

## **Influence of Guerrilla Skills on Micro and Small Enterprise Survival in Wakiso District, Uganda.**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the influence of Guerrilla skills on Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) survival in Wakiso district, Uganda. The objective of the study was to establish the influence of guerrilla skills on profitability, stability and continuous resource availability of the Micro and Small Enterprises in Wakiso District, Uganda. Multiple sampling methods were used to derive a sample of 306 MSEs and a cross-sectional survey research design was used and adopted a positivist approach. The study used quantitative approaches which involved descriptive analysis (frequencies, percentages tables) and inferential statistics (linear regression). Raw data was captured into SPSS (version 16). Results revealed that Guerrilla skills had a positive and statistically significant influence on profitability, stability and continuous resource availability leading to increased enterprise survival. It also revealed that guerrilla skills have a positive and statistically significant influence on the survival of MSEs in Wakiso district, Uganda and accounted for 29.6 per cent of the variation in Micro and Small enterprise survival. MSE owner/managers need to develop, improve and utilize guerrilla skills in running their businesses. They should utilize resources within their surrounding maximally and be ahead of the competitors by utilizing unconventional low-cost tactics not known to their competitors and are difficult to copy. Similarly, programs to improve MSE owners/managers' guerrilla skills be implemented to enhance MSE survival. Curriculum developers need to design programs that will involve learners to apply guerrilla skills.

**Key Terms:** Enterprise survival, micro and small enterprises, guerrilla skills.

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## Introduction

Literature exists on the performance of small and medium enterprises – SMEs (Campbell, et al., 2012; Abaho, et al., 2017). These SMEs have been historically main players in local economic activities, especially as large providers of employment, hence, generators of primary and secondary sources of income for many households (Mayanja, et al., 2019a). SMEs are vital engines for the development of economies and communities worldwide (Khan, & Abasyn, 2017). Abosedo et al. (2016) argue that vibrant SMEs are crucial to the process of overcoming poverty, inequality and unemployment. SMEs play a crucial role in people's effort to meet basic needs and help marginalized groups such as female heads of households, disabled persons, and rural families (Mayanja, et al., 2019a). In Europe, more than 90 per cent of the businesses are SMEs and contribute more than 53 per cent to the employment sector (Czarniewski, 2016). In Sub-Saharan Africa, SMEs contribute 90 per cent to the employment sector (Karadağ, 2016). Thus the development, growth and survival of SMEs is a key tool to job creation, poverty alleviation, wealth creation, income distribution, revenue generation and crime reduction (Mayanja, et al., 2019a).

Uganda is ranked to be a more entrepreneurial country than many big economies of the world; for instance, the United States of America at 13 per cent (Global Entrepreneurship Index, 2017). Although Uganda has a robust entrepreneurial activity, 50 per cent of SMEs do not live to celebrate their third birthday (Global Enterprise Monitor, 2014). SMEs still struggle to survive. Studies on business failure in Uganda attribute it to the unbecoming behaviour of most Ugandan businessmen/women such as lack of a desire and commitment to achieve greater heights, low saving culture, financial indiscipline acts, and being short of a vision which are key factors hindering the survival and growth SMEs (Eurostat, 2015; Mayanja, et al., 2019b). Nanyondo (2017) also indicates the unfortunate

education system of Uganda which mainly prepares students for ready office jobs and gives little attention to entrepreneurship education is another factor accounting for the low survival rates in Uganda (Mayanja, et al., 2019b).

Mayanja et al. (2019a) stated that Uganda's entrepreneurship is more necessity than strategic driven. Although Uganda has many underutilized business prospects in manufacturing, agriculture, trade and industry, education, engineering and construction, among others, with a high entrepreneurial index in the world, and although efforts have been made to train owner/managers on how to exploit the prospects (Mayanja, et al., 2019a), SMEs are still struggling to make their businesses survive. Consequently, while it is possible to raise questions about the quick failure of SMEs in Uganda, the bigger question is on the entrepreneurial competency in terms of guerrilla skills of the owner/managers in fostering business survival. Thus, in the public interest, this study attempts to promote guerrilla skills as a factor in contributing to MSE survival. As such, this paper investigated the influence of guerrilla skills on MSE survival in Wakiso district, Uganda.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The term guerrilla skills have been widely applied in the field of marketing. Thus, guerrilla skills in marketing are easily traced to guerrilla warfare which utilizes atypical tactics to achieve a goal in an environment that is unforgiving and competitive (Yuksekbilgili, 2014). The guerrilla marketing concept implies an unusual way of performing promotional activities using a very low budget. Levinson et al. (2010) describe guerrilla skills in marketing as achieving conventional goals, for instance, profits and joy with unusual methods such as investing energy instead of money. Guerrilla marketing involves untraditional advertising activities such as eye-catching street graphics,

