

Nigerian Women Empowerment and the Entrepreneurial Myth

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The decision usefulness of women empowerment depends on its ability to satisfy the fundamental daily needs of a woman not minding any limitation. Despite Nigeria government efforts on corruption reduction, poverty is still on the increase. This research investigates the relationship between women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria. By means of survey design, the primary data were obtained from sample of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), marketers, and civil servants. Two hundred copies of questionnaire were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found correlation of women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth is significant at 0.01 level and no significant difference in Nigerian perception of women in the entrepreneur due to the probability value (0.08). The research concluded entrepreneurial myth is a significant factor in women empowerment, it recommends women should be proactive in addressing the current poverty situation in Nigeria and policy-makers should consider enlightenment programmes because it has a far-reaching implication on national development.

Keywords: empowerment, entrepreneurial myth, Nigeria women

Introduction

Solanke and Dandago (2018) identified that gender issues are not widely discussed in accounting literature and this may explain reasons for the gap in theory and practice of accounting for gender diversity that would ensure effective social and behavioural communication programmes to focus on accounting information relevant to their financial and material contributions as agent of economic change in developing economies, like Nigeria. Yusufu (2018) identified an urgent need to address women challenges in entrepreneurship development in developing nations.

Over the last 10 years, absolute poverty has been witnessed in the developing countries which led to the rate of migration to developed countries as well as misuse of human assets. The goal of women in enterprise development is to reduce poverty and bring about a shift from welfare to the empowerment approach by the government.

The recent report by the United Nation (UN, 2019) revealed that women constituted 5.6 billion of the total 7.8 billion, representing 72% of the total population. Though, the World Bank Vision 2020 for the developing

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countries has one of its focuses on women and children due to the high poverty rates witnessed among the groups. However, the march of economic reforms on women empowerment has not grown as expected, especially in developing countries. If the goal of economic development includes improved standards of living and removal of poverty through creation of entrepreneurial activities and proper utilisation of resources, then it is better to start with belief about women. To encourage rural women entrepreneur in developing countries, three types of activities were identified, which include stimulating, supporting, and sustaining (Rahman, 1979, Katz, 1991).

Women empowerment has been seen as a tool for achieving economic development if their skills and talents are fully utilised. Different empowerment program can be initiated by individual, family, organisations, and government in order to boost economic status of women folk. Adeleye (2014)¹ identified economic and social empowerment as means of women empowerment. According to the study, economic empowerment can yield a broad range of economic gains from increased profits, productivity gains, better corporate leadership, and more efficient utilization of all resources and talents. Various vocational skills identified include soap making, tailoring, decorations, and knittings.

Generally, women are rugged, patient, tenderhearted, and less egocentric; they have the foresight and persuasive ability; they are highly influential, hospitable, dedicated, and flexible; and they do not give up easily. These are the attributes needed in entrepreneurship development of any nation. Therefore, in order for them to use these entrepreneurial skills, it is essential for them to be attracted to the opportunities of enterprise promotion. Thus, they will not only come to the mainstream of the nation-building but also contribute to the shift from welfare to empowerment approach.

Entrepreneur as a course has been introduced into the institutional levels in Nigeria, but it has not been generally accepted as a means of solving the problem of poverty; this may be due to the national custom. According to Adeleye (2014), custom is an established pattern of behaviour that can be objectively verified within a particular social setting. It has a strong implication on the level at which something new is accepted or rejected in a society.

To support the World Bank objective on women poverty reduction in developing countries (Nigeria inclusive), there is the need to know Nigerians' perception on the women in entrepreneur. The result of this research will be a supporting and stimulating instrument in the area of policy formulation and public enlightenment on the opportunities of enterprise promotions, thereby bringing women into the mainstream of the nation building through creating the value of economic goods and services, which can in turn help to improve national wealth as well as women social, economic, and health condition. According to Adam Smith (1776), the national economy is the input of private and public funds.

