

Employment Generation Programmes and Women Empowerment in Nigeria

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Abstract

Women employment and empowerment is the critical goal of employment programme in Nigeria in driving productive and sustainable economy. Thus, this study objectively investigates the impacts of employment generation programme on women empowerment in Ogun State, Nigeria. The researcher adopts descriptive survey research method and use a self-constructed questionnaire to elicit information from the randomly selected respondents. One Hundred and Twenty (120) respondents of the total population (comprising of women beneficiaries of the employment generation programme of the skill acquisition outfits at Ijebu-Ode, and Ijebu-Ibafun as well as that of the Ogun State Ministry of Women Affairs) were sampled. The data collated was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentage and mean (using a cut-off mean score of 0.5 rating scale) to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested with Chi-square at $P < 0.05$. The result shows that demographic characteristics (i.e. marital status, educational qualification and employment status) do have significant influence on the women empowerment programmes as it is positively embarked on by young, married and highly educated women. It was also realized that although, training centres, catering tools, tie and dye materials and cloth sewing machine were moderately available facilities for women empowerment programme; their availability and diverse activities during the programme is not significantly determined the women sustainable empowerment. The result also revealed major persistent challenge of the programme is highly unemployed women community. Thus, the study justifiably recommends that incorporation of more entrepreneurs, accommodation of more young school leavers, provision of more training tools and motivating interest of learning with attractive compensation can go a long way in assuring the quality of employment programmes to ensure stable and productive empowerment of women community.

Keywords: Employment, Job Creation programmes, Empowerment, and Women Empowerment

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Introduction

Employment generation programmes are designed with the intent to create employment and empowerment as government responsibility to her citizens who have stake in the sustainable development of the nation. Women are equally found under this prospect. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE, 2018) in agreement also stressed further that that the various employment creation programmes are designed to provide training in critical skills required to make an unemployed person either employable or self-employed. Emphasis is placed on self-employment as against paid employment as a stimulus to engender entrepreneurial spirit and create wealth.

Employment as the word implies means to give work to somebody, usually for payment. It further implies those people who are engaged either permanently or temporarily in a productive venture for a payment. The payment may be daily, hourly, weekly or monthly. In contrast, unemployment is a situation in which some people who are qualified, ready, willing and able to work do not find work to do. It is also a situation where some people who fall within the ages of the working population, capable and willing to work are unable to secure befitting jobs to do. Since unemployment constitutes one of the problems facing many nations, especially the developing nations like Nigeria, governments tend to focus much attention on programmes and methods of combating it (Uwazie, 2006).

In 2004, Nigeria took to a new form of planning for employment generation, the NEEDS plan strategy. As stated by the Nigerian National Planning Commission (2004), NEEDS is a Nigeria's plan for prosperity. The strategy involves the mobilization of resources of Nigerians to make a fundamental breakthrough from the failure of the past and bequeath a united and prosperous nation. Donli (2004) and Tsauni (2006), fashioned out the goals of NEEDS into Wealth Creation, Employment Generation, Poverty Reduction and Value Re-orientation that will be achieved through Sectoral Reforms (both public and private), growing the private sector, Human Resource Development, including employment and youth development. NEEDS strategy for employment generation is an advancement over past plans in many respects including recognizing that employment generation must take place at all levels of the society, thereby subsidizing for 'state own SEEDS and local level LEEDS to encompass the economy as a whole (Ekong and Ikot, 2012).

In the early decades, the concept of women empowerment was totally out of mind and their condition was

miserable. But with the changed scenario, the thinking of people has been changed due to education, awareness and now various intervention approaches have been developed in order to address the needs of the women which ultimately reveal modifications not only in social policy approaches to third World Development, state policies relating to women but also in the overall economic policy of the country as a whole. The empowerment approach is the most recent and is aimed at empowering women through greater self-reliance and internal strength (Narang, 2012).

The Ogun State Government in Nigeria, through it's the state's Ministry of Women Affairs and other concerned private foundations such as the Timothy Adeola Odutola foundation, Ijebu-Ode and the Vocational and Skills Training Centre, Ibefun via Ijebu-Ode have been in no small ways driving human capacity building and objective empowerment among women community. In this quest, special women rescued-organizations (both public and private) are to train trainees (women) to be self-reliant and gainfully employed, most especially to solve the problems of unemployment through creating jobs by empowering trainee-beneficiaries with relevant skills in the field of their choices, some of who may be assisted by the government at the end of the training to be self-employed.

