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**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
OF FAMILY BUSINESS:
THEORY – PRACTICE – POLICY**

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Family legacy and female entrepreneurs: insights from Nigeria

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Abstract: Analysis based on primary data shows that Female Entrepreneurs (FEs) from self-employed parental households display taste for risk-taking and selecting businesses in which risk factors are considered to be higher as well. They are also of a competitive nature, holding the belief that they have the requisite skills for their chosen businesses and that they would still be in such a position even if they were not making enough profit. Their decision to be in business is based on clever judgement and reading of the market, and accordingly making the first move. FEs do so to have a sense of self-independence and achievement, to earn extra income and to build equity for retirement. The family legacy factor is considered significant, as many seem to choose the business owing to the fact that not only it is peculiar to their family, but also because it will enable them to be involved in the family decision-making process.

Keywords: female entrepreneurs; family legacy; Z-statistic; zero-order correlations; logistic regressions.

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1 Introduction

People become entrepreneurs for a number of reasons. There is now extensive literature that describes the definition of an entrepreneur, and the motivations behind becoming an entrepreneur (Section 2). In this paper, we specifically examine the influence of family legacy on Female Entrepreneurs (FEs). We define 'family legacy' as short- and long-term impacts emanating from households in which parents are self-employed. Such a household can provide an entrepreneurial environment which can ultimately affect family members' decisions to become entrepreneurs as well. With this in mind, this paper addresses two key related research questions: first, do FEs whose parents are self-employed display reasons or motivations to become entrepreneurs which are different from FEs whose parents are in paid employment?; and secondly, if FEs from self-employed parental households display different motivations for becoming entrepreneurs, are these motivations in any way also influenced by additional personal and family attributes? Personal and family attributes include entrepreneur's age, marital status, number of children or dependents, qualifications or the fact that she may be the only or the first child in the family, or the primary bread earner. The study is important for a number of reasons. A search of literature shows that, at this point, a study of this nature has not been conducted. Therefore, this paper makes a contribution to the existing literature by empirically investigating the issue and, in the process, suggests a methodology which may be adopted in future research. Secondly, the study is important for policy reasons. Self-employment is often a choice made in transition economies, such as Nigeria, owing to the low level and certainty of employment in that specific context (Alarape, 2009). As a result, it is only appropriate to decipher the underlying factors which lead to self-employment so that these can be addressed, and also can be given encouragement and support by the state. The study assumes added importance by virtue of its analysis of female entrepreneurs – an area in which little research has been done, and one that is worthy of attention (Brush, 2006).

The paper is organised as follows: Section 2 describes the concept of the entrepreneur in general and provides an overview of work relating to FEs in Nigeria; Section 3 examines the literature relating to family legacy and FEs, and states the relevant methodology and the data sources; results are analysed in Section 4; and conclusions and a discussion are incorporated within Section 5.

2 The female entrepreneur

2.1 The concept of entrepreneur in literature

Following Casson (2003) and Knight (1921), we are able to identify one key characteristic of an entrepreneur, which is the ability to exhibit traits of judgement in decision-making. Judgement is a capacity for making a successful decision when

no obviously correct model or decision rule is available (Casson, 2008). Other characteristics or 'traits' concern creativity and innovation (Schumpeter, 1911; Schumpeter, 1954; Begley and Boyd, 1986), foresight (Kirzner, 1973; Kirzner, 1979), imagination and daring (Begley and Boyd, 1986; Chandler and Jansen, 1992; Aldrich and Wiedenmayer, 1993; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). These 'content-based' theories search for and emphasise specific traits within individuals which initiate, direct and sustain entrepreneurial behaviour. Other theories (i.e. Gilad and Levine, 1986; Watson et al., 1998; Littunen, 2000; Morrison, 2000; McKay, 2001; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Alstete, 2003; McClelland et al., 2005; Doobs and Hamilton, 2007) have focused on motivating 'push' factors, such as a lack of employment opportunities, dissatisfaction at work and supportive government initiatives, as well as 'pull' factors which relate to a desire for self-fulfilment and other personal rewards.

