

WOMEN EDUCATION AND SUBSISTENCE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN YENAGOA BAYELSA STATE NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper is on assessing women education and subsistence entrepreneurship in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to assess the factors that motivate women into entrepreneurship, ascertain the challenges facing women towards subsistence entrepreneurship and assess the contributions of women education towards subsistence entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The paper however recommends that women entrepreneurs should attempt to go for training independent of the conditions that drove them to begin business of their own. Regardless of whether they are inherently or extraneously persuaded, training and skill achievement is unavoidable for viable and proficient operation. This will help in improving the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Key Words: Subsistence Entrepreneurship, Women Education

INTRODUCTION

According to Viswanathan, Echambadi, Venugopal and Sridharan (2014), subsistence entrepreneurship is defined as entrepreneurial actions, undertaken in the informal sector of the economy, by individuals living in poverty in bottom of the pyramid or subsistence marketplace to create value for their consumers. They posited that subsistence entrepreneurs confront a twofold danger: they work with insignificant assets, and work in settings set apart by incapacitating formal institutional voids, indeterminate institutional conditions and the overall absence of market-based establishments and encouraging tenets, along these lines trying their innovative endeavours very difficult. It is embraced by performing artists who are totally installed in, and execute inside the casual markets in which they work.

Subsistence entrepreneurs live in thickly organized social networks (Viswanathan, Gajendiran & Venkatesan, 2008) offering ascend to consistent up close and personal meetings and social trades. Additionally, by righteousness of their social inserting inside the subsistence networks and by living in destitution themselves, the lives of subsistence networks and by living in neediness themselves, the lives of subsistence business people are interwoven vigorously with those of their clients prompting the advancement of extraordinary relational connections and emotional responsibilities. Without financial and institutional systems, subsistence entrepreneurs depend only on these social duties to support and settle their organizations (Viswanathan, Rosa & Ruth, 2010). Subsequently considering these subsistence ventures can

really add to a superior comprehension of the creation and support of their proximate network level social and financial linkages. From a practical perspective, subsistence commercial centers are huge parts of the worldwide economy (Viswanathan, Sridharan, Ritchie, Venugopal & Jung, 2012) and thus a comprehension of subsistence entrepreneurship would empower better structure of organizations and societal systems. From a hypothetical stance, subsistence entrepreneurs make financial value for them to subsist, as well as give monetary and social incentive to the proximate network on the loose. Such social trades help build meso-level network trade frameworks, which, thus, add to creating and keeping up the supposed "casual economy."

Women Education in entrepreneurship is the training of people to comprehend and create key pioneering characteristics, aptitudes and practices. Entrepreneurial aptitudes, for example, imagination, imaginativeness, snappy decision-making and risk-taking are not just important to the individuals who have enthusiasm for beginning and developing their own business, yet are applicable to all as these abilities are fundamental in the workplace, in their daily activities in managing the home and to the society at large. As the saying goes that learning never ends, so should women education in entrepreneurship never end; successful entrepreneurs continue throughout the lifetime of their business. According to Adesulu (2010), to achieve the vision 20:2020 objectives, we must not only teach entrepreneurship in our universities, we also need to be ready to practice entrepreneurship.

This research makes a case for the women education on entrepreneurship as a major tool to reduce the vulnerabilities of women especially those from lower socio-economic levels. As the saying goes, educate a woman and you educate a nation.

