

INVOLVEMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES IN ASA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Kayode, A. O., Oladipo, F. O., Omotesho, K. F. and Awoyemi, A. O.

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Correspondence contact details: toyinkayode2000@yahoo.com; +2348067309397

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the level of involvement of rural women in the various entrepreneurial activities in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara state, Nigeria. Data were collected from 126 respondents and analysed with descriptive statistics and correlation. Data analyses revealed that the mean age of the rural women is 39.4 years with a mean years of entrepreneurial experience to be 10.7 years. Categorization of farmers' level of involvement showed that rural women had low level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities with a mean of 1.59. Lack of capital (2.57) was identified as a major constraints in entrepreneurial activities. Correlation analysis indicated that age ($r = 0.246;p=0.06$), Marital status($r = 0.176;p=0.002$), Household size ($r = 0.202;p=0.023$), had a positive and significant effect on the level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities among the women. The study concluded that the level of involvement of entrepreneurial activities among women in the study area was low and therefore recommended that rural women should have access to financial support such as loans from banks and other stakeholders and also government intervention programmes such as N-power and Trader-moni in other to increase their level of involvement in entrepreneurship activities.

Keywords: Rural Women, Entrepreneurial, Levels, Activities, Involvement

INTRODUCTION

It is a common say that entrepreneurial people owns the world. Hence entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. This wealth is created by individuals who take the major risks in terms of equity, time, and career commitment of providing value to some products or services, which 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. (Kuratko and Richard, 2001). Shane and Venkataraman (2000) defined entrepreneurship as the discovery, creation and exploitation (including by whom and with what consequences) of opportunities to bring into existence future goods and services. Onubuogo and Esiobu (2014) also confirmed that sustainable development of agribusiness requires the development of entrepreneurial and organisational competency in farmers. Entrepreneurship has become one of the most dynamic forces in the economy which drives the technological boom, which in turns is driving much of the world's economic growth.

However, women around the world are involved in numerous tasks and responsibilities at contemporary families, societies and national affairs. Women around the world are major contributors to the economy, as they are making a difference in the socioeconomic arena. Iyiola and Azhu, (2014) confirmed that women contributes numerous ideas and a great deal of energy and capital resources to their communities, and generate jobs as well as create additional work for suppliers and other spin-off linkages. Entrepreneurial activities in rural areas loom large to solve the problem of poverty, unemployment and rural transformation in developing countries. In

many developing countries, including Nigeria due to the increasing economic downturn, resulting in loss of jobs for the men in folks, women as a mother and custodians of family stability, assume the responsibility of keeping the family on course through the running of microenterprises. As a result, women have known to sacrifice their lives for the survival of their families, amidst their reproductive function (Garba, 2011).

Rural women are key agents for development; they play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. Entrepreneurship is the only solution to the growing employment among rural youth. It helps to generate employment for a number of people within their own social system. This is more beneficial for women in rural areas as it enables them to add to the family income while taking care of their home and livestock centred task. There are various entrepreneurial activities performed by rural women especially in the study area such as farming, trading, hairdressing, fashion designer, shea-butter processing, locust bean processing, bead making, and cassava processing.

Women play an essential role in poverty reduction of their family especially where the income of the husband or parents is very meager to cater for the family basic needs. They actually play a complementary responsibility in the fight against poverty through their entrepreneurial activities. There is therefore need to determine their level of entrepreneurial activities so as to empower them which is essential, not only for the well-being of individuals, families, and rural communities but also for overall economic productivity.

Objectives of the study were to:



- i. describe the socioeconomic characteristics of rural women in the study area
- ii. identify the entrepreneurial activities engaged in by the rural women.
- iii. ascertain the level of involvement of rural women in their various entrepreneurial activities.
- iv. examine the perceived benefits derived from entrepreneurial activities on the rural women livelihood.
- v. identify the constraints of rural women involvement in entrepreneurial activities.