Statement of the Problem

In those days, agriculture used to be the main occupation in Nigeria. There was food in abundance to feed the nation. The Nigerian believed that men should solely provide for their homes, while women were to keep the home was the concept generally accepted. The recent record revealed Nigeria as the poorest country in the

¹ Adeleye (2014) defined empowerment to mean programs aimed at raising peoples income as opposed to provision but supporting their capacity in order to bring about economic change for a country or economy. To experience empowerment women must act on a sense of self-worth, value and give voice and equal validity to their needs as to others. When women begins to develop a sense of empowerment, then a discovery that causes one to imagine solutions for empowerment would emerge.

world, government cannot provide employment for the citizenry, few women are engaged in government job, salaries are owed, and men run away from their home due to financial responsibility, while some prefer to commit suicide. Graduates of business administration are teaching in nursery and primary school on N8,000 per month. Despite Nigerian government's efforts to introduce entrepreneur into institutions of learning, Adetayo (2015) found graduates prefer government job to business creation.

Various studies on women entrepreneurship concentrated on women motivation, personal characteristics, environment relationship, style of management, and problems faced (Bouzekraour & Ferhane, 2017). However, each country has a peculiar belief otherwise called myth on gender diversity which can be used to explain practice and little is known about entrepreneurial myth and women empowerment effectiveness in Nigeria environment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

- (i) What are the changes in Nigerian perception about women in entrepreneurial activities?
- (ii) To what extent can entrepreneurial myths affect Nigerian women?
- (iii) What relationship exists between women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria?

Aims and Objectives of the Study

Primarily, the research aims at investigating women empowerment effectiveness and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria.

The specific objectives include:

- (i) Identifying current perception of Nigerian on women in entrepreneurial activities;
- (ii) Determining the extent to which entrepreneur myth can affect Nigerian women;
- (iii) Determining the relationship between women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on gender as well as reduces the paucity of scholarly papers on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. Also, the findings will aid the policy-makers on areas to focus on individual and collective effort in achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant change in Nigerians' perception of women in the entrepreneur.

Hypothesis 2: Nigeria women in entrepreneur cannot be significantly affected by any myth.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Women

According to *Macmillian English Dictionary*, a woman is an adult female person. Female adulthood depends on some physiological feelings and can start from age 10. In this study, women are regarded as young female individual, unmarried, married, widow, orphans, single mothers, and divorcee.

Entrepreneur

The meaning of entrepreneur is an elusive concept (McQuaid, 2002). According to Gill (1963), entrepreneur is described as “an individual who possesses the drive, ambition, foresight, and imagination to break through traditional barriers, overcome social inertial and transform theory into practice”. In the view of Dion-Adetayo (2011), entrepreneurship is a process involving ideation, conceptualisation, enterprise creation, commercialisation, and business growth.

Entrepreneur helps economic decisions of individuals thereby affects their personal earnings, buying decisions, and quality of life. This will help exchange the extreme inequalities of income; reduce poverty and very high level of unemployment. Entrepreneurial activities should not only be seen in the angle of the provision of goods alone but also in the provision of services that may not be quantifiable. Ajide and Kameel (2018) enjoined government to put up policies that ensures friendly environment to enhance entrepreneurial development in developing countries.

Nigeria Cultural Heritage

Nigeria has a rich culture notwithstanding the colonial experience and these cultures are reflected in differences found among groups. There are Hausas, Igbos, and Yorubas domicile in every corner of the country. Yorubas are grouped into states of Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Ekiti, Lagos, and Kwara. Igbos are found in Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Imo, and Anambra. Hausas are found in Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Gombe, Plateau, Niger, and Bauchi. In all, the country has a federal capital territory and 36 states of several groups with the cultural diversity of ethnocentric attitudes and feelings. The culture is manifested in the tools, crafts, arts, artefacts, music, festivals, religion, myth, languages, greetings, and mode of dressing found among different groups. Basically, the country has a patrilineal society where a man assumes the headship and responsibility for his family, while the woman takes care of the home. There is a nuclear and extended family recognition and the members of the family constitute an economic unit, often producing the goods and services for the satisfaction of their basic needs (Odugbemi, 1999). Rosa (1992) argued that the vagueness of enterprise definition has been to the disadvantage of the government and the academics in the 1990s in their attempt in the UK to change the national culture. Thus, the enterprise has a connection with national culture. In Nigeria, everybody has a belief in one thing or the other and this belief translates into their view about entrepreneur.

