

Knowledge Transfer and Family Business Sustainability in VaZezuru Entrepreneurship model: an Explorative study of Botswana VaZezuru Sub-culture

Clever Gumbo

Faculty of Business and Accounting, Botho University, PO Box 501564, Gaborone, Botswana
Tel: +267 76690062

Abstract

This paper examined the intra and inter-family businesses knowledge/skills transfer approaches and their relevance to business sustainability. Businesses are established to save a purpose in the economy and as such their sustainability in terms of business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders with future oriented mobilization and utilization of resources. In examining the complexities of family business sustainability, this paper provided an argument based on the family business sustainability model comprised of sustainability enabling factors which are realized through the introverted, extroverted, conservative and visionary/innovative strategies. A qualitative approach was adopted during the research, data was collected through interviews from a sample of ten (10) VaZezuru both males and females drawn using a purposive sampling method from an estimated population of around 4500 households. Also three (3) other stakeholders from some public offices, VaZezuru customers, suppliers and neighbours were interviewed. Findings of this research suggest that knowledge transfer, religious norms and values, and networking were the main family business sustainability enabling factors and family business sustainability is measured by longevity of businesses regardless of the business growth outcome.

Keywords: Family business, Knowledge transfer, Sustainability, Networking, Sustainability strategies,

1. Introduction

Governments, regional groupings, trade institutions and even some Non Governmental organisations are increasingly concerned and active with respect to the creation and transfer of knowledge in SMEs and the relevance of this knowledge transfer (Ketsle & Muizer, 2002). Modern trend in business is towards the understanding that cooperation is believed to lead to better results than competition. In recent years, the government of Botswana has been looking for strategies to diversify from the heavy reliance on diamond minerals sales economy by encouraging small and medium enterprises from various industries and sectors to participate in development and this move saw mushrooming of many family businesses. A family business is a company characterized by a considerable involvement of a family, in a political, cultural or generational term (Astrachan, Klein & Smyrniotis, 2002). Family business is also defined as a business that is owned and managed by one or more members of a business household of two or more people related by blood, marriage or adoption (Olson, Zuiker, Danes, Stafford, Heck & Duncan, 2003). All the known VaZezuru businesses are family oriented and they are all in the categories informal/microenterprise, small and medium enterprises categories. As there is no one universally accepted definition for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), this paper adopted the Botswana Ministry of Trade and Industry (1999) definition, which is an enterprise that employs less than 25 employees and has an annual turnover of between P60 000 and P1 500 000, and a medium enterprise being a firm that employs less than 100 employees and has an annual turnover of between P1, 500,000 and P5, 000,000, with an international rate of conversion of 1P (One Pula) being approximately equivalent to \$9 (US dollar). A Microenterprise is a business that engages fewer than five (5) workers fulltime (Botswana Ministry of Trade and Industry (1999)

This study was done in Botswana, one of the leading South African nations in terms of political stability, and good governance. Botswana was rated as one of the top 20 economies with a favourable business environment and was ranked number one in developing countries (Kelcic, 2007). Botswana has made efforts to create a business environment that is conducive enough to promote formation and growth of businesses.

Of interest to this research was a VaZezuru sub-cultural group that has demonstrated continued family business from as way back as the 1930s to date. This paper starts with the origins of VaZezuru subculture; secondly it will then provide the proposed family business sustainability model, which is supported by the literature review and business sustainability enablers. After that the methodology followed is then discussed. The results and discussions are provided. The last section of the document presents the conclusions, and limitations that are supported by areas of further research.