surprising product placements and memorable events and Wanner (2011) considers it an effective method of snatching customers. The name guerrilla according to Isaac (2014), he describes a group of people who use violent approaches to execute their ideology and beliefs.

The advantage of guerrilla fighters is the fact that they know where and when to strike, while opponents are those with more people and resources (such as weapons and money). Owner/managers utilizing guerrilla skills must act as guerrilla fighters when attacking valuable targets of large competitors by surprising them (Milak, & Dobrinić, 2017). Guerrilla skills are meant to win in the minds of customers and consumers. Strategies that strive to position the products and services of the company in the customer's mind are adopted. Guerrilla skills in marketing create drama, interest, positive impact or emotion, and these achieve incredible results. They contribute to achieving a distinctive position of the brand on the market, thus allowing advertisers to use creative and innovative ideas. Levinson and Levinson (2011) claim that companies which apply guerrilla marketing must monitor marketing campaigns of rivals, and be in trend with the latest trends. Also, they must be aware of the happenings in the world and the situation in immediate surrounding (at the local level); otherwise, they could lag behind their competitors.

Guerrilla marketing appears in unconventional (unusual) places through unconventional media, where it intends to create surprise and diffusion effect – expansion effect (Baltes, & Leibing, 2008). It uses a smaller budget than traditional marketing strategies. It is a 'Hit and run' guerrilla warfare tactics. It avoids wasting marketing resources, attracts customer attention through eye-catching activities and is generally effective if used wisely (Baltes, & Leibing, 2008). The key features of guerrilla marketing include the ability to concentrate resources, selling the ideology together with the product, identifying and overcoming the established patterns, searching for synergies, outsmarting

any perception filters in the target group, avoiding direct attacks using detours and alternatives and being flexible, agile, and avoid building strongholds (Baltes, & Leibing, 2008). Even though research has shown that using guerrilla skills can yield tremendous results in business, it has not been empirically addressed and conceptualized within Uganda's business survival literature.

Organizational survival is a multi-dimensional concept with no single significant element as its measure of analysis. According to Ryan and Dietrich (2010), survival is the ability of a system to fulfil its mission in a hostile environment. It can be further described as the ability of a system to continue to deliver certain essential services or fulfil a mission in the face of failures and intrusions. On the other hand, Amah and Okoisama (2017) define organizational survival as the ability of a firm to realize and actualize its outcome and expectations in line with its mission, goals, and objectives. It is also the ability to operate effectively and efficiently, coping adequately and being able to withstand the environmental turbulences by being flexible and adapting to change, which may result in growth. In another context, they also attribute it to the organization's ability to achieve sustainable growth and realization of its goals which leads to eventual superior performance (Ahmad, & Zabri, 2016; Azemina, 2018). Survival of firms depends on the ability to obtain distinctive competitive capabilities that lead to competitive advantage (Cant, et al., 2014). Firm survival and growth depend on the quality of the relationship among all stakeholders, both internal and external, as well as on the goodwill of the company (Mutesigensi, et al., 2017). Previous studies seen do not fully conceptualize survival in terms of business but address it as an organization and on a foreign perspective. The present study intends to address enterprise survival using a business approach and in a localized Ugandan perspective.

