

Innovations

Impact of Women Entrepreneurial Training on Performance: A Case Study of South-East Nigeria

Chinyere Jane Nwobilor¹, Gambo Nasamu², Ifeoma May Nwoye³,
Hauwa Lamino Abubakar⁴, Umar Abbas Ibrahim⁵

¹PhD Student, ²Lecturer, ³Professor & ^{4&5}Associate Professor
Department of Business Administration, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

Corresponding Author: [Chinyere Jane Nwobilor](#)

Abstract: *Despite efforts to promote women's entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurs in the region face significant challenges, including limited access to education, finance, training, and markets. This study investigates the impact of entrepreneurial training on the performance of women-owned businesses in Southeast Nigeria. The study aims to assess the influence of networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management training on business growth among women entrepreneurs. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 1,334 respondents from registered women-owned enterprises across five southeastern states. The data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal positive and statistically significant relationships between the identified training needs (networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management) and business growth. The study highlights the transformative potential of targeted capacity-building initiatives in empowering women entrepreneurs and driving sustainable business growth. Policy recommendations emphasize the development of holistic entrepreneurship programs, establishment of support systems, promotion of collaborative ecosystems, and fostering enabling environments to address the unique training needs of women entrepreneurs. By prioritizing these interventions, policymakers can contribute to the economic empowerment of women, promote inclusive growth, reduce gender disparities, and unlock the entrepreneurial potential of women as drivers of development in Southeast Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Women entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial training, business growth, Southeast Nigeria, capacity building, networking, business risk management.*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a significant boost to employment and economic growth, benefiting suppliers, investors, companies, and entrepreneurs themselves (Audretsch et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in their societies by introducing innovations, addressing social issues, and contributing to business establishment and revitalization (Acs, Desai, & Hessels, 2021). Historically, entrepreneurship has proven to be a vital factor in economic growth, productivity, and innovation, transforming ideas into economic opportunities and generating new sources of tax revenue (Acs et al., 2021). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report reveals that female entrepreneurship has risen significantly worldwide over the past decade (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, GEM, 2022). As more women engage in the economy, female entrepreneurs are assuming a key role in propelling the world economy forward, producing significant consumer ability to spend and opening doors for personal fulfillment. They contribute to enhancing the variability of entrepreneurship, a trajectory beneficial for the world economy and society (GEM, 2022).

Despite their substantial contributions, female entrepreneurs often face numerous challenges that can hinder their success. These challenges include lack of access to formal education and training, with only 20% of female entrepreneurs in Nigeria having a university degree (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). They also face limited access to capital, as a study by the World Bank found that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria are less likely to receive loans from banks than their male counterparts (World Bank, 2021). In addition to financial and educational barriers, female entrepreneurs encounter social challenges such as discrimination and societal expectations. Patriarchal social structures may limit support to women entrepreneurs in the later stages of their businesses (Adu-Gyamfi & Adu-Gyamfi, 2022), reflecting the need for cultural shifts to support and empower female entrepreneurship.

Recognizing the importance of female entrepreneurship, governments and organizations have implemented initiatives to address these challenges. In Nigeria, the government has allocated increased budgetary provisions to empower women through platforms like the Women's Empowerment Fund and the National Women's Development Agency (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2020). Additionally, there has been an increase in women's entrepreneurship training programs and business incubators, aimed at equipping female entrepreneurs with necessary skills and knowledge (Aina & Aina, 2022). Entrepreneurial training and the development of an entrepreneurial culture among youth, especially girls, have been identified as essential strategies to overcome constraints and barriers to female entrepreneurship (Aina & Aina, 2022). These strategies can help to change social attitudes towards women entrepreneurs and create an environment where they can thrive.

In regions with greater gender equality and focus on innovation, such as North America, more women are enrolling in post-secondary education, including business faculties, leading to an increase in female participation in entrepreneurship (Wahid & Ahmed, 2022). Similarly, in Africa, as the private sector grows and public sector opportunities decline, more women are starting their own businesses, highlighting the potential for growth in female entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006). Therefore, female entrepreneurs are a vital part of the economy, contributing to economic growth and job creation, and are seen as a central focus of economic development and public policy concerns (Adu-Gyamfi & Adu-Gyamfi, 2022). By supporting female entrepreneurship and addressing the challenges they face, economies can benefit from their innovative ideas, job creation, and economic contributions, ultimately leading to a more prosperous and inclusive society.

1.1 Problem Statement:

Despite the increasing focus on women's entrepreneurship in developing countries, recognizing women as an "untapped source of growth" (United Nations Women, 2022), women still own and manage fewer businesses than men, with smaller and less profitable ventures. This disparity is attributed to several structural barriers that hinder women's participation in entrepreneurship. One of the significant barriers faced by women entrepreneurs is limited access to education and finance (Aina & Aina, 2022). As highlighted by the National Bureau of Statistics, only 20% of female entrepreneurs in Nigeria have a university degree (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), indicating a lack of access to formal education and training. In addition to educational and financial barriers, women entrepreneurs encounter social challenges such as discrimination and cultural norms that discourage women from pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2020). These societal barriers can limit the support and opportunities available to women entrepreneurs, particularly in the later stages of their businesses (Adu-Gyamfi & Adu-Gyamfi, 2022).

