

Cultural orientation, perceived support and participation of female students in formal entrepreneurship in the sub-Saharan economy of Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose – This purpose of this paper is to examine cultural orientations and intention of Ghanaian women to engage in entrepreneurship while assessing the role of perceived support system. The aim is to contribute to the literature in the sub-Saharan African context where women entrepreneurs are generally under-researched, despite their increasing significant roles in socio-economic development in the continent even in the face of huge cultural barriers.

Design/methodology/approach – The study uses a hierarchical regression analysis and Hay's PROCESS moderation technique to analyze survey data from 190 female students from Ghana, Africa.

Findings – The results indicate that uncertainty avoidance and power distance cultural orientations have significant positive and negative effects, respectively, on women's participation in formal entrepreneurship. However, collectivism and masculine cultural orientations do not have any effect on their intention to engage in formal entrepreneurial activity. The study further shows that perceived support system has a buffering effect on the destructive consequences of power distance culture on formal entrepreneurship intentions. On the contrary, perceived support does not moderate the relationship between uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and masculine cultural and formal entrepreneurial intention.

Practical implications – Given the fact that most African governments are making efforts to accelerate the growth and development of their economies via entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, this study's findings encourage stakeholders to implement measures to leverage on the positive dimensions of cultures to facilitate the development of formal entrepreneurship among Ghanaian women while mitigating the negative consequences of cultural practices. The findings further highlight the need to evaluate the current level of support given to women in Ghana. The study suggests that provision of sufficient level of support can make women more willing to challenge the status quo in power distance cultures and take personal initiatives, thereby leading to more formal entrepreneurial actions.

Originality/value – This study is a significant addition to women entrepreneurship literature because the role of culture in females' intention to participate in entrepreneurship is generally an under-researched area. Besides, our examination of national cultural variation at the individual level on formal entrepreneurship



intention in a heterogeneous setting is novel. The study also highlights the buffering roles of perceived support on the destructive consequences of power distance cultural orientation on formal entrepreneurial development among women.

Keywords Culture, Support, Ghana, Women entrepreneurship, Formal entrepreneurship, Ghana, Sub-Saharan Africa, Entrepreneurship intention, Gender

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is an important subject in the socio-economic discourse on the development of Ghana. Engaging the population in entrepreneurial activities is perceived as a powerful instrument for fighting unemployment and poverty while making valuable contributions to sustainable economic development. Increasingly, women entrepreneurs in particular, are considered as vital agents of socio-economic development through their perceived high potential to make a significant contribution to job creation and economic growth (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, 2018; Verheul and Thurik, 2001). Consequently, there is a growing emphasis on taking measures to increase their participation in entrepreneurship. Participation in entrepreneurial activities can be either in the formal or informal sectors. Formal entrepreneurs operate within the written laws and regulations and are regulated by formal institutions of a country, region or society. However, informal entrepreneurs conduct their business activities outside the boundaries of formal institutional structures of an economy (De Castro *et al.*, 2014; De Mel *et al.*, 2013; Williams and Vorley, 2014). According to Webb *et al.* (2009), informal entrepreneurs are “illegal” from the perspective of the formal institutions. They are however regarded as “legitimate” from the outlook of a country’s informal institutional norms, values and beliefs. In Ghana, majority of women are engaged in informal entrepreneurial activities with less participation in formal entrepreneurship. A survey by the Institute of Economic Affairs (2016) reveals that women are highly disadvantaged with respect to their participation in formal entrepreneurial activities as only 4.5 per cent of them as against 13.4 per cent of men operate in the formal sector. It therefore, appears that women have less intention to participate in formal entrepreneurial activities in Ghana.

The intention to participate in entrepreneurship encompasses attitudes towards the pursuit of entrepreneurship as a career option, and a willingness to act (Ajzen, 1991). While not all intentions translate into actual actions, there is a general agreement that entrepreneurial intention represents an important step in the formation of entrepreneurial behaviour and thus, regarded as the best predictor of people’s actual participation in entrepreneurial ventures (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán and Rodríguez-Cohard, 2015). According to Liñán and Rodríguez-Cohard’s (2015) multi-wave study of undergraduate students in Spain, entrepreneurial intentions have significantly explained actual start-up behaviour of students. The intentions to participate in entrepreneurship are often influenced by an array of factors such as entrepreneurship education and business training (Adom and Asare-Yeboah, 2016; Pedrini *et al.*, 2017; Puni *et al.*, 2018; Nabi *et al.*, 2017), self-efficacy (Miranda *et al.*, 2017; Puni *et al.*, 2018; Setiawan, 2014), and among others. However, a major potential determinant of entrepreneurial intention which has received little attention in the academic circles is the role of national culture at the micro or individual level and how perceived support from spouses, societies and government agencies can enhance or discourage potential women entrepreneurs from participating in entrepreneurial activities, particularly, in formal entrepreneurship.

Culture is a set of consensual aspirations or dominant values that govern the behaviour of people in a particular society (Kuada, 2010) and which “distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5). Some scholars claimed that certain cultural practices have the potential of influencing entrepreneurial intentions (Heilbrunn, 2008; Kuada, 2015). We find this claim worthy of consideration particularly among women in male-dominated, power distance, collectivist and high uncertainty avoidance cultural environments such as Ghana, given the view that women in these cultures often have to deal with negative gender stereotypes (Coleman, 2010; Javadian and Singh, 2012), and may have great challenges in starting their own business ventures. This can even be exacerbated by some cultural practices in the country that treat or see women as house wives or house helps. Hence, they are generally not expected to participate actively in economic activities. This attitude though is changing, many females who ventured into the so-called “man’s world” still finds their ways obstructed by discrimination, rules and cultural practices that work against them. For instance, the 2018 Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs found that 46.4 per cent of the businesses in Ghana are owned by women. However, some scholars (Jennings and Brush, 2013) suggest that the performance or success of women entrepreneurs tends to be affected by the socio-cultural conditions in which they find themselves. And as earlier indicated the formal entrepreneurial sector in Ghana is dominated by men in contrast to what pertains in the informal sector (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2016). The formal entrepreneurial arena is generally more challenging than the informal sector in Ghana. One therefore wonders whether the patrilineal cultural practices of Ghana have any influence on women participation in formal entrepreneurial activities in the country.

Interestingly, evidence from the literature (Brush and Cooper, 2012; Bullough *et al.*, 2017; Madichie *et al.*, 2008) suggests that women entrepreneurs are generally under-researched despite their increasing significance as well as the notable contributions they are making toward local and global economic development, even in the face of huge cultural barriers. According to Brush and Cooper (2012, p. 1), “studies about women entrepreneurs comprise less than 10 per cent of all research in the field.” The few studies on women entrepreneurs often assess how men and women’s entrepreneurial motivation, expectations and organizations vary (Bastian and Zali, 2016; Dabic *et al.*, 2012; Smith *et al.*, 2016), preferred financing sources for women entrepreneurs (Lindvert *et al.*, 2015), spirituality effects on women entrepreneurs (Reid *et al.*, 2015), and the contributions of women enterprises in promoting economic growth (Okah-Efogo and Timba, 2015).

