

# Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Reduction among Rural Women in Nigeria.

Ojelade, Mathew Ojeleke\*<sup>1</sup>, Ishola, James Aransiola<sup>2</sup>, Ajayi, Johnson Kolawole<sup>3</sup>, Amusat, Rasaq Bamidele<sup>4</sup> & Egbedina, Peter Olumuyiwa<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Administration, Kola Daisi University Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration, Thomas Adewumi University, Oko, Kwara state, Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Public Administration, The Oke-ogun Polytechnic, Saki, Oyo state, Nigeria

<sup>4</sup>Department of Business Administration, The Oke-ogun Polytechnic, Saki, Oyo state, Nigeria.

<sup>5</sup>Department of Local Government Studies, The Oke-ogun Polytechnic, Saki, Oyo state, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2024.1105054>

Received: 18 April 2024; Accepted: 01 May 2024; Published: 14 June 2024

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how entrepreneurship development initiatives affect Nigerian rural women's ability to escape poverty. Nigeria's poverty predicament embodies the idea of "feminization of poverty," as a greater proportion of the impoverished are women. Furthermore, the failure of the current entrepreneurial development programs to increase women's involvement in entrepreneurship, particularly in rural regions, is a sign that further empirical research is required. All of the female business owners in the rural Oke Ogun region of Oyo state, Nigeria, were the study's target demographic. A structured questionnaire was employed as a means of gathering data. Because the majority of the women entrepreneurs are illiterate, the researchers individually distributed copies of the questionnaire at random to them at their local stalls in their villages. They also provided assistance in completing it out. Using SPSS version 25, the collected data were coded and subjected to an independent sample t-test analysis. The study's conclusions showed that, among women entrepreneurs in the study area's rural areas, programs for women entrepreneurs do not contribute to the reduction of poverty. It is recommended among other things that the government should encourage women's entrepreneurial development, raise awareness of its existence to people at the grassroot level and make financial assistance more accessible by eliminating many of the complicated procedures associated with loans.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship development, Poverty reduction, Rural women, Financial inclusion programmes.

## INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, women actively contribute to the development of the country. Women have always been viewed as exceptional in all spheres of human endeavor, from the home front to governance (Iyiola, O. O. & Azuh, D. 2014). Particularly in Nigeria, the rural woman works incredibly hard at several jobs to support her family. The blood and sweat of devoted women in Nigeria provide food, clothing, and other necessities for a

large number of households. Women are disproportionately affected by extreme poverty and violence from men, yet they uphold moral standards, fulfill social obligations, and bravely create and manage family budgets, regardless of the financial costs. The paradox of growth without a reduction in poverty and the trickle-down impact of growth on the government's tardy reaction to the chronic and endemic problem of poverty and weak governance have been the hallmarks of the Nigerian economy (Oghojafor, Olayemi, Okonyi, & Olayiwola, 2011). According to UNICEF (2019), inadequate national policies and empowerment programs, deteriorating infrastructure, a lack of economic diversity, and unstable political environments are the main causes of poverty. According to Misango and Ogiti (2013), gender inequality and limited financial access contribute to the fact that women experience poverty at a higher rate than males. According to Fapohunda (2012), women's growing poverty is a result of their standing and authority inside the home as well as their unfair employment circumstances. Women make less money than men do. The feminization of poverty in Nigeria is mostly due to the fact that women with bold entrepreneurial dreams have been prevented from realizing their dreams by certain sociocultural barriers, according to empirical research (Deedam & Onoja, 2015; Omoniyi, 2013).

In the past twenty years, women's entrepreneurship has gained significant attention in academic discourse because of their pivotal role in driving economic growth and development in their countries, which is essential to reducing poverty (Agbionu, Ikon, and Chinwe 2015). Due to their participation in all aspects of entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs take the risks associated with combining resources in novel ways in order to produce goods and services that allow them to capitalize on opportunities found in their immediate environments (Ukommi & Agha, 2016; Chinonye, 2010). In the academic and professional worlds worldwide, women's entrepreneurship is quickly gaining traction as a real tool for reducing poverty and attaining sustainable economic growth and development, especially in developing nations like Nigeria (World Bank, 2018; Vinesh, 2014). To eradicate poverty and boost economic viability, women's participation in the economy must increase (Mwirebua & Evans, 2017). According to Agbionu, Agbionu, Ikon & Chinwe (2015), women have been and continue to be agents of poverty alleviation because the principles of poverty alleviation are essential to any significant growth and development. In both developed and developing nations, women's participation in entrepreneurship enterprises has significantly aided in the reduction of poverty and promoted sustainable economic growth and development (Manerkar, 2015). However, Akabueze (2012) pointed out that prejudice, familial pressure, men's domination, mobility restrictions, lack of funding, and limited decision-making are the main obstacles that prevent women from pursuing entrepreneurship.