Empowerment

Merriam-Webster defined empowerment as an act aim at increasing the degree of autonomy, power, and right in order to perform various acts or duties. There is social, economic, and political empowerment. Provision of information is a means of empowerment. Solanke and Dandago (2018) opined accounting profession should provide financial and non-financial information of both sexes in taking care of the growth and development of the family.

Women empowerment starts when a woman is aware of not fully dependent on anybody to meet her basic daily needs and still assist another person. Though women entrepreneur is essential and it empowers women, however, some women entrepreneurs are leaders making huge success, while others struggle to succeed (MeenuMaheshwari & PriyaSodani, 2015).

Women empowerment in Nigeria is one means of reducing poverty rate among women. There is a women affairs ministry in each state and federal government has other poverty alleviation programmes, like trader money introduced by the present administration to boost entrepreneurial development.

Myth

Myth helps to make sense of the world around the people; it can be used to explain the inexplicable and help to relate actual events that are associated with individual belief; it plays a fundamental role in society. Myth can be captured through collective opinion or perception. Nigerian perception of women as weaker vessels with lesser capacity to perform tends to make women have a subjective perception about them. Research confirms the socio-cultural presence of negative “myth” stereotype women existence in the entrepreneur. For the purpose of this research, the entrepreneurial myth which explains a practice of women.

Include:

- (1) Women are not usually encouraged by their husbands.
- (2) Religion should not hinder women in the entrepreneur.
- (3) Women are weaker vessels; they should not work.
- (4) Women should not be involved in financial decisions.
- (5) Entrepreneurial activities do expose women to immorality.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs identified the lower level of physiological needs of every human as food, water, sex, and shelter, followed by other needs of safety, socio, ego, and self-actualization. Thus every human being desired to have their daily needs met through whatever source. If men can no longer provide for their home, who can take care of the widow, orphan, divorcees, and mature female on the street that are entitled to daily need of food?

Theory of Capital Circulation

Adam Smith (1776) in the book entitled *An Enquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* opined “national economy is the input of private and public funds”. The little contributions by an individual woman in entrepreneur will be a compliment to improve the national economy. Adetayo-Dionco (2014) stated that economic growth depends on individual contributions in building the economy through creating the value of economic goods and services. Nigerian government may not be able to provide the citizenry with daily needs of food and shelter, considering the huge population, but enlightenment on the need for a change of belief considering the reality of time will go a long way to motivate individual on self development as part of contribution towards the development of own country.

Empirical Review

Admed, Chowdhury, Bhuiya (1997) discovered that about 84% of the 140 million people living in Bangladesh resides in rural areas, and half of this population are women. Females, however, remain idle in their houses due to a number of social and cultural barriers. They are discouraged from working outside their homes. This situation can be attributed to the dominant patriarchal society and strong religious influence.

Babatunde (2014) found that 70% of the Nigeria population is classified as poor (< \$2 a day) and 35% living in abject poverty (< \$1 a day) with a high unemployment rate of 80% university graduates and women constituted the majority of this population.

Alam, Jani, and Omar (2011) examined the success factors of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia using

survey research design. Data were analysed using multiple regression and it was found that the success of women entrepreneurs in small businesses were positively and significantly influenced by family support, social tiles, and internal motivation.

Wale-Oshinowo and Kuye (2016) investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education and knowledge on entrepreneurial intention among Yaba college of Technology in Nigeria using survey design; it was discovered that entrepreneurship education had a significant and positive relationship with knowledge and entrepreneurial intention.