However, cultural effect on women participation in entrepreneurial activities and women’s enterprise development is still under researched (Devine and Kiggundu, 2016; Freytag and Thurik, 2007; Madichie *et al.*, 2008), particularly in Ghana. Consequently, Madichie *et al.* (2008, p. 286) maintain that the “trifling research effort on culture and entrepreneurship especially in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, which has one of the world’s most diverse cultures, could be argued to be among the worst.” Prior to this, Freytag and Thurik (2007) posit that limited studies have focused on providing deeper explanations on the relationship between culture and entrepreneurial development.

Although the idea of national culture is considered important for the study of entrepreneurial development of nations and societies (Autio *et al.*, 2013; Harms and Groen, 2016; Yoo *et al.*, 2011), the reflection of culture at the individual level is more important (Autio *et al.*, 2013; Peterson *et al.*, 2012). This is because equating “the stereotypical culture of a country directly with all citizens of the country would be misleading. This concern is true when a country consists of a heterogeneous population with different cultural backgrounds” (Yoo *et al.*, 2011, p. 194) such as Ghana. In Ghana, there is diversity of ethnic

and cultural groups with their own unique values and cultural aspirations. Although the country has some shared values and norms, most of its 50 and more ethics groups have practices that are unique and deviate from each other's such as chieftaincy, inheritance (including commercial properties), and traditional festivals. For instance, the Akan in southern Ghana are organized along matrilineal lines. Most other ethnic groups in the North and Volta are patrilineal while the Gas in the Greater Accra Region, are somewhat anomalous in having bilateral inheritance and kinship structure (Baden *et al.*, 1994). Even within each ethnic group, factors such as personality, ability, intelligence, power motivation, among others can make people in the same ethic group or society exhibit different values and orientations. This means that there are potential significant variations in individual perception of national culture. In line with this, Park *et al.* (2012) asserted that not all individuals from the same or identical "culture respond in the same ways. Within-culture socialization is far from uniform, and numerous dimensions of individual differences such as personality ensure that even if cultural socialization was uniform, the effects of culture on the individual would not be uniform" (pp. 179-180).

Moreover, because within-culture variations tend to be high, the neglect of variations in individual perception of national culture may result in underestimating the power of culture as an explanatory construct (Park *et al.*, 2012). Thus, while it is important for us to be interested in understanding shared values and norms of people of a particular country, the study of within-country variation at the individual level is equally necessary for targeted economic empowerment policy interventions to produce desired maximum results. Consequently, we seek to contribute to the literature by examining the effect of national culture (masculinity, power distance, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance) on formal entrepreneurial intention among Ghanaian women generally and specifically, female tertiary students. Students are perceived to be the most potential sample to be used for understanding the cultural orientation and women participation in formal entrepreneurship because their educational training can motivate them to pursue formal entrepreneurship as a career through their desire to apply the competencies and insights acquired or learnt in solving societal problems at a fee. Besides, students at the tertiary level tend to have different cultural orientation because of the fact that they have come from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, variations in individual perception of national cultural orientations and their effects on formal entrepreneurship development are highly expected.

Additionally, many women are highly disadvantaged in terms obtaining access to the necessary resources and knowledge to grow their businesses successfully (Kelley *et al.*, 2015). In Ghana in particular, women face severe constraints with regards to access to land, labor, credit and agricultural technologies (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2016). Consequently, it is suggested that spousal support (Brickell and Chant, 2010), friends and family members' support (Javadian and Singh, 2012; Kuada, 2009; Petro *et al.*, 2014), and governmental supports (Edoho, 2015; Pettersson, 2012; Sheriff and Muffatto, 2015) can play a critical role in the development of entrepreneurial intention among women. This means that the cultural impacts on women participation in entrepreneurship can be altered by existence of mechanisms or conditions such as perceived support systems. However, there is a dearth of studies on the moderating effect of perceived support on Hofstede's cultural orientation and formal entrepreneurial intention among Ghanaian women. Consequently, our study contributes to knowledge in this regard.

Our findings highlight the aspect of Hofstede's culture dimensions that are productive or counterproductive to the development of women's entrepreneurial intention in Ghana. Second, our findings contribute to the literature by showing the buffering role of perceived support in limiting the destructive effect of power distance culture on formal entrepreneurial

intentions among the Ghanaian women. Third, the role of culture in females' intention to participate in formal entrepreneurial activities is an under-researched area not just in Ghana. Similarly, the examination of within-national culture variation at the individual level in a heterogeneous setting as an antecedent of women participation in entrepreneurship is novel.

The rest of the article is organized as follows: literature review and hypothesis development, methodology, results and discussions and, finally, implications and conclusions.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Culture dimensions and entrepreneurial intention

The main theory underpinning this study is derived from Hofstede's cultural theory (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede's (1980) study based on employees of IBM from 72 different countries reveals four cultural dimensions (power distance, masculinity or assertiveness, uncertainty avoidance and collectivism). Hofstede and Bond (1988) later identify an additional dimension as long-term orientation. The following explores the relationship between the above cultural orientations and the intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurship.

Power distance and entrepreneurial participation

Power distance culture refers to "the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1991, p. 28). This cultural practice emphasizes hierarchy in societies. It is believed that there is a relationship between power distance and resistance to change. The reason being that people in high power distance cultures frequently rely on their superiors or bosses for actions they take. Power distance culture encourages the need to maintain the status quo. Subordinates or employees in this culture do not have the opportunity to take personal initiative that will lead to a significant change in their place of work (Hofstede, 1991). This suggests that power distance cultural practices create barriers to novelty and change (Hayton *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, individuals in a cultural environment that is characterized by high levels of hierarchy are likely to be content with their position in their societies. As a result, they tend to have less motivation for upward social mobility such as becoming business owners (Vinogradov and Kolvereid, 2007), and are unlikely to exhibit more enterprising behaviors (García-Cabrera and García-Soto, 2008). It is also expected to have more adverse influences on women than their male counterparts as in such cultural societies such as Ghana, men are mostly seen as the family heads with women as their "assistants" and in some cases as "domestic managers." This perception can potentially discourage them from pursuing great business ideas.

