

Entrepreneurship as a Leverage for Innovative Energy Technologies in Africa: An Investigation of the Entrepreneurial Framework in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The development of decentralized energy technologies is expected to keep creating new market opportunities in energy supply in the African countries, which still face challenges in securing a clean and safe energy access for its population (Silvia Escudero, Josephine Zana 2017). These market opportunities can be targets for entrepreneurs, whose role is to discover arbitrage opportunities in the market such as unmet needs and/or undervalued resources (Levie, Autio 2008; Kirzner 1997). African entrepreneurs can play hence a crucial role in the market development of innovative energy systems in Africa.

However, the economic and institutional framework in many African countries differs considerably from the framework in renown entrepreneurial developed countries and may constitute a challenge for African entrepreneurs. This study aims to examine the entrepreneurial framework within an African economy, in order to point out the challenges and chances for the African entrepreneur. A systematic approach based on the GEM conceptual model (Reynolds et al. 2005) is assumed to investigate the interactions of the entrepreneurs with the whole entrepreneurial framework. For the entrepreneurs, the motivation, skills and attitudes are pointed out and analyzed. On the other side, the entrepreneurial framework is fragmented into its different constituents, where the role of each is analyzed according to its role and influence. A mapping of the whole ecosystem comprising roles and interactions is then deduced. Moreover, the role of entrepreneurial innovation through technology is investigated. Additionally, the gender issue in entrepreneurship is observed. Based on this overview, recommendations for further enabling of

entrepreneurial activity in the African markets are concluded especially in terms on entrepreneurial and technical training.

The observed case study in this work is the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Zimbabwe. The findings are based on a qualitative research based on interviews with entrepreneurs and experts in Harare.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial framework; Entrepreneurial ecosystem; Africa; Technological innovation

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