-time courses. There are twenty nine non-teaching staff; and about fifty two teaching staff of which thirty seven are permanent while fifteen are on a part-time contract as at the time of this study. The reasons for having part-time lecturers are to enhance flexibility, strategic planning, and to reduce administrative costs. KingPele University has four faculties with multiple degree courses, including law, microbiology, crop science and accounting, amongst others. Presently, the first son of the founder of KingPele University (who is likely to be the next successor) is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration). Family and non-family members hold strategic positions in the institution.

Godwin Governor University was founded by two brothers (Guinea and Laotu) who are both polygamists with two wives each and multiple children. The University is a privately owned and managed institution, with a clear vision for world-class education and raising highly talented future world leaders. Godwin Governor University prides itself as a hub for bright minds in medicine, innovation and entrepreneurship. As of the 2019/2020 academic year, the student population of Godwin Governor University is about four thousand and seventy students. The teaching staff strength is about thirty eight, while the non-teaching staff is forty four. The University started with two faculties (management and humanities) but has since expanded to six faculties, including law, medicine, agriculture and education. The University offers degrees in marketing, entrepreneurship, agricultural science, law, education, medicine, philosophy, and creative arts at the undergraduate degree levels, amongst others. While at the post graduate level (Masters), the University offers degrees in marketing, management, accounting and creative arts, amongst others. One key focus of the institution is the fostering of entrepreneurial mindsets within the University community. Like the KingPele University, family and non-family members hold strategic positions in the institution.

We adopted the case study research strategy, with data collection via interviews and observations. According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), interview constitutes a primary source of data in the case study methodology. The interview is an essential source of data

collection method because it pertains to human affairs or behavioural events (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). According to De Massis and Kotlar (2014, p. 19), interviews “are a targeted, insightful and highly efficient means by which to collect rich, empirical data, especially when the phenomenon of interest is highly episodic and uncommon”, and are well suited to prompt responses from extreme cases (Yin, 2003). We employed the semi-structured interviews to collect rich empirical data. Semi-structured interview is an in-depth strategy that allows for an open-ended data collection process (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). We adopted semi-structured interview because it explores participants’ thoughts and feelings in their natural environments (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

We also undertook formal and informal observations to buttress the research process (Pettigrew, 1990). While formal observations consist of scheduled times in the data collection process, informal observations were carried out unannounced during leisure and lunch hours (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Pettigrew, 1990). According to De Massis and Kotlar (2014), observation thrives in a natural environment. Therefore, significant amount of time was spent observing family members and non-family members at the HEIs. However, knowing that humans are social beings and may not demonstrate their actual behaviours (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003), we systematically position ourselves for critical observations, knowing that people’s behaviours are dynamic, and they may deliberately allow the observer to see or hear what they want.

We gained approval for this study through the authors’ institution’s ethics committee before commencing data collection. Participants’ confidentiality and anonymity were assured during and after the data collection. We obtained informed consent from each participant through: (a) participants agreeing to the terms of the study by filling and signing the consent form, (b) pre-briefing participants before the data collection process on their willingness and availability, and (c) reassuring participants at every stage of their confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. To reduce cases of asymmetry, we recorded all interviews on secure devices (Amu & Nyarko, 2019).

[INSERT Table 1 here]

Data analysis

We built on the view that qualitative data must be subjected to a series of thorough scrutiny, themes, patterns, coding, and interpretations (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Thomas, 2006). We used the inductive qualitative technique to analyse the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, we systematically adopted thematic approaches to transcribe, code, and interpret the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We also followed Marshall and Rossman's (1999) and Braun and Clarke's (2006) approaches to develop the research themes for this study: cultural effects on women in HEIs, women’s entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs, and polygamous influences in HEIs. Table 2 shows the main interview questions.

[INSERT Table 2 here]

Findings

We focus our findings on three main themes: cultural effects on women in HEIs, women’s entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs and polygamous influences in HEIs. We found that despite cultural practices, women’s entrepreneurial activities are impactful and significant to the development of HEIs. From our findings, women are motivated into undertaking

entrepreneurial activities due to their socio-economic needs, and as a “reference point” that often leads to healthy competition. While acknowledging cultural relativism, our findings reveal that polygamy significantly contributes to primogeniture and patriarchy business environment. As polygamy is contextual, the findings also reveal that polygamists place significant value on the diverse cultural antecedents influencing the growth of women’s entrepreneurial activities in HEIs, although there were mixed reactions amongst the research participants.