Despite the above, traditionally in Ghana; markets are the traditional roles for women. It is their domain and women are expected to be entrepreneurs in the marketplace. As a result, stalls and commercial properties are often handed down through matriarchal lines rather than patriarchal. Indeed, in all traditional markets in Ghana, there are queen mothers who are in charge of the marketplaces, and among many other functions, ensure peace and harmony among traders by settling any disputes that arise from the interaction of men and women. As a result, there is high percentage of women engaging in entrepreneurial activities, but mostly in the informal sectors. Recently, the *Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs* (2018) finds support for the claim that the Ghanaian marketplaces are dominated by women. However, Institute of Economic Affairs' (2016) shows that few women than men operate in the formal entrepreneurial sector. Prior to this, *Baden et al.* (1994) indicate that women in Ghana are greatly under-represented in the formal sector and

that they only constitute one-quarter of wage employees. They further suggest that although about 990 per cent of Ghanaian women are:

[...] self-employed or work as unpaid labour in agriculture, agro-based enterprises and commerce or small scale manufacturing in the informal sector [...] only a very small number of women have broken through into modern sector occupations and even fewer into managerial positions (p. ii).

Women dominate in the trading sector, and mostly “involved in informal, low productivity petty trading and hawking. These activities are strongly concentrated in highly perishable, low profit goods including agricultural produce and traditionally processed goods” (Baden *et al.*, 1994, p. iv). In Baden *et al.*'s (1994) views therefore, Ghana's labor force is highly sex-segregated in the traditional as well in the modern wage sectors, suggesting that the socio-cultural practices of Ghanaians could be responsible for the low participation of women in the formal entrepreneurial sector.

The preceding discussions thus, suggest that while power distance culture may not obstruct participation of Ghanaian women in informal entrepreneurial activities, it can affect their participation in formal entrepreneurial activities. This is because the performance or success of women entrepreneurs can be affected by the socio-cultural conditions in which they find themselves (Bullough *et al.*, 2017; Jennings and Brush, 2013). Prior to this, Takyi-Asiedu (1993) argues that power distance culture can inhibit entrepreneurial activities in Africa. Because of these reasons, we hypothesize that:

H1a. Power distance cultural orientation will significantly reduce the participation of women in formal entrepreneurship in Ghana.

Uncertainty avoidance and intention to participate in entrepreneurship

Uncertainty avoidance is described as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertainty or unknown situations” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 113). Uncertainty avoidance is critical for entrepreneurial development. It involves taking bold and courageous decisions. It is also related to risk-taking (Lee and Wong, 2009; Vinogradov and Kolvereid, 2007) which is a major dimension of entrepreneurship. According to scholars (Autio *et al.*, 2013; Wennekers *et al.*, 2007), there is a relationship between uncertainty avoidance culture and intention to participate in entrepreneurship, because it plays a critical role in the kind of career or occupation an individual decides to pursue. This indicates that women who fear risks may see participation in entrepreneurship as unattractive arena, thereby negatively influencing their entrepreneurial intention and active participation in economic activities.

In a longitudinal study involving 42 countries, Autio *et al.* (2013) find a significant negative relationship between motivation to engage in entrepreneurship and uncertainty avoidance culture. Recently, Harms and Groen (2016) also find an inverse relationship between uncertainty avoidance and entrepreneurial intention. Besides, although there is large number of entrepreneurial ventures or businesses in Africa, their mortality rate is high with most of them unable to beyond their second birthday (Okpara, 2011). In Ghana, Abor and Quartey (2010) indicate that creating and sustaining start-up businesses are challenging because of numerous obstacles one has to overcome. Earlier, Baden *et al.* (1994) reveal that Ghanaian women find it difficult to gain access to credit facilities. The above suggest that women are not highly favored like their male counterparts in Ghana disadvantaged with respect to their participation in formal entrepreneurial activities (Baden *et al.*, 1994; Institute of Economic Affairs, 2016). This potentially could be attributed to the high risks associated with doing business in the Ghanaian cultural environment. Similarly, the high rate of

business failure can be a source of disincentive to women entrepreneurs as women in the Ghanaian context whether in the marketplace or at home are generally more fearful, less courageous and bold in undertaking risky ventures or activities with unknown outcomes. Thus, there is high tendency that the desire among women in the Ghanaian cultural environment to participate in formal entrepreneurship may be low, as they may be less willing to take risks that are typical of entrepreneurs, as they may not have the needed or strong mental strength and belief to overcome the risks of failure in the formal entrepreneurial sector. Consequently, we hypothesize that:

H1b. Uncertainty avoidance cultural orientation will significantly reduce participation of women in entrepreneurial ventures.

Collectivism and entrepreneurial intention

Collectivism encourages people to pursue the best interest of groups instead of their individual interests and pleasure. On the other hand, individualism promotes the pursuit of personal interests rather than group interests. It defines self independently (Hofstede, 2001). Some scholars claim that collectivist culture can reduce entrepreneurial intention (Autio *et al.*, 2013; Takyi-Asiedu, 1993) in Africa and specifically in Ghana. In spite of the above claims, collectivist values are very important in entrepreneurial development through the mobilization of necessary business resources (Lechler, 2001; Tiessen, 1997). People in high collectivism cultures tend to prefer to collaborate and work in teams to solve problems. Ghana is described as a collectivist society, and it is not surprising because traditionally, Ghanaians tend to support one another in the performance of various roles or functions. For example, it is usual to see different people coming together to support each other on their farms. In some cases, lands are given to people for cultivation and other commercial purposes that can advance the growth and welfare of the entire community. Thus, through their collective efforts and resources, they can develop and implement innovative business ideas or programs. Furthermore, in Dwyer *et al.*'s (2005) views, in collective cultures, there are lots of opportunities for people or innovators to easily communicate their new innovative products or services to potential investors, consumers, and workers. Aside, it easily promotes consumers' acceptance of entrepreneurs' new products and services (Rauch *et al.*, 2013). In a recent study of 725 students in Finland, Rantanen and Toikko (2017) indicates that collectivism has significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. In line with the preceding discussions, it can be inferred that Ghanaian women may engage in cooperating business activities with others, or can gain support in terms of resources to boost their motivation in entrepreneurial activities. Thus, we argue that:

H1c. Collectivism orientation will significantly increase the participation of women in formal entrepreneurship.

