

Entrepreneurship in a Developing Market: The Role of Socio-cultural and Environmental Hostilities

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A b s t r a c t

This paper examines environmental hostilities and entrepreneurship in a developing market focusing on Ghana. A qualitative assessment is provided on the influence of socio-cultural factors and environmental hostilities on entrepreneurship issues in emerging markets. Recent findings have implied that entrepreneurial businesses in emerging markets are not as proactive and dynamic as their Western peers while facing intense competition. They are less likely to invest heavily in research and development (R&D) or in building up a strong brand name when the environment is hostile and competitive. The findings of a qualitative study with financial services providers, firm relationship managers and their micro-enterprise customers demonstrated the dual impact that socio-cultural factors and environmental hostilities had on entrepreneurship; that is, each of these influences co-creation by enhancing or limiting firm-customer collaboration, dialogical interactions, learning and creativity. While the negative implications of environmental hostilities on entrepreneurship are perhaps more obvious, the findings also illustrate how operating in economies are constrained by the market, and institutional failures act as a stimulant. It stimulates creativity and learning between firms and customers as they attempt to manage these issues through creativity techniques. Taken together, the study findings extend theories on entrepreneurship by incorporating a developing market perspective and by illustrating the importance of leveraging entrepreneurial resources while developing innovative solutions and product services for developing markets.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, environmental hostilities, financial services firms, microenterprises, socio-cultural factors.

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Introduction

Recent findings implied that entrepreneurial businesses in emerging markets are not as proactive and dynamic as their Western peers while facing intense competition (Parker 2018; Boso, Story and Cadogan 2012; Kiss, Wade, and Cavusgil 2012; Bruton, Ahlstrom, and Obloj 2008). They are less likely to invest heavily in research and development (R&D) or in building up a strong brand name when the environment is hostile and competitive (Tang and Hull 2012). For emerging markets such as Ghana, this is partly attributable to the seeming absence of supporting platforms for entrepreneurship. There are also socio-cultural factors and environmental hostilities peculiar to emerging markets with weak business infrastructures, such as subsistence markets, which could hinder entrepreneurship. Developing countries, also known as “base-of-the-pyramid” markets, are characterized by widespread poverty, weak infrastructure, and environmental (economic, political, and climatic) uncertainty (Gine, Goldberg, Silverman, and Yang 2012; Viswanathan, Sridharan, and Ritchie 2010; Maranz 2001). Socio-cultural factors reflect traditional and social systems, including values, norms, and activities.

Theoretical Foundations

The literature review is interdisciplinary and draws on studies from entrepreneurship as well as from studies related to environmental hostilities and socio-cultural factors in developing countries. Each discipline brings different organizing questions and perspectives. This literature review integrates them to shed more light on the research question: *Which creativity techniques are useful to build the entrepreneurial relationship between financial service providers and customer microenterprises?* The literature on environmental hostilities and socio-cultural factors and how these factors affect entrepreneurial businesses (subsistence markets) in Ghana has not been extensively investigated to determine how to improve entrepreneurial businesses and participation in global markets. A study of these factors will help to identify how they advance or hinder the entrepreneurship process. This is especially relevant as creativity techniques may derive knowledge from a resource developed from interrelationships (Audrestch, Belitski, Caiazza,

and Lehmann 2020; Belitski and Heron 2017). The study explores how environmental hostilities and socio-cultural factors in entrepreneurial business (subsistence markets) influence the entrepreneurship process for internationalization. Case examples are used to support the arguments.