Cultural effects on women in HEIs

During the data collection stages, the usage of the word ‘culture’ dominated the interviews. Remarkably, our findings reveal that polygamy, and the associated businesses, thrive under ‘cultural blankets’ and this study shows how it influences women’s entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs. A quote from Miss Ebezige summed it up:

“I am so shocked that even in this 21st century, women are still held ... by ancient cultural practices and norms. Achievements should be gender blind. If women are most qualified, so be it.”

Findings from other interviewees also unravel cultural effects on women’s entrepreneurial behaviours (Alkhaled, 2020) in HEIs. While most polygamous activities are synonymous with patriarchy societies, women are rarely found in the decision-making units and considered culturally unfit to rise above certain positions. A quote from one of the polygamists, Mr Gbalipre, shows the level of cultural resistance against women:

“Our culture allows us to marry multiple wives and have many children. I have about 20 children. Hmmm sorry; we do not count the number of our children in our tradition. It may be more, and it may be less. Must they [women] be in every unit? They [women] are culturally obliged to specific positions and jobs [he laughed]. Women are not allowed to hold top positions here. Their brothers and sons are.”

Buttressing Mr Gbalipre’s views, Mr Calabar argues that:

“We cherish our culture so much. Polygamy is our culture and women are taught to live with it. Admittedly, we are gradually losing our identity, and we need to build the broken walls of our culture.”

A polygamist, Chief Garoro, who is not among the founders, but a family member, explained that:

“Women are bringing forth brilliant ideas towards growth and expansion but are faced with some ... cultural factors. I think it is because they are women and men are naturally, or culturally, not comfortable.”

Other interviewees, including family members (Mrs Denny, Mr Calabar and Mrs Pina) and non-family members (Mrs Gabi and Mrs Kumasi), unanimously agreed that culture is a deciding factor on women’s abilities. However, as time went by, education may reduce the harsh gender norms placed on women’s achievement within the polygamous family business context.

Our observations also collaborate the interviews and reveal that women are deprived of their ability to be innovative within the HEIs, even though they are ready to contribute their quota. We observed that most women are excluded in strategic departments, making them invisible. Thus, it is proposed that:

Proposition 1: Cultural intolerance negatively affects women's roles and participation in HEIs.

Women's entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs

During the interviews, nearly all the respondents explained that culture negatively influences women's entrepreneurial behaviours (Ahl, 2006; Alkhaled, 2020). Most respondents acknowledged that this cultural stereotype revealed the patriarchal nature of polygamists and other male siblings (Reynos, 2019). From our findings, polygamists' orientation and emotional feelings hinder women's entrepreneurial activities. Mr Nanabo explained that:

"Yes, our sisters are entrepreneurial and are ready to give in their best, but I think daddy is too extreme with cultural beliefs. Maybe because he is among the custodians of the customs [local chief]. No law forbids women's growth in entrepreneurship."

In another interview, Mr Odem stated that:

"I am still surprised we are still talking about gender disparity in this century. Women are an asset to this family institution. Moreover, no customary punishment or curses befall anybody if women can be more innovative or entrepreneurial. Most often, it is just an institutional and individual perception."

Most women we interviewed felt they have lots to offer the institutions. Miss Ebezige demonstrated this in the below quote:

"I am a woman, and I am proud. There will be harmony amongst us if women can exhibit their talents. We are all [she and her male siblings] stakeholders in this institution."

From our observations, women have an intense desire to achieve entrepreneurially among their male siblings (Alkhaled, 2020). We also observed that academic qualifications and age are factors considered in non-entrepreneurial positions. Informally, we observed that girls are not socialised into innovative activities early, as women are culturally perceived to suit specific jobs and activities, which in turn hinder women's entrepreneurial potentials. Hence, it is proposed that:

Proposition 2: Women's entrepreneurial behaviours are negatively influenced by polygamous orientation, cultural beliefs and practices in HEIs.