These models, whilst adding to our knowledge concerning the make-up and motivations of the entrepreneur, are largely based on the experiences of men (Lewis, 2006). Accordingly, a body of work has recently – largely in the context of the West – focused on women. Such research has often been based on measurements of gender differences and the specific characteristics of female entrepreneurs in comparison to men. In this respect, female entrepreneurs have been found to be younger and less oriented to financial reward (Rosa et al., 1996). Many hold 'androgynous' or masculine self-perceptions (Brodsky, 1993) such as confidence, a sense of adventure and risk-taking. Other works have explored the motivations to set up business, such as the desire for autonomy, a work–life balance (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Lewis, 2006), a sense of achievement and self-esteem (Carter and Cannon, 1992), as well as the specific challenges women face, such as exclusion from formal and informal networking (Carter, 2000), negative stereotyping as 'less serious' business person (Lewis, 2006) and less favourable credit terms (Riding and Swift, 1990). Such work has often resulted in different typologies of the female entrepreneur (e.g. Goffee and Scase, 1985) based on comparisons with men. More recent works have drawn attention to how notions of the successful entrepreneur are often written in masculine terms (Carr, 2000; Bruni et al., 2004a; Bruni et al., 2004b). Such understandings draw on the rhetoric of enterprise (discovery, exploration, commitment, risk), as well as on symbolic meanings around heroism, initiative, leadership and self-reliance, and point to their location within the masculine domain. These are embodied in conventional (male) entrepreneurship models which emphasise size, growth and profit (Lee-Gosselin and Grise, 1990; Fenwick, 2002), whilst alternative (female) ways of organising based around, for example, stability and work–life balance are devalued and marginalised (Lewis, 2004).

2.2 Female entrepreneurs in Nigeria

The phenomenon of Nigerian women owning their own businesses dates back to pre- and post-colonial periods (Aderemi et al., 2008). During this period, women were predominantly involved in commercial activities, such as wholesale and retail trading, weaving, fishing, food processing and agricultural production (Aderemi et al., 2008). This trend was further intensified by the post-colonial economic decline, a lack of access to formal education and a male-dominated labour market (Fapohunda, 1976; Fapohunda, 1983) based on traditional notions of the male as the breadwinner and family provider, and the socialisation of girls into domesticity. These stereotypes have contributed to women becoming less visible in the formal economy (Woldie and Adesua, 2004) and

3 Literature on family legacy and FE, methodology and data sources

3.1 Literature on family legacy and FEs

We define the term 'family legacy' as short- and long-term impacts emanating from households in which parents are self-employed. The impact of self-employed parents on their children can be real (e.g. financial- or property-related) or abstract (character-building, attitude-forming, etc.). Both categories of impacts can fundamentally propel a child to taking the entrepreneurial route. Assistance in real terms can be useful in providing or bridging the capital needs required for business start-ups. The character attributes – business knowledge, thrift and social skills inherited from hard-working self-employed parents – can inculcate in children a sense of autonomy and control of their lives (Kohn and Carmi, 1978; Kohn, 1981). Parents can also provide valuable on-the-job training, which can enhance chances of success (Becker and Tomes, 1986; Carroll and Mosakowski, 1987). The positive influence of parents' networks on their offspring has also been noted by various scholars (Granovetter, 1993; Aldrich et al., 1996). Equally important is the fact that these internalised survival skills can come in handy during times of crisis. These essential soft skills – also termed as 'entrepreneurial capital' (Aldrich et al., 1998) – can provide an alternative to paid employment (Hout, 1989). In the literature, whilst the discourse on what makes up a family business competitive (Huovinen and Tihula, 2008) exists, little attention has been paid to the influence of family legacies on females towards engaging in entrepreneurial activities – despite the centrality of this question to the field of entrepreneurship. Over three decades of studies aimed at answering this question have offered partial and vague answers (Carter, 2000; Winn, 2005). Specific empirical studies on the measurements of impact of family legacy on the offspring of self-employed parents are scarce. One study (Aldrich et al., 1998) directly examined this link, and subsequently found only weak and inconclusive support for their hypothesis that entrepreneurial capital was more important than financial or physical capital. However, in contrast to this, in a small all-female Irish study, the evidence was stronger, with the results stating that Irish women were far more likely to enter into self-employment if their parents had an entrepreneurial spirit (Long, 2009). An interesting empirical finding concerning the educational skills of children from self-employed households is that higher educational skills do not seem to have a significant effect on entering self-employment (Carroll and Mosakowski, 1987). It is probable that the applied skills – learnt from self-employed parents – negate the requirement for higher studies. Furthermore, although the examination of this particular question is beyond the scope of this paper, we do examine a number of related research questions which may impact upon females becoming entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, existing literature shows that females who engage in entrepreneurial activity are not arbitrarily chosen. The literature points to a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that might influence women to choose an entrepreneurial career. Intrinsic factors include personality or traits such as having a proactive, assertive personality, and being self-governed and positive (Akrivos et al., 2007). In this respect, female entrepreneurs have been found to be less oriented towards financial reward than men and valuing work satisfaction and challenges, and holding masculine self-perceptions (Brodsky, 1993), such as confidence, a sense of adventure and risk-taking. Females have tended to engage in entrepreneurial activities for intrinsic reasons, such as the need to attain some form of success, self-importance and a need for control (Evans and Leighton, 1989). Extrinsic factors influencing the career choices of female entrepreneurs include family circumstances and family orientation (Evans and Leighton,