Statement of the Problem

Empowering women is expedient in driving national economy development because of their population ratio in world labour system. In spite of the recognition of women stake in this strategic and sustainable development which have attracted various interventions to promote vocational skills acquisition for teeming population of unemployed/underemployed women and help reduce poverty and social-vices through employment generation agencies; some gaps seem confronting these women capacity-building agencies as they fight inadequacy of facilities for empowerment, amidst women marital status, educational qualification, and the scheme failing to truly empower the women in sustaining objective-driven activities expected to impact the women in a way to becoming self-creative, productive and contributive women in their society. It is against this backdrop that the study is set to evaluate the Employment Generation Programmes in Ogun State especially as it affects women, mostly in the area of skill acquisition, Technical and Vocational Education, entrepreneurial development and economic empowerment. The main objective of the study is to examine the Employment Generation Programmes and Women Empowerment in Ogun State. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. Does woman marital status influence admission into women empowerment programme?
- ii. Do educational qualifications determine women participation in their empowerment programme?
- iii. Does women employment status determine their involvement in women empowerment programme?
- iv. Does level of availability of facilities for women empowerment programme influence the impact?
- v. To what extent are the activities of the employment generation agencies promote women empowerment programme?
- vi. How can the challenges of women empowerment programme be solved in Ogun State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- i. Level of availability of facilities for women empowerment programme will not significantly influence the impact
- ii. The activities of employment generation agencies will not significantly promote women empowerment programme

Materials and Methods

The study adopted a survey type of the descriptive research design. The population of this study comprised of women, beneficiaries of the employment generation programme of the skill acquisition outfits at Ijebu-Ode, and Ijebu-Ibefun as well as that of the Ogun State Ministry of Women Affairs, the facilitators/trainers used for the various programmes, the graduates of these outfits in their domicile communities and their environs. The sample of this study comprised of 120 participants of employment generation agencies in Ogun state. The sample was drawn through the multistage sampling procedure involving random, proportionate and stratified sampling techniques. The research instruments tagged "Employment Generation Programme Questionnaire" (EGPQ) was used to collect data for this study. This instrument comprised six (6) sections of 31 items. The scoring method that was used in all sections (except in Section A) of the only instrument was Yes or No rating scale of measurement which was used thus: Yes – 1 No – 0. The researcher ensured that completed copies of the questionnaire were collected same day they were given out and this assisted in recording a high response rate. Data collected for this study were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The general questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency counts and mean. The research hypotheses were tested by using inferential statistics. Hypotheses 1-2 were tested with Chi-square. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05

level significance.

Results and Discussion

Women Demographic Distribution in Women Empowerment Programme in Ogun State

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage summary of the age, marital status, highest educational qualification, and employment status

Demographic	Women Distribution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	10-19yrs	21	17.5
	20-29yrs	49	40.8
	30-39yrs	26	21.7
	40-49yrs	16	13.3
	50-59yrs	8	6.7
	60yrs above	0	0
	Total	120	100.0
Marital Status	Single	35	29.2
	Married	85	70.8
	Divorced	0	0
	Widowed	0	0
	Total	120	100
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	10	8.3
	Primary Six	10	8.3
	WAEC	28	23.3
	NCE/OND	19	15.8
	BA/BSc/BEd/HND	39	32.5
	MA/Med/MBA/MSc	5	4.2
	PhD	9	7.5
	Total	120	100
Employment Status	Unemployed	64	53.3
	Self-employed	20	16.7
	Underemployed	3	2.5
	Government employed	21	17.5
	Private sector employed	12	10.0
	Total	120	100

Table 1, presents the summary of women demographic distribution in Women Empowerment Programme in Ogun State by their age, marital status, highest educational qualification, and employment status. The results showed that respondents between 20-29years of age are 40.8% being the most frequent age bracket in the study then follows 30-39years respondents which are 21.7% and the least age bracket falls within 50-59years with 6.7% of total respondents. This implies that young women benefit more from women empowerment programme more than the older ones.

Analysis of the Research Questions

Research Question 1: Does woman marital status influence admission into women empowerment programme?