The hypothesis of the study is as follows:

There is no significant relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics and the women's level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Kwara state was one of the seven states created on 27th of May, 1967. The state has 16 Local Government Areas. Asa Local Government was created in 1976, it is one of the 16 Local Governments in the State and located on the latitude 8⁰⁰ and 9⁰¹⁰' North of the equator and longitude 2⁰⁴⁵' and 4⁰¹⁵' East of the Greenwich Meridian. It has a landmass of 1,525km². It is bounded by Moro LGA to the North, Oyo state to the South, Ilorin West LGA to the East and Oyun LGA to the West. It has a rainfall of 1000-1500mm. The vegetation of the area comprises of guinea savanna, derived savanna and forest. The mean monthly rainfall ranges between 50 mm during the wettest months and 24 mm during a driest period. The population is 126,668 (NBS,2006) and their major language is Yoruba, the major occupation of the people is agriculture, planting of various crops such as maize, sorghum, cashew, cassava, sweet potato, yam, cowpea, tomato and also rearing of livestock such as poultry birds and are also into entrepreneurial activities such as farming, trading, hairdressing, fashion designer, Shea-butter processing, locust bean processing, bead making, and cassava processing

The population for the study comprised all the rural women who are involved in entrepreneurial activities in Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria

Three stage sampling procedure was employed for the study. Stage one involved the random selection of 50% out of the 17 wards in Asa L.G.A, giving a total number of 8.5, approximately 9 wards. The selected wards are Afon, Yowere, Owode, Onire, Odo-Ode, Aboto, Ogbondoroko, Reke and Ila-Oja. Stage two involved random selection of two Communities each out of the 9 wards were randomly selected making a total of 18 communities from the study area which are Laduba, Budo-Aagun, Aboto-Oja,

Budo Alake, Alapata, Aiyekale, Aboto-Alfa, SapatiOko, Ago- Oja, Temidire, Gbadu, Adafila, Aiyede, Sapati Ile, Ajagun, Ajelanwa, Onyangi, Oko-Erin. Stage three involved random selection of 7 respondents from each community making a total sample size of 126 respondents for the study.

The instrument was analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation while correlation was used for inferential statistics. The instrument was divided into five sections. The first section dealt with the socioeconomic characteristic of the respondents. The second section examined the types of entrepreneurial activities engaged in by the respondents. The third section sought to determine the level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities. The fourth section identified the perceived benefits derived from entrepreneurial activities on the livelihood of respondents.

To identify the respondents' entrepreneurial activities, a list of entrepreneurial activities was provided for the respondents to indicate 'Yes or No'. Also obtain information on the perceived benefits on entrepreneurial activities by the respondents, a list of possible benefits of entrepreneurial activities was provided for the respondents to identify. Respondents were also asked to indicate the level of seriousness of constraint in involving in entrepreneurial activities on a 3 point Likert type scale of Very serious(3) , Serious(2) and Not serious(1). These values were summed up to obtain 6 and divided by 3 to get 2. Variables greater or equal to 2 would be considered as more serious constraints to involvement of entrepreneurial activities among respondents.

The dependent variable of the study was the level of involvement of rural women in entrepreneurial activities. The levels were measured using a 4-point Likert type scale. Fully Involved =3 moderately Involved=2, less involved =1 and Not Involved=0. A decision mean of 2.00 was derived. Any category with a mean value less than 2.00 was regarded as low, any category with a mean value between 2.00-2.99 was regarded as medium while any value higher than 2.99 was regarded as high category: Low = 0 - 1.99(<2.00) Medium = 2.00 -2.99, High = >2.99. Data obtained from the field survey was subjected to both descriptive (frequency distribution, percentage, mean score and ranking order) and inferential (Pearson product moment correlation) statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that women in the study area had a mean age of 39.38 with many of the respondents in the category age of 36 -50 years. This implies that the respondents were in their economic age and are matured enough to make use of every available opportunity and technology

provided by the environment. This is line with the findings of Ayogu and Agu (2015) which states that entrepreneur is a midlife choice for women and majority of them starts entrepreneurial activities at the age of 35. About 60.3% of the respondents were married which indicates that most of the women have family to cater for which make them to opt for more money by involving in various business activities in order to improve their standard of living in the society. This agrees with the findings of Akerele and Aihonsu (2011) that 59 percent of the rural women in Ogun state, Nigeria

are married, and have family responsibilities which make them to opt for more money by involving in various business activities in order to improve their standard of livings in the society. Also, the mean of the household size was 6 persons with about 35.7% of the respondents having secondary education. The mean entrepreneurial experience is 11.27 years with about 46.7% of them having about 6-15 years of entrepreneurial activities which imply that the respondents have vast knowledge in entrepreneurial activities.