Polygamous influences in HEIs

Respondents agree that wealth and riches are reasons for polygamous lifestyles. In terms of the strengths and weaknesses of polygamy toward entrepreneurship, Mr Calabar explained that:

"Polygamy is a source of strength and expansion [for] our institution. Although we usually have infightings as in other family types, for instance, monogamy. Nevertheless, it has made us grow to accommodate our views and preferences."

Mrs Awo stated that:

"My husband had just one wife for years. His father hid under our culture to remind him that he needs plenty of children. This must have forced him into marrying more wives because he is now wealthy."

Some sons and a nephew unanimously agreed that they would instead prefer to be polygamous. Nevertheless, from our findings, the experience of polygamy can be somewhat negative. Mrs Gabi explained that:

“Polygamy has caused me a lot. My husband got into polygamy when his elder cousin died. The deceased’s wives were ceremonially shared among the surviving men. This is our tradition.”

Women were found to be the most affected by cultural factors that can also impede family firms’ growth. From our findings, women were excluded from inheritance rights, affected by glass-ceiling and deprived of succession (Ahl, 2006; Alkhaled, 2020). We also discovered the reasons for polygamy and why most polygamists use the disguise of culture to restrict women’s entrepreneurial behaviours. Therefore, it is proposed that:

Proposition 3: Polygamy has both negative and positive influences in family firms in HEIs.

Discussion and conclusion

Our study shows the role of polygamy in businesses despite not having much on it in the spotlight (Brooks, 2009; Mwambene, 2017; Reynos, 2019; Todd, 2000; United Nations, 2011). From previous studies, polygamy is synonymous with infighting and poverty (Fenske, 2015), and reduced resources allocation for women (Edlund & Lagerlöf, 2006). Other studies suggest that polygamy smoothens family relationship, creates a unique family bond, builds lasting altruistic acts, and encourages collective participation and numerical strength (Dalton & Leung, 2014; DeBerry-Spence, Dadzie, Darley & Blankson, 2008). Here, we contextualise the study of polygamy on women’s entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs. As entities within the broader family firm, the context of our study – polygamously owned and managed businesses in the HEI sector – anchors on the concept of cultural relativism as opposed to the universalism of family firms (Brooks, 2009; Fenske, 2015; Muhammadin & Mohd Kamal, 2019; Todd, 2000; Welter, 2011). We contribute to both the family business and the female entrepreneurship literatures by showing an understanding of cultural hindrances that affect women’s entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs within the foregoing context of study. Our findings reveal that culture is relatively subjective, as no customary law forbids women from being entrepreneurial in the research context. Therefore, our findings suggest that the emotional perceptions of individuals, usually males, that women are less entrepreneurial, is socially constructed (Miller, Steier & Le Breton-Miller, 2003).

While polygamy takes diverse forms – e.g. polygyny and polyandry (Mwambene, 2017; Reynos, 2019) – our focus is on polygyny and how it influences women’s entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs that are polygamously owned and managed. Given the paucity of studies in this area, we consider this research important as we add value by showing the core beliefs on polygamy with regards to women’s entrepreneurial behaviours.

Additionally, by researching the polygamist angle, we contribute to the resource-based theory with our findings, which suggest that multiple wives and children are sources of internal resources for the firm, and may reduce agency costs. In this regards, the findings from this study can help researchers and practitioners to view gender from a broader perspective. It might also assist in understanding the business implications and risks of segregating women by hindering their entrepreneurial abilities.

The cultural values reported in this study indicate that there is a tendency for an increase in polygamy in the Southern parts of Nigeria where this research was undertaken, in terms of the next generation of owners/successors of polygamous family firms. These support the study by Fenske (2015), which argues that polygamy is on the increase in Sub-Saharan Africa despite