1.1 The Origins of VaZezuru Sub-culture

ZeZuru is one of the Zimbabwean Shona dialects. "Mu" denotes a ZeZuru speaking individual, "VaZeZuru" plural, meaning many ZeZuru speaking people. VaZeZuru is a name that has been widely accepted in Botswana given to one of the African initiated apostolic church followers (originated from Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe),

Johane Masowe who are registered as Johane Gospel of God church in Botswana. The Johane Masowe Vapostori (VaZezuru) founded in the 1930's by a man called Shoniwa Mtunyane born in 1912, sometimes called "Sixpence" from Gandanzara area in Makoni district in Zimbabwe (Mukonyora, 1998). The founder was popularly known by his religious titles of Johane Masowe (meaning John of the wilderness) and believed to resembled John the Baptist (Mukonyora, 1998) and was believed to have received his call to ministry in 1932 through dreams that showed him direct calling from God (Dilon-Malone, 1976). After spending 40 days and nights in prayer on Marimba hills near Norton town he survived on honey only (Reese, 2008). The church began during the height of colonialism when Africans were feeling the effects of racial discrimination (Reese, 2008). Johane preached in reaction to white domination, promising a better situation for Africans without the influence of white colonialists (Reese, 2008). Johane Masowe was considered the messenger sent by Jehovah to African people, just as Jesus had been sent to whites (as they understand it, BUT they did not equate Johane to Jesus); Followers believed that Johane Masowe did to Africans what Jesus did among whites (Mukonyora, 1998). Vapostori are a blend of African traditional religion and Christianity, with Old Testament practices being prominent in Southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, South Africa)(Dilon-Malone, 1976).

In an evangelizing mission, some of the Johane Masowe followers travelled to South Africa and in 1951, a group of 28 evangelists travelled from Charter District in the Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) on foot till they settled in Bechuanaland (Botswana) in Moroka village (Mosinyi, 2013).

One of the founding principles of the Johane Masowe (VaZezuru) was their utmost belief that they were not supposed to be employed by any person and they were not to work for whites. Realizing that they needed some means of generating income the Vapostori/ Johane Masowe initiated the self help projects (Dilon-Malone, 1976). The Johane Masowe registered as Johane Gospel of God church popularly known as VaZezuru started to demonstrate their hard working spirit ,strong spirit of self reliance ,honesty ,fear of God and brotherly love through self reliance small backyard vegetable gardens ,metalwork ,carpentry, pottery ,weaving and many others (Mosinyi, 2013).

At his death in 1973, Johane Masowe had an estimated following of more than half a million in nine different countries of East, Central and South Africa Mukonyora (1998); Reese (2008); Dillon-Malone (1976) now the population is estimated to be well over 2 million (church elders)

All VaZezuru families and almost every member of family from primary school going age ,around seven years are involved some form of business activity. Their mode of family businesses has been in existence since the 1930's, and this has been as a result of some sustainable strategies adopted by this sub cultural group. There is clear evidence of knowledge/skills transfer as businesses have passed over through generations. It is within this purview that this research was done aimed at addressing the main question "What are the sustainability enabling factors nurtured in VaZezuru entrepreneurship model and what is sustainability in this form of family business model?"

In order to answer the above question, arguments made were based on Baumgartner (2008) corporate sustainability strategies: introverted, extroverted, conservative and visionary strategies.

1.1.1 VaZezuru Religious Values and beliefs

The Johane Gospel of God church referred in Botswana to as VaZezuru believes in Genesis 3 vs 19: which says "By the sweat of your brow, you will eat", hence their inherent drives to be jack of all trades as men are more into manufacturing or production (Mosinyi, 2013). Women are sales agents who roam around the town, villages and Bus termini selling vegetables, fruits, artefacts and some are into currency exchange dealing (Mosinyi, 2013). Vapostori were and are still against both African tradition and white Christianity that is they were against African witch craft and charms ,while they could not support white Christianity citing that Africans were treated as second class and had to get an education in order to read bible ,preach or to come close to God (Dilon-Malone, 1976)