Environmental hostilities

Participants of this study reveal that environmental hostilities such as marketplace illiteracy and resource constraints limit learning and creativity and subsequently hinder entrepreneurship. To financial service providers (FSPs), marketplace illiteracy is interpreted as insensitivity to micro-enterprise needs. Failure to demonstrate a solid understanding of the market dynamics with which the customer microenterprises (CMEs) deal limits the learning and creativity of the FSP and results in CME frustration. There's also institutional failure occasioned by monitoring costs associated with information asymmetry negatively influencing loan products as FSPs shift these costs onto CMEs. From the point of view of FSPs, "there will always be some borrowers whose demand for credit is not satisfied in full or include terms they consider inappropriate" (Quaye, Abrokwhah, Sarbah, and Osei 2014, pp341)

Socio-cultural factors

Socio-cultural factors refer to the traditional and social systems, including values, norms and activities. The findings of the study demonstrate two important aspects of socio-cultural factors that impact the entrepreneurship process between the FSP and the CME. Firstly, the interplay between horizontal and vertical collectivism is referred to in this study as cross-collectivism. Vertical collectivism refers to the perception of the self as part of collecting and accepting the inequalities within the collective. Horizontal collectivism entails perceiving the self as a part of a collective group and regarding all members of the group as equal (Karasz and Singelis 2009; Singelis, Bhawuk, Gabrenya, Harwood, Her, et al. 2009). The second socio-cultural factor that impacted entrepreneurship was familism associated with deferred gratification. Familism describes a social organization in which values are determined by reference to the preservation and effectiveness of the family group (Abugre 2014; Zoogah and Nkomo 2013; Kuada 2010).

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative approach was used to investigate the research question. A qualitative approach was considered ideal for this study because, in contrast with quantitative approaches, this approach enables the researcher to unveil what people say and do because of how they interpret the world. Furthermore, the qualitative method of phenomenological interviews, which is interpretative, was considered ideal for capturing the social realities that are relative to interactions between people in moments of time and space. This especially applies to a context of networked participants, who are embedded in an intricate flow of complexly entwined relationally-responsive activities (Shotter 2008).

Compared to other forms of qualitative research methods, phenomenological interviews were considered best suited to answer the research questions for two reasons. First, phenomenological interviews are "the most powerful means of attaining an in-depth understanding of another person's experience" (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989, pp138). This characteristic of phenomenological interviews facilitates entrepreneurship investigation from both the firm-provider and customers' perspectives. Ultimately, this method facilitates the exploration of the influence of socio-cultural factors and environmental hostilities on entrepreneurship for international services in subsistence markets.

This study employs the qualitative approach, in the form of phenomenological interviews and observations, to investigate the research question. Visual data (photographs) further complements the interview and observation data. This investigation is conducted in the context of customer relationship managers (CRMs) of multinational and local FSPs and their CMEs in Ghana. The findings from this study expose the fact that whilst socio-cultural factors and environmental hostilities may hinder the entrepreneurship process, they also have the potential to advance the entrepreneurship process. We, therefore, extend the theories of entrepreneurship by incorporating these perspectives of subsistence markets.

Research Context

The study context is financial services providers and customer microenterprises operating in Ghana, located in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa was chosen because it has a substantial population (more than 600 million people) living at a subsistence level of less than \$2 per day (Tiffen 2003). However, services marketing developments, especially in e-commerce and mobile banking, are booming in Africa, thus highlighting the entrepreneurs' potential for international services in these markets. Ghana is one of the fastest-growing economies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and among the top three SSA economies in terms of GDP growth % (World Development Report 2017; World Bank Global Economic Prospects 2010). The study as it relates to Ghana will provide insights on the environment and measures to support interventions towards Ghana's Global Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the liberalized economy of Ghana has helped improve relationships between financial services providers and customer microenterprises (Acquaah 2008). Respondents were identified by purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is frequently used to investigate information-rich cases (Patton 2002). The snowball technique begins with a single participant who, in turn, refers the researcher to his or her network of contacts. This type of referral facilitates the building of trust and rapport within a short time (McCracken 1988).

Overall, 15 FSPs were interviewed. Sample representation of 15 associated CME participants was obtained from referrals from the customer relationship managers CRMs. The CME participants were operating in various industries and had various lengths of relationships with the FSPs. The CME participants were mostly retailers or wholesalers, with one contractor, one manufacturer, and one farmer. These CME participants operate in both the formal and informal sectors. The ages of participants ranged from 27 to 50 years.

