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Training and Entrepreneurial Qualities of Rural Women for Sustainable Development in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study was carried out in Abia state to determine the influence of various forms of business training on the entrepreneurship qualities of rural women. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. Survey methodology was adopted, as a set of structured questionnaires was used to elicit responses from a sample size of three hundred and sixty (360) respondents. Multi- stage random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. Face validity technique was applied in ascertaining the validity of the instruments. Thus, the questionnaires were handed over to two academics in the Department of Home Science/Hospitality Management and Tourism, Michael Okpara, University of Agriculture, Umudike. These intellectuals ensured that the questions were consistent with the topic of the paper. To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out around the university community, where a total of twenty-five (25) respondents were drafted for the purpose, to determine whether the responses would be in line with the results expected from the research work. The instrument was employed twice, and the data collected were compared to see if they met the expected reliability rate. After the administration of the instruments, an interval of two weeks was given for the re-administration of the instruments. The data obtained from the two tests were then subjected to the main reliability test using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Statistical Procedure. Furthermore, results from the study were analyzed with simple descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, percentages and means. Multiple regression was used to determine the influence of various training activities on the development of entrepreneurial qualities among the rural women in the state. Results show that majority of the female entrepreneurs in Abia State had received training on business development skills, moral support and community relation, customer recognition/rewards and training as well as on basic accounting principles and customer management/ relationship. Result of the Multiple regression estimate shows that all the predictor variables tested at 5% level of significance were entrepreneurship qualities. As trainings on product quality management had a strong and negative influence with the development of entrepreneurship qualities, others had positive relationship with it. Based on the result of the study, it was recommended that since entrepreneurship training improves entrepreneurship qualities, government should mobilize resources for mass training of rural dwellers to enable them to explore the innate entrepreneurship potentials and put them to appropriate use.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Rural Women, Entrepreneurial Qualities, Training, Sustainable Development

Introduction

In most developing countries of the world, a continuously widening gaps exist between the urban and rural areas. United Nations Industrial Development Organization-UNIDO (2011) noted that about half of the world's poor who subsist at income level less than two dollars a day are found in rural areas. UNIDO (2011) elaborated that close to 75 per cent of the world's poor people live in rural areas. It

regretted that despite the greater number of people residing in rural areas, provision of resources and policies are continuously biased in favor of urban settlements. The imbalance in the spate of development between the rural and urban areas in Nigeria has led to a constant drift of able-bodied manpower especially the men to urban areas. The migration of rural men to urban areas leaves unbalanced family structures, with women most times taking over as household heads. This widens and perpetuates the poverty level of Nigerian rural communities to the extent that it can best be described as a vicious cycle (Moa-Liberty, Tunde, and Tinuola, 2016).

Women are the worst hit of rural poverty, Muhammad and Andow (2011) wrote that women and girls constitute an appreciable percentage of the rural dwellers of the world's poor. Poverty level of women is worse than that of men due to gender disparities in education, employment opportunities and decision-making power. Rural women are mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture as well as in micro and small-scale enterprises (MSE) such as food processing, weaving, personal services, beverage preparation, and selling of snacks. In Nigeria, women constitute over 50 per cent of the total agricultural labor force (UNIDO, 2011). Few rural women engage in non-agrarian economic activities at least at the medium scale. Ozigbo (2014) lamented that such situation is a threat to security and economic integration globally and demands urgent intervention.

Training is the process of systematically acquiring job related knowledge, skill and attitude to perform with effectiveness and efficiency specific tasks in an organization (Mullins,2010). Acquisition of knowledge and skills is not desired for its own sake in industrial and commercial enterprises, and it is utility that predisposes an organization to invest financial and material resources. The skills required by entrepreneur can be classified into three main areas: technical skills, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills.