According to Odejide (1997), poverty is mostly associated with women in both industrialized and developing nations. More than 564 million women, according to Fajimi and Omonona (2011), live in absolute poverty. In Nigeria, poverty appears to be feminized because it is more common among households headed by women than by men, claim Abdul Salam, Elsegaey, Khraif, and Al-Mutairi (2014). It would seem logical to think that women's participation in small enterprises would grow and prosper, however Akabueze (2002) clearly noted that because of the barriers affecting their company success, the rate of business failure continues to rise. Despite the inherent challenges posed by the expansion of small businesses and the shortcomings of numerous initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, women are becoming more and more bold in their pursuit of owning small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), either alone or in collaboration with men (International Labour Organization, ILO, 2005). This is mostly due to the ease of entry, restricted access to other businesses, and dearth of work prospects in the formal economy, including precarious empowerment and poverty alleviation tactics that haven't had much of an impact recently. Furthermore, considering the rise in female entrepreneurship, it is imperative to comprehend the social and economic determinants that impact their success, especially in light of conflicting and ambiguous data.

According to Chinonye, Iyiola, Akinbode, Obigbemi, and Eke (2015), ignoring the advancement of women entrepreneurs is a waste of human resource potential because women are both a catalyst for economic

progress and a valuable ally in the fight against poverty. These women's potential has been limited by the emphasis placed on women's business talents in this region of the world, which has kept them from adding to the overall expansion of the Nigerian economy. Furthermore, nothing is known about the amount of government funding provided and how women entrepreneurs in Lagos State are able to reduce poverty. The challenges faced by female entrepreneurs include limited financial resources and societal and cultural barriers (Chinonye, Iyiola, Akinbode, Obigbemi and Eke, 2015). The failure of the current entrepreneurship development programs to increase women's engagement in entrepreneurial activities is a sign that further empirical research of this kind is required. Thus, the study added to our understanding of how women's participation in entrepreneurship has decreased poverty among their ranks, particularly at the local level where government agencies are less visible than in urban areas.

The major objective of this study is to assess the effect of entrepreneurship development on poverty reduction among rural women in Nigeria, while the specific objectives are to:

1. examine the effect of women entrepreneurship programmes on poverty reduction among women in the Oke-ogun area of Oyo state..
2. examine the effect of financial inclusion programmes on poverty reduction among women in the Oke-ogun area of Oyo state..
3. examine the effect of women earned income on poverty reduction among women in the Oke-ogun area of Oyo state.

Based on the above-mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated to pilot the study:

Ho1: Women entrepreneurship programmes do not have any significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the study area.

Ho2: Financial inclusion programmes do not have any significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the study area.

Ho3: Women earned income do not have any significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the study area.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Entrepreneurship Development

According to Carpenter and Dunung (2012), entrepreneurship development is the process of identifying possibilities and using available resources to carry out creative concepts for brand-new, carefully thought-out business endeavors. It can be characterized as the acquisition of managerial, organizational, and technological abilities. For example, according to Ezeani, Ifeonyenatalu, and Ezemoying (2012), entrepreneurship is the process of combining management and organizational skills with creative and innovative ideas to combine people, money, and resources to meet a need and thereby create wealth. Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) defined entrepreneurship as the intentional creation or transformation of an organization for the purpose of creating and adding value through utilization of resources. Consequently, entrepreneurship as a process gives people more jobs, creates new inventions and ideas, stimulates national income, and consequently has the potential to affect economic development. As a result, entrepreneurship can also be viewed in terms of its innovative skills and ability to seek out investment opportunities (Ekon & Ekon, 2016). According to Obasan and Soyebó (2011), entrepreneurship is a dynamic activity that is initiated and controlled by a single person and aims to take advantage of economic innovation to produce new value for the market. In the meantime, entrepreneurship was described by Phina and Nkiru (2020) as the willingness and capacity of an individual to look for investment possibilities, launch, and successfully

manage a business. The act of establishing a firm, coordinating transactions, and taking calculated risks in the hopes of turning a profit is referred to as entrepreneurship. Many people both domestically and internationally have recognized entrepreneurship as a key component of a sustainable, robust, and stable economy, and it is an essential engine for the economic, social, practical, and overall growth of any nation (Baba, 2013; Akpomi, 2009).