Data Collection

Data were collected over an eight-month period, with one month of intensive face-to-face interviewing and observations preceded by four months of telephone interviews and followed by two months of more

telephone interviews. The qualitative telephone interviews provided flexibility in data collection and analysis (Yeung 1995). Data were collected from multiple sources at several points of time, guided by a protocol developed according to recommendations for qualitative studies and grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss 2008; Eisenhardt 1989). Specifically, ten customer relationship managers (CRMs) and 10 of their associated CMEs were interviewed individually on multiple occasions. The lengthy and repetitive phenomenological interviews were conducted to uncover the perspectives, meanings, and behaviours that participants brought to bear on the entrepreneurship of services. Dyadic interpersonal communications were also recorded during meetings with the dyad. Overall, 30 participants were interviewed, with 72 interviews lasting from 45 to 75 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis and data collection had been a simultaneous process. The data analysis followed the categorization of data into themes and subthemes, a procedure for classifying the qualitative information contained in oral and written materials. This method was considered appropriate for the data analysis because it is generally used with a study design that describes a phenomenon, especially when research literature on the phenomenon is limited (Kondracki, Wellman, and Amundson 2002).

Analysis was a multi-layered process using the Atlas Ti software for open and axial coding, that is, the record and cross-referencing of codes that emerged from the data. In the initial rounds of interviews, each interview was coded separately based on words, phrases, terms, or labels offered by the participants; that is, we distinguished the first-order codes (cf. Van Maanen 1979). Each interview was re-read several times to distinguish the similarities and differences among informants. Constant comparison of the multiple participant's overtime was relied on to detect conceptual patterns (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The codes were combined into first-order categories to systematize the data, employing language used by the informants that expressed similar ideas. Continued coding interviews were done in this way until it was not possible to ascertain any more distinct conceptual patterns

shared by the participants. Along with developing first-order categories, we discerned connections among these categories. The connected categories were clustered into theoretically distinct groupings or second-order themes. These were researcher-induced concepts, cast at a more abstract level, providing overarching dimensions that integrates into a rich description of concepts and enables us to finalize a theoretical framework of how socio-cultural factors and environmental hostilities impacted the entrepreneurship process for services in subsistence markets.

Findings

1. Influence of socio-cultural Factors on Entrepreneurship

The findings of the study demonstrate that socio-cultural factors either hinder or advance entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME, as earlier discussed, through horizontal collectivism, vertical collectivism, and cross collectivism. The second socio-cultural factor observed to impact entrepreneurship was familism associated with deferred gratification. Generally, the deferred gratification involved the deference of the CME to family members' needs to gain family approval (Pye 2000). Familism and deferred gratification were observed to hinder entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME by limiting collaboration and learning.

Familism has been discovered to influence knowledge acquisition and character development (Kuada 2010). The study demonstrates that familism hinders entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME by limiting the proactiveness and risk-taking that facilitate collaboration. This is in line with Assimeng's (1981) argument that the collectivist social structure encourages the maintenance of the status quo and avoidance of serious disruption of the specific social order. In the context of this study, familism also negatively impacts resource allocation and management, and hence limited collaboration with the FSP. CME1 explains:

With my family, I do have several problems. You know, the business started from the family level...We are three people - my junior brother, myself

and my sister. With the help of Unibank, we have been able to divide the business into three, and now everybody is operating on their own... So it is family work, and because of that, we find it difficult to handle our finances. It was not until we divided it that we could manage it well. So now, with the help of Unibank, we can put our ideas together...(CME1)

As explained by CME1, Familism leads to a situation where he has to defer to family members to preserve the interests of the whole group. However, this happens at the expense of the business. He indicated that it was not until they changed their orientations away from familism that the family could successfully combine ideas to advance entrepreneurship with the FSP. Implied in this definition of familism is the concept of deferred gratification, where one is obliged to place the needs of family members before his needs. In CME1's situation, deferred gratification made it difficult to handle the finances of the family business. However, when the business was divided, decisions could be autonomously made. This points to the fact that collateral learning and, therefore, entrepreneurship is hindered by deferred gratification. CRM3 and CRM12 provide further insight:

Today someone comes to sell something, and they dip their hands into the sales and buy it without keeping any records. She has to stamp her authority. You see, you also have to play your part for the bank to give you money. Ghanaians like the concept of "Give it to God" instead of doing the right thing...(CRM3)

