

International entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries

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Abstract Despite the increase in research about international entrepreneurship, relatively little is known about the process in Africa. This is due to the disparity between the actualization of business ventures and global perceptions of African entrepreneurs. As a result of the diversity of countries within the African continent, the nature of international entrepreneurship varies with cultural and historical context. To address this research gap, we discuss how international entrepreneurship in Africa differs to the more studied traditionally North American and European perspective. To do this we develop a number of research propositions for resource-rich landlocked African countries (Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) that have unique characteristics in terms of how they approach international entrepreneurship. The research propositions suggest that resource-rich landlocked African countries need to focus on informal networks and cultural attributes as a way to differentiate themselves in the international marketplace. Managerial implications and theoretical research suggestions for differentiating resource-rich landlocked African countries from the more resource scarce and coastal countries are stated.

Résumé Malgré l'augmentation de la recherche sur l'entrepreneuriat international, on sait relativement peu de choses sur le processus en Afrique. Ceci est dû à la disparité entre l'actualisation des entreprises commerciales et les perceptions globales des entrepreneurs africains. En raison de la diversité des pays du continent africain, la nature de l'entrepreneuriat international varie selon le contexte culturel et historique. Pour combler cette lacune de recherche, nous discutons comment l'entrepreneuriat

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international en Afrique diffère de la perspective traditionnellement nord-américaine et européenne plus étudiée. Pour le faire, nous élaborons certaines propositions de recherche pour les pays africains sans littoral mais riches en ressources (Botswana, Zambie et Zimbabwe) ; ces pays ont des caractéristiques uniques en termes d'approche de l'entrepreneuriat international. Les propositions de recherche suggèrent que les pays africains sans littoral mais riches en ressources doivent se concentrer sur les réseaux informels et les attributs culturels comme moyen de se différencier sur le marché international. Les implications managériales et des suggestions de recherche sont énoncées.

Keywords Africa · International entrepreneurship · Culture · Opportunity recognition · Emerging economies · Informal business · Internationalization · Networks

Summary highlights

Contributions: Entrepreneurs in emerging economies especially those in Africa need to focus on informal networking and cultural attributes for their global competitiveness.

Purpose: This paper examines the role of international entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries (Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe) by providing a set of research propositions.

Results/findings: The analysis of international entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries reveals that culture and institutional environment affect internationalization efforts.

Limitations: This paper is a conceptual paper adding to the emerging literature around international entrepreneurship in Africa so more empirical research is needed to substantiate the findings. This includes more longitudinal data analysis about international entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries and comparative analysis to other emerging economies.

Practical implications: The findings reveal the importance of entrepreneurs utilizing their competitive advantages based on natural resources as a source of internationalization. The paper provides some suggestions for entrepreneurs in emerging economies to utilize informal networks to enhance global competitiveness.

Theoretical implications: Due to the lack of theories about international entrepreneurship focusing on cultural attributes specific to Africa, this paper helps to build a more holistic theoretical underpinning that can be extended to other emerging economy contexts.

Policy recommendations: Governmental authorities need to utilize both formal and informal networking to increase international entrepreneurship. For landlocked resource-rich African countries, it is important not to rely on lack of sea transport or access but rather cultural attributes that distinguish their products and services from competitors.

Future research direction: More research is needed to extend the research propositions in this paper based on African landlocked resource-rich countries to other emerging economies. This includes contrasting Africa to other geographic locations to see how country resources and geographic position affects their internationalization patterns.

Introduction

Despite international entrepreneurship research blossoming in recent decades, limited progress has been made about understanding cultural differences affecting international opportunity recognition and international commercialization (Chandra et al. 2015). This is due to there being still much to discover about how entrepreneurs identify, formulate, and evaluate business ideas in the international business environment (Etemad 1999; Etemad et al. 2001; Shane 2012). While it has been shown that the identification of opportunity for entrepreneurship is culturally influenced (Dana 1995, 1996), the gap in the literature has given rise to suggestions that the opportunity recognition process in different countries and cultures has been overlooked (Dana et al. 2000; Dana et al. 2001; Terjesen et al. 2013). The field of international entrepreneurship—particularly in the African context—remains void of research about the processes around recognizing opportunities. This has meant that most international entrepreneurship focuses on a single opportunity rather than multiple perspectives to explain the process (Dimov 2007). The contribution of this paper is to focus on the unique characteristics of international entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries. This is an important addition to the field of international entrepreneurship, which has limited focus on Africa and especially in terms of the differences between coastal and landlocked countries, which this paper is discussing in the form of research propositions that can be later used in an empirical context. In addition, this paper focuses on resource-rich landlocked African countries that do not have coastal access for trade rely on informal networks and cultural attributes for international entrepreneurship.