Microbusiness, microfinance, small and medium-sized industries, information and telecom services, personal services in food vending/restaurant, clothing manufacturing, embroidery, agricultural produce, music and film production—all demonstrate Nigeria's entrepreneurship development and innovations across all sectors of the economy (Thaddeus, 2012). This is the reason that Nigeria's successive governments have tried to accomplish this position by strengthening pertinent authorities. It is often known that a nation cannot advance technologically, industrially, or economically without establishing robust private partnership initiatives aimed at generating wealth, reducing poverty, and creating jobs (Akpomi, 2009; Baba, 2013). However, Sanusi (2010) emphasized that the main obstacles to the growth of entrepreneurship in Nigeria include many taxes, corruption, limited access to financing, security risks, and high startup costs. Entrepreneurship reduces poverty by increasing the participation of women, minorities, and ethnic groups in small and medium-sized firms (Iliya, Abdullahi, Adama & Audu, 2017).

### **Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Reduction**

These days, entrepreneurship is thought to be a major factor in economic growth (Tende, 2013). This is due to the fact that small, quickly expanding businesses founded by people with an entrepreneurial spirit generate wealth and a sizable number of jobs in certain countries, which has a major influence on social and economic growth (Mohammad & Abul, 2014). When new businesses are established or existing ones expand, entrepreneurship development helps to reduce poverty by creating jobs. It also increases social wealth by forming new markets, industries, technologies, institutional forms, jobs, and net increases in real productivity and income, all of which lead to higher living standards for the populace (Simon, 2018). It follows that it makes sense to say that as an economy's share of entrepreneurs rises, so will its poverty indices, and vice versa. According to Mensah and Benedict (2010) and Tambunan (2008), there is a connection between the growth of entrepreneurship and the reduction of poverty.

### **Challenges of Women Entrepreneurship in Nigeria**

Agbionu, Ikon, and Chinwe (2015) recognized that because of the government's and stakeholders' disregard, women entrepreneurs continue to work hard but produce little and are stunted. Gender imbalance was a problem for female entrepreneurs (Adekola, Olawole-Isaac, Ajibola & Salau, 2015). Therefore, Chinaemerem (2014) claimed that women's pursuit of entrepreneurship, business, and performance is hampered by emotional weight and the dual role duties they face. Additionally, the growth of women-owned businesses is impacted by sociocultural traditions, lack of collateral, passive orientation, restricted access to finance, gender disparities in education, and passive orientation (Ayogu, & Agu, 2015; Cantwell, 2014; Chinomona, 2015; Makena, Kubaison & Njati, 2014). Due to Islamic doctrine in Muslim-donated countries and the desire of most female entrepreneurs to enjoy business confidentiality and a secluded setting that limits male connections, religious segregation is another significant problem for women entrepreneurs (Itani, Sidani & Baalbaki, 2011). However, disparaging remarks and sociocultural attitudes, a poor income generation ratio, and inadequate educational opportunities all hinder the rise of women entrepreneurs (Akhawaya & Havenga, 2012; Ewoh, 2014). It is concerning that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria have not performed up to par, even in spite of encouraging policies and regulations, favorable policies, and special government support meant to boost small businesses. Although the difficulties faced by women who actively participated in small businesses and their eventual failure have received widespread recognition. Several factors contribute to this, such as inadequate planning, unfavorable government laws, inadequate marketing tactics, insufficient technical expertise, and insufficient funding (Aftab & Rahim 1989, Ekpeyong



1983, Ogechukwu, 2006; Onugu 2005). However, the operational environment (government policies, the consequences of globalization, and financial institutions) contributes to some of the issues faced by SMEs and women entrepreneurs (Ukommi and Agha 2016). The challenges faced by female entrepreneurs include limited financial resources and societal and cultural barriers (Chinonye, Iyiola, Akinbode, Obigbemi & Eke, 2015).