Masculinity and entrepreneurial intention

Hofstede's dimensions of culture also include femininity versus masculinity. This cultural dimension measures the difference of social roles taken by men and women in a society. In a feminine society, men and women share similar personalities such as modesty and tenderness. But in a masculine society such as Ghana, men are more assertive, tough and ambitious (Hofstede, 1991). Masculinity can have significant influence on entrepreneurial intention through its emphasis on achievement-oriented motives, wealth creation and accumulation, competitiveness, assertiveness and

aggressiveness (Estrin *et al.*, 2013; García-Cabrera and García-Soto, 2008; Vinogradov and Kolvereid, 2007; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). The assertiveness, competitiveness and aggressiveness elements of this culture stress on the relevance of taking initiatives, competition, and the need to reward performance (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Culturally and traditionally in Ghana, men are seen as being more assertive, competitive and achievement-oriented compared to females. This is based on the cultural practice that regards men as the head and breadwinner of their family while women as their assistants. This does not mean that women in this culture do not aspire to achieve great things in life and in business. Indeed, women in recent times have been fighting for their rightful place in the various socio-economic spheres in the country, with many becoming heads and leaders of important national and constitutional bodies as well as chief executive officers of private sector institutions. However, because the formal entrepreneurial arena in Ghana is generally hostile from regulatory, economic and socio-cultural perspectives, particularly to new businesses, it can deter more women, hence can explain the current low representation in the formal entrepreneurial sector in the country.

Moreover, from the perspectives of entrepreneurs or self-employed people, assertiveness plays a critical role in the initiation, development and implementation of innovative business ideas. It enables entrepreneurs to adapt their environments to their benefit so as to accomplish their performance goals, hence, its critical role in entrepreneurial development (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Although some researchers (Estrin *et al.*, 2013) indicate that the intention to engage in enterprising behavior may be high among women, Harms and Groen (2016) posit that they may need some level of competitiveness and aggressiveness to mobilize funding or business resources, and to ensure the acceptance of their products and services. This may be stressful to women, especially as there is a widely held notion that the field of entrepreneurship is male dominated, though it is changing. In view of this, we anticipate an inverse relationship between masculinity and women intention to participate in entrepreneurial ventures. We therefore, hypothesize that:

H1d. Masculine cultural orientation will significantly decrease the intention of women to participate in entrepreneurship.

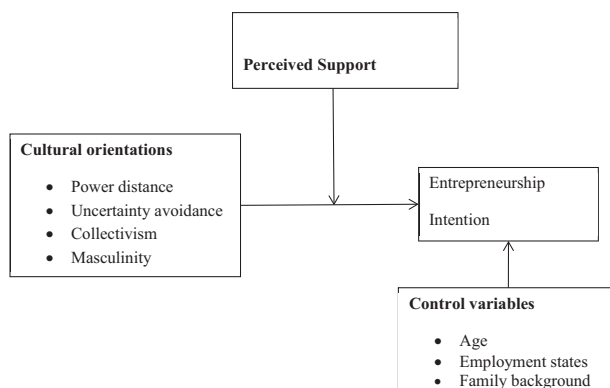
Perceived support and entrepreneurship intention

Women in entrepreneurship are confronted with various challenges. These challenges can be mitigated or exacerbated depending on the support they get from their male spouses, the general society and the government. The literature on male spouses' support offers some ideas into the role of husbands in encouraging or discouraging entrepreneurship among their wives who are entrepreneurship inclined (Santos and Cabral-Cardoso, 2008). Ruderman *et al.* (2002) posit that women who are managers often feel stressed and guilty. Women are regularly undecided between their professional role as well as that of a wife. This means that when male spouses provide the necessary physical, economic, psychological and social support to their wives, most of them will be willing to participate actively in entrepreneurial activities. In Ghana, it is common for a husband to help the wife to establish her own business or expand an existing business mainly through the provision of financial and psychological assistance. In few cases, their spouses make them co-founders and owners by partnering with them. This means that when females enjoy more supports from their spouses, it can significantly boost their entrepreneurial intention and success in the formal entrepreneurial arena despite the socio-cultural barriers they may face in an area that is apparently dominated by their male counterparts. Relatedly, the support of one's family, friends and members of general society play a critical role in the success of women-owned

enterprises. For instance, one's family members can constitute an important pool of affordable financial and human resources to help in engaging in entrepreneurial actions (Javadian and Singh, 2012; Kuada, 2009).

Similarly, social contexts, that is, the traditions and norms of the society are very relevant in explaining gender specific behavior in entrepreneurship (Welter, 2011). The "social embeddedness of entrepreneurship manifests itself not only in shaping individuals' dispositions, but also shapes the manner in which business resources are generated, leveraged, and used" (Kuada, 2015, p. 150). Recently, Petro *et al.* (2014) show that poor support from members of the society has significant inverse relationship with the success of women-owned businesses in Tanzania. Clearly, women who get support from members of the general society are more likely to venture into entrepreneurship. Moreover, in most countries worldwide, governments are considered as major players in stimulating entrepreneurial intention among their people. Debt and (external) equity is difficult to acquire, mostly especially for young female entrepreneurs, as their business profiles are generally less favorable from investors' viewpoints compared to their male counterparts (Verheul and Thurik, 2001). The government can influence capabilities and preferences of individuals to become self-employed by making access to financial resources or financial support easy to them. Sheriff and Muffatto (2015) therefore opine that government has to play a crucial role in supporting entrepreneurial development, while Edoho (2015) highlights the need for public policy not to stifle business initiatives. In line with the preceding discussions, we argue that perceived support system will moderate the relationship between cultural orientations and intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurship in Ghana. Specifically:

H2. Perceived support will moderate the relationship between cultural orientations and women intention to participate in formal entrepreneurship, such that, the existence of high perceived support will reduce the predicted negative effect of: (*H2a*) power distance, (*H2b*) uncertainty avoidance and (*H2c*) masculinity cultural orientations on formal entrepreneurship participation among women. However, it will increase the predicted positive relationship between (*H2d*) collectivism and entrepreneurial intention. The hypotheses are summarized and presented in the conceptual model in Figure 1.



Source: Authors' own framework (2019)

Figure 1.
Conceptual
Framework

Methodology

Study context and sample

Women are consistently underrepresented as entrepreneurs (Roche, 2014; Jennings and Brush, 2013), including African countries such as Ghana (Kelley *et al.*, 2016). Women in Ghana are often confronted with cultural stereotypes and barriers that tend to deter them from participating in formal entrepreneurship (Baden *et al.*, 1994; Coleman, 2010; Javadian and Singh, 2012). Therefore, Ghanaian women provide an interesting context for this study which sought to assess cultural orientations and perceived support on the intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurship. We administered questionnaires to 250 female students in a leading public university in Ghana; however, the number of valid and usable questionnaires was 190, representing a response rate of 76 per cent. We targeted educated women, specifically, final tertiary students in Ghana for the following reasons: First, students of this university come from various diverse cultural backgrounds across the country, thereby making this sample representative of cultural orientations of the wider population (Rantanen and Toikko, 2017). Indeed, the university where the female students were sampled is a large public university in Ghana that is noted for attracting students from the various parts of the country with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Hence, significant variations in cultural orientations are expected. Second, tertiary students can demonstrate significant understanding of the limiting and promoting roles of cultural factors in the development of entrepreneurial intentions. Third, Liñán and Rodríguez-Cohard (2015) observed that undergraduate students tend to be faced with the problem of selecting their professional careers, when they are about to graduate. This situation makes them more appropriate for a study such as this as it can result in significant modifications in career attitudes and intentions (Robinson *et al.*, 1991). Finally, the use of tertiary business students in this study is consistent with prior studies (Harms and Groen, 2016; Puni *et al.*, 2018; Rantanen and Toikko, 2017; Yurtkorua *et al.*, 2014). The demographic background of the respondents indicated that 178 (93.70 per cent) were 16-35 years, while 12 (6.30 per cent) were 36-60 years old. Also, 129 (67.890 per cent) were unemployed and 61 (32.11 per cent) were employed. Moreover, 167 (87.89 per cent) of the respondents' family member(s) owned a business whereas 23 (12.11 per cent) of the respondents did not have any of their family members or relatives owning a business.