Training contributes positively to the growth and performance of enterprises. Hence, in any organization, the needs of training rise when there is the need to improve, adapt and adjust to changes and solve problems to improve on both employee and organizational performance (Getahun, 2018). According to the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEC), (2019), quality is simply the degree to which someone or something meets the customer's needs or expectations. Quality depicts excellence, a distinctive character or trait. Thus, entrepreneurial quality refers to the excellent attributes, characteristics or distinctive nature of an entrepreneur (Palanivelu & Manikandan, 2015). One of the qualities of entrepreneurship is the ability to discover an investment opportunity and to organize an enterprise, thereby contributing to economic growth. It involves taking of risks and making the necessary investment under conditions of uncertainty and innovating, planning and taking decisions to increase production in agriculture, business, industry, (Palanivelu & Manikandan, 2015).

The quality of entrepreneurship training ensures sustainable development in any society, this paper considers sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" Emas, 2015). Thus, this study investigates the training and entrepreneurial qualities of women for sustainable development in Abia state

Problem Statement

The only way to encourage women into self-employment is to recognize that there is a clear need to widen access to business start-up and growth training. However, data in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, (2017a and 2017b) show that fewer women entrepreneurs have tertiary education or managerial experience globally. The shortage of skills contributes to women's lower presence in technology based manufacturing especially in retail. Siba (2019) asserts that women may be lagging in some aspects of soft skills such as self starting behaviors, innovation, identifying and exploiting new opportunities, goal setting, planning, and overcoming obstacles. This study therefore investigates the impact of training on the development of entrepreneurship qualities and potentials of rural women.

Research Objectives

i. To ascertain the entrepreneurship trainings attended by rural women.
ii. To find out the entrepreneurial qualities possessed by rural women in Abia State.
iii. To examine the influence of training on entrepreneurial qualities of rural women.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed the survey research design, where it gathered information from target population of women on the subject matter and relates this information to the objective of the study, after which the results is generalizable to other relevant group of women.

Population of the Study

The study was carried out in Abia State. Abia state is divided into three senatorial districts each having a metropolitan headquater. These include Abia South with Aba the entrepreneurship hub of the state as its major urban area, Abia Central houses Umuahia the State Capital and Abia North with Ohafia as its headquarters. The state has seventeen Local Government Areas. The state is blessed with very fertile agrarian land thus the rural dwellers are predominantly and primarily farmers. This however is combined with some non-agro entrepreneurship activities.

Abia state has a total human population of two million, eight hundred and thirty thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine people (2,830,999) people. The population figure for the females is One million, three hundred and ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred and six (1,399,806) representing 49.4 percent of the entire population for the state (National Population Commission 2006). All the women that were involved in any form of entrepreneurial activity were involved in the study.

Sampling Technique/Sample Size

The respondents for the study were selected using multi - stage random sampling technique. In the first stage, three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from each of the Senatorial Districts; this gave a total of nine (9) LGAs. In the second stage, two autonomous communities were chosen from each of the sampled LGAs; this gave a total of eighteen (18) autonomous communities. Finally, twenty (20) respondents were chosen from each of the selected autonomous communities to get a total sample size of three hundred and sixty (360) women.

Method of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire titled Women Entrepreneurial Training (WET) was used to elicit information on the

entrepreneurship training attended by the respondents as well as the level of entrepreneurial development. To ensure validity of the instruments used in this study, face and content validity was established by two academics in the Department of Home Science/Hospitality Management and Tourism, Michael Okpara, University of Agriculture, Umudike.

Likert five-point scaling system of very strong (4 points), strong (3 points), average (2 points), weak (1 point) and very weak (0) was used to record the responses. A threshold of 2 was obtained by adding the points and dividing by 5 the total scale, i.e 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 + 0 = 10 ÷ 5 = 2. Any response of 2 or above is considered high while less than 2 is low.

Method of Data Collection Analysis

The data collected from the study were analyzed using frequency count, percentages and means as well as multiple regression. Multiple regression was used to estimate the influence of training on the entrepreneurial qualities of rural women in the study area. The regression estimate was specified as follows:

Y_1 = F (X_1, X_2, X_3 ……X_{10})
Where Y =Entrepreneurial quality
X_1 = Business Development training
X_2 = Training on marketing skills development
X_3 = Training on quality management
X_4 = Training on Customer management/ relationship
X_5 = Training on procurement and advisory services
X_6 = course on technical skills Development
X_7 = Training on business information management
X_8 = Training on Basic accounting skills
X_9 = Training on moral support and community relation
X_{10} = Training on Customer recognition/awards

Results

Entrepreneurship Trainings attended by Rural Women

Table1 shows that 58.89% of the respondents had been trained on business development strategies while 56.39% got training on moral support and community relations, 51.94% of the respondents had training on technical and managerial skills development whereas 46.39% had for training on customer recognition and rewards. However female entrepreneurs that had acquired training on basic accounting skills accounted for 33.89% while those that were trained on customer management and relationship made up 30.00%. The table equally shows that very little number of the respondents had gotten training on business information management (11.67%) and quality management (9.44%)

Table 1: Entrepreneurship Training Attended by the Respondents

Entrepreneurship Training	Frequency	Percentage
1. Business Development training	212	58.89
2. Marketing course	87	24.17
3. Quality management course	34	9.44
4. Customer management/ relationship Course	108	30.00
5. Training on procurement and advisory services	89	24.72
6. course on technical skills Development	187	51.94
7. Training on business information management	42	11.67
8. Training on Basic accounting skills	122	33.89
9. Training on moral support and community relation	203	56.39
10. Training on Customer recognition/rewards	167	46.39

Entrepreneurial Qualities possessed by Rural Women in Abia State

Table 2 shows that rural women have high entrepreneurial qualities. Cumulatively, the women had mean score of 3.0 which is above the threshold of 2. Specifically, on the quality of being self-reliant and having good management skills, the respondents had mean score of 3.1 respectively. Also, with a mean score of 3.0, the result shows that the respondents were hardworking, had self-confidence and were very knowledgeable in their area of businesses.

Table 2: Analysis of the entrepreneurial qualities of rural women in Abia State

Entrepreneurial Qualities	Very Strong	Strong	Average	Weak	Very Weak	Mean
1. Ability to Satisfy Customers	118 (32.78)	121 (33.61)	76 (21.11)	31 (8.61)	14 (3.89)	2.8
2.Good Communication Skills	102 (28.33)	132 (36.67)	88 (24.44)	28 (7.79)	10 (2.78)	2.8
3. Good Customer Relationship	124 (34.44)	109 (30.28)	91 (25.28)	29 (8.06)	7 (1.94)	2.9
4. Innovativeness	108 (30.00)	143 (39.72)	82 (22.78)	23 (6.39)	4 (1.11)	2.9
5. Hardworking	134(37.22)	138(38.33)	66 (18.33)	19 (5.28)	3(0.83)	3.0
6. Good Business Knowledge	132 (36.67)	121 (33.61)	79 (21.94)	22 (6.11)	6 (1.67)	3.0
7. Good Management Skill	144 (40.00)	132 (36.67)	74 (20.56)	8 (2.22)	2 (0.56)	3.1
8. Self-Confidence	129 (35.83)	142 (39.44)	67 (18.61)	17 (4.72)	5 (1.38)	3.0
9. Self-Reliance	131 (36.38)	146 (40.56)	69(19.17)	11 (3.06)	3 (0.83)	3.1
Cumulative mean						3.0

Multiple Regression Estimate of Influence of Training on Entrepreneurial Qualities of Rural Women

The nine indices of entrepreneurial quality considered was taken to be the dependent variable while ten independent variables were used in the analysis. These were business development training, marketing course, quality management course, customer management/ relationship course, training on procurement and advisory services, course on technical skills development, training on business information management, training on basic accounting skills, training on moral support and community relation and training on customer recognition/awards. The independent variables were tested for significance at 5% level of significance.

