

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA ECONOMY

By

Akpor Regina Ukpohwo

*Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara
Department of Science Laboratory Technology*

Abstract

This paper examines the role of women entrepreneurship skills in sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper also discussed women empowerment and education, women entrepreneur for sustainable development. In addition, the population of Nigeria, as also the case in most countries of the world obviously shows that women grossly outnumber men. Women are occupied with various entrepreneurship skills and even training fellow women and men in skills acquisition for self-reliance. This implies that the level and rate of sustainable development of a nation depends very much on women entrepreneur.

Nations all over the world developed economically through entrepreneurship skills and the role of women in this respect cannot be overemphasized. In spite of this, anytime women are mentioned in any human endeavour, most people frown and start to think of a second rate activity. A mere observation of everyday life by individuals has led to a general consensus about the obscurity and low esteem or value generally attached to women.

Women constitute the highest number of population in Nigeria according to the National Population Census of 2006. This implies that women are mostly affected with the problem of unemployment. Many have attempted to look at various issues concerned with women unemployment. In this paper, the author is concern with how entrepreneurial skills can be acquired to solve the problem of unemployment for sustainable national development. For better appreciation of this work, the paper looked at the following concepts such as: concept of woman, women empowerment and education, role of women entrepreneur in sustainable development, entrepreneurship skills etc.

Concept of Woman?

The period of life between childhood and maturity is adolescence, which biologically extends from 10 years to the age of 19 years. Derek (1992) identified the period of being women from the onset of menstruation which is called the menarche, he

went further that this is when the female child can be referred to as a woman because she takes the duties and obligations of womanhood. The menarche however, is only the culminating change in a sequence of events which change the girl into a young woman accompanied with changes between several glands in the body. Jallade (2009) sees women as people in the age bracket of 19 years to decline age. Irrespective of this age bracket the women still need to be empowered through entrepreneurial skills to enable them contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation.

Women Empowerment and Education

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines empowerment as a process of granting political, social or economic power to an individual or group by helping them to succeed. Czuba (2014) sees empowerment as a process that challenges our assumptions about the way things can be. It challenges our basic assumptions about power, helping, achieving and succeeding.

Every nation has the responsibility of preparing its women for survival and continue to give them the opportunity to contribute to the development and sustenance of younger generation. It should be noted that the world is a global village, therefore each group, community and nation ought to have a vision and programmes which should be geared towards women empowerment because they constitute the largest population in Nigeria. This can be achieved through adequate policy planning to keep abreast with what is happening in other parts of the world globally. Appelbaum, Dineier and Giddens (2015) see globalization as a process of making world economy dominant by capitalist model.

Ekong (2016) asserted that women entrepreneurs are the real engine driving the economy of Nigeria Nation and are the keys to development crucial to the goals of sustainable development. Agbola (1990) confirmed the assertion by concluding that women are the operators of the economy and constitute a major arm of the labor force, and that Nigeria women are dynamic, industrious and resourceful entrepreneurs.

It is believed that a reliable index of the progress and development of any nation is the position of its women. Women represent a tool for positive change depending on opportunity given to them to showcase their skills. In view of this Obasan (2016) simply put women entrepreneurs as those women who are self made, whose bulk of wealth did not come from working for other establishment, organizations or companies but rather from their own innovative endeavors and establishment. A lot of women in Nigeria run their own businesses and doing very well for themselves, even better than some men.

In the world of entrepreneur sphere, the Nigeria women could be described as pacesetters in their chosen fields and they are deserving of every accolade and recognition they can get, this is because Nigeria could boast of such vibrant entrepreneurial motivated women like Folorunsho Alakija of Lagos who started walk to wealth with secretary job, she further went into tailoring company called supreme stitches. Thereafter she delved into oil and she remained a billionaire since then. Her

Women Entrepreneurial Skills...

net worth is estimated to be \$1.9 billion. She owns 60% of famfa oil limited. She is categorized as the most successful woman entrepreneur in Nigeria. Hajia Bola Shagaga started working as a clerk with the audit department of Central Bank of Nigeria and then later delved into commercial sector in 1983, she owns a huge part of her wealth to oil, presently she is managing director of Practoil Limited which is one of the largest importer and distributor of base oil in Nigeria. Stella Chinyere Okoli has made life easy and healthy in the sense that everyone with headache and takes Emzor paracetamol to make it go away thank Stella Okoli as a founder of Emzor paracetamol. Bimbo Alase with wealth stems from furniture. She is the owner of the prestigious leather world furniture company; she started as a small furniture store and later expanded to be what it is today and she is one of the most popular entrepreneur in Nigeria. Other women entrepreneurs in Nigeria who have successfully contributed to the economic development of Nigeria are: Fifi Ejindu who is a founder of starcrest group of companies. Linda Ikeji, a blogger in Nigeria who made millions from gossip blogging and also a successful female entrepreneur in Nigeria. Tera Fela Durotoye who managed to build an empire from something people consider Trivial that is make-up artist who owns House of Tara International and Greater of the “Tara Orekelewa” Beauty range. Uche Eze Pedro is also a blogger, social media expert and founder of the prestigious Bella Naija which is an online magazine and blog who focuses on reporting news, entertainment fashion, lifestyle and other media content aimed at Pan African and Nigeria audience. Bella Naija has become every Nigerian’s dream to be featured on the website. Betty Irabor started as a freelance writer for Thisday and Vanguard newspapers and today she is the founder and publisher of Genevieve magazine. In fact, the popularity, and respect accorded Genevieve Magazine is enough to make her one of the female entrepreneurs in the history of Nigeria. Thus, these women were pride to womanhood anywhere in Nigeria and a great force in development in their spheres of influence.