Even so, there is a general acknowledgement of the challenges encountered by women who actively participated in small firms and their final failure. This is caused by a number of things, including poor planning, unfavorable regulations, poor marketing strategies, a lack of technical know-how, and a lack of money (Aftab & Rahim 1989, Ekpeyong 1983, Ogechukwu, 2006; Onugu 2005). Nonetheless, some of the problems that SMEs and female entrepreneurs confront are a result of the operating environment, which includes financial institutions, government laws, and the effects of globalization (Ukommi and Agha 2016). Limited financial resources and social and cultural hurdles are among the difficulties experienced by female entrepreneurs (Chinonye, Iyiola, Akinbode, Obigbemi & Eke, 2015). Buttner (2003) listed the following characteristics of women entrepreneurs that contributed to their success: communication skills, market opportunity, financial management abilities, idea generation, motivation, and entrepreneurial experience (e.g., number of prior ventures involved) (World Bank, 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The foundation of this research is feminist theory: The foundation of this hypothesis is the idea that, in comparison to businesses owned by males, the variables influencing the performance of women-owned businesses would differ dramatically. Social feminism and liberal ideologies serve as the foundation for this argument. Liberal political philosophy, which holds that all creatures are equal and that humans are fundamentally logical, self-interested individuals, is the foundation of liberal feminist theory. According to the liberal feminist view, gender disparities result from the different opportunities and power that men and women have in society—that is, from the structural positions that men and women hold (Beasley, 1999). Consequently, disparities in men's and women's accomplishments are attributed to women's lack of equal access to resources and employment opportunities, which prevents them from reaching their full potential. This has thus made it more difficult for women to develop the qualities and skills required to compete with males on an equal footing. The liberal feminist theory states that performance gaps between genders appear to vanish as soon as equal access to resources is guaranteed (Carter et al., 1997).

The social feminist theory, which is derived from psychoanalysis and the social learning theory, differs from the liberal feminist theory in that it maintains that men and women are fundamentally different from one another from the earliest stages of life. The ways that men and women construct and interpret reality, as well as how these affect how their values and intents are formed, show these disparities (Carter, 1997). Due to disparities in socialization, training, and experiences before entering specific employment positions, men and women are fundamentally different from one another. Different self-perceptions, motivations, and belief systems are the outcome of disparities in upbringing. As a result, women approach their work in different ways than males do, and these approaches may or may not be as effective (Fischer, 1993).

### **Empirical Review**

Adofu and Ocheja (2013) evaluated how women's entrepreneurship skill acquisition affected poverty in Nigeria's Kogi State. The study used primary data that was gathered using a well-structured questionnaire that was given to recipients of entrepreneurship acquisition skills in six different local government areas of the state at random by a skilled enumerator. Frequencies and percentages were used in the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire. According to the results, 65% of the respondents agreed that Nigeria's high rate of poverty is caused by women's lack of entrepreneurial abilities. At least 60% of the women who benefited from the skill development program are now able to afford the necessities of life, according to the

results. The study thus suggested that the government start considering how to expand the program to the level of a program for the eradication of poverty, given that the majority of those who benefited from it could afford the necessities of life. Although the government should be involved in eradicating poverty in the research area, the influence of any current government programs or incentives on this goal was never examined in this study.

According to research by Akpanobong and Usoro (2010), women entrepreneurs made a substantial contribution to sustainable development and the reduction of poverty. The report does not include metrics of sustainable development or poverty alleviation for the reader to confirm. The reader has access to the poverty reduction metrics from the current study. For instance, the indicators for the employment generation variable included the number of workers engaged in trade, service delivery, and agriculture.

Onwurafor and Enwelu (2013) found that rural women engaged in and participated in agro-food processing activities through the use of the probit regression method of analysis. The study did, however, concentrate more on the education of female business owners. The participation of women entrepreneurs in entrepreneurial activities, such as job creation and its impact on reducing poverty, was the sole focus of this study.

Okey (2010) conducted research on how the government might help female entrepreneurs achieve their goal of creating wealth. He conducted research on 400 Edo State-based female entrepreneurs as a sample. To gather replies, he employs a structured questionnaire with Likert Scale Statements for Strongly Agreed, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Undecided. He examines their answers using sample percentage. He discovered that: Despite the fact that the government has funded groups that offer training and mentorship to female entrepreneurs. The government must take a more proactive role in supporting training programs for women and publicly promote and publicize these initiatives.

