

---

# **BUSINESS EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES IN AKWA IBOM STATE**

---

**By**

**DR. CHARITY FRIDAY IDO**

*Department of Vocational Education,  
University of Uyo,  
Uyo.*

**And**

**UYAI EMMANUEL AKPANOBONG**

*Department of Vocational Education,  
University of Uyo,  
Uyo.*

## **Abstract**

*This study investigated business education as a tool for women's involvement in entrepreneurship and consultancy services in Akwa Ibom state. The population of the study comprised 692 female entrepreneurs and consultants. The study adopted Ex post facto research design, while stratified random sampling technique was used in drawing a sample of 208 women for the study. The instrument for data collection was tagged 'business education and women's involvement in entrepreneurship and consultancy Questionnaire (BEWIECQ). Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The reliability of the instrument was 0.67. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyse the data. The results of the data analysed were all significant at .05 levels and from the results of the analysis; it was observed that business education has significantly contributed to women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State. The recommendation was that parents should encourage their female children to study business education knowing that a wide range of employment opportunities are embedded in the programme.*

**Keywords:** Vocational Education, Employability, Diversified Curriculum, Self-reliance, Products and Competence.

Business education is a vocational education programme that provides skills and competence for business, office occupation and for self-reliance. Osuala (2009) stated that business education revolves around job skills, employability and self-dependency. The business education curriculum in Nigerian universities has a very significant role of producing individuals who will use their skills and the abilities acquired during training to actively participate in economic growth and development wherever they find themselves. It also provides practical training and creates employment opportunities. Kudehinbus (2001) stated that, business education curriculum has a distinguishing role of training individuals who are not only employees but entrepreneurs that are in constant search for business opportunities, provide services or products capable of meeting the needs of customers and in return benefit from such investments. Business education trains individuals who serve as tools that help the government curb unemployment problems in the nation as the products find themselves in paid or self-employment. Business education plays a significant role in Nigeria's economic growth and development. It improves personal qualities and builds the attitudes of individuals that are necessary for adjustment to employment situations, and also provides knowledge, skills and competence for individuals to function well in office occupation and also create jobs for themselves and others (Amoor and Udoh, 2008).

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment. It is widely accepted as a key aspect of economic dynamism. Transforming ideas into economic opportunities is the decisive issue of entrepreneurship. History shows that economic progress has been significantly advanced by pragmatic people who are entrepreneurial and innovative, able to exploit opportunities and willing to take risks (Hisrich, 2005). Business education as a tool for women's involvement in entrepreneurship and consultancy has often been underestimated. Over the years, however, it has become increasingly apparent that women with the knowledge of business education indeed contribute to entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, the significant numbers of enterprises were owned by men (ILO, 2006). In other words, it was not common to see women-owned businesses worldwide especially in developing countries like Nigeria. The idea and practice of women entrepreneurship is a recent phenomenon. Until the 1980's little was known about women entrepreneurship both in practice and research, which made its focus entirely on men. Scientific discourse about women's entrepreneurship and women owning and running organizations is just the development of 1980s (UNECE, 2004 and ILO, 2006). Even though we observe a number of women entrepreneurs in the business, recent studies show that most of them are found in Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). According to the Nigeria Central Statistics Authority (2007), almost 50% of all new jobs created in Nigeria are attributable to small businesses and enterprises, and

***Business Education: A Tool for Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship and Consultancy Services in Akwa Ibom State - Dr. Charity Friday Ido and Uyai Emmanuel Akpanobong***

---

roughly 49% of new businesses that were operational between 1991 and 2003 were owned by women.

Aregash as cited in Eshetu and Zeleke (2008) observed that, 98% of business firms in Nigeria are micro and small enterprises. The last census of Nigeria shows that of the total population of the country (73,918,505), 36,621,848 are females (Nigeria Central Statistics Authority (NCSA), 2007). This accounts for 49.5% of the population. This shows that Nigeria is among those African countries that are known by female human resource potentials. Regardless of its potential, it does not utilize this labour force. This underutilization of the untapped potential is attributed to a lot of reasons, such as, inability to effectively use entrepreneurship in poverty reduction in general and alleviating the problems among women who are susceptible to poverty in particular; inability to bring meaningful economic and social transaction; promoting and enhancing gender equality and women empowerment; and ensuring women's social mobility in the country is worth mentioning.

Kenton and Ervin (2000) opined that entrepreneurship education as an educational discipline that prepares people, especially youth to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers that contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. Entrepreneurship education is a programme that provides discipline to an individual to assume the responsibility and the risk for a business operation with the expectation of making a profit. It can also be seen as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Odulami, 2001). Business education has always been dedicated to preparing its graduates for employment in the world of work. In essence, entrepreneurship education will offer business education students such opportunities by helping them anticipate and respond to change.

