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Influence of Entrepreneurial Tendencies on Uptake of Access to Government Procurement Opportunities by the Youth A Study of ISIOLO County, Kenya

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Abstract

Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) is an initiative by the Kenyan Government to empower the Youth, Women and Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) through preferential treatment while seeking Government Procurement Opportunities. The aim of the AGPO initiative is to facilitate the enterprises owned by Youth, Women and PWDs to participate and benefit from at least thirty percent (30%) of the Government tenders. However, considering the numerous challenges experienced, the determinants of this initiative and how they influence the uptake of this opportunity is not clear and hence this study while narrowing on the independent parameters of Entrepreneurial Tendencies sought to correlate with the dependent variable which was the Uptake of AGPO. Using the descriptive research design with inferential statistics as tools of analysis, and with a sample of 55 respondents drawn from the Three (3) Sub-Counties, namely; Isiolo, Garbatulla, and Merti, all in Isiolo County in Kenya. The researchers correlated the independent variable with the dependent variable. The study found that Entrepreneurial Tendencies had a moderate positive correlation with the Uptake of AGPO, as it was established that the youth were able to seek and exploit opportunities and had high propensity to undertake risks. The study recommends that the County Government of Isiolo and other agencies such as development partners should come up with new initiatives on ways of inculcating an entrepreneurial culture and assist the youth to be innovative through development of new products and provision of services.

Keywords: Determinants; Access to Government Procurement Opportunities; AGPO; Innovation; Proactiveness, Risk Taking Propensity; Entrepreneurial Tendencies, Uptake

Statement of the Research Problem

The AGPO initiative by the Government of Kenya (GOK) through the National Treasury was to facilitate the enterprises owned by Women, PWDs and Youth to be able to access, participate and benefit from the various Government Procurement Opportunities.

This was to be made possible through the implementation of the legal requirement encapsulated in the Constitution of Kenya (COK) 2010 article 227 and executed through the Public Procurement and Disposal Act (PPADA), 2015 through which 30% of Government Procurement Opportunities were to be set aside specifically for enterprises owned by these groups.

However, the said beneficiaries have tended not to take advantage of this opportunity as evidenced by Annual Reports from the National Treasury and research by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

According to the National Treasury Report on AGPO, 2018 less than 40% of the youth, particularly in rural areas have picked up the challenge to utilize this opportunity and procuring entities are finding it difficult to engage these beneficiaries for varied reasons. Similarly, research by *Hivos* East Africa in 2018 on 'Kenya's Efforts to Empower Women, Youth and PWDs through Public Procurement' indicated that only 36% of applicants reported to have won tenders, 66% lack capital, 60% had challenges in getting paid after delivery and all indicated that procurement procedures and criteria are complex, burdensome, costly for new entities, too technical requiring specialized bidding skills and have limiting compliance costs.

The purpose of this study therefore, was to establish the possible reasons which could account for these challenges, considering that these Government procuring entities are countrywide and yet the Youth, Women and PWDs still constitute the low-income cadre as per the Kenya National Housing and Population Census of 2009.

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of Entrepreneurial Tendencies on Uptake of AGPO by the Youth in Isiolo County.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis discussed, assumed that there is a relationship between the research variable; Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Uptake of AGPO after review of literature.

H₀₁: Entrepreneurial Tendencies does not have a statistically significant relationship with the Uptake of AGPO by the Youth in Isiolo County.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualized that Entrepreneurial Tendencies influence the Uptake of AGPO. The relationship is shown in **Figure 1**.