With deferred gratification, family members are seen to satisfy their needs at the expense of the business by taking out funds to spend on themselves. This made it difficult for CMEs to keep records. In such a situation, collateral learning is limited because information on sales and business performances are distorted. Familism and deferred gratification also adversely influences decision-making and the openness of the CME to disclose information or to

receive feedback from the FSP, so that collateral learning is further limited:

They set up the business, and they include their wives and children who are underage as shareholders and directors so that the key man risk is there, so whatever decision he has taken, whether it is the right decision, whether it is the wrong decision ...And disclosure of information. They think that when they disclose information, you are going to use it against them...(CRM12)

Familism in this situation plays out as the inclusion of all family members regardless of their qualifications in the operations of the family business. Familism, therefore, creates a situation where there is the risk of an individual making all the key decisions without checks and balances. The CMEs, as key men in this context, find it difficult to share information with the FSP because they want to maintain the status quo. When strategic decisions remain in family hands, FSPs will find it difficult to make changes in decision structures. Familism and deferred gratification have far-reaching consequences that have the potential to further hinder the entrepreneurship process between the FSP and CME. In the first place, demands by extended family on working capital led to the need to maintain high inventory levels to hedge supply. In the second place, as CRM12 explains, succession problems occur which threaten the survival of the business. Thirdly, due to the tight control over the affairs of the business, there is likely to be a shortage of managerial talent across the firm. Collateral learning is enhanced when there is the willingness of both parties to share important, even proprietary, information. This might include involving the FSP in opening books and sharing cost information, discussing future market development plans, or sharing supply and demand forecasts. If the CME is reluctant to disclose this kind of information in the bid to maintain the status quo, entrepreneurship would be hindered.

To conclude, socio-cultural factors both hinder and advance entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME in subsistence markets through familism and deferred gratification. The idiosyncratic nature of

the marketplace with diverse social and cultural groupings makes cross-collectivism more pertinent and essential to the entrepreneurship process, as demonstrated in this study. The involvement and interaction of these multiple actors advance the entrepreneurship process by providing highly valuable operant resources. However, the extreme involvement and deference to the needs of the family members were observed from the findings to hinder the entrepreneurship process by creating disinterest in collateral learning in a bid to maintain the status quo.

2. Influence of Environmental Hostilities on Entrepreneurship

Three dimensions of environmental hostilities that either hinder or advance entrepreneurship were discovered in the study: market failures, institutional failures, and marketplace illiteracy. Market failures are defined as the lack of facilitating structures and key exchange mechanisms that cause business malfunction (Fligstein 2001). These include costs of doing business (business costs), lack of market information and market uncertainties. Institutional failures are policies that hinder the effective operations of CMEs (Aidis 2002). Marketplace illiteracy is the absence of conceptual/strategic knowledge grounded in understanding marketplace exchanges (Viswanathan, Sridharan, Gau, and Ritchie 2008). Market failures and institutional failures were observed from the findings of this study to hinder and advance the entrepreneurship process between the FSP and the CME, and marketplace illiteracy was observed to hinder the entrepreneurship process as discussed below.

a. Market Failures

The findings of the study demonstrate that market failures hinder and advance entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME by limiting relational-based creativity but advance entrepreneurship by enhancing collateral learning and relational-based creativity. The business costs dimension of market failures includes problems relating to the rising cost in the process of conducting business, namely, interest rates, taxes and costs related to the strength of the currency. Market uncertainty includes concerns about changes in the marketplace, such as declining demand in the local market and low-profit margins.

These factors are elucidated in the narration of CME15.

