

**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ACQUISITION AS CORRELATES OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated women education and Entrepreneurial skills acquisition as correlates of women participation in community development in communities in South-East, Nigeria. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. Correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was communities in South-East, Nigeria. A population of 9,315 women who participate in the 2021/2022 Community-Based Education Programme was used for the study. A sample of 384 women sampled from the population using multi-stage sampling procedure and Taro Yamane's Proportional Sampling Technique were used for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was trial-tested on 20 women who participate in Community-Based Education Programme in Kogi State and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to calculate the reliability indices and the instrument yielded the overall reliability coefficient of 0.80. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment Correlation coefficient. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using analysis of variance which is an aspect of Simple Linear Regression. The findings revealed that there is high positive relationship between women entrepreneurial skills acquisition and women participation in community development in the areas of economic development and infrastructural development. Based on the findings, recommendations were also made and among them are that the society should encourage women education and Entrepreneurial skills acquisition that will prepare women for public sector employment and private sector Entrepreneurial practice for self sustained and for effective participation in community development. The study also recommends that curriculum experts should overhaul educational curricula content at every level of education so that education attained at any level should be skill-oriented for meaningful development. This will ensure that any education that women acquire will enable them to participate in community development.*

**Keyword:** Women, Entrepreneurial, Skills, Correlates, Participation, Community, Development

### **Introduction**

In many countries of the world especially in African sub-regions, community development efforts have helped to change the lives of people in the communities especially when women are involved. Women are the adult girls or females who occupy the positions of mothers, sisters, aunts, or female cousins (Emenalo, 2017). They are the female confidants who form the building blocks for the foundations of families as well as happy homes (Chizea, & Njoku, 2008). Women generally are regarded as the engineers and nuclei of development. They work tirelessly almost round the clock in and around the home in order to make ends meet in their families, communities and for the development of the society. Operationally, women are the adult females in the society who are old enough to carry out responsibilities in the family and community. Community is similar to a living creature, comprising different parts that represent specialized functions, activities, among others. In every society of the world, women have the obligation of participating in community development. They play the roles as mothers, wives, house-keepers, child bearers and managers of the home and according to Agbo (2008), women serve as a source of help in community development. Ezegbe and Akubue (2012) noted that women play roles such as peace keeping, decision-making, industrial and agricultural production, food-processing and marketing in the society. The authors stated also that women give economic support in the family such as payment of house rent and building of houses, payment of children's school fees, provision of foods in the family especially the educated and skilled ones. Nnamani and Okpara (2010) added that women contribute in trade, music, arts, craft, industry and politics though at a low level. According to the United States (US) Department of Labour in Dimson (2017), women engage in 25% of non-traditional occupations such as engineering, science, technology, trades, entrepreneurship and leadership roles as Board members. The author further stated that in Nigeria, 24% of the workforce of federal civil service and 14% of the overall management positions (Board seats) are occupied by women. Women therefore, play roles in both traditional and non-traditional settings for the benefit of their households, their communities and the society at large.

Despite all the tasks and responsibilities women play in and outside their homes, it seems that their contributions to community development still remain minimal and invisible. This is in line with the statement of Ngwu (2014) that the contributions of women in community development still remain insignificant and unrecognized in the society. This may be as a result of insufficient acquisition empowerment tools such as education and entrepreneurial skills among women. According to Oranusi (2009), majority of Nigerian women are uneducated and unskilled enough to participate effectively in community development. This means that education and skill acquisition among women are very necessary as they serves as basic tools for acquiring knowledge, information, skills and techniques to participate effectively in community development. It also aids in the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and techniques for the development of an individual's life and societal improvement in education.

According to Lawal (2016: 20) defined women education as any training given to women to prepare their mind, mould their character and develop their potentialities to function well in society. The author further stated that education does not only prepare and mould the mind of women, but also serves as a key to open the doors of their participation in all human endeavours including community development. This means that women education develops all the potentialities of women and also gives them direction to the right way of life to be able to get involved in all human assignments. Women education therefore is the education that women acquire to help increase their self-reliance and employment chances so as to improve their economic, social and political status and responsibilities in the society. In this study, women education refers to any training (practical or theoretical) that women acquire at any age, level of education (primary, secondary or tertiary) and in any form (formal, informal or non-formal) to provide them with the right knowledge, skills, ideas, techniques and values to enable them live happily in their homes and participate in community development.