the expansion of, and investment in, formal education. However, these findings are in contrast to Hayase and Liaw's (1997) study, which suggests that polygamy has declined substantially in the southern region of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Prior research shows that women in family firms are less entrepreneurial (Chrisman, Chua, De Massis, Frattini & Wright, 2015; Kelley, Baumer, Brush, Greene, Mahdavi & Majbouri, 2017). Nevertheless, there is a global recognition of women's contributions in job and wealth creation (Allen, Elam, Langowitz & Dean, 2007; Brush & Cooper, 2012; Brush, De Bruin, Gatewood & Henry, 2010). For example, in Africa, women's entrepreneurial presence is on the increase (Kelley, Baumer, Brush, Greene, Mahdavi & Majbouri, 2017). Despite these competencies, our findings show that culture hinders women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamously owned and managed HEIs. We hope that our examination of the polygamous concept in businesses within the HEI sector can steer academic debates on polygamous family firms, as most family business research are on traditional family firms. As a citadel of learning, education should be a solid bedrock for eradicating cultural norms and practices limiting women's entrepreneurial abilities.

Like all studies, ours has some limitations (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). This is mainly due to it being limited in scope and exclusively composed of polygamous family firms in the HEI sector. As a result, the context and the sample size of the study may limit the generalisability of the findings (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Although our study focuses on cultural effects on women's entrepreneurial behaviours in polygamously owned and managed HEIs, future researchers can expand the sample and context. Also, future scholars may deepen the exploration of cultural benefits of women's entrepreneurial behaviours using alternative qualitative methods. At the same time, it will be interesting to see studies using quantitative research methodology.

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Table 1: Participants' information

| Name | Institution | Years in Service | Nature of Job | Interview Duration (in minutes) | Age of Participants |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Mr Bamugha | KingPele University | 7 Years | Head of Department, Sports | 30 | Between 30-40 |
| Mrs Denny | KingPele University | 5 Years | Utility Department | 40 | Between 35-45 |
| Mr Odem | KingPele University | 7 Years | Lecturing | 50 | Between 50-60 |
| Chief Garoro | KingPele University | 8 Years | Lecturing | 60 | Between 55-65 |
| Mrs Kori Garoro | KingPele University | 6 Years | Student Affairs Department | 45 | Between 45-55 |
| Mrs Awo | KingPele University | 10 Years | Lecturing | 50 | Between 45-55 |

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| | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------|--|----|---------------|
| Mr Tokus | KingPele University | 8 Years | Administrator | 30 | Between 25-35 |
| Mrs Pina | KingPele University | 6 Years | Staff Bursary Department | 45 | Between 30-40 |
| Mr Edu | KingPele University | 8 Years | Administrator | 30 | Between 30-40 |
| Dr Nemi | Godwin Governor University | 10 Years | Medical Director | 45 | Between 35-45 |
| Mr Calabar | Godwin Governor University | 5 Years | Clerical Officer | 30 | Between 25-35 |
| Miss Ebezige | Godwin Governor University | 6 Years | Domestic Worker | 60 | Between 25-30 |
| Mrs Kumasi | Godwin Governor University | 10 Years | Senior Administrator | 40 | Between 30-40 |
| Mr Gbalipre | Godwin Governor University | 10 Years | Lecturing | 60 | 60 and above |
| Mr Nanabo | Godwin Governor University | 7 Years | Lecturing | 40 | Between 25-35 |
| Mrs Gabi | Godwin Governor University | 6 Years | Clerical Officer, Transport Department | 30 | Between 35-45 |

All names of individual participants and universities are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Table 2: Interview questions

| Cultural effects on women in HEIs | Women's entrepreneurial behaviours in HEIs | Polygamous influences in HEIs |
|--|---|---|
| How does culture affect women's entrepreneurial abilities in this institution? | Are women entrepreneurial in this institution? | How does polygamy influence entrepreneurial activities in this institution? |

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| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | |
| How does this institution perceive women and their capabilities? | What are the limiting factors of women's entrepreneurship in this institution? | What are the strengths and weaknesses of polygamy towards entrepreneurship in this institution? |
| Do you think education has a role in changing cultural norms that limit women in this institution? | Does being a woman limit entrepreneurial behaviours in this institution? Give reasons, please. | Does polygamy widen the gender gap in this institution? |
| How does culture influence women's progression in this institution? | How do women's entrepreneurial involvement influence family harmony and cohesion in this institution? | Are gender norms extreme to women in this institution? |
| How and why does gender disparity occur in this institution? | Why are women culturally bound not to be entrepreneurial in this institution? | How is the perception of women towards polygamy in this institution? |

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