Our system is designed not to help anybody who is willing to do long-term business... Businesses cannot develop based on the current interest rates in the market- if you are borrowing over 35% and more to pay taxes...The economies of scale are not there... the intention is to take taxes then you are opening up the economy and businesses cannot compete... The banks are not social engineers because if they are, they can also go out of business...(CME15)

CME15 shows how sustainable resource management becomes difficult for CMEs because of the high-interest rates and taxes in the markets. In such situations, it is difficult for CMEs to compete effectively since the emphasis on product quality may be compromised due to high costs. CME15 further indicates that the FSP, in this case, cannot become social engineers. Social engineers seek to promote the welfare of others without regard for profit. In such a situation, the FSP may not be motivated to engage in entrepreneurship with the CME, jeopardizing profit when applying collaboration, dialogical interactions, relational-based creativity and collateral learning. However, CRM12 elucidates how such market failures can also advance entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME by enhancing collateral learning:

You can have your own strategies, and you can keep them to your chest, but there are some you need to divulge to people to help you and for you to get results... Maybe there may be an issue with quality, and maybe there may be an issue with customers, okay...Most of the time also the customers also actually do not understand what they do so when you get closer to the customer then the customer can actually come out and tell you problems that he is facing in the business and you the relationship

*manager with the knowledge and skills
tell him that it is better you do A, B or C.
...(CRM12)*

From this exposition, FSPs are motivated to engage in entrepreneurship to assist the CMEs in overcoming market failures through collateral learning. FSPs assist CMEs in conditions of market failures to reduce their transactions costs and risks by learning simultaneously with them about the market failures. After learning from the customer to gain a solid understanding of these market failures, the FSP can provide advice on how to handle costs and address problems relating to demand, supply, and access to ensure business performance enhancement and overall profitability.

b. Institutional failures

Institutional failures were shown from the findings as environmental hostilities that hindered entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME by limiting collateral learning. The dynamics of the institutional environment may have generated repressive financial policies, adversely affecting the interest of FSPs to provide support to CMEs. Institutional failures were also shown to advance entrepreneurship by enhancing relational-based creativity. These institutional failures centred on the substandard organizational capability of the government institutions and the low effectiveness of political and civil society organizations.

*...But the problem also is with the
government - Lands department, service
department; If I have a property and
trying to register the property. It is not
like the United States, where you can
get your deed registered within three
days. Over here, you have to go through
this person, that person, and you may
wind up spending about fifty million on
the side. Even with that, you still won't
have your deed registered...(CME7)*

Governmental institutions such as the lands department play a key role in the entrepreneurship between CMEs and FSPs. This is because they have to register the deeds of properties before CMEs can use

these to secure facilities. As indicated by CME7, it takes a very long time and is also very costly to have the government lands department register the deeds of these properties due to extensive bureaucracy. As a result, CMEs cannot patronize the loan products of the FSPs, which negates the basis for collaboration. In the subsistence markets contexts, institutional failures are also inextricably linked with market failures caused by corrupt practices. The corrupt practices of some government officials exacerbate the inefficiencies in the market system:

*... Therefore the economy is not skewed
in any way to help microenterprises...
People are just paying bribes left and
right...More efforts are being made by
community banks. Rural banks are very
much engaged in communities in which
they are situated. (CME15)*

As depicted in the narration, CME15 indicates that bribes are being paid in a rampant manner for people to go behind official market channels to manipulate the system, worsening the problem of institutional ineffectiveness. Bribery increases the risks and costs of innovation to such an extent as to make it unfeasible (Berdegue 2005). However, CME15 also indicates how institutional failures advances entrepreneurship between CMEs and FSPs in various communities. He refers to how community and rural banks have taken up the challenge to compensate for the institutional failures by engaging in entrepreneurship with the CME communities. The engagements with the CME communities by certain FSPs were exposed earlier on in the findings as relational-based techniques such as community animation.

c. Marketplace Illiteracy

Marketplace illiteracy was exposed in the study to hinder and advance entrepreneurship by limiting and enhancing collateral learning. The marketplace illiteracy played out in various ways: The CME not having the inclination and knowledge to conduct market research, misunderstandings about business performance indicators and difficulties in using the e-commerce products of the FSP. CRM12 refers to how marketplace illiteracy in the form of not knowing how to conduct business research and misunderstanding

the business performance indicators make CMEs grossly inefficient.