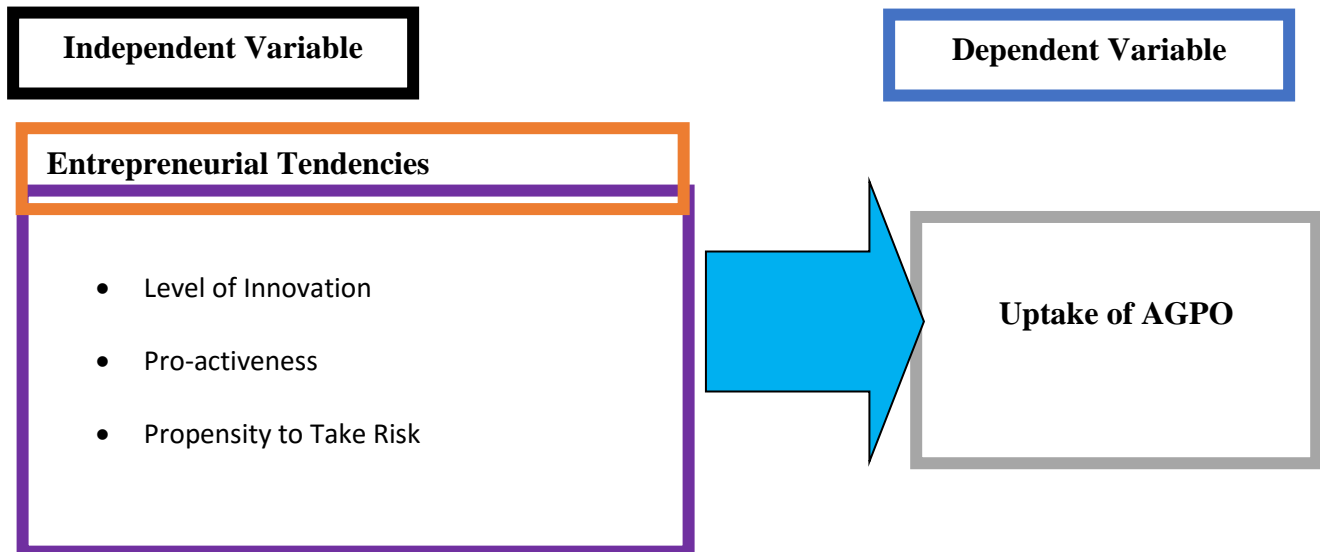


Figure 1: Conceptual Model
(Source: Authors. 2019)

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theory employed in this study was Hagen's Theory of Entrepreneurship. This theory of entrepreneurial behavior was propounded by Hagen Everett (Deakins & Freel, 2009). It is also referred to as the Withdrawal of Status Respect Theory. Hagen attributed the withdrawal of status respect of a group to the genesis of entrepreneurship. That the withdrawal acts as a trigger mechanism for changes in personality formation. Status withdrawal occurs when members of a certain group or party perceive that their purpose, goals, values and aspirations are not respected and considered to be important by another group that the subjects hold with high esteem and they also respect.

One group perceives that the other group is not reciprocating the initiatives that the other group is providing. Hagen advanced that this perception could trigger various reactions and create different personality traits such as; *Retreatist* where the entrepreneur will continue to perform the day to day duties but remain indifferent to his work or status; *Ritualist*, meaning that the entrepreneurs works as per the norms in the society but has no hope of improving the business performance or the current status; *Reformist* are rebellious and will always try to bring in new ways of working and a new community and lastly are the *Innovators* who are creative and try to achieve their set goals.

For the Youth to regain the lost prestige and glory, it is imperative for them to become more active and aggressive thereby giving rise to many entrepreneurs in the society. Hagen's theory was supported by David McClelland who admitted that a suppressed community or group will always exhibit creative Entrepreneurial Tendencies in business undertakings.

McClelland stated that the behavior of such groups could arouse achievement in its members but its extent depended upon the initial level of incentive and the means available to the groups to realize its achievement motivation. Hagen sees the entrepreneur as a creative problem solver interested in things in the practical and technological realm and driven by a duty to achieve. The theory was found relevant in this study as it helped to explain the variables; Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Uptake of AGPO by the Youth.

Empirical Review of Literature

A huge body of literature exists which examine various determinants of the utilization of AGPO by the target group. In Kenya, AGPO is an affirmative action intended to empower Youth, Women and PWDs, by setting aside thirty percent (30%) of all public procurement in Kenya for the targeted group (PPADA, 2015). The AGPO initiative is founded in the COK, 2010, article 227 on the fair, equitable, transparent and cost-effective public procurement of goods and services, article 55 on affirmative action and the PPADA, 2015.

A study conducted by (Nkonge et al. 2013) in Thika on challenges facing Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) Suppliers when bidding for Government tenders, established that the existence of the legal framework makes it difficult for upcoming SMEs to compete with the established firms in the market. This acted as a discouragement for SMEs to participate in the public procurement.

