



# The Role of Women Empowerment in the Development of Women Entrepreneurship in Lagos State

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**Abstract:** Women Entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all sectors of the economy globally through the display of originality, ingenuity, innovation, and creativity, which has enhanced productivity and by this economic growth and development can be achieved. The study examined the role of women empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used for this study. One research question was used and three hypotheses were tested to guide the study. The population for the study were all women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The sample for the study was women entrepreneurs in Lagos State and a simple random sampling procedure was used to draw the 111 that participated in the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Role of Women Empowerment in the Development of Women Entrepreneurship in Lagos State” with a Cronbach alpha coefficient value of 0.75. The data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency count and percentages while Chi-Square was used for null hypotheses testing with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21). The result from the study revealed that women’s empowerment had a significant role to play in the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State. The study recommends that the government and all stakeholders in the field of women entrepreneurship must join hands together to promote women entrepreneurship through adequate educational, financial and skill empowerment because the benefits the economy stands to gain from the female entrepreneurial activity are capable of transforming all sectors of the economy where these women businesses are domiciled and by extension bring about the much desired economic development of the nation

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Women Entrepreneurship, Skill Empowerment, Educational Empowerment, Financial Empowerment

## 1. Introduction

Women empowerment is one of the current issues which have featured prominently in both national and international debates for some time now in both developed and developing nations. Women empowerment is tailored towards raising the position of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment equips and permits women to take decisions about their life; and give them the opportunity to redefine gender roles, which provides freedom to pursue desired objectives. Women empowerment is achieved when women are given the opportunity to participate fully in the

educational, social, political and economic aspects of life. This means accepting and allowing women to participate in the decision-making process that bothers on educational, social, political and economic spheres of life.

Empowerment of women has become very important because of the contribution it would bring to the growth of society and the nation at large. Women empowerment would help in improving the standard of life of women in the cities as well as in the rural areas, stopping crimes against women, decreasing domestic violence, giving numerous social and economic profits, and resolving societal challenges like

poverty, unemployment, birth control, achieving complete growth in every sector of the economy. Women empowerment also assists in encouraging women education which leads to the employment of a significant number of a country's population as well as providing equity and equality for women in all facets of life (Mahbub, 2021). The empowerment of women could go a long way in assisting the growth and development of women entrepreneurship.

The empowerment of women can be examined from different perspectives, such as educational, financial, economic, political and skill empowerment. Educational empowerment of women is meant to increase their intelligence, skills, knowledge and to provide them with better earning opportunities (Forgeard, 2022). Political empowerment is a way of enabling women to achieve equality, rights, fulfilment and involvement in political matters and processes (Mahbub, 2021). Financially empowered women understand how to spend money, make wise financial decisions, and have access to resources to help them achieve set goals (Consumers and Business Affairs, 2022). Women who possess skills have the opportunity to earn high incomes with better livelihoods and confidence to support their families (Vyas, 2018). Economic empowerment of women provides them with the education, training and skills needed to find a job, earn an income and become self-supporting. This gives them more control over their lives and increases their happiness, productivity and life satisfaction (Seven Women, 2020). When these dimensions of empowerment are attained it can go a long way to assist women who venture into the world of self-employment and entrepreneurship to achieve their desired goals.

Women entrepreneurship has become the fastest-growing class of entrepreneurship globally and has received the attention of many academicians, particularly in recent years. The study of women entrepreneurship has experienced tremendous growth, gaining a worldwide agreement among academicians and providing an understanding of all factors that explain the challenges that women encounter in taking up an entrepreneurial career (Giuseppina, 2020).

Research has shown that women who have made note-worthy success as entrepreneurs have demonstrated certain characteristics in the course of their journey in business, among the characteristics are; courage, vision, passion and persistence. Aside from the characteristics, some functions that women entrepreneurs perform have also been identified, among which are; developing new business ideas, having the prospects of starting new enterprises, undertaking risks and coping with economic challenges, job creation, introducing new ideas of innovation, contribute to family's income, overall economic growth and balance territorial development (Urmila, 2020).

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

*Women entrepreneurship is carried out by women entrepreneurs who generate business ideas through which business opportunities are discovered from the needs and challenges of the people in the environment, take the initiative*

*to set up an enterprise, organise and combine factors of production, manage the business, undertake risks and handle economic issues involved in operating it. The business ideas and opportunities which abound and are available to all and sundry can be taken up by women if they are adequately empowered.* The need to empower women seems to border on the fact that women like their male counterparts also have the potential to contribute to the development of the economy of nations, but are constrained by some factors that make it difficult for them to also contribute towards the achievement of the societal goals of full production which can be achieved by the full employment of all economic resources (Umogbai, Agwa & Hian, 2018). With the significant percentage of women in a nation, coupled with their multi-roles as mothers, homemakers and managers, they have not been sufficiently empowered, to enable them to be independent without relying on the spouse, family, parents, and relatives.

