

AN APPRAISAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETENCES OF WOMEN FARMERS IN AGRIBUSINESS IN IKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF DELTA STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the entrepreneurship competences of rural women farmers in agribusiness and constraints to entrepreneurial development in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and twenty one (121) women farmers were randomly selected and interviewed. Data were collected using questionnaire and interview schedule and were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as mean, frequency and percentage. The result showed that majority of women belongs to farmers association (70.2%) and earned an annual income of ₦200,000 - ₦500,000. Those embarked on production were (70.3%), marketing (54.5), processing (39.7), and the ownership pattern of women business was majorly sole proprietorship (91.7%). The respondents gave multiple responses on the areas of entrepreneurial competence which are systematic planning and monitoring (92.5%), goal setting (90.3%), risk taking (90.3), self confidence (70.3%) and information seeking (67.8%). The leading constraints are lack of start-up capital (95.4%), cumbersome procedure of farm credit facilities (92.5%), inadequate storage facilities (90.3%), high cost of farm inputs (89.2%) and unavailability of machines/equipment (87.6%). The general results shows that rural women farmers are engaged in diverse form and types of business and also have entrepreneurial competence in their enterprise but were limited by several constraints which was capable of affecting their entrepreneurial development. It is recommended that women farmers should be educated on how to obtain capital for start up business so as to help build their capital base, rural women farmers should equally be encouraged to join more farmers groups as this is a quick means of raising fund, storage facilities and farm input should be made available to women farmers by the government through its agencies such as the ministry of agriculture.

Key words: Entrepreneurial development, women entrepreneur and constraints

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is used to describe a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth (Shailesh *et al.*, 2013). This wealth is created by individuals who take the major risks in terms of

equity, time and career commitment of providing value to some product or services, the product or service itself may or may not be new or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by securing and allocating the necessary skill and resources. In other words entrepreneurship is the application of energy for initiating and building an enterprise (Mishra *et al.*, 2010).

Presently, in Nigeria an entrepreneur is an innovator who recognizes and seizes opportunities, converts those opportunities into workable ideas, adds value, effort, money, skill and assumes risks of competition to actualize the ideas and takes the reward. Entrepreneurship is associated with innovative and dynamic developments within the Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise (SMME) sector (United State Department of Agriculture, 2011). Onubuogu and Esiobu (2014) opined that sustainable development of agribusiness requires the development of entrepreneurial and organizational competency in farmers. Developing entrepreneurial skills of farmers can take two tracks. The first is to amend the social, economic, political, and cultural frameworks that hinders, and foster those that stimulate their development. The second is encouragement of farmers, via their personalities and capabilities, to kindle the development of entrepreneurship. If farming competitiveness is to be improved by nurturing entrepreneurial behaviour, both tracks have to be considered.

Entrepreneurship is the only solution to the growing population to generate employment for number of people within their own social system. This is more beneficial for women in rural areas as it enable them to add to their family income while taking care of their farm, home and livestock centered tasks. Rural women possess abundant resources to take up an enterprise. They have the benefit of easy availability of farm and livestock based raw materials and other resources. Hence they can effectively undertake both production and processing oriented enterprises. But to be a successful entrepreneur, women should process certain fundamental qualities beside the support of the family and government organizations. Entrepreneurial development among rural women helps to enhance their person capabilities but also decision making status in the family and society as a whole. If entrepreneurship is an instrument for improving the

quality of life for families and communities, and for sustaining a fit economy and environment, fostering entrepreneurship skill must be regarded as an urgently needed development component (Chandramouli *et al.*, 2007).

Raising entrepreneurial activity could therefore play a considerable role in promoting economic development. Though government development programmes are put in place to promote entrepreneurship, most agribusinesses are still encountering challenges that stagnates entrepreneurial activities. Such Corrective measures should seek to boost the farmer's levels of entrepreneurship, adopting the most appropriate approach for producing more entrepreneurs and for getting more agribusinesses to grow. Encouraging and releasing women's entrepreneurial energies are essential keys to the achievement of greater economic prosperity and to the continuing regeneration of its economy over time.

