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Franchise Growth as Strategy for Employment Creation in the Fast Food Sector: The Case for Windhoek

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Abstract

The primary aim of this research was to investigate if franchise growth can be applied as a strategy for employment generation in Windhoek. The researchers wanted to ascertain if there is growth in the fast food franchise sector in Windhoek and also if the franchises are creating employment. The research mainly solicited for the views of the residents of Windhoek. The main reason why the research only covered Windhoek is that the cost related to carrying out this type of research are very high if it covers a large area. The main weakness of this research is that it only concentrated on the capital city (Windhoek) and can, therefore, not be generalised for the entire country. Questionnaires were used as the primary instrument for data collection in this inquiry. The data collected was analysed using the Statistical Program for Social Scientists (SPSS). The article contributes to the literature on franchising as a strategy for generating employment in Namibia given the fact that it is one of the very few researches on the same topic ever done on Namibia. The inquiry showed that the food franchise sector is seen by the respondents as a viable means of executing business in Windhoek. The other significant finding is that franchising has been growing and generating employment in Windhoek. In addition, the other significant finding of the research is that the respondents strongly felt that franchises need to be incentivised so that they can grow further, and create more employment in Windhoek. The incentives that may be used include tax exemptions, government guaranteed loan schemes, export processing zones incentives and favourable municipal bylaws.

Keywords: franchise, franchisee, franchisor, growth, employment, Windhoek, Namibia.

INTRODUCTION

Olotu & Awoseila (2011) defined franchising as an agreement between organizations where a producer of product or service grant rights to independent business men to conduct business in a specified way, designated place and at a certain period of time. It is a very specific method or way of distributing goods and services. In addition, Peretiatko, Humeniuk, D'Souza, and Gilmor,(2009) also defined franchising as a business relationship based on contract law in which a franchise business, the franchisor, grants a franchisee the right to use its trademarks and proprietary information in exchange for royalties. Instead, it is a business context or a licensing and contractual relationship between two parties, both of whom are private. Despite the growing interest in franchising locally and the world over, little research has been done in Namibia to address issues such as perception of benefits, survival rates and employment creation. Franchising has become more and more popular as a strategy for development in different countries including Namibia. The purpose of the study is to examine the reasons for running franchise businesses as opposed to other forms of ownership in the hospitality fast food sector. This research gathered information which was used to determine whether franchising contributes to employment creation and the economic growth in Windhoek. Rondan-Cataluña, Navarro-Garcia, Diez-De Castro, & Rodriguez-Rad (2012) and Eser (2012) argue that franchising provides opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to gain knowledge and experience. Rondan-Cataluña *et al.* (2012) and Chinyoka (2008) discussed country characteristics that are most likely to influence the spread of franchising across borders. They went on to argue that franchises flourish in countries that are politically stable, urbanized, with strong economic growth rates and a bigger middle class with significant disposable income. At national level, franchising can also be used as one of the instruments that assist towards the achievement of national goals like National Development Plan 4 (NDP4) and Vision 2030 which both highlight employment creation as one of the key goals of the nation (Sivakumar & Schoormans, 2011).

The entities listed below are some of the categories of franchises that are found in Windhoek from which data for this research were collected:

- Barbeque franchises
- Fast food franchises
- Sea food franchises
- Ice-cream franchises

- Pizza franchises
- Fried Chicken franchises
- Burger franchises
- Deli franchises and drive through franchises

Some examples of popular fast food franchises that already established in Windhoek include Debonair, Chicken City, The Hungry Lion, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Milky Lane, Nandos, Steers etc (Bailey, 2011).

The main purpose of the current research is to determine if franchising can be used as a strategy for employment generation in Windhoek. This research is especially important because it tests if franchising growth can be used as a strategy for employment generation in Windhoek. If franchising grows it follows that jobs may be created, and government revenue (through taxes) may be boosted, and this naturally feeds into the growth and development of the economy. This study is also crucial in that it tries to find out how the franchisee benefits from operating a franchise instead of starting other types of business. In addition, the study is also essential to the fast food franchises as it demonstrates if the franchisees benefit from the franchise type of business. The benefits the franchisees may enjoy include the lucrative profits, goodwill from utilising a well-established name, the knowledge that may be imparted to them by the franchisors among others. Such knowledge is critical to the franchisees in situations where they may want to start a new franchise in future. In addition, starting an entirely new business whose name is not in any way associated with success may be a rather daunting task for the entrepreneur as the prospective customers may not have faith in a business which has no track record. Given the above rationale the objectives of this research are:

- ❖ To determine if there is growth in fast food franchises in Windhoek,
- ❖ To test if franchising gives advantages to the franchisee,
- ❖ To determine the effectiveness of franchising as a strategy for employment creation, and,
- ❖ To discuss the policy implications of the findings of this study.