Ali and Salisu (2019), in a study, reported that in Nigeria, women comprise half of the population, but they are not empowered enough to carry out entrepreneurial activities, so there is a need for the government to give more support to ensure gender equity and give them more rights and opportunities in the enterprises sector of the country. It is known that if women are empowered educationally, trained in different fields, given the opportunity to acquire skills, and provided with micro-loans to invest in businesses and gain entry into the markets they will expand their productions and services thereby contributing to national economic growth and development of the nation. In spite of the role that women entrepreneurs can play in the economy, the sub-sector has continued to be impeded as a result of problems like not being adequately equipped to build and sustain their businesses. As a result of these serious circumstances and discrimination, many have not been able to explore their potential. This study is therefore conducted to examine the role of women empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the role of women empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos state. Specifically, the study examined:

1. the role of educational empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship.
2. the role of financial empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship.
3. the role of skill empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The research questions below were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does the educational empowerment programme influence the development of women entrepreneurship?
2. To what extent does the financial empowerment programme influence the development of women entrepreneurship?
3. To what extent does a skill empowerment programme influence the development of women entrepreneurship?

### 1.5 Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

1. Educational empowerment will not significantly influence the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.
2. Financial empowerment will not significantly influence the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.
3. Skill empowerment will not significantly influence the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.

## 2.0 Literature Reviewed

### 2.1 Concept of Women Empowerment.

Women Empowerment is the process to challenge social limitations and customs for women which are obstacles in the way of their progress to build up their level of self-confidence and also contribute to the nation's development in the areas of political, social and economic life in the local, state and national levels (Mustapha & Yakubu, 2019). Okpoko (2002) stated that women empowerment became famous with the feminist movement which demanded that women become empowered to take control of their own lives; to set their own plans of what to do and how to do things that have an impact on them.

### 2.2 Concept of Women Entrepreneurship

Women Entrepreneurs is defined as an association of women who initiate, establish and manage a business enterprise. Women entrepreneurs are also regarded as women that take part in entrepreneurial activities and undertake the risks involved in combining resources in order to take advantage of the opportunities identified in their immediate environment through the production of goods and services (Tende, 2016). Most of them are involved in micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) which contribute more than 97% of all enterprises, 60% of the nation's GDP and 94% of the total share of employment (Mayoux, 2001, Ndubusi, 2004). The scope of women in entrepreneurship ranges from home-based businesses (HBB) to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSEs) (ILO, 2003).

Worldwide the effect of women entrepreneurs is gaining recognition greatly; globally, the number of female business entrepreneurs has continued to rise rapidly and is making a positive impact on the global economy (Tende, 2016). For instance, women produce over 80 per cent of the food in sub-Saharan Africa, 50-60 % in Asia, 26 % in the Caribbean, 34 % in North Africa and the Middle East, and more than 30 % in Latin America (Ali & Ali, 2013). Women entrepreneurs in many nations have become major contributors to the economy, as they are making a difference in the socio-economic cycle. They contribute numerous ideas, significant energy and capital resources to their communities, and create jobs as well as additional work for suppliers and other spin-off business linkages.

Ali (2016) revealed in a study that women entrepreneurs are involved in business due to push and pull factors which encourage women to be independent. Under the influence of

these factors, women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and are motivated to do something new. Such a situation is described as a pull factor. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility placed on them.

### 2.3 Role of Women Empowerment in Women Entrepreneurship

Women empowerment serves as the foundation for growth and prosperity in any society. By empowering women economically, there is a huge opportunity for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. Globally, entrepreneurial-minded women have continued to display a firm determination to venture into and become a success in today's competitive business world.

In 2021, Nigeria was ranked among the top ten African countries with a high percentage of female-owned businesses according to the MasterCard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2021, which gives insights into the enablers and constraints of female business owners globally. Policymakers in Nigeria are increasingly becoming conscious of the key role of women in the socio-economic development process, evidenced by the many women intervention programs at national, state and local levels. Women contribution to economic activities with emphasis on job creation is quite significant. A survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) revealed that out of 59.6 million jobs created by MSME operators in the year 2017, female entrepreneurs were responsible for 26 million jobs equivalent to 43% contribution compared to 57% contribution by their male counterparts (LSETF, 2021).

Similarly, a recent survey by the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) to understand the key factors and dynamics of job creation within the MSME eco-system revealed that female business owners contribute as much as 35% to employment generation in the MSME eco-system in Lagos State.

### 3.0 Methodology

The research design for the study is Descriptive (survey). The population for the study were all women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The sample for the study was drawn through simple random sampling from women in business within the Lagos State Metropolis and the total number of participants in the study was 111. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Role of Women Empowerment in the Development of Women Entrepreneurship in Lagos State". The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument for data collection was 0.75. Data collected from the study were analysed using frequency, percentages and the Chi-Square tool on the SPSS version 20. All hypotheses are tested at a 0.05 significant level.

### 4.0 Analyses of Responses

This section presents the analysis of responses to the hypotheses tested.

### Test of Hypotheses

The analyses of responses are presented in line with the three hypotheses formulated for the study.

