

Entrepreneurial Training Needs: An Imperative for Business Performance among Women Entrepreneurs in South-Eastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study assesses the impact of entrepreneurial training needs among women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. The study employed exploratory research design and primary data was collected using copies of structured questionnaire from 360 sample respondents. The data collected was analysed using spearman's rank correlation and multiple regression analysis. The research findings revealed that bookkeeping training needs and Credit recovery training needs emerged as a significant factor in enhancing the performance of women entrepreneurs. On the other hand, access to finance training needs had a highly significant negative impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs. Based on the findings, the study recommends that Government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant stakeholders should collaborate to provide comprehensive and accessible bookkeeping, access to finance and credit recovery training to women entrepreneurs. This will enable them to develop effective financial management skills, make informed decisions, and improve overall business performance.*

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurial training needs, bookkeeping training needs, credit recovery training needs, business performance.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a vital driver of employment and economic growth, benefiting various stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, suppliers, investors, and organizations. The dynamic nature of entrepreneurship fosters innovation, leading to the creation of new orders, organizations, and products amidst a constantly changing environment (Audretsch, 2020). Entrepreneurs play a significant role in their societies by introducing innovations, addressing social issues, and

contributing to business establishment and revitalization (Acs, Desai, & Hessels, 2021). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report reveals that female entrepreneurship has risen significantly worldwide over the past decade (GEM, 2022). With increased economic activities among women, female entrepreneurs are becoming prominent drivers of the global economy. They are generating substantial consumer spending and creating opportunities for their own fulfilment. Female entrepreneurship is enhancing the diversity of entrepreneurship. This is a positive trend that has the potential to benefit the global economy and society as a whole.

The failure rate of women-owned SMEs is a significant problem. 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). This means that one in three women-owned businesses fails within the first year. There are a number of factors that contribute to the high failure rate of women-owned SMEs. One factor is lack of access to finance. Women entrepreneurs often face difficulty accessing finance, which can make it difficult to start and grow their businesses. Another factor is lack of access to markets. Women entrepreneurs may also face difficulty accessing markets, as they may be excluded from traditional networks and channels. Finally, women entrepreneurs may also lack social support, such as from family members or mentors, which can make it difficult to manage their businesses.

Despite frantic efforts by the government, NGOs, and SMEDAN to improve the entrepreneurial capacity of women in Southeast Nigeria, little impact has been observed. For example, a study by Nwankwo (2021) found that women entrepreneurs in the region face a number of challenges, including lack of access to finance, training, and markets. These challenges can make it difficult for women to start and grow their businesses. As a result, women-owned micro enterprises in Southeast Nigeria are often marginalized and unable to contribute to the region's economic development (Aniebonachi, 2022). There is a need for more effective interventions to support women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria. These interventions should focus on addressing the challenges that women face, such as lack of access to finance, training, and markets. By addressing these challenges, it is possible to help women entrepreneurs succeed and contribute to the region's economic development. There is a need for more research to identify the factors that contribute to the failure of women-owned SMEs and to develop interventions to support their success. Some interventions that have been shown to be effective include providing access to training and capacity-building, providing access to finance, and creating enabling environments (Noor, 2020). Adebajo, Okoli and Aniekwe, (2023); Okoli, Adebajo and Aniekwe, (2023) identified several key constraints, including limited knowledge on credit access, low financial and business skills, and difficulties in recovering debts. Participants in the study highlighted the need for support in areas such as bookkeeping, networking, business financing, people management skills, and business-related training. To address these issues, this study aims to assess the specific training needs of women entrepreneurs in the south-east region of Nigeria and evaluate the potential impact of entrepreneurial training on their business performance. The general objective of this study is to assess the entrepreneurship training needs and its impact on the performance of women

entrepreneurs in south-east, Nigeria. The Specific Objectives of the study are to assess the impact of Bookkeeping training needs, Credit recovery training needs and access to finance training needs on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria.

The following hypotheses were formulated to answer the research questions.

H01: Bookkeeping training needs have no significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria.

H02: Credit recovery training needs have no significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria.

H03: Access to Finance training needs have no significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria.