Mauchi, Mutengezanwa, and Damiyano (2014) investigated challenges faced by women entrepreneurs using interviews of 50 entrepreneurial women in Mashonal and Central Province and found entrepreneurial women are faced with problems relating to finance, conflicts of works, responsibilities in families, networking, education, and management skills.

Methodology

Research Design

This is an exploratory research aimed at discovering recent Nigerians' perception of women in entrepreneurial activities. Survey research design was used because it seeks to build a profile about the phenomenon of women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population for the study is Nigerian citizens.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Data were collected from 200 respondents (men and women) using purposive random sampling technique. They were classified into three groups. The first group was 100 respondents of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC—Nigerian graduates of tertiary institutions) which was conducted between 26th March and 15th April, 2019 at their orientation camp, Ede, Osun State. The second group was marketers (50 respondents) at the National Baptist Conference which was held in May 2019 at Ogbomosho, Oyo State. The third group comprised of 50 respondents from Osun State Civil Service and was conducted in May, 2019.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire comprising six items were used to measure dependent and independent variables associated with the research. The questionnaire provided information on empowerment and identified myth as statements in Likert form ranges from "Strongly agree = 4" to "Strongly disagree = 1" the scoring procedure indicated high scores with high level.

Administration of Research Instrument

Three research assistants were used to distribute and collect the 205 questionnaires with possible interpretation where necessary. Two hundred copies were returned due to time constraints.

Statistical Tool/Analytical Procedures

A study of the variables was considered appropriate in order to capture the interactive influences of other variables and thus be able to come up with a holistic and generally more acceptable result. Regression studies nature of the association, while correlation supports to measure the strength of relationship among variables (Fabayo, 2009). The research adopted both descriptive and inferential statistics for the analysis. Descriptive

included frequency and graph, while inferential statistics of linear multiple correlation and regression analysis with the aid of SPSS were used to measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to measure differences among the groups.

Model Specification

$$Y_i = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \mu_i \text{ (Linear regression model)}$$

Women empowerment effectiveness = f (entrepreneurial myth)

Women empowerment is the dependent variable and X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5 , represents items of entrepreneurial myth identified as independent variables.

a = intercept

β_1 - β_5 = Regression coefficients used to measure the sensitivity of the dependent variable.

μ_i = stochastic error term that captured the unexplained variations in the model.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Table Showing Summary of Administered Questionnaire with Frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	NYSC	100	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Marketer	50	25.0	25.0	75.0
	Civil Servant	50	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Note. All the hypotheses have the same distribution, i.e., the same number of respondents (200) in which NYSC respondents have the highest frequency of 100 (50%) while marketers and the civil servants contribute the remaining 100 (50%) with each having the same number of respondent 50 (25%).