The next section of the paper discusses the literature review. The third section of the article briefly discusses the methodology used in the article. The fourth section of the article gives the analysis and discussion of results and the fifth and last section discusses the conclusion and recommendations derived from the inquiry..

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

Franchising is traced back to the middle ages when the Catholic Church granted franchises to tax collectors (Pizam, 2010). They would receive a percentage of revenue and handed over what remained to the Pope. Pizam (2010) also mentioned that the largest expansion of franchising occurred in the late 1940's at the end of World War II when many veterans returned home desiring to open their own businesses. In the 1950's, leading fast food chains like Burger King, MacDonald's and Dunkin Donuts began to appear. He also mentioned that, from the 1960's onward, the American fast food chains began their expansion drive into international markets. Steers first franchised in Namibia in 1997 while the Milky Lane was established in 2011.

Olotu and Awoseila (2011) carried out a study that examined the importance of franchising in developing economies. Their study focused on the Nigerian fast food sector. They used survey techniques to gather the relevant information for their study. Olotu and Awoseila (2011)'s established that franchising resulted in satisfactory results, in terms of profits, job creation and revenue generation. They claim that franchising is seen as the key strategy multinationals adopt to promote and expand their trade in other untapped markets. This cuts across different sectors including the fast food sector which is the study area focused on in this article.

Chinyoka (2008) conducted a study on franchising as an alternative strategy for developing enterprises in Botswana. His study listed a number of strategies that the Botswana government had tried in order to diversify their economy. He suggested that Botswana can solve her problem of lack of sufficient enterprises by promoting franchising. Chinyoka uses the interview technique to determine whether existing franchisees in Botswana have low levels of entrepreneurial skills. The findings proved that franchisees have low skill levels compared to non-franchised entrepreneurs. Secondly, he also proved that franchisees in Botswana operate as employee-managers. His results also show that franchisees perform better than non-franchised entrepreneurs, even though they have low entrepreneurial skill levels. Chinyoka also found that while non-franchised entrepreneurs are rated higher than franchisees in Botswana, the franchises perform better than other types of businesses.

Makgosa, Iyanda, and Phambuka-Nsimbi (2013) investigated the retail business sector structure in Botswana emphasising its potential in strengthening small business expertise and knowledge. This study used a descriptive study design to collect data from 227 managers in the food, clothing and furniture retail sectors. Their findings demonstrated that Botswana's real sector has many small stores, and also that the food and furniture stores are comparatively larger than clothing stores. In addition, their results show that the retail sector contributes to the development of entrepreneurs in Botswana through informal staff training, advisory support to local suppliers and employment opportunities at decision making levels. The study also established that retailing significantly contributes to Botswana's economic activities through income and employment generation.

de Resende Melo, Andreassi, Oliveira Juniour, and Borini (2013) focused their attention on analysing the four aspects defined as drivers of innovation in franchise companies. These were listed as the professionalization of the franchisor, the management of relationships with franchisees, the performance of franchisees with entrepreneurial profiles and the role of knowledge management. They used several case studies involving significant franchising food chains in Brazil. They found that franchising grew in Brazil and also created many jobs. These researchers also highlighted that the performance of franchisees especially local entrepreneurs is particularly crucial to franchising success.

Hsu (2013) focused his research on finding hierarchical levels of the critical success factors and the relative importance of analytical hierarchy process. A questionnaire survey was used to obtain results. The study found out that due to the economic downturn that resulted in high unemployment many people found themselves without jobs, so they invested in catering franchises since franchising presents a lower investment capital and restrictions. They also found that franchising does not require high educational background and training. His findings also reveal that service quality is regarded as a priority for the success of the franchise, while the location of the franchise and product characteristics are also critical success factors.

Nijmeijer, Fabbricotti, and Huijsman (2013) carried out a study whose purpose was to find out how franchising works. They reviewed 126 empirical journal articles which showed that the outcomes of franchising are determined by the following key factors: ownership structure, contract design, business format design, behaviour of the franchisor and the franchisee and their interactions. This study concluded that to produce better results both the franchisor and the franchisee should work on a recognisable brand name and also have a strong working relationship.