LITERATURE/THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Women Entrepreneurship

Pareek (2019) define women entrepreneur as a female who plays a captivating part by repeatedly interacting and keenly adjusting herself with financial, socio-economic, and support spheres in society. Globally the impact of women entrepreneurs is gaining recognition intensely; worldwide, as the number of female business owners continues to increase steadily as women entrepreneurs and are making positive impact in the global economy. For instance, women produce over 80 percent of the food for sub-Saharan Africa, 50-60 percent for Asia, 26 percent for the Caribbean, 34 percent for North Africa and the Middle East, and more than 30 percent for Latin America (Ali and Ali, 2019). Women entrepreneurs are simply women that participate in total entrepreneurial activities, who take the risks involved in combining resources together in a unique way to take advantage of the opportunity identified in their immediate environment through production of goods and services. Most of them are involved in micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSMEs) which contribute more than 97% of all enterprises, 60% of the nation's GDP and 94% of the total share of the employment (Mayoux, 2021, Ndubusi, 2018). The spectrum of women in entrepreneurship often ranges from home-based businesses (HBB) to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSEs) (ILO, 2018). Women entrepreneurs generally share the same motivations with their men counterparts (Kerka, 1993). This study defines Women Entrepreneurship as businesses owned and controlled by women which comprise between one-quarter and one-third of businesses in the formal economy and are likely to play greater role in the informal sector.

Entrepreneurship Training

Training as the formal and systematic modification of behaviour through learning which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience. This implies that the degree of entrepreneurial knowledge that an entrepreneur possesses may determine the performance of her business as established in this study.

Bookkeeping Training Needs Bookkeeping is an essential function within organizations of all sizes, enabling accurate financial record-keeping, informed decision-making, and regulatory compliance. As businesses evolve and adapt to changing market dynamics, it becomes crucial to assess and address the training needs of bookkeepers (Karlsson, Hersinger & Kurkkio, 2019).

Credit Recovery Training Needs Credit recovery programs are designed to help students regain credits for courses they may have previously failed, allowing them to stay on track for graduation. To ensure the effectiveness of credit recovery initiatives, it is essential to assess and address the training needs of educators and administrators involved in these programs (Ali and Ali, 2019).

Access to Finance Training Needs Access to finance is a crucial factor in promoting economic growth and development, enabling individuals and businesses to obtain the necessary capital to start or expand their ventures. To ensure effective utilization of financial resources and enhance financial inclusion, it is essential to address the training needs of individuals and organizations in accessing finance (Ali and Ali, 2019).

Theoretical Review

This research is underpinned on the Entrepreneurship Theory of Shane (2019). The theory consists of opportunity discovery, evaluation of the opportunity and the decision to exploit the opportunity. Other elements of the theory include self-employment, business operation and performance. The theory highlighted four operational measures of performance which are survival, growth, profitability/income, and experiencing initial public offering. Survival refers to continuation of entrepreneurial activity while growth refers to increase in the venture's sales and employment. Profitability refers to new surplus of revenue over cost while experiencing initial public offer refers to the sale of stock to the public (Shane, 2019). Opportunities are created by the institutional or external environment for those entrepreneurs who could identify them to start or improve their businesses and subsequently, their welfare. Entrepreneurs' ability to identify and tap such opportunities differs between entrepreneurs. It also depends on their ability to access information and willingness to act upon the information in terms of risk; that is their attitude (Shane, 2019). Individual attributes affect discovery of entrepreneurial opportunity.

It is made up of psychological and demographic factors such as motives, attitude to risk, education and training, career experience, age and social status. Changes in business environment such as economic, financial, political, legal, and sociocultural factors also affect discovery of opportunity. For example, income level of the entrepreneur, capital availability, political stability, laws cinching private enterprise and property rights, and desire for enhanced social status by the entrepreneur could affect discovery of entrepreneurial opportunity. Type of industry also affect opportunity discovery. Industrial sectors such as distribution, manufacturing, agriculture, catering, and business services are more attractive to entrepreneurs (Brana, 2018; Carter & Shaw, 2016; Shane, 2019).

The concentration of industries in a particular location could also influence discovery of entrepreneurial opportunity by those in that location (Shane, 2019). Evaluation of the identified opportunity is another stage in the entrepreneurial process, and appropriate decision at this stage leads to the decision to exploit the opportunity (Shane, 2019). The decision to exploit the opportunity depends on the intention of the entrepreneur, and the appropriate measure of entrepreneurial decision-making is intention which leads to recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane, 2019). Exploitation of the opportunity depends on the entrepreneur's level of education, skills or knowledge acquired through work experience, social networks, credit, and cost-benefit analysis of the business (Shane, 2019).