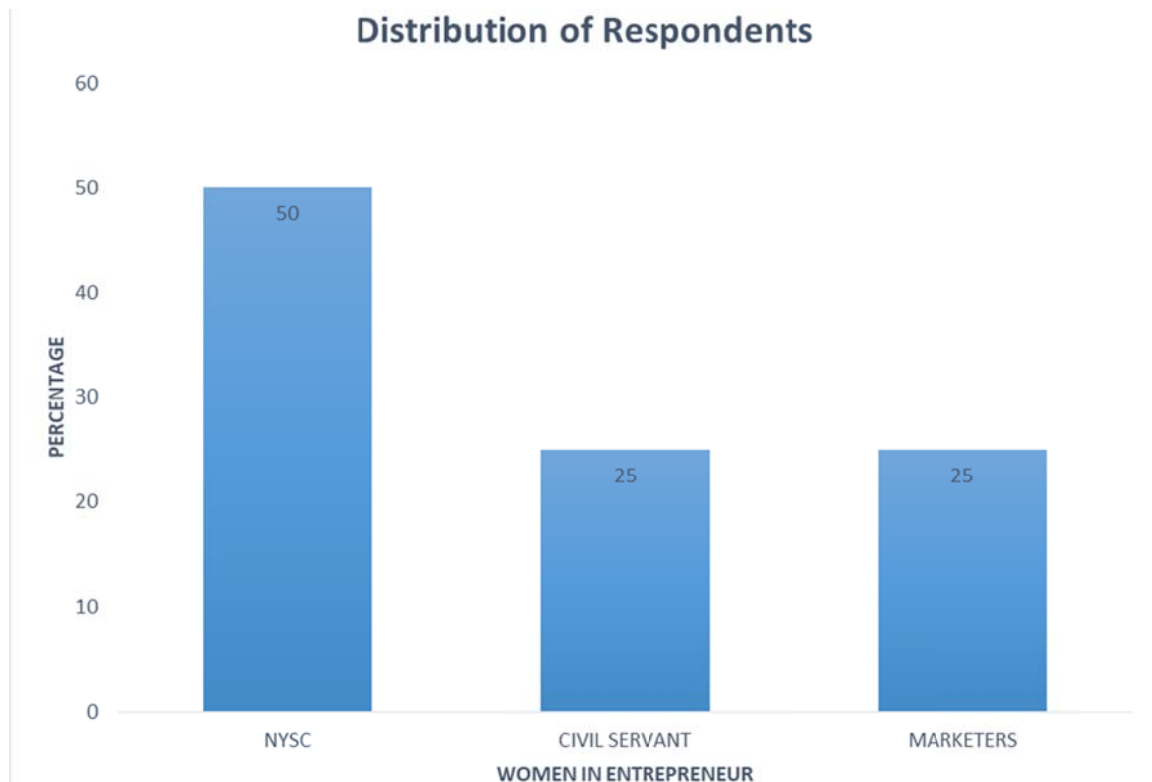


Figure 1. Respondents perception of women in entrepreneur.

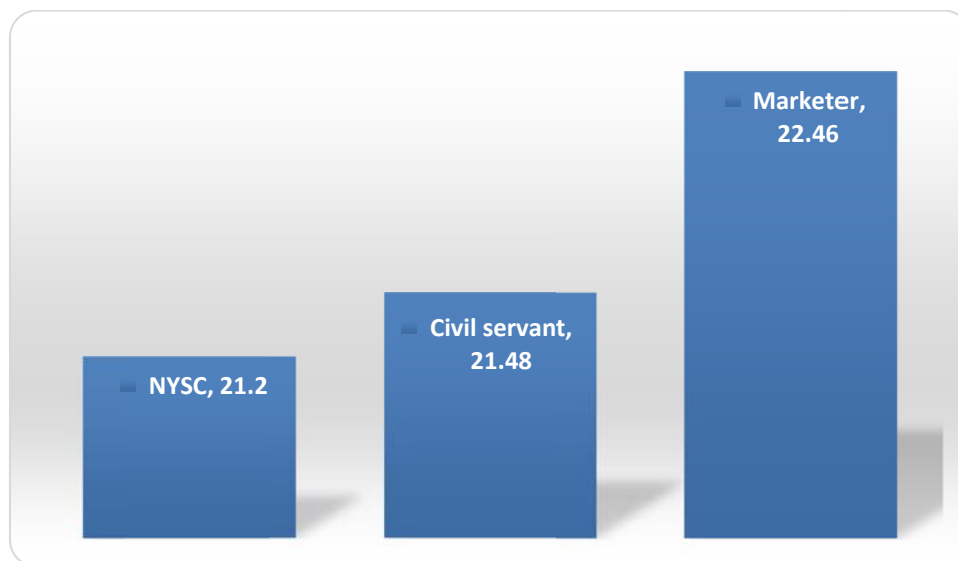


Figure 2. Respondents perception of women in entrepreneur.

