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Research Article

Answer to Ph.D. Viva Voice Questions by Doctoral Candidates: In the Case of the Ph.D. Thesis Entitled “Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa”: Short Communication

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Dr. Kanbiro Orkaido Deyganto¹

1. Atlantic International University, Honolulu, United States

This paper aims to prepare a short communication describing how to answer Ph.D. Viva Voice Questions by Doctoral Candidates: In the Case of the Ph.D. thesis entitled “Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa.” The author used observation during open defense and document analysis of Ph.D. dissertation answers from 20 potential Ph.D. Viva Voice Questions by Doctoral Candidates. The result of this study shows that a successful answer to Ph.D. viva voice questions enables Doctoral Candidates to earn a doctorate. So, the researcher forwarded recommendations to Doctoral Candidates to use this short communication for preparing to answer Ph.D. Viva Voice Questions during oral defense of the Ph.D. thesis report.

Corresponding author: Dr. Kanbiro Orkaido Deyganto, k.orkaido@aiu.edu

1. Introduction

The Ph.D. Viva voice or the final oral examination for a doctoral candidate is a crucial and defining moment in an individual’s academic journey. It is during this rigorous assessment that the candidate defends their research and findings, facing a panel of experienced scholars who will scrutinize their work and pose challenging questions. Responding to these Viva voice questions holds immense importance as it allows the candidate to demonstrate their expertise, depth of

knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and ability to articulate their research effectively (Lindsay, 2015). Furthermore, engaging in thoughtful and well-reasoned responses not only showcases the candidate’s competence but also enhances their credibility and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in their respective field.

Research has shown that doctoral candidates face challenges in answering Ph.D. Viva Voice questions during open defense. Doctoral candidates are subjected to rigorous examination during their Ph.D. viva voice, which often presents a series of challenges. Firstly, the pressure to demonstrate comprehensive

knowledge and expertise in their research area, as well as related fields, is immense. Candidates must showcase intellectual depth and be prepared to defend their work against critical questioning from the examining committee. Secondly, the ability to confidently communicate complex concepts and research findings in a concise and coherent manner, while also being prepared to engage in intellectual debates, can be difficult. Lastly, candidates must remain composed and manage any anxiety or nervousness that may arise during the viva voce (Evans, 2018). These challenges are crucial to the overall evaluation and success of the doctoral candidate's research (Garringer and Hogan, 2018).

Most doctoral candidates fail due to a lack of preparation on how to respond to Ph.D. Viva Voice questions asked by examiners during the open defense day (Chen, 2008 & 2014; van der Heide et al., 2016; Lantsoght, 2021-2023; Jalilifar & Mayahi, 2023). Hence, this paper sets out to examine holistic answers to 20 potential Ph.D. Viva voice questions with reference to a Ph.D. dissertation on "Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa."

2. Narrative Analysis on Ph.D. Dissertation on "Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa"

Q1. Can you start by summarizing your Ph.D. thesis?

Answer1: My Ph.D. thesis, titled "Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa," explores the various factors that influence entrepreneurship and sustainable development in African countries. It examines the economic, social, and environmental aspects of entrepreneurship and their impact on long-term sustainable development on the continent using mixed research methods. Results of the study revealed that all variables incorporated in the model, such as entrepreneurial mindset, communication skills, marketing strategies, availability of financial resources, tax incentives, inflation, change in government policy, political stability, information technology utilization, and work culture, were statistically significant. Eight variables, including entrepreneurial mindset, communication skills, marketing strategies, availability of financial resources, tax incentives,

political stability, information technology utilization, and work culture, have a positive and statistically significant effect on business income tax collection in the study area. Tax evasion and corruption have a negative and significant effect on entrepreneurship sustainable development in Africa. However, two variables, inflation and change in government policy, have a negative effect on entrepreneurship sustainable development.

Q2. What motivated and inspired you to carry out this research?

Answer2: I was motivated and inspired to carry out this research due to the significant challenges and opportunities that exist in Africa regarding entrepreneurship and sustainable development. African countries face unique socio-economic issues, and entrepreneurship has emerged as a potential solution to address these challenges and drive sustainable growth. I wanted to contribute to the understanding of this complex relationship and identify the key determinants that can foster entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa.