1989), the influence of socio-cultural factors (Mordi et al., 2010), the political-economic climate surrounding the business environment, the dominant features of human resources within the labour market (Ituma and Simpson, 2007), the need for flexible employment status and work patterns (Winn, 2004; Winn, 2005), income (Roper and Scott, 2009) and the need for formal and informal networks (Carter, 2000). In this paper, we address several of these factors by formulating two related research questions: first, do FEs whose parents are self-employed display reasons or motivations for becoming entrepreneurs which are different from FEs whose parents are in paid employment?; and secondly, if FEs from self-employed parental households display different motivations for becoming entrepreneurs, are these motivations in any way also influenced by additional personal and family attributes? The following section describes the methodology used to approach these questions.

3.2 Methodology

In order to address the first question, a list of 49 motivational factors for becoming entrepreneurs were categorised under eight headings: character, personal, innate qualities, motivation, family, benevolence, gender and finance. Table 1 lists these factors which were posed as questions to respondents. The questions were posed on a Likert scale with a scoring system of 1–5, where ‘4’ and ‘5’, respectively, represent ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’. These were pooled and cross-classified by parental status, i.e. whether parents were self-employed or were in paid employment. Columns 3 and 4 represent this data: for instance, the first row that reads the character attribute ‘I enjoy taking risk’ has two ratios – 135/180 and 81/139. The data conveys the following: there are 135 female entrepreneurs whose parents were in self-employment, and these entrepreneurs agree that they also enjoy taking risk; 45 (180 – 135) entrepreneurs whose parents were self-employed did not agree that they enjoyed taking risk; similarly, 81 female entrepreneurs came from households in which parents were in paid employment but who nevertheless agreed that ‘they enjoy taking risk’; 58 (139 – 81) entrepreneurs whose parents were in paid employment said that they do not enjoy taking risk. Data in other rows can be interpreted similarly. Column 5 (Table 1) states the null and alternative hypotheses. The null hypothesis, H_0 , for all the attributes is that the ratio $p_1 = p_2$, and the alternative hypothesis, H_1 , is that $p_1 > p_2$. The Z-value can be computed as below, and follows a normal distribution with zero mean and unit standard deviation.

$$Z \cong \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{p(1-p)\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}, \text{ where } p_1 = \frac{x_1}{n_1}, p_2 = \frac{x_2}{n_2} \text{ and } p = \frac{x_1 + x_2}{n_1 + n_2}$$

For a one-sided test, $p_1 > p_2$, the value of Z should be greater than 1.64 in order for it to be considered significant at .05 level (or 2.32 at .01 and 1.28 at .10 level).

Table 1 lists the results of the proportions test applied to 49 attributes. Fourteen of these attributes turned out to be of statistically significantly higher value for FEs originating from self-employed households. These are:

- 1 ‘I enjoy taking risk’;
- 2 ‘I would have still been in business even if I was not making enough profit’;
- 3 ‘I wanted to have self-achievement by having my own business’;
- 4 ‘I chose this type of business because the risk involved is relatively high’;

- 5 'I have the skills required for business; this encouraged me to start the business';
- 6 'My competitive nature pushed me to start this business';
- 7 'I chose this business because it will enable me to achieve self-independence';
- 8 'Nobody is doing this type of business in my community; that is why I started it';
- 9 'My friends are into this type of business';
- 10 'I chose this business because it will enable me to be involved in the family decision-making process';
- 11 'I chose this type of business because it is peculiar to my family';
- 12 'Accessibility to finance required for my business encouraged me to start this business';
- 13 'Desire to earn extra income encouraged me to start this business' and
- 14 'My desire to build up equity for retirement made me start this business'.

These statements formed the basis of dependent variables. These dependent variables were created only for those FEs who came from self-employed parental households, and who had also either ticked '4' (agree) or '5' (strongly agree) on the five-point Likert scale on the attributes reported in Table 1. This was done in order to separate the effects of independent variables on *this* set of entrepreneurs only, as opposed to all FEs.