From the table presented above, the result revealed the marital status of the randomly selected women with 70.8% married while 29.2% are still single with no record of divorced and widowed in the empowerment programme. This result shows that more married people enroll for women empowerment programmes than the singles; this is disagreeing with Nashid and Zunai (na) in their study on Education and Women's Empowerment which held that women who are unmarried have almost 6 times higher probability of being empowered.

Research Question 2: Does educational qualifications determine women participation in their empowerment programme?

Same from the table further revealed women with no formal education and those with primary 6 grade have equal percent of 10, but women in the category of BA/B.Sc./B.Ed./HND had the highest participation of 32.5% followed by SSCE grade women with 23.3%, while MA/Med/MBA/M.Sc. grade have the lowest percent of 4.2; this means that educational qualification of women contributes to their participation in women empowerment programme.

Research Question 3: Does women employment status determines their involvement in women empowerment programmes?

Furthermore, the result in table 1 shows that 53.3% of the total sampled women are unemployed, 16.7% self-employed, 2.5% underemployed, 17.5% government employed, while 10% are employed by private bodies. This implies that larger percentage of women remains unemployed and government could only provide job for 16.5%

more than the private sectors.

Research Question 4: Does level of availability of facilities for women empowerment programme influence the impact?

Table 2 shows remarkably high that 87 respondents representing 72.5% of the total sample agreed that catering tools are available, followed by tie & dye materials with 83 agreed responses representing 69.2% while the bag sewing machine agreed to be the lowest available facilities with 68 respondents representing 56.7%, followed by Hair dryer agreed to be next least on the available facilities with 67 respondents representing 55.8%. It is quite noticeable that the training centres are adequately available in women empowerment programme within this scope of study.

Using a cut-off mean score of 0.5 for rating scale most of the variables indicated that the mean scores were above the cut off mean score except for the hair dryer and bag sewing machine. This implies that training centres, catering tools, tie and dye materials and cloth sewing machine were moderately available facilities for impactful women empowerment programme.

Research Question 5: To what extent are the activities of the employment generation agencies promote women empowerment programme?

Table 3 shows a distinct benefit of boosted morale of 120 respondents representing the total percentage of the sample then family welfare was one of derived benefit women empowerment programme with 144 agreed responses representing 95.0% of the total sample, followed by widened horizon (i.e. a way becoming a better woman)

Using a cut-off mean score of 0.5 for rating scale most of the variables indicated that the mean scores were above the cut off mean score except for political connections. This implies that employment generation agencies have benefited women more in boosting their morale, helping to improve their family welfare and social status but have nothing or less to do with political connections in their empowerment programme.

Research Question 6: How can the challenges of women empowerment programme be solved in Ogun State?

Table 4 revealed perceptual solutions of the respondents to the challenges in women empowerment programme shows that interest motivation through attractive compensation was more frequent with 35 respondents representing 29.2% as one of the ways to resolve the issues in women empowerment programme while other ways were slightly clustered around the mean; including incorporation of more entrepreneurs.

Using a cut-off mean score of 2.5 for rating scale the responses indicated that the total mean scores were above the cut off mean score. This implies that incorporation of more entrepreneurs, accommodation of more young school leavers, provision of more training tools and motivating interest of learning with attractive compensation can go a long way to relieve the clog in the driving wheel of women empowerment programme.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho₁: Level of availability of facilities for women empowerment programme will not significantly influence the impact.

Table 5 shows the influence of the level of availability of facilities on the impact of women empowerment programme. The result revealed that all the available facilities respectively has no significant influence on the impact at 0.05 alpha level, cloth sewing machine ($\chi^2 = 1.402$, $p=0.236$), Hair Dryer ($\chi^2 = .299$, $p= .585$), Catering tools ($\chi^2 = .477$, $p= .490$), Tie & Dye Materials ($\chi^2 = .174$, $p= .677$), Bag Sewing Machine ($\chi^2 = .22$, $p= .882$), and the Training centers (120^a this variable is constant; the chi-square test cannot be performed). Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that level of availability has no significant influence on the impact of women empowerment programme.

Ho₂: The activities of employment generation agencies will not significantly promote women empowerment programme.