...You have to look at the kinds of categories of people would be buying my product. We do not do that...There are other things you have to think about before going into manufacturing. Do you even have a power source? How reliable is your power? If you depend solely on hydro, can you have a thermal plant? Can you even buy a generator, would this affect your profit margin? Most of Ghanaians especially traders, they want to stock. They go to the warehouse and [he] sees his stock then he thinks he is making money...His interest costs are so high... but now we want to partner with [X Company] to introduce a capacity building program... (CRM12)

CRM12 emphasizes the various elements that CMEs may need to consider before entering into particular businesses, especially in the subsistence context with weak business infrastructures. According to CRM12's discourse, these considerations are often ignored by CMEs. Viswanathan et al. (2008) refer to such a situation as the absence of 'know-why', that is, a deeper understanding of marketplace exchanges. This lack of understanding about the marketplace hinders entrepreneurship by limiting relational-based creativity because CMEs are not open to new solutions. Additionally, other aspects of marketplace illiteracy exposed by CRM12 are the misunderstanding of business performance measures. An example provided by CRM12 is the misunderstanding of the CME, who perceives the level of stock and not the profit he is making as an indicator of his business performance. Marketplace illiteracy in these situations could also advance entrepreneurship with the FSP. CRM12 exposes the fact that the lack of 'know-why' led one FSP to partner with an entrepreneurial training firm to provide training for the CMEs. This demonstrates that marketplace illiteracy advances entrepreneurship between the FSP and CME by enhancing collateral learning. Viswanathan et al. (2008) also expose

another aspect of marketplace literacy that is essential to the CME: 'Know-how' or strategic knowledge relating to how to be informed as a seller and consumer. This aspect of marketplace literacy is also found lacking in several ways with the CMEs, as explained by CRM6:

But most of the time because these customers are not very sophisticated ... Most of them are not computer literate. They can't even do any internet banking... This year we have introduced what we call the Pay's accounts and that one it is a bit more general so anybody can use this...They think the money is for the governments...They take the money and the next time you go the shop is locked. ...They are not organized. They would go to the 'Susu' companies which charges them exorbitant rates...and then they would start playing with the bank... The amount of money that these banks are making, they can actually do these things for free but they won't do it...If I have my money and you don't pay me, I won't give you my money again... (CRM6)

CRM6 exposes three key aspects of the marketplace illiteracy that hinder entrepreneurship with the CME. These are, firstly, the inability to make effective use of the FSP's e-commerce products. As stated by CRM6, this situation of CMEs not being internet savvy was observed to advance entrepreneurship by leading the FSP to introduce e-banking products that are easy for the CME to use. Secondly, CRM6 indicates that the marketplace illiterate customers have a wrong misconception that funds provided by the FSP belongs to the government, and so they are reluctant to pay back debts to a faceless government. CRM6 explicates that such a mentality hinders entrepreneurship by limiting collaboration and relational-based creativity as the FSPs shy away from the relationship.

In conclusion, while environmental hostilities adversely impact entrepreneurship, it also may productively advance the entrepreneurship process as the FSPs and CMEs react to and cope with environmental uncertainty in various ways, such as collateral learning and relational-based creativity. This is in line with Moran and Ghoshal's (1999) assertion that "it is not resources per se, but the ability to access, deploy, exchange, and combine them that lies at the heart of value creation" (pp409). Furthermore, as rightly stated by Vaessen and Keeble (1995), a more hostile business environment may have the effect of encouraging firms to become more, rather than less, innovative to try to overcome the constraints they are facing. Although operating in subsistence markets may mean that FSPs and their CMEs face several environmental hostilities, relational-based creativity and collateral learning serves as a strategy to overcome some of these hostilities during entrepreneurship.

In this excerpt, the CME remarks that FSPs do not fully appreciate microenterprise businesses, including what it takes to run and grow them. Clearly, FSPs are not wholly without business acumen, yet a detailed understanding of inner market workings is often missing. This is captured in CME3's comments regarding the structure and content of FSP sponsored forums. While the CME views these forums as platforms for discussing and developing strategies to address microenterprise issues, they, unfortunately, take on the feeling of an unproductive meeting for "shop talk" or idle talk. Missed learning opportunities such as these contribute to FSP marketplace illiteracy and limit the potential for shared creativity and entrepreneurship. Additionally, they promote negative perceptions of FSPs.