The methodology adopted to address the second question is the Logit regression model of the following type:

$$\text{Logit}(Y) = \ln\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right) = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon_i$$

where π = probability (Y = probability of being an entrepreneur) $|X_1 = x_1, X_2 = x_2, \dots$

$$X_n = x_n = \frac{e^{\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n}}{1 + e^{\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n}}$$

where π is the probability of the event, α is the Y intercept, $\beta_{1\dots n}$ are the regression coefficients and $X_{1\dots n}$ are a set of predictors; α and $\beta_{1\dots n}$ are estimated by the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. The null hypothesis underlying the overall model is that all $\beta_{1\dots n}$ are zero. A rejection of the null hypothesis implies that at least one β does not equal zero in the population, i.e. the logistic equation predicts the probability of the outcome better than the mean of the dependent variable Y .

Ten predictor variables are used in the logistic regression. Table 3 reports the results of these regressions. The first column lists the predictor variable names: 'Age' refers to the log of age when the FE started her business. Respondents were asked to tick one of the five age groups with five-year intervals, beginning with 15–20 and ending with 46 years and above. Logs were taken at mid-points of the intervals. Serial number 2 was 'First child' (are you the first in your nuclear family?), 3 'Only child' (are you the only child of your parents?), 8 (are you the breadwinner of the family?), 9 'Business peculiar to family' (is this type of business peculiar to your family members?) and 10 'Is the current business a family business'. All of these are binary variables, with 'yes' consisting of 1, and zero otherwise. 'Qualification', is binary coded with one group

consisting of FEs with school-level qualifications and second containing the rest (degree level and above). 'Marital status' is also binary coded with one group consisting of singles and the second group containing the rest (i.e. married, divorced and widows). The element of 'Children status' is binary coded with one group consisting of up to two children and the rest with three or more children. The personal factor 'Number of Dependents' is also binary coded with one group consisting of up to two dependents and the rest with three or more. A zero-order correlation table derived for these variables is reported in Table 2.

3.3 *Data sources*

The data used in the study come from 300 small-scale women entrepreneurs operating in three states in the southwest of Nigeria – Lagos (Nigeria's largest commercial city), Oyo and Ogun. These three are out of six states in the southwest of Nigeria. The three states were chosen as most small business ventures representing most Nigerian tribes are well represented here. A small-scale entrepreneur was defined as one having up to ten employees, with assets worth no less than one million naira. A population list representing 2150 entrepreneurs engaged in agriculture, manufacturing, trade and services was constructed. Of these, a sample size of 570 was formed using a combination of random and stratified sampling methods. From the 570 questionnaires distributed amongst the respondents, 422, or 74%, were received. Furthermore, face-to-face contacts were used to fill in the gaps, and cross-checking produced 300 usable questionnaires.

4 **Results**

4.1 *A profile of female entrepreneurs from self-employed households*

Table 1 presents the results of the proportions test on 49 attributes under eight headings. Fourteen of these attributes were shown to be statistically significantly different for female entrepreneurs from households in which parents are in self-employment as opposed to those in paid employment. These significantly higher attributes portray the following profile. Female entrepreneurs from self-employed parental households display a definite desire for risk-taking. Not only do they enjoy taking risks, they chose the business they are in precisely because of the level of risk involved (and perhaps the expected returns), both of which were potentially very high. They believed that their competitive nature pushed them to start the business for which they believed they had the requisite skills; so much so that they would still have been in a business venture even if they were not making enough profit. All of these characteristics seem to be based upon clever judgements and reading of the market, accessibility to finance and making the first move, since no one in the community was partaking in the business when they first started. In addition, it seems that the entrepreneurs in question chose to initiate their type of business because it would enable them to have a sense of self-independence and achievement, to earn extra income and to help them build equity for retirement. However, the family legacy factor for female entrepreneurs was considered to be important as well, since many seem to have chosen the business because not only it is peculiar to their family but also because it will enable them to be more involved in the family decision-making process.