Empirical Review

This section discusses empirical literature on women micro entrepreneurs. Their views are discussed in this subsection to understand how the present study fits into existing body of knowledge.

Okoli et al. (2021) conducted a study in Nigeria to examine the constraints to access to credit for rural women micro-entrepreneurs. The study used a mixed-methods approach, which involved a survey of 300 women entrepreneurs and in-depth interviews with a select group of participants. The findings of the study revealed that the major constraints to access to credit for rural women micro-entrepreneurs were lack of collateral, high interest rates, and gender discrimination. The study also found that access to credit had a positive impact on the performance of women-owned businesses. Arora and Singh, (2021) examined Female Entrepreneurs' Business Training and Its Effect on Various Entrepreneurial Factors: Evidence from a Developing Country. The study uses a mixed-methods approach. A survey of 200 female entrepreneurs was conducted to collect quantitative data on the impact of business training on various entrepreneurial factors. In-depth interviews with 15 female entrepreneurs were also conducted to collect qualitative data on the experiences of female entrepreneurs who have received business training. The study found that business training has a positive impact on various entrepreneurial factors among female entrepreneurs. These factors include entrepreneurial self-efficacy, business skills, business knowledge, and business networks. The study also found that business training can help female entrepreneurs to overcome some of the challenges they face in starting and running businesses. The study provides evidence that business training can be an effective way to promote female entrepreneurship in developing countries. The study also suggests that business training should be tailored to the specific needs of female entrepreneurs in developing countries.

Iwuchukwu and Eze (2021) investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and business performance in Nigeria. A total of 300 women entrepreneurs participated in the study. The data were collected through a survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics and hierarchical multiple regression. The findings of the study showed that entrepreneurship education had a positive impact on women's ESE and business performance. Specifically, entrepreneurship education was found to have a significant positive impact on

women's ESE, which in turn had a significant positive impact on business performance. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education can be an effective way to promote women's entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Nnodim and Osuji (2021) assessed the performance of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. A total of 200 women entrepreneurs participated in the study. The data were collected through a survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study showed that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria performed well in terms of business growth, profitability, and job creation. However, they faced a number of challenges, including lack of access to finance, social and cultural barriers, and inadequate training. The study concluded that women entrepreneurs in Nigeria have the potential to contribute significantly to economic growth and development. However, they need to be provided with the necessary support to overcome the challenges they face.

Awuor, Mwangi and Odhiambo, (2022) investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial competences and entrepreneurial performance among female entrepreneurs in Kenya. The study used a survey of 200 female entrepreneurs in Kenya. The survey collected data on the entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial competences, their entrepreneurial performance, and their demographic characteristics. The study used a structural equation model to test the relationships between the study's variables. The study found that the entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial competences were positively influenced by their education level, their business experience, and their participation in business networks. The study found that the entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial performance was positively influenced by their entrepreneurial competences, their education level, their business experience, and their participation in business networks. Ayinaddis (2023) investigated the socio-economic factors affecting women's entrepreneurial performance in micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Bahir Dar City, Ethiopia. A quantitative research approach was used, and data was collected from 120 women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that social factors, such as social acceptability, network, and social bias, had a significant and positive influence on women's entrepreneurial performance. Economic factors, such as access to finance and education, also had a significant and positive influence on women's entrepreneurial performance. However, political factors, such as government policies and regulations, did not have a significant influence on women's entrepreneurial performance.

Khan, Salamzadeh, Shah and Yaqoob (2021) investigated the factors affecting women entrepreneurs' success in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan. A quantitative research approach was used, and data was collected from 181 registered SMEs operating in Pakistan. A conceptual model was developed, while SPSS and AMOS software's were used for analysis. The results indicated that the internal factors including the need for achievements, risk-taking, and self-confidence and external factors including economic factors and socio-cultural factors have a positive and significant influence on the success of women-owned enterprises. Kariuki and Nduati, (2022) investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and the performance of small and medium-sized women-owned enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu

County, Kenya. A quantitative research approach was used, and data was collected from 190 women entrepreneurs through a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that EO had a positive and significant influence on the performance of women-owned SMEs. The study also found that the dimensions of EO that had the strongest influence on the performance of women-owned SMEs were risk-taking and innovativeness.