There are a variety of constraints on women and the ability of women to upgrade their production continuously. These include poor access to market, information and technology, finance as well as poor linkages with support services, an unfavorably policy and regulatory environment (UNDO 2014). These constraints were neither ranked nor location specific. Although, if the constraints are shared by both female and male entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs face additional obstacles, this due to deeply rooted discriminatory socio- cultural values and traditions embedded, particularly in the policy and legal environment as well as in institutional support mechanism. In many instances, women are unable to benefit from services and must struggle to overcome or circumvent discriminators in business circles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

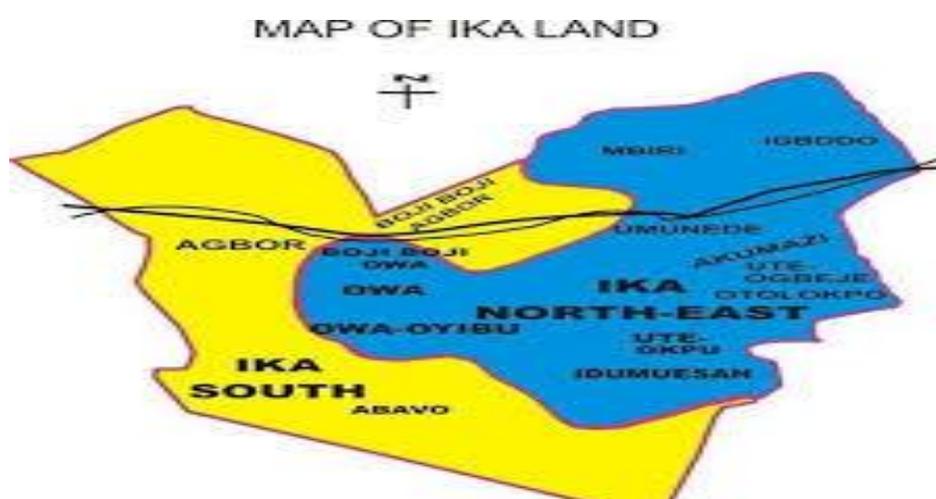
The general objective was investigation of entrepreneurial competences among rural women farmers in the state. Specifically, the paper:

- i. identify the enterprise characteristics (type, form and duration) of women entrepreneurs,
- ii. examine the entrepreneurial competencies of the women entrepreneurs, and
- iii. identify the constraints to women entrepreneurial development in the area.

METHODOLOGY

Ika South is one of the 25 Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria with its headquarter is in the town of Agbor. It has an area of 436km² and a population of 162, 594 at the 2006 censuses. Its comprises of 22 villages. Among the villages are: Abavo, Agbor-Nta, Aliagwa, Alifekede, Alizormo, Alihame, Aliokpu, Alismie Alisor, Emuhu, Ewuru, Oki, Omumu, Ekuku-Agbor, Ozanogogo, Idumuoza, Alihagwu, Agbor-Alidima Udomi-Obi-Anyima, Ogbesogba, Oblihe.

Ika South Local Government Area is in Delta North agricultural extension zones, with its headquarters at Agbor. It is a narrow Local Government Area located in the northern part of the State. It shares borders with Ika North East and Aniocha South Local Government Areas. The predominant occupation of the people is farming and trading.



Women entrepreneurs in Ika south local government of Delta State constitute the population of the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the women entrepreneurs for the study.

Stage 1: firstly was the purposive selection of Ika South Local Government area in Delta State, because of the high density of Women farmer's entrepreneurs in the area.

Stage 2: secondly was random selection of eleven villages out of the 22 villages from the selected Local Government Area.