Table 1: Distribution of rural women in Asa local government area according to their socioeconomic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentages	Mean	SD
Age (years)				
< 20	20	15.9	39.38	14.03
21-35	40	31.7		
36-50	43	34.1		
> 50	23	18.3		
Marital status				
Single	22	17.5		
Married	76	60.3		
Divorced	10	7.9		
Widowed	18	14.3		
Household size				
1-4	16	12.7	6.13	1.34
5-8	108	85.7		
>8	2	1.6		
Years of schooling				
0	29	23.0		
1-6	24	19.0		
7-12	45	35.7		
>12	28	22.2		
Entrepreneurial Experience (Years)				
≤ 5	34	27.0	11.27	10.74
6-15	60	47.6		
16-25	18	14.3		
26-35	10	7.9		
> 35	4	3.2		

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Entries in table 2 shows that 60.3% of the respondents were engaged in farming, about 42.1% were into trading, 21.4% were into cassava processing, 15.9% were into fashion designer and shea-butter processing, 15.1% were into sales of recharge cards, 14.3% were into bead making, 12.7% were into hairdressing, 11.1% were into

locust bean making, 10.3% were into catering, and 5.6% were into local soap making. This result indicates that women in the study area were involve in various entrepreneurial activities and this implies that these activities may likely generate more income for the upkeep of the respondents' household.

**Table 2: Distribution of entrepreneurial activities engaged in by rural women in Asa LGA**

Entrepreneurial activities	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	76	60.3
Trading	53	42.1
Cassava processing	27	21.4
Fashion designer	20	15.9
Shea-butter processing	20	15.9
Sales of recharge cards	19	15.1
Bead making	18	14.3
Hairdressing	16	12.7
Locust bean making	14	11.1
Catering	13	10.3
Local soap making	7	5.6

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Multiple responses

The result in Table 3 shows the rank order of level of involvement of the rural women in various entrepreneurial activities. Trading activities have a mean score of 2.47, farming activities have a mean score of 2.42, cassava processing with a mean score of 1.68, sales of recharge cards 1.55,

fashion designing, 1.43, shea-butter processing 1.41, hair dressing 1.39, catering 1.30, locust bean making 1.28, while local soap making 1.09 respectively. This implies that various entrepreneurial activities are practiced among the rural women.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on their level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities

Entrepreneurial activities	Fully involved F(%)	Moderately involved F(%)	Less involved F(%)	Not involved F(%)	M.S	Rank
Trading/hawking	39 (31.0)	29 (23.0)	10 (7.9)	48 (38.1)	2.47	1 st
Farming	38 (30.2)	24 (19)	17 (13.5)	47 (37.3)	2.42	2 nd
Cassava processing	26 (20.6)	3 (2.4)	1 (0.8)	96 (76.2)	1.68	3 rd
Sales of recharge cards	17 (13.5)	7 (5.6)	4 (3.2)	98 (77.8)	1.55	4 th
Fashion designing	17 (13.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	107 (84.9)	1.43	5 th
Shea-butter processing	13 (10.3)	6 (4.8)	1 (0.8)	106 (84.1)	1.41	6 th
Hair dressing	14 (11.1)	2 (1.6)	3 (2.4)	107 (84.9)	1.39	7 th
Catering	12 (9.5)	0 (0)	2 (1.6)	112 (88.9)	1.30	8 th
Locust bean making	9 (7.1)	4 (3.2)	0 (0)	113 (89.7)	1.28	9 th
Local soap making	2 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	1 (0.8)	121 (96)	1.09	10 th

Source: Field survey, 2019

(F= Frequency, M.S=Mean score)

This result in Table 4 shows about 92.1 percent had low level of involvement, 7.9 percent had moderate level of involvement. This indicates that the level of involvement of the respondents in entrepreneurial activities is generally low. This implies that most of the respondents may likely be

engaged in other occupation which does not create much time for them to involve in entrepreneurial activities or lack of capital as stated in table 6 that lack of capital is a major constraint to the rural women involvement in entrepreneurial activities

Table 4: Categorisation of respondents based on their level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities

Categorisation of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Low (<2.00)	116	92.1	1.59
Medium (2.00-2.99)	10	7.9	
High (>2.99)	0	0	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The result in Table 5 shows that All (100%) of the respondents claimed that entrepreneurial activities improve their savings habit and self- esteem, 98.4% claimed that it reduce

crisis at home, 97.6% claimed decision making power, 96.8% claimed that it serves as source of employment, 83.3% claimed that it enhances group society, 79.4% claimed that it serves as additional

source of income, 78.6% claimed that it serves as major source of income. This implies that entrepreneurial activities have a positive impact in the life of the respondents. The level and extent of women entrepreneurship empowerment varies from society to another. In some society, women do assume complementary role in managing and providing basic needs of their family, while in some instances their role is only supplementary

where they are historically restricted to home chores or family up keep (Brush *et al*, 2009; Mordi, Simpson, Singh and Okafor, 2010; Garba, 2011). The success of women entrepreneurial activity is determined by the type and nature of business environment they found themselves which is subject to a number of factors such as national policies, culture and socioeconomic factors (Garba, 2011; Emmanuel, 2013).

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to perceived benefits of entrepreneurial activities on their livelihood

Perceived benefits of entrepreneurial activities to the livelihood	Frequency	Percentage
Improve their savings habit	126	100
Improve Self-esteem	126	100
Reduce crisis at home	124	98.4
Boost decision making power	123	97.6
Serve as source of employment	122	96.8
Enhances group society	105	83.3
Serve as additional source of income	100	79.4
Serve as major source of income	99	78.6

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 6 shows that lack of capital ranked first with mean score of 2.57, unconducive business environment second, lack of family support ranked third, lack of resources fourth, lack of training and development ranked fifth, inadequate of labour

sixth, poor planning ranked seventh, and eighth is the conflicting at home with mean score of 1.13. The aforementioned factors contributes to the decline in level of involvement of the respondents in entrepreneurial activities in the study area.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Constraints in Entrepreneurial Activities

Constraints	V.S	S	NS	MS	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Lack of capital	80 (63.5)	38 (30.2)	8 (6.3)	2.57	1 st
Unconducive business environment	40 (31.7)	41 (32.5)	45 (35.7)	1.96	2 nd
Lack of family support	24 (19)	41 (32.5)	61 (48.4)	1.71	3 rd
Lack of resources	15 (11.9)	38 (30.2)	73 (57.9)	1.54	4 th
Lack of adequate training	8 (6.3)	48 (38.1)	70 (55.6)	1.51	5 th
Inadequate labour	7 (5.6)	40 (31.7)	79 (62.7)	1.43	6 th
Poor planning	1 (0.8)	46 (36.5)	79 (62.7)	1.38	7 th
Conflicting at home	0 (0)	16 (12.7)	110 (87.3)	1.13	8 th

(VS=Very severe, S=Severe, NS=Not severe)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The result in Table 7 shows that a significant relationship exists between the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and their level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities. The significant variables were; age ($r^2=0.246$), household size ($r^2=0.202$), years of schooling ($r^2=-0.417$), years of entrepreneurial activities ($r^2=0.190$). The implication of the result is that respondents' involvement in entrepreneurial activities was influenced by their age, household size, years of schooling and years of entrepreneurial activities. That is the higher their

age, household size, years of entrepreneurial activities increases the higher their level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities. however, a negative significant relationship between the years of schooling and their level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities i.e. the higher their literacy level the lower their involvement in entrepreneurial activities, which may likely be, due to the fact that most of the educated women are engaged in white collar jobs which may not give them the opportunity to invest in entrepreneurial activities



Table 6: Result of the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis showing the relationship between socioeconomic characteristics and level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities

Socioeconomic characteristics	r – value	p – value	Decision
Age	0.246***	0.06	Significant
Household size	0.202**	0.023	Significant
Years of schooling	-0.417***	0.001	Significant
Years of entrepreneurial activities	0.190**	0.033	Significant

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); *** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Level of involvement in entrepreneurial activities among respondents was low. Rural women in the study area involved to improve their saving habit and self-esteem. Major constraints were lack of Capital and Unconducive business environment such as lack of social amenities. The study therefore recommends that rural women should also have access to loans and more awareness on government intervention programmes such as N-power and Trader-moni in other to increase their entrepreneurship development and also adequate social amenities should be made available to the rural communities.

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