

Assessment of Factors Affecting Women Entrepreneurs in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Women's entrepreneurship is gaining more prominence in this contemporary time than ever before. In recent times, the number of female entrepreneurs has been five times more than what it used to be for the past two decades, partly due to some efforts by the government and philanthropists to raise consciousness and awareness and promote women's entrepreneurship. However, there are some hindrances affecting the establishment and operation of businesses by women in Nigeria despite numerous interventions. This study assesses factors affecting women entrepreneurs in Lagos state, Nigeria. Three research questions and two hypotheses were raised and tested to guide this study. A descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The study population comprised 157 women entrepreneurs registered with the Bank of Industry and Lagos State Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in Lagos State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 112 female business owners whose businesses were still operating. A structured questionnaire titled: Women Entrepreneurs Assessment Scale was used to collect data for the study. The data collected were analyzed and presented using simple percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The hypotheses were analyzed using multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 significant level. The findings of this study revealed that gender discrimination significantly influences women entrepreneurs in business operations and that family commitment influences the business establishment and operation of female entrepreneurs, among others. The study concludes that women entrepreneurs contribute in no small measure to the development of the economy, and as such, women's entrepreneurship should be promoted and not be discriminated against. Based on the findings and conclusion reached, it was recommended that government enacts policies that will enhance women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria, such as empowerment programs, soft loans for women entrepreneurs, and anti-discrimination against women, among other things.

Keywords: Assessment; Business operation; Gender discrimination; Women entrepreneurs

1. Introduction

In recent years, the study of women's entrepreneurship has experienced significant growth, gaining a broad consensus among academics and contributing, above all, to understanding all those factors that explain the difficulty of women in undertaking an entrepreneurial career.

Transforming enormous ideas into economic opportunities is the decisive issue of entrepreneurship. History shows that economic progress has been significantly advanced by pragmatic people who are entrepreneurial and innovative, able to exploit opportunities, and willing to take risks. The role of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture in economic and social development has often been underestimated. Over the years, however, it has become increasingly apparent that entrepreneurship contributes to economic development. Nevertheless, a significant number of enterprises were owned by men (Oduma, 2012). In other words, it was rare to see women-owned businesses worldwide, especially in developing countries like India. The idea and practice of women's entrepreneurship is a

recent phenomenon. Until the 1980s, little was known about women's entrepreneurship in practice and research, making it focus entirely on men. Scientific discourse about women's entrepreneurship and women-owned and run organizations is just the development of the 1980s. Even though we have observed several women entrepreneurs in business, recent studies show that most are found in micro and small enterprises (Alene, 2020).

Nigerian Women have engaged in entrepreneurial activities for centuries (Falobi and Ononiwu, 2022). However, their contributions still need to be acknowledged. They have produced and bartered goods and exchanged services in their local communities and surrounding markets (Falobi and Ononiwu, 2022). Moreover, more often than not, family survival has often depended on women's enterprising spirit. Women entrepreneurs have a significant and increasing contribution to their immediate family budget and the community's prosperity. This study identifies several severe issues and implications for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria's rural and urban regions. This definition will hence be utilized concerning the role played by Nigerian women as entrepreneurs and how these entrepreneurial skills have played out toward the move from oil dependency in the Nigerian region.

Also, women have been found to generate less sales turnover than men, even in the exact industry comparisons (Loscocco and Robinson, 1991). For example in Nigeria in spite of the support and incentive programs to micro business, Akabueze (2002) briefly stated that it would seem reasonable to suppose that small businesses would grow and boom, but the speed of business breakdown continues to raise because of the shortcomings influencing business performance which are: inadequate financial resources, poor location, insufficient management experience, poor laws and regulations, general economic situation, together with critical factors such as poor infrastructure, little demand for products and services, corruption, and poverty. Others include: shortage of raw materials, handicap in obtaining finance, inadequate competent and motivated personnel, lack of ability to control costs and cheap foreign products dumped in the market. Notwithstanding the intrinsic problems related to the growth of micro - scale businesses, women entrepreneurs are increasingly venturing into ownership of small-scale enterprises either on their own or in partnership with male entrepreneurs (Falobi et al., 2024). This has been made possible primarily because of ease of entry, limited access to other enterprises, and lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector of the economy. In addition, given the expansion of entrepreneurship amongst women, understanding the social, cultural, and economic factors influencing their success is vital.

Female entrepreneurs represent the fastest-growing category of entrepreneurship worldwide and have received, especially in recent years, the attention of many academics. According to the emerging literature, women can make a significant contribution to entrepreneurial activity and according to a study by Guzman and Kacperczyk (2019), females are 63% less likely than males to obtain external financing in terms of risk capital, and the most significant part of the gap derives from gender differences.