Measures

Cultural orientation: To measure national culture at the individual level based on Hofstede's (1980) operationalization; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and masculinity, Yoo *et al.*'s (2011) CVSCALE was adopted. This scale measured Hofstede's national cultural values at the individual levels. The scale combined modified items from previous studies (Hofstede, 2001, 1980). It is measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 5 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*. Sample items are: "People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently". We performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which retained 19 out of the original 26 item scale for analysis. The Cronbach's alpha values were: 0.68 (Collectivism); 0.65 (Uncertainty avoidance); 0.69 (Power Distance); and 0.60 (Masculinity), and were within the minimum threshold of 0.60 for reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Formal entrepreneurial intention: The five-item Intention and Desire for Venture Creation scale by Lee *et al.* (2005) was adopted to measure entrepreneurial intention. It was measured on five point Likert scale, where 5 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*. Sample item includes: "I am more interested in establishing my own venture company than getting a

job.” We performed an EFA which indicated that 2 items accounted for 72.56 per cent of the variance in entrepreneurial intention, and with 0.62 as its Cronbach’s alpha value.

Perceived support: This is a micro-level measure that seeks individual’s perception of general or overall support they get from different sources: their spouses, members of their societal and agencies of the government. It is measured using a single dichotomous item. It asked the respondents to indicate “Yes” or “No” to the statement: “Will you set-up your own business if you get support (from your spouse, parents, friends and general members of your society and or government and other state agencies)?”

Control variables: Some demographic characteristics were found to have a significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention: Gender (Rantanen and Toikko, 2017), age (Wilkinson, 2005), family background (Rantanen and Toikko, 2017). Hence, these variables were used as control variables in this study. Age of the participants was coded as Young adult (Below 40 years) = 1 and Old adult (Above 40 years) = 0. Family background in entrepreneurship = 1 (yes) and 0 if otherwise. Tertiary education = 1 and 0 if pre-tertiary education.

Data analysis

The main hypotheses were analyzed using hierarchical regression. Our procedure involves a four-step hierarchical regression analysis. Following Covin *et al.*’s (2006) logic, we entered the control variables in Model 1; the independent variable (cultural orientations) in Model 2, the moderator (perceived support system) in Model 3, and finally the interactive terms in model 4. This procedure allowed us to ascertain the actual effects and contributions of the control, independent and moderator variables (Covin *et al.*, 2006). We further used Hay’s PROCESS technique version 3.0 for moderation analysis to test the moderated hypotheses.

Findings

Preliminary analyses

We computed univariate statistics (skewness and kurtosis) scores to assess normality of the data. The results indicate that all the variables are normally distributed at 5 per cent level of significance as they are all within the threshold of 3.29 or -3.29 , $p < 0.001$ (Field, 2009). Besides, we test for common method bias (CMB) using Harman’s single factor test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The results indicate that the eight factors collectively accounted for 60.36 per cent variance, with the highest variance explained by one-single factor being 16.93 per cent. Thus, no single factor accounts for more than half of the variance, thereby suggesting absence of CMB. Similarly, consistent with prior studies (Armstrong and Overton, 1977; Keillor and Hult, 2004; Shirodkar *et al.*, 2016), we test for significant difference in early response and late response to assess non-response bias using 30 respondents each. The pairwise *t*-test comparison result in Table I shows insignificant difference across all the variables between the responses of the two categories of respondents at 5 per cent level of significance. This means that there are no issues with non-response bias with the data.

Correlation and multicollinearity

Table II shows the descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation analyses. There are generally low correlations between the independent variables, suggesting no significant concerns for multicollinearity. Moreover, following Aiken and West’s (1991) recommendation, all the independent variables including the control variables are centered to reduce possible multicollinearity between the variables including the interactive terms.

Hypotheses testing

Direct effect: We hypothesized that the cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and assertiveness will have significant effect on women's participation in entrepreneurship. To achieve our research aims, we perform hierarchical regression analysis. The results are shown in Table III. The control variables are entered in Model 1 and the cultural dimensions in Model 2. The interpretations of the direct hypotheses results are based on Model 2. Contrary to expected negative result, the evidence shows that uncertainty cultural orientation ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.001$) increases the intention of women in formal entrepreneurship at 0.1 per cent level of significance. The results however provide empirical evidence in support of hypothesis (H1a) that power distance cultural orientation ($\beta = -0.17, p < 0.05$) can significantly reduce women participation in entrepreneurship at 5 per cent level of significance. The results further indicate that collectivism and masculine cultural orientations do not have an effect on formal entrepreneurial intention among women. Hence, our hypotheses H1c and H1d are not supported.

Moderation effect: Our second hypothesis (H2) investigate whether perceived support system will moderate the relationships between cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and assertiveness) and entrepreneurial intention. The results in Table III are also used to test the moderated hypotheses but the interpretation is based on the results in Model 4, which is the main moderation model. Prior to the moderation analysis, we compute the products of the centered scores of the moderator

Table I.
Pairwise *t*-test
comparison of
response of early and
late respondents

Variables	Early respondents				N	Late respondents		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		df	t	p
Age	0.90	0.31	0.87	0.35	30	29	0.37	0.71
Employment	0.30	0.47	0.53	0.51	30	29	-2.04	0.05
Family	0.93	0.25	0.90	0.31	30	29	0.44	0.66
Support system	0.83	0.38	0.83	0.38	30	29	0.00	1.00
Entrepreneurship Intention	4.37	0.64	4.30	0.65	30	29	0.42	0.68
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.30	0.60	4.22	0.52	30	29	0.55	0.59
Power distance	2.10	0.54	1.87	0.71	30	29	1.34	0.19
Collectivism	3.65	0.83	3.75	0.58	30	29	-0.51	0.61
Masculinity	2.63	0.86	2.68	1.04	30	29	-0.19	0.86