A similar study conducted by International Trade Centre (ITC) in 2014 on challenges that face women and youth in Developed and Developing economies in Government procurement, found out that lack of information about tender opportunities, overly complex and burdensome tender procedures, and failure by those agencies to promptly pay women-based businesses influenced uptake of AGPO by the targeted groups.

According to UN Women Report of 2006, women entrepreneurs face many challenges when participating in public procurement which include; Government rules and regulations, lack of access to finance, assets, information technology, infrastructure and other facilities that enable their efficiency and business growth.

Nduta et al. (2015) undertook a study with the main objective to determine factors affecting youth participation in public procurement in Mombasa County. The study documented that, lack of awareness on compliance, lack of effective regulations and financial availability influenced participation of the youth in the public procurement.

Mwangi (2017) carried out a study to determine Compliance of AGPO regulations for Women, Youth and PWDs by Public Universities in Kenya. The research findings revealed that prequalification criteria negatively contributed to the level of compliance with AGPO. The study further revealed that elaborate selection procedures lead to a higher level of compliance with AGPO for special groups in Kenya.

A study carried out by Wleth (2013) to establish factors that influenced the youth uptake of Government Procurement Opportunities in Ministries concluded that access to information, finance, legal framework and ethics in procurement influenced Uptake of AGPO by the youth.

Ngugi and Mugo (2007) in a similar study on an examination of procurement activities on the operation and effectiveness of Ministries in Kenya, established that there was need for procurement activities to be carried out by qualified staff with high professional and ethical standards, using sound procedures anchored on appropriate policies and regulations.

Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Uptake of AGPO

Entrepreneurial Tendencies refers to multidimensional concepts that are useful at the organizational or entrepreneur's level, which exemplifies entrepreneur's or firms entrepreneurial actions and includes one or several of these magnitudes: Innovativeness, Pro-activeness and Risk-Taking Propensity. (Irungu, 2008; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Nyambariga, 2012). When Young people exhibit such Entrepreneurial Alignment, they get inclined to participate in business activities including AGPO. One approach to enhancing entrepreneurial activity and enterprise growth in Kenya is to create an entrepreneurial culture among the youth (Nelson & Mburugu, 1991; Gibb, 2000). The Entrepreneurial Propensities discussed in this study that explained the reasons behind the uptake of AGPO among the Young included:

Level of Innovation

Joseph Schumpeter is credited for being amongst the first scholars to emphasize the role of innovation in the entrepreneurial process which entails interrogating the status quo within the business environment. He stressed on the critical role of an entrepreneur as an innovator who implements change in an economy by introducing new goods or new methods of production. In the Schumpeterian view, any entrepreneur including young people are disruptive forces in any economy playing the role of engaging in the beneficial process of creative destruction in which the introduction of new products results in the obsolescence or failure of others (Mwaura et al., 2015). When the youth engross in innovative activities they are able to create wealth through the introduction of new goods or services, re-allocating resources from existing firms to new firms and growth.

According to (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996), "innovativeness reflects a tendency for an enterprise "to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative processes that may result in new products, services, or technological processes". Innovation is an important means of pursuing opportunities including AGPO and so is an important component of Entrepreneurial Orientation that the youth should harness to remain vibrant in the field of business (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Pro-activeness

Pro-activeness is another entrepreneurial characteristic critical for the youth to engage in business with the Government. Pro-activeness is related to initiative and first-mover advantages and to "taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities" (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

The Oxford Dictionary defines Pro-activeness as "acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes". Lumpkin and Dess (1996) argued that Pro-activeness may be essential because it suggests a forward-looking perspective that is accompanied by innovation and entrepreneurial activity. Pro-activeness relates to taking advantage of market prospects in entrepreneurship by "seizing the available initiative and acting opportunistically in order to shape the environment, that is, to influence trends and, perhaps, even to create the demand". The characteristics of a Pro-active youth involve assertiveness and progressive tactics towards rival enterprises in the same market segment, such enterprises shape their environments by actively seeking and exploiting opportunities.

Proactive firms introduce new products, technologies, administrative techniques to shape their environment and not react to it (Callaghan, 2009).