Historical Review of Women Education on Subsistence Entrepreneurship

The enormous tasks, roles and responsibilities bring undertaken by women in contemporary families, societies and national affairs cannot be undermined. "Women entrepreneurs around the globe are significant supporters of the economy, as they are having any kind of effect in the financial field. They contribute various thoughts and a lot of vitality and capital assets to their networks, and produce employments just as make extra work for providers and other turn off business linkages (Iyiola & Azhu, 2014). In many emerging nations, because of the expanding monetary downturn, bringing about loss of employments for the men folk, women as moms and caretakers of family soundness, accept the accountability of keeping the family on course through the running of microenterprises. Thus, ladies have been known to forfeit their lives for the survival of their families, in the midst of their regenerative capacity (Garba, 2011). This implies the disregard of ladies in any improvement procedure comprises a human waste. With this impact, research appears to suggest that women in developing world (e.g. Nigeria) are picking up a proportion of self-sufficiency as impression of their job in rising economies is by all accounts weaning. In some emerging or low pay nations, ladies assume imperative job in destitution decrease of their close family particularly where the salary of the spouse/guardians is exceptionally small to cook for the family fundamental needs. They really assume an integral job in the battle against destitution. Women entrepreneurs in Nigeria are real supporters of monetary development on the grounds that most assuredly, they are creating work (Iyiola & Azhu, 2014).

Several investigations have uncovered that the expanding rate of ladies support in business has a positive connection with increment in the monetary weight bringing about more noteworthy attention to the financial significance of ladies in a country (Thomson, 2002; Minniti & Arenius, 2003; Allen, Minnit & Langouitz, 2006; Tambunan, 2008). In most developing countries such as Nigeria, the vast informal sector business ranging from street vendors to one-person apparel makers, are run by women and the available statistics suggests that this sector account for more than half of the economic activities in these countries (Soetan, 1997; Thomson, 2002; Aina, 2003; Garba, 2011).

Generally, women entrepreneurs suffer lot of setbacks and constraints in exploiting their potentials unlike their men counterparts. A wide range of factors are responsible for limiting the progress of women entrepreneurs and these factors range from socio-economic, cultural, political to family factors.

Theoretical Foundation

This study considers Lord Marshall, Schumpeter and Kirzner, who have all contributed to the understanding of entrepreneurship and its processes in different economies.

Marshall's (1920) theory explains equilibrium conditions of the market under the assumptions of perfect knowledge information and perfect competition. According to Loasby (1982), Marhsall analyzes the normal running of the business as entrepreneurship, but recognizes that some businessmen are much more enterprising than others. Economic progress is achieved in terms of a variety of small improvements in the production process and in the range of quality of products available. According to Tiryaki (2010), this progress does not depend on "one great" man like the Schumpeterians posit, bit "many men."

Schumpeter sees the entrepreneur as the way to financial improvement. The Schumpeterian entrepreneur can choose and coordinate, he is creative, applying new strategies for generation available, in this way opening up new markets. This makes him the financial "extraordinary". His innovative capacity allows the entrepreneur to make overabundance benefits, however just briefly as imitators that enter the market utilizing similar strategies. As indicated by Tiryaki (2010), Schumpeter's entrepreneurs assumes the job of a progressive in making of new creation capacities and techniques. Entrepreneurship is excessively unsafe, in this way making it a rare asset that ought to be empowered by giving some insurance to lessen the hazard they take. Schumpeter places that the reward for advancements and hazard is surplus benefits.

As per Kirzner (1997), the entrepreneur who sees (finds) a profit opportunity, is finding the presence of a gain which had not been seen by him or any other individual and this benefit opportunity animates enterprise. Nonetheless, the benefit emerges from exchange and not development. For change to happen, the entrepreneur needs motivating forces and this motivators originate from the distinction among specialists as far as data and knowledge, "the pure innovative capacity comprises in purchasing shoddy and moving dear-that is, in the revelation that the market has underestimated something with the goal that its actual market value has up to now not been commonly figured it out. The ready entrepreneur understands that a change has happened and sees benefit openings. The researcher's situation of entrepreneurship lies unequivocally with Schumpeter who sees the entrepreneur as

imaginative and inventive. Be that as it may, not undermining the entrepreneur should be alarm and accept on profits open doors as Kirzner set.