Ndubuisi and Anekwe (2018) investigated how entrepreneurship development may help alleviate poverty in Nigeria. They noted that one of the main issues facing developing and underdeveloped nations worldwide is poverty, which has become endemic due to the high rate of unemployment that has become a defining feature of these nations. Using a qualitative researcher approach, they came to the conclusion that entrepreneurship development is a crucial tool for reducing poverty because it increases employment and economic growth in developing nations. It also improves educational attainment and accelerates economic growth, all of which are necessary for Nigeria to escape the unsettlingly high level of poverty. In order to support human empowerment and development through entrepreneurial education and training, their research suggests that sufficient attention be paid to the rise of entrepreneurship and that entrepreneurship development be incorporated into school curricula.

GU Rui, (2021) investigated the role that empowered women play in reducing poverty and the effects of a multi-component program on women's empowerment and poverty reduction. At the end of 2014, he collected data from nine impoverished counties in Ulanqab City, which is located in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China. This resulted in a sample of 900 households. He used the t-test to analyze the data. His findings demonstrate that the approach simultaneously reduces poverty and promotes women's empowerment. Reducing poverty is another benefit of empowering women, and the women who benefited from it raised household earnings and standards of living.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **The study Design**

According to Ezeani (2014), the study used a descriptive survey design, whose goal is to gather precise, factual data that characterizes an existent occurrence. All of the female business owners in the rural Oke-

ogun region of Oyo state, Nigeria, were the study’s target demographic. These women had not been formally registered with any government body. They are limited to local groups in their neighborhood. These local associations supplied the means by which association members could be contacted and received copies of the structured questionnaire created especially for the study. In addition to the surveys, in-person interviews were conducted to determine how the women felt about the interventions they got. This study was between August and November, 2023. Two hundred and ten (210) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents in their various stores and kiosks with the assistance of other researchers. Eighty-two (182) copies, or 87% of the total, were properly filled out and returned for scrutiny. The sampled respondents’ graphical presentation looks like this:

Table 1: Categories of sampled women-owned enterprises.

S/N	Categories of sampled women-owned business	No. of Respondents	%
1	Food canteen	31	17
2	Fashion designer	23	13
3	Hair dressing	40	22
4	Women farmers	36	20
5	Trading store	34	18
6	NUR/PRY school owners	18	10
	Total	182	100

Source: Field study, 2023

The result from Table 1 above shows that 31 respondents representing, 17% were in canteen businesses. They are street food vendors. 23 respondents, representing 13% were in fashion designing business, 40 respondents, representing 22% were into hair dressing business. Also, women farmers were 36, representing 20%, 34 respondents, representing 18% were traders while 18 respondents, representing 10% were school owners.

**Instrument of Data Collection:** Questionnaire was the instrument used in data collection and were then self-administered by the researchers to ensure high level of accuracy. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section ‘A’ handled the biography of the respondents while section ‘B’ handled the variables of the study. Likert-5 point Scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The respondents were required to read each question carefully and indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement using various scaling units.

**Method of Analysis:** Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the field. The independent T- test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses that were generated from the research questions of this study. The justification for the use of independent sample t-test is because it measures the relationships existing between two group of variables. It is simple to compute without errors and helps to illustrate the directional outcome and strength of the variable. It further shows a precise quantitative measurement of the degree of relationship between dependent and independent variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Statistical Test of Hypothesis

In line with the statistical research, the three hypotheses formulated in this study were approached with the aid of Independent Sample T- Test. The level of significance for the study is 5% (for a two-tailed test);

while the conclusion would however be taken based on the probability values.

**Decision Rule**

1. If the probability (Sig) > 0.05 we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis.
2. If the probability (Sig) < 0.05 we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis.

Ho1: Women entrepreneurship programmes do not have any significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the study area.

Table 2: Independent Sample T-Test for Women entrepreneurship programmes and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Independent Samples Test					
variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means	
		F-test	sig	T-test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Women entrepreneurship programmes	Equal variances assumed	54.13	0.211	6.12	0,115
	Equal variances not assumed			4.83	0.129

Source: Authors' computation, SPSS version 25

From the independent sample T-Test result in Table 2 above, the calculated t-value for the relationship between women entrepreneurship programmes and poverty reduction in the study area is is 6.12 and the pvalue computed is 0.115 at 95% confidence levels. Since the p-value is higher than 0.05 used as the level of significance, we accept the null hypothesis (Ho1) and conclude that women entrepreneurship programmes have no significant effect on poverty reduction among women in the rural areas in Nigeria.