Shahabadi and Feyzi (2016) identified the political economy as an essential factor influencing the business environment. The study results indicated that the countries that have been more successful in improving political economy indices have a better business environment. Ifekwem and Adedamola (2016) indicated a statistically significant relationship between the survival strategies and the sustainability of SMEs. They studied 50 SMEs in the local area of Oshodi-Isolo in Lagos state. They found that maintaining

committed and motivated staff is crucial in ensuring the survival of SMEs in an unstable economy.

Anderson (2017) evaluated seven factors influencing the improvement of SMEs in Tanzania and categorized business environment including political, legal, regulatory, and socio-economic environments, institutional support such as resources and finance, management and know-how, appropriate infrastructure, and technology, as well as individual attributes and knowledge like entrepreneurial tendencies and innovation, and vision and exposure to external knowledge. Based on the results, competitive activities and location, inadequate finance, human and social resources, and technical and management skills can significantly affect start-ups.

Undoubtedly, different factors, such as social, economic, and political factors, affect most women entrepreneurs' performance. Crouch factors, if not adequately tackled, will continue to put women entrepreneurs in depression, and this will reciprocally affect national growth since entrepreneurial activities are instruments for national development. Based on this background, this study assesses factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

Statement of the Problem

Despite different empowerment programs undertaken by the government to upgrade women entrepreneurs and despite the vast amount of money both government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) spend on making women entrepreneurs dependent, all efforts result in futility. Many factors had said to have caused this according to the literature reviewed, only social factors, political and economic factors have not been thoroughly studied as regards women entrepreneur performance; it is based on this that this study seeks to assess factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneur in Kosofe local government, area of Lagos state.

This study's main objective is to determine the factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

*To investigate the social factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

*To examine the political factors affecting women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area in Lagos state.

*To examine the economic factors affecting women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area in Lagos state.

*To investigate challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Lagos state's Kosofe local government area.

The following hypotheses were raised to guide this study;

H₀1 – Gender discrimination resulting from culture and tradition does not significantly affect the performance of women entrepreneurs.

H₀2 – Fear of male competitors does not have a significant effect on the performance of women entrepreneurs.

2. Methodology and Data Collection

The research design used for this study was exploratory survey research in which some women entrepreneurs have explored findings of which factors affect their performances. The target population for this study comprised all women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos state. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select 20% of the population, of which 112 women entrepreneurs were randomly selected as the sample size. The instrument used for the research was a self-structured "women entrepreneur performance questionnaire" (WEPQ) questionnaire. The instrument was used to elicit information from the respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain information on social, economic, and political factors affecting women entrepreneurs and the challenges facing women entrepreneurs. The questionnaire was modified on a four-rating measurement scale - strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. The instrument's reliability was pilot tested; this was done by administering the instrument to 25 market women in Bariga market which is not the market used for the main study. The pilot study data were analyzed to ensure that the techniques, instruments, and procedures developed for the exploratory study could generate the information required to achieve the study's aims. The collected data were analyzed using the Cronbach alpha coefficient to determine the degree of reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach alpha coefficient yielded a result of 0.86, considered valid and reliable enough for the study. This is used to test the internal consistency of the instrument using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0. After the data collection, the responses to the questionnaire were coded and analyzed using various statistics. A descriptive approach such as mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions and Pearson product moment correlation analysis were used to test the hypotheses to achieve the research objective. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

3. Results

The study's results were obtained from the research questions answered by the study.

Research Question 1: What social factors affect women entrepreneurs' performance in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?

Table 1: Social factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs
 (Mean and standard deviation on social factors affecting women entrepreneurs)

S/N	Social factors	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	I suffer from gender discrimination caused by the culture and traditions of the society	64 (64%)	19 (19%)	11 (11%)	6 (6%)	3.41
2	The support from strong ties (spouse, parent, friends, and relatives) has had a positive effect on my Business Growth	76 (76%)	12 (12%)	8 (8%)	4 (4%)	3.60
3	The religious bigotry has affected customers' patronage of my Business.	4 (4%)	80 (80%)	6 (6%)	10 (10%)	2.78
4	Society attitude towards my Business is positive	6 (6%)	9 (9%)	69 (69%)	16 (16%)	2.05
5	Community relation at my location of Business is	67	8 (8%)	12	13	3.29

not cordial	(67%)	(12%)	(13%)	
Overall Mean				3.03

Source: Researchers, 2024

Table 1 indicates that respondents agreed with the stated statement. It shows that 83% agreed that they suffer from gender discrimination caused by the culture and traditions of society, while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 84% agreed that religious bigotry had affected customers' patronage of my Business, while 16% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. More so, 74% of the majority agreed that community relation at my location of Business is not cordial. The cumulative overall means score of 3.03 of the respondents, above the benchmark of 2.50, clearly shows that social factors affect the performance of women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

Research Question 2: To what extent do political factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?