Women Education

Women are considered to assume a developing job in business everywhere throughout the world. According to Nwoye (2002), Nigerian women have colossal limit of HR. From time; women in offer to help their families have been in a roundabout way or straightforwardly associated with entrepreneurship either through cultivating, angling, weaving materials, preparing ranch items and exchanging the business sectors, along these lines adding to the economic growth. According to Morse (1973), inability to focus on ladies' financial exercises is both ethically weak and monetarily foolish. Enhancing the chances of ladies to monetary exercises is a noteworthy prerequisite for emerging nations to accomplish expanded dimensions of financial development and advancement.

Women's productive activities, particularly in industry, empower them economically and enable them to contribute more to overall development. Regardless of whether they are engaged with little or medium scale production exercises, or in the casual or formal parts, ladies' entrepreneurial exercises are a method for financial survival as well as have social repercussions for the ladies themselves and their social condition (UNIDO, 2001). Since ladies are commonly moderately more fragile physically and socially consigned to the foundation, they keep on confronting difficulties in this continuously democratic society. Ladies and girls are liable to maltreatment at local and non-residential dimension. They are more vulnerable by nature and generalizations put upon them put them at a distraught position; the trouble in persuading different individuals from society to see them past being moms, spouses, cooks and home watchers. Ladies still need to battle against various generalizations to be viewed as equivalent with men in the business world. Adedeji (2010), noticed that education in each propelled nation is a main consideration for the development of entrepreneurs. He noticed that in cutting edge nations of the world, 20-25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is utilized in propelling training, where as in Nigeria it is a long ways.

Subsistence Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined as the pursuit of unexploited or underexploited business opportunities (Acs, 2006). Conventional entrepreneurship research has centered on wealth creation (Hitt, Duane, David & Cheryl, 2011), and the pursuit of competitive advantage (Zahra & George, 2002). Research has suggested that the entrepreneurial process moves along these stages: entrepreneurial alertness, opportunity recognition, opportunity exploitation, and growth decisions (Webb, Justin, Duane & David, 2009). Entrepreneurs are posited to either employ deliberate search to discover opportunities that arise out of competitive imperfections (Kirzner, 1973), or to possess market-specific knowledge and hence make serendipitous discoveries (Shane, 2000).

The argument of subsistence entrepreneurship firstly looks at wealth creation and competitive advantage reflects an entrepreneurial perspective of individuals with sufficient resources and having an active choice to start a new enterprise (Acs, 2006). Interestingly, in subsistence settings, entrepreneurship is on a very basic level about survival (Viswanathan *et al.*, 2010). Entrepreneurs frequently need practice in sending intellectual aptitudes to recognize, assess and abuse development oriented chances (Viswanathan, 2007). They take

part in entrepreneurship out of need (Reynolds, Niels, Erkkö, Steve, De Bono, Isabel, Lopez-Garcia & Nancy, 2005) and center the business around an ability or asset with little respect to whether their business alternatives truly speaks to aggressive separation in the commercial center. Thus, the entrepreneurial procedure could unfurl contrastingly in subsistence commercial centers and could unfurl altogether different results. This isn't to contend that subsistence entrepreneurs totally need intellectual qualities or aptitudes, yet to feature the precise restricted development and market-introductions with which they commonly enter the entrepreneurial procedure.

Most academic work on entrepreneurship has concentrated on exercises in a "formal" economy, i.e. economic settings that contain capital and labour markets, extensive physical infrastructure, mechanisms of contracts and regulatory enforcement and property rights (Webb *et al.*, 2009). In contrast, subsistence marketplaces exemplify an "informal" economy, characterized by uncertain institutional contexts and "institutional voids," that is, the lack of the above market-based institutions and resources (Mair & Marti, 2006). A significant proportion of global economic activity takes place in the informal sector: approximately 17 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in developed countries and approximately 40 to 60 percent in developing countries (Schneider, 2002). Given such practical importance, it is vital to push the frontiers of entrepreneurship research in informal economies. Although interest in doing so is now growing (Webb *et al.*, 2009), the study of entrepreneurial action in poverty contexts, a special case of entrepreneurship in an informal economy, has received very limited attention.