Grewal, Iyer, Javalgi, and Radulovich (2011) provided insights into the organisational structure of franchising regarding the key factors that enable international franchise development and performance. They advanced the argument that a franchise relationship is essentially an entrepreneurial partnership and that this partnership influences the rate, scale and scope of franchise expansion into international markets. The research showed that there has been a tremendous growth in franchising, especially in retail and fast food service sectors in many countries. They claimed that the franchise system can be a rational economic option as compared to other organisational forms. Emerson (2010) suggests that franchising can serve both large and small businesses. He claims that operating a franchise enables small retail outlets to compete with large distribution firms. He also added that franchising helps new competitors to enter the market and thus increase inter-brand competition. Emerson (2010) also found that owning a franchise significantly reduces the risks associated with building a business from scratch because the franchisee usually gets help from the franchisor.

Barnes (2012) analysed the franchising boom in Latin America. His study established that strong economic growth and the expansion of the middle class resulted in more people turning to franchising as a way to tap rising customer demand. This was because franchise types of businesses are simple and cheap to start. The next section of the study focuses on the methodology used in the current research.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research is quantitative, and the questionnaires were used to collect data. This methodology was mainly derived from the research by Chinyoka (2008) and Olotu & Awoseila (2011). The data collected was analysed using the Statistical Program for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 21. The target population for this research was comprised of all the fast food franchises in Windhoek. The study intended to target the managers and supervisors of the sampled franchises in this population. The sample used in this study was selected through the simple random sampling technique. The sample size chosen for the current research was 40, and this was made up of the following franchise food restaurants: Kentucky Fried Chicken, Chicken City, Wimpy, Debonair, Milky lane and STEERS among others. In addition, the fast food franchises that were included in the sample incorporate the chicken and chips restaurants, the Pizza restaurants, ice cream shops, steaks and burger restaurants. Before the questionnaire was used to collect data, a pilot survey was conducted to determine whether the questions in the questionnaire were good or not. The initial questionnaire was given to five people to complete, and this helped to reveal the questions that were vague and difficult to comprehend and answer. The people who participated in the pilot survey were not included in the actual survey because, including them, would have introduced some bias in their responses since they had seen the questions previously, and had time to ponder over the questions and develop some preconceptions. Thus, only people who had not previously seen the questionnaire participated in the final survey.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The data collected is useful in meeting the objectives of the research. In this section the results are presented using bar graphs. To collect data for the research, 40 questionnaires were distributed to franchises in the fast-food sector of Windhoek. In addition, data for the article were obtained from franchises operating within Windhoek CBD, Maerua Mall, Khomasdal Mall, Katutura among others. A total of 39 out of 40 respondents completed the questionnaires and returned them. This represents 97.5% of the respondents, which is large enough for the purposes of this study. Some of the questions were not answered, and these were captured and analysed in SPSS as missing responses.

Table 1 below represents the ages of the respondents. They show that 7.7 percent of the respondents are aged between ten and twenty years, 59 percent are aged between twenty one and thirty years, 28.2 percent are aged between thirty-one, and forty years and 5.1 percent are aged between forty one and sixty years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are young people in the age group twenty one to thirty years.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	10-20 years	3	7.7	7.7
	21-30 years	23	59.0	59.0
	31-40 years	11	28.2	28.2
	41-60 years	2	5.1	5.1
	Total	39	100.0	100.0

The qualifications of the respondents are represented by Figure 2. All the 39 questionnaires were completed, and there were no missing responses. The results show that 42.2 percent of the respondents had Grade12 as their highest qualification followed by 30.8 percent who had certificates. Those who had diplomas, degrees and higher degrees were 12.8 percent, 7.7 percent and 2.6 percent respectively. The results show that the majority of the respondents hold either a Grade 12 qualification or a certificate which means that they are not highly qualified.

Table 1: Qualification of respondent

Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Grade 12	18	46.2	46.2
Certificate	12	30.8	30.8
Diploma	5	12.8	12.8
Degree	3	7.7	7.7
Higher	1	2.6	2.6
Total	39	100.0	100.0

The next sets of questions were Yes and No questions. The responses show that it is not easy to start a franchise business in Windhoek, and this is represented by 53.8 percent of the respondents.

Table 2: Is it easy to start a new franchise business in Windhoek?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	18	46.2	46.2
	No	21	53.8	53.8
	Total	39	100.0	100.0

Table 4 summarizes the responses about whether the franchise managers should be highly qualified. The results show that the majority of the respondents (61.5 percent) are of the notion that managers should be highly qualified, and the other 38.5 percent have an opposing view.