Table 2: Political factors affecting women entrepreneurs
(Mean and standard deviation on political factors affecting women entrepreneurs)

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	X
1.	I am satisfied with the financial services given by Banks and other Lending institutions	12 (12%)	11 (11%)	3 (3%)	74 (74%)	1.61
2.	I cannot find a competent labor force to supplement my effort for business growth	6 (6%)	72 (72%)	16 (16%)	6 (6%)	2.78
3.	Start-up capital has been the central issue affecting my performance	61 (61%)	13 (13%)	15 (15%)	11 (11%)	3.24
4.	There is no stiff competition in the marketplace that I engaged in	11 (11%)	9 (9%)	64 (64%)	16 (16%)	2.15
5.	I have access to information to exploit Business opportunities	21 (21%)	55 (55%)	8 (8%)	16 (16%)	2.81
	Grand Mean					2.52

Source: Researchers, 2024

Table 2 indicates that respondents agreed with the stated statement. It shows that 23% agreed that they are satisfied with the financial services given by banks and other lending institutions, while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 74% agreed that start-up capital had been the central issue affecting my performance, while 26% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Moreso, 76% of the majority agreed that they have access to information to exploit business opportunities. The cumulative overall means score of 2.52 of the respondents, which is above the benchmark of 2.50, clearly shows that, to a moderate extent, political factors affect women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

Research Question 3: To what extent do economic factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?

Table 3: Economy factors affecting women entrepreneurs
 (Mean and standard deviation on economy factors affecting women entrepreneurs)

S/N	Preventive measure	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	I have no legal, institutional, or policies constraints	12 (12%)	57 (57%)	15 (15%)	16 (16%)	2.65
2	I can borrow money even without a titled asset as a collateral	16 (16%)	12 (12%)	11 (11%)	61 (61%)	2.83
3	I am a beneficiary of government incentives	12 (12%)	24 (24%)	12 (12%)	52 (52%)	1.96
4	Interest rate and VAT charged by the financial institutions and government is affecting my business growth	48 (48%)	13 9(13%)	23 9(23%)	16 (16%)	2.93
5	The tax levy on my Business is reasonable	14 (14%)	20 (20%)	52 (52%)	14 (14%)	2.34
Overall Mean						2.54

Source: Researchers, 2024

Table 3 indicates that respondents agreed with the stated statement. It shows that 69% agreed that they have no legal, institutional, or policy constraints, while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 36% agreed they are beneficiaries of government incentives, while 64% disagreed with the statement. Moreso, 34% of the majority agreed that the tax levy on my Business is reasonable. The cumulative overall means score of 2.54 of the respondents, which is above the benchmark of 2.50, clearly shows that, to a moderate extent, economic factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

Research Question 4: What challenges confront women entrepreneurs in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State?

In order to answer this research question, respondents' responses to items on the challenges confronting women entrepreneurs were collated. The data collected from the study were analyzed, as shown in Table 4

Table 4: Mean ranking order of the challenges confronting women entrepreneurs

S/N	Challenges confronting women entrepreneurs	N	X	Rank order
1	Financial constraints	100	3.51	1 st
2	Lack of entrepreneurship skills	100	3.00	5 th
3	Poor facilities	100	3.16	4 th
4	Poor personnel management	100	2.65	11 th
5	Constant disturbance from hoodlums (Agbero)	100	2.54	13 th
6	Poor marketing	100	2.60	12 th
7	Lack of strategic planning	100	2.70	8 th
8	Unplanned business ownership	100	2.68	9 th
9	Poor transportation	100	2.20	16 th
10	Low level of research and development	100	1.69	17 th
11	Inconsistent supply of raw materials	100	2.84	6 th
12	Unrecoverable debt	100	2.44	15 th
13	Lack of start-up capital	100	3.41	2 nd
14	Government policy	100	2.76	7 th
15	Fear of male competitors	100	3.31	3 rd
16	High Tax Rate	100	2.48	14 th
17	Fear of Relocation	100	2.67	10 th

Source: Researchers, 2023

Table 4 shows the challenges confronting women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state in terms of the most challenges confronting women entrepreneurs and the minor challenges confronting women entrepreneurs. The table revealed that financial constraint has the highest mean score of 3.51. This implies that financial constraint is the biggest challenge confronting women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state. At the same time, lack of start-up capital is followed by fear of competitors, with a mean score of 3.31. A low level of research and development has a mean score of 1.69. Low research and development is a minor challenge confronting women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