Result of the analysis shows that from the fitted multiple regression model, that the regression coefficient obtained was 2.07 signifying the entrepreneurial quality to be realized in the absence of any form of training to the entrepreneurs. The coefficient of determination r^2 was obtained as 83.4%. Specifically, there is a strong influence of entrepreneurship qualities and training on business development (0.458), training on business information management (0.288), training on procurement and advisory services (0.252), training on technical skills development (0.224), training on customer recognition/awards (0.152), customer management/ relationship

training (0.131), training on moral support and community relation (0.096), training on basic accounting skills (0.052) and training on marketing (0.017).

Table 3: Estimate of Training Factors on Entrepreneurial Qualities of Rural Women

Constant	Coef	S.E. Coef	*T*	P
Predictor	2.06551	0.03821	54.06	0.000
X1	0.45835	0.03246	14.12	0.000
X2	0.01726	0.02343	0.74	0.462
X3	-0.09890	0.04769	-2.07	0.039
X4	0.13061	0.02566	5.09	0.000
X5	0.25268	0.03296	7.67	0.000
X6	0.22476	0.02223	10.11	0.000
X7	0.28813	0.04330	6.65	0.000
X8	0.05218	0.02751	1.90	0.059
X9	0.09637	0.03642	2.65	0.009
X10	0.15253	0.02363	6.45	0.000
R2	0.834			
S	0.179067			
Adjusted R2	0.829			

Discussion of Findings

The entrepreneurship training that the female entrepreneurs in Abia State rural areas had attended were presented in Table 1. Thus, the fact that most of the rural women had received training on various aspects of entrepreneurship development and business management is an indication that women were better prepared to engage and strive in business activities. Nnadi (2014) noted that except the government explores and trains fledgling entrepreneurs, the country will miss her thrust in the application of potential contribution of women for poverty alleviation. The result agrees with the popular assumption that establishing, running and maintaining a business enterprise is a product of planning achieved through building of knowledge and ideas. On the other hand, an insignificant percentage of the female entrepreneurs in the rural areas of Abia State had training on information management and quality development. Most businesses collapse due to absence of training on basic managerial skills, marketing strategies, recruitment policies, innovation abilities and access to relevant business information and communication skills.

The result on Table 2 shows that rural women in Abia State had very high and appreciable entrepreneurial qualities. It has been established that a strong and significant relationship exist between training and skill development and entrepreneurship and business management ability (Brinda and Dileep, 2011; Dan and Popescu, 2017). Munene (2013) asserted that even among poorly performing entrepreneurs, training had a way of improving the entrepreneurship potentials and qualities of startup entrepreneurs.

In Table 3, the result shows various aspects of training impacted on the entrepreneurial qualities of the rural female entrepreneurs. Njoroge and Gathungu (2013) states that the key to the success of establishing good entrepreneurship culture of rural Africa is training and education, which depends on the involvement of stakeholders, including state, educators, and entrepreneurs

The study also shows a strong but negative influence of entrepreneurship quality and training on quality management. That a negative relationship existed between training on quality management and entrepreneurial qualities of the rural women may not be taken that training is not required to bring about improvement in entrepreneurial qualities, rather the skill an entrepreneur should crave for is that which is directly related to skills required in the operation of the business (Msoka, 2013).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined training and entrepreneurial qualities of rural women for sustainable development in Abia state and concludes that training is an essential factor in enhancing the entrepreneurial qualities of rural women for sustainable development.

Based on the findings of this study, the paper recommends as follows:

i. Training and orientation programs should be organized for rural women to enhance participation in entrepreneurship activities. Providing such training can help break the cycle of poverty among women. These trainings can be organized by Home Economists in extension under the agricultural development projects and the poverty alleviation programs instituted by government. Government should mobilize resources for mass training of rural dwellers to enable explore the entrepreneurship potentials

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