Q3. Why is the problem you have tackled worth addressing?

Answer3: The problem I have tackled is worth addressing because entrepreneurship holds great potential for economic growth, poverty reduction, and social development in Africa. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that analyzes the specific determinants that influence entrepreneurship and contribute to sustainable development in the region. By examining these factors, my research aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to promote entrepreneurship and drive sustainable development in Africa.

Q4. Which of these does your research address?

Answer4: My research addresses the relationship between entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa. It delves into the determinants of entrepreneurship and explores how they can contribute to long-term sustainable development on the continent. This research also examines the role of government policies, social factors, and environmental considerations in shaping the entrepreneurship landscape in Africa.

Q5. Who has had the strongest influence on the development of your subject area in theory?

Answer5: In the development of my subject area in theory, scholars such as Saras Sarasvathy, William Baumol, Joseph Schumpeter, and Scott Shane have had a strong influence. Baumol's theory of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth, Schumpeter's concept of creative destruction, and Shane's research on entrepreneurial opportunities have provided theoretical foundations for understanding entrepreneurship and its impact on development.

Q6. Which are the three most important papers that relate to your Ph.D. thesis?

Answer 6: The three most important papers that relate to my Ph.D. thesis are:

1. "Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Development Goals: A literature Review and a Closer Look at Fragile States and Technology-Enabled Approaches Rashid (2019)". This paper provides a theoretical framework for understanding the linkages between entrepreneurship and sustainable development, which is central to my research.
2. "Drivers of Entrepreneurial Activity: Evidence from Africa" by Gries and Naudé (2010). This paper examines the factors that influence entrepreneurial activity in Africa, including economic, institutional, and cultural factors. These findings are relevant to my research on the determinants of entrepreneurship sustainable development in Africa.
3. "Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in Africa" by Kiggundu (2002). This paper discusses the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship and its potential to drive sustainable development. The ideas presented in this paper are relevant to my research, which aims to understand how entrepreneurship can contribute to sustainable development in Africa.

Q7. What published work is closest to yours? How is your work different?

Answer7: Three important papers that relate to my thesis are:

- a. Naudé, W., & Szirmai, A. (2012). Entrepreneurship and economic development.

Journal of Economic Surveys, 26(5), 918–935.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6419.2010.00663.x>

- b. Okpara, J. O., & Wynn, P. (2019). Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in Africa: A Gender Perspective. In *Regional and Gender Dimensions of Entrepreneurship in Africa* (pp. 31–49). Springer.

- c. Olaniran, S. O., & Shabi, I. M. (2018). Entrepreneurship and sustainable growth in Africa: a critical perspective. *Cogent Business & Management*, 5(1), 1467606.

My research work is different from the aforementioned research by examining individual (institutional), economic, social, technological, political, and cultural factors that determine the sustainable development of entrepreneurship in Africa.

- d. The published work that is closest to mine is "The impact of entrepreneurial resilience on the success of small and medium enterprises in South Africa" by Fatoki (2018). While their research also focuses on the relationship between entrepreneurship and sustainable development, my work differs in terms of the geographical focus (Africa) and the specific determinants I analyze.

Q8. What are the most recent major developments in your area?

Answer8: The most recent major developments in my area include the recognition of social entrepreneurship as a key driver of sustainable development, the increasing importance of digital entrepreneurship and technology-based innovations, and the growing emphasis on the role of women entrepreneurs in fostering inclusive growth.

Q9. Why did you use this research methodology? What did you gain from it?

Answer9: I used a mixed-method research methodology to conduct my study. I combined quantitative analysis of large-scale datasets on entrepreneurship and economic indicators with qualitative interviews and case studies of successful African entrepreneurs. This methodology allowed me to analyze the determinants of entrepreneurship from both a macroeconomic perspective and through the experiences and perspectives of individual entrepreneurs. It helped me gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between

entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa.

Q10. How have you evaluated your work?

Answer10: I evaluated my work through a rigorous analysis of data and literature, triangulation of findings from quantitative and qualitative research, and cross-validation of results with experts in the field. I also conducted peer reviews and sought feedback from my supervisory committee during the writing process to ensure the robustness and validity of my research.