Insufficient progress has been made in enhancing women's entrepreneurial ability in Southeast Nigeria, despite intense efforts by the government, NGOs, and SMEDAN (Nwankwo, 2021). Women entrepreneurs in the region face several challenges, including lack of access to finance, training, and markets, making it challenging to launch and expand their enterprises (Aniebonachi, 2022). According to a 2021 International Labour Organization (ILO) study, women-led businesses in Nigeria are not receiving enough training or follow-up on training, and they lack formal, external support for developing their managerial competence (ILO, 2021). This lack of entrepreneurial skills and training contributes to the failure of many female-owned businesses in Nigeria.

A significant problem highlighted is the high proportion of women-owned SMEs that collapse. A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that the turnover rate of women-led businesses is about 32% per annum (OECD, 2021), indicating that within the first year of operation, one in three women-owned firms fails. The high failure rate of women-owned SMEs can be attributed to various factors, including lack of access to credit, inability to access markets, and lack of social support or mentorship (Noor, 2020). These challenges highlight the need for interventions that provide access to training, capacity-building, finance, and enabling environments to support the success of female entrepreneurs.

Recognizing the importance of addressing these challenges, Okoli et al. (2022) conducted a study aimed at overcoming constraints related to awareness and access to credit for rural women micro-entrepreneurs in Nigeria. To find out more about the possible effects of entrepreneurial training on the performance of women-owned businesses and to understand the particular training requirements of these women-owned businesses in the southeast of Nigeria, more research is necessary. The following research questions were developed for this study based on the problem statement:

- i. What is the impact of Networking training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does people management training impact the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?
- iii. What is the impact of Marketing training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?
- iv. To what extent does access business risk management training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?

Therefore, the study sought to achieve the following objectives;

- i. Assess the impact of Networking training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria;
- ii. Determine the impact of people management training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria;
- iii. Investigate the impact of Marketing training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria;
- iv. Assess the impact of business risk management training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurial Training:

Training is the intentional and methodical alteration of behavior by learning brought about by development, education, instruction, and planned experience. Additionally, training's primary goal is to support the business in achieving its objectives by enhancing its most valuable asset, which is its human resource. The goal of entrepreneurship training is to create the abilities, know-how, and mindset needed for entrepreneurs to launch new ventures and grow current ones. It has been discovered to be a key factor in determining how quickly businesses grow. Enterprise performance is influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. One internal aspect influencing small businesses' performance is entrepreneurship training. According to research done by Peter et al. (2019) Entrepreneurship training was found to have had a substantial impact on performance of entrepreneurs.

According to Aderemi (2013), Small businesses, whose owner-managers who have the experience of participating in Entrepreneurship programs, exhibited superior managerial practice; hence, a higher gross-margin and rate of growth than small businesses whose owner-managers did not have such experiential learning. One key element that promotes the growth of entrepreneurship is training. The growth of entrepreneurship and small business performance are positively correlated. By taking part in a training program, they can improve their managerial abilities in the areas of inventory control, product marketing, competitive aggression, and identifying business possibilities. According to additional research, this will boost small business success and make it easier for small enterprises to grow to a medium size and eventually become major businesses.

Academic entrepreneurship education (EE) programs often concentrate on developing knowledge and skills related to or for the purpose of entrepreneurship, however they might vary from program to program. Entrepreneurship training (ET) programs, by contrast, tend to focus on building knowledge and skills, explicitly in preparation for starting or operating an enterprise (GEM, 2020).

Networking is a vital skill that allows individuals to establish and cultivate relationships, opening doors to new opportunities and valuable resources. To harness the power of networking effectively, it is crucial to address the training needs associated with this skill. Networking training programs should prioritize the development of effective interpersonal communication skills (Jones et al., 2018). Successful networking is built on cultivating and nurturing relationships over time. Training programs should focus on relationship-building strategies, including building trust, maintaining contact, and adding value to connections (Cardwell et al., 2017). Participants should learn how to identify and develop mutually beneficial

relationships, leverage existing connections, and foster long-term professional relationships that contribute to personal and career growth. Networking training should emphasize the concept of strategic networking, involving the identification of specific goals and strategically connecting with individuals who can support those goals (Cullen-Lester et al., 2017). Participants should learn techniques for researching and identifying potential contacts, approaching them effectively, and creating mutually beneficial partnerships. By understanding the importance of targeted connections, individuals can make the most of their networking efforts and achieve desired outcomes.

Similarly, people management is a critical aspect of organizational success, encompassing the skills and strategies needed to effectively lead and engage employees. To optimize people management practices, it is essential to address the training needs associated with this area. People management training programs should prioritize leadership development, equipping individuals with the skills and competencies necessary to effectively lead and inspire their teams (Shanafelt et al., 2021). Participants should receive training on leadership styles, effective communication, conflict resolution, decision-making, and motivating others. By enhancing leadership skills, individuals can create a positive work environment, guide their teams toward shared goals, and drive organizational success. People management training should address strategies for employee engagement, including providing feedback and recognition, setting clear goals, fostering a positive work environment, and promoting work-life balance (Clack, 2021). Participants should learn how to create an engaging workplace culture, effectively motivate and inspire employees, and address individual needs and aspirations.