Table 1 Analysis of attributes related to women becoming an entrepreneur

Groups and Sr. No.	Attributes	Parents self-employed			$H_0: p_1 = p_2$ $H_1: p_1 > p_2$ Z-value
		Yes (p_1)		No (p_2)	
		Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	
<i>Character attributes</i>					
1	I enjoy taking risk	135/180	81/139	3.17***	
2	I enjoy pursuing moderate to difficult goals	124/178	101/137	0.79	
3	My tolerance for ambiguity is very high	120/171	96/136	0.08	
4	I am highly creative and innovative	143/181	115/137	1.11	
5	I believe I have control over my business resources through my own efforts	142/179	112/134	0.95	
6	I would still have been in business even if I was not making enough profit	121/176	74/139	2.82***	
<i>Personal attributes</i>					
7	Desire for social recognition led me into starting business	103/179	74/138	0.70	
8	Desire to experience business growth/success made me start business	135/180	106/139	0.26	
9	I desired self-confidence, hence I had to start my own business	127/180	96/135	0.11	
10	I wanted to have self-achievement by having my own business	141/179	117/136	1.66**	
11	I was not challenged by the work that I was doing which led me to start this business	105/179	86/138	0.66	
12	My mentor/role model encouraged me to start this business	108/180	77/137	0.68	
13	My desire for self-esteem led me to start my own business	131/178	104/137	0.45	
14	My need for independence made me start my own business	130/180	100/138	0.04	
<i>Inmate qualities</i>					
15	I chose this business because I have personal characteristics in line with this type of business.	118/176	92/136	0.11	
16	I chose this type of business because the risk involved is relatively high	91/180	53/136	2.05**	
17	I have the skills required for business; this encouraged me to start this business	199/180	101/138	1.68**	
18	I have the strength and energy required for this business that I am doing	140/178	110/137	0.33	
19	My competitive nature pushed me to start this business	112/179	96/137	1.39*	
20	My pro-activeness pushed me to start this business	113/177	87/134	0.20	

Table 1 Analysis of attributes related to women becoming an entrepreneur (continued)

Groups and Sr. No.	Attributes	Parents self-employed		Column 5	$H_0: p_1 = p_2$ $H_1: p_1 > p_2$ Z-value
		Yes (p_1)	No (p_2)		
		Column 3	Column 4		
<i>D</i>					
	<i>Motivation related</i>				
21	I chose this business because it will improve my quality of life	129/177	104/134	0.95	
22	I chose this business because it will enable me to achieve self-independence	137/180	114/137	1.54*	
23	Desire for self-fulfilment made me to start this business	130/180	101/139	0.09	
24	My desire to be my own boss led me into starting this business	130/180	104/136	0.85	
25	Desire for a change of career led me into starting this business	90/180	61/138	1.03	
26	Desire to advance in my career made me to start this business	127/178	95/138	0.48	
27	The challenges facing women entrepreneurs motivated me to start this business	108/178	76/137	0.93	
28	My movement into the city encouraged me to start this business	87/177	61/137	0.81	
29	Nobody is doing this type of business in my community, that is why I started it	75/179	37/138	2.79***	
30	I chose this business because it is the type of business most people around me do	79/175	56/136	0.70	
31	My friends are into this type of business	88/179	57/136	1.28*	
32	I did not want to be among unemployed, hence I started this business	120/179	84/138	1.14	
<i>E</i>					
	<i>Family related</i>				
33	I chose this business because it will enable me to be involved in the family decision-making process	121/180	103/137	1.54*	
34	I chose this type of business because it is peculiar to my family	79/174	57/134	2.22**	
35	I could no longer cope combining my former job with my family affairs; this led me into starting this business	72/180	60/136	0.73	
36	I started this business because I wanted to be close to my family	70/181	53/138	0.04	
37	I started my own business because I wanted to be involved in family decision-making	106/180	81/139	0.11	

Table 1 Analysis of attributes related to women becoming an entrepreneur (continued)

Groups and Sr. No.	Attributes	Parents self-employed		Column 5	$H_0: P_1 = P_2$ $H_1: P_1 > P_2$ Z-value
		No (p_2)			
		Column 3	Column 4		
<i>F</i>	Column 2				
	<i>Benevolence related</i>				
38	Desire to leave business as a legacy made me to start this business	110/181	83/135	0.13	
39	I started this business because I wanted to be involved in job creation in Nigerian economy	130/178	95/137	0.72	
40	I wanted to make contribution to my community; this led me to start this business	125/180	100/139	0.48	
<i>G</i>	<i>Gender related</i>				
41	I started this type of business because I wanted to prove that I can do what a man can do	107/173	76/134	0.91	
42	I started this type of business because it is peculiar to women	115/179	82/135	0.64	
43	Issues of gender discrimination in the labour market made me start this business	92/179	73/138	0.84	
44	I chose this type of business because it is convenient for me as a woman	114/179	94/134	1.20	
<i>H</i>	<i>Finance related</i>				
45	I chose this business because it does not require too much capital to start	107/179	74/137	1.03	
46	Accessibility to finance required for my business encouraged me to start this business	126/181	109/139	1.77**	
47	Desire to earn extra income encouraged me to start this business	135/181	113/138	1.55**	
48	I started the business because I obtained loan from the bank	55/180	47/138	0.66	
49	My desire to build up equity for retirement made me to start this business	99/179	90/139	1.70**	

Notes: *Significant at .10; **significant at .05; ***significant at .01.