Risk-Taking Propensity

Richard Cantillon, a French Classical economist and businessman, in his essay on the “Nature of Commerce”, defined entrepreneurship as a risk bearing function, which entails having a foresight and willingness to assume risk and take the action required to make a profit. The Youth in Kenya to effectively utilize AGPO approaches, calls for the need to accelerate the importance of understanding the concept of risk taking characteristic. This entails having the willingness to become bearers of uncertainties while engaging in AGPO initiatives. Risk-taking relates to a business readiness to pursue opportunities despite uncertainty around the eventual success (Deakins & Freel, 2012). It necessitates acting boldly without knowing the consequences of risk-taking, it is the firm knowingly devoting the resources to projects with chances of high returns but may also entail a possibility of higher failure (Mahmoud & Hanafi, 2013).

There are three (3) categories of individuals in terms of analyzing their propensity to take a risk, i.e. risk-takers, risk-neutral and risk-averse. Effective and efficient entrepreneurs undertake moderate, calculated and rational risks. The high propensity to undertake risks have also been associated with higher performance by individuals. (Deakins & Freel, 2012; Callaghan, (2009). Lumpkin and Dess (1996), “identified three (3) types of risks that businesses face in pursuing entrepreneurial activities”; Business’s Risks associated with entering new markets or supporting unproven technologies; Financial Risks relating to the financial exposure required and the risk/return profile of the new venture. It may include borrowing heavily or obligating large proportions of their resources and Personal Risks referring to the reputational effects of success or failure in the business. Drucker argued that entrepreneurs are not typically risk seekers rather, like any other rational individuals, they take steps to minimize risks, and this may involve developing strategies that entail a higher acceptance for risk, but also the calculation of risks.

The Research Gap

In summary, most of the studies reviewed showed that; access to information, access to finance, Legal and Regulatory Framework, ethics in procurement, are key determinants of AGPO by the youth. The existing body of knowledge was not sufficient to show the influence of the independent variable; Entrepreneurial tendencies and the dependent variable Uptake of AGPO initiatives by Youth in Kenya. The literature reviewed generally outlined the external environmental factors influencing participation of youth in government business opportunities. The literature laid little emphasis on the internal intrinsic dynamics such as inculcation of entrepreneurial spirit and how it imparted on the behavior of the Youth in operating entrepreneurial ventures. This study sought to fill the research gap by exploring the influence of Entrepreneurial Tendencies on Uptake of AGPO among the Youth in Isiolo County.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of Entrepreneurial Tendencies on Uptake of AGPO. To realize this, the study undertook a descriptive survey design. The study population targeted the Three (3) Sub-Counties, namely ; Isiolo, Garbatulla, and Merti in Isiolo County in Kenya. The target group constituted 55 Youth from Isiolo County that were attending a Course at the Kenya School of Government, Embu Campus.

The study used questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaire had closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions made use of a five-point Likert scale where respondents were required to fill according to their level of agreement with the statements. Many researchers prefer to use a Likert-type scale because it's very easy to analyze statistically (Jackson, 2009).

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable. Correlation technique allowed the researchers to analyze the degree and direction of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable.

Operationalization of the Study Variables

The responses in the questionnaire were rated on a scale of 1-5, where 1 represented strongly disagree and 5, strongly agree.

Table 1. Operationalization of the Study Variables

Variable	Indicators
Dependent Variable (Uptake of AGPO)	Business Ownership Status Business Growth Business Profitability
Independent Variable (Entrepreneurial Tendencies)	(Innovation, Pro-activeness, Risk Taking) I always engage in high-risk activities I aggressively seek and exploit opportunities I have new products/services all the time I always have opportunities to learn new ideas As an entrepreneur am rarely in control of my life and business I am always very certain on the decisions I make concerning the future I rarely anticipate future wants and needs in the market I always respond to what competitors bring in the Market

(Source: Authors, 2019)

Interpretation of the Correlation Coefficients of the Study Variable

$H_{0i}: \rho_i = 0$ versus $H_{oi}: \rho_i \neq 0$

If the hypothesis is rejected then the Independent Variable X_i had a statistically significant relationship or association with the dependent variable Y (Chen & Popovich, 2002).

The decision to reject or fail to reject the Null Hypothesis was based on the statistical significance of the correlation coefficients ($p \leq 0.05$).

Research Findings and Discussions

This section reports the findings of the study. It begins with the respondents' response rate, the respondents' demography, descriptive analysis of the study variables using proportions and

culminates with the inferential statistics of the study variables using the Pearson's correlation coefficient r .

