

Market orientation of black ethnic minority hair dressers in London

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Extended abstract

The Small/Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly making a significant contribution in the growth of national economies worldwide. Indeed, it accounts for a disproportionate amount in terms of its contribution to GDP, relative to other sub-sectors of the economy. As a matter of fact, for the UK, it accounts for over 70 per cent in GDP generation. Understandably therefore, it has become the subject of growing interest among academics and practitioners, as well as multi-lateral institutions, especially as the quest for public-private partnerships, geared toward enhancing national economies and standards of living gain currency.

Seemingly ineffectively, this interest have focused primarily on SMEs of the dominant cultures, with little or no attention paid to minority businesses who are increasingly becoming significant participants in the economies of most developed countries, as liberal migration policies have enabled such development. It is in the context of this lack of sub-cultural attention that the need arises for the investigation of SMEs, the issues affecting ethnic minority businesses, especially in terms of marketing orientation. This is an area that has not only been ignored, but under-researched, even as current developments and market dynamics are increasingly impacting on this sub-sector, especially in the UK.

In the circumstances, there arises the urgent need for a study that evaluates these "missing" components, which would hopefully enable practitioners and educators to have a better appreciation and which would also lend some insight into the possibilities and limitations. It is also hoped that the outcome of this investigation would help improve entrepreneurial education and focus attention on micro units, even within ethnic sub categories, like hair dressing. Hopefully, it would also provide a broader perspective on the intricacies and limitations of ethnic SMEs.

This research is concentrating on the Black ethnic minority hairdressers as to what extent they have acquired the management skills to be able to manage their businesses in order to improve their performance.

This research proceeds by developing a conceptual framework based on the literature review. It will examine the organisational culture and hence the market orientation of the ethnic minority hair dressing businesses in the UK and test the relationship with their market orientation. This will in turn be tested against their business performance. Finally, it draws conclusions on managerial implications, by identifying the various organizational culture, market orientation and performance variable that impact on ethnic minority hair dressing businesses performance in the UK.

The outcome of this study and the recommendations that would follow would enable practitioners, policy makers and educators to have an insight into the possibilities and limitations in the UK and other economic environments, where there are significant ethnic minority participation. It is also hoped that the findings will help improve entrepreneurial education, marketing and policies that are focused on minorities' enterprises.