Although there is considerable research in entrepreneurship, most is concentrated in North America and Europe with less known about Africa (Sheriff and Muffatto 2015). Most theories about international entrepreneurship were tested in Europe and North America, which may mean that reality might differ in Africa due to the cultural differences and the historical context of colonization. Africa has been marginalized in mainstream entrepreneurship research due to the limited availability of published studies (Naude and Havenga 2005). This has led to there being more interest in entrepreneurship research in Africa due to its economic recovery and growth trajectory (Gatewood and Boko 2009). Moreover, Lingelbach et al. (2005) criticize entrepreneurship research in developing countries for focusing on description rather than explanations. This has meant that existing work of entrepreneurship scholars being focused on developed countries instead of examining the different ways entrepreneurship is practiced in developing, emerging, and transition economies (Bruton et al. 2008).

Africa is important in the global economy due to it comprising 20% of the total global land area, representing a high proportion of land for business purposes (Edoho 2015a). There are 54 recognized sovereign states in Africa with different political structures and resource endeavors. The vast population size of Africa (estimated at

over 1 billion) means that there is a diverse array of people with various cultures in this continent (World Population Review 2013). In addition, Africa is the second most populous continent after Asia within its expansive ethno-heterogeneity (Edoho 2015b). Despite the large land mass and population size there is poverty and low average income in many parts of Africa (Mudamburi 2012). This has led to there being an intensifying focus on Africa due to its cultural heritage and innovative capabilities, which has led to increased interest about international entrepreneurship in Africa due to its ability to stimulate economic growth and improve social conditions (Edoho 2015a).

The basis of most management theories has been from the personal experience of scholars and their cultural upbringing (Klingebiel and Stadler 2015). As international entrepreneurship scholars, we have a direct interest in Africa, as it comprises a large geographical area and many developing countries. It is important to extend and challenge the existing international entrepreneurship theory. Africa is the next context of international entrepreneurship and much can be learnt in terms of theory development. The conventional understanding of international entrepreneurship needs to be addressed by emerging contexts including Africa. Research on Africa is critical for the advancement of international entrepreneurship theory because it can offer insights into cultural reasoning. This is important for understanding how historical and current environmental conditions shape the actions of international entrepreneurs. Culture can offer an understanding about the dynamics of international entrepreneurship, which can be used to advance theory. In addition, cultural-focused research using emerging economies in Africa can help create a better identity for international entrepreneurship distinguishing it from other entrepreneurship fields. As there has been an increase in new theories about entrepreneurship, in this paper we provide a view about how international entrepreneurship is different in African resource-rich landlocked countries. Since Africa has a high number of informal and small businesses, an understanding of international entrepreneurship is critical for their growth and prosperity. Moreover, an understanding of the mechanisms of entrepreneurship in international markets is helpful in recognizing and exploiting opportunities. Our paper provides an understanding of international entrepreneurship in Africa, which we call a cultural perspective that necessitates a different approach. The methodology of the paper involves a literature review and content analysis of existing research about international entrepreneurship in Africa by focusing on a specific geographic area that has distinct features. We focus on resource-rich landlocked countries of Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe because they have distinct characteristics towards international entrepreneurship that differ from other countries in Africa (Sheriff and Muffatto 2015). The next section discussing the literature on international entrepreneurship focuses specifically on how Africa is a different context and requires new perspectives in order to understand behavior.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, an overview of the importance of Africa in the global economy is stated. This leads to a discussion about the role of international entrepreneurship research in Africa. Next, we describe the role of culture in shaping entrepreneurial African businesses in the international domain. We then state how international entrepreneurship in Africa is culturally influenced with regards to policy directions and management implications. A number of research propositions are developed that focus on resource-rich landlocked African countries in terms of their approach towards international entrepreneurship. Finally, we conclude with a

discussion of the implications of this theoretical framework for international entrepreneurship and suggestions for future research endeavors.

Literature review

International entrepreneurship theory

The research on international entrepreneurship can be described in these main theoretical approaches: Uppsala/process model, eclectic/economic paradigm, international new ventures, and network perspective (Chandra et al. 2015). Each of these theoretical frameworks for explaining international entrepreneurship is summarized in Table 1. These theories are also stated in terms of how they apply to emerging economies, which is the focus of this paper based on landlocked resource-rich African countries.

The Uppsala or process model was developed as a way to understand internationalization as a step-by-step approach that occurs gradually (Johanson and Vahlne 1977). This traditional view of internationalization was developed before the Internet was invented and took the view that firms entered markets that were more geographically and culturally close. This meant that firms as they increased their market knowledge would be more committed to internationalization depending on relationship formation. Firms would acquire knowledge that they could then use to develop connections and opportunities in foreign countries.