Table 2. Response Rate

Item	Administered Questionnaires	Returned Questionnaires	Percentage Remaining
Respondents	55	55	100%

(Source: Authors, 2019)

Respondents Demography

Respondents Gender

From **Table 3** and **Figure 2** sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents were male and thirty-three percent (33%) were female.

Table 3. Gender of Respondents

(N = 55)

Gender	N	%
Male	37	67.0
Female	18	33.0
N	55	100.0

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

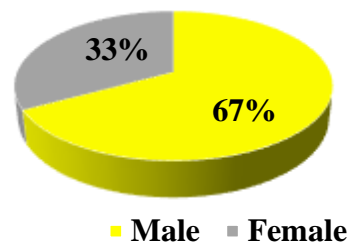


Figure 2 Gender of Respondents

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Age of Respondents

From **Figure 3** seventy-three percent (73%) of the respondents were between 20-29 years and twenty-seven percent (27%) were between 30-39 years.

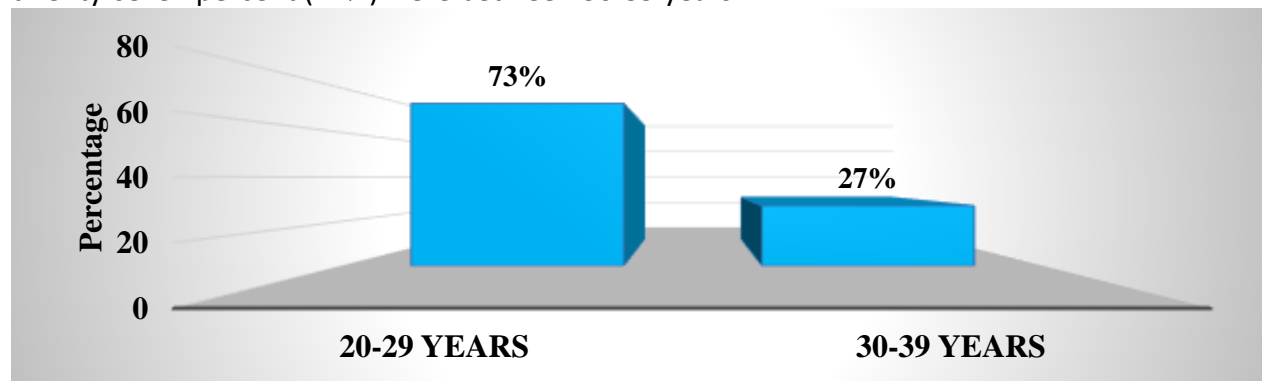


Figure 3: Age of Respondents
(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Highest Academic Qualification

From **Figure 4**, sixteen percent (16%) had KCPE, twenty-nine percent (29%) had KCSE, twenty-one percent (21%) had Certificate, twenty-one percent (21%) had Diploma and eleven percent (11%) had a Degree.

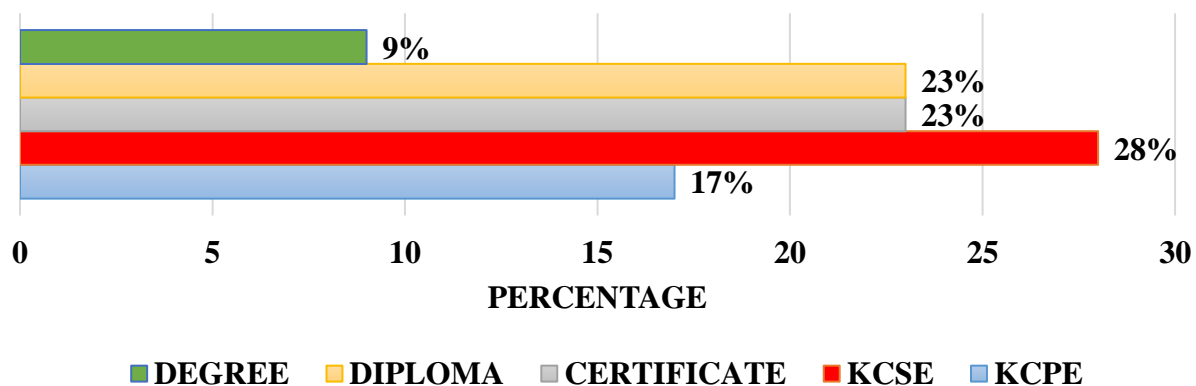


Figure 4: Respondents Highest Level of Education
(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Respondents' Sub-County

From **Table 4**, majority of the respondents, that is eighty percent (80%) were from Isiolo, eleven percent (11%) from Garbatulla and nine percent (9%) from Merti Sub County.

