

Entrepreneurial Competencies and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises in Amolatar District: A Case of Private Education Institutions

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Background: The study was carried out to investigate the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on growth of small and medium enterprises in Amolatar District. The objectives of the study were to establish the effect of innovation, networking and risk-taking competencies on growth of SMEs in Amolatar District.

Methods: The study employed a cross sectional study design and adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study population was 130 from which a sample of 97 was drawn basing on Krejcie & Morgan (1970). Questionnaire and interview guide were the main data collection tools. Study findings indicated that innovation competencies have a very weak positive relationship with the growth of SMEs at 0.2640.

Findings: Study findings further indicated that most factors under innovation competencies were significant at 1% level. Also, networking competencies have a very weak positive and significant relationship with growth of SMEs at 0.2462. it was further found out that networking competencies factors were also significant at 1% level of significance. Finally, risk-taking competencies had a moderate positive relationship with the growth of SMEs in Amolatar District at 0.5390. it was also evident that all factors under this variable were significant at 1% level of significance.

Recommendations: The study recommended that; school management committees put more emphasis on ensuring frequent innovations in their services for instance; rewarding those staff with innovative ideas could best work as this shall ensure diversification and hence continued operations. More emphasis should also be put on building strong networks for both customers and suppliers as these play a significant role in ensuring continued business operation. Continuous risk assessments should be emphasized so as to ensure no single risk affects the operations of the business.

Keywords: *Competencies, Entrepreneurial Competencies, SME Growth, and Small Enterprises.*