Issues Facing Women Entrepreneurship in Nigeria as relates to SMEs

Several studies revealed that Nigerian women are making tremendous success in entrepreneurial activities, but they are being constrained with several challenges (Soetan, 1997; Thomson, 2002; Aina, 2003; Farrington, 2006; Barrett, 2006; Mordi, Simpson, Singh & Okafor, 2010; Arenius & Minniti, 2003). These challenges include high rates of business failures, low productivity, no access to capital, credit and labour among others. It is noted that some of the government policies that emphasized economic enhancement are sometimes gender-blind as women are explicitly excluded in some of the programmes. In line with this, Dionco-Adetayo *et al.*, (2000), investigated and evaluated the implementation of several Nigerian government programmes. Their investigation focused on finding out how far the programs have succeeded in achieving their primal objectives of empowering women to be involved in developmental issues, both economically and socially. It attempted to uncover the possible implementation gap problems and determine the extent of which these gaps have affected the effectiveness of the policy implementation (Dionco-Adetayo, Makinde, & Adetayo, 2000).

One of the key factors in determining the success of development in any society is the status and position of women (Olutunla, 2001; Ogundele & Opeifa, 2003; Ogunleye, 2004). Women are believed to have lower propensity for entrepreneurship compared to men (Koellinger *et al.*, 2008 cited in Kirkwood, 2009). Studies such as Coleman (2007); Kirkwood (2009) and Garba (2011), opined that women are generally less growth oriented than men. This may be attributable to the inherent constraints women face in their entrepreneurial activities which continued to be a stumbling block for their entrepreneurial growth and success. In Africa generally, the literacy level for women is low, particularly among the rural dwellers, hence their entrepreneurial activities are not beyond retailing and micro businesses (Aina, 2003).

Institutionally, banks are too elitist in nature, women as 'the poorest of the poor' (Aina, 2003) have no specialized channel to approach banks for credit (Iheduru, 2002; Thomson, 2002). Banks' loans are structured for short term lending operation with strict collateral conditions, which most women cannot meet up with. The banks are mainly interested in short-term LPO financing with high interest and administrative charges. These are social-cultural impediments which prevent women from approaching the banks for loans. Most of the development banks and poverty alleviation support financial institutions failed because they were not tailored to meet the needs of women. Banks prefer to provide large loans as result of the high cost of administration involved in a large number of customers.

Another constrains that women entrepreneurs face is in the area of family issues. At home base, most fathers and husbands usually restrain their daughters/wives rather than allowing them to explore opportunities and portray their potentials in the business world in the name of providing protection for them against being exposed to the cruelty that characterized business world (Mordi *et al.*, 2010; Arenius & Minniti, 2003). Consequently, this notion of protection creates dependency syndrome among women and further limit their potentialities required for business success. The after effect of this is overdependence of most women entrepreneurs on their family members, friends, husbands and associations for decision making (Singh, Mordi, Okafor & Simpson, 2010).

Relationship between Women Education and Subsistence Entrepreneurship

Women entrepreneurial education is seen as a distinct social institution that seeks the establishment and maintenance of a functioning economy through job creation with a wide range of interest put into consideration especially as regards unemployment reduction and poverty eradication (Ekundayo & Babatunde, 2014). It is an orientation that seeks to transform graduates from job seekers into job creators in order to reduce graduate unemployment, eradicate poverty and it increases students' interest in entrepreneurship as a career.

Marvis (2013), noted the positive impact of entrepreneurship courses and programmes in higher education, on the employability of graduates and on society and the economy (specifically employment, innovation and welfare effects) has well been established and acknowledged across the globe. It is a skill development programme designed to expose and prepare students for real work in which they are likely to meet in their selected courses after graduation from school. It is the accepted skills training programme which forms part of the approved minimum academic standards in the various degree programmes in all Nigerian Universities (Usman & Tasmin, 2015).