Resource scarcity is shown to hinder entrepreneurship by limiting learning and creativity. The realities of resource scarcity due to underdeveloped capital markets and monetary systems such as high-interest rates and high operating and administrative costs remain very serious issues for companies operating in subsistence markets. To meet profitability targets,

local branches try to make up for budget deficits by passing on high operating costs in the form of significant customer fees and charges. CMEs, who do not perceive the direct benefits of firm investments are suspicious of the large spread between savings and lending rates. Wary of high bank fees and the burdensome cost implications these have on CME operations, the microenterprise owner becomes apprehensive about FSP advice and recommendation, thus stifling joint learning and creativity. CME3 narrates:

The neglect of the FSP is there because we [microbusinesses] do not have much capital, unlike the large corporates [i.e. large business customers]. Always we are cash strapped. The bank becomes just like a conduit. If you want to buy your cement [for your business], the bank issues bank checks and takes charges. Basically, we are working for the bank because there is no real benefit, and that is why we are also not keen to grow the business so much and pass everything to the bank.

This excerpt illustrates how CME perceptions of the FSP may depreciate to a point where the FSP is viewed as a "conduit" or simply a means to channel money. It also demonstrates that the CME may become less interested in accruing significant financial growth, believing monies gained will be immediately lost in bank charges. Together these perceptions find the resource-constrained or "cash strapped" microbusinesses demotivated to work with the FSP, believing that every time the bank is involved, large fees and charges follow. Because entrepreneurship and associated learning and creativity require motivation and engagement by the co-creating actors, this lack of motivation can be ruinous. Instead, efforts must be made to keep the customer interested in the entrepreneurship process and be aware of the benefits of sharing knowledge and skills.

Conclusion and Discussion

In conclusion, while environmental hostilities adversely impact entrepreneurship, it also may productively advance the entrepreneurship process as the FSPs and CMEs react to and cope with environmental uncertainty in various ways, such as collateral learning and relational-based creativity. This is in line with Moran and Ghoshal's (1999) suggestion that resource on their own does not serve a purpose but rather how it is utilized. Furthermore, as rightly stated by Vaessen and Keeble (1995), a more hostile business environment may have the effect of encouraging firms to become more, rather than less, innovative in order to overcome the constraints they are facing. Although operating in subsistence markets may mean that FSPs and their CMEs face several environmental hostilities, relational-based creativity and collateral learning serves as a strategy to overcome some of these hostilities during entrepreneurship.

CMEs may succeed or thrive in adverse environmental conditions because these conditions oblige them to innovate, take risks and be entrepreneurial in a way that promotes profitability and growth (Zahra and Neubaum 1998).

The concept of relational-based creativity that emerges from the data involves the utilization of a variety of creativity techniques during entrepreneurship. In answering the research question, we find that the structural aspects of the creative techniques influence the quantity and quality of the ideas produced and encourage divergent thinking. What makes creativity techniques such as improvisational bricolage appropriate, or the context, is the routes, twists, and surprises that this technique navigates in complex interactions conditioned by the environmental hostilities. Such a technique enables a number of smart responses to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations in the environment of uncertainty. Creative techniques such as shared synergistic motivation, the art of challenging, and community animation facilitate the re-framing of problems and discovery of new ways to act, new patterns of thought, practices and structures. The informants in the study show that these creativity techniques are strategic in that they assist in compensating for resource constraints. The

strategic role that these creativity techniques play is to help discover new meaningful opportunities and challenges and generate various ideas, which explore and exploit these opportunities.

Relational-based creativity embodies a strong sense of collective social citizenship that impacts emotions, creates motivational synergies, and excites the imagination to move away from the status quo and transcend formidable barriers. Whilst embodying a logical movement towards novelty, it also embodies improvisations and consensual ideologies to create an atmosphere in which creativity thrives.