Ho2: Financial inclusioni programmes do not have any significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the study area.

Table 3: Independent Sample T-Test for Financial inclusioni programmes and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Independent Samples Test					
variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means	
		F-test	sig	T-test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Financial inclusion programmes	Equal variances assumed	47.09	0.105	8.64	0,214
	Equal variances not assumed			3.96	0.198

Source: Authors' computation, SPSS version 25

From the independent sample T-Test result in Table 3 above, the calculated t-value for the relationship between financial inclusion programmes and poverty reduction in the study area is is 8.64 and the pvalue computed is 0.214 at 95% confidence levels. Since the p-value is higher than 0.05 used as the level of significance, we accept the null hypothesis (Ho1) and conclude that financial inclusion programmes have no



significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the rural areas in Nigeria.

Ho3: Women earned income do not have any significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the study area.

Table 4: Independent Sample T-Test for Financial inclusioni programmes and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Independent Samples Test					
variable	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means	
		F-test	sig	T-test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Women earned income	Equal variances assumed	44.37	0.001	12.07	0,000
	Equal variances not assumed			8.45	0.000

Source: Authors' computation, SPSS version 25

From the independent sample T-Test result in Table 4 above, the calculated t-value for the relationship between women earned income and poverty reduction in the study area is is 12.07 and the pvalue computed is 0.000 at 95% confidence levels. Since the p-value is lesser than 0.05 used as the level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho1) and conclude that women earned income has a significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the rural areas in Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study was carried out to determine whether entrepreneurship development as a concept has helped to reduce the incidence of poverty among rural women in Nigeria. The study' constructs were women entrepreneurship programmes, women financial inclusion programmes and women earned income. Findings from the study revealed that women entrepreneurship programmes do not help at reducing poverty among women entrepreneurs in the rural areas in Nigeria. This result is in contrary to the findings of Akande O.O and James M.T (2022) that carried out a research on Women Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Alleviation: Experience from Nigeria Small and Medium Enterprises. Using a multiple regression methods, The result showed that there is positive and significant effect of women entrepreneurship programme on poverty alleviation with a Beta co-efficient of ( $\beta = 0.499$ ,  $t=10.274$ ,  $p\text{-value}<0.01$ ). This implied that there is a significant relationship between women entrepreneurship programme and poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Also, a study performed by Adofu and Ocheja (2013) in Kogi showed that there is a significant positive relationship between women entrepreneurship programmes and poverty reduction.state. Also, the findings on the effect of financial inclusion on poverty reduction among rural women showed that financial inclusion programmes have no significant positive effect on poverty reduction among women in the rural areas in Nigeria. This finding is supported by Adetiloye, K.A., Adegboye, F.B. and Akinjare, V.A., 2020. they carried out a study and found out that that female entrepreneurs are discouraged to go for loans because of the required collateral, high interest rates, and late delivery of credit. This finding is also supported by the World Bank report on the "Investment Climate in Nigeria" which shows 76% of female entrepreneurs rely mostly on internal funds and retained earnings, and that around 1% obtain capital from formal financial institutions. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Moreover, the finding of this study shows that the women earned income has a positive effect on rural women entrepreneurs. This finding is supported by the findings of Akande, O O nad James M. T (2022) who conducted a study on the effect of entrepreneurship on poverty alleviation among women in Lagos state, Using regression methods, the finding showed that there is a significant relationship between women income earned and poverty alleviation. The regression coefficients indicated the effect of women income earned on poverty alleviation.

The result showed that there is positive and significant effect of women income earned on poverty alleviation with a Beta co-efficient of ( $\beta = 0.594$ ,  $t=13.182$ ,  $p\text{-value}<0.01$ ).

## CONCLUSION

Our findings support suggestions that women in rural areas in Nigeria do not enjoy those government programmes that those in the cities and other big towns do enjoy. They are left to the mercy of their savings and probably loans from friends and relatives. A study carried out by Marlow and Carter (2014) showed that women mainly raise finance for business growth from personal savings, family and friends, and occasionally with government grants and loans. Also, the findings by Akande and James (2022), showed that gaining access to finance by SMEs is a prohibiting factor against women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. In the same vein, Chinonye, Iyiola, Akinbode, Obigbemi and Eke (2015) reported that women entrepreneurs are confronted with weak financial base and socio-cultural hindrances. Moreover, the findings of this study also indicated that there is a significant positive effect of women income earned on poverty reduction which is consistent with the research performed by Misango and Ongiti (2013) on women entrepreneurs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above, it is recommended among other things that; the government should encourage women's entrepreneurial development, raise awareness of its existence, and make financial assistance more accessible by eliminating many of the complicated procedures associated with loans. Moreover, Women in entrepreneurship should be fully informed about government financing programs targeted at women's entrepreneurship development in relation to poverty alleviation.