Q11. How do you know that your findings are correct?

Answer11: I can confidently claim the correctness of my findings based on the consistency and coherence of the evidence obtained from multiple sources of data and the alignment of my results with established theories and concepts in the field. Additionally, my research underwent a peer review process, which further affirmed the reliability and accuracy of the findings. The regression coefficients of my research were triangulated with existing theories of entrepreneurship and sustainable development, real-world practices, and qualitative analysis results, which make my research findings strong and scientifically accepted by the global community.

Q12. What are the strongest or weakest parts of your work?

Answer12: The strongest part of my work lies in the comprehensive analysis of various determinants of entrepreneurship and their impact on sustainable development in Africa. By examining individual, economic, social, cultural, technological, and political factors, my research provides a holistic understanding of the complex relationship between entrepreneurship and sustainable development. However, weaknesses may lie in the limitations of data availability for some African countries and the challenge of generalizing findings to the entire continent due to its diversity. Additionally, my study did not consider environmental factors.

Q13. To what extent do your contributions generalize?

Answer13: The contributions of my work are relevant and generalizable to African countries facing similar socio-economic challenges and seeking sustainable

development through entrepreneurship. However, the extent of generalizability may vary across countries due to variations in factors such as cultural, political, and institutional contexts. Nonetheless, the findings and recommendations of my thesis can serve as a valuable guide for policymakers and practitioners involved in promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa.

Q14. Who will be the most interested in your work?

Answer14: Stakeholders who are most interested in my work include policymakers, government agencies, international organizations, entrepreneurs, the African Union, and researchers focused on entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa. They can benefit from the insights and recommendations provided in my thesis to design effective policies, programs, and initiatives that promote and support entrepreneurship in the African context.

Q15. What is the relevance of your research to practitioners?

Answer15: The relevance of my research to practitioners lies in its potential to inform strategic decision-making and policy formulation in promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa. By identifying the key determinants that support entrepreneurship and drive sustainable growth, my work can guide practitioners in devising effective strategies to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities present in the African entrepreneurship landscape.

Q16. What are the contributions to knowledge of your thesis?

Answer16: The contributions to knowledge of my thesis are multifold. Firstly, it provides a comprehensive analysis of the determinants of entrepreneurship and their impact on sustainable development in Africa, filling a significant gap in the existing literature. Secondly, it offers insights into the specific socio-economic and technical factors that influence entrepreneurship in the African context. Lastly, it provides recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders on how to foster entrepreneurship and drive sustainable development in Africa.

Q17. How long-term are these contributions?

Answer17: The contributions of my thesis have both short-term and long-term significance. In the short term, they can inform immediate policy changes and interventions aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa. In the long term, the findings and recommendations can contribute to the development of a sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem in Africa, fostering economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability on the continent.

Q18. What have you learned from the process of your Ph.D.?

Answer18: Throughout the process of completing my Ph.D., I have learned the importance of interdisciplinary research, critical thinking, online learning, online tutoring, and effective communication. Engaging with literature, data, and experts from multiple fields enriched my understanding of entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The rigorous analytical and writing process sharpened my critical thinking skills. Presenting and defending my research in webinars, online class lives, comprehensive examinations, seminars, and conferences enhanced my ability to communicate complex ideas effectively. I successfully answered 20 potential Ph.D. Viva voice questions on my Ph.D. dissertation and earned an excellent grade.

Q19. What advice would you give to research students entering this area?

Answer19: For research students entering this area, my advice would be to maintain a broad perspective and explore interdisciplinary approaches. Entrepreneurship and sustainable development are complex and multifaceted fields, and studying them from various angles can yield valuable insights. Additionally, staying updated with the latest developments, building a strong network of peers and experts in the field, and actively engaging in discussions and collaborations can greatly enhance the research experience and contribute to the academic and practical impact of the work. I am very motivated to guide students who conduct their research work on sustainable development goals, financial innovations, strategic planning, climate changes, artificial intelligence, business innovation, transformational leadership implementation in secondary schools of Africa, African free trade economy, factors limiting women's participation in

business activities in Sub-Saharan African countries, women's economic empowerment, theology, human rights, strategic management, conflict management, marketing management, entrepreneurship, conflict management, indigenous conflict management strategies, corporate governance, human resources management, green finance, green economy, financial markets, politics, green energy, financial institutions, public finance, cryptocurrency, environmental accounting, corporate finance, Africa 2063 agendas, financial markets, and online business strategies.