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in Nigerians' perception of women in entrepreneur. Analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was carried out to test this hypothesis. The result ($df = 2$, $F = 2.518$, $Sig. = 0.083$) revealed that significant value obtained is extreme of the probability value of 0.05, implying we accept the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in Nigerians'

perception of women in entrepreneur. Meaning that irrespective of the category of women (NYSC, marketers, and civil servant) their perception of women involvement in entrepreneur is the same.

Table 2

ANOVA of Nigeria Women Perception

	Sum of squares	df.	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	53.655	2	26.828	2.518	0.083
Within groups	2098.900	197	10.654		
Total	2152.555	199			

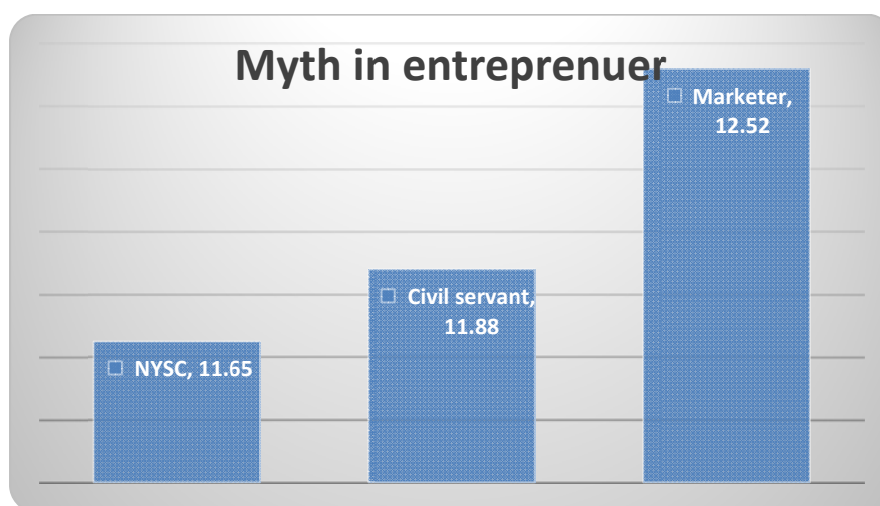


Figure 3. Myth in entrepreneur.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that Nigeria women in entrepreneur cannot be significantly affected by myth. Analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was carried out to test this hypothesis. The result ($df. = 2$, $F = 2.410$, $Sig. = 0.092$) revealed that significant value obtained is greater than the probability value of 0.05, implying we accept the null hypothesis which implies that Nigeria women in entrepreneur cannot be significantly affected by myth

Table 3

ANOVA of Entrepreneurial Myth

	Sum of squares	df.	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	25.365	2	12.682	2.410	0.092
Within groups	1036.510	197	5.261		
Total	1061.875	199			

Hypothesis Three

Correlation matrix shows relationship between women empowerment and other variables.

Table 4

The correlation of Hypotheses three

Variables	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
V1	1	-0.018 0.795 200	0.06 0.395 200	-0.011 0.876 200	-0.014 0.84 200	-0.09 0.204 200
V2		1	0.014 0.847 200	0.083 0.24 200	0.056 0.431 200	-0.025 0.727 200
V3			1	0.727 0.147 200	-0.012 0.864 200	0.283 0.00 200
V4				1	0.279 0.00 200	-0.018 0.798 200
V5					1	0.099 0.162 200
V6						1

Notes. V1 = women empowerment, V2 = Women in entrepreneur are not usually encouraged by their husband, V3 = Religious believe should not hinder women in entrepreneur, V4 = Women are weaker vessels therefore they should not work, V5 = Women should not be involved in financial decision in the family, and V6 = Entrepreneur does not expose women to immorality; $p < 0.05$ is significant.

Interpretation of the Result on Correlation for Hypothesis Three

We have correlation and regression here. Correlation and regression analysis dwells on relationship among variables. While correlation shows the degree of association or relationship, regression shows cause and effect or functional relationship between and among the variables.

The correlation matrix in the first table shows relationship between women empowerment and women in entrepreneur are not usually encouraged by their husband. Religion believe should not hinder women in entrepreneur; women are weaker vessels, therefore they should not work; women should not be involved in financial decision in the family and entrepreneur does not expose women to immorality.