Women education is an indispensable tool for any development in Nigeria and among the women in South-East in particular, especially in the areas of economic, health promotion, infrastructural development and good leadership and governance. In economic activities, education increases women's productive capacity and output at the household and community level. According to Sepp (2015), women education results to women's increase in income and distribution, increased opportunity for wage, employment and increased access to credit, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase and training opportunities for life. Farzaneh and Moghadam (2003) stated that quality education of women provides women with employment and increases their earning power. This invariably improves their household nutrition, family health and children's education. In the same vein, Mbalisi (2009) supported that through education, women are provided with the knowledge and understanding of environmental challenges and concerned attitudes for the environment. Women education has other benefits in society which Farzaneh and Moghadam (2003) outlined as follows: reduction of poverty in the home, community and the society, making social investment in health, family planning, control population growth, infant, child and maternal mortality reduction, makes women more politically active and better informed about their legal rights, challenges their good governance and leadership roles as well as infrastructural development and maintenance.

Furthermore, women education has helped a lot of women to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are individuals who create business opportunities for themselves and for others. Afolabi, Omoluwa and Oyetayo (2011: 52) defined entrepreneurs as people who set up new small and medium scale businesses out of their creative ideas, drive and determination to enhance dignity of labour, create wealth and be self-reliant. This means that women entrepreneurs establish some small and medium-sized enterprises such as hair salon, fashion and designing centers, catering and management industries, agro-chemical industries among others for self-reliant and employment as well as to generate income. In the context of this study, entrepreneurs refer to women who engage themselves in small-scale and medium-scale enterprises where they can make income to support their families and participate in community development. They include women in various industries such as entertainment, finance, agriculture, fashion and designing, as well as technology (Tewa Onasanya, 2022). Recently, the 3rd edition of the Annual World of Women Entrepreneurs (WOWE) festival was held in Lagos, Nigeria. It was aimed at celebrating the West African female entrepreneurs from all walks of life; giving them a chance to learn, share knowledge and network (Tewa Onasanya, 2022). However in most cases, entrepreneurs gain their creative ideas, motives, directions through engaging themselves in entrepreneurship education and other training programmes such as apprenticeship.

Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong learning process which starts as early as elementary school, progresses through all the other levels of education as well as outside the formal education system (Fernald, 2010). The author further explained that entrepreneurship education equips individual(s) with the entrepreneurial skills and attributes with which to set up business. Entrepreneurship education therefore provides individuals (women inclusive) with entrepreneurial skills. In this context of study, entrepreneurship education refers to any education or training given to women to enable them acquire skills.

Skills refer to those capacities and potentials that an individual acquires through training, practice and experience to enable him or her start up business. In other words, skills are the abilities and techniques of doing business to succeed. Gail (2012: 132) defined skills as those abilities and capacities acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions. This implies that skill acquisition involves time, devotion, carefulness and people's involvement. Skills in this study, refers to those abilities and capabilities that women acquire to enable them establish businesses, succeed and make profits to sustain their lives and the lives of people around them and these types of skills are referred to as entrepreneurial skills in curriculum.

Entrepreneurial skills serve as empowerment tools into business ventures to make profit. They are those abilities, capabilities and techniques that one acquires through training, practice or experience to enable him or her start up a business. According to Adeyemo (2009); entrepreneurial skills are those skills that are required for one to start, develop, finance and succeed in one's own business. Olagunju (2004) viewed entrepreneurial skills as those abilities that an individual uses to exploit ideas and create an enterprise that can be beneficial to oneself and others in society. The scholar outlined abilities to constitute the enablement

to make wealth and property through exploitation, creativity and initiatives. Entrepreneurial skills can be in form of those general or common skills that every entrepreneur must require and apply for business success. These include: planning, motivation, creativity, decision-making, marketing skills among others. Ryan (2018) added that the common entrepreneurial skills include but not limited to: communication, strategic formula, financial and stress management, among others. Entrepreneurial skills can also mean those specific skills that one must acquire to start up a particular business and succeed in it such as farming skills (both crops and animals), catering and home management skills, fashion and designing, hair-dressing, bakery, bead-making interior decoration among others (Anyaeibunam, 2015). In this study, entrepreneurial skills are those skills or abilities women acquire through training, education, practice, experience, imitation or observation to enable them engage or establish their own businesses in order to contribute their quota in the family and community development such as farming skills, fashion and designing, catering and management, hair-dressing, bead-making, bakery, soap making.