Furthermore, marketing plays a crucial role in driving business growth and attracting customers. To succeed in today's competitive market, organizations must address the training needs associated with marketing. Marketing training programs should focus on strategic planning, equipping individuals with the skills to develop comprehensive marketing plans aligned with organizational goals (Kerzner, 2002). Participants should receive training on market research, target audience identification, competitor analysis, positioning, and marketing mix strategies. By enhancing strategic planning skills, individuals can create effective marketing campaigns that maximize return on investment and drive business success. Measuring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns is crucial for making data-driven decisions and optimizing marketing strategies. Training programs should include training on marketing analytics, metrics, and key performance indicators (KPIs) (Varouchas et al., 2018). Participants should learn how to track and analyze marketing data, evaluate campaign performance, and make informed adjustments to improve marketing outcomes.

Business risk management is a critical component of organizational success, encompassing the strategies and practices needed to identify, assess, and mitigate risks that may impact business operations. To effectively manage risks, organizations must address the training needs associated with business risk management. Business risk management training programs should prioritize risk assessment and identification, equipping individuals with the skills to identify and evaluate potential risks that may affect the organization (Komendantova et al., 2014). Participants should receive training on various risk assessment techniques, such as risk mapping, scenario analysis, and probability assessments. By enhancing risk assessment skills, individuals can proactively identify potential risks, assess their potential impact, and develop appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Effective risk management involves implementing strategies to mitigate identified risks. Training programs should focus on teaching individuals the different risk mitigation strategies, including risk avoidance, risk reduction, risk transfer, and risk acceptance (Sibevei et al., 2022).

2.2 Business Performance:

The success of female entrepreneurs has recently drawn significant attention from policymakers and academics. According to Teoh and Chong (2017), there isn't any comprehensive research on how well women entrepreneurs fare. Performance, as opposed to mere possession, is the act of doing; that is, doing something successfully; employing knowledge. Cross-comparison is challenging, though, as performance appears to be conceptualized, operationalized, and measured differently. Survival, staff growth, and profitability are some of the operationalizations that are most commonly utilized (Lerner et al., 2017). According to Buttner's (2021) findings, relational qualities including empathy, nurturing, sharing of information, mutual empowerment, and collaboration best characterize the management styles of female entrepreneurs. Yes, women and men work in different ways.

According to Heffernan (2018), female negotiating styles have been shown to be different and it has been demonstrated that they are significantly more beneficial to long term business success. The most recent study that explored a genetic basis for special attributes of women in social ability and empathy imply a better performance of companies created and run by women because of their ability to communicate better with employees, suppliers and customers (Valencia, 2016). Equally, Brush (2020) opined that individual motivations and goals such as profitability, revenues and sales growth have been found to be related to performance in women owned businesses. Research has shown that women typically

that women typically are motivated by a more complex set of objectives for starting a business than their male counterparts.

Key factors that have been shown to influence SME performance are business attributes. Useful indicators of corporate outcomes are demographics. In particular, both theoretical discussion and empirical study have emphasized the significance of business age and business size and their influence on firm performance. Up until a certain scale, small enterprises typically operate quite successfully before becoming sluggish (Mandviwalla & Flanagan, 2021). If these companies are entrepreneurial, they often do well; if not, they have a higher chance of failing than older companies with more resources and a greater degree of experience.

2.3 Development of Research Questions:

The literature review highlights the importance of networking as a vital skill for establishing and cultivating relationships, opening doors to new opportunities and valuable resources. Networking training programs are crucial for developing effective interpersonal communication skills, relationship-building strategies, and techniques for identifying and connecting with individuals who can support specific goals (Jones et al., 2018; Cardwell et al., 2017; Cullen-Lester et al., 2017). Given the significance of networking for entrepreneurial success, it is essential to investigate the impact of networking training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. This leads to the first research question: **What is the impact of Networking training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?**

Similarly, the literature emphasizes the critical role of people management in organizational success, encompassing skills and strategies for effectively leading and engaging employees. People management training programs focus on developing leadership competencies, promoting employee engagement, and creating a positive work environment (Shanafelt et al., 2021; Clack, 2021). Given the importance of effective people management for business performance, it is crucial to examine the extent to which people management training impacts the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

This leads to the second research question: To what extent does people management training impact the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?