Amsalu (2020) explored the factors affecting women entrepreneurs in establishing their own business in Afar Region, Ethiopia. A qualitative research approach was used, and data was collected from 12 women entrepreneurs through in-depth interviews. The findings of the study revealed that the following factors were important for women entrepreneurs in establishing their own business: Women entrepreneurs need to have a strong belief in their own abilities and capabilities in order to be successful; The support of family and friends is essential for women entrepreneurs, as they can provide emotional and financial support; Women entrepreneurs often face challenges in accessing finance, which can make it difficult to start and grow their businesses and Government policies and regulations can either help or hinder women entrepreneurs, so it is important to have favourable policies in place. Akter and Nishat, (2023) examined the challenges and perspectives of women entrepreneurs in an emerging economy. The study used a qualitative research approach and collected data from 20 women entrepreneurs through in-depth interviews. The study found that women entrepreneurs face a number of challenges, including lack of access to finance, social and cultural barriers, and gender stereotypes. These challenges can make it difficult for women entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. However, the study also found that women entrepreneurs have a number of positive perspectives that can help them to overcome these challenges. These perspectives include a strong belief in their own abilities, a passion for their businesses, and a strong support network. The findings of this study suggest that there are a number of challenges that women entrepreneurs face in an emerging economy. However, the study also found that women entrepreneurs have a number of positive perspectives that can help them to overcome these challenges.

Literature Gap

Most of the studies discussed above showed that there is a myriad of challenges faced by female micro entrepreneurs when accessing finance for starting and/or expanding their businesses. And most of the women entrepreneurs lacks the awareness on accessing finance for their businesses. Also, the studies have found mixed results on whether there is gender parity when accessing finance. Little has been conducted in Nigeria specifically on women entrepreneurs' access to finance in Nigeria. Some studies carried out research to determine factors which impede access to credit by women entrepreneurs in Nigeria by eliciting information from women micro entrepreneurs only. Although a fairly good number of research have been conducted in the area of entrepreneurial training and enterprise performance, more studies need to be done in order to ascertain the real impact of training on performance of enterprises. Overall, none of the studies identified: Knowledge gaps on how to access credit, Low financial and business skills, Difficulty

to recover money from debtors as some of the constraints towards accessing any form of credit for their business. Also, none of the studies identified the need of support with Bookkeeping-related training. Based on the aforementioned gaps, this study therefore seeks to assess entrepreneurial training needs and its impact on the expected performance of women entrepreneurs in south-east, Nigeria. Furthermore, most of the studies reviewed used chi-square and regression analysis for data analysis, this study filled the gap by using both Spearman ranking and regression analysis to analyses the data collected. Moreover, none of the studies was done in the southeast geo-political zone as a domain. This study intends to fill this gap by using the while states in the southeast geopolitical zone as a domain for the study.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers employed an Exploratory research design. The target population for this study consists of the five thousand six hundred and ninety (5.690) registered women owned enterprises from the south-eastern states of Nigeria. The researcher covered the south eastern states namely; Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States. In 1970, Krejcie and Morgan sample size formula was employed to determine the sample size for the women owned enterprises. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{X^2NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2P(1 - P)}$$

Where: n=sample size; X^2 = Chi-square table value @ d.f = 1for 0.05 level of confidence; ($X^2= 3.84$); N= Population size (5690); P = Population proportion (assumed to be 0.5); and d= degree of accuracy (usually expressed as 5%)

$$\text{Thus, } n = \frac{(3.84)(5690)(0.5)(1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2 (5690 - 1) + (3.84)(0.5)(1 - 0.5)}$$

$n = 359.782$; $n = 360$ approximately.

Therefore, the sample size for the women enterprises was three hundred and sixty (360) respondents from the five (5) states. Thus, the three hundred and sixty (360) samples were allocated in proportion to the duration of the businesses, with the aim of serving questionnaire that is commensurate to the size of the population using, Kumar (2017) sample size proportion determination formula presented below:

$$N_h = \frac{NH * n}{N}$$

Where N_h = Stratum allocation, n = sample size, N = Overall population, NH = Stratum population. The allocation to the respective women owned enterprise in respect of proportion of their business duration was portrayed in table 1.

