

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts are invited for papers from anyone with an interest in rural entrepreneurship; we encourage contributions from academics and practitioners alike. Please indicate which of the conference themes you think is/are most appropriate and limit your abstract to 400 words.

Your Details

Name	Afamefuna Obi
Position	PhD Student
Institution/organisation and Postal address	University of Strathclyde 199 Cathedral St, Glasgow G4 0QU
Email address	afamefuna.obi@strath.ac.uk

Please use the following headings: (boxes will expand as you type)

Title: Strategic Entrepreneurship: The evidence from small family farms.
Purpose of this paper (please also indicate whether empirical, conceptual or case study etc) The purpose of this paper is to examine and characterise the resource of small family farms that have potentials for strategic entrepreneurship. Strategic entrepreneurship here, refers to a view of entrepreneurship that concerns how firms develop their existing resources to create opportunities in multiple markets. Multiple case studies were used at this stage of the research.
Design/methodology/approach (including limitations if applicable) This research adopts a sequential mixed methods design. The approach is to identify the resource attributes of small family farms using multiple case studies, this is then followed by a survey to determine the representativeness of these resources in the sector.
Findings It is expected that small family farmers will possess resources that can be strategically developed for entrepreneurial activities. A likely outcome, based on the resource-based perspective literatures, is that these resources will be valuable and replicable.
Practical implications Strategic entrepreneurship is relevant to small the family farm sector as it allows the retention of their current resources as well as the possibility of expansion to other markets.
Policy Implications (if applicable) Rural policy makers may consider channelling funds to support the development of the identified resources, in the long run, to sustain the small family farm sector.
What is the originality/value of paper The originality of the paper stems from its different application of the resource based perspectives. These perspectives are normally recommended for larger organisations in dynamic markets. Applying them to a different business environments will test the rigorousness of these theoretical perspectives and the scope of their applicability.
Please state if your paper is a: Refereed research paper Practitioner Paper Presentation only ✓
Please indicate the theme(s) that you consider most appropriate for your paper: ✓ <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship, farming and the natural environment <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Rural Entrepreneurship

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Strategic Entrepreneurship: The evidence from small family Farms.

Entrepreneurship is popularly considered to be an opportunistic and risky approach to profitably exploit change in dynamic business environments. However, this may be a bias characterisation of the phenomena. In the UK for instance, small family-farm businesses typically exhibit an aversion for risky business opportunities in order to pursue non-pecuniary goals like the inter-generational transfer of family farms (Barnes et al. 2016). A similar aversion to change is exhibited by major stakeholders in the sector because of its importance of rural economies (ScotGov 2015). Consequently, risk-taking and spontaneous opportunism are not typical characteristics of this business environment. Nevertheless, entrepreneurship was forecasted to be a most important aspect of farming (Phelan & Sharpley 2012).

Ironically, physiocrats, like Cantillon, were instrumental in developing the entrepreneurship discourse. Cantillon considered entrepreneurship to be the organisations of factors of production; facilitated by an entrepreneur. Schumpeter (1934) advanced this view but emphasised the importance of a firm's existing resources; while Casson (1982) simply concludes that entrepreneurship will be significantly constrained by a lack of these resources. These views emphasise another aspect of entrepreneurship, i.e. a firm's existing resources that enable it. Whereas its popular characterisation focuses on the business environments that accelerates it.

This paper argues that the existing resources of a firm can be strategically developed to create opportunities in multiple markets. This strategic approach, by no means a novel idea (Van Rensburg 2013), bears particular relevance to the business environments of small family farms since 1) their non-pecuniary goals require the preservation of their existing resources and 2) high regulations, put in place to minimize change, favour a long term (strategic) approach to entrepreneurship. However, the relative newness and a dearth of empirical research on strategic entrepreneurship has allowed the image of risky-opportunism, in dynamic business environments, to dominate its discourse.

In response, this paper adopts three resource-based perspectives to examine the resources of family farms engaged in entrepreneurial activities. We identify the resources that are employed to produce multiple agricultural products for multiple markets. The attributes of these resources were analysed to determine those with potentials for strategic entrepreneurship. The results of these research broaden the entrepreneurship discourse to accommodate atypical business environments, like in the small family-farm sector; while simultaneously providing empirical evidence to establish strategic entrepreneurship as a viable option for these businesses.