The eclectic or economic paradigm of internationalization focused on economic considerations such as risk and market demand (Dunning 1980). This meant that businesses would evaluate foreign markets based on financial considerations such as costs of doing business and risk exposure (Chandra et al. 2015). This theory was popular with businesses using transaction costs as a way to test location advantages in foreign markets. However, this theory has been criticized due to its emphasis on resource commitment and opportunism rather than long-term need.

The theory of international new ventures was developed in conjunction with the invention of the Internet and increase in firms operating internationally instead of only domestically (Nieto and Fernandez 2006). Born global or international new ventures challenged traditional theories of internationalization that took a gradual process. International entrepreneurship grew as a research field and the international new venture approach gained ascendancy because of its linkage to innovation. This has been linked to the role of entrepreneur's prior knowledge in making decisions to export to geographically distant markets (Chandra et al. 2009). Moreover, as more global travel is occurring businesses are involved in strong and weak entrepreneurial networks, which help the internationalization process (Ellis and Pecotich 2001).

The network perspective focuses on the social, human, and business relations between firms in the international marketplace (Johanson and Mattsson 1988). Networks are utilized in their direct and indirect role to see how businesses can increase internationalization rates (Johanson and Vahlne 2006). The emphasis in the network perspective is internationalization as an unplanned process, which develops from interactions. These networks can involve government and non-profit organizations that influence firm internationalization in an industry and market (Chandra et al. 2015). International market opportunities in the network

Table 1 Summary of main theoretical frameworks in explaining international entrepreneurship in emerging economies

Theory	Theoretical foundation	Selected references	Application to emerging economies
Uppsala or process model theory	The Uppsala or process model theory suggests that firms internationalize by going through a graduate step-by-step process based on geographic location.	Johanson and Vahlne 1977; Johanson and Vahlne 2009; Vahlne and Johanson 2013; Vahlne et al. 2011	In emerging economies often firms utilize the Uppsala or process model approach due to their lack of resources and ease of conducting business with geographically close neighbors. However, due to the internet and increase ease of use with information communications technology the Uppsala model no longer always applies and it depends rather on the type of firm in the emerging economy context.
Eclectic or economic paradigm	The eclectic or economic paradigm theory examines the role of finance and risk in internationalization decisions. The theory suggests that firms will internationalize based on weighing up the economic advantages in terms of costs, risks and opportunities.	Dunning 1980, 1988	In emerging economies the eclectic/economic paradigm can help to explain the reluctance of firms to internationalize due to resource constraints.
The theory of international new ventures	The theory of international new ventures examines how some firms internationalize from inception. This means that due to advanced information technology firms can directly go into international markets.	Glavas and Mathews 2014; McDougall et al. 1994; Oviatt and McDougall 2005; Zahra 2005; Zahra et al. 2000	Due to the lack of consumer purchasing power in emerging economies, firms from these regions internationalize as a way of reaching a larger market share.
Network perspective	The network theory examines how firms are embedded within their economic, professional and social relationships, which helps them gain access to international markets	Coviello and Munro 1995; Etemad et al. 2001; Hohenthal et al. 2014; Manolova et al. 2014; Ruzzier et al. 2006;	Firms in emerging economies can utilize their networks to facilitate easier access based on knowledge about language, culture and customs.

perspective develop from community endeavors when opportunities are linked and exploited. The ability to use networks as a collective initiative helps firms to share knowledge and innovate in the international marketplace (Lee and Williams 2007). By sharing information entrepreneurship can develop by network formation. The network perspective for international entrepreneurship is adopted as the theoretical framework for this paper as it best describes the difference between resource-rich landlocked countries compared to other countries in Africa. To explain international entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries, it is helpful to explain the decision-making process. Part of the decision-making process in international entrepreneurship involves effectuation or causation (Sarasvarthy et al. 2003). These decision-making styles differ depending on the uncertainty and complexity of the international business environment (Chandra et al. 2015). The effectuation approach for entrepreneurs about international opportunities is used initially to evaluate markets. This is due to the emphasis on building partnerships and leveraging contingencies based on international demands (Perry et al. 2011). Causation focuses on international entrepreneurship as a decision based on expected goals and financial returns. The focus in causation is on business planning and competitive analysis that will encourage a firm to internationalize. Causation is important when businesses can utilize their resources more efficiently in an international market.