Stage 3: The third stage was the random selection of 11 respondents each from the selected villages given a total of 121 respondents (farmers). (Alihame, Alisime, Agbor-Nta, Ogbesogba, Alihagwu, Abavo, Aliokpu, Ewuru, Emuhu, Ekuku Agbor, and Omumu)

Primary data were used for the study. The primary data were collected through the use of structured interview schedule which was administered on the respondents. Women entrepreneurs were visited by trained enumerators to collect relevant data. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data collected. Respondents were required to indicate their major characteristics of enterprise by type, form and duration among the options and was measured by simple percentage of the highest source of information and ranked according. The entrepreneurial competencies of respondents was determined using the weight score of 5.0 which was the benchmark on which competencies was regarded as yes (≥ 5.0) and no (< 5.0). The weight score was determined as follows: $(5+5=10) \div 2=5.0$. The constraints to women entrepreneurial development competencies was determined using the weight score of 5.0 which was the benchmark on which constraints was regarded as yes (≥ 5.0) and no (< 5.0). The weight score was determined as follows $(5+5=10) \div 2=5.0$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio- economic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of women entrepreneur. The mean age of the women was 35, which is an indication that the rural women in the study area were young and this could enhance their capability of functioning effectively as an entrepreneur. Bruton (2008) asserted that this age bracket combined the innovative, motivated and adoptable individuals. Since most of the farmers are in their productive and economic ages, this could play a vital role in easy adoption of entrepreneurship skills in agribusiness in the area. Majority (67.8%) of women entrepreneurs were

married, educated (65.3%), The fact that the respondents were educated could enhance their ability of taking risk as an entrepreneur while being married might denotes high entrepreneurial responsibility. The average farming experience of the rural women was 8 years. This is a confirmation that the respondents were young and as such have not had many years of experience in farming. Nevertheless, having an average farming experience of 8 years is enough to gather reasonable experience in entrepreneurship development. The findings supports the study of okoli *et al*, (2014) who asserted that farmers with more experience in agribusiness would be more efficient, have better knowledge of climatic conditions, better knowledge of efficient allocation of resources and market situation and thus, expected to run a more efficient and profitable enterprise. The mean farm size cultivated being 6acres, suggested that the respondents are highly engaged in farming which may have improved their entrepreneurial ability. Esiobu and Onubuogu (2014) asserted that large farm size increases agricultural productivity and improves farmer's technical, allocative and resources use efficiency. Hence large farm size is a positive variable for entrepreneurship development in agribusiness in the study area.

Majority (70.2%) of the respondent does belong to farmers association, this helps in raising fund to finance their farm business as belonging to associations is one of the fastest means of raising capital among farming communities. Onubuogu and Esiobu *et al* (2014) who asserted that membership of cooperative society affords farmers the opportunity of sharing information on modern farming practices and project a collective demand. A proportion (54.5%) of the respondents earned an annual income of ₦200,000-500,000, which suggest that the annual income of the respondents was fairly high and this could enhance their ability to produce more and by implication be more entrepreneurial minded. Fairlie (2005) opined that farmers with higher farm income would easily be involved in entrepreneur activities than those of their counterpart who have poor or fairly high farm income.

Table 1 socio-economic characteristic of respondent

Variables	%	Mean
Age (years)		
Less than 25	20.7	
25-29	14.9	
30-34	9.9	
35-39	9.9	
40-44	29.8	
45-49	9.9	
55 >	5.0	
Educational level		
WASC/GCE/TC11	65.3	
NCE/OND	24.8	
HND/B.Sc/B.A	5.0	
M.Sc/PhD	5.0	
Farming experience		
< 5	14.9	
5-9	5.3	
10-14	5.0	8.4
15-19	9.9	
20 <	5.0	
Marital status		
Single	28.1	
Married	67.8	
Divorced	2.5	
Widowed	1.7	
Farm size(Acre)		
< 2	44.6	
2-4	25.6	6.6
< 4	29.8	
Association membership		
Belonged	70.2	
Don't belong	29.8	
Annual Income (#)		
<200,000	10.8	
200,000	54.5	
500,000	54.5	

Source: Field survey data, 2020 (*Multiple responses)

Enterprise Characteristics

Majority of the respondents (70.3%) were engaged in production, (54.5%) engaged in marketing and (39.7%) engaged in processing. This indicates that the respondents engaged in diverse type of business which may have influenced their entrepreneurial

ability. Their pattern of business (91.7%) was sole proprietors, (29.8%) engaged in partnership while (10.7%) were engaged in cooperative business. This finding could be due to the small-scale nature of women entrepreneurship in the study area.