In the light of recent developments such as the selection of Ghana to host the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA), which is the world's largest free trade area after the World Trade Organisation, and the impact of the coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic it becomes even more imperative to reduce any tractions that could emerge adversely affecting the environment of CMEs and FSPs. The role of CRMs would need to be strengthened in more innovative creative techniques. The insights from this study will support interventions in other African Union economies as well. This is especially as the AfCTA "will cover a market of 1.2 billion people, with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$2.5 trillion, across the fifty-four (54) Member States of the African Union that have signed the Agreement" (Africa Times 2019).

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Themes –	Means by which it occurs	Quotations
Informal Institutions (<i>Environmental hostilities</i>) - Enhancing collaboration and dialogical interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in complementary sectors with family members to mitigate against economic downturns Ability to pool resources together to provide capital on a rotating basis Ability to survive and grow in market downturns 	<i>The market conditions are [turbulent]. Sometimes in church communities we help ourselves [work together] and these funds are available when you are in need. The banks come in to partner with the church and give deposit facilities, loans, advisory services. They are able to give loans to people in groups of three and they can give us this sort of financing without the strict provisions. (CME8)</i>
Informal Institutions (<i>Environmental hostilities</i>) – Limiting collaboration and dialogical interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising and inconsistent interest rates, institutional fees, taxes and bureaucratic processes reduce MEC trust and motivation. Taking a short-term perspective toward the partnership and opportunistic behaviors ensue 	<i>The amount of money that these banks are making, they can actually do these things for free but they won't do it. It would benefit them in the long term as more and more people become more conscientized but they won't look at that but would try to make their profit in the short term whilst dealing with the bad loans (CME6)</i>
Cognitive Institutions (<i>Environmental hostilities</i>) - Enhancing creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile banking innovation resulting from lack of proper house identification schemes, which compel FSPs to transact business at MEC general areas of business and residence. Lack of supportive credit reference bureaus necessitated the creation of financial services products that reduce the risk of default. 	<i>We do not have identification schemes, like shop numbers and specific location identification information. Traders can be roadside or mobile, with no specific business address. So, we have to go to their areas. Out of this came ideas from the microenterprises, another innovation, the mobile bank. We have a car that has everything of a bank in it. The car goes to remote areas to take deposits and provide loans. (FSP11)</i>
Cognitive Institutions (<i>Environmental hostilities</i>) – Limiting Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missed learning opportunities at forums promote negative perceptions of FSPs Unproductive meeting for “shop talk” or idle talk. Detailed understanding of inner market workings is often missing 	<i>Training programs would be a good thing and open forums where they [FSPs] would get to know the [CME] problems and address them. Once in a while, there are forums but it is like ‘talk shop’. They don't come down to our level to get the right information – in the very raw form and they may have to sit down with us and look at all these things together. They just do the appraisal and give the money (CME2)</i>
Normative Institutions (<i>Environmental hostilities</i>) - Enhancing learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a sense of common business purpose and a converging way of perceiving market problems and solutions with the circulation of ideas and skill formation relevant to the local environment. Create customer-driven value chains that substantially reduce costs and better align services with the customer's needs. 	<i>That is where we come in to advise them on part-time basis and as we use what we learn from them we get to understand the challenges they are facing better. And, you get to learn a lot from them in terms of how they import their things, like if it comes to the port, how they go about clearing their goods. Since you are close to them you get to learn from them on the shop floor, like how they relate to people. And if you go to the market, how they behave in a particular way. So, in understanding the nature of their business we are able to serve them better (FSP8).</i>
Normative Institutions (<i>Environmental hostilities</i>) – Limiting Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underdeveloped capital markets and monetary systems such as in high interest rates and high operating and administrative costs limit profitability and MECs are suspicious of the large spread between savings and lending rates. The FSP is viewed as a “conduit” or simply a means to channel money. 	<i>Training programs would be a good thing and open forums where they [FSPs] would get to know the [CME] problems and address them. Once in a while, there are forums but it is like ‘talk shop’. They don't come down to our level to get the right information – in the very raw form and they may have to sit down with us and look at all these things together. They just do the appraisal and give the money. It is only when the loans are not paid that they try to understand our business. (CME3)</i>