4.2 *Correlation and model results*

Table 3 displays the results of the logistic regressions of 14 significant attributes on personal and family-related explanatory variables: age, marital status, number of children, dependents, qualifications, the fact that the entrepreneur is the only or the first child in the family, the main breadwinner, and the fact that the business being run is peculiar to the family or if it is a family business. A zero-order correlation matrix of explanatory variables is presented in Table 2. We shall first comment on this table, which depicts several interesting features.

Firstly, we notice the fact that the parents are self-employed is closely and significantly correlated with the fact that the FEs are also the breadwinner for the family and the type of business being undertaken is the family business or is peculiar to the family. Secondly, there does not seem to be any correlation between the self-employment of parents and the marital status or the number of children of FEs. Thirdly, it seems to be the case that if the entrepreneurs are the first-born child in the family, they are also engaged in family business and are the breadwinner for the family, notwithstanding the fact that they are females. Fourthly, the amount of qualifications seems to have no bearing on fellow variables under consideration; in fact, there is a negative association. Finally – and understandably – marital status and the children status and dependents are positively related. Interestingly, the results of Table 2, by and large, are also corroborated when tested in the modelling exercise.

Table 3 reports the results of 14 individual models run on ten explanatory variables as stated above. The purpose of these models was to ascertain if the explanatory variables do, in any way, impact upon the individual attributes. The model-fitting statistics reported at the bottom of the table show that models are a good fit to the data. Notably, the chi-square value in most cases is not significant, thereby implying that there is no significant difference between actual and observed probabilities. Furthermore, as previously stated, FEs having the 'breadwinner status' is positive and statistically significant as a function of several attributes. As an example, it does positively impact on the entrepreneur's choice of business, which is peculiar to her family – presumably owing to the fact that the probability of success is higher if FEs stayed within the realms of the family business circles. Sensibly, it is also negative for attributes saying that 'I chose this business because it will enable me to achieve self-independence'. Family bindings and security do seem to play their role. Four points are especially worth noting in results in Table 3. The coefficients of 'age', 'qualification', 'marital status', and 'number of dependents' are shown as being significant in several places but with negative signs. What this tells us is that holding all else constant, the log of the odds in favour of the factors under consideration goes down (by the value of the coefficients) if the prospective entrepreneur does not have higher qualifications, is younger, single and has dependents.

Table 2 Zero-order correlation of independent variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Are your parents self-employed?	1										
2 Log age	-.12*	1									
3 Are you the first in your nuclear family?	0.04	0.01	1								
4 Are you the only child of your parents?	0.06	-0.08	0.12	1							
5 Qualification	-.12*	-0.06	-0.09	-.13*	1						
6 Marital status	0.05	-.32**	0.10	0.04	-.16**	1					
7 Children status	0.00	-.22**	-0.08	0.08	-0.04	.14*	1				
8 Dependents	-0.09	-.16*	-0.02	0.04	.14*	.25**	.34**	1			
9 Are you the breadwinner of your family?	.15**	0.02	.30**	.17**	-0.07	-0.05	-0.07	-0.12	1		
10 Is this type of business peculiar to your family members?	.13*	-0.08	.12*	0.06	-0.04	0.09	0.05	-0.00	0.10	1	
11 Is the business you are currently running family business?	.12*	-.15**	.17**	.24**	-.15**	0.02	-0.07	-0.09	.25**	.31**	1

Notes: Please see text for explanation of the variables in the table.

*Significant at .05; ** significant at .01.