The relationship between women empowerment and women in entrepreneur are not usually encouraged by their husband shows a negative weak correlation ($r = -0.18$) with a non-significant value of 0.795. It shows 18% relationship between the two variables which is negative and it is not significant. The significant value (0.795) is greater than probability value of 0.05, therefore, null hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between women empowerment and religious believe should not hinder women in entrepreneur shows a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.060$) which is not significant (0.395). The result revealed about 6% association between the two variables. The significant value (0.395) is $p > 0.05$, therefore null hypothesis is accepted. The negative sign shows the direction of their relationship. The relationship between women empowerment and women are weaker vessels and should not work shows a negative weak correlation ($r = -0.11$) with a significant value of 0.876. The result revealed that there is about 11% relationship that is negative between them with a significant value that is greater than 0.05. This implies that null hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between women empowerment and women should not be involved in financial decision in the family revealed negative weak correlation ($r = -0.14$) with a significant value of 0.840. The result revealed that there is about 14%

relationship that is negative between them with a significant value that is greater than 0.05. This implies that null hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between women empowerment and Entrepreneur does not expose women to immorality revealed negative weak correlation ($r = -0.090$) with a significant value of 0.204. The result revealed that there is about 9% relationship that is negative between them with a significant value that is greater than 0.05. This implies that null hypothesis is accepted.

However, significant positive weak association were found to exist between religious believe should not hinder women in entrepreneur and entrepreneur does not expose women to immorality with $r = 0.283$ with a significant value of 0.00 while women are weaker vessels therefore they should not work was significantly correlated with women should not be involved in financial decision in the family with $r = 0.279$ and significant value of 0.00. Based on these relationships, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is accepted.

Table 5

The regression of Hypotheses three

Variables	A	b	Standard error	Sig.
	2.473		0.385	0.00
V2	-	-0.012	0.070	0.867
V3	-	0.099	0.080	0.212
V4	-	-0.013	0.086	0.884
V5	-	-0.017	0.089	0.847
V6	-	-0.117	0.075	0.121

Notes. Y = women empowerment, V2 = Women in entrepreneur are not usually encouraged by their husband, V3 = Religious believe should not hinder women in entrepreneur, V4 = Women are weaker vessels therefore they should not work, V5 = Women should not be involved in financial decision in the family, and V6 = Entrepreneur does not expose women to immorality.

The regression result intends to predict which of the variables that were correlated earlier will better explain and or affect and what contributions they make to women empowerment. The R^2 value of 0.018 reveals that 1.8% explanation can be provided by the explanatory variables to women empowerment. The significant value (0.630) indicates the model used for the prediction of women empowerment and is not significant indicating that it is not reliable which is further confirmed from our coefficient of determination value (R^2) which is very low. However, the variables made different degree of contributions to women empowerment as seen in b (slope) values in Table 5. The intercept of the regression model is 2.473 with different slope values for the different variables.

The fundamental regression linear model is given as $y = a + bx$, the y is the dependent variable (women empowerment) while a is the intercept of the linear graph where the graph touches the y -axis and x is the independent variable or the predictors (other variables) and the b is the slope which indicate the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable. And since we have multiple regressions in our hands, our equation changes slightly. We now have $y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + b_5x_5$

Where x_1 - x_5 represents variables 2-6, therefore women empowerment = $2.473 + -0.012v_2 + 0.099v_3 + -0.013v_4 + -0.017v_5 + -0.117v_6$.

Conclusion

This study examined women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria. Five entrepreneurial myths were identified and the result revealed a significant relationship between women empowerment and entrepreneurial myth in Nigeria. The research concluded entrepreneurial myth is a significant factor in women

empowerment, it recommends women should be proactive in addressing the current poverty situation in Nigeria and policy-makers should consider enlightenment programmes because it has a far-reaching implication on national development.

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