Table 4. Respondents Sub-County

Sub -County	n	%
Isiolo	44	80.0
Garbatulla	6	11.0
Merti	5	9.0
N	55	100.0

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

The proportion of Respondents with Businesses

From **Table 5** and **Figure 5** forty-four percent (44%) of the respondents owned some form of business while fifty-six percent (56%) did not own a business.

Table 5. Business Ownership
(N = 55)

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	24	44.0
No	31	56.0
N	55	100.0

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

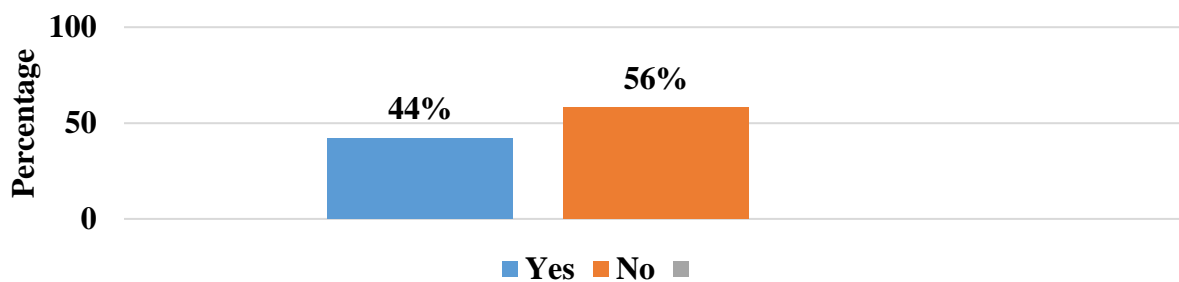


Figure 5: Respondents Business Ownership
(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Type of Business Ownership

From **Table 6** and **Figure 6**, sixty-two percent (62%) had sole proprietorship type of business, twenty-seven percent (27%) had partnerships and eleven percent (11%) had limited companies.

Table 6. Business Ownership
(N=55)

Type of Business	<i>n</i>	%
Sole proprietorship	16	62.0
Partnership	7	27.0
Limited Company	3	11.0
N	26	100.0

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)



Figure 6: Business Ownership
(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Do you own a business * what is the type of Business Ownership Cross tabulation

From **Table 7** sixty-seven percent (67%) owned a business and were sole proprietors. Twenty-one percent (21%) owned partnerships, whilst twelve percent (12%) did own a business but were in Limited Companies. Twenty-nine percent (29%) did not own a business but were in partnerships.

Table 7. Cross Tabulation-Business Ownership and Type of Business

		What is the type of Business Ownership			%	
		Sole proprietorship	Partner-ship	Limited company		
Do you own a business	N	16	5	3	24	
	Yes	Do you own a business	67.0%	21.0%	12.0%	100.0%
		What is the type of Business Ownership	100.0%	71.0%	100.0%	92.3%
	N	0	2	0	2	
	No	Do you own a business	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		What is the type of Business Ownership	0.0%	29.0%	0.0%	8.0%
%	N	16	7	3	26	
		Do you own a business	62.0%	27.0%	11.0%	100.0%
		What is the type of Business Ownership	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Uptake of AGPO by the Youth in Isiolo County

From **Table 8**, fifty-five percent (55%) agreed that they engaged in high-risk activities hence a high propensity to undertake risks. These findings are in tandem with the works of Kuratko & Hodgettes, 2007 that Risk-taking is frequently associated with entrepreneurial performance and the general successful entrepreneurs are risk-takers. Eighty-five percent (85%) agreed that they aggressively pursued and exploited business opportunities implying that they possessed Pro-activeness which is an entrepreneurial orientation dimension.

The findings of this study agree with scholarly works of (Callaghan, 2009) that Proactive firms introduce new products, technologies, administrative techniques to shape their environment and not react to it.