Dilon-Malone (1976) observed that Masowe/Vapostori followers are not permitted to work for anyone outside their own group and a Masowe disciple is required to learn a trade by which he or she can contribute to the welfare of the group, any other work is unacceptable and with the communal work ethic and business acumen have made the Vapostori prosperous. Machingura (2005) contributes that VaZezuru/Vapostori/Apostles principles are that: they should not work for any other person or firm especially one owned by whites, they observe strict obligations on the Sabbath day (members are not allowed to work and/or cook ,no doing business ,no handling of cash on the Sabbath, Marriages should be done with the sub-culture; they are totally any marriages with non-members of the church, Alcohol beverages and cigarettes are prohibited, Women and girls put on white dresses and head scarves as a symbol for purity, Men are head shaved and keep bearded (haired head is believed to hide evil spirits) .VaZezuru just like other apostolic sects have a variety of life styles including their persistence to maintain polygamy as a symbol of continued (Machingura, 2005). Neither men nor

women are allowed to marry outside the church and this seem to disadvantage women most as: women form the bigger percentage around (60-65%) of the VaZezuru and they are not allowed to marry men outside the church as they are considered devil by virtue of not following the apostolic church, and this exposes women to polygamy as there are fewer men than women (Machingura, 2005).

Also Apostles, Vapostori in Shona, are characterized by their appearance: men shave their heads and grow beards, while women wear white dresses and scarves (Reese, 2008)

1.1.2 Knowledge/skills transfer in Family business

Knowledge is the integration of information, ideas, experience, intuition, skill and lessons learned that create added value for a firm (Leo-Paill, Korot & Tovstiga, 2005). Organisations that are able to transfer knowledge effectively from one organisational unit to another are more productive than organisations that are less capable of knowledge transfer (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). Knowledge has become a valuable resource connected with the organisation's ability to innovate and to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Naftanalia, 2002). How family members share knowledge (traditions) may become sources of competitive advantage for the family long term survival (Trevinyo –Rodriguez & Bontis, 2010).

In family businesses, the founder's tacit knowledge is the strategic asset that needs to be transferred and developed, especially in small businesses (Bracci & Vagnoni, 2011). Efficient transfer of knowledge requires extensive contacts, permanent cooperation and trust (Bilinska-Reformat & Sztangret, 1999). New knowledge, Inkpen and Tsang (2005) especially from outside the business can be an important stimulus for change and organisational improvement. On the other hand, knowledge can be viewed as a subset of intellectual capital of the business, and as information that has a meaning, context and purpose in family businesses (Bilinska-Reformat and Sztangret, 1999). There are various forms of knowledge and Bilinska-Reformat and Sztangret (1999) contributes that Embrained knowledge includes beliefs, ideals, values, thinking schemes and models that are deeply rooted in people and that people treat as axioms. Also common in family businesses tacit knowledge is the knowledge we have without knowing that we know it (Haldin-Herrgard, n.d). Bilinska-Reformat and Sztangret (1999) mentioned that tacit knowledge is knowledge that is not immediately, explicitly or embedded in the culture, routines and internal processes of individuals and organisation. Tacit knowledge is observed by Leo-Paill *et al* (2005) as to consist of intuition, feelings, perceptions and beliefs often difficult to express and therefore difficult to capture and transfer

On the other hand Nonaka and Takeuchi (as cited in Bratianu, 2010) define explicit knowledge as one articulated in formal language and transmitted among individuals, being easy to articulate, communicate while tacit knowledge is personal knowledge embedded in individuals based on their experience. Also Leo-Paill *et al.* (2005) consider explicit knowledge as easily identifiable, easy to articulate, capture and share (it is the staff of books, manuals and reports).

Knowing what, why, how and who are vital questions for family businesses when establishing networks. Knowledge management and innovation requires understanding and application of four(4) domains namely culture(knowing who we are) ,process(knowing how we know), content(knowing what we know),and infrastructure(knowing the who ,how and where) (Leo-Paill *et al.*, 2005).

There are always benefits in businesses resulting from knowledge transfer especially to the recipients that are Next Generation Members (NGMs) who can also be known as human capital. Human capital (HC) is members of an organisation that retain personal knowledge, experience and expertise (Bracci & Vagnoni, 2011). It is almost guaranteed that with human capital, family business will derive some synergistic values from the knowledge acquired. Synergistic value of knowledge transfer is defined as the extent to which business yields additional value from interdependent knowledge sharing beyond the sum of the parties' individual knowledge that is cooperation yields knowledge in excess of the exchange of individual knowledge (Loebbecke, Van -Fenema, & Powell, (1999). In SMEs, the absorption of new knowledge is only interesting if the knowledge can be easily obtained and will lead to more efficiency, a higher turnover or to enhance competitive advantages (Ketsle & Muizer, 2002). Transferring knowledge within the family business is a difficult task, confronted with the central barrier of the willingness of people to share and integrate their knowledge (Naftanalia, 2002). More skilled entrepreneurs employ more people, produce higher levels of output and enjoy more profits (Chinyoka & Muranda, 2013). Also it has been observed by Figge, Hahn, Schallegger and Wagner (2002) that the concept of Balanced score card is based on the assumption that the efficient use of investment capital is no longer the sole determinant for competitive advantages, but increasingly soft factors such as intellectual capital knowledge creation as excellent customer orientation become more important.

1.1.2 Networking in Family business

Family businesses utilize their networks as a source of opportunities and resources and their network can serve as an avenue for change towards sustainability (Jamsa, Tahtinen, Ryan & Pallari, 2011). Learning in the network was identified as a key process through which family businesses and the network evolve (Jamsa *et al.*, 2011). Moore and Manring (2009) explain that sustainability strategies create many synergistic effects for family

businesses working collaborations, as well as systemic benefits. Family businesses can optimize sustainability by creating highly competitive network of sustainable SMEs in market spaces where large firms are less successful (Moore & Manring, 2009). Family businesses have to find a favourable position in their external network of cooperating organisations and also manage the internal relationships between their business units so that they complement and support each other (Walter, Leehner & Kellermanns, 2012). Networks of SMEs are essential for addressing the systemic problem that underlie industry ecology, enterprise resilience and supply chain sustainability (Moore and Manring, 2009). As most businesses are utilizing ICTs, entrepreneurial networking and relationships demand a fundamental repositioning of policy support and a major reorganization of the way that knowledge is made explicit and disseminated to SMEs (Gibb, 2006). SMEs can enhance their innovativeness by understanding and leveraging the structure of the business network in which they participate (Xu, Lin & Lin, 2008). In their research Xu *et al.* (2008) observed that innovative capabilities, density, reciprocity and multiplicity of business network are the main factors with positive association. Also research results showed that foreign networking showed a significant positive impact on SMEs export performance (Babakus, Yavas & Haahti (2006). In relation to family businesses as they are of different magnitudes, firm size was found to have positive impacts on foreign networking and expert performance (Babakus *et al.*, 2006). Inter-organisational knowledge transfer is affected by the nature of the network type in which the business is embedded (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). Social capital is considered as the network of relations, not just within the organisation boundaries, but most of them outside the business (Bracci & Vagnoni, 2011). Most significant networking practices are found to: search and incorporate diverse points of view, challenging the status quo, learning from failures, communicating with people outside the business including experts, allocation of resources to support communication linkages (Terziovski, 2003).

Family business supervisors demonstrate a higher preference for centralized knowledge sharing networks and deferential patterns (Wen-Bao, 2011). Successful inter-organisational succession in family business involves ensuring that the next generation is well prepared to assume the leadership /ownership role within the business (Naftanalia, 2002)

