

African Journal of Management and Administration, Volume 6, Number 3, 2013**AN APPRAISAL OF THE EFFECT OF CULTURE ON THE ATTITUDE OF EMPLOYEES ON FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS****Okeke, M.N and Onuorah A.N****Department of Business Administration,
Anambra State University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

The involvement of women in entrepreneurship has enabled them to establish economic activities. Thus as self-reliant individuals, they become opportune to elevate their social status as well as their administrative abilities. Certain challenges however, appear to be inimical to the achievement of women's objectives. This study therefore investigated the attitude of employees towards female entrepreneurs. In an attempt to solve the identified problem, two hypotheses were formulated. Employing the descriptive design method, responses were elicited from respondents in two female-owned organizations. Using the Paired Difference t Test for Related Samples, the hypotheses were tested at the 5% level of significance. It was found that the managerial abilities of female entrepreneurs are by no means inferior to those of their male counterparts. Also no difference was found to exist between the attitudes of employees towards male and female entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

In nearly every society women's status appear overtly different from men's (Tisdell, 2002; O' Council, 1994) maintain that the prime responsibility of women is to keep (he home. According to Lopez, Aleaza and Fernandez (2009), women should in addition to their roles as mothers maintain their houses and children. Entrepreneurship is generally perceived as a male domain because its tasks are often linked with masculine behaviour; In nearly every society, women's status appear overtly different from men's. (Tisdell, 2002; O' Connell, 1994) maintain that the prime responsibility of women is to keep the home. According to Lopez - Ferdncdcz, and Aleazar (2009), women should, in addition to their roles as mothers, maintain their homes and children.

At variance with this assertion however, is the view of Brush et al. 2009 wherein they argue persuasively that in businesses, entrepreneurs are among the fastest growing entrepreneurial activities in the world. Brush et al (2009) maintain that there has been an increased awareness of the role of women in various parts of the world. In line with the above assertion Tambunain (2008) has this to say; "some studies however, reveal that the increasing rate of women participation in entrepreneurship is due to increased economic pressure and perhaps awareness as a result of increasing level of education. On the involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities, UNIDO (2001) argues that women get involved in entrepreneurial activities as a means of positive social repercussions for themselves and their social environments, as opposed to the conventionally conceived idea-means of economic survival. Lee and Venkataraman (2006) posit that the involvement of females in entrepreneurship may have arisen from the disequilibrium between their aspirations and the perceived valuation of the labour market offers. However, Abubakar 2011), in support of the above claim, argues that the increasing rate of women participation in entrepreneurship is as a result of increased economic pressure and probably awareness, gained through education. Irrespective of the immense contribution of women in entrepreneurial activities, the discrepancy between their levels of participation and those of men seems overt. According Koellinger et al (2008) in Kirkwood (2009), the women have lower propensity for entrepreneurship than men, Colctnan (2007) affirms to the claim above by asserting that women are most often thought to be generally less growth oriented than men.

However, despite the prevalent constraints, women in the contemporary society strive to establish their own enterprises.

Okafor and Mordi (2010) however, posit that despite the contributions of women, the existence of obstacles in entrepreneurial activities stems from the belief that it is not a traditional occupation for women. Coleman (2007), Koellinger (2008) in Kirkwood (2009) maintain that women have lower propensity for entrepreneurship than men. None of these dealt with employees' attitude towards female entrepreneurs. The objective of this study therefore, is to ascertain the attitude of employees towards female entrepreneurs.

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STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Because of the nature of Nigeria as a traditional society, her women face some challenges in their performance of entrepreneurial activities. While men and women entrepreneurs face additional challenges which stem from cultural and traditional beliefs, Ehigie Okafor and Mordi (2010) opine that Nigerian female entrepreneurs encounter problems that emanate from socio-cultural factors because some cultures and social traditions play a significant role in the determination of who becomes an entrepreneur. Ehigie and Idemudia (2000) argue forcibly that women are expected to manage their families and remain perpetually submissive to their husbands. This demand for submission transcends the shores of homes to offices where females are entrepreneurs, meant to delegate authorities and responsibilities to male subordinates who by virtue of the entrepreneur's position, are obliged to submit. On this basis therefore, this study seeks to ascertain employees' attitude towards female entrepreneurs.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Concept of Entrepreneurship: The definition of entrepreneurship lacks a common language. Various authors, agencies and institutions have defined entrepreneurship with respect to the circumstances and issues at stake.

Okitiki (1985) perceive entrepreneurship as a force that mobilizes other resources to unmet market demand Ige (2007) posit that entrepreneurship is a predisposition towards the establishment and operation of business ventures by anyone or a group of persons, including government for the sake of making project or social surplus in order to accumulate wealth.

The activities of entrepreneurs are seen to possess the following features risk taking; locus of control; creation of wealth; innovation; need for achievement; creation of value; scouting out an opportunity; enthusiasm and ability to start a new business and manage it effectively; provision of resources; market stabilizing force; provision of resources; profit maximization. On the basis of the above criteria entrepreneurship can generally be defined as a combination of production factors to produce new products and services in pursuance for the purpose of either pro lit maximization or provision of social services.

Who is an Entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurs are individuals who "pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control" Stevenson and Jarill (1990). According to Thomson (2002), entrepreneurs are individuals who survey their potential business environment, identify opportunities to improve it, marshal resources and act to maximize operational opportunities. Generally, entrepreneurs are perceived to be enterprising individuals who show enthusiasm in starting up a new business or continuing with an existing one, accommodating the overt and covert risks, and effecting required modifications geared towards meeting identified needs in their immediate environment. Minniti and Arenius (2003) argue that recent changes in the economy and the restructuring of labour markets in terms of employee qualifications, nature of work contents and work contracts have raised the profile and importance of entrepreneurship within global economy, giving rise to different types of entrepreneurs. Thus they classified entrepreneurs into nascent, new, opportunistic and necessity entrepreneurs.

Women in Entrepreneurship: Women who involve themselves in entrepreneurial activities are termed women entrepreneurs. Majority of them are involved in micro, small and medium scale businesses which contribute more than 97% of all enterprises. 60% of the nations GDP and 94% of the total share of the employment (Udechukwu, 2003; Ndubuisi 2004). Entrepreneurship has accorded women the opportunity of getting to the mainstream of economic development, thus re-making the world. In affirmation to this claim, Olutunla (2001) posits that "as women form micro-enterprises and bring their values and concerns to the market place, they are changing the face of the nation's business".

The Profile of Women Entrepreneurs in Nigeria: Despite the significant role played by women in small- and medium-scale-enterprises, they have limited access to formal financial services. In support of the above assertion, Obaid (2004) emphasizes that African women involved in farming have much less access to credit extension services and technology than men. While they have a right to only 1 percent of the land allotted, they receive less than 10 percent of the credit facilities meant for small scale farmers. Iheduru (2002) maintains that many Nigerian women entrepreneurs, in the bid to alleviate financial difficulties, resort to predatory money lenders. The traditional and conventional role of Nigerian women inhibits them from obtaining loans from formal financial institutions.

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They are not able to meet up with the required conditions for accessing loans (collateral, guarantor etc), thus they are hindered from starting up/expanding their own entrepreneurial activities. Full participation of women however, enhances sustainable development. Since this has not been achieved, the contributions of women to economic development is adversely affected. Women entrepreneurs are active in a large number of enterprises and make a substantial contribution to national economies (United Nations 2006). Although women record lower rates of participation in formal large enterprises, their rates of start-ups and growth are higher in small and medium enterprises. UN reports also depict that sectors that are traditionally dominated by women are often crowded with competitors, and are characterized by low productivity and low profit margins. Because these sectors are also marked by physical and cultural divides between products and the markets, most women entrepreneurs therein struggle to achieve profits.

Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs: Women entrepreneurs cherish autonomy and special personality. They have a high need for self actualization, perceive change as opportunity, and are willing to take careful risks. Okafor and Mordi (2008) maintain that women entrepreneurs are endowed with potential advantages such as: possession of dual characteristics- entrepreneurial and women characteristics, which gives them extra-ordinary ability to carry out their role as entrepreneurs. According to Birley 1989, managerial skill is an in-born trait in women because of their peculiar nature of home keeping. Home keeping and management have made women to be better business managers. Women entrepreneurs portray personal qualities such as self-confidence, autonomy, responsibility, determination, and leadership that help them to be successful in the formation and management of their own businesses (Thomson, 2002),

Comparison of Men and Women Entrepreneurs' Characteristics

The characteristics of women and men entrepreneurs differ in several important aspects. Evaluating this critically. Hisrich, Micheal and Shepherd (2005) argue that differences in men and women entrepreneurs' characteristics result from the fact that men and women differ in terms of: (i) reasons for starting an enterprise (ii) the types of business they run (iii) the method of accessing finance (iv) choice of business location (v) choice of labour force (vi) educational background (vii) age (viii) business of the parents, (ix) position in the family (x) educational background (xi) propensity to risks taking (xii) structure of business (xiii) type of business ownership (xiv) sources of finance (xv) type of marketing. Hisrich, Michael and Shepherd (2005) tabulated the basic differences that exist in the characteristics of male and female entrepreneurs as follows:

Table 1. Comparison of men and women entrepreneurs' characteristics

Characteristics	Men	Women
Achievement	Strive to make things happen	Accomplishment of a goal
Independence	Self-image as it relates to status	Desire to do it alone
Departure point	Dissatisfaction with present job	Job frustration
Sources of funds	Personal assets and savings, bank financing and investors	Personal assets and savings personal loans
Occupational Background	Experience in line work, recognized specialist and competence in a variety of business functions	Experience in area of business, middle-management level, service-related occupational background
Personality Characteristics	Goal oriented, innovative and idealistic, high level of self-confidence., enthusiastic, energetic and boss	Goal oriented, creativity and realistic, medium level of self confidence, enthusiastic, energetic and ability to deal with social economic environment
Age	Age when starting venture is usually 25-35 years	Age when starting venture is usually 35-45 years

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Business of the parents	Father is usually self-employed.	Father and mother are self-employed.
Position in the family	They are usually first born	They are first daughters of their parents and not necessarily first born of the family.
Background	College educated-degree in business or technical area	College educated-degree in liberal arts.
Support Groups	Friends, professional acquaintances, business associates, spouse	Close friends, spouse, family, women's professional groups, trade associations
Type of business	Manufacturing or construction	Service- Related educational services, consulting, trade, and public relations.

Source: Hisrich, Micheal and Shepherd (2005)

Methodology

The descriptive design method was adopted for the study. The population constitutes employees from two female- owned establishments. Hindsight Holdings and May and Jay Ventures in Onitsha and Awka respectively.

The entire population was used for the study. A total of one hundred and fifty-two copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents. One hundred and forty-four copies were retrieved.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1

In this hypothesis the author desires to determine whether the managerial abilities of female entrepreneurs subordinate those of their male counterparts. Thus:

Ho: $\mu_{\text{female}} \geq \mu_{\text{male}}$

H_i: $\mu_{\text{female}} < \mu_{\text{male}}$

HYPOTHESIS 11

Ho: No difference exists between employees' attitude towards male entrepreneurs and their attitude towards their female counterparts. In other words $\mu_D = 0$

H_i: There is a difference between employees' attitude towards male entrepreneurs and their attitude towards their female counterparts $\mu_D \neq 0$

Hypotheses testing 1.

Table 2. Paired Difference Table For Employees' Perception Of Managerial Abilities Of Male And Female Entrepreneurs.

Age group	Hindsight Holdings	May and Jay Ventures	Difference	D ²
18-22	13	15	-2	4
23-25	14	16	-2	4
26-30	15	14	2	4
31-40	15	18	-3	9
41-55	12	14	-2	4

$$N = 5$$

$$\Sigma D = -7$$

$$\Sigma D^2 = 25$$

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$$\begin{aligned}\bar{D} &= \frac{\sum D}{n} = \frac{-7}{5} = -1.4 \\ S^2 D &= \frac{n \sum D^2 - (\sum D)^2}{n(n-1)} = \\ &= \frac{5(25) - (49)}{5(4)} = \frac{125 - 49}{20} \\ &= \frac{76}{20} \\ S^2 D &= 3.8 \\ SD &= \sqrt{3.8} \\ &= 1.95\end{aligned}$$

Ho: μ female \geq μ male

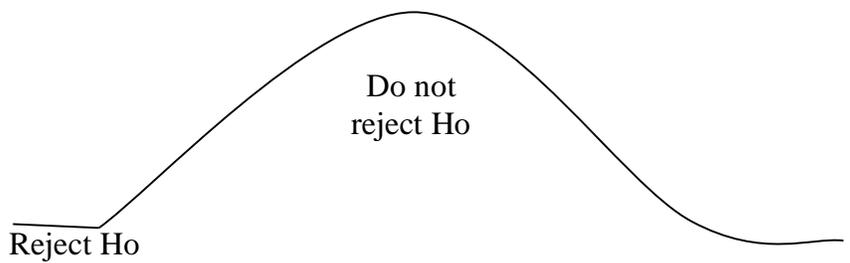
Hi: μ female $<$ μ male

Decision Rule:

Reject H_0 if $t < -2.132$, otherwise accept H_0 .

$$\frac{\bar{D}}{SD}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Test statistics} &= t_{n-1} = \frac{\bar{D}}{SD} \\ &= \frac{-1.4}{1.95} \\ &= \frac{-1.4}{\frac{\sqrt{5}}{2.24}} \\ &= \frac{-1.4}{.8705} = -1.61 \\ T &= -1.61\end{aligned}$$



One-tailed test for the paired difference at the 5% level of significance with 4 degrees of freedom.

Since the computed t-value of -1.61 $>$ -2.132, we reject H_1 and accept H_0 . The conclusion therefore, is that the managerial abilities of female entrepreneurs are not inferior to those of their male counterparts.

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Hypothesis two:

Table 3. Paired Difference Table For Employees' Attitude towards Male and Female Entrepreneur

Age group	Hindsight Holdings	May and Jay Ventures	Difference (N)	D ²
18-22	10	18	-8	64
23-25	18	12	6	36
26-30	14	16	-2	4
31-40	13	20	-7	49
41-55	11	15	-4	16
			-15	169

$$\bar{D} = \frac{\sum D}{n} = \frac{-15}{5} = -3$$

$$\bar{D} = -3$$

$$S^2 D = \frac{n \sum D^2 - (\sum D)^2}{n(n-1)}$$

$$= \frac{5(169) - 225}{5(4)}$$

$$= \frac{845 - 225}{20} = \frac{620}{20} = 31$$

$$S^2 D = 31 \therefore SD = \sqrt{31} = 5.57$$

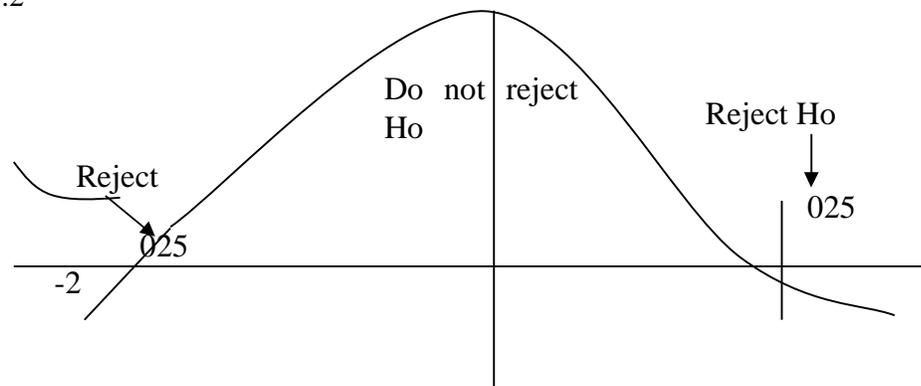
$$SD = 5.57$$

$$t_{n-1} = \frac{\bar{D}}{\frac{SD}{\sqrt{n}}} = \frac{-3}{\frac{5.57}{2.24}}$$

$$\frac{5.57}{2.24} = 2.49$$

$$\frac{-3}{2.49} = -1.2$$

$$t = -1.2$$



Since the computed value of t , -1.6 is > -2.776 we accept H_0 and reject H_1 . The conclusion therefore, is that there is no difference in the attitude of employees towards male and female entrepreneurs.

African Journal of Management and Administration, Volume 6, Number 3, 2013**FINDINGS**

The result obtained from hypothesis two showed no significant difference by the attitude of employees towards their male and female employers. Thus if employees would adhere to the instructions given by a male employer, the case with a female employer would certainly not be the reverse. If traces of disrespect are observed in a female owned enterprise therefore, the act is attributed to the employee's disposition, as well as the employer's strength of character and not to gender. This is in consonance with the views of Okafor (2007), wherein he posits that, with the exception of some social disparities between men and women entrepreneurs in Africa, there are no major differences between the males and females, since both transact business with the aim of achieving organizational objectives.

The test conducted on hypothesis one revealed that administrative abilities of female entrepreneurs are by no means inferior to those of their male counterparts. The deduction to be made here is that gender has no effect on the managerial acumen of individuals. This may not erase abruptly the societal perception of women as incompetent in many aspects of business management. (Kon 2003) argues forcibly that there is a societal stereotype perception of women as unintelligent, dependent, incapable, weak intuitive timid, passive, receptive emotional and content.

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