Kamau and Bwisa (2013) found a relationship existing between guerrilla skills in marketing and business growth. Guerrilla marketing according to Bigat (2012), is a powerful tool for rapidly gaining competitive advantage, especially for small and medium businesses in an increasingly competitive environment. Milak and Dobrinić (2017) found guerrilla marketing to increase the intangible value of the brand and the firm's capital. Although prior studies seen mention the great importance of guerrilla skills/guerrilla marketing on business growth and firm competitiveness, it is evident that enterprise survival has been ignored and has not been properly conceptualized within Uganda's MSE survival literature. The present study is aimed at establishing the influence of guerrilla skills of owners/managers on MSE survival in Wakiso district, Uganda. Hutter and Hoffmann (2011) posit that guerrilla marketing is a common term for an unconventional advertising campaign to attract the attention of a large number of people in the advertising message at a low cost, causing surprise effect and diffusion effect. They conclude that guerrilla marketing campaigns in terms of cost-benefit ratio are highly efficient. Hiam (2009) posits that guerrilla marketing applies creativity and effort to increase the impact and reduce costs. Kar Yan and Yazdanifard (2013) concluded that guerrilla marketing involves a combination of cost-effectiveness, unconventional low-cost tactics and shocking marketing techniques that can lead to word of mouth effect. Bigat (2012) posits that through innovative design, materials and methods, the maximum level of turnover can be achieved through low cost. Sasanka et al. (2016) stated that "the main principles of Guerrilla Marketing are: measure success by profits, not sales; instead of prioritizing new customers, prioritize increasing number and size of transactions from existing customers, and gaining referrals. Profitability is the firm's ability to produce profit and to measure its operational efficiency value and efficiency to use its property (Chen, 2004 in Hermuningsih, 2013). Profitability is the company's ability to generate profits and measure the level of operational

efficiency in using its assets (Sudiani, & Wiksuana, 2018). Although previous research shows that guerrilla skills immensely contribute to cost reduction and firm efficiency, it has not been fully conceptualized with MSE survival literature. The present study is aimed at establishing the influence of guerrilla skills on profitability, which is one of the dimensions of MSE survival.

In this study, stability was divided into two categories, that's business stability and job stability. (Seo, 2014) defines business stability as the condition in which an organization functions soundly. Archarya et al. (2011) argue that liquidity is a major factor in determining the business stability of organizations. Business stability can also be expressed in the form of capital adequacy, profitability, loan soundness, and liquidity. In other words, in case of a financial institution, ensuring stability means being able to generate sufficient revenue as well as maintaining enough assets to provide against losses. On the other hand, job stability is the point at which an individual employee will feel comfortable and where the employer will gain maximum potential (Abdulrhman, & Katsaiti, 2015). Fong and Yazdanifard, (2014) stated that guerrilla skills could help reduce the rate of unemployment and contribute to national development since involves a large number of people going out using word of mouth and is an essential strategy for survival and success of businesses. Word of mouth has a positive effect on purchase intention, brand loyalty, and image (Jonsson, & Belic, 2012). From the literature search, there's scarce literature on guerrilla skills in relation to Micro and Small enterprise stability. This study aims to establish the influence of guerrilla skills on stability as a dimension of Micro and Small enterprise survival.

Continuous resource availability would be defined as the access to the right resources for a given firm at all the time with the necessary skills sets (in case of people) and with the necessary technology in case of non-human resources

(Yadunath, 2018). In another way, continuous resource availability can be defined as the extent to which resources are available all the time to meet the project needs (Amadi, & Ezeugo, 2019). Resource availability may be in terms of physical resources or non-physical resources. Physical resources are the raw materials which are needed to achieve an objective or goal in an organization (Amadi, & Ezeugo, 2019). With technological development, mobility is facilitated by access to the Internet via various smart devices such as smartphone, iPod, mobile phones, and the internet, online shopping options that have allowed access to global resources very effectively and efficiently. This has given business the opportunity to increase their sales through guerrilla marketing whose purpose is, first and foremost, to use not only financial but creative and intellectual resources. More attention is paid to courageous, modern ideas and encourages investing not money but time, energy, imagination and information. Furthermore, the use of guerrilla strategies has been known to involve the use of limited resources to fight competition (Jobber, 2010), especially through concentrating resources where the competition is not paying enough attention. A critical literature search shows that the concept of guerrilla skills in relation to continuous

resource availability as a dimension of enterprise survival has not been fully studied.

In this study, the influence of guerrilla skills on Micro and Small enterprise survival was investigated through the theory of planned behaviour by (Ajzen 1991). This theory posits that individual behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions where behavioural intentions are a function of an individual's attitude towards behaviour, the subjective norms surrounding the performance of the behaviour, and the individual's view of the ease with which the behaviour can be performed. The theory links appropriately to this study because MSE owners/managers' behaviour and intentions in the practice of guerrilla skills can determine whether they can eventually achieve the goal of increasing profit, ensuring stability and continuous resource availability, hence enhancing MSE survival eventually.