International entrepreneurship can drive social and economic development in Africa (Valliere 2015), especially given the important role international business and entrepreneurs have in economic growth (Van Stel and Thurik 2004). Valliere (2015:244) states: “there has been very little examination of entrepreneurship in Africa and the degree to which developed country theories apply to Africa.” This is due to the majority of entrepreneurship research in Africa focusing on South Africa meaning the diversity of other countries is missed (Kiss et al. 2012). In addition, the African continent consists of different countries with various cultures and business philosophies. Some research suggests that Africa is similar to other regions and should be studied in the same manner (Dutt et al. 2015). Other studies demonstrate that Africa includes unique cultures (Dana 1997) coupled with specific historical factors (Elbanna and Child 2007).

Limited research has focused on how an entrepreneur’s background and culture influences the dynamics of opportunity recognition (Chandra et al. 2015). An international entrepreneur’s experience of failures and successes affects their opportunity development. In pursuit of opportunities entrepreneurs based on their history may face different obstacles in the international marketplace. In order to identify and decide whether to pursue certain international opportunities some entrepreneurs will look at the novelty and dynamism involved. International entrepreneurship is attracting increased interest in emerging economies including Africa because it plays a pivotal role in economic growth. Governments are focusing on formulating policies around international entrepreneurship as a way to support economic growth and commercialization of innovations (Archibong 2010). This is especially evident in policies for emerging economies in Africa in terms of how they manage the internationalization process, which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Economic liberalization and internationalization

Internationalization is crucial for the competitiveness of emerging economies (Acs and Amoros 2008). Global competitiveness is viewed by many emerging economies as a way to develop their small local based networks by taking advantage of international opportunities (Felzensztein 2016). There has been an increase in the volume of international business particularly for countries classified as emerging economies. Firms in emerging economies are seeking to expand their business into the international arena in order to provide jobs but also stimulate economic growth. In emerging economies, internationalization is viewed as a way to increase knowledge capacities but also learn about innovation (Bruton et al. 2012). Felzensztein et al. (2015) suggests that having an entrepreneurial orientation can help firm's internationalize and increase their financial performance. By focusing on their international entrepreneurial orientation, firms in emerging economies can expand their businesses through increasing market access.

Ngo et al. (2016) discuss how firms in emerging economies are pursuing international strategic behaviors. This is due to there being increased opportunities in international markets that firms can obtain by utilizing export, foreign direct investment and licensing strategies (Bruton et al. 2008). More recently there has been an increase in research about international entrepreneurship in emerging economies due to previous works failing to highlight the different cultural and behavioral norms existing in the global marketplace (Jones et al. 2011). Ngo et al. (2016:53) define emerging economies as “economies whose governments adopt the free-market system and favor policies of economic liberalization but whose formal market-supporting institutions are lacking or weak.” Emerging economies are prevalent in Africa as countries move to more open societies made possible by economic liberalization. In addition, the ability of countries to be involved in international entrepreneurship is affected by their institutional environment, which is stated in the next section.

Institutional environment

North (1990:3) defines institutions as “the rules of the game in a society.” Emerging economies often have weak or inconsequential institutions that create a sense of lawlessness (Hoskisson et al. 2000). Institutions in emerging economies help with reducing uncertainty by providing a more efficient form of business communication (Ngo et al. 2016). This enables entrepreneurs in emerging economies to invest in businesses that will provide a source of income. The lack of formal institutions in emerging economies often necessitates managers to use bribery or illegal payments for business purposes (Li et al. 2015).

The institutional environment of emerging economies influences the level and scope of entrepreneurship (Kiss et al. 2012). Both formal and informal institutional factors affect entrepreneurial capacity in emerging economies due to their role in regulating, encouraging or hindering business growth. The formal institutional environment consists of government authorities who enforce business rights enabling a degree of predictability and stability to exist in an economy (Ngo et al. 2016). These formal structures enable entrepreneurs to have specific requirements that help them form and grow businesses in the international markets. Informal institutional structures are more

prevalent in emerging economies due to the lack of legal and contractual rights for business. This means that in emerging economies there is still debate about how to define institutions due to the broad conceptualization and understanding about the institutional environment (Peng et al. 2009). In emerging economies regulative, normative, and cognitive dimensions of institutions affect internationalization rates. This is due to regulations about exporting, licensing, and franchising affecting the development of internationally orientated businesses in emerging economies. The norms in terms of culture also influence how businesses in emerging economies are perceived by international firms. In addition, cognitive factors in terms of behavior affect whether hard working entrepreneurs are able to see international opportunities.