Table 6 shows reported activities of employment generation agencies whether it is significant in the women empowerment programme or not. The result presented that all the activities like seminars and workshops are not significant in promoting women empowerment programme at 0.05 alpha level; Seminars ($\chi^2 = 0.13$, $p = 0.909$), Workshops ($\chi^2 = 0.040$, $p = 0.842$), and Conference ($\chi^2 = 0.719$, $p= 0.396$), respectively. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that activities of employment generation agencies will not significantly promote women empowerment programme.

Conclusion

The result revealed that young women benefits more from women empowerment programme more than the older ones. It further shows that more married people enroll for women empowerment programmes than the singles. This could mean that married women have higher sense of responsibilities thus greater crave to be committed to their empowerment. However, the result established that educational qualification of women contributes to their participation in women empowerment programme. The study also showed that larger percentage of women remains unemployed and government could only provide job for 16.5% more than the private sectors.

The findings of the result established that training centres, catering tools, tie and dye materials and cloth sewing machine were moderately available facilities for impactful women empowerment programme. Also, the result revealed as well that incorporation of more entrepreneurs, accommodation of more young school leavers, provision of more training tools and motivating interest of learning with attractive compensation can go a long way to relieve the clog in the driving wheel of women empowerment programme

It was established that level of availability has no significant influence on the impact of women empowerment programme and that the activities of employment generation agencies will not significantly promote women empowerment programme.

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Table 2: The influence of available facilities on the impact of women empowerment programme

S/N	Variables	Responses				Mean	Std. Dev.
		Yes		No			
		Freq	%	Freq	%		
1.	Cloth Sewing Machine	67	55.8	53	44.2	.56	.499
2.	Hair Dryer	53	44.2	67	55.8	.44	.499
3.	Catering tools	87	72.5	33	27.5	.72	.448
4.	Tie & Dye materials	83	69.2	37	30.8	.69	.464
5.	Bag Sewing Machine	52	43.3	68	56.7	.43	.498
6.	Training Centers	120	100	0	0	1.00	.000

Table 3, how the activities of the employment generation agencies have benefited women in women empowerment programme.

S/N	Variables	Responses				Mean	Std. Dev.
		Yes		No			
		Freq	%	Freq	%		
1.	Family Welfare	114	95.0	6	5.0	.95	.219
2.	Boosted Morale	120	100	0	0	1.00	.000
3.	Improved Social Status	74	61.7	46	38.3	.62	.448
4.	Political Connections	38	31.7	82	68.3	.32	.467
5.	Widened Horizon	91	75.8	29	24.2	.76	.430

Table 4 present data on the solution to the challenges of women empowerment programme be in Ogun State.

S/N	Response	Freq.	%	Mean	Std. D
1.	Incorporation of entrepreneurs	34	28.3	2.52	2.52
2.	Accommodation of young school leavers	25	20.8		
3.	Provision of training tools	26	21.7		
4.	Interest motivation through attractive compensation	35	29.2		
	Total	120	100.0		

Table 5: Availability of facilities for women empowerment programme and its impact

VARIABLES	RESPONSES	IMPACT		TOTAL	df	χ^2	p-value
		NO	YES				
Cloth Sewing Machine	No	3	50	53	1	1.402	.236
	Yes	8	59	67			
Total		11	109	120			
Hair Dryer	No	7	60	67	1	.299	.585
	Yes	4	49	53			
Total		11	109	120			
Catering Tools	No	4	29	33	1	.477	.490
	Yes	7	80	87			
Total		11	109	120			
Tie & Dye Materials	No	4	33	37	1	.174	.677
	Yes	7	76	83			
Total		11	109	120			
Bag Sewing Machine	No	6	62	68	1	.22	.882
	Yes	5	47	52			
Total		11	109	120			
Training Centres	No	0	0	0	-	-	-
	Yes	11	109	120			
Total		11	109	120^a			

P<0.05 * 120^a this variable is constant. The Chi-square test cannot be performed.

Table 6: activities of employment generation agencies and promotion of women empowerment programme

VARIABLES	RESPONSES	IMPACT		TOTAL	df	χ^2	p-value
		No	Yes				
Seminars	No	3	28	31	1	.013	.909
	Yes	8	81	89			
Total		11	109	120			
Workshops	No	4	43	47	1	.040	.842
	Yes	7	66	73			
Total		11	109	120			
Conferences	No	8	65	73	1	.719	.396
	Yes	3	44	47			
Total		11	109	120			