## RESULTS

This section begins with responses on how the owner/managers of MSEs in the study area within Wakiso district, Uganda utilized Guerrilla Skills, followed by regression results that show the extent of the influence of guerrilla skills on MSE survival.

**Table 1: Responses to Guerrilla Skills**

	SD	D	N	A	SA	$\chi^2$	$P > \chi^2$
I always utilize unusual tactics that others cannot easily copy when providing a product or service.	0.36	6.05	8.54	53.0	32.0	273.6	<.0001
I always exploit resources within my surroundings using novel low-cost tactics not recognized by others.	2.14	8.54	6.05	49.5	33.8	239.4	<.0001
I can do more with less resources available	1.07	15.3	6.41	52.3	24.9	229.5	<.0001
I always generate original ideas and implement them before others do.	3.23	6.09	6.09	47.3	37.3	238.9	<.0001
I always strive to monopolize	28.6	26.1	4.64	23.2	17.5	50.79	<.0001

business in the short run before new entrants come in.							
I can develop new products that generate profit and provide sufficient user benefits with a fair return	1.78	4.27	11.4	60.5	22.1	322.9	<.0001

Results in Table 1 indicate that 53 per cent of the respondents agree ( $\chi^2 = 274, p \leq 0.0001$ ) that they always utilize unusual tactics that others cannot easily copy when providing a product or service; 49.5 per cent of the respondents agree ( $\chi^2 = 239, p \leq 0.0001$ ) that they always take advantage of the resources within their surroundings by employing unconventional low-cost tactics not recognized by others; 52.3 per cent of the respondents agree ( $\chi^2 = 230, p \leq 0.0001$ ) that they are able to do more with less resources available to them; 47.3 per cent of the respondents agreed ( $\chi^2 = 239, p \leq 0.0001$ ) that they always generate original ideas and implement them before others do; 28.6 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed ( $\chi^2 = 51, p \leq 0.0001$ ) that they always strive to monopolize business in the short run before new entrants come in; and lastly, 60.5 per cent of the respondents agreed ( $\chi^2 = 323, p \leq 0.0001$ ) that they believe that they can develop new products and services that generate revenues exceeding their costs and provide sufficient user benefits with a fair return.

This implies that owner-managers of MSEs in Wakiso district utilize guerrilla skills maximally through making use of unusual or novel tactics that others may not know, utilize resources within their surroundings, are quick to generate and implement original ideas, and always develop new products and services that contribute to optimal revenue. However, majority of them do not monopolize business as depicted by the majority strongly disagreeing and disagreeing with 28.6 per cent and 26.1 per cent, respectively. The findings of this study are in line with Levinson et al. (2010), Yuksekbilgili (2014) and Isöraité (2018) who described guerrilla skills as a strategy of achieving conventional goals such as profits and joys with unconventional methods such as investing energy instead of money. It is also linked to the explanation made by (Castronovo, & Huang, 2012; Fong, & Yazdanifard, 2014; Ay, 2010; Hutter, & Hoffmann, 2011; and Kamau, & Bwisa, 2013) who describe it as a low-cost, high-impact strategy that allows small firms to act like large firms in an effort to achieve a firm's value and mission.

**Table 1: Linear Regression Analysis to establish the Influence of Guerrilla Skills on Profitability.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.570 <sup>a</sup>	.325	.323	.58229		
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.146	.224		5.105	.000

	Guerrilla Skills	.678	.058	.570	11.601	.000
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**Dependent Variable: Profitability and Significance level is  $\alpha = 0.05$**

Table 2 shows that there's a positive and significant influence between guerrilla skills and the dimension of MSE survival, profitability. This is denoted by ( $r=0.570$ ,  $t=11.601$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < \alpha=0.05$ ). This implies that guerrilla skills can predict the dimension profitability and therefore, an increase in one unit of guerrilla skills increases profitability

by 57 per cent. The hypothesis which stated, "Guerrilla skills do not have any statistically significant influence on the profitability of MSE in Wakiso district, Uganda," was rejected implying that there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and profitability of MSEs in Wakiso district, Uganda.

**Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis to establish the Influence of Guerrilla Skills on Stability**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.377 <sup>a</sup>	.142	.139	.75110	
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.081	.290	7.172	.000
	Guerrilla skills	.512	.075	6.784	.000

**Dependent Variable: Stability at significance level,  $\alpha = 0.05$**

Table 3 shows that there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and the dimension of MSE survival, stability. This is denoted by ( $r=0.377$ ,  $t=6.784$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < \alpha=0.05$ ). This implies that guerrilla skills can predict the dimension stability in MSE survival and therefore, an increase in one unit of guerrilla skills increases stability by 37.7 per cent. The

hypothesis which stated, "Guerrilla skills do not have any statistically significant influence on the stability of MSE in Wakiso district, Uganda," was rejected implying that there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and stability of MSEs in Wakiso district, Uganda.

**Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis to establish the influence of Guerrilla Skills on Continuous Resource Availability**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.416 <sup>a</sup>	.173	.170	.80147	
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.373	.310		4.4409	.000
	Guerrilla Skills	.615	.081	.416	7.636	.000
Dependent Variable: Continuous Resource Availability average at $\alpha = 0.05$						

Table 4 shows that there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and the dimension of MSE survival, continuous resource availability. This is denoted by ( $r=0.416$ ,  $t=7.636$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000 < \alpha=0.05$ ). This implies that guerrilla skills can predict the dimension continuous resource availability in MSE survival

and therefore, an increase in one unit of guerrilla skills increases continuous resource availability by 41.6 per cent. The hypothesis was rejected, implying that there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and continuous resource availability of MSEs in Wakiso district, Uganda.

**Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis to establish the Influence of Guerrilla Skills on MSE Survival**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.546 <sup>a</sup>	.298	.296	.55911		
				Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)		1.495	.215		6.937
	Guerrilla Skills		.611	.056	.546	10.892
a. Dependent Variable: Survival average						

Table 5 shows that on the overall, there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and MSE survival. This is denoted by ( $r=0.546$ ,  $t=10.892$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.000 < \alpha=0.05$ ). This implies that guerrilla skills can predict the MSE survival in Wakiso district, Uganda and therefore, an increase in one unit of guerrilla skills increases MSE survival by 54.6 per cent. The findings indicated that guerrilla skills account for 29.6 per cent of the variation in MSE survival, implying that there are other factors not covered in this study that explain MSE survival. A recommendation for further study in this area is suggested. The hypothesis which stated, "Guerrilla skills do not have any statistically significant influence on MSE

survival in Wakiso district, Uganda," was rejected implying that there's a positive and statistically significant influence between guerrilla skills and MSE survival in Wakiso district, Uganda.

From the analysis, it is clearly shown that guerrilla skills have a positive and statistically significant influence on Micro and Small enterprise survival in Wakiso district. This means that when owners/managers utilize and practice guerrilla skills in the running of their businesses, the dimensions of MSE survival such as profitability, stability and continuous resource availability will increase and eventually leading to enhancement in MSE survival. The



results are in line with (Fong, & Yazdanifard, 2014) and (Tam, & Khuong, (2015) who found guerrilla skills to be an essential strategy for survival and success of businesses. This further supports the theory of planned behaviour by (Ajzen 1991) in that the MSE owners/managers' behaviour and intentions while practising the use of guerrilla skills can eventually lead to the achievement of the goal of increasing profit, ensuring stability and continuous resource availability, hence enhancing MSE survival.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusion:** We conclude in this study that guerrilla skills significantly contribute to the dimensions of MSE survival such as profitability, stability and continuous resource availability, and hence eventually contributing to MSE survival in Wakiso district, Uganda. Therefore owners/managers should consider developing, improving and embark onto utilization of guerrilla strategies if they

want their businesses to generate profits, maintain stability and to have a continuous flow of resources.

**Recommendations:** MSE owners/managers need to utilize resources within their surroundings, employ unconventional low-cost tactics, do more with fewer resources available, put in the time, energy and imagination with a lot of innovation and creativity if they want their businesses to thrive and survive. Also, policies and programs to enhance owner/managers' guerrilla skills should be implemented to enhance MSE survival, and curriculum developers should design programs that will involve learners to apply guerrilla skills. Furthermore, recommendations for further study would include expanding the study to the rest of Uganda to establish whether the results provide a similar trend and conducting a study to establish other factors that would enhance MSE survival in Uganda.

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