Furthermore, marketing is identified as a crucial driver of business growth and customer attraction. The literature highlights the need for marketing training programs that focus on strategic planning, market research, target audience identification, competitor analysis, and marketing mix strategies (Kerzner, 2002;

Varouchas et al., 2018). As marketing plays a vital role in driving business success, it is essential to investigate the impact of marketing training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. This leads to the third research question: **What is the impact of Marketing training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?**

Business risk management is recognized as a critical component of organizational success, involving strategies and practices for identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that may impact business operations. The literature emphasizes the importance of risk assessment and identification, as well as the implementation of risk mitigation strategies (Komendantova et al., 2014; Sibevei et al., 2022). Given the significance of effective risk management for business performance, it is crucial to examine the extent to which access to business risk management training impacts the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. This leads to the fourth research question: **To what extent does access to business risk management training impact the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria?**

2.4 Theoretical Justifications:

The Human Capital Theory, as formalized by Becker and Gerhart (2016), provides a compelling theoretical framework for understanding the impact of entrepreneurial training needs on women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. This theory views training as a strategic investment in human capital, emphasizing the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and capabilities that enhance individuals' productivity and economic potential (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). In the context of women entrepreneurs, the Human Capital Theory suggests that investments in specific training areas, such as bookkeeping, credit recovery, access to finance, networking, people management, marketing, and risk management, contribute to the development and augmentation of their human capital.

A fundamental premise of the Human Capital Theory is that individuals, including entrepreneurs, make rational decisions to invest in acquiring skills and knowledge based on expected returns on investment (Buyruk, 2020). For women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria, participation in training programs aimed at improving their business acumen and managerial skills represents a deliberate investment in enhancing their human capital. These investments are driven by the expectation that acquiring new skills will lead to increased business success, profitability, and overall economic outcomes, providing a theoretical justification for the study's focus on the impact of entrepreneurial training on women entrepreneurs' performance.

Moreover, the Human Capital Theory emphasizes that human capital is distinct from physical capital in that it cannot be easily transferred or sold (Calabrò et al., 2021).

This distinction is particularly relevant for women entrepreneurs who rely on their skills and knowledge to drive business growth and innovation. By engaging in entrepreneurial training, women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria accumulate human capital assets that enable them to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and adapt to changing market dynamics effectively, further justifying the study's exploration of the impact of specific training areas on business performance.

The Human Capital Theory also highlights the importance of skills and knowledge accumulation over the life cycle (Gruzina et al., 2021). Women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria can benefit from continuous investments in entrepreneurial training to adapt to evolving market demands, technological advancements, and competitive pressures. By continuously upgrading their human capital through targeted training interventions, women entrepreneurs can remain resilient and responsive in dynamic business environments, providing a theoretical basis for the study's examination of different training areas and their potential impact on sustained business performance. Additionally, the Human Capital Theory underscores the role of governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders in facilitating access to entrepreneurial training for women entrepreneurs. Policy interventions that promote and support training initiatives align with the principles of Human Capital Theory by enhancing the human capital base of women entrepreneurs and fostering inclusive economic development. This aspect of the theory provides theoretical justification for the study's potential implications for policymakers and stakeholders in designing and implementing effective training programs for women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

2.5 Empirical Review:

The research by Anyanwu (2018) reveals that women in Nigeria face limited access to credit facilities from commercial banks due to lack of awareness and general illiteracy. The study found that women entrepreneurs often seek loans from unlicensed borrowers, and their ability to utilize credit facilities is limited by their businesses, earnings, security, and risk perception. The study recommends raising awareness about credit rights and providing education to improve women's financial situation. Equally, Metu & Nwogwugwu (2024) identified obstacles like lack of microfinance information, bureaucratic hurdles, high interest rates, and absence of collateral faced by women micro-entrepreneurs in Nigeria, calling for gender-sensitive microcredit policies.

Furthermore, Cheluget et al. (2015) highlighted education level and interest rates as critical factors affecting access to credit among women entrepreneurs in Kapseret Constituency, Kenya, underscoring the need for government interventions to enhance credit accessibility. In the same vein, Okoli et al. (2021) revealed that

discrimination based on gender, high interest rates, and lack of collateral were the main barriers to credit for rural women micro-entrepreneurs in Nigeria, suggesting the need for policies to address these challenges.

Adesua-Lincoln (2011) found that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria were particularly constrained by their weak financial base, lack of collateral, and cultural norms, emphasizing the need to address these barriers. Also, Arora and Singh (2021) provided evidence that business training can address various challenges faced by female business owners in developing countries, benefiting entrepreneurial factors like business networks, skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy. Furthermore, Iwuchukwu and Eze (2021) found that entrepreneurship education significantly increased women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy and business performance in Nigeria, suggesting the potential of such training to encourage women's entrepreneurship.

Akter and Islam (2020) linked technology adoption with entrepreneurial intention among rural women micro-entrepreneurs in Pakistan, highlighting the importance of access, skills, and usage in driving innovation and entrepreneurial orientation. Correspondingly, Khan et al. (2022) found that social capital, influenced by education, business experience, and networking, positively impacted Pakistani women entrepreneurs' business performance, underscoring the significance of these factors. Awuor et al. (2022) revealed that entrepreneurial competencies, education, business experience, and networking positively influenced entrepreneurial performance among female entrepreneurs in Kenya, suggesting the need to foster these elements.

Ayinaddis (2023) showed that social factors like social acceptability, networks, and bias, as well as economic factors like access to finance and education, significantly influenced women's entrepreneurial performance in micro and small enterprises in Bahir Dar City, Ethiopia. Also, Khan et al. (2021) found that internal factors like need for achievement, risk-taking, and self-confidence, as well as external factors like economic and socio-cultural factors, positively influenced the success of women-owned enterprises in Pakistan.