Table II.
Descriptive and
correlation analysis

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. EI	4.14	0.81	1.00								
2. Collectivism 3.74	0.68	0.16*	1.00								
3. Masculinity	2.64	0.89	-0.08	-0.15*	1.00						
4. Uncertainties	4.24	0.60	0.36**	0.31**	-0.16*	1.00					
5. PDistance	0.67	0.37	-0.29**	-0.19**	0.08	-0.35**	1.00				
6. Support	0.77	0.42	0.22**	0.17*	-0.07	0.24**	-0.18*	1.00			
7. Age	0.94	0.24	0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	0.05	-0.04	1.00		
8. Employment	0.32	0.47	-0.05	-0.01	0.05	-0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	1.00	
9. Family	0.88	0.33	0.21**	0.06	-0.08	0.09	-0.11	0.10	-0.03	0.19**	1.00

Notes: **, *Significant at 1 and 5%, respectively; PDistance = power distance (logged); EI = entrepreneurial intention

Table III.
Hierarchical linear
regression predicting
entrepreneurial
intention

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Family	0.21** (1.04)	0.17* (1.06)	0.16* (1.10)	0.45* (1.10)
Employment	-0.01 (1.04)	-0.02 (1.04)	-0.02 (1.05)	-0.07 (1.09)
Age	0.04 (1.00)	0.03 (1.01)	0.04 (1.02)	0.17 (1.03)
Uncertainty avoidance		0.27*** (1.25)	0.25*** (1.28)	0.34*** (1.35)
Collectivism		0.04 (1.13)	0.03 (1.14)	0.04 (1.14)
Masculinity		0.00 (1.05)	0.00 (1.05)	0.02 (1.08)
Power distance (logged)		-0.17* (1.16)	0.16* (1.17)	-0.37* (1.18)
Perceived support			0.11 (1.09)	0.21 (1.22)
Support × uncertainty avoidance				0.24 (1.34)
Support × collectivism				0.22 (1.16)
Support × masculinity				-0.14 (1.07)
Support × power distance (logged)				0.86* (1.25)
R^2	0.047	0.191	0.202	0.233
Change in R^2	—	0.144***	0.011	0.031
F -test	3.061*	6.144***	5.729***	4.482***

Notes: ***Significant at 0.1% (0.001); **significant at 1% (0.01); *significant at 5% (0.05) NB (1): VIF values are in parentheses; (2) unstandardized regression coefficient is reported in Model 4 (i.e. moderation model)

(perceived support) and the independent variables (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and assertiveness) to obtain the interactive terms “*Support X Uncertainty*, *Support X Collectivism*, *Support X Assertiveness* and *Support X Power Distance*”. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), when the interactive term is significant, then the moderated hypothesis is supported. The findings (based on Model 4) reveal that perceived support moderates the relationship between power distance cultural orientation and entrepreneurial intention at 5 per cent level of significance.

We further use Hay’s PROCESS version 3.0 techniques for moderation to test for the moderating effect of perceived support on the effect of cultural orientations (uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, masculinity and power distance) on formal entrepreneurial intention. The results in Table IV indicate that perceived support does not moderate the relationship between uncertainty avoidance ($\beta = 0.17, p = 0.39 > 0.05$), collectivism ($\beta = 0.24, p = 0.23 > 0.05$), and masculinity ($\beta = -0.22, p = 0.19 > 0.05$) cultures and formal entrepreneurial intention at all the conventional levels of significance. The results however show that perceived support system moderates the effect of power distance culture on ($\beta = 0.68, p = 0.08 > 0.05$) on formal entrepreneurial intention at 10 per cent level of significance.

We plot this moderating or interactive effect in Figure 2 and it confirms the moderation effect. From the figure, perceived support enhances formal entrepreneurial intention of women with power distance cultural orientation. Thus, high perceived support is associated with high interest in formal entrepreneurship among women with high power distance orientation but low perceived support is associated with low intention in formal entrepreneurship among women with high power distance cultural orientation.

Discussion

Cultures influence entrepreneurial intentions (Heilbrunn, 2008; Kuada, 2015), in particular with regards to women. However, the effect of national culture on micro-level outcomes such as entrepreneurial intention and women’s enterprise development is still under researched, particularly in Ghana. We therefore seek to contribute to knowledge by examining cultural

Table IV.
Results of the moderating effect of perceived support system on cultural orientation and entrepreneurial intention

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Family	0.43* (2.53)	0.48** (2.68)	0.45* (2.54)	0.43* (2.49)
Employment	-0.04 (-0.30)	-0.03 (-0.23)	-0.04 (-0.31)	-0.07 (-0.56)
Age	0.11 (0.48)	0.18 (0.79)	0.16 (0.70)	0.18 (0.79)
Uncertainty avoidance	0.43*** (74.01)			
Collectivism		0.15 [†] (1.76)		
Masculinity			-0.03 (-0.48)	
Power distance (logged)				-0.55** (-3.68)
Perceived support	0.27* (0.14)	0.38** (2.73)	0.40** (2.91)	0.24 [†] (1.76)
Support × uncertainty avoidance	0.17 (0.86)			
Support × collectivism		0.24 (1.21)		
Support × masculinity			-0.22 (-1.32)	
Support × power distance (logged)				0.68 [†] (1.78)
R ²	0.181	0.108	0.098	0.160
F-test	6.751***	3.699**	3.294***	5.795***

Notes: ***, **, * and [†] = significant at 0.1, 1, 5 and 10%, respectively; *t*-values values are in parentheses

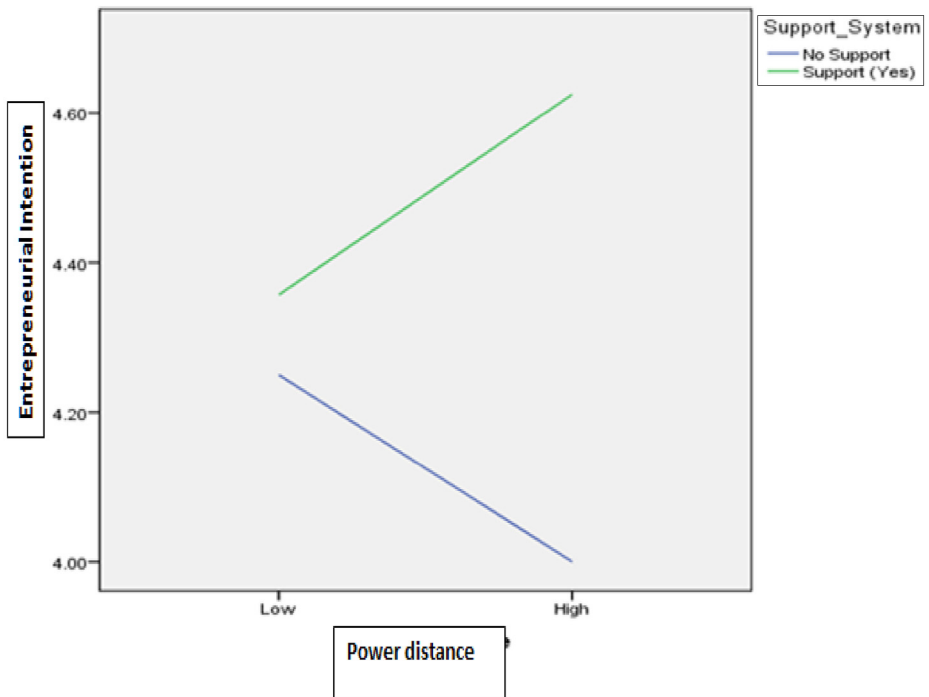


Figure 2.
Interactive Plot of Support System, Power Distance Culture and Entrepreneurial Intention