Table 2 Characteristic of enterprise by type and ownership pattern

variables	%
Business type	
Productions	70.3
Marketing	54.5
Processing	39.7
Business ownership	
Sole proprietorship	91.7
Partnerships	29.8
Corporative	10.7

*Multiple responses

Entrepreneurial competence of respondents

Competencies of women in the entrepreneurial characteristics were examined and it shows that the major areas where the respondents have entrepreneurial competence which were systematic planning and monitoring (92.5%), goal setting (90.3%), risk taking (90.3), self confidence (70.3%) and information seeking (67.8%) ranked highest. An entrepreneur is expected to have systematic planning which will help him to prepare an action plan for performing all the activities in every area of operation in order to achieve the pre-determined goals. It sets up a sense of direction; increases operational efficiency, helps to increase market share and profitability and can make the business more durable. Setting goals increases self-esteem of the entrepreneurs- the more they achieve their goals, the more they gain confidence in their abilities and increase their chance of success. Information seeking enables entrepreneur undertakes personal research on how to satisfy customers and

solve problems. He/she knows that different people have different capabilities that can be of help to them. Also, respondents were committed to the work contract (=2.47). Commitment to the work contract is the ability to accept final responsibility for completing a job for the customers. Customers expect entrepreneurs to perform and to honor their commitments. It follows therefore; that the entrepreneur should do everything possible to ensure that he/she fulfils the commitment with his/her customers. It means joining the workers to work with them to ensure that contractual commitments are fulfilled, demand for efficiency and quality (44.6%), show that the entrepreneur is always competing with others to do things better, faster, and at less cost he/she strives to achieve excellence. Persuasion being a good part of entrepreneur means being able to effectively convince an investor that you have a great idea persuades partners that your approach is right, and convinces potential customers that the solution is right for them.

Table 3

Characteristics	%
Systematic planning and monitoring	92.5
Goal setting	90.3
Risk taking	90.3
Self confidence	70.3
Information seeking	67.8
Opportunity Seeking	34.5
Commitment to work contract	54.5
Demand for efficiency and quality	44.6
Persuasion and networking	39.7
Persistence	34.7
Multiple responses	

Constraints to women entrepreneurial development

Table 4 indicates the constraints to women entrepreneurial development. Finance is the most important aspect of any business. Lack of start-up capital was rated as the biggest constraint (95.4%), cumbersome procedure of farm credit facilities (92.5%), inadequate storage facilities (90.3%), high cost of farm inputs (89.2%) and unavailability of machines/equipment (87.6%). Others are poor infrastructural facilities (70.3%), inadequate access to relevant information (70.3%), high labor cost (69.2%), scarcity of labour (69.2%), low demand of products (44.6%) and inadequate skill in the line of business (39.7%). This result suggests that diverse

constraints affect entrepreneurial development among women in the study area. European commission (2004) reports that barrier to farmer's entrepreneur's development to include: poor management skills of farmers, lack of entrepreneurial spirit, limited access to business support, farm tenancy agreements and regulation. They concluded that these barriers will differ from different entrepreneur depending on the personal and business characteristics of the individual farm and farmer. Similarly, Madama (2015) reported that in Nigeria, lack of motivation, lack of finance, inadequate management skills, poor infrastructures, and taxation data youths and farming households from venturing into entrepreneurship world.

Table 4 respondent's entrepreneurial development constraints

S/No	Constraints	%
1	lack of startup capital	95.4
2	Cumbersome procedure of formal credit facilities	92.5
3	Inadequate storage facilities	90.3
4	High cost f farm input	89.2
5	Unavailability of machines/ equipment	87.6
6	poor infrastructural facilities	70.3
7	Inadequate access to relevant information	70.3
8	High labour cost	69.2
9	Scarcity of labour	69.2
10	low demand of product	44.6
11	Inadequate skill in the line of business	39.7

*Multiple responses

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The rural women farmers were engaged in diverse form and pattern of business ownership and also have entrepreneurial competence in their entrepreneurial business but are limited by several constraints which is capable of affecting their enterprise. women farmers should be educated on how to obtain capital for start up business so as to help build their capital base, They should equally be encouraged to join more farmers groups as this is a quick means of raising fund, storage facilities and farm input should be made available to women farmers by the government through its agencies such as the ministry of agriculture.

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