However, women need not only to acquire entrepreneurial skills but also acquire them at a high level of competencies as this will enable them participate in community development. It will help them to set up businesses, create wealth in abundance for their family and community use. According to Mazumber and Ahmed (2015), adequate women's acquisition of entrepreneurial skills provide them with a change in attitude, increased mobility, training, professionalism, self-recognition, various amenities, general growth among others. The author revealed also that high competencies of entrepreneurial skills among women enable them to make wealth and improve their family and community life in general. Anyaeibunam (2015) corroborated the view that entrepreneurial skills have some benefits especially when they are of high competencies. These include: self-employment, self-reliance, gives room for diverse job opportunities and self-esteem. Entrepreneurial skills therefore are designed for the socio-economic development of people especially the less privileged women.

Women entrepreneurs with adequate and appropriate entrepreneurial skills seems to be doing well in different business areas. In India, women with entrepreneurial skills are showing their presence in herbal marketing, food processing, farming, dairying, production and sale of ready-made garments, preparation of handicrafts and hand-crafted gifts such as bangles and utensils which they use wood, stones, metals or vessels to make (Mazumber & Ahmed, 2015). Others according to the authors are decorative pieces, basket-making from straw, tailoring, embroidering. The authors revealed further that this has helped to develop economic independence, improved health conditions, personal and social capabilities among the women in India and consequently, life improvement in their families, communities and the nation. In Abuja, Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2015 graduated not less than 330 women who were trained in various skills acquisition programme organized by the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) to help reduce poverty in Nigeria (Olasupo, 2015). Rakiya (2017) also revealed that in Alasan village in Sokoto State of Nigeria, women engage themselves in garri production through the entrepreneurial skills they acquired. The proceeds they make now enable them to own several cattle herds like their men folks and they invest heavily in family and community development in their area. Entrepreneurial skills therefore develop women's competence and confidence to create viable businesses for income generation. According to Anyaeibunam (2015), women acquire entrepreneurial skills in Education Centers and schools.

Despite all the benefits of women entrepreneurial skills acquisition, women seems to generally lag behind in acquiring education and entrepreneurial skills. This is as a result of poverty, ignorance and patriarchy (parents' male education preference) (Oluwo, 2011). World Education (2016) noted that world-wide, majority of women lack the empowerment tools of education and skills that can empower them to improve their lives and that of others in communities. In other words, there is high rate of illiteracy and deficient of entrepreneurial skills among women generally. According to United Nations (2015), a lot of female children especially in Sub-Saharan Africa drop out of school every year and this makes a lot of women to become illiterates. Anurugwo (2017) stated that 80% of women in Nigeria cannot read and write. Acholonu (2017) noted also that in this era of unprecedented technological development and innovations, the Nigerian women lack the necessary entrepreneurial skills, especially in agriculture to enable them fight food crisis, hunger and poverty. In other words, a lot of women do not have enough necessary entrepreneurial skills such as

agricultural and home economics skills that can help them install, handle and manage modern equipment as well as adopt new improved techniques in such activities to yield income. Furthermore, Ukwuaba and Igbo (2015) asserted that women lack the general knowledge about health improvement activities. In addition, the illiteracy condition of women makes them to be marginalized and become dependent on men. In the same line of thought, Izuagba, Nwigwe and Nwamuo (2014) stated that the high rate of illiteracy among women keeps them marginalized and serves as a major obstacle to reduction of poverty and hunger in communities; it also hinders their active participation in community development. This means that women generally suffer illiteracy which keeps them marginalized and dependent on men for survival. Consequently, there is high rate of poverty and hunger in the society according to the author. Invariably, the high rate of poverty and hunger in the society then can be attributed to high rate of illiteracy and unskilled traits among women in developing countries.

Locally and globally, this high rate of poverty in society has become worrisome. According to the United Nations (UN) Women (2016), poverty rate in the world has resulted to high rate of malnourishment and disease infection among children and mothers, increase in homeless households, increase in street beggars and waste pickers, high rate of crime, high rate of maternal/infant mortality and increase in death rate. All these problems are as a result of women's incapