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THE CONTRIBUTION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP TO FIRM PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTREPRENEURS IN KENYA (SUMMARY)

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP TO FIRM PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTREPRENEURS IN KENYA

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Principal Topic

Entrepreneurship scholars have recently argued for the examination of entrepreneurial leadership as an antecedent of firm performance (Gupta et al. 2004, Cogliser and Brigham 2004). Recent efforts in this regard include the development of models that relate entrepreneurial leadership to firm outcomes (Antonakis and Autio 2006, Cogliser and Brigham 2004) and the specification of measures to operationalize this construct (Gupta et al. 2004). This growing conceptual and methodological focus on entrepreneurial leadership is yet to be subjected to rigorous empirical analysis in order to gain insights into and generate robust evidence on the relationship between leadership and firm performance. This study addresses this gap by empirically analyzing the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and firm performance among small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) firms in Kenya. This study addresses the following central question: how does entrepreneurial leadership contribute to firm performance? We answer this question by focusing on two main objectives: a) to investigate how entrepreneurial leadership attributes vary among small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in Kenya, and b) to examine how entrepreneurial leadership attributes contribute to the performance of SMEs in Kenya.

Method

We collected data for this study by interviewing 103 randomly selected SME entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Kenya in East Africa. We used a structured questionnaire, with key measures derived from existing literature as much as possible and measured entrepreneurial leadership using a scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). This scale comprised 19 statements reflecting various behaviors and characteristics of entrepreneurial leaders that were derived from the Gupta et al. (2004) entrepreneurial leadership construct. Using regression analysis, we determine the contribution of various attributes of entrepreneurial leadership to firm performance.

Results and Implications

This study contributes to literature in leadership and entrepreneurship by examining the role of entrepreneurial leadership in the performance of SMEs in Kenya. Our preliminary analysis reveals a relationship between leadership attributes of entrepreneurs and firm performance. Furthermore, this study highlights challenges that could affect firm performance and leadership among Kenyan entrepreneurs.

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