HO₁ - Gender discrimination resulting from culture and tradition does not significantly affect the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Table 5: Linear regression analysis results of relative contribution of gender discrimination and performance of women entrepreneurs

Model summary							
R= .952 ^a							
R ² = .906							
R ² (Adjusted) = .906							
Standard Error of Estimate = .170							
F=3435.5, <i>P</i> <0.05							
Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	p-	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.058	.056		-1.023	.307	Reject
	Gender Discrimination	1.012	.017	.952	58.613	.000	HO ₁

a. Predictors: (Constant), GD

b. Dependent Variable: PWE

The result from table 5 revealed that gender discrimination had a strong positive correlation with performance of women entrepreneurs ($R=.952$). The R square value of .906 indicated that gender discrimination contributed 90.6% to the variability of performance of women entrepreneurs. This implies that, for every small change in gender discrimination experienced by women entrepreneurs, there is 90.6% effect on the performance of women entrepreneurs. Hence, this justifies the reason the predictor variable which is gender discrimination is statistically significant with performance of women entrepreneurs ($\beta=.952$, $t=58.613$, $p=.000 >.005$). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, gender discrimination will significantly affect performance of women entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis Two

HO₂ – Fear of male competitors does not have a significant effect on the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Table 6: Linear regression analysis results of relative contribution of fear of male competitors and performance of women entrepreneurs

Model summary							
R= .890 ^a							
R ² = .793							
R ² (Adjusted) = .792							
Standard Error of Estimate = .24374							
F=1360.478, <i>P</i> <0.05							
Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	p.	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.135	.091		-1.479	.140	Reject
	FMC	1.035	.028	.890	36.885	.000	HO₂

a. Predictors: (Constant), FMC

b. Dependent Variable: PWE

The result from table 6 revealed that fear of male competitors had a strong positive correlation with performance of women entrepreneurs (R=.890). The R square value of .793 indicated that fear of male competitors contributed 79.3% to the variability of women entrepreneurs' performance. This implies that for every small fear of male competitors entertained by women entrepreneurs, there is 79.3% change in performance of women entrepreneurs. Hence, this gives the reason predictor variable which is fear of male competitors is statistically significant with performance of women entrepreneurs given ($\beta=.890$, $t=36.885$, $p=.000<.005$). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, fear of male competitors has a significant effect on the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Discussion of Results

This section gives a detailed discussion of the findings from the research questions raised. Table 1 shows the social factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state, revealing that social factors affect the performance of women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state. This implies that religious bigotry, gender discrimination, societal attitude, and community relations affect the performances of women entrepreneurs, thereby making business activities cumbersome. The findings buttressed that Ademola et al. (2020) posit that social factors affect the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Findings from table 2 on the extent political factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state showed that to a moderate extent, political factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state. This connotes those financial services and stiff competition affect women entrepreneurs. The study supported the findings of Abdullahi (2018), who posits that political factors affect women entrepreneurs.

Table 3 revealed how economic factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state. This implies that economic factors affect women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government area of Lagos state. The findings buttressed those of Omolawal and Adeniyi (2024), who opined that economic factors affect women entrepreneurs.

The findings highlighted in table 4 on the challenges confronting women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State revealed that financial constraint is the biggest challenge confronting women entrepreneurs in the Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State. This implies that financial constraints, lack of entrepreneurship skills, poor facilities, poor personnel management, poor marketing, and poor transportation are some challenges affecting women entrepreneurs. The findings agree with the assertion of Dsouza and Panakaje (2023), who opine that challenges affecting women entrepreneurs should be emphasized because they hinder women's performance.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has revealed some critical factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs in the business world. Financial constraints, poor facilities and fear of male competition are some of the leading factors affecting the performance of women entrepreneurs. This is not far-fetched given the reality of Lagos as a cosmopolitan state that houses multi-ethnic groups and male dominated market especially at the informal sector level. Women entrepreneurs that are coming on board faced survival challenges and scaling up due to the aforesaid factors. Findings from the hypotheses also affirmed that gender discrimination affect women entrepreneurs and in a similar way, fear of male competition affect the performance of women entrepreneurs. This implies that the role of gender discrimination should not be undermined in the success of women entrepreneurs in the business world. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made for the proper enhancement of women entrepreneurs in Kosofe local government and other locale: There is need for policy formulation and implementation by government to ensure that all categories of entrepreneurs undertake value re-orientation and enlightenment programmes that will discourage gender discrimination in the business environment; government should soften the policy to make an entrepreneur to operate excellently; empowerment should be made available to solve the issue of financial constraints; Lagos state government should ensure that tax policies are flexible for women entrepreneurs.

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