Fifty-two percent (52%) disagreed on having new products and services all the time. Seventy-nine percent (79%) agreed that they do have opportunities to learn new ideas meaning they had strong desire to be creative and innovative. Fifty percent (50%) agreed that as entrepreneurs, they are rarely in control of their life. Ninety-three percent (93%) agreed that they were very certain on the decisions they make concerning the future. Seventy-four percent (74%) agreed that they rarely anticipate future wants and needs in the market. Eighty-four percent (84%) agreed that they always respond to what the competitors bring in the market.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variable, Entrepreneurial Tendencies (N = 55)

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree	%
I always engage in high risk activities	16.0	26.0	4.0	43.0	12.0	100.0
I aggressively seek and exploit opportunities	2.0	9.0	4.0	66.0	19.0	100.0
I have new products/services all the time	2.0	50.0	10.0	28.0	10.0	100.0
I have an opportunity to learn new ideas	-	19.0	2.0	56.0	23.0	100.0
As an entrepreneur am rarely in control of my life	17.0	29.0	4.0	35.0	15.0	100.0
I am always very certain on the decisions I make concerning the future	2.0	6.0	-	62.0	31.0	100.0
I rarely anticipate future wants and needs in the market	10.0	10.0	8.0	62.0	12.0	100.0
I always respond to what the competitors bring in the market	4.0	4.0	8.0	67.0	17.0	100.0

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Inferential Statistics of the Study Variable: Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Uptake of AGPO

Table 9 indicated that, the independent variable, Entrepreneurial Tendencies had a statistically significant moderate positive correlation with the dependent variable Uptake of AGPO $r(51) = .634$ $p < .05$ hence we **REJECT the Null Hypothesis H_{01}** : Entrepreneurial Tendencies do not have a statistically significant relationship with the Uptake of AGPO by the Youth in Isiolo County.

Table 9. Correlation Coefficients between the Independent Variable and the Dependent Variable (N=55)

<u>Determinant of AGPO (X_i)</u>		<u>Uptake of AGPO (Y)</u>
	Pearson Correlation	.634*
Entrepreneurial Tendencies	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039
	N	55

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study established that, fifty-two percent (52%) disagreed on having new products and services all the time hence the need to embrace innovation and creativity in businesses. Mwaura et al., (2015) espoused that among the critical characteristic of an entrepreneur involves exhibition of innovative predispositions and implementation of change in an economy by introducing new goods or new methods of production.

The study established that seventy four percent (74%) of the respondents rarely anticipate future wants and needs in the market hence the need for the youth to be Pro-active. Lumpkin and Dess, (1996) considered Pro-activeness as a prerequisite which was associated with initiative and first-mover advantages and to “taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities”.

The study concluded that Entrepreneurial Tendencies had a moderate positive correlation with the Uptake of AGPO, as it was observed that fifty five percent (55%) of the respondents had a High Propensity to undertake Risks. The findings are in congruence with the works of Mahmoud and Hanafi, (2013) that risk-taking necessitates acting boldly without knowing the consequences of any business actions. It encompasses a firm knowingly devoting the resources to projects with chances of high returns but may also compel a possibility of higher failure.

It was also established that fifty-six percent (56%) of the respondents did not own a business. This is an indication that 31 out of 55 respondents could not participate in AGPO initiative. The study concurs with the scholarly works of Gibbs that one approach of enhancing entrepreneurial activity and enterprise growth in Kenya is to create an entrepreneurial culture among the young through training and socialisation process (Nelson & Mburugu, 1991; Gibb, 2000).

Recommendations

From the findings, the study recommends that the National Government and County Government of Isiolo together with other agencies such as Kenya School of Government and Development Partners should devise AGPO intervention strategies on ways of inculcating entrepreneurial culture among the youth through:

1. Capacity building Programs
2. Coaching and Mentorship Programs
3. Promoting Business Incubation Programs
4. Provide a conducive Legal and Regulatory Framework
5. Strengthen provision of seed capital among the youth to promote business Start Ups

These recommendations shall expedite the youth entrepreneurs in change of attitudes and mind sets, grow their business skills, and compete favourably in the Government business initiatives and attainment of Global, Regional and National Development Agendas.

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