1.1.3. Sustainability strategies

A sustainable company is responsive to the demands and challenges of the markets (traditional view) as well as the environmental, societal, cultural and political contexts in which the company develops its business models and pursues its value creation strategies (Lenssen, 2013). While WCED (1987) contributes that sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In support of that Baumgartner (2008) considers that sustainable development is an ethical standard, which has to be translated into a manageable standard. Businesses regardless of the size and mode should pay attention to the medium and long term developments within the political, social and natural environments (Lenssen, 2013). In his research results Lenssen (2013) show that strategic management has consistently shown that unique knowledge, relationships and capabilities are vital to creating sustainable advantage. The notion of the “triple bottom line” “TBL or 3BL” developed by Elkington (1998) described company’s taking account of economic, social and environmental performance (Lenssen, 2013). Also Baumgartner (2008) notes the concept of sustainable development as consisted of ecological, social and economic sustainability. In support of the value of sustainable development Baumgartner (2009) argues that if aspects of sustainable development are not part of the mindset of leaders and members of the organisation, corporate sustainability activities will not affect the core business efficiently and are more likely to fail. Businesses can apply different sustainability strategies: introverted, extroverted, conservative and innovative/visionary strategies (Baumgartner, 2008) and these strategies have been the foundation for this research family business sustainability model. In agreement with the proposed sustainability strategies Petrini and Pozzebon (2009) also realized that Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concepts refer to long-term prospective based on requirements necessary to provide for the present without compromising the needs of future generations.

Sustainability agenda relate to business ethics, community investment, environmental protection, human rights and work place conditions (Petrini & Pozzebon, 2009).

Visionary strategies in Family Business

Visionary/Innovative strategies focus on sustainability issues within all business activities that is competitive advantages are derived from differentiation and innovation, offering customers and stakeholders unique advantage (Baumgartner, 2008). Each of the above strategies will be examined in relation to co-optation (that is the sharing of knowledge which may be a key source of competitive advantage

Innovation is the process by which knowledge is transformed into new or significantly modified products and/or services that establish the firm’s competitive edge (Leo-Paill *et al.*, 2005). Given the growing competition, Ketsle & Muizer (2002) suggests that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have to apply themselves on inventing new products, services and processes, and they have to distinct themselves from their competitors

through innovations. Organisational innovation leads to SMEs operating outside their core competency but does not have an adverse environmental impact (Laforet, 2013). Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) including family businesses should focus on innovation and manage innovation activities as a case competency (Purcarea, Del Mar Bernavides Espinosa & Apetrei, 2013). Innovation is often the result of interaction of various subjects, technologies, people and organisations Mitra (2000). To enhance their capabilities (Purcarea *et al.*, 2013) said that there is need for SMEs to focus on strengthening the collaboration with institutions of higher learning to acquire knowledge. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are better able to innovate when they are part of clusters since Mitra (2000) argued that it is through the networking process and the management of externalities that they develop new products, processes and services. Business assets, age of the business, personnel management, owner's weekly hours in the business, family employees and hiring of temporary are positively associated with increased achievements and innovations for both the family businesses (Olson *et al.*, 2003). Regardless of all the positives of innovation, Laforet (2013) argued that organisational innovation does not lead to organisational efficiency and employees' retention in SMEs.

Extroverted strategies

Baumgartner (2008) suggested the extroverted strategies for sustainability which focus on the external relationship of a business that is its position on public acceptability and the "license-to operate and grow". Businesses whether small or large should be concerned about its reputational capital and the trust and legitimacy it needs in order to keep transaction costs low and to benefit from a favourable license to operate (Lenssen, 2013). Structural relational in family business is concerned with relationship beyond the firm's boundaries namely social, supporting and inter-firm networks that family business are embedded in (Baumgartner, 2008). Owner manager is at the centre of a network of relations with strategic stakeholders (Bracci & Vagnoni, 2011). Businesses with family /founder ownership undertake sustainability-related initiatives as patient investors based on their ideological motivations (Carol-Ann Tetraalt Sirsly & Sujit, 2012). Due to the lack of management team in most small family businesses, the internal and external social capital is expected to reside in the owner manager (Bracci and Vagnoni, 2011). Business intelligence (BI) has an important role to play in helping organisations implement and monitor sustainable practices (Petrini and Pozzebon, 2009).

For a business enterprise, sustainable development means "adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future" (International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), 1992). Sustainable development must meet needs of the business and its stakeholders and communities who are affected by the business activities (IISD, 1992). Sustainability in businesses is all to do with meeting today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own (IISD, 1992).

Introverted strategies

Introverted strategies are viewed by Baumgartner (2008) as focusing on whether all business activities are in compliance with legal and other external standards concerning environmental and social aspects in order to avoid risks for the business. There are four main critical success factors for environmentally sustainable product innovation: market, law and regulation knowledge, inter-functional collaboration, innovation-oriented learning and R & D investments

Family businesses are less likely to engage in entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviours because of the overlap between ownership and management (Bettinelli, 2013). Social sustainability means to meet human needs within the limits set by the conditions for ecological sustainability (Baumgartner, 2008). Sustainability should include taking into account the risk management objective of owners (Carol-Ann *et al.*, 2012). For sustainable development, businesses should find approaches that aim to concomitantly attain three (3) main goals: environmental protection, ii) social well being and iii) economic development (Figge, Hahn, Schaltegger, & Wagner, 2002). Success of the business depended on family processes and how the family responded to disruptions rather than simply how the owner managed the business alone (Olson *et al.*, 2003).

Conservative strategies

Conservative Strategies focus on eco-efficiency, products and services that are to be provided with low costs and low consumption of materials and energy that is emissions and waste are to be avoided (Baumgartner, 2008). Over and above physical and financial capital, sustainability emphasizes that business activity must not irreparably degrade or destroy these natural and human resources (IISD, 1992). Ecological sustainability deals with the mechanism and conditions that natural life sustaining systems can be maintained and their destruction can be prevented (Baumgartner, 2008). There are three (3) dimensions of absorption capacity: efficiency (refers to how a firm absorbs and uses knowledge in the perspective of cost and scale advantages), scope (refers to the diversity or width of the different absorbed knowledge components) and flexibility (refers to the degree to which a firm can put in additional knowledge components) (Ketsle & Muizer, 2002). Economic sustainability describes

the important role of economy in order to meet ecological and social sustainability (Baumgartner, 2008). Structural capital can be equated to the capability of an organisation to manage its embedded knowledge and sustain its personnel in developing skills and capabilities (Bracci & Vagnoni, 2011). Social capital is “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintances or recognition” (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005). SMEs are encouraged to develop skills which help them to utilize the network as a source of opportunities and resources (Jamsa *et al.*, 2011). To benefit family businesses is also the sustainability concept which Tahir and Darton (2010) suggest that they can be related to two business perspectives namely resource efficiency, which measures the effectiveness of the conversion of natural, financial, human and social capital, and ii) fairness in benefit which describes how fairly the benefits and disbenefits of changes are distributed amongst stakeholders.

Sustainability includes using materials and inputs that are: non-toxic, non-fossil, non-ozone depleting and relies on efficient, renewable and sustainable sources of energy (Waage, Geiser, Irwin & Weissman, (2005).

1.1.4. Methodology

The research was based on a qualitative approach, where data was collected through face to face interviews and collected data was analysed qualitatively also. Gaborone is the capital city of Botswana with a population of approximately 232 000 (World population review, 2012). It is estimated that 79% of Gaborone population is for the indigenous people category in which VaZezuru belong. VaZezuru in Gaborone are estimated to be around 4500 households (VaZezuru elders). Through a purposive sampling approach, face to face interviews were done on ten (10) VaZezuru participants from four main categories: the youth, young adults, adults. Also interviews were done on three (3) VaZezuru stakeholders like neighbours, Government officials like educationists, their customers and suppliers. Primary data was analysed through the qualitative data analysis procedure.

1.1.5 Results and Discussions

Religious values and beliefs

During the interviews male participants were more positive to participate in the interview as opposed to the females. The total of those who accepted to participate in the interview were six (3) females and nine (7) males. It is their church values that females should not entertain unfamiliar males, especially if the topic of discussion is not business. Females were all dressed in white with white head scarves, while male adults had clean shaved heads, while the youth males could not be easily identified due to their youthfulness.

All the four youth and six adults of VaZezuru members who participated in the interview acknowledged that they were engaged in business in one way or the other. They confirmed that as per their church principle, they do not intend to be employed by any other person; instead they are totally engaged in their own businesses. The forms of businesses in which the participants were engaged were all in the informal and small enterprise categories. Instead of engaging some employees, these forms of business engaged family members to do all business value chain activities from sourcing raw materials or stock for resale, production to marketing. None of the businesses had an external employee while there was only one business that had a non church member partner.

All participants were from a polygamous family of orientation although half of the both males and females were also in a polygamous family of procreation. Females supported polygamous marriages with some bitterness citing the effects of AIDS/HIV, increased cost of leaving and they were not in total agreement to arranged marriages as this violates female children's right to choose a long life partner.

Knowledge /Skills transfer

VaZezuru participants mentioned that they were all educated only up to Standard seven that is up to primary education level. They all echoed sentiments that education is not a priority or a necessity to them. According to their church values what was important was to be skilled for life, and not be educated as they were not going to look for employment. They all reiterated their value as God created them and their superiority in the eyes of God hence they should not work for anyone, let alone a white person. They started being groomed on the business skills as early as 5-6 years of age. As family business sustenance is mainly evidenced by change of business ownership from generation to generation Next generation members (NGMs) learning process must start at early stage (childhood) since learning is enhanced over time with such practices as repetition, rewards and punishments, feedback and practice (Trevinyo-Rodriguez and Topies, 2010) Their parents were a clear testimony on how they view education as an aspect without value to their future generations. They are many in their families with an average of two (2) wives, and an average of six(6) children but their parents can afford to fend for them. Formal education is not a necessity as one of the VaZezuru Johane Gospel of God church sect has its own school in the church premises, with only 3 teachers teaching from standard one to seven at its Gaborone church premises. This sect of VaZezuru does not want its children to be influenced by other children who attend formal schools. Formal education beyond primary school education is viewed as valueless as there is only need for the future generations or their children to gain business or technical skills for their family business sustenance as opposed to looking for employment.

Networking

There are some inter and intra-family members networking arrangements mainly informally, and this emanates from their church values. Most of the collaborations or alliances are between family members' families (either family of orientation or family of procreation). Collaborations are supported by Terziovski (2003) who mentioned that SMEs are more likely to improve their chances of attaining business excellence with networking practices than without. It is evident from the data gathered that Business alliances or partnerships are encouraged although there are some of the VaZezuru with non church members as partners. Networks are prevalent in skills transfer, manufacturing activities and in selling. Networking within family members is an easy task as they have a lot of commonalities and family members networking is a very common feature within VaZezuru businesses. Networking facilitates easy flow of knowledge and skills from one member or family to another, and also it promotes transfer of market knowledge. Networking is one of the factors which promote these businesses continued existence.

Introverted Strategies

The youth were not privy to the knowledge as to whether the businesses they operate were registered or not, but what they knew was that their businesses were done at homes. All family based businesses were not registered for tax purposes or to the council. Participants mentioned that some of the reasons why these businesses are being left by the council to operate at homes were due to their contributions to the society, environment consciousness and the council does not have land distribute for those interested to buy. Benefits of doing businesses at home are that it provides opportunity to the children to be groomed early in business as they develop interest from seeing and later on to doing as family traditions, ties and emotions, which are considered in the original learning framework, affect knowledge transfer, commitment and the motivation of family members (Trevinyo –Rodriguez & Bontis, 2010). Also their customers can easily know where to get them, especially those who are in manufacturing; operating at home make them not pay commercial rates and taxes. Most of the VaZezuru businesses do not have operating licenses as they are mainly informally operated.