2.5.1 Research Gaps:

While the existing literature highlights various factors influencing women's access to finance and entrepreneurial performance, there is a lack of specific focus on the impact of entrepreneurial training on women's business performance in southeast Nigeria. Studies such as Anyanwu (2018), Ifelunini and Wosowei (2018), and Metu et al. (2015) have primarily focused on the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing finance, but they do not directly address the role of entrepreneurial training in improving business performance. This gap underscores the need for

research that specifically investigates the impact of training programs on women's entrepreneurial performance in the southeast region of Nigeria.

The literature review reveals a limited focus on the specific aspects of entrepreneurial training, such as networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management, which are the key objectives of the proposed study. While some studies, like Arora and Singh (2021) and Iwuchukwu and Eze (2021), have explored the benefits of business training and entrepreneurship education for women entrepreneurs, there is a need for more targeted research on the impact of these specific training components on women's business performance in southeast Nigeria.

Furthermore, the existing literature lacks a comprehensive examination of the interplay between various training components and their collective impact on women's entrepreneurial performance. Studies such as Akter and Islam (2020), Khan et al. (2022), and Awuor et al. (2022) have explored individual factors like technology adoption, social capital, and entrepreneurial competencies, but they do not provide a holistic analysis of the combined effects of networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management training on women's business performance.

Also, the literature review highlights the importance of contextual factors in shaping women's entrepreneurial experiences and performance. While studies like Ayinaddis (2023) and Khan et al. (2021) have examined social, economic, and cultural factors influencing women's entrepreneurial performance in other regions, there is a need for research that specifically focuses on the southeast Nigerian context. The proposed study can contribute to filling this gap by providing insights into the impact of entrepreneurial training on women's business performance within the unique socio-cultural and economic environment of southeast Nigeria.

3. Materials and Methods:

The research design used in the study was a cross-sectional survey using positivist philosophy. 5,690 registered women-owned businesses from the Nigerian states of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo made up the target demographic. A sample size of 1,360 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, and the respondents were selected through a non-probability judgmental (purposive) sampling technique. The data was collected in the second quarter of 2023 using a structured questionnaire.

The internal consistency metric Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability of the research instrument, which was a questionnaire. A pilot research comprising one hundred women-owned firms demonstrated an exceptional degree of reliability

with an overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.998. The study adopted a multiple linear regression model to analyze the impact of seven independent variables (Networking Training, People Management Training, Marketing Training, and Business Risk Management Training) on the dependent variable, Performance (Business Growth). The study modified the model into the model in equation 1

$$BG = \beta_0 + \beta_1NT + \beta_2PM + \beta_3MT + \beta_4BR + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 1$$

Where;

BG = Business Growth

NT= Networking Training Needs

PM= People Management Training Needs

MT= Marketing Training Needs

BR= Business Risk Management Training Needs

B₀ = Beta coefficient for the constant

β₁.β₄ = Beta coefficients for the independent variables

ε = Error term

Both descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and frequencies) and inferential statistics (multiple regression analysis) were used in the data analysis. At a 95% confidence level, the multiple regression analysis findings were examined for statistical significance. P-values of less than or equal to 0.05 indicated a statistically significant link between the research variables.

4. Analysis and Discussions:

The descriptive statistics for the variables Networking Training (NT), People Management Training (PM), Marketing Training (MT), and Business Risk Management Training (BR) are presented in Table 1. The sample size for each variable is 1334. The mean values range from 2.5180 for BR to 2.6856 for MT, indicating a relatively low average rating for these training needs among the respondents. The median values for all variables are 2.0000, suggesting that the majority of responses are concentrated around the lower end of the scale. The standard deviations range from 1.36383 for BR to 1.46838 for MT, indicating a moderate level of dispersion in the responses.

Equally, the skewness values for all variables are positive, ranging from 0.447 for MT to 0.678 for PM, indicating that the distributions are slightly skewed to the right. The kurtosis values are negative for all variables, ranging from -0.904 for BR to -1.220 for MT, suggesting that the distributions are relatively flat compared to a normal distribution. The range for all variables is 4.00, with minimum values of 1.00 and maximum values of 5.00, indicating that the responses cover the entire range of the scale used. These descriptive statistics provide an overview of the central tendency, dispersion, and distribution characteristics of the variables under study

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	NT	PM	MT	BR
N	1334	1334	1334	1334
Mean	2.5359	2.5419	2.6856	2.5180
Median	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Std. Deviation	1.39397	1.46112	1.46838	1.36383
Variance	1.943	2.135	2.156	1.860
Skewness	.642	.678	.447	.619
Std. Error of Skewness	.133	.133	.133	.133
Kurtosis	-.909	-.997	-1.220	-.904
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.266	.266	.266	.266
Range	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Source: Author’s computation, 2023

The regression results presented in Table 2 show the estimated coefficients, standard errors, t-statistics, and p-values for the independent variables: Networking Training, People Management Training, Marketing Training, and Business Risk Management Training. The constant term (0.319) represents the value of the dependent variable (Business Growth) when all the independent variables are equal to zero. The coefficient for Networking Training is 0.093, indicating a positive relationship with Business Growth. Similarly, the coefficients for People Management Training (0.105), Marketing Training (0.237), and Business Risk Management Training (0.094) are all positive, suggesting that an increase in these training needs is associated with an increase in Business Growth.

The standard errors of the coefficients range from 0.013 for Business Risk Management Training to 0.022 for Marketing Training, indicating the precision of the estimates. The t-statistics, which measure the statistical significance of the coefficients, range from 5.545 for People Management Training to 10.970 for Marketing Training. The corresponding p-values for all the independent variables are 0.000, which means that the coefficients are statistically significant at the 1% level of significance. This implies that the observed relationships between the independent variables and Business Growth are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The model summary statistics are also provided. The R-squared value of 0.730 indicates that the independent variables (Networking Training, People Management Training, Marketing Training, and Business Risk Management Training) collectively

explain approximately 73% of the variation in Business Growth. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.718 accounts for the number of predictors in the model. The F-statistic of 521.313 with a p-value of 0.000 suggests that the overall model is statistically significant, meaning that at least one of the independent variables has a significant impact on Business Growth. These results provide evidence that entrepreneurial training in the areas of networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management can significantly contribute to the growth and performance of women-owned businesses.

Table 2: Regression Result

Model	Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
1	(Constant)	.319	.072	4.435	.000
	Networking Training	.093	.015	6.204	.000
	People Management Training	.105	.019	5.545	.000
	Marketing Training	.237	.022	10.970	.000
	Business Risk Management	.094	.013	7.120	.000
	R-squared	.730			
	Adjusted R-squared	.718			
	F-statistic	521.313			
	Prob(F-statistic)	.000			

Source: SPSS Output from Author's Computation using the original Data

5. Discussions of Findings:

The study's findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between various entrepreneurial trainings and business growth for women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. This underscores the crucial role of targeted training programs in empowering women entrepreneurs and fostering sustainable business growth. Specifically, the study identified networking training, people management training, marketing training, and business risk management training as significant predictors of business growth. These findings align with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of such training components in enhancing entrepreneurial performance and success.

The positive coefficients observed in the study for networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management training are indicative of the crucial role that these skill areas play in fostering business growth and sustainability among entrepreneurs, particularly women entrepreneurs. The findings underscore a convergence with existing research, linking specific training domains to enhanced professional networks, effective leadership, marketing prowess, and risk mitigation strategies. Aboagye and Agyei-Mensah (2013) and Khan et al. (2021) have

highlighted the pivotal nature of networking skills in establishing supportive relationships, accessing resources, and identifying growth prospects, aligning with the observed positive coefficient for networking training. Similarly, the positive coefficient for people management resonates with the importance emphasized by Gichuki et al. (2019) and Orobia et al. (2020) in terms of effective leadership, communication, and team-building capabilities, which are vital for organizational success and longevity.

The highest positive coefficient associated with marketing training underscores its significance in driving business success, as corroborated by Naong and Naong (2022) and Assefa (2020), who recognize marketing acumen as instrumental in business growth and expansion. This finding points to a critical area of focus for women entrepreneurs aiming to enhance market visibility and customer reach. Moreover, the positive coefficient for business risk management training further accentuates the necessity of effective risk mitigation strategies for sustained business growth. The works of Waari and Nwangi (2015), Ugoanni et al. (2018), and Khan et al. (2021) have previously stressed the importance of robust risk management practices in securing financing, managing microcredit risks, and navigating uncertainties, which resonate with the observed statistical significance of this training domain.

The statistically significant coefficients, denoted by low p-values (0.000), provide robust empirical support for the observed relationships between these training variables and business growth outcomes. This statistical validation bolsters the credibility of the study's findings, aligning with broader research highlighting the importance of skills development in entrepreneurial contexts. The multidimensional impact of networking, people management, marketing, and risk management skills underscores the holistic approach required for women entrepreneurs to thrive in competitive business environments. The study contributes to a growing body of evidence emphasizing the pivotal role of tailored training interventions in empowering entrepreneurs and fostering sustainable economic development. Further research avenues could explore the longitudinal effects of these skill enhancements and their implications for long-term business resilience and expansion among women-led enterprises.

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations:

The study's conclusions have important ramifications for organizations, stakeholders, and legislators in Southeast Nigeria who want to encourage women entrepreneurs and sustainable company growth. The study highlights the transformative potential of focused capacity-building initiatives catered to the unique requirements of women entrepreneurs by demonstrating the positive and statistically significant

correlations between various entrepreneurial trainings and firm growth. By providing comprehensive and contextually appropriate programs to address these training needs, women entrepreneurs can be given the tools they need to successfully negotiate obstacles, seize opportunities, and propel their companies' expansion.