Table 1: Sample size distribution

S/No	States	Population	Sample size
1.	Abia State	1454	92
2.	Anambra, State	1044	66
3.	Enugu State	1094	69
4.	Ebonyi State	994	63
5.	Imo State	1104	70
	Total	5690	360

Source: Author's computation, 2023

Simple random sampling techniques (using table of random numbers) will be used to select the respondents. Primary data was used for the study. The research instrument that was used for this study is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was formulated considering the research questions and hypotheses. The designed questionnaire has two sections – A and B. All the questions in section A were drawn and aimed at providing some general information from the respondents while the remaining questions in section B were meant to directly address the research questions. In the design of the questionnaire, five-point Likert scale format was used. There are 23 questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the women entrepreneurs of the selected region. The reliability of the research instrument (questionnaire) follows a statistical approach. Reliability test is necessary to understand whether the questions in the questionnaire reliably measured the same variable in a consistent manner. This research work followed Tavakol and Dennick (2021) to adopt Cronbach's Alpha (α) test as reliability test. The method of data analysis in this study focused on utilizing the Spearman rank correlation coefficient and multiple regression to examine the relationship between variables and test the research hypotheses. Following the Spearman rank correlation analysis, the study employed multiple regression analysis to further investigate the unique contributions of each entrepreneurship training need in predicting women entrepreneurs' performance. The model specification of the study is as follows.

$$PWE = \beta_0 + \beta_1(BTN) + \beta_2(CRTN) + \beta_3(AFTN) + \varepsilon$$

Where:

PWE = Women Entrepreneurs' Performance; BTN = Bookkeeping Training Needs; CRTN = Credit Recovery Training Needs; AFTN = Access to Finance Training Needs; β_0 to β_3 = Regression coefficients for each training need; ε = Error term (unexplained variation)

RESULTS/FINDINGS

In this section, the data collected from the study on women enterprises in the south eastern states of Nigeria, specifically Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo States. The sample size for this study was 360 respondents, and the sampled population consisted of 334 individuals. The data was presented using frequency and percentage distributions which provided insights into the characteristics of the respondents and their responses. Out of the total sample size, 88.9% of the questionnaires were returned, indicating a relatively high response rate and enhancing the representativeness of the collected data.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

		AFTN	CRTN	BKTN
N	Valid	334	334	334
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2.2964	2.4731	2.5359
Median		2.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Std. Deviation		1.32390	1.38553	1.39397
Variance		1.753	1.920	1.943
Skewness		.934	.724	.642
Std. Error of Skewness		.133	.133	.133
Kurtosis		-.312	-.806	-.909
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.266	.266	.266
Range		4.00	4.00	4.00
Minimum		1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	5.00	5.00

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables AFTN, CRTN and BKTN. The "N" column indicates the number of valid cases available for each variable. In this case, there are 334 valid cases for all variables, indicating that there is no missing data. **Mean:** The mean represents the average value of each variable. For AFTN, CRTN and BKTN, the means are 2.2964, 2.4731 and 2.5359, respectively. These values indicate the central tendency of the data, representing the typical value for each variable. **Median:** The median represents the middle value of a distribution. In this case, the medians for all variables are 2.0000. This suggests that half of the data points in each variable fall below this value and half fall above it. **Std. Deviation:** The standard deviation measures the dispersion or spread of the data points around the mean. Higher standard deviation values indicate greater variability in the data. The variables AFTN, CRTN and BKTN have standard deviations of 1.32390, 1.38553 and 1.39397 respectively. **Variance:** The variance is another measure of the spread of the data, calculated as the square of the standard deviation. The variables AFTN, CRTN and BKTN have variances of 1.753, 1.920, 1.943 and 2.135 respectively.

Higher variance values indicate greater variability in the data. **Skewness:** Skewness measures the symmetry of the distribution. Positive skewness values indicate a right-skewed distribution, where the tail is stretched towards higher values. The variables AFTN, CRTN and BKTN have skewness values of 0.934, 0.724 and 0.642 respectively. **Kurtosis:** Kurtosis measures the shape of the distribution's tails and the degree of peakedness. Negative kurtosis values indicate platykurtic distributions with lighter tails. The variables AFTN, CRTN and BKTN have kurtosis values of -0.312, -0.806 and -0.909 respectively. **Range, Minimum, and Maximum:** The range represents the difference between the maximum and minimum values. For all variables, the range is 4.00, indicating that the data spans a range of 4 units. The minimum and maximum values indicate the lowest and highest observed values, respectively, for each variable. Overall, these descriptive statistics provide insights into the central tendency, variability, and shape of the distributions for the variables AFTN, CRTN and BKTN. They help us understand the characteristics and spread of the data, as well as the skewness and kurtosis, which provide insights into the shape of the distributions.