effect on women participation in formal entrepreneurship. Specifically, we first hypothesized that the cultural orientations of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and masculinity at the micro-level will have significant effect on women's participation in entrepreneurship. The statistical results support our hypothesis (H1a) that power distance

cultural orientation significantly reduces the intention of women to engage in formal entrepreneurial activities. This result gives credence to previous findings that power distance culture inhibits entrepreneurial behavior (García-Cabrera and García-Soto, 2008; Takyi-Asiedu, 1993). This finding can be explained by power distance cultures' emphasis on the need for people to maintain the status quo, which in turn discourages people from taking personal initiative that can lead to a significant change (Hofstede, 1991) in society and the world of business. This suggests that power distance cultural practices create barriers to novelty and change (Hayton *et al.*, 2002) by creating unfavorable and uncondusive conditions for successful entrepreneurial development.

The results further show that uncertainty avoidance culture has significant positive effect on the intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurship. This result is in contrast to our expected negative effect. Hence, our hypothesis (*H1b*) is not supported. This finding also contradicts findings of prior studies (Harms and Groen, 2016; Autio *et al.*, 2013) that find negative outcome. Possible reasons for this result may be, contrary to the view that women are risk averse, they rather demonstrate courage and willingness to pursue greater business opportunities that may have high risk of failure. Moreover, it indicates that women are having increasing propensity for high risk occupations or careers which previously were unattractive to them or thought to be the preserve for men only. Also, because this study focused on the Ghanaian elite women, it may mean that there is increasing desire of women to occupy higher positions in modern societies. This can make them resort to entrepreneurial activities as a means of achieving upward social mobility, despite the risks involved. It could further suggest that the results may have been influenced by traditional roles of women as traders and sellers in Ghana. This is because, traditionally in Ghana, markets are the traditional roles for women, and are expected to be entrepreneurs in the marketplace.

However, our empirical results do not show significant effect of collectivism culture on the intention to engage in enterprising behaviors, hence, hypothesis (*H1c*) is not supported. This result is inconsistent with prior studies that show significant positive (Rantanen and Toikko, 2017; Rauch *et al.*, 2013) or negative effect (Autio *et al.*, 2013; Takyi-Asiedu, 1993). Even though the result is not positively significant, it highlights the need for women in this culture to engage more in team works and collaborative enterprising behaviors (Lechler, 2001). Through their collective efforts and pooling of resources, they can develop and successfully execute entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, and contrary to the expected negative effect, the empirical evidence shows that masculine cultural orientation has no effect on the intention of women to engage in entrepreneurship. This missing link between masculine cultural orientation and entrepreneurial intention may indicate lack of great sensitivity to or awareness of business opportunities among women with masculine cultural orientation. It may also mean that women with masculine cultural orientation are unable to demonstrate sufficient level of competitiveness and aggressiveness needed for the identification and pursuance of business opportunities.

Our second hypothesis contributes to knowledge by examining the moderating effect of perceived support on the intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that perceived support positively moderates the relationship between power distance cultural orientation and intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurial activities. This is interesting given the fact that power distance as our earlier results indicate (Table III) has significant negative effect on formal entrepreneurial intention. This means that perceived support has changed the direction or the effect of power distance culture on women's intention to participate in entrepreneurship by decreasing the negative effect of power distance on women participation in formal entrepreneurship in Ghana. This finding suggests that even though power distance cultural orientation discourages women

participation in formal entrepreneurship, if they are given necessary support from their spouses, friends and family members, governmental and state agencies, they will be motivated to engage in entrepreneurial activities. It therefore means that if there is sufficient level of support, women will be willing to challenge the status quo in power distance cultures, and take personal initiatives, thereby leading to entrepreneurial actions.

This finding appears to give credence to the claim that support provided by husbands to their wives alleviates work-family conflict among female entrepreneurs (Javadian and Singh, 2012). It also confirms claims that friends and societal members' support (Petro *et al.*, 2014; Welter, 2011; Kuada, 2009) and governmental support (Edoho, 2015) can influence capabilities and preferences of individuals to become self-employed. However, perceived support system does not moderate the relationship between the other three cultural dimensions (uncertainty, collectivism and assertiveness) and participation of women in entrepreneurship. The missing link between the interactive effect of perceived support system and cultural dimensions (uncertainty, collectivism and masculinity) on entrepreneurial intention may be because of inadequate provision of spousal, social and governmental support to women with these cultural orientations. This therefore, highlights the need for stakeholders to evaluate current level of support given to women in these cultures.

Implications, limitations and conclusion

Implications

We examine the effect of cultural orientation on the intention of women to engage in formal enterprising behaviors. Our aim is to contribute to the literature in the Sub-Saharan economy of Ghana where women entrepreneurs are generally under-researched despite their notable contributions toward socio-economic transformation of countries (Brush and Cooper, 2012; Madichie *et al.*, 2008). Our results indicate that uncertainty avoidance and power distance cultural orientations have significant positive and negative effects on intention of women to participate in formal entrepreneurial activities respectively. The findings however, show no significant effects of collectivism and masculine cultural orientations on formal entrepreneurial intention of women. We also observe from the literature that there is dearth of studies examining the role of perceived support on the participation of women in entrepreneurship generally and specifically in Africa. Consequently, we investigate the interactive effect of perceived support and cultural orientations (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and assertiveness) on formal entrepreneurial intention of women. Our findings reveal that perceived support positively moderates the relationship between power distance cultural orientation and formal entrepreneurial intention. However, it does not moderate the relationship between uncertainty, collectivism, and assertiveness and intention to engage in entrepreneurship.