The Bayelsan subsistence entrepreneurs are characterized with very less or no education. They have lack of asset and capital enough to spend on entrepreneurial activity. Before starting the entrepreneurship they are mostly dependent on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. Lacking enough arable land and proper agricultural practices, education and often the production is not enough for the survival and they have to work on rent as manual labour for others in agriculture or construction works. The aspiring entrepreneurs of the subsistence setting also mostly lack technical skills for starting an enterprise. The driving force for the entrepreneurs in the beginning of their entrepreneurial process is the need for fulfilling the basic requirements of their families. Therefore the characteristics of a conventional entrepreneur such as "being assertive", having internal locus of control, needing independence

with low need for support and conformity from others, inclination for high risk and tolerance to ambiguity are not applicable to the subsistence entrepreneur (Low & MacMillan, 1988).

Subsistence Entrepreneurship in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

The Bayelsans' subsistence setting enterprises are mostly run by one person entrepreneur, usually the family head of the household. The characteristics of the entrepreneur and their household are usually the characteristic of the enterprises as well. The enterprises are startups with very small initial capital often provided by an external agency such as an NGO or Microfinance. They do not have a defined business model and strategy. The longevity and profitability of these enterprises are contingent to whether they are local resource and raw material dependent or are dependent on external materials. Businesses of local resource exhaustive enterprises such as crops, fishes, vegetable processing enterprises is less elastic to the changes in the external market and incur less production cost making them more profitable compared to enterprises dependent on imported raw materials such as fabrics, soap, scent and incense manufacturing enterprises. The scalability and profitability of the enterprise is also dependent on whether it is service providing or product manufacturing and technology intensive or labour intensive or both. Labour intensive business are usually easier to scale up because of easier availability of cheap labour such as handicraft manufacturing, improved farming as opposed to higher cost required for technology intensive enterprise such as herb processing, metal crafting etc. Dependence of the enterprise in local market is opposed to distant market also affects the enterprises' success. Since the entrepreneurs are usually less inept with advanced marketing skills if they have their business less dependent on distant market they are more likely to have stable business. More distant the market lesser they have the competitive advantage and skills to deal with it. If the enterprises are easier to replicate then their ability to differentiate themselves from others is crucial for their sustainability (UNDP, 2010).

CONCLUSION

This research paper concludes that facilitated entrepreneurship development program as an intervention for poverty alleviation has been an effective tool in the context of Bayelsan Subsistence setting. Entrepreneurship development program directly impacts poverty alleviation through increasing the income level of beneficiaries. This increment in income also trickles the empowerment of various other aspects of beneficiaries' wellbeing such as education, healthcare, social-political status and identity. Therefore, enabling the impoverished ones in subsistence setting to start their own business is indeed a sustainable method of poverty alleviation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research paper recommends that;

- The stakeholders of education should take a critical look and make a case for the entrepreneurial education of the women. In view of the vulnerabilities of women faces in a hardship ridden economy, and as the woman of tomorrow with the burden of dealing with female role definitions brought on by cultural barriers.
- Entrepreneurial behaviours can be developed, practiced and learned therefore it is important to expose all women to entrepreneurial education. It should be started as

early as primary school and progress through all levels of schooling to further inculcate and develop entrepreneurial skills in young people.

- Women should understand that they play important role in nation's building, they should therefore be prepared to start-up entrepreneurial activity whether they are supported or not. This will help in building up their self-confidence and self-esteem which are important factors in taking the risks involved in starting and growing entrepreneurial ventures.
- Women entrepreneurs should take out time to consider the challenges other women in business are facing and find out how best those challenges could be tackled before taking the decision of going into business, If women entrepreneurs were aware of the challenges they might face, they could better prepare mentally and strategically toward the challenges.

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