Entrepreneurship Skills

Our review of literature confirms that it is possible to identify a set of skills that can be critically looked into as entrepreneurship skills. However, skills according to Hadiza and Sikiru (2016) are qualities of performance which does not depend solely upon a person’s fundamental innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. Skills may depend essentially on learning; it also includes the concept of efficiency and economy in performance. Nwaoke (2019) sees concept of skills as flexibility with which a skilled operator reaches a given end on different occasions according to precise circumstances.

However, it must be noted that even when basic human capacities are not enough to produce skills, they form the essential basis of their development; skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental demand, with human beings and external situation together forming a functional system. There are various fields that make someone an entrepreneur and what entrepreneurial skills are. Entrepreneurial skill is the ability of an individual to exploit opportunities or ideas and

create an enterprise which could be small or big but not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gains (Iromaka 2006).

Entrepreneurship skills are associated with competence in the process of opportunity identification or creation, the ability to capitalize on identified opportunities and a range of skills associated with developing and implementing business plans to enable such opportunities to be realized.

There is a clear evidence to suggest that there is a positive association between entrepreneurship skills and some measure of business success. There is notable evidence that some entrepreneurship skills can be taught or learned. However, entrepreneurs tend to learn less effectively from the conventional didactic approaches typical of much of the educational sector. The most effective approaches to develop entrepreneurship skills involve experiential learning based around task-oriented development focused on problems associated with Business.

Anho (2011) opined that entrepreneurial skills go beyond education and training, rather it involves a process of human capacity building through formal and informal training, inculcating the entrepreneur basic skills such as financial skills, technical skills, marketing skills, communication skills and technological skills. An entrepreneur should also possess some of the following characteristics traits according to (Iromaka, 2005) which include; deep sense of innovation, initiator, attraction for ambiguous, unstructured situations, enthusiastic vision, self confidence, Risk Taker, Task and Result Oriented, Leadership Skills Originality, Decision Taker, energetic and ability to work longer hours, etc.

Entrepreneurship Skills for Sustainable Development

Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting new organization or revitalizing nature organizations particularly new businesses. Women entrepreneurs according to Anyakaoha (2009) are women who have possession of enterprises, or ventures and assume significant accountability for the inherent risks and the outcome. They are ambitious women who combine, land, labour and capital to create and market new goods and services. Therefore, the following are contributions of women entrepreneurs as noted by various researchers, Nwaoke (2019) noted that entrepreneurship helps in sustaining nation's economy through:

- **Development of New Markets:** This implies that entrepreneurs are resourceful and creative individuals who create customers as buyers by their activities.
- **Discovery of New Sources of Materials:** Simply put by Okechukwu (2017) that women entrepreneurs are never satisfied with the traditional or existing sources of materials. As a result of their innovation, persistence and focus, new sources of materials are discovered. This improves their enterprises' faction of the buyers or customers.
- **Introduction of New Technologies:** Women entrepreneur helps in facilitating new technologies, industries and products. This can be done by taking advantage of business opportunities and transforming them into profits and also help in the

Women Entrepreneurial Skills...

reduction of social vices and other related crime by keeping the recipients occupied and busy with acquisition of skills thereby keeping them from evil thought. Eyibe (2015) noted that entrepreneurship has helped in creating employment; millions of jobs are provided by women entrepreneurs through agricultural enterprises factories, industries and other small scale enterprises.

- **Create Employment:** The greatest challenge of the contemporary system is unemployment. But female entrepreneurs have provided massive employment which has multiplier and accelerating effects on the whole economy. More jobs mean more income which thus results to increased demand for goods and services and thus stimulate production and more employments.