Nigeria, having realized the effectiveness of vocational education as a powerful instrument for national progress and development adjusted her educational philosophy and methodology to march the ideals and challenges of changing economic and social structure of modern society. Consequently, in 1982, Nigeria adjusted her educational system to encompass diversified curriculum that integrates academic with technical and vocational subject intended to empower the individual for self-employment (Azuka, Nwosu, Kanu and Agomuo, 2006)).

It is quite obvious that there are a large number of women in Akwa Ibom State with very little proportion running entrepreneurship or consultancy services. This unexpected situation is bound to be caused by the fact that most women in the State

lack basic knowledge of business education and therefore develop cold feet towards going into such practices. Gemechis (2007) and ILO (2009) stressed that entrepreneurs are surrounded by a number of challenges such as competition in the market, lack of access to the market, lack of access to raw materials, lack of capital or finance, lack of marketing knowledge, lack of production/storage space, poor infrastructure, inadequate power supply and lack of business training. The social factors include lack of social acceptability, having limited contacts outside, prejudice and class bias, society looks down upon, attitude of other employees and relations with the work force.. These therefore, pose serious hindrances to women's success in business. Hence, the problem of this study is therefore to determine how business education has contributed to women's involvement in entrepreneurship and consultancy services in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent does business education contribute to women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent does business education contribute to women's involvement in consultancy services in Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between business education and women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State
2. There is no significant relationship between business education and women's involvement in consultancy services in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Methodology**

Ex post-facto design was adopted in conducting this study. In this type of research design the researcher cannot manipulate the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable because the events have taken place and the data are already in existence. The research area was Akwa Ibom State. It is one of the 36 States in Nigeria. The population of this study comprised 692 women entrepreneurs and consultants in Akwa Ibom State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 208 women for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Business Education and Women's involvement in Entrepreneurship and Consultancy Questionnaire (BEWIECQ)". The questionnaire was made up of sections A and B. Section A was used to collect information on personal data of the respondents while section B was to collect information on business education, women involvement in entrepreneurship and consultancy. The data was coded statistically before the analysis. Rating scale method was used, that is strongly

*Business Education: A Tool for Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship and Consultancy Services in Akwa Ibom State - Dr. Charity Friday Ido and Uyai Emmanuel Akpanobong*

agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). A test - retest analysis was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which was .67. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analyse the data at .05 alpha level.

**Statistical Tools Used:** Mean deviation was used to analyze the research questions while the hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Research Questions 1**

To what extent does business education contribute to women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 1: Mean Analysis of the Contribution of Business Education to Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Arithmetic mean</b>	<b>Expected mean</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Business education	208	16.63	12.50	0.91*	*strong to perfect relationship
Women's involvement in entrepreneurship		13.42	12.50		

**Source: Field Survey**

Table 1 presents the result of the mean analysis of the contribution of business education to women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State. The two variables were observed to have strong to perfect relationship at 91%. The arithmetic means for Business education (16.63) was also observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.50. In addition, the arithmetic mean for women's involvement in entrepreneurship (13.42) was also observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.50. The result therefore means that business education contributes remarkably to women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Question two**

To what extent does business education contribute to women's involvement in consultancy services in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 2: Mean Analysis of the Contribution of Business Education to Women's Involvement in Consultancy in Akwa Ibom State**

Variable	N	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Business education		16.63	12.50		
	208			0.94*	*strong to perfect relationship
Women's involvement in consultancy		12.42	12.50		

**Source: Field Survey**

Table 2 presents the result of the mean analysis of the contribution of business education to women's involvement in consultancy in Akwa Ibom State. The two variables were observed to have strong to perfect relationship at 94%. The arithmetic mean for business education (16.63) was also observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 12.50. Though the arithmetic mean for women's involvement in consultancy (12.42) was observed to be lower than the expected mean score of 12.50, the result therefore means that business education plays a major role in women's involvement in consultancy, even though their involvement rate in Akwa Ibom State is not high enough.