Q20. You propose future research. How would you start this?

Answer20: To propose future research in this area, I would start by conducting in-depth case studies on successful African entrepreneurs who have made significant contributions to sustainable development. This qualitative approach can provide valuable insights into the specific strategies, challenges, and opportunities faced by these entrepreneurs and their impact on sustainable development outcomes. Additionally, a comparative analysis across different African countries can help identify country-specific factors that influence entrepreneurship and sustainable development, ultimately guiding policymakers in designing tailored interventions. Moreover, I propose researching environmental and technological factors limiting entrepreneurship and sustainable development. I appreciate that the research will focus on factors limiting women's participation in business activities in Sub-Saharan African countries and women's economic empowerment in Africa, in particular, and in the world in general.

3. Conclusion

The student researcher has successfully answered 20 Ph.D. Viva Voice questions while defending the Ph.D. thesis entitled "Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa" at Atlantic International University and earned an excellent grade due to outstanding responses to Viva Voice questions, high self-confidence, a brilliant mind with the research topic, and an excellent understanding of research methodology. In conclusion, this research presents a comprehensive analysis of the determinants of entrepreneurship sustainable development in Africa, shedding light on crucial factors that influence the success and long-term

viability of entrepreneurial ventures. Through rigorous empirical investigation and critical evaluation of existing literature, this study has identified key determinants such as access to finance, government support, education and training, and social capital. By recognizing these factors and developing policies and strategies that address them, policymakers, stakeholders, and entrepreneurs can foster a conducive environment that promotes entrepreneurship and leads to sustainable economic development in Africa. It is imperative that future research builds upon these findings and continues to explore new avenues for promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development in the African context.

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First of all, thanks to God for everything. Next to God, I am immensely grateful to Atlantic International University for their remarkable kindness and exceptional uniqueness in providing me an opportunity to study the Ph.D. dissertation on "Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa." Their unwavering support and dedication to fostering academic growth are truly commendable. From its flexible online learning platform to its experienced faculty members, Atlantic International University stands out as a distinguished institution that values individual potential and fosters a global community of learners. Their emphasis on practical and sustainable solutions, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship and development in Africa, showcases their commitment to making a positive impact on the world. I am truly fortunate to be a part of this extraordinary academic institution, where I have the privilege of studying under their esteemed guidance and contributing to the advancement of knowledge and sustainable development. I express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the esteemed Professors at Atlantic International University for their invaluable guidance and support throughout the entire process of studying and completing my Ph.D. dissertation on the topic of "Determinants of Entrepreneurship Sustainable Development in Africa." Their expertise, encouragement, and insightful feedback have been instrumental in shaping and refining my research, enabling me to produce a comprehensive and meaningful contribution to the field. Their dedication and commitment to fostering academic excellence have been exceedingly inspiring, and I am truly indebted for their unwavering guidance and assistance. Especially thanks to Professor Edward Lambert for guidance and support in every aspect. I

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Appendix – Comments by Professors on my Ph.D. thesis @ Atlantic International University

- Course: Final Ph.D. Thesis
- Attempt ID: 1204824
- Student: Kanbiro Orkaido Deyganto / UD78518BU87730
- Date Graded: 7/28/2023 9:13:30 AM
- Grade: A (Excellent)

Comments

Thank you for submitting your thesis! A few comments...

- *Good presentation
- *Original work
- *Well organized
- *Well-researched
- *Citations are well-placed
- *Very important and timely issue
- *Good thesis & context
- *Good scope, purpose of study
- *Nice job with your research questions
- *Good literature review
- *Good coverage and overview of research methods
- *Good summary of data analysis methods
- *Good results of statistical analysis
- *Good summary and interpretation of the results
- *Good conclusion & recommendations
- *Good research, source selection & formatting
- *Excellent answer for PhD Viva voice questions
- *Powerful self-confidence in presentation and defense

Overall, excellent job on your Final Ph.D. Thesis!

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Declarations

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