Table 3 Logistic regression analysis of probability of various attributes of female entrepreneurs influenced by personal and family attributes

Predictors	Dependent variables													
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14
<i>Personal</i>														
Constant	7.67*	3.42	4.50	7.33	16.33***	9.72*	16.13*	3.52	-2.3	5.06	6.7	10.19*	10.10*	-7.20
1 Age	-2.23*	-1.07	-4.4	-2.49*	-4.31***	-2.52	-4.31	-1.29	.30	-1.51	-2.28*	-2.80*	-2.31	2.47*
2 First child?	-3.13	-50	.76	.46	-.07	-.49	.33	-.44	.54	.06	.18	-1.10*	-.60	-.54
3 Only child?	.032	-.68	.44	.05	-.54	-.37	-1.25	.57	.17	-.75	-1.29	-.62	18.90	-1.38
4 Qualification	-1.04**	-.19	-1.22	-1.31**	-.84	-.34	-1.86*	-1.85***	.04	.16	-.86	-.59	-1.03	-1.00*
5 Marital status	.129	-1.48	-2.01	-1.60	-2.57***	-1.16	-5.53***	-1.32	-1.13	-21.32	-.40	-3.70**	-23.42	-1.82*
6 Children status	.107	.064	-.21	.91	-1.07*	.23	.80	.38	-.30	-.43	-.69	.20	.48	-.12
7 No. of Dependents	-1.02**	.10	-.59	-.89	-.11	-1.05*	-.68	-.13	.87*	-.50	.39	-.56	-.41	-.15
8 Breadwinner?	.867*	.96**	-.75	.91*	.47	.31	-.68*	.70	.20	.69	.36	1.04*	.49	.75
<i>Family</i>														
9 Business peculiar to family?	.316	.50	.41	-.09	-.15	.10	.04	.19	.18	1.12*	.73	.93	-.71	1.39*
10 Is current business family business?	.99	.53	-.80	.59	-.20	-.01	20.36	.26	.80	-.18	1.01*	1.06	.27	-.51
<i>Model fitting statistics</i>														
-2 log likelihood	133.41	59.53	103.09	86.63	89.71	41.37	107.95	111.58	104.70	107.75	76.51	59.45	79.89	
H&L test χ^2	6.72	2.37	9.66	6.93	3.08	7.96	10.65	2.35	6.65	6.35	8.12	5.46	6.96	
R ²	.31	.13	.30	.25	.13	.52	.24	.13	.22	.25	.33	.38	.30	
Nagelkerke														
R ² Cox and Snell	.23	.09	.09	.22	.17	.31	.17	.09	.16	.18	.23	.24	.23	

Notes: See text for details on the variables.

Significance levels: * .10, ** .05, *** .01

5 Conclusion and discussion

There is extensive literature concerning the motivations that lead people to become entrepreneurs. There are, however, not enough studies on female entrepreneurs – in particular, those coming from households in which parents are self-employed entrepreneurs as well. This study fulfils this gap in literature by analysing primary data from female entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The study analysed the factors helping females to become entrepreneurs coming from two sets of households: one in which the parents were self-employed and the other in which parents were in paid employment. Research questions centred on establishing whether the proportion of replies coming from these two sets of entrepreneurs are the same, or if there is a set of factors which are distinctly more important for females originating from self-employed parental households. We have found that there is, indeed, a set of factors for which the proportion of replies given by FEs from self-employed households are statistically significantly higher than those replies given by FEs from households in which parents were in paid employment.

The significant replies portray an interesting profile. FEs from self-employed parental households show a distinct taste for risk-taking, and can be seen as selecting businesses in which the risk factor (and possibly the rewards) are higher. They are also of a competitive nature with the belief that they have the requisite skills for the chosen business and that they would still be in a business venture even if they were not making enough profit. Their decision to be in business is based on clever judgement and reading of the market, accessibility to finance and making the first move. Female entrepreneurs are doing this in order to have a sense of self-independence and achievement, to earn extra income and to build equity for retirement. However, the family legacy factor is shown as being important as well, since many seem to choose their own business because not only is it peculiar to their family but also because it will enable them to be more involved in the family decision-making process. The modelling results lend weight to the values of having good qualifications and mature age. Being single, and having dependents, negatively impacts on the factors influencing motivations to become entrepreneurs.