Characteristics of Women Entrepreneur

Women entrepreneurs must possess the following characteristics from the view of different researchers. Some of these characteristics include the following:

- **Enthusiastic:** Women entrepreneurs must have enthusiastic vision which represents the driving force of the enterprise Iroamaka, (2020) noted that without such vision creation cannot be actualized, and one of the unique characteristics of women entrepreneur is focus on vision and clear task. It should be noted that the basic measure of success in any business are usually bench marked in attainment of set targets and where possible surpassing such targets and for a target to be set, it means that such goals and objectives are quantifiable with indices e.g. profitability, growth rate of the organization, contribution to employment generation etc. Hence, the entrepreneur is a person who is always expecting and appreciates outcomes in terms of results valued on a concrete feedback.
- The study of Ajai (2016) emphasized self-confidence. He said that self-confidence is a unique characteristic of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneur is driven by self-confidence, she must have a belief in herself idea and products she intends to offer to the public. Therefore, self-confidence on the part of the entrepreneur results to consistency focus and self determination to achieve her objectives and success. Also calculated risk takers based on skills and knowledge of subject endeavours is another characteristics. Entrepreneurial outcome is a function of interaction of different factors. Meanwhile, the elements associated with these factors are generally minimized based on skills, knowledge, ideals and analytical ability of the entrepreneur.
- Boroffice (2015) in his study contended that leadership skills, organizational skills and originality are other characteristics of entrepreneurship. Hence she pointed out that, entrepreneurship must have leadership style and skills acquired through formal training or naturally gifted. As an entrepreneur, you must be able to mobilize human and other resource and channel them into purposeful use for attainment of desired goals or results. Therefore, the ability to coordinate, plan and control all other factors of production must be exemplary and persuasive, it is also important that the entrepreneur must have the ability to organize, manage, plan, coordinate, control and direct all other factors of production to attain set of objectives in which

the business is set up. On the other hand, an entrepreneur should be innovative, creative, flexible, and open minded to be able to convert ideas and knowledge into new and original concept capable of serving useful purpose.

Conclusions

Women entrepreneurship skill is essential for rapid economic growth and development for country sustainability. It creates job opportunities for both men and women thereby reducing social vices, poverty and unemployment.

To this end, and to break away for the shackles of women unemployment, quality support should be given to women entrepreneurs through adequate support and encouragement from government especially now that women venture into different areas of entrepreneurship with high level of sincerity and transparency, it will not be surprise to see in the future that women entrepreneur excel and contribute meaningfully to the development of Nigeria economy.

Recommendations

This paper therefore recommends the following:

- Government should ensure that Nigeria women are fully involved in entrepreneurship skills.
- Women in Pudah from Northern part of Nigeria should be encouraged to acquire entrepreneurship skills to enable them contribute their quota to the development of Nigeria economy.
- All women in Nigeria irrespective of their educational background should try as much as possible to acquire one skill in addition to their qualification instead of sitting at home waiting for white collar jobs; they can start something until the white collar job comes.
- The Federal Mortgage banks should be fair in giving out loan without gender discrimination.
- Entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory at all levels of education in Nigeria.

References

- Agbola, T. (1990). Women Self-actualization and the Theories of Development. *African Urban Quarterly*. 5(384) 170 – 178
- Ajai, O. (2016). *Entrepreneurship Development and Small Business Management*. Lagos, Immaculate Conception.
- Anho, J. E. (2011). Impact of Entrepreneurship Education and Training on University Graduates for Sustainable Development in Arubayi, N. E. Akpotu and E. P.

Women Entrepreneurial Skills...

- Oghuvbu (Eds). A Book of Reading: Education and Training for Entrepreneurship.
- Appelbaum, R., Dineier, M. and Gidden, A. (2015). Introduction to Sociology. Norton and Company Limited.
- Boroffice, O. B. (2015). Building Partnership for Entrepreneurship Development Education: Strategy for Sustainable Development. *Asian. Journal of Business Management*. 3(5) 196 – 202
- Czuba, C. K. (2014). Youth Unemployment and Relationship in Education. *Journal of General Studies*. 1(1) 103 – 108
- Dereck, L. J. (1992). Everywoman: A Gynecological Guide for Life. Penguin Publisher, Australia.
- Ekong, F. (2016). A Gender Appraisal of the Disbursement of Bank Loans, 160m. *Journal of Social Issues*, 7(2) 87 – 101
- Eyibe, S. C. (2015). The Burden and Menace of Secret Cult in Higher Institutions. *Journal of Industrial and Technological Research* 1(2) 12 – 19
- Hadiza, N. U. and Sikiru, N. I. (2018). Entrepreneurship Skills as a Tool for Community Development in Kwara State. *Journal of Qualitative Education*. 12(1) 195 – 200
- Iromaka, U. R. (2006). Complete Entrepreneurship. Masega Publisher, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
- Iromaka, U. R. (2015). Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium Scale Business Development: A Guide to Success. CED Press Trust Ventures, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Jallade, J. P. (2009). Youth Empowerment and Education: In Oyeoku, E. K. (eds), *In Journal of General Studies*. 1(1) 118 – 126
- Nwaoke, N. M. (2019). The Role of Entrepreneurship on Crime Reduction in Ethiopia West Local Government Area of Delta State: A Ph.D Seminar Paper Presented at Igbinedion University, Okada, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
- Pearson Education (2005). Longman Dictionary Contemporary English, Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 5th Edition. Great Clarendon Oxford