Extroverted strategies

All participants claimed to be having very good relations with their stakeholders: neighbours, customers, Gaborone city council, their suppliers and many others. They believed that they have taught a lot of Batswana in skills related areas like carpentry, building and metal work. The stakeholders interviewed were of mixed feelings as some were against the noise made by VaZezuru when doing their business especially those who do metal work. Some stakeholders were not sure as to how they dispose the cut offs. Unfortunately some of the VaZezuru neighbours mentioned that they experience some noise for example from the production activities for example when doing some carpentry, welding or repairing vehicles.

Conservative strategies

VaZezuru men who are mainly in the manufacturing business do their production activities at homes. They cited advantages of operating at homes as including that they don't have transport costs, they can make use of their children and this facilitates early training of the children on the requisite skills, they do not pay rentals for the business activities, they use domestic electricity from home which is cheaper, they can easily access food say for lunch or tea break from the family provisions. In most cases the materials they use are the cut offs or scrape from the industry for example wooden or metal cut offs, scrape vehicles. These industrial scrape are their main raw materials as they are cheap and this will entail cheaper production costs. Also after their production they properly dispose the unwanted cut offs in an effort to conserve the environment.

Visionary strategies

There is limited innovation in the VaZezuru production activities. As mentioned by Muranda and Chinyoka (2013), Botswana entrepreneurs can be classified as lacking entrepreneurship skills since their characteristics do not include Innovativeness and the will to act. Botswana entrepreneurs including VaZezuru lack innovativeness and creativity (Muranda & Chinyoka, 2013) Most of their innovations are derived by their customers' needs. Since it was confirmed that they do not go to technical colleges to acquire skills, they mostly develop innovations when customers request them to do some domestic gadgets. They mostly produce in significant quantities their traditional products like: watering cans, wooden chairs, wooden benches, under door dust shields, dishes. All the VaZezuru businesses do not have formal operational or strategic plans. In most cases their plans are just kept as drafts with no detail. As such their mode of operation does not build a strong foundation of loan application collateral or security hence their minimum chances to secure bank loans for innovation and business expansion.

1.16 Limitations and further research implications

Considering that almost all VaZezuru went to school up to standard seven, hence the difficulty in verifying the data collected through any quantitative approach like the questionnaire. Research was done on VaZezuru subculture in Gaborone, Botswana of which all the findings arrived at from this research may not be generalised to all other family businesses due to aspects like religious values and beliefs. There is need to establish children mode of entrepreneurship, how children are being groomed versus the universal children rights especially in

education. It seems as if the subculture is mainly dominated by males or the husbands also not observing other main stakeholders like the female adults rights. Further research could be done on the women rights, their business acumen ship and their genuine views on polygamous marriages in light of HIV/AIDS and the increased cost of living. Mom/Mum-preneurship model being exhibited by VaZezuru women and succession planning in this business model could be further studied on.

1.1.7 Conclusion

Longevity and “remaining small/ informal” approach are the main measures of sustainability of VaZezuru businesses. The research findings suggest that these forms of businesses have been sustained mainly due to some protectionism on the subculture business culture mainly behind the religious beliefs, controlled education levels for the children of these families aimed at maintaining control over their approach in business and the general life. However since these businesses have been in existence since the 1930’s there are some positive aspects that policy makers and other family businesses could learn or improve from this business model for example combining religious values with business, building strong intra and inter family collaborations and disciple among all family members as regards business activities. One of the important points for businesses willing to be more sustainable is their awareness of their culture with a fit between culture and sustainability activities (Baumgartner, 2009). This is the starting point of discussing the VaZezuru subculture business model which is based on a qualitative research done through face to face interviews with business holders. The interview questions were mainly guided by the sustainability strategies and the family business model is mainly based on the extroverted and conservative strategies with minimum introverted and visionary strategies. There is evidence of the right fit among family culture, business activities and sustainability activities.

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