The results of the study are consistent with the literature concerning the nature and motivations that make people entrepreneurs. For instance, Casson's (2003) and Knight's (1921) identification of a key characteristic of an entrepreneur is the ability to exhibit traits of judgement in decision-making, which come alive in the analysis. In the same vein, foresight (Kirzner, 1973; Kirzner, 1979), imagination and daring behaviours of entrepreneurs (Begley and Boyd, 1986; Chandler and Jansen, 1992; Aldrich and Wiedenmayer, 1993; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996) show evidence in our analysis. The 'pull' factors – desire for self-fulfilment and other personal rewards – seem to find better support than the 'push' factors – i.e. lack of employment opportunities, dissatisfaction at work (Gilad and Levine, 1986; Watson et al., 1998; Littunen, 2000; Morrison, 2000; McKay, 2001; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Alstete, 2003; McClelland et al., 2005; Doobs and Hamilton, 2007). The results also throw doubt on the perceptions of a glass ceiling in the Nigerian workplace, which is suggestive of the possibility of 'push' factors to self-employment where women make this choice almost 'by default' (i.e. because of a lack of opportunity elsewhere). On the other hand, such negative motivational factors have emerged in other contexts as a driver of self-employment (e.g. Deakins and Whittam, 2000). This potential constraint was rejected by respondents, with women actually appearing to embrace the risk and challenge that self-employment brings. It is possible

here, as argued by McClelland et al. (2005), that perceptions of gender-specific obstacles subside once the business is established and women feel they have proved themselves as competent business owners.

What are the rational explanations that can be given for the profile of FEs that emerges from the study? One has to begin with the realisation that a household in which parents are self-employed is entrepreneurial. Accordingly, in this sense, the offspring of entrepreneurial parents have a head start which is found in the culture of the household itself; this is not to say that all the children of entrepreneurial parents will become entrepreneurs, but that growing up in an entrepreneurial culture and interacting with like-minded entrepreneurial households – particularly in a society where social norms, though rigid, are accommodating in terms of interactions at family and social circles – can be a rewarding and rich experience in terms of learning business skills, character development and attitude towards life and sustenance in general. For budding family entrepreneurs, the family may offer practical support – i.e. support which may then become the source of obligation and reciprocation (with an associated antipathy towards orientations of individualism and self-interest) that forms the basis of Nigerian culture, and perhaps of most developing societies. From this, we may predict that the availability of these benefits, which we can capture in the concepts of ‘family capital’, will help precipitate women in Nigeria to make the decision to become an entrepreneur. This resonates with other research in the context of Africa (McClelland et al., 2005), where family commitments – particularly a desire to create a better environment for family members – emerged as a strong motivating factor to entrepreneurship.

In the light of our findings, the decision by Nigerian women to become self-employed can be interpreted as a rational and path-dependent decision. In a rational decision-making process, choices between alternatives are based on the principle of maximisation of benefit or the minimisation of costs. Thus, the decision to become an entrepreneur rather than to become an employee is likely to reflect estimates of greater benefit from the former route. The rational choice model interpreted in this fashion can be usefully applied beyond the Western context, where norms of individualism and self-serving interests are assumed to dominate notions of choice, to include and reflect (through the concept of family capital, for example) contexts characterised by reciprocal relationships and family obligations. Path dependence explains how a set of decisions in present times can be influenced by the decisions that have been made in the past. In a broader context, the phrase is often used to mean that history matters (Pierson, 2004), i.e. history has an enduring influence upon the present choices. Thus, the explanation of the present outcomes of a path-dependent process requires consideration of history, rather than simply viewing present preferences and other factors that determine outcomes.

The implication of the findings for the state seems to be that measures – such as de-regulation and making finance available to prospective entrepreneurs – are strong contributory factors in helping turn women into entrepreneurs (Singh et al., 2009; Mordi et al., 2010). As a policy measure, the government would do better to identify prospective entrepreneurs from self-employed households and to accordingly provide them with the necessary support to launch them into their ventures.

Overall, this study has made both a theoretical and an empirical contribution. On a theoretical level, it has contributed to literature by examining the issue and contribution of family legacy in turning women into entrepreneurs. The methodology used can be conveniently applied to similar studies for other countries. The study has the applied value in that it has identified the issues which are considered to be important for

entrepreneurial development that can receive attention from the state. This study has gone some way to 'closing the gap' in terms of our understanding of family legacy and the impacts upon female entrepreneurs in an African context. In this respect, we have obtained through our data a 'snapshot' of the impacts of personal, family and social attributes in turning a female family member into an entrepreneur. The next step might be to complement this quantitative work with an in-depth qualitative analysis of female entrepreneurs' perceptions of family values and experiences in turning them into entrepreneurs.

Notably, future studies could actively analyse data at disaggregate level (for example, manufacturing and services). Finally, the results experienced limitation owing to the fact that respondents from only three regions from the southwest of the country were included in the survey. Future studies could endeavour to include additional regions from other parts of the country as well.

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