Table 3: Is it necessary for franchise managers to be highly qualified?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	24	61.5	61.5
	No	15	38.5	38.5
	Total	39	100.0	100.0

One of the main objectives of the study was to determine whether franchises were creating employment in Windhoek. The results that relate to this objective show that a resounding 97.4 percent of the respondents are of the impression that franchises are creating jobs in Windhoek.

Table 4: Are franchises creating employment in Windhoek?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	38	97.4	97.4	97.4
	No	1	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	39	100.0	100.0	

On the question of whether franchises grow faster than other businesses, all the respondents responded, and there were no missing values. The results suggest that 10.3 percent of the respondents totally disagree that franchises grow faster than other types of businesses, and another 10.3 percent disagree. Additionally, 15.4 percent were neutral while 17.9 percent and 46.2 percent agreed and totally agreed respectively that franchises grow faster than other types of businesses. The majority of the respondents affirm that franchises grow faster than other types of businesses.

Table 5: Franchises grow faster than other business types

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	totally disagree	4	10.3	10.3
	disagree	4	10.3	10.3
	neutral	6	15.4	15.4
	agree	7	17.9	17.9
	totally agree	18	46.2	46.2
	Total	39	100.0	100.0

Table 7 contains information which relates to whether franchising has more advantages than other types of businesses. The findings suggest that 5.1 percent of the respondents are of the perception that franchising is certainly not advantageous when compared to other business types. Another 5.1 percent disagree that franchising has more advantages over other business types, while 20.5 percent were indifferent. Nevertheless, 23.1 percent and 46.2 percent of the respondents agree and totally agree that franchising has more advantages than other types of businesses respectively. This implies that the majority of the respondents gave affirmative responses.

Table 6: Franchising has more advantages than other business types

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	totally disagree	2	5.1	5.1
	disagree	2	5.1	5.1
	neutral	8	20.5	20.5
	agree	9	23.1	23.1
	total agreement	18	46.2	46.2
	Total	39	100.0	100.0

The other question the respondents answered wanted to confirm if the franchisor imparts management skills, which benefit franchisees in their operations. The results show that 10.3 percent, 17.9 percent, 30.8 percent and 41 percent disagreed, were indifferent, agreed and totally agreed respectively that franchisors impart management skills, which benefit franchisees in their operations, respectively. The results show that the majority of the respondents agree with the preceding idea.

Table 7: Does the Frinchisor impart management skills which benefit franchisees in their operations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	disagree	4	10.3	10.3
	neutral	7	17.9	17.9
	agree	12	30.8	30.8
	totally agree	16	41.0	41.0
	Total	39	100.0	100.0

Table 9 is a multiple response question which required the respondents to indicate the support schemes they prefer as a way of boosting franchise performance in Windhoek. The results show that all the suggested support mechanisms are preferred by the respondents what only differs are the degrees to which they are preferred. The results indicate that the most preferred support system is the use of EPZ incentives. In addition, 30.7 percent of the responses are in support of this scheme. The second most popular support mechanism is the use of tax exemptions, and this received 28.7 percent of the responses. The results also show that 21.8 percent and 18.8 percent of the responses were placed on favourable municipality bylaws and government guaranteed loan schemes respectively. This, therefore, means that the respondents are in support of the use incentives as a way of boosting franchise performance in Windhoek.

Table 8: Support mechanisms preferred ($support Frequencies)

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Support mechanisms preferred	Do you prefer use of government guaranteed loan schemes as a way of boosting franchise performance in Windhoek?	19	18.8%	51.4%
	Do you prefer the use of tax exemptions as a way of boosting franchise performance in Windhoek?	29	28.7%	78.4%
	Do you prefer to use of EPZs incentives as a way of boosting franchise performance in Windhoek?	31	30.7%	83.8%
	Do you prefer use of favourable municipality by-laws to boost franchise performance in Windhoek?	22	21.8%	59.5%
Total		101	100.0%	273.0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of the previous section was to discuss and examine the findings of the article. The results show that the respondents confirm the fact that there has been growth in the franchising fast food sector of Windhoek. In addition, the findings also show that the respondents were of the perception that franchising is more advantageous to the franchisees. Moreover, the high percentage of positive responses from the respondents on the effectiveness of franchising as a strategy for employment generation in Windhoek show that franchises have tremendous potential to generate employment. The respondents also believe that different incentives can be used to improve franchise performance in Windhoek, and the incentives suggested to the respondents included the use of government guaranteed loan schemes, tax exemptions, EPZs incentives and favourable municipality bylaws.