**Hypothesis 1:** Educational empowerment will not significantly influence the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.

**Table 1: Chi-Square Analysis of Educational Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs.**

Degree of freedom	Sample size	Chi-Square Value	P-value
10	111	73.03	.000

Table 1 reveals the chi-square value for educational empowerment of women entrepreneurs as 73.03 with the degree of freedom as 10 and the significant value as .000. The significant value is below the 0.05 significant level set for Alpha, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a significant influence of educational empowerment on the development of women entrepreneurship.

**Hypothesis 2:** Financial empowerment will not significantly influence the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.

**Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis of Financial Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs.**

Degree of freedom	Sample size	Chi-Square Value	P-value
10	111	73.03	.000

Table 2 reveals the chi-square value for financial empowerment of women entrepreneurs as 73.03 with the degree of freedom as 10 and the significant value as .000. The significant value is below the 0.05 significant level set for Alpha, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a significant influence of financial empowerment on the development of women entrepreneurship.

**Hypothesis 3:** Skill empowerment will not significantly influence the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State.

**Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis of Skill Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs.**

Degree of freedom	Sample size	Chi-Square Value	P-value
9	111	81.88	.000

Table 3 reveals the chi-square value for skill empowerment of women entrepreneurs as 81.88 with the degree of freedom as 9 and the significant value as .000. The significant value is below the 0.05 significant level set for Alpha, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a significant influence of skill empowerment on the development of women entrepreneurship.

### 5.0 Discussions Based on Findings

The three hypotheses tested from the study addressed if there were a significant influence of women empowerment on the development of women entrepreneurship. That is if financial,

educational and skill empowerment has any significant influence on the development of women entrepreneurship. The result from the statistical analysis revealed that there was a significant influence as the Chi-Square values had significant P-values. Looking at tables 1, 2 and 3, where the analysis is presented on the tested hypotheses, educational empowerment had a chi-square value of 73.03 with the degree of freedom as 10 and the P-value as .000, financial empowerment had a chi-square value of 73.03 with the degree of freedom as 10 and the P-value as .000 and skill empowerment had chi-square value of 81.88 with the degree of freedom as 9 and the P-value as .000. The implication of this result is that women just like their male counterparts in business can also promote and boost entrepreneurial activities if the necessary support in terms of empowerment is channelled towards the enterprises established. This finding is in agreement with the study conducted by John and Sathiq (2020) on "Factors contributing to women empowerment", where it was revealed that education plays an important role in empowering women. Women should have access to higher education and career opportunities because educational empowerment can reduce poverty in society as women can spend more on their families and don't depend on others as this gives the opportunity for income generation through the conduct of entrepreneurial activities.

Similarly, Ali and Salisu (2019) in a study conducted on women entrepreneurship and empowerment strategy for national development recommended that women must be educated and trained regularly to possess skills and knowledge in all relevant areas of business management. This can make women succeed in the decision-making process and develop a good business network. Awodipe (2021) also in a write-up on "Empowering Women through Skill Development, Entrepreneurship" remarked that skills acquisition programs have opened a whole new opportunity for women, formally educated or not and women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, brings about economic diversification and income equality as well as other positive development.

Furthermore, Ekele, Zubairu and Ayorinde (2018) in their study on empowering Nigerian women entrepreneurs through Microfinance, carried out an interview in which women entrepreneurs remarked that their economic conditions improved immensely after benefiting from the Federal University of Technology Microfinance Bank (FMB) loans and leases. Extracts from the interview conducted to gather data from the respondents are below; "after I received a loan from FMB my business increased so much that I started another business." Another said, it was not easy for me to raise capital for my business, but now, managing my business became easier." What can be inferred from the responses of these women entrepreneurs is that FMB micro-loans and leases had a tremendous impact on their economic conditions. In other words, FMB's microfinance initiatives had successfully empowered these women entrepreneurs economically.

## 5.1 Conclusion

The role of women empowerment in the development of women entrepreneurship is the focus of the study. The statistical analysis of the data collected revealed that women empowerment played a significant role in the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State. Furthermore, the result of the study revealed that educational empowerment, financial empowerment and skill empowerment had significant influences on the development of women entrepreneurship in Lagos State. From the findings above, it is concluded that women are no longer to be confined to the home because the entrepreneurial capacity of women has become noticeable in many areas and women are also actively participating in the world of trade and commerce. In addition, women entrepreneurs are seen to be contributing positively to the nation's economic development through increasing participation in Micro, Small and Medium Scale businesses.

## 5.2 Recommendations Based on Findings

Women Entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy of the world, it is recommended to the government, corporate bodies and non-government organisations continue to support women educationally, financially and for skill acquisition programmes, where both hard and soft skills can be acquired which would go a long way in sustaining and enlarging the scope of their businesses and also to provide a conducive environment where there is adequate provision infrastructural facilities, peace and security, technological development, research/extension services, business development support for women so that they can continue to play the identified roles of generating new business ideas, starting new enterprises, generating employment opportunities, innovation and overall economic growth and development of the nation.

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