To capitalize on the identified positive impacts of entrepreneurial training, policymakers should prioritize the development and implementation of holistic entrepreneurship development programs that incorporate training components focused on networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management. These programs should be designed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as women's organizations, business associations, and educational institutions, to ensure that the content and delivery methods are aligned with the unique needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

Furthermore, policymakers should consider establishing dedicated support systems and resources to facilitate the implementation and sustainability of these training programs. This could include the establishment of entrepreneurship centers or incubators that provide ongoing mentorship, access to networking opportunities, and practical hands-on training sessions. Additionally, the provision of financial support, such as grants or subsidized training fees, could help overcome financial barriers and ensure that women entrepreneurs from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to these capacity-building initiatives.

To ensure the long-term impact and effectiveness of these training programs, it is crucial to foster a collaborative ecosystem involving various stakeholders, including the private sector, financial institutions, and civil society organizations. Partnerships with financial institutions can facilitate access to credit and financing opportunities for women entrepreneurs who successfully complete training programs, enabling them to translate their acquired skills into tangible business growth. Collaboration with the private sector can provide mentorship opportunities, facilitate knowledge sharing, and create avenues for networking and potential business collaborations.

Ultimately, addressing the identified entrepreneurial training needs through comprehensive and inclusive policies and programs can contribute significantly to the economic empowerment of women in Southeast Nigeria. By fostering an enabling environment that supports women's entrepreneurship, policymakers can promote inclusive economic growth, reduce gender disparities, and unlock the latent potential of women entrepreneurs as drivers of sustainable development in the region. The findings of this study provide a roadmap for policymakers and stakeholders to develop targeted interventions that can have a transformative impact on the lives of women entrepreneurs and their communities, ultimately contributing to the achievement of broader socioeconomic development goals.

7. Contributions to knowledge and Suggestions for Further Studies:

The current corpus of information in the areas of women's entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial training is significantly increased by this study. By providing empirical evidence on the positive and statistically significant relationships between various entrepreneurial training needs (bookkeeping, credit recovery, access to finance, networking, people management, marketing, and business risk management) and business growth, the study expands our understanding of the critical role that targeted training programs play in fostering the success and growth of women-owned enterprises. The study's findings not only reinforce the importance of addressing these training needs but also highlight the specific areas that should be prioritized in the design and implementation of capacity-building initiatives for women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of entrepreneurial training on business growth, further research is recommended to build upon these findings and address potential limitations. Future studies could explore the long-term effects of these training programs on women's entrepreneurial performance, as well as the sustainability of the observed business growth over an extended period. Additionally, comparative studies across different regions or sectors could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variations in training needs and their impact on business growth, taking into account socio-cultural, economic, and industry-specific factors. Furthermore, qualitative research methodologies, such as in-depth interviews or case studies, could complement the quantitative findings by providing deeper insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of women entrepreneurs who have participated in these training programs. Such studies could uncover additional nuances and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training and its impact on business growth.

Reference List:

1. Acs, Z. J., Song, A. K., Szerb, L., Audretsch, D. B., & Komlósi, É. (2021). *The evolution of the global digital platform economy: 1971–2021*. *Small Business Economics*, 57, 1629-1659.
2. Adesua-Lincoln, A. (2011). *Assessing Nigerian female entrepreneur's access to finance for business start-up and growth*. *African journal of business management*, 5(13), 5348.
3. Adu-Gyamfi, A., & Adu-Gyamfi, S. (2022). *Challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Nigeria: A systematic review*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 11(1), 29-50.
4. *affecting women's entrepreneurial success*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging*

5. Aina, O. L., & Aina, O. B. (2022). *Supporting female entrepreneurship in Nigeria: Challenges and opportunities*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 11(1), 51-72.
6. Akter, S., & Islam, M. N. (2020). *Innovation and the entrepreneurial performance in women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan*. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 152, 119892.
7. Alarape, A. A. (2013). *Entrepreneurial orientation and the growth performance of small and medium enterprises in Southwestern Nigeria*. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 26(6), 553-577.
8. Aniebonachi, C. (2022). *Challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 11(1), 73-92.
9. Audretsch, D., Colombelli, A., Grilli, L., Minola, T., & Rasmussen, E. (2020). *Innovative start-ups and policy initiatives*. *Research Policy*, 49(10), 104027.
10. Awuor, E. O., Mwangi, J. N., & Odhiambo, S. O. (2022). *Entrepreneurial competences and entrepreneurial performance: Empirical insights of female entrepreneurs in Kenya*. ResearchGate. www.researchgate.net
11. Ayinaddis, S. G. (2023). *Socio-economic factors affecting women's entrepreneurial performance in MSEs in Bahir Dar City, Ethiopia*. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 12(23).
12. Brush C., Carter N., Gatewood E., Greene P. and Hart M. (2016). *Growth Oriented Women Entrepreneurs and their Businesses: A Global Research Perspective*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
13. Buttner E. H. and Moore. D. P. (2017). "Women organisational exodus to entrepreneurship: Self-reported motivations and correlates with success", *Journal of Small Business Management*, 35(1), 34-36.
14. Buyruk, H. (2020). *An exploration of human capital theory and its effects on the world of education*. In *Understanding Education and Economics* (pp. 64-76). Routledge.
15. Calabrò, A., Torchia, M., Jimenez, D. G., & Kraus, S. (2021). *The role of human capital on family firm innovativeness: the strategic leadership role of family board members*. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 17, 261-287.
16. Cardwell, L. A., Williams, S., & Pyle, A. (2017). *Corporate public relations dynamics: Internal vs. external stakeholders and the role of the practitioner*. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 152-162.
17. Chatterjee, N., Das, N., & Srivastava, N. K. (2018). *A structural model assessing key factors*
18. Clack, L. (2021). *Employee engagement: Keys to organizational success*. *The Palgrave Handbook of Workplace Well-Being*, 1001-1028.

19. Gerhart, B., & Feng, J. (2021). *The resource-based view of the firm, human resources, and human capital: Progress and prospects. Journal of management, 47(7), 1796-1819.*
20. *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2020). Global entrepreneurship monitor: 2015 report on women and entrepreneurship, Babson College, Wellesley, MA.*
21. Gruzina, Y., Firsova, I., & Strielkowski, W. (2021). *Dynamics of human capital development in economic development cycles. Economies, 9(2), 67.*
22. *International Labour Organization. (2021). Women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria: Challenges and opportunities. Geneva: ILO.*
23. Iwuchukwu, E. J., & Eze, A. I. (2021). *Impact of entrepreneurship education on women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy and business performance in Nigeria. Management Science Letters, 13(4), 111-120.*
24. Jones, K. S., Namin, A. S., & Armstrong, M. E. (2018). *The core cyber-defense knowledge, skills, and abilities that cybersecurity students should learn in school: Results from interviews with cybersecurity professionals. ACM Transactions on Computing Education (TOCE), 18(3), 1-12.*
25. Khan, R. U., Salamzadeh, Y., Shah, S. Z. A., & Yaqoob, M. (2021). *Factors affecting women entrepreneurs' success: A study of small- and medium-sized enterprises in emerging market of Pakistan. Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 10(11).*
26. Komendantova, N., Mrzyglocki, R., Mignan, A., Khazai, B., Wenzel, F., Patt, A., & Fleming, K. (2014). *Multi-hazard and multi-risk decision-support tools as a part of participatory risk governance: Feedback from civil protection stakeholders. International Journal of disaster risk reduction, 8, 50-67.*
27. Lerner M., Brush C. and Hisrich R. (2017). *"Israeli women entrepreneurs: An examination of factors affecting performance", Journal of Business Venturing, 12(4), 315-339.*
28. Mandviwalla, M., & Flanagan, R. (2021). *Small business digital transformation in the context of the pandemic. European Journal of Information Systems, 30(4), 359-375.*
29. Metu, A. G., & Nwogwugwu, U. C. (2024). *Challenging factors affecting access to finance by female micro entrepreneurs in Anambra State, Nigeria. Journal of African Business, 25(1), 142-154.*
30. *National Bureau of Statistics (2021). SMEDAN and National Bureau of Statistics Collaborative Survey: Selected findings, March, 4 2023, available online at: nigerianstat.gov.ng.*
31. Noor, N. (2020). *The challenges and opportunities of women entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa. Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy, 10(1), 1-22.*

32. Nwankwo, O. (2021). *The challenges of women entrepreneurship in Southeast Nigeria. Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, 34(1), 1-18.
33. Okoli, C., Adebajo, A., & Aniekwe, I. (2021). *Constraints to access to credit for rural women micro-entrepreneurs in Nigeria: Evidence from a capstone study. Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 10(1), 95-114.
34. Okoli, C., Adebajo, A., & Aniekwe, I. (2021). *Constraints to access to credit for rural women micro-entrepreneurs in Nigeria: Evidence from a capstone study. Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 10(1), 95-114.
35. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *Women entrepreneurs: Measuring progress and identifying good practices. Paris: OECD.*
36. Shanafelt, T., Trockel, M., Rodriguez, A., & Logan, D. (2021). *Wellness-centered leadership: equipping health care leaders to cultivate physician well-being and professional fulfilment. Academic Medicine*, 96(5), 641.
37. Sibevei, A., Azar, A., Zandieh, M., Khalili, S. M., & Yazdani, M. (2022). *Developing a risk reduction support system for health system in Iran: a case study in blood supply chain management. International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(4), 2139.
38. Teoh W. M. Y. and Siong S. C. (2014). "Towards strengthening the development of women entrepreneurship in Malaysia", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 29(7), 432-453.
39. United Nations Women. (2022). *Women's entrepreneurship: The untapped potential to drive economic growth. New York: United Nations Women.*
40. Varouchas, E., Sicilia, M. A., & Sánchez-Alonso, S. (2018). *Towards an integrated learning analytics framework for quality perceptions in higher education: A 3-tier content, process, engagement model for key performance indicators. Behaviour & Information Technology*, 37(10-11), 1129-1141.
41. Wahid, A., & Ahmed, A. U. (2022). *Female entrepreneurship: A review of the literature. Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 11(1), 1-28.
42. World Bank. (2021). *Women, Business and the Law 2021. Washington, DC: World Bank.*