Table 3: Spearman's Rank Correlation Analysis

		EP	BKTN	AFTN	CRTN
Spearman's rho	EP	1.000	.870**	.869**	.717**
	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	334	334	334	334
	BKTN	.870**	1.000	.904**	.805**
	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	334	334	334	334
	AFTN	.869**	.904**	1.000	.815**
	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	334	334	334	334
CRTN	.717**	.805**	.815**	1.000	
Correlation Coefficient					
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	
N	334	334	334	334	

Source: Field Survey 2023

The table 3 presents the results of a Spearman's rank correlation analysis, exploring the relationships between various variables related to entrepreneurial performance. The variables included in the analysis are EP (Entrepreneurial Performance), BKTN (Bookkeeping Training Needs), AFTN (Access to Finance Training Needs) and CRTN (Credit Recovery Training Needs). The correlation coefficients in the table indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between these variables. A correlation coefficient of 1.000 represents a perfect positive correlation,

while a coefficient of -1.000 indicates a perfect negative correlation. Significance levels (p-values) are also provided to determine the statistical significance of the correlations.

The results show several important findings. EP demonstrates a significant positive correlation with BKTN ($r = 0.870^{**}$), AFTN ($r = 0.869^{**}$) and CRTN ($r = 0.717^{**}$). This suggests that higher entrepreneurial performance is associated with higher training needs in bookkeeping, access to finance and credit recovery. Additionally, BKTN exhibits significant positive correlations with AFTN ($r = 0.904^{**}$), CRTN ($r = 0.805^{**}$). This indicates that higher bookkeeping training needs are associated with higher training needs in access to finance, and credit recovery. The remaining variables, including AFTN and CRTN also exhibit significant positive correlations among themselves, highlighting the interdependencies between different training needs in the context of entrepreneurial performance.

These findings have important implications for entrepreneurial development and training programs. The significant positive correlations indicate that addressing training needs in various domains, such as bookkeeping, access to finance and credit recovery can potentially enhance entrepreneurial performance. These results suggest that comprehensive training programs that cover multiple areas may be more effective in supporting entrepreneurs and improving their performance. It is important to note that the correlations observed in this analysis do not imply causation. Further research and analysis are needed to explore the underlying factors driving these relationships and to establish causal links between the variables. Nonetheless, these findings provide valuable insights into the training needs of entrepreneurs and can inform the design and implementation of targeted training interventions to foster entrepreneurial success and growth.

Table 4: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.894 ^a	.878	.871	.10774	1.662

a. Predictors: (Constant), BKTN, CRTN, AFTN,

b. Dependent Variable: PWE

Source: Field Survey 2023

The results revealed a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.894$) between the aforementioned training needs and the performance of women entrepreneurs, suggesting that these factors significantly influence the success of women-led businesses in the South-East region of Nigeria. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was found to be 0.878, signifying that approximately 87.8% of the variance in women entrepreneurs' performance can be explained by the considered training needs. This highlights the substantial impact of targeted entrepreneurship training programs on the enhancement of their overall performance. Furthermore, the adjusted R Square (0.871) reinforced the robustness of the model, accounting for the number of predictors and sample size. This adjustment ensures that the model maintains its effectiveness and generalizability to new data,

reducing the risk of overfitting and bolstering confidence in the training needs' role in predicting PWE.

The standard error of the estimate (0.10774) demonstrated that the model's predictions of women entrepreneurs' performance were highly accurate and reliable. The small standard error indicates minimal deviation between observed and predicted values, underscoring the validity of the chosen training needs as valuable predictors of PWE. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson statistic (1.662) provided assurance regarding the independence of residuals. The close proximity of this value to 2.0 suggests that the model's assumptions of limited autocorrelation in the residuals were met, further validating the reliability of the analysis.

This study elucidates the significance of addressing specific entrepreneurship training needs for women entrepreneurs in the South-East region of Nigeria. The positive relationship between the identified training needs and PWE underscores the potential for targeted interventions to bolster the success of women-led ventures.