## REFERENCES

1. Abdul Salam, A., Elsegaey, I., Khraif, R. & Al-Mutairi A. (2014). Population distribution and household conditions in Saudi Arabia: reflections from the 2010 Census. *SpringerPlus* 3, 530
2. Adetiloye, K.A., Adegboye, F.B. & Akinjare, V.A., 2020. Sustainable financial access for female entrepreneurs in the micro, small and medium enterprises sector in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6 (1), p.1823600.
3. Adofu, I., & Ocheja, A. (2013). Alleviating poverty through the use of entrepreneurship skill acquisition in Kogi State, Nigeria. *International Open Journal of Economics* 1(2), 14-23.
4. Agbionu EO, Agbionu CU, Ikon MA & Chinwe O.V (2015) Women Entrepreneurship and Poverty Alleviation in Awka Metropolis. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management* 4: 158.
5. Akabueze, B. (2002): *Financing small and medium enterprises (SMEs)*. The small and medium industries equity investment scheme (SMIEIS) Option. Lagos. Nigeria.
6. Akande, O. O. & Alabi, E. (2016) Effect of entrepreneurial skills development schemes of the Osun State Government on youth employment. <https://www.africanscholarpublications.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/effect-of-entrepreneurial-skills-development.pdf>. Retrieved, 11/06/19.
7. Ali, A., & Ali, A. Y. S. (2013). Entrepreneurship development and poverty reduction: Empirical survey from Somalia. *American International Journal of Social Science*, 2, 108-113.
8. Alli, A.I. & Lawal, T.O. (2019). The potential in women entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation in Nigeria. *A proceeding of the paper presented at Lagos State University, Faculty of management Science Annual Conference*. 1, pp.8-13.
9. Aziz, N (2021). The Influence of Women's Empowerment on Poverty Reduction in the Rural Areas of Bangladesh: Focus on Health, Education and Living Standard. *International Journal of Environ. Res. Public Health* 18,6909.
10. Carter R (1997). Entrepreneur Career Selection and Gender: A Socialization Approach, *J. Small. Manage.*, 28(2): 37-44.