Our findings have a number of implications for practice, policy, teaching and future research. In terms of practice, given that power distance culture promotes respect for the status quo as well as high sex-segregation, it suggests that the power distance culture in form of the patrilineal cultural practice of majority of Ghanaians is an important factor limiting women participation in formal entrepreneurial activities in the country. The patriarchal cultural practices encourage males to predominate, oppress and exploit their female counterparts (Hechavarria and Ingram, 2016; Shinnar *et al.*, 2012). These practices make majority of women unconsciously resist exploring new opportunities (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Fayolle *et al.*, 2015) and pursuing challenging ambitions. This adversely affects women's self-confidence, and career achievement motivation and success in formal entrepreneurship. It further explains why although significant number of women in Ghana

owned business than their male counterparts, they are unable to make any significant inroads in the formal entrepreneurship arena but reign only in the informal sector with significant focus on trading of perishable goods or being self-employed in agriculture and agro-based enterprises.

This, according to our empirical results can be reversed by providing Ghanaian women with adequate supports to buffer the destructive influences of power distance culture on the participation of women in formal entrepreneurship. These supports may take the form of sponsored entrepreneurship training and mentoring programs for women to accelerate their interest in formal entrepreneurial activities. According to a recent study in Ghana by [Puni et al. \(2018\)](#), entrepreneurship education enhances self-efficacy, confidence and enterprising behaviour among undergraduate students. Similarly, formal education can significantly enhance the ability of women to manage their enterprises more successfully in Ghana ([Adom and Asare-Yeboah, 2016](#)). Hence, such support initiatives from spouses, members of the general public and other state agencies can make women, particularly, female students in Ghana more empowered to challenge societal status quo while exploring their entrepreneurial potentials. It can further make them demonstrate entrepreneurial resilience in face of the limiting nature of power distance culture to entrepreneurial behaviors. Also, husbands should provide supports to their wives with the view of inspiring them to achieve financial independence and status in societies through their participation in formal entrepreneurship. This can be realized by helping their female spouses to establish their own business, or serving as co-founders and owners by partnering with them or helping in expanding an existing business of their female spouses mainly through the provision of financial, emotional encouragement and psychological assistance. Moreover, they should not treat their wives as merely 'domestic managers' but an individual with great potential for success in entrepreneurship. Again, [Institute of Economic Affairs \(2016\)](#) found that Ghanaian women face severe constraints with regards to access to land, labor, credit and agricultural technologies ([Institute of Economic Affairs, 2016](#)). This implies that governmental institutions with responsibility for enterprise development and economic empowerment of women needs to formulate and implement policies to create necessary macro-economic conditions and conducive business climates by enhancing women's access to finance as well as reducing other constraints to stimulate women's interest in formal entrepreneurship. Furthermore, educators, teachers, and instructors engaged in gender entrepreneurship and women empowerment should highlight the role of cultural orientation and adequate support system in nurturing their students to leverage positive cultural orientation for formal entrepreneurship participation. They should also have the opportunity to equip them with knowledge to limit their exposure to cultural orientations that limit women participation in formal entrepreneurship. More so, a potential source of support to encourage formal entrepreneurship among women is affirmative policy or actions. Affirmative policies at various level of society are required to entice women to pursue formal entrepreneurship as a major career aspiration.

Another finding of our study reveals that there is a significant positive association between uncertainty avoidance culture and intention to participate in formal entrepreneurship. This is an indication that there is increasing interest among elite Ghanaian women for upward social mobility in modern society through the pursuit of careers in formal entrepreneurship even though this sector of the economy is highly risky. Indeed, some scholar ([Abor and Quartey, 2010](#); [Baden et al., 1994](#); [Institute of Economic Affairs, 2016](#)) show that there are high risks and challenges associated with doing business in the Ghanaian cultural environment which can serve as a source of disincentive to women to engage in formal entrepreneurship. Likewise, the frequent failure of small enterprises in

the formal sector of the economy can be a source of disincentive to women entrepreneurs. Similarly, formal entrepreneurial arena in Ghana is generally hostile from regulatory. We have observed that in recent times, specifically between 2017 and 2019, many formal sector businesses in various industries such as banking, microfinance, and broadcast media, among others have collapsed through the use of regulations in Ghana. This general level of hostility in the formal sector of the Ghanaian economy can deter more women; hence, can explain their low representation in the formal entrepreneurial sector in the country currently. The good news from our research however, is that the positive effect of uncertainty avoidance cultural orientation on Ghanaian women participation in formal entrepreneurship suggests that elite or educated Ghanaian women are comfortable with uncertainty and breaking barriers in realizing their career aspirations. Thus, women with uncertainty avoidance cultural orientation have a high propensity to take bold and courageous decisions, and can cope with the uncertainty of operating in the arena of formal entrepreneurship. Hence, the government of Ghana should develop policies to support women with this cultural orientation to engage in formal entrepreneurial activities, maybe, through provision of incentive schemes. Similarly, teachers and educators of entrepreneurship and women empowerment should emphasize the development of this uncertain cultural orientation and risk coping strategies among female students to boost their participation in formal entrepreneurship as it has the potential of making them perceive formal entrepreneurship as an attractive career to pursue.

Limitations and future research

We recognize that our research findings may potentially be limited in the following ways: First, the study focuses on Ghanaian elite women and their cultural orientation. We therefore recommend further studies among other group of women (e.g. non-educated) to help expand our understanding of how cultural orientations affect entrepreneurial intention of Ghanaian women. Second, our data are based purely on quantitative and cross-sectional data. We therefore suggest that future research should use both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, as it can make significant contributions. Moreover, because we could not get data on actual culture at the individual level in Ghana presently, we used a perceptual measure culture rather than actual cultural variations. The use of perceptual culture variations may limit our findings. We therefore call for future studies using actual measure of variations in national culture at micro level to help increase our understanding of the present findings. In addition, perceived support system was measured using a dummy variable. Future studies can use a validated measure for perceived support system.

Conclusion

We believe our study provide important insights in expanding stakeholders' knowledge of the facilitating and limiting roles of cultural dimensions in stimulating formal entrepreneurial intention among women in the Ghanaian context by highlighting culture orientations that are productive (e.g. uncertainty avoidance orientation) or counterproductive (e.g. power distance orientation) to the development of women's formal entrepreneurial intention. In particular, the findings encourage women entrepreneurs – potential or actual – and policymakers to take measures to leverage uncertainty avoidance cultural orientation to facilitate formal entrepreneurial activities among women in Africa, while instituting measures to mitigate the negative consequences of power distance as it discourages women participation in formal entrepreneurship. Furthermore, our findings regarding the buffering role of perceived support in enhancing formal entrepreneurial intention among women with power distance cultural orientation is a wake call for

stakeholders and authorities in Africa to institute adequate support system to encourage formal entrepreneurship among women. In addition, although collectivism cultural orientation has insignificant positive effect on women's interest in formal entrepreneurship, it does suggest the need for women with this cultural orientation to engage more in team works and collaborative formal enterprising behaviors.

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