Institutions are considered an important element in distinguishing emerging economies from developed economies (Peng 2003). Despite with what the role institutions play in emerging economies, little is known about their effect on international entrepreneurship (Shirokova and McDougall-Covin 2012). In particular, the role of domestic institutions in affecting the entrepreneurial capability of firms in emerging economies still largely remains unanswered (Peiris et al. 2012). To understand the institutional environment of a country, it is important as it enables knowledge about the rules and way business is played (Pejovich 1990). This is discussed more in the next section about international entrepreneurship that focuses on culture and the institutions that are evident in an African context.

International entrepreneurship in resource-rich landlocked African countries: Towards a conceptual framework

International entrepreneurship research needs to be enriched by the cultural contexts of Africa, which produce different ecosystems (Sheriff and Muffatto 2015). In Africa, entrepreneurship may evolve in conjunction with societal changes that interact with international trends. An understanding of international entrepreneurship in Africa can help entrepreneurs and policy makers provide better management strategies. In order to extend the international entrepreneurship literature, it is necessary to analyze the present entrepreneurship conditions in Africa with a view to incorporating cultural differences.

Entrepreneurship has been downplayed in Africa due to the entrenched belief of state capitalism (Edoho 2015b). The history of many African countries meant that collectivism and state control was preferred because of economic concerns, high poverty rates, and development reasons (Marsden 1990). African governments preferred state control of the economy as a way to regain independence after colonial rule and to engineer social change (Edoho 2015a). Despite the efforts of African governments with state ownership of enterprises, critical infrastructure needed for investment (including telecommunications) were neglected (Bewayo 2012). This has meant that the level of entrepreneurship in Africa is low because of the proliferation of state-owned enterprises and government control over business.

Governments utilize policies about entrepreneurship to enhance the behavior, knowledge, and skills of individuals towards innovation (Osemeke 2012). Countries in Africa need to group together and become an entrepreneurial society that enables continual, steady, and positive growth (Thurik and Wennekers 2001). Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process in which the entrepreneur acts as the catalytic agent changing African society (Edoho 2015a). Due to the increased ease of internationalization for

businesses based on Internet availability more African entrepreneurs are focusing on the global market rather than local market. There are some technological innovations that have been more successful in Africa than other parts of the world. An example of this is the mobile money system (M-PESA, M for mobile, pesa for Swahili) that was adopted quickly in Kenya but not in Eastern Europe (Adner 2012). Internationalization in Africa has occurred in the movie industry with exports of African entertainment popular (Klingebiel and Stadler 2015). Nollywood—Africa's equivalent of Hollywood in the USA and of Bollywood in India—has led the way for internationalization of entertainment. The next section will further discuss each of the research propositions for resource-rich landlocked African countries by focusing first on opportunities in emerging economies.

Research propositions

Opportunities in emerging economies

Entrepreneurship helps a country internationalize at the firm, industry, regional, and national level (Audretsch 1995). Bruton et al. (2008) argue that most entrepreneurship research in emerging economies is descriptive rather than theory building. This means that it is important to focus on the different cultures and historical significance of emerging economies to create new theories (Valliere 2015). Valliere and Peterson (2009) refer to three macro-scale factors that vary by country, which affects entrepreneurship and economic development. Firstly, there are institutions that integrate knowledge by linking individuals and business together. This helps build momentum into an economy by making new knowledge available for entrepreneurs to use in the marketplace. Secondly, the regulatory environment of a country affects the freedom and ability of entrepreneurs to start new ventures. This affects the institutional environment and way entrepreneurship is developed within a region. Thirdly, the access to legal protection of property and ownership enables entrepreneurs to build businesses. This includes the role of access for financial resources that are needed for entrepreneurship.

Khosa and Kalitanyi (2015) discusses how individuals engage in entrepreneurship because of extrinsic rewards, intrinsic motivators, independence, and family reasons. The extrinsic rewards are referred to as push factors that have a negative connotation. This is due to the perception of individuals being entrepreneurial by necessity instead of by choice (Manev et al. 2005). This often occurs for employment or monetary reasons when starting a business is the only way to access these resources. In developing countries, often informal entrepreneurship is a push factor due to the lack of appropriate safeguards. In addition, social inequality and marginality affect the ability to find formal employment. Sometimes it is hard for a person to find a job due to government or labor market restrictions (Kalitanyi 2007). This may lead individuals to create businesses that enable an owner to create their own employment (Dana and Morris 2007).