The respondents believe that franchising can be successfully implemented as a strategy for employment growth. This is illustrated by the recent surge of fast food franchises in areas like, Khomas

Mall, Maerua Mall, Katutura and the central business district. This surge naturally leads to franchise growth and related growth in employment. These findings are in line with the research objectives. The findings of the current article are in support of the results that were found by Olotu and Awoseila (2011), which established that franchising results in job creation. The only difference is that Olotu analysed other variables like revenue generation and profitability of franchises. Chinyoka's 2008 findings are also in support of the current research results in that his findings revealed that the promotion of franchising is a viable alternative strategy for growth and employment generation.

Makgosa *et al* (2013) emphasised that franchisees have a strong relationships with the franchisors in Botswana. This association encourages and boosts the government efforts to promote franchising as a method of raising productivity of local small and medium enterprises. Their analysis is different from the current article in that the promotion of franchising was used as a method of raising productivity of local small and medium enterprises. The only similarity between Makgosa *et al.* (2013) and the current study is that franchises lead to growth which in turn leads to employment creation.

In their findings, de Resende *et al*. (2013) confirm that franchising growth in Brazil resulted in the creation of direct and indirect jobs. This is in line with the current article's objective, which intended to determine the effectiveness of franchising as a strategy for employment creation. However, their other findings highlighted that the performance of local franchisees is especially beneficial to the overall performance of the franchising chains. They also noted that a franchising chain will achieve better results if there is local participation by indigenous franchisees. The other studies that corroborate the current study results is a study by Hsu (2013). The information above reveals that the findings of the current article are firmly rooted in literature. The last section of this article gives recommendations that are based on the analysis of the findings of the current article.

The main recommendations derived from this study are that:

- The Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) and the city of Windhoek should reinforce the Namibia Franchise Association (NFA), so that franchising becomes effective and efficient so as to unlock their growth and employment generation potential. The policy makers can enhance the current rules and regulations that are favourable to the starting of new franchises in Windhoek, and the country's other cities in order to spread franchising nationwide. Windhoek can resolve her problem of lack of sufficient business and unemployment by further promoting franchising growth.
- The franchise businesses have to be encouraged since a franchised network of businesses allows the franchisor to acquire local knowledge and rapidly penetrate local markets while permitting the franchisee to gain advantage of national name recognition, marketing and goodwill of a larger business. This permits them to grow faster and thereby create employment and also minimise their failure rates.
- Namibia and countries that have similar socioeconomic circumstances should look at alternative strategies in the promotion and development of enterprises. In particular, the encouragement of franchisees could be a worthwhile alternative development strategy. Specifically, the Government of Namibia should identify areas and articles that would be beneficial for the nation to invest in through franchising. This identification can be done in consultation with the private sector. This can be done in conjunction with current efforts to promote skills development and the strengthening of manufacturing industries.
- Namibia and other countries facing challenges in the creation and development of new enterprises should note that running franchisees does not require extremely high entrepreneurial skill levels. These countries can save some resources they normally would use to develop entrepreneurial skills by deploying their citizens as franchisees.
- There should be legislation that would provide rules and laws for the franchising industries. The foreign franchises should be encouraged to enter the local market by creating a conducive atmosphere by giving tax holiday like those given under the EPZs. Foreign franchisors should take advantage of the Namibian market by relating with Namibian business men and women. Namibian government should encourage her business citizenry to franchise with foreign franchisors in the fast food industry by creating credit facilities with the Namibian banks like, the Development Bank of Namibia and the SMEs Bank.
- Incentives such as lower corporate taxes, government guaranteed loans and favourable city bylaws can be considered so as to encourage more potential entrepreneurs to opt for the franchising type of business. A combination of low educational background and low capital requirements with the above-mentioned incentives lead to franchise growth and hence job creation.

- One strategy NFA can use to enhance franchise growth is to encourage them to sell local dishes, in addition to their fast foods, so as to encourage more local people not to dine at home. This may increase demand for food from these franchises which in turn lead to their growth and hence employment generation.
- Future researchers can extend the current research by including variables like revenue generation and profitability of franchisees. They can also extend the current research to cover the whole country as this has the potential to produce more reliable results

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