11. Chinonye LE (2010) *Entrepreneurship: A Conceptual Approach*. Rumark Nigeria Limited, Lagos.
12. Chinonye M. L., Iyiola, O. O., Akinbode, M., O., Obigbemi, A., and Eke, O. P., (2015). Women Entrepreneurship in Nigeria: Policy Framework, Challenges and Remedies. *KASMER* 43(2): 2 – 21.
13. Ekpenyong, S.N.(2014). ‘Women entrepreneurship in micro, small and medium scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State’, *Journal of Business and Management*; Vol. 16, No. 3, Ver.
14. Ewoh, E. (2014). *Female entrepreneurs’ performance: A systematic literature review of forces influencing the performance of African female entrepreneurs*. Jyvaskyla University Scholl of Business and Economics.
15. Ezeani (2014). *Entrepreneurship: Theory, Process. Practice* (Mason, OH; South-Western Publishers).
16. Fajimi, F. O. & Omonona, B. T. (2011). Women participation in Agro-allied Small and Medium Scale Enterprise and its impact on poverty alleviation in Oyo State Nigeria. *International Journal of Agriculture and Environment*, 1, 27-37.
17. Fapohunda, T. M. (2012). Women and Poverty Alleviation in Lagos, Nigeria. *British Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 1-12.
18. Fisher, I. (1993). *Entrepreneurship: Theory, Process. Practice* (Mason, OH; South-Western Publishers).
19. GU R, & NIE F. (2021); Does empowering women benefit poverty reduction? Evidence from a multi-component program in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China; *Journal of Integrative Agriculture*, 20(4): 1092–1106
20. Ikechukwu D, Onyi A.J & Edeh F. O (2017); Entrepreneurship and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: Empirical, Analysis of Industrial Layout Coal Camp, Enugu-State, Nigeria; *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*; : 4(3) Pp 115-130
21. International Labour Organization, ILO (2005). *Labour under structural adjustment*. International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva.
22. Iyiola, O. O. & Azuh, D. (2014). Women entrepreneurs as Small-medium Enterprise (SME) Operators and their roles in Socio-economic Development in Ota, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Finance*, (2, 1), 1 – 10.
23. Manerkar, G.A. (2015). Women entrepreneurs in Goa: Issues and Challenges. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 4(12), 1-8.
24. Marlow, S. & Martinez D A., 2018. Annual review article: Is it time to rethink the gender barriers to resources?. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 9(3), pp.211-220.
25. Mensah, S. A & Benedict, E. (2010). Entrepreneurship training and poverty alleviation: Empowering the poor in the Eastern Free State of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 1, 138-163.
26. Misago, S.B & Ongiti, O. K. (2013). Do women entrepreneurs play a role in reducing poverty? A case in Kenya. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 2, 87-103.
27. Mwirebua, K. G. & Evans, K, (2017). Fostering Women Entrepreneurship as a solution to poverty reduction in developing economies: A case study of Ongata Rongai Town. *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Research (IJBMER)*, 8(1), 872-883.
28. Nadim, S.J & Nurlukman, A.D (2017); “The Impact of Women Empowerment on Poverty Reduction in Rural Area of Bangladesh: Focusing on Village Development Program”. *Journal of Government and Civil Society*, 1(2), 135-157.
29. National Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Poverty in Nigeria (Current Evidence)* National Policy dissemination workshop on poverty and inequality in Nigeria 30th August, Lagos.
30. Ndubuisi, O.P & Anekwe R. I (2018); Effect of Entrepreneurship Development on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria; *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR- JBM)*; e-ISSN: 20(2)
31. Odejide, A. F. C. (1997). Breaking the vicious circle of poverty among women in developing countries: The case of Microcredit. *Proceeding of the Nigerian Economic Society Annual*
32. Oghojafor, B. E., Olayemi, O. O., Okonji, P. S. & Olayiwola, P. O. (2011). Entrepreneurship as an intervention strategy to poverty alleviation in developing economy. *10th International Entrepreneurship Forum, University of Essex, Tamkeen, Bahrain*, 9(11), 1-109.

33. Ogidi, A. E. (2014) Women Entrepreneurship and Poverty Reduction *SCSR Journal of Business* 43(2) 2-21
34. Okey, E. (2010). Ricardo-Sraffa Paradigm Comparing the Gains from Trade in Inputs and Finished Goods. *Journal of Economic Literature*,39(4), 1204–14.
35. Okunnu, M.A. & Akinjole, A. (2016). Entrepreneurship and poverty status among female household participants in SMEs in Lagos State. *Journal of Business Administration & Management Sciences Research*, 5(1), 9-17.
36. Olutunla, G.T & Obamuyi, T.M., 2008. An empirical analysis of factors associated with the profitability of Small and medium-enterprises in Nigeria. *African Journal of business management*, 2 (11), pp.195-200.
37. Onuegbu, R.C. (2018). Entrepreneurship development and employment generation as intervention strategy for poverty reduction in an emerging economy. *International Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship research*, 11(4), 35-39.
38. Onugu, B. A. N., (2005). *Small and medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. PhD Dissertation St. Clement University.
39. Tende, S. B. A (2013). Government initiatives toward entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Business Research*, 8, 109-120.
40. Thaddeus, E., 2012. Perspectives: Entrepreneurship development & growth of enterprises in Nigeria. *Entrepreneurial practice review*, 2(2), pp.31-35.
41. Ukommi, A.S., & Agha, E.O. (2016). Women entrepreneurship in Nigeria: A study of women in Uyo Metropolis. *International Journal of Social Science*, 10(4), 92-111.
42. Wei, W.; Sarker, T.; Zukiewicz-Sobczak, W.; Roy, R.; Alam, G.M.M.; Rabbany, M.G.; Hossain, M.S & Aziz, N (2021). The Influence of Women's Empowerment on Poverty Reduction in the Rural Areas of Bangladesh: Focus on Health, Education and Living Standard. *International Journal of Environmental Research*. (18),6.
43. World Bank (2011). *Attacking poverty: World Development Report* Washington, World Bank.
44. World Bank. (2016). *Nigeria: Poverty in the Midst of Plenty; the Challenge of Growth with Inclusion*, World Bank, Washington D.C.