Necessity entrepreneurs enter business as a way to make a living rather than as a way of life (Habiyakere et al. 2009). Often natives of developing countries choose to be entrepreneurs in foreign countries due to their difficulty in finding access to capital (Chrysostome 2010). Intrinsic rewards or pull factors involve the need for achievement

that involves starting a business (Khosa and Kalitanyi 2015). Some entrepreneurs have a desire for independence that leads them to want control over their working hours and conditions (Nwankwo 2005). The positive motivations of seeking independence and control over employment lead individuals to entrepreneurship. For some people, the best way of escaping poverty is by being entrepreneurial (Serrie 1998). This is increasingly important as countries transition from developing to develop status on the basis of economic liberalization and their resource endowments. In Africa, there are many emerging economies but their ability to be entrepreneurial in the international marketplace will be based on resource and geographical characteristics. This leads to the first research proposition:

Research proposition 1: Opportunities in emerging economies about international entrepreneurship will be based on geographic characteristics of countries including resource endowments and access to coastal areas.

Resource-rich landlocked countries

The focus of this paper is on the resource-rich landlocked countries in Africa as they have distinct characteristics of having a large middle class and high per capita income compared to other African countries. Moreover, the need to focus on their international markets as they do not have the same sea access as other African countries, which affects their international entrepreneurship rates. Landlocked resource-based countries including Botswana are trying to change the composition of their economies into being more diversified and service based (African Economic Outlook 2011). This has led to government policies around entrepreneurship aimed at encouraging a more robust private sector and this is impacted by whether the country is resource rich or resource scarce in terms of natural endowments.

Research by Venables (2010) has suggested that resource-rich landlocked African countries are more focused on the international environment due to their necessity to utilize capabilities in a different way compared to resource-rich coastal countries such as Namibia and Sierre Leone. Moreover, Botswana while not having access to coastal waterways has one of the highest levels of income per capita in Africa making it an emerging African country (Sheriff and Muffatto 2015). This compares to resource-scarce landlocked countries such as Ethiopia and Uganda who have not internationalized to the same extent as the resource-rich landlocked countries. This leads to the next research proposition:

Research proposition 2: Resource-rich landlocked African countries are internationalizing faster than coastal African countries due to entrepreneurial capabilities.

Informal entrepreneurship

Africa differs to other international settings due to the large number of informal businesses that exist. In Africa, these informal enterprises contribute to the

entrepreneurial ecosystem as they surpass regulations and rules to engage in business activity (Klingebiel and Stadler 2015). The aim of this paper is to offer some inspiration for more research and attention to focus on international entrepreneurship in Africa. Often African entrepreneurs use family and community ties to launch new businesses (Khavul et al. 2009). These social ties are utilized by entrepreneurs in Africa as a basis of their networking to help them create new ventures. This is important in Africa as there are often regulatory and institutional challenges to entrepreneurship that encourage informal business activities. Countries that have high regulatory barriers with weak legal and financial markets often influence entrepreneurs to use their social network ties (Ahlstrom and Bruton 2006). In addition, the high normative barriers in the form of professional standards may make it hard for entrepreneurs to get the appropriate certification to start a business (Valliere 2015). Valliere (2015) found that entrepreneurial intent in Cameroon is equal to developed Western countries and in some cases can be higher. It is important to understand whether international entrepreneurship is different in Africa due to the disparity between entrepreneurial intention levels and actualization of starting business venture rates (Valliere 2015).

Increasingly more data is becoming available on entrepreneurial activity on Africa including venture capital and private equity rates (Groh et al. 2013). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor contains information for some African countries based on attitudes and aspirations and this includes both formal and informal business activity. Countries in Africa have unique features based on their culture and colonization experience. Many African countries were once colonies of European nations including Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom, have rebelled against their colonial past, and many African countries see internationalization as a negative rather than positive experience.

Klingebiel and Stadler (2015) highlighted how many African businesses are too busy with navigating corruption and violence to focus on international entrepreneurship. Due to the income inequality and living conditions some African entrepreneurs find it hard to strategize outside their domestic market. Khosa and Kalitanyi (2015) in a study of micro-enterprises by African foreign entrepreneurs in South Africa found that the fear of internationalization is detrimental to a business. Entrepreneurial energy is needed to foster economic growth and development in Africa (Edoho 2015a). Africa's economy is changing from being in crisis to focusing on international expansion as part of its growth strategy. The past stagnation of business in Africa is altering as a result of changing political leadership and broader national goals. This leads to the next research proposition:

Research proposition 3: Resource-rich landlocked African countries need to focus more on informal entrepreneurial networks as a way to increase internationalization rates.