### **Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant relationship between business education and women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Business Education and Women's Involvement in Entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State**

Variable	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r
	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$		
Business education (X)	3460	58112	47012	0.91*
Women's involvement in entrepreneurship (Y)	2791	38189		

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df =206; N =208; critical r-value = 0.138**

Table 3 presents the obtained r-value as (0.91). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical. The obtained r-value was greater than the critical r-value (0.138). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between business education and women's involvement in entrepreneurship in Akwa Ibom State. The findings of Kuzilwa (2005) and Hisrich, Peters & Shepherd (2008) agreed with this study, they opined that entrepreneurship development depends on the quality of education provided and the presence of an environment that encourages innovation. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

### **Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between business education and women's involvement in consultancy services in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Contribution of Business Education and Women's Involvement in Consultancy in Akwa Ibom State**

Variable	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r
	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$		
Business education (X)	3460	58112	43492	0.94*
Women's involvement in consultancy (Y)	2583	32635		

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df =206; N =208; critical r-value = 0.138**

Table 4 presents the obtained r-value as (0.94). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value. The obtained r-value was greater than the critical r-value (0.138). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between business education and women's involvement in consultancy in Akwa Ibom State. The finding of Kudehinbus (2001), who stated that students learn job-specifics and employability skills and are given opportunities to use these skills through work experience programmes that connect them with the business community agreed with this work. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions were made:

1. Women entrepreneurship serves as a potential source of employment to many.
2. Even though entrepreneurship is not free of risks, existing female entrepreneurs are succeeding in business.
3. Business education has contributed remarkably to women's participation in entrepreneurship and consultancy services in Akwa Ibom State and beyond.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should encourage their female children to study business education knowing that a wide range of employment opportunities are embedded in the programme.
2. Institutions should not only enrich business education curriculum but should also install up-to-date equipment needed for effective learning by the students of business education with the hope to prepare them as future entrepreneurs and consultants.
3. To tackle the different economic, social, cultural, legal and administrative bottlenecks often faced by entrepreneurs and consultants, women entrepreneurs should endeavor to persuade government officials for support.
4. Women entrepreneurs in Akwa Ibom State should search for other alternative supporting agents rather than relying only on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, and micro finances in improving their performances.
5. Institutions and colleges should provide both technical and business trainings to would-be women entrepreneurs to enable them withstand competitions, develop entrepreneurial spirits, and improve managerial skill in this competitive world.

**References**

- Amoor S.S. & Udoh A.A. (2008) The role of secretarial education in Nigerian economic development. *Journal of Educational Research and Development*. 3: 294 -298.
- Azuka, E.B, Nwosu, B.O, Kanu, I.N. & Agomuo, E.E. (2006), *Foundations of business education in Nigeria*. Anambra: Data word computers academy.
- Eshetu, J. & Zeleke, .G. (2008) Women entrepreneurship in micro, small and medium enterprises: The case of Ethiopia. *Journal of International Women's Studies*.10 (2), 3-5.
- Gemechis, L. (2007) *Attitude of college students towards entrepreneurship: A case study of Addis Ababa University and Rift Valley University College*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Unpublished Thesis.
- Harrison, U. & Mason, E. (2007). Does gender matter? Women business angels and the supply of entrepreneurial finance. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 31 (3), 445-472.
- Hisrich, L., Peters, O. & Shepherd, E. (2008). *Entrepreneurship* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Co.Inc.
- Hisrich, R. D. (2005). *Entrepreneurship*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- ILO (2006) *Vulnerability and young women Entrepreneurs: A case study of Ethiopian Informal Economy*. Geneva: International Labor Organization. Retrieved on 16-5-10, from [http://www.cartierwomensinitiative.com/docs/Ethiopia\\_n\\_women\\_entrepreneurs\\_ILO](http://www.cartierwomensinitiative.com/docs/Ethiopia_n_women_entrepreneurs_ILO)
- Kenton, B. W. & Ervin L.B. (2000). Re-engineering the undergraduate business core curriculum: aligning business schools with business for improved performance at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com>.
- Kudehinbus O. L. (2001) A paradigm of entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 11:17-27
- Kuzilwa, M. (2005). The role of credit for small business success: A study of the National Entrepreneurship Development Fund in Tanzania. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 14 (2).

- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. NERDC Press, Lagos, Nigeria.
- NCSA, K. T. (2007). Introduction to special issue of Small Business Economics on female entrepreneurship in developed and developing economies. *Small Business Economics*, 37 (4), 393 – 396.
- Odulami, J. O. (2001). Entrepreneurial context of business curriculum. *Book of Reading in Business Education*. NABE.1 (1).
- Okpukpara, J. (2009). Microfinance paper wrap-up: Strategies for effective loan delivery to small scale enterprises in rural Nigeria. *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, 1 (2), 41-48.
- Osuala, E. C. (2009). *Business and computer education*. Cheston Agency Ltd. Enugu: Nigeria.