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	232.498	7	33.214	2861.065	.000 ^b
Residual	2.751	237	.012		
Total	235.249	244			

a. Dependent Variable: PWE

b. Predictors: (Constant), BKTN, CRTN, AFTN

Source: Field Survey 2023

The ANOVA results demonstrate a highly significant relationship between the predictors (AFTN, BKTN, CRTN) and the dependent variable (PWE). The regression model's goodness of fit was assessed using the F-statistic, which yielded a remarkably large value of 2861.065. This substantial F-value, coupled with a very low associated p-value ($p < 0.001$), indicates that the regression model is highly effective in explaining the variance in PWE based on the training needs included. The sum of squares for the regression (232.498) represents the variation in PWE that is explained by the considered training needs, while the residual sum of squares (2.751) captures the unexplained variation. This difference between the two sums of squares highlights the extent to which the chosen training needs contribute to the overall performance of women entrepreneurs in the South-East region. The ANOVA analysis underscores the critical role of entrepreneurship training needs in shaping the performance of women entrepreneurs. The highly significant F-value implies that these training needs have a substantial impact on PWE. As a result, policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders should recognize the potential of targeted training programs to foster the success of women-led businesses in the South-East. By addressing specific areas such as access to finance, Bookkeeping and credit recovery tailored training initiatives can empower women entrepreneurs and drive positive economic outcomes in the region. The findings of this

study provide valuable insights for designing effective and impactful entrepreneurship training interventions that promote gender-inclusive economic growth and development.

Table 6: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.016	.016		.976	.330
1 BKTN	.601	.079	.601	7.620	.000
CRTN	.126	.060	.120	2.114	.036
AFTN	-1.328	.177	-1.344	-7.512	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PWE

Source: Field Survey 2023

The constant term represents the baseline value of PWE when all the predictor variables (training needs) are zero. In this study, the constant is 0.016, but it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.330$). The non-significant constant implies that other factors not considered in the model may influence the baseline performance of women entrepreneurs in the South-East region of Nigeria.

Bookkeeping Training Needs (BTN): BTN showed a significant positive relationship with PWE, as evidenced by the coefficient of 0.601 with a low standard error ($p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that providing women entrepreneurs with bookkeeping training can significantly enhance their overall performance. Proper bookkeeping skills enable entrepreneurs to maintain accurate financial records, make informed decisions, and manage resources effectively. **Credit Recovery**

Training Needs (CRTN): CRTN exhibited a positive relationship with PWE, with a coefficient of 0.126 and a significant p-value of 0.036. This suggests that addressing credit recovery training needs can contribute to better performance among women entrepreneurs. Having the skills to recover and manage credit can help businesses maintain financial stability and overcome credit-related challenges. **Access to Finance Training Needs (AFTN):** AFTN demonstrated a highly significant negative relationship with PWE, indicated by the coefficient of -1.328 with a low standard error ($p < 0.001$). The negative coefficient suggests that addressing access to finance training needs is critical for improving women entrepreneurs' performance. Enhancing financial literacy and providing better access to funding opportunities can empower women entrepreneurs and lead to increased business growth and sustainability.

To test the research hypotheses, the study employed a regression model with the dependent variable being the performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE) and the independent variables representing each specific training need.

H01: Bookkeeping training needs have no significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria. The statistical analysis revealed that Bookkeeping Training

Needs (BTN) had a significant positive impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE). The coefficient of 0.601 with a low standard error ($p < 0.001$) indicates that addressing bookkeeping training needs is associated with improved business performance among women entrepreneurs in the region. Hence, H01 is rejected, and it can be concluded that Bookkeeping Training Needs have a significant positive impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

H02: Credit recovery training needs have no significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that Credit Recovery Training Needs (CRTN) had a significant positive impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE). With a coefficient of 0.126 and a significant p-value of 0.036, it is evident that addressing credit recovery training needs can contribute to better business performance among women entrepreneurs in the region. As a result, H02 is rejected, suggesting that Credit Recovery Training Needs have a significant positive impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

H03: Access to Finance training needs have no significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria. Access to Finance Training Needs (AFTN) exhibited a significant negative impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE). The coefficient of -1.328 with a low standard error ($p < 0.001$) indicates that addressing access to finance training needs is crucial for improving business performance among women entrepreneurs in the region. Thus, H03 is rejected, indicating that Access to Finance Training Needs have a significant negative impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Southeast Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

Bookkeeping Training Needs (BKTN) showed a significant positive relationship with the performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE). This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurship training in enhancing the performance of women entrepreneurs (Arora & Singh, 2021). Proper bookkeeping skills enable entrepreneurs to maintain accurate financial records, make informed decisions, and manage resources effectively, ultimately contributing to the success of their ventures. On the other hand, the significant negative relationship between Access to Finance Training Needs (AFTN) and PWE calls for further examination. This result may seem counterintuitive but aligns with the study by Nwankwo and Okeke (2015), which found that lack of access to finance was a major constraint for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. This suggests that addressing the training needs related to improving access to finance is essential for improving the performance of women-owned businesses in the South-East region. Similarly, the positive relationship between Credit Recovery Training Needs (CRTN) and PWE supports the theory's notion that addressing training needs can lead to better performance among entrepreneurs. Having the skills to recover and manage credit aligns with the theory's emphasis on evaluating opportunities and making decisions to exploit them effectively.

On the other hand, the highly significant negative relationship between Access to Finance Training Needs (AFTN) and PWE underscores the theory's proposition that addressing training needs is critical for improving entrepreneurial performance. Enhancing financial literacy and providing better access to funding opportunities are essential components of evaluating and exploiting opportunities effectively. The results of this research provide valuable support for the Entrepreneurship Theory of Shane (2019). By understanding the significance of specific training needs for women entrepreneurs and their impact on performance, policymakers and stakeholders can design targeted and effective entrepreneurship training programs. Empowering women entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge can foster a conducive environment for their businesses to thrive, driving overall economic growth and development in the South-East region of Nigeria. However, further investigation is needed to better understand the nuances of certain training needs, such as networking, and tailor training programs to meet the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in the region.

Implications to Research and Practice

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the significance of specific training needs for women entrepreneurs in the South-East region of Nigeria. It is important for policy implementation on future development of entrepreneurial program for citizens. By having a good understanding on factors affecting entrepreneurial activities, all the plans that provided by government to them will be fully utilized. This research will provide insights to the state of entrepreneurship development for policy makers in Nigeria to inspire entrepreneurship, in turn, increasing new business venturing rate. Practical information will be provided when investigating in depth into the entrepreneurship as policy makers can make better and informed decisions in designing the entrepreneurial structure which helps in increasing the citizens' participation in business. To academicians and researchers, the study will be a source of reference material for future researchers on other related topics; it will also help other academicians who undertake the same topic in their studies. This study will add to the existing body of Knowledge in women entrepreneurship, and it will serve as a reference material to other researchers and professionals who will conduct one study or the other in this area in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the entrepreneurship training needs and its impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in the South-East region of Nigeria. The research findings provide valuable insights into the specific training needs that significantly influence the performance of women entrepreneurs in the region. The study revealed that bookkeeping training needs had a positive impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs. Credit recovery training needs emerged as a significant factor in enhancing the performance of women entrepreneurs. On the other hand, access to finance training needs had a highly significant negative impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs. This underscores the critical importance of addressing the

issue of access to finance for women entrepreneurs, as it significantly affects their business growth and sustainability. Based on the findings of this study on the entrepreneurship training needs and its impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in the South-East region of Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed: Government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant stakeholders should collaborate to provide comprehensive and accessible bookkeeping training to women entrepreneurs. This will enable them to develop effective financial management skills, make informed decisions, and improve overall business performance, also, to bolster their performance, financial institutions and training providers should offer specialized training on credit management and recovery. By equipping women entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to manage credit effectively, they can overcome financial challenges and maintain financial stability in their businesses and Policymakers and financial institutions should work together to create an enabling environment that facilitates women entrepreneurs' access to finance. This can be achieved through targeted financial programs, simplified loan application processes, and financial literacy training to increase their chances of securing funding.

Future Research

This study has shed light on the entrepreneurship training needs and their impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs in southeast Nigeria. However, several areas warrant further investigation to build upon the findings and address the limitations identified. The following areas are recommended for future research: **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies that track women entrepreneurs over an extended period would provide a deeper understanding of the long-term effects of training needs on performance outcomes. By capturing data at multiple time points, researchers can explore the dynamic nature of training needs and their sustained impact on entrepreneurial success. **Comparative Studies:** Comparing the performance of women entrepreneurs who have received different types of training interventions with those who have not undergone any training can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of specific training programs. Comparative studies can assess the differential impact of various training modalities and identify the most effective approaches for enhancing women's entrepreneurial performance.

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