Society and cultural attitudes

The increased independence of African countries after colonial rule led to a desire to catalyze economic change by supporting government ownership of state assets. This led to state capitalism occurring in the 1980s, which has been referred to as “Africa’s

lost decade” (Jolly 2009). Decreased economic performance in the 1980s, following government intervention in business ownership led to a reappraisal of economic policy (Edoho 2015a). Thus, there was the belief in Africa that self-employment and the development of entrepreneurship were better than government intervention (Chukwuemeka 2011). Private entrepreneurship has since been developing in Africa as people change their beliefs about relying on the government for employment and see the benefits in having economic freedom (Bewayo 2012). In addition, there has been a shift since the 1990s and 2000s towards internationalization from international financial agencies (Edoho 2015a). This has led African countries to trade liberalization and deregulation further promoting internationalization (Jolly 2009).

The extent an individual engages in entrepreneurial activities is based on societal attitudes towards this behavior. This means entrepreneurial activities are socially embedded based on cultural values (Dana 1995; Steyaert 2007). In different societies, there will be varying levels of social pressure put on individuals to behave in an entrepreneurial manner (Moore 1997). Entrepreneurs will emerge in a society that values entrepreneurship. In Africa, the social embeddedness of entrepreneurship influences the resources and opportunities to start a business (Kuada 2015). In African countries, educational programs have been blamed for encouraging students to be employees rather than being an entrepreneur and starting their own business (Boter et al. 1990). Mambula (2008) in a study about Senegalese entrepreneurs found that in Africa there is a preference for group activity rather than individual action, which affects work relationships. In Africa, some individuals have greater access to resources than others because of social structures and hierarchies based on mutual obligations (Barr 2000).

Kuada (2009) found that businesses in Ghana utilize family members as a source of cheap labor in order to help start and sustain a business enterprise. Some research suggests that the loyalty and obligation to extended family in Africa is detrimental to entrepreneurship (Okpara 2007). This means that family involvement in African businesses is seen as a personal commitment and not a value added proposition to economic growth (Neshamba 2006). For this reason, African societies tend to focus on the moral obligations to family members at the expense of good business practices (Kuada 2015). Some African businesses see inequalities in income distribution as being a duty to support weaker members of their family (Sorensen 2003). This form of free-rider mentality means that some African businesses lose resources as they are transferred to other family members (Okpara and Wynn 2007). This is in contrast to Asian businesses that have family members willing to work and protect the reputation (Himbara 1994). The sense of diligence and discipline of Asian family businesses differs to African businesses where there can be a sense of entitlement to look after less fortunate family members (Kuada 2015). Most small enterprises in Africa are necessity-based as negative economic circumstances have lead individuals into starting their own businesses (Kuada 2015). In Africa, there is a survivalist mentality among entrepreneurs who have multiple businesses in order to ensure a steady level of income (Alderman and Paxson 1992). This portfolio of income generating activities enables African businesses to minimize income variability in uncertain economic climates (Kuada 2015). This leads to the fourth research proposition:

Research proposition 4: Resource-rich landlocked African countries need to utilize their unique cultural attributes to differentiate their products and services in their international marketplace.

Implications for theory

The research propositions discussed previously pave the way for new theoretical perspectives about international entrepreneurship to develop in Africa based on geographical characteristics of being a landlocked country without coastal access. The entrepreneurial ecosystem is important in developing small business in Africa, which is crucial in transforming socioeconomic conditions. The World Bank, International Labor Organization (ILO), and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have viewed international entrepreneurship as the way to transform economic conditions in Africa (Nelson and Johnson 1991). In addition, other countries have implemented international entrepreneurship development programs such as the United States International Development Agency (USAID). Public policy around internationalization and new business development positively influence the level of entrepreneurship in a country (Storey 1999). This is due to entrepreneurship impacting opportunities and job creation, which leads to increased standards of living. The development of entrepreneurship is a way to alleviate poverty in developing countries (Garba 2010).

Culture is at the heart of understanding international entrepreneurship. Despite the cultural significance, there has been little attention given to international opportunities in Africa, which has a large number of emerging economies. To address this research gap, we use the role of culture as a new theoretical framework to clarify international entrepreneurship in Africa. We demonstrate that culture in terms of social, political, historical, and economic processes affect entrepreneurship and international business orientation. This is helpful in demonstrating the historical and current use of context about entrepreneurial ideas to provide a broader understanding of forces that drive international expansion. We view international entrepreneurship in Africa as being culture-based, including the creation, discovery, and pruning of opportunities based on choice and necessity. These processes have not been previously documented in international entrepreneurship research because of the lack of work focusing on Africa. We believe that the African approach to international entrepreneurship can reconcile the debate about the positive and negatives to market expansion. This involves highlighting the co-existence of cultural and economic reasons for international entrepreneurship in emerging economies in Africa. We make note of opportunity recognition in entrepreneurship (Chandra et al. 2015; Ellis 2011) and that cultural historical perspectives should co-exist when businesses are expanding internationally. This is discussed in more detail in the next section about managerial implications.

Managerial implications

The international entrepreneurship experience in emerging economies is an important way to facilitate economic growth. In resource-rich landlocked African

countries, international entrepreneurship provides a way for managers of firms to increase their market share and improve overall financial performance. The propositions discussed indicate that cultural attributes and informal entrepreneurial networks provide a way for firms in African resource-rich landlocked countries to compete with countries that have easier transportation access.

Cultural attributes

Managers of firms in resource-rich landlocked African countries can benefit from their unique cultural attributes to increase their international performance. Culture has an effect in the international market due to the marketing and branding perceptions of consumers. African managers can stress the cultural elements of their products and services that are not offered by their competitors particularly those closer to the sea who have access to easier transportation services. The culture in African is unique and offers a way for entrepreneurial firms to go into the marketplace by using their assets and capabilities.

Culture can be progress prone or resistant in an entrepreneurship context (Harrison 2006). Progress-orientated cultures focus on positive entrepreneurial behavior to foster high-growth enterprises. This means entrepreneurs in progress prone cultures focus on innovation and achievement to cultivate a good work environment. Progress-resistant cultures see entrepreneurship as negative and against traditional values in society. This means that progress-resistant cultures are likely to see risk and competition differently because of their uncertainty about entrepreneurship. These different forms of culture can be evaluated based on the location and historical context of each country in Africa, which are affected by informal networks discussed in the next section.

Informal networks

Business networking with local and international partners is important for managers of African landlocked resource-rich countries. This is due to their ability to utilize resources unavailable in other countries. The discussion in the research propositions suggests that African entrepreneurs need to understand the informality of networking in the international market context. Sometimes networking can be conducted in an online and informal manner that is relevant to expanding their international opportunities.

In Africa, small and medium-sized enterprises comprise the majority of new enterprises. Despite the abundance of small and medium-sized enterprises, many are informal and lack appropriate regulatory safeguards to help them internationalize. Importantly, with the lifting of international trade restrictions and increased collaboration for business in Africa, it is becoming more crucial to look at international market opportunities. We suggest that entrepreneurs in Africa should utilize their culture to encourage more international activity. We highlight how there is a large scope for African businesses to become global players. While some African enterprises have already internationalized their businesses more attention needs to be paid to how global expansion can impact the opportunity recognition process.

As smaller African firms are being forced to compete in the global arena, new forms of international entrepreneurship are being utilized. These include different internationalization routes including integrated outsourcing, collaborative partnerships and cooperative agreements. These new international arrangements are used by African businesses to compete in the global marketplace with larger multinational enterprises. However, the traditional theories of international entrepreneurship and international business cannot adequately describe these new approaches utilized by African entrepreneurs. This means a new model of entrepreneurship involvement requiring a modified approach is needed based on culture, capabilities, and internationalization.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on resource-rich landlocked African countries in terms of how they develop their international markets. Current international entrepreneurship theory has tended to focus on developed countries while neglecting the emerging and developing countries of Africa. A number of research propositions were developed in this paper that focused on the informal networks and culture endemic in resource-rich landlocked African countries. As stated in the managerial implications and theoretical suggestions section, this paper contributes to the growing interest in international entrepreneurship in Africa, which is an important emerging research stream.

In this paper, we contribute to the literature about international entrepreneurship by focusing on internationalization strategies of firms in African landlocked resource-rich countries. This enables an understanding of how international entrepreneurship in emerging economies differs based on cultural attributes and informal networking. We believe this has some implications for future research and policy decisions regarding international entrepreneurship in African countries particularly those that are in resource-rich in natural endowments. There has been increased recognition that the context of entrepreneurship is an important component of the internationalization process (Welter and Smallbone 2011). Despite the contextualization of entrepreneurship less is known from emerging economies and especially less studies landlocked resource-rich African countries like Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. We believe a more holistic perspective of international entrepreneurship will emerge when studied from an African context. This will help to understand the internationalization of entrepreneurial firms from emerging economies especially from those in less studies areas such as Africa. While more research has focused on context and institutional environment in emerging economies (e.g., Bruton et al. 2008; Peng et al. 2009; Wright et al. 2005) we believe by stressing the cultural attributes of a country this will further distinguish the role of international entrepreneurship. Our research propositions can be applied to other resource-rich landlocked countries but they have been discussed in the context of Africa, which means there are some limitations. First, international entrepreneurship is not viable for all firms in emerging economies due to resource and time constraints. While entrepreneurial firms in emerging economies are increasing there needs to be an understanding of the entrepreneur's success or failure (Ngo et al. 2016). Therefore, future research can extend our research propositions based on landlocked resource-rich African countries to other emerging economies.

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