



Occupational Gifting and Entrepreneurial Development among the Fantse of Ghana

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Abstract

This paper, derived from ethnographic research projects on the indigenous social and economic systems of the Fantse, conducted in Mankesim and Abura Markets in the Central Region of Ghana noted that the lack of credit facilities from the formal banking sector makes many youthful entrepreneurs rely on family and friends for start-up capital. Using the model of capital accumulation developed by Das, Mourmouras, and Rangazas (2018), the paper argues that occupational gifting offers opportunities for the aged to give out their lifetime savings and expertise in return for care and thereby creating avenues for the youth to raise capital to revamp existing small-scale family businesses to provide them with employment and facilitate effective care of the aged. The paper concludes that occupational gifting helps to guarantee a stable means of income and financial security for both the youth and the aged. It recommends that occupational gifting should be encouraged by making the youth accept businesses gifted to them and applying modern business strategies to develop such enterprises to help achieve the SDGs associated with the well-being of both parties, particularly, SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8 and 16.

Introduction

This article examines the role of *occupational gifting* (the transfer of a business, technical skills, and core competencies from an older person to a younger one) in providing intergenerational support for entrepreneurial development to avert youth unemployment, and in turn, provide the necessary familial support for the aged in Ghana. It posits that indigenous Fantse family values associated with filial piety [defined as the value that parents take care of their children so that when the children grow up, they will reciprocate the care (Fortes, 1959)], provide avenues for occupational gifting for youth employment and care for the aged. The arguments are anchored on three ideas. First is Apt van Ham's (1991) that parents' hope of getting their sons and daughters to take care of them in their old age is contingent upon the latter getting well-paid jobs. The second is that of Kuada and Mangori (2021) that, the growth of enterprises provides job opportunities for people (particularly the youth), to enable them to care for themselves and their families and also provides revenues for anti-poverty and welfare policies of governments. The other is Abebrese's (2014) admonition that the exclusion

of women and youth from social security and other social protection interventions has a high risk of sliding them into lifelong poverty with all its negative aspects.

Accordingly, this article argues that one of the ways by which the double-pronged problem associated with youth unemployment and the dwindling opportunities for supporting the aged, and also for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in addressing youth unemployment and care for the aged is by taking advantage of occupational gifting for entrepreneurial development. It highlights aspects of the values acquired from the socialisation of Fantse children, which spells out the need for adolescents to develop entrepreneurial skills while growing up for effective acquisition of safety nets in adulthood and old age. Consequently, this paper uses Das, Mourmouras, and Rangazas' (2018) model to examine the strengths associated with the reception of occupational gifting as a source of entrepreneurial development in Ghana. It examines the role of the family in providing capital and social networking for developing enterprises. The paper continues from here by spelling out the problem, offering justification for this write-up, and highlighting the methods of data collection. It follows with the review of relevant literature, including the theoretical framework and its application, and the conceptual review of ideas about the economy and addressing the social support mechanisms associated with occupational gifting. Finally, it concludes and makes recommendations.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the indigenous Fantse value of filial piety which calls for rights and obligations of reciprocal care among the youth and the aged, many youths are unemployed and are unable to care for the aged, making the aged suffer from rejection and neglect. The rate of unemployment has been increasing over the years, rising from 2.8% in 1984 to 12% in 2016 (Yirenkyi et al 2023). After experiencing drops from 2017 to 2019, it rose again from 4.65% in 2020 to 4.70% in 2021, and from 13.4% in the first quarter of 2022, to 13.9% (1.8 million people) in the second quarter (GSS, 2022). In 2023, the rate was 10.9 (GSS, 2024). Out of this figure, 77.4% were made up of youth between the ages of 15-35. It is gratifying to note that 22.3% of persons who experienced an unemployment spell from the first quarter of 2022 to the third quarter of 2023 had completed tertiary education. Even though those with tertiary education are more likely to be employed, the rate of unemployment of graduates is worrisome, considering that many more people have access to tertiary education, due to improved access to tertiary education. Many factors, including the unavailability of white-colour jobs, the inability of the youth to establish their own enterprises and the lack of credit from the formal banking sector for establishing business enterprises can be attributed to the high level of unemployment. Considering the high level of youth unemployment in Ghana, and the fact that many more people are reaching old age (GSS, 2021), there is the need to consider other avenues of youth employment to support the aged.

Inadequacy of capital is the primary constraint in establishing and expanding business in Ghana as many youths find it difficult to obtain start-up capital, and credit facilities from the formal banking sector (Adjabeng and Osei, 2022; Anyidoho and Steel, 2015; Stack & Amissah, 2022). Many of the credit institutions, which emerged from the dynamics of Western culture have not been successful in providing financial services to many people, especially those in the informal sector of the economy. They require the small-scale entrepreneurs to demonstrate their creditworthiness with collateral security which the youth lack, so the youth find it difficult to obtain credit facilities from them (Ayittey, 2018). In addition, many borrowers do not understand the criteria that financial institutions use to determine who gets loans from them, so they are not enthusiastic about the operations of the banks (Agyapong, Agyapong, and Darfor, 2011). All these do not enhance the raising of capital through the formal banking system, hence, the need to rely on indigenous and informal institutions.

Many people are ageing and need support from the youth. Ageing is a developmental challenge, so in 2003, 32 out of 41 countries (78%) decided to include it in their national social development policies (UNECA, 2007). The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), which offers a comprehensive action plan for handling issue of ageing in the 21st-century, commits governments to link issues of ageing to human rights and other policies for social and economic development. This puts ageing within the ambit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNECA noted that while overall economic growth remained strong during the last few years of a person's life, there is limited evidence to show that such growth has created jobs for Africa's youthful population. This suggests that if youths tap into the experiences of the ageing population, they can develop enterprises and create more employment.

Caring for the aged has become a challenge to many people in contemporary Ghanaian societies. The indigenous arrangement of care for the aged, where the elderly people are provided with food, shelter, and company is dwindling because of the break-up of the mega-family system with its accompanying compound housing system, where family members enjoyed mutual support from one another (Aboderin, 2004; Apt, 1992;

Apt, Koomson, Williams and Grieco, 1995; Ofori-Abebrese, Pickson, & Abubakari, 2017; Ofori-Dua, 2023), especially those with duolocal residential arrangements which manifest age grades. The dwindling of familial support for the aged calls for a formal social security system which does not isolate them. However, Ghana's formal social security system is weak, making many aged persons poor (Brammah, 2021; Kpessa-Whyte, 2018). Furthermore, the weak resource base undermines the effectiveness of the informal sector, so it does not adequately protect many of the aged from poverty. Also, the contributory social security scheme benefits civil servants and employees in the formal sector (Abebrese, 2014). Though the enabling act of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) makes provision for persons in the informal sector to contribute to the fund (GoG, 2008), many people in the sector do not patronise the scheme due to lack of adequate information and/or desire to utilise the product (Botchwey, 2022).

Again, the aged face many problems including loneliness due to limited social networks emanating from the loss of relatives and friends, and the rejection or denial by living friends and relatives. Though the indigenous family support system is the proper site for caring for the aged, its dwindling support mechanisms make it no longer reliable (GoG, 2010). It is imperative to supplement intra-family and community support with public social protection programs to reduce poverty among the aged as suggested by the UNECA (2007). These problems call for the need to get young graduates employed so that the youth can take good care of the aged in their families. We surmise, therefore, that filial piety and its positive association with occupational gifting are in preparation for the uncertain future. All these show the importance of the indigenous family in entrepreneurial development and care for the aged, and hence, the essence of exploring occupational gifting in entrepreneurship, wealth creation, and capital formation.

It is worthy of note that, university graduates are not oblivious to the challenges of becoming entrepreneurs in the informal sector of the economy, especially, those challenges associated with identifying areas that can be developed readily, raising start-up capitals, offsetting problems associated with the low-quality of jobs, poor working conditions, loss of dignity, and their exclusion from social dialogue and decision-making, (Anafo, 2023; Aryeetey, 2015; IFS, 2018).

Justification

This paper is appropriate, given the calls on the universities of Africa to train students to be entrepreneurs so that they can create more jobs and not just earn degrees and expect to be offered sinecures (Etounga-Manguelle, 2000; Lose & Cheteni, 2024; Padi et al., 2022). The African Development Bank's (AfDB's) assertion that many of the world's fastest-growing economies are in Africa south of the Sahara, but the economic gains achieved have failed to translate into development and poverty reduction (Kuada and Mangori, 2021) motivates the youth to explore other avenues. Furthermore, most of these countries promote the advancement of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) to reduce poverty, generate employment, and encourage national development (Robson, Haugh, and Obeng, 2009). The government of Ghana has embarked on some policies and programmes, including the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and the *YouStart*, to make the private sector the engine of growth of Ghana's economy to encourage entrepreneurship and train university graduates to establish micro and small-scale enterprises (GoG, 2022). The latter seeks to support nascent micro businesses and unemployed youth with micro-loans and starter-pack products. However, considering that such programmes have often been politicised and mismanaged, and more importantly, finding initial avenues for creating jobs, and sustaining them have often proved difficult, we concur with the above-named authors that the youth need to create employment for themselves and others, while governments create conducive environments for enterprise development. We posit that one such avenue for offsetting youth unemployment and caring for the aged is through occupational gifting.

Cultural values are worth exploring for entrepreneurial development. In the past, indigenous peoples' cultures and knowledge systems were misunderstood and dismissed by development planning experts, but Western development models have proved less effective for Africa's development (Ayittey, 2006, 2018; Chamlee-Wright, 1998; Dumett, 1983; Elrushdie, 2021; Idowu, 2021; Landes, 2000). Although none of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been designed exclusively for culture, the acknowledgment of the diverse nature of culture as a driving force behind sustainable development in the preamble of the SDGs, the numerous implicit references to culture, and the emphasis on the importance of active participation of individuals in their cultural lives, all position culture as a fundamental aspect of both human and sustainable development. Although none of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been designed exclusively for culture, the acknowledgment of the diverse nature of culture as a driving force behind sustainable development in the preamble of the SDGs, the numerous implicit references to culture, and the emphasis on the importance of active participation of individuals in their cultural lives, all position culture as a fundamental aspect of both human and

sustainable development. Furthermore, culture defines the goals and ethics of business entities, provides the criterion for selecting alternative resources and helps to organise financial and social capital for developing business enterprises (George and Zahra, 2002; Sackey, et al., 2013).

Drawing upon these arguments, this paper amplifies the position that individuals' personal or family ambitions and group solidarity contribute to economic development, especially in Ghana and many African societies, where the family is the most important social, political, economic, and religious organisation (Fortes, 1959; Wilson, 2016), and advocates the need to explore the values associated with family relations, particularly occupational gifting, for entrepreneurial development.

Filial piety, one of the dynamics associated with African family systems, is also upheld in other jurisdictions. Though, not a popular concept in business in the universal world, and not often documented for its roles in building business enterprises in Africa, it is an essential element of Confucianism and hence, Chinese culture draws on its strengths for developing business enterprises (Low and Ang, 2013). This paper maintains that the Fantse, and for that matter the Akan, uphold filial piety as a socio-religious value which influences general ways of life. Filial piety has the potential to increase employment among the youth in Ghana so that they can take good care of the aged. Considering the physical and religious bonds associated with it, and the fact that occupational gifting helps to provide the needs of the aged, there is enough justification that, occupational gifting has the potential to uphold the three core areas advanced by MIPAA – older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age, and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. Also, the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) sought to align healthy ageing with the SDGs by developing age-friendly environments and empowering older people to contribute their quota to society and maximise their well-being throughout life (Shevelkova, Mattocks and Lafortune, 2023). Therefore, exploring the potential of occupational gifting will suffice for socio-economic development and the achievement of the SDGs, especially, SDGs 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), and 16 (Inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

Two assertions are worth recalling for arguing that occupational gifting is one of the opportunities which the unemployed youth can tap into for their economic development, as well as provide better care for the aged. The first is the call by the UNECA (2007) to debunk the assumption that aged people are an economic burden with nothing to contribute to society, but accept that they have many small-scale businesses and are also endowed with indigenous business acumen. The second is that of Lashitew and van Tulder's (2017), that Africa's extensive socio-economic environments provide a great deal of business opportunities to achieve inclusive growth, but the challenge remains how to exploit its resources to achieve inclusive growth.

Though there are diverse Ghanaian and African cultures with many things in common, by using the Fantse for this study, we try to avoid the monolithic representation of the Ghanaian or African, since the ethnic groups in Ghana and Africa have diverse histories and cultures. In other words, it is less productive to think of the economic and entrepreneurial activities of these ethnic groups as monolithic so choosing the Fantse creates avenues for other authors to examine other ethnic groups to develop scholarship about the diverse cultural values of Africa. The Fantse is a subgroup of the Akan which is the major ethnic group in Ghana. The Akan constitute about 45.7% of Ghana's population (GSS, 2021). Many Ghanaians are non-native speakers of Akan (Agyekum, 2006). Though English is the official language, and the one used for formal business transactions, in the local markets in many cosmopolitan areas, Akan is used for trading (Wilson, 2024). Therefore, the use of aspects of the Fantse, and for that matter, the Akan can provide avenues for examining other groups.

Literature Review

For the review, we examined themes such as how filial piety, wealth creation and occupational gifting inform the socialisation processes and entrepreneurial development and the theoretical framework. We also examined indigenous Fantse values associated with the socialisation of children and how these lead to the development of business acumen among the children before they become adults. We supported the themes with the Das et al. (2018) model to amplify the need for upholding and developing family businesses for employment and care for the aged.

Filial Piety as a Value

The principles of filial piety framed in the Fantse maxim, *nyea w'ahwe wo ma wose efifir no, wo nso hwe no ma nese ntutu* (Lit: take care of the one who took care of you to develop your teeth so that he or she also loses his or hers), make parents socialise their sons and daughters to be responsible adults in the future. The Fantse believe that this is a divine directive with blessings. Also, they believe that the aged are closer to the ancestors so they fear the repercussions from ancestors on anyone who fails to take care of the aged. The vulnerability of children and the aged makes the maxim a moral issue which commits parents and their offspring to a symbiotic relationship associated with care for the younger generation and the aged. These make filial piety not negotiable on either side. It binds the two parties into reciprocal rights and obligations where every right goes with a corresponding responsibility towards the other person. Thus, society ridicules parents and sons or daughters who fail to provide such parental or filial care.

Socialisation and Development of Entrepreneurial Skills

Conscious efforts are made to socialise boys and girls to perform house chores participate in income-generating activities of households and develop entrepreneurial skills. They begin to acquire entrepreneurial skills by running errands to buy basic necessities and hawking (Ephirim-Donkor, 2021). At times, they are sent to deliver goods and services or collect debts on behalf of their parents. They are expected to know how much change should be given for their sales and purchases. The learning objective here is to inculcate interpersonal relations and help them to acquire numeric and money management skills which are basic requirements for managing households (see Twum-Danso, 2009). It also aims at preparing them for a vocation and/or taking over their parents' businesses in the future. However, in recent times, many consider these values as inimical to children's education, because the times the children use for these rounds are those expected to be used for doing their class assignments and/or playing.

Like the other Akan, the Fantse extol values of hard work, wealth creation and ownership of resources (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974, Wilson, 2024). One can create wealth through one's personal or collective effort with family and community members. They believe that "good wealth" goes with success. Success is a gift of blessing which a person receives from his or her ancestors and other divinities for his or her good deeds of caring and sharing. For this reason, wealth and success are measured by one's ability to help members of his or her family and the entire community (Ayithey, 2006). The Fantse eschew selfishness, especially when one creates wealth by exploiting others or making conscious efforts to prevent others from participating in economic activities. One is likely to resist any such attempt because of the fear that such deprivation may extend to his or her dependents and prevent them from surviving and upholding the principles of filial piety.

Everyone has the right to establish businesses, acquire wealth, and pass them on to anyone of his or her choice. This right and the knowledge that white-collar jobs for the youth and formal social welfare system for the aged are not readily available compels people to make financial and social provisions for their old age (Apt and Katila, 1994; Botchwey, 2022; Braimah & Rosenberg, 2021; Ofori-Abebrese et al. 2017; Ofori-Dua, 2023), making occupational gifting necessary for their social security.

Occupational Gifting, Family Business and Social Security

Occupational gifting is an indigenous knowledge base associated with family business and economics which emanates from filial piety. In a bid to guarantee a stable means of income, financial security, and economic and social well-being in old age, ageing parents often 'gift' their thriving businesses and transfer the experience garnered over their active years, to their sons and daughters and/or other younger relatives to guarantee their social security (Apt, Koomson, Williams, and Grieco, 1995). In return, the recipients of the gift are obliged to ensure the sustainability and longevity of the business. As a trans-generational entrepreneurial culture among Ghanaians and many African societies, it helps to develop mutual benefits between the aged and the youth. Subsequently, it reduces the rates of unemployment and poverty among the aged.

The symbiotic relations associated with occupational gifting enable the aged to link their young dependents to the economy to make the latter self-sufficient, while the aged participate in the economy, though, not in an active capacity. It leads to inter-generational transfer of wealth and helps society to address issues of gender and ageing. Consequently, women (often considered as marginalised), get the opportunity to develop. Therefore, the potential of occupational gifting can be explored to develop the informal sector of Ghana's economy, and other socio-economic domains to help achieve some SDGs.

Many ageing people are apprehensive that their businesses will collapse in their old age, and prevent them from enjoying their old age because their sons and daughters are not ready to take over their businesses (Boateng, 2019). They contend that if their offspring take over their occupations, the offspring will not migrate. They consider this as an opportunity to enjoy care. The youth do not like gifted occupations because the occupations are often small-scale enterprises in the informal sector of the economy, and are also apprehensive about their dignity. In the past, the sector hardly came under the purview of organised economic activities and was often underestimated in national accounts (Aryeetey, 2015; Todaro and Smith, 2009), but now that many countries in Africa advocate the development of such enterprises for generating employment and reducing poverty, the youth are likely to accept the challenge and go into it. Aryeetey attributes the vibrant nature of the sector to many indigenous social and economic institutions, such as the family, which provides the needed business acumen for developing social capital.

Theoretical Framework and its Application

Generally, capital formation follows the concept below in Figure 1. High levels of income lead to high levels of consumption, savings, capital and investments, all other things being equal.

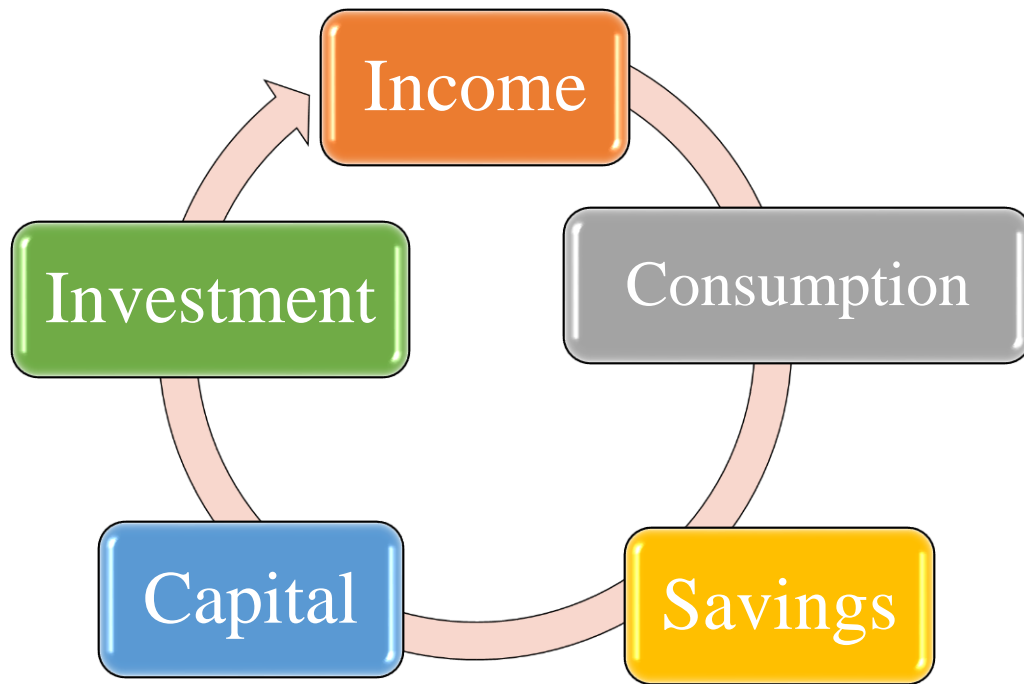


Fig. 1: The processes of capital formation and investments
 Source: Authors derived this as summaries from their readings.

However, income levels in Ghana are low (GoG, 2022). This, coupled with low consumption, leads to low savings, low capital flows and subsequently, low investment – one of the problems associated with entrepreneurial development. Consequently, low incomes and consumptions reduce the levels of profits made by entrepreneurs, lower their savings and capital, and subsequently, investments, all other things being equal.

The Das, et al (2018) model, on capital formation and accumulation, suffices for addressing our arguments since this paper assesses the individual and collective modes of capital accumulation for enterprise development in Fantse family systems. The main argument of the proponents is that an economy’s saving rate is influenced by the income levels of individuals within the household and government policies. They noted that the rate of saving is derived from the utility-maximising-behaviour of the individuals in the households. The individual’s propensity to save and accumulate capital is influenced by his or her thoughts about the safety nets that he or she must create towards his or her old age. Consequently, they argued that individual members of a household live for two periods of life – the youth and working, and the aged and retired. The youth consider savings as a resource for investment at present and consumption during their retirement, while the retirees feel

that to sustain their lifetime savings, it is prudent to give it out as capital for the youth in their families to ensure their current consumption. Therefore, the model shows that capital formation is not just economic but also social.

Das et al (2018) maintained that governments' fiscal and monetary policies influence income, saving, the accumulation of capital, and enterprise development. In the case of Ghana, the government is the major employer in the formal sector. Also, government policies enhance a conducive business environment that promotes "productive" entrepreneurship, through policies and regulations that ease the establishment of new ventures and support for entrepreneurs (Abebe, Getachew and Kimakwa, 2022). Many individuals rely on such interventions, including LEAP and *YouStart* to develop their enterprises. On the other hand, where the policies are cumbersome, they impede enterprise development.

The Das et al (2018) model shows the relevance of culture to financial and social capital formation, and hence, enterprise and socio-economic development. It draws on an individual's propensity to consume, save, and raise capital for investment, and his or her strong familial values based on filial piety. Drawing upon the symbiotic gains between the aged and the young in addressing savings and accumulation of capital among members of households, presented by the model, and submissions by authors such as Ayittey (2006; 2018), Landes (2000) and Harrison (2000) on the role of culture in capital formation, we present how indigenous Fantse culture uses the concept of filial piety to explain the benefits that develop as a parent and his or her sons and daughters rally round each other by pooling ideas and resources together to raise capital and develop enterprises to sustain their communal welfare. We examine the model in line with indigenous Fantse values in developing small-scale business enterprises.

Methods

This paper developed out of three ethnographic research works on the social and economic systems of the Fantse, which were carried out in 2011, 2019 and 2023. The one on the social systems, specifically, on the family systems and inheritance, which was carried out in Dago, Kormantse, Mankessim, Baafikrom and Cape Coast, in the Central Region of Ghana found that mothers often passed on their wealth and estates to their daughters (Wilson. 2011). The study also identified filial piety as a social value, thus making occupational gifting a potential for addressing care for the aged. Consequently, we sought to examine the possibility of upholding the practice for effective mobilisation of capital and developing business enterprises. These ideas influenced the second and third, carried out in the Mankessim and Abura (a suburb of Cape Coast) markets which delved into the affairs of traders in informal family businesses and how they passed their lifetime wealth to their daughters and other close relatives within their matrilineages.

The research method used for all the studies was qualitative, particularly, ethnography, where participant observation, interviews and participant listening were used to collect the data. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select respondents for the interviews. For the studies on the indigenous markets (leading to this paper), we started by examining the life histories of some traders and carefully selected those whose market stalls were gifted to them and those who intended to pass their stalls onto their sons and/or daughters to capture their experiences of trading and involvement in family economies.

The research question that guided the production of this paper was, "What will you do to ensure that your sons and daughters take good care of you in your old age?" We employed snowballing to recruit more women, especially those who were not very active in trading but had not gifted their trade and were monitoring their trading outlets from the fringes. We had targeted 15 participants each from both the Abura and Mankessim Markets. However, after 12 and 10 interviews respectively, and coding the responses based on thematic areas, we noticed that the responses were becoming saturated, as no new information was emerging, thus making every additional interview almost superfluous.

In organizing the data, we listened to the recordings several times and compared them with the notes taken. We identified the salient ideas, including the patterns and relationships of the flow of ideas and grouped them into themes. We validated the results by checking the accuracy and ensuring that they represent reality. For reliability, we examined the consistency of the data through follow-up interviews with a few of those who had been interviewed to confirm the themes that developed out of the earlier interviews. The data were supported with other social and economic anthropology materials, and analysed to bring out the rationale and processes of gifting occupations and articulating the ideas for developing entrepreneurial skills and enterprises, and subsequently, support for the aged.

Results and Discussions

The presentation of results is based on the social and economic support mechanisms of occupational gifting and entrepreneurial development. We intersperse the primary data with the secondary data to inform ideas about occupational gifting, entrepreneurial development, social security and the attainment of the SDGs. The section is presented under sub-headings including, socialisation, filial piety and capital formation; occupational gifting and the SDGs; and the challenges of occupational gifting.

Socialisation, Filial Piety and Capital Formation

The process of socialisation among the Fantse inculcates the development of entrepreneurial skills but capital formation is often hampered by low levels of income and savings and lack of credit facilities from financial institutions. As boys and girls participate in trading, they may develop an interest in it. If they choose to trade, their parents replenish their wares for them and when they are of age the stock and accumulated savings serve as their initial capital. The money they save out of their profits encourages them to accumulate more capital for themselves and upgrade their businesses in the future. Upon attainment of adulthood, their parents provide them with additional capital. If a woman marries, her husband is expected to contribute money and other resources to add up to her capital.

As noted earlier, when parents gift their occupations to their sons and daughters in their old age, they increase the latter's capital while they enjoy their old age. These make the young adults grow with the means to take very good care of themselves, their parents, and by extension, other members of their families and communities (Khayesi, George and Antonakis, 2014). The youths provide the aged with financial and social support, including the provision of capital for their door-step enterprises while the aged help with childcare to support the youth (Apt et al, 1995). These make the aged relatively active, and get the companionship they need as they interact with their customers and their grandchildren. They show the two periods associated with the Das et al (2018) model – that for the youth and that for the aged.

The lack of credit facilities from the formal banking sector and the constraints in raising capital make many entrepreneurs often rely on family and friends for capital (Anyidoho and Steel, 2015; Robson, Haugh and Obeng, 2009). The two major indigenous sources of capital are the “family pot” and “*susu*” (Ayittey, 2018). The family pot is a common pool into which every member of a family contributes money according to his or her means, to help develop family assets and raise capital. A member can borrow from it and pay it back later. Nobody coerces a borrower to repay, but failure to do so prevents him or her from accessing credit from it again. *Susu* is a mutual self-help saving scheme where each member of the group contributes a specified amount of money, at regular intervals. The group gives the lump sum collected for each period to a member to use. The process continues until every member receives his or her share to complete one *susu* cycle.

The origins of the family pot and *susu* schemes from indigenous social and economic systems and attempts by private individuals and government agencies to formalise them enhance their viability. While the family pot upholds the sovereignty of the indigenous family, the *susu* system upholds that of solidary groups, such as age sets and guilds. These make social organisations acquiescent to wealth creation and capital formation. The family pot develops from the concept of filial piety as parents groom their sons and daughters to unite and take up after them. The parents assist them in raising capital and developing enterprises to become responsible to themselves and others in the family and community. The siblings may pool their resources together to help their parents and also assist one another to meet their financial needs and accumulate more capital for developing enterprises. However, without a sense of unity, this may not materialise.

The *Susu* scheme also emanated from the indigenous Akan *nnoboa* system [a cooperative self-help system among farmers where members provided labour for one another on a rotational basis (Amoah-Mensah, 2021)]. It is a communal value associated with agriculture, which is the mainstay of the indigenous economy. This scheme, coupled with its development from an informal to a semi-formal microfinance scheme (Jennische, 2018), has developed into many formal ones, known as micro-credit schemes and become more viable. Microfinance schemes have also developed into credit unions in churches and workplaces as many people pool their resources together and can borrow from them. Though this has the potential of reducing family bonding, many families have also become stronger through formalisation, as they encourage their members to join microfinance schemes and credit unions. When a member needs substantial capital, which he cannot obtain from the schemes, the family members may borrow in their individual capacities from the schemes and give the lump sum to the one in need. It is also gratifying to note that government policies have set a minimum capital base for the institutions and thus made them formal.

Though the capital accumulated from both the family pot and *Susu* systems may not be substantial, the viability of the schemes is underpinned by the indigenous Fantse values associated with filial piety and communalism. Members of the group believe that their common pool ensures their individual survival and continuous existence, so its operation is driven by the need to maintain the integrity of the group. This belief motivates many to contribute to the efforts at maintaining the status quo of lineages, clans, and other social organisations. In the event of the death of any member, the groups ensure that his or her business survives even if it is gifted to or inherited by other persons. Consequently, beneficiaries of occupational gifting continue to contribute to the schemes to support investments and make them more viable and sustainable. Such schemes provide the needed security for acquiring loans in the formal banking systems. Thus, the social dimensions enhance the need to explore them.

Capital formation is not all about money but also the interpersonal relations for developing social and emotional attachments (Granovetter, 1985). Key among them is through occupational gifting as outlined above. In addition, communal values create social networks for regular stock of goods and services on credit and access to other resources for their business enterprises (Abebe et al, 2022; Clark, 1994). The networks shape the collective mindsets of people for their individual and collective economic and social engagements (Kuada and Mangori, 2021). A major social network in Ghana is the market-based commodity associations. Even though these associations are believed to create artificial shortages, on the other hand, their members learn about the base of supplies, price changes and bargaining skills from one another. (Scheiterle and Birner, 2020). As the producers and suppliers develop loyalty to one another and the guilds and associations, they help to manage the supply chain and boost business enterprises. Thus, the modes of social capital formation outlined here are in sync with the Das et al (2018) model as they spell out the roles of the individual, family, community and government, with filial piety, being a major component.

Occupational Gifting and the SDGs

It is observable that older people are included in the framework of the SDGs either directly or implicitly. As occupational gifting is explored to develop entrepreneurship, it also helps achieve the afore-mentioned SDGs, so it is worth exploring its potential. By gifting their occupations and giving out their lifetime savings to the youth to raise capital, older persons participate in the economy and thus help to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, to achieve SDG 8. Viewing older people as a group that has something to offer helps to avoid the violence and discrimination that people perpetrate against them. By participating in the economy, the aged lead healthy lives as spelt out in SDG 3. All these, help to end loneliness and poverty among the aged.

Occupational gifting makes more women independent, and socio-economically powerful, and this provides avenues for achieving SDGs 2 and 5. Occupational gifting is common among female traders (Apt and Katila, 1994; Apt et al, 1995). Many small-scale enterprises are in the informal sector of the economy, and a majority of those who are employed and control the sector are women (Akintoye, 2006; Baah-Enum and Adom-Asamoah, 2012; Jennische, 2018). Furthermore, the socialisation of girls makes women show a stronger commitment to trading than men. Indigenous family values make women preserve fish and add value to it before marketing them. In farming communities, women often do the harvesting and distribution of produce. Once women are involved in these, they socialise girls to take over from them.

At times, the spaces that older women obtain in the markets are sublet to other members of the community (Jennische, 2018). The spaces help to create social relations. Being a renowned trader exudes power and makes many women popular. The acquisition of market spaces, and subsequently gifting them to their daughters, promote entrepreneurship, as the gift allows daughters of aged women to replenish the small doorstep trading posts of the aged with goods while the aged women perform child-care services for their daughters (Apt, Koomson, Williams, & Grieco, 1995). Through these, aged people become active as they are not considered to be feeble as ageing is associated with, but participate in business enterprises even when they have gifted their occupation. Thus, the aged have more to offer and are not a liability to society.

The matrilineal descent system of the Fantse makes occupational gifting more common and acceptable among women than men because as mothers gift their occupations to their daughters, and the daughters also pass them on, they retain the property among their descendants and thus transform them into lineage property (Ayittey, 2006; Wilson, 2011). Thus, many businesses, especially, those in the informal sector are retained in the lineage, and this is a value upheld among the matrilineage for ensuring the development of lineages as corporate entities. Though this may sound discriminatory to men, the Fantse accept it as the norm and thus makes

it a recipe for affirmative action. Therefore, occupational gifting among the Fantse, conceived in matrilineality, diminishes the level of poverty among women and ensures affirmative action for gender mainstreaming, as spelt out in SDGs 2 and 5.

Occupational gifting provides a solid base for most thriving family businesses, enhances family bonding, and growth and expansion of family businesses. The beneficiary maintains an inter-generational source of wealth and meets his or her personal needs as well as those of his or her aged parents and other relatives. It connects the youth to the networks of a parent, and eventually, other community networks. As a reciprocal gesture, the young consult the elderly person for monetary support, pieces of advice and direction, while the elderly are included in economic production and social participation (Apt, 1992). Through occupational gifting, the aged get their supplies of basic necessities of life for their continuous survival. These ensure that ageing traders have the needed social and economic support (Apt et al, 1995), and the resources to facilitate their proper integration into their households, lineages and communities.

Occupational gifting helps to address issues associated with the achievement of the SDGs. In line with the 2030 Agenda, it seeks to include both the youth and the aged in global commitments to end poverty and assure them of healthy lives. The youth get employed and prepare towards healthy ageing. These empower them to contribute to the social security of the aged and development of society. The aged can improve upon their incomes and enjoy healthy and quality lifestyles, thereby making their voices heard and freeing them from discrimination and abuse. All these maximise people's well-being throughout their lives and promote healthy ageing. The participation of women in social and economic life fosters inclusion and engenders gender mainstreaming. These lead to sustainable social and economic development.

Challenges of Occupational Gifting

Despite the advantages associated with occupational gifting, it has several challenges that should be addressed. As noted earlier, the fact that many of the gifted occupations are small-scale businesses makes them less attractive to the many unemployed youth. There are other challenges associated with the family system and entrepreneurship.

The indigenous African family system has some challenges for the effective development of entrepreneurship. Negative family dynamics, including lack of unity leading to quarrels among siblings, between parents and their siblings, and between parents' siblings and other relatives serve as disincentives to the development of enterprises. Quarrels associated with claims of rights to the ownership of family resources and those governing rules of succession and inheritance discourage the youth from taking up occupations which are gifted to them. For example, issues associated with rules of succession and inheritance lead to quarrels among siblings and do not enhance the acceptance of gifted occupations. Also, there are situations where some siblings do not want to contribute to the running of gifted businesses or ones inherited by siblings but would want to enjoy the profits that accrue. Again, once family members who borrowed from the family pot are not coerced into paying back it leads to financial indiscipline, and eventually, the collapse of the scheme. This impoverishes the family and also prevents the attainment of SDG 2. These notwithstanding, there is also no gainsaying that selfishness may override these values.

Using individual profits for the social and financial needs of family members does not enable entrepreneurs to accumulate more capital for investments (Khayesi, George and Antonakis, 2014). Also, unplanned costs from family crises can cause businesses to fail (Clark, 2010). Furthermore, the involvement of family members in the management of firms confers obligations on entrepreneurs to employ the members, irrespective of their knowledge, skills, and capabilities. At times, the near impossibility of firing a recalcitrant worker who is a family member results in financial indiscipline. With these, entrepreneurs have to make difficult choices about whether they should spend their meagre resources on running their businesses or take care of other people including the aged in their lineages and communities and also whether to involve family members in their businesses. These notwithstanding, family ownership provides avenues for maintaining a crop of human resources who maintain positive cultural discipline and accept lower wages. It helps to reduce the cost of production, increases the profit margins of entrepreneurs and increases capital for the development of enterprises, all other things being equal.

Many people argue that the communal system brings about a high level of dependency, and this does not enhance the development of enterprises. This holds where there is overindulgence and misapplication of the communal systems that bring about over-dependence. Among the Fantse, the true sense of dependency associated with communalism is framed in symbiotic relationships where everyone is supposed to contribute to

the welfare of his or her family and community and also draw from the collective enterprise according to a social arrangement framed in equity (Hagan, 1993; Wilson, 2024). Though communal values have the potential to increase the cost of keeping and maintaining capital and reducing the available resources, they also enhance good human relations and social capital (Khayesi and George, 2011; Robson, Haugh and Obeng, 2009).

Western Education, migration and other factors of social change do not support the effective transfer of indigenous knowledge to the younger ones for effective gifting of occupation. For example, the younger ones do not have the indigenous business acumen underlain by the survival of the members of a community. Rather, they are used to perfect competition which is associated with the capitalist system of economics and the development of enterprises that they have studied in school.

The modernisation of gifted businesses is problematic. After going through some of the problems associated with family issues, government policies, including long procedures for registering businesses, unfavourable rules about licensing and many more hurdles have to be cleared. Furthermore, fiscal policies such as taxation, do not enhance private ownership of businesses (Onwumere & Egbo, 2008), and hence, occupational gifting. They hinder the effective development of enterprises. However, new enterprises also have to honour their obligations to the government as these are also very necessary for them to obtain loans from the banks and also for the holistic development of the economy. There is no gainsaying that the government relies on them to provide public goods, part of which is used to support the youth and the aged.

Conclusion

This paper has been examining the viability of occupational gifting as a means of developing entrepreneurship, to offset youth unemployment and take good care of the growing ageing population. It has established that the aged are not an economic burden, but have a lot to contribute to society as they have many small-scale businesses and are also endowed with indigenous business acumen. It argued that occupational gifting is an indigenous way of developing business enterprises for youth employment and ensuring that the aged get the needed care and that it should be considered for entrepreneurial development in Ghana to minimise youth unemployment and ensure that the aged are taken very good care of. The informal sector, within which many of the gifted occupations fall, has gained considerable attention and recognition in Ghana, and it contributes immensely to national development. Therefore, it is worthy to encourage occupational gifting and make efforts to improve upon it to make it more viable to solve the problem of unemployment among the youth and provide social security for the aged.

The arguments are based on the indigenous Fantse values that wealth-creation and success are moral issues which indicate that everyone, especially the wealthy, should assist the underprivileged in society, including the aged, and the principles of filial piety that parents should take care of their children and, in return, the children should also take care of their parents. Considering that family members pool their resources together to support individual members, amid the inaccessibility of formal credit schemes, occupational gifting, if explored properly, will help to offset the challenges of lack of capital for the businesses of the youth. Furthermore, the need for the aged to ensure that their sons and daughters take good care of them influences them to save while they are economically active and offer their life-time savings and occupation in their old age to support the youth. These notwithstanding, family values have the potential to develop a parasitic type of dependency instead of the symbiotic type where members contribute their quotas for overall development. In that case, some members make efforts to take over the businesses of aged and deceased family members when they do not deserve it or have the business acumen to maintain it. These may end up collapsing such businesses, an upfront to occupational gifting. The authors contend that despite these shortfalls, the benefits of occupational gifting can be explored in Ghana to help the youth accumulate capital from informal sources, to develop enterprises.

Recommendations

Newly gifted enterprises need capital for revamping. Despite the positive contributions of social capital, there is the need to go beyond overemphasising the positive attributes of the roles of occupational gifting in addressing social capital and present a balanced analysis of both its risks and benefits. One should not be oblivious to the problems associated with the management of family businesses, and more importantly, factors that militate against occupational gifting should be considered on a case-by-case basis to address the particular problems associated with each of them.

Government policies and those of the banks should consider the role of culture in taking care of the aged in society. Enterprises, advanced through occupational gifting, should be considered for tax rebates while the banks consider the cultural capital of entrepreneurs for an offer of credit. Policy-makers should consider developing special training programs by focusing on how to incorporate aspects of culture in entrepreneurial development. The training should be done in line with the communal principle where everyone must contribute to the general welfare of a group to benefit from that group, instead of those that make people obtain capital simply because it is from a common pool which they have not contributed to and are likely not to be accountable if they fail to pay back.

With occupational gifting, the banks should consider the viability of customers' knowledge of the socio-cultural concerns and networks which they can dwell on and how best to use these for the growth of their businesses. Entrepreneurs need to find out what each needs to get access to credit facilities so that they will be able to take good care of their businesses as well as the aged in the community.

While considering the viability of occupational gifting, those factors that make it unattractive should also be identified and reviewed for effective use of the knowledge base for social and economic development, and subsequently, improved care for the aged in Ghana

Also, there is the need for other authors to consider replicating some of these Fantse values to guide them to examine their plausibility for other social and cultural groups to develop scholarship about indigenous knowledge of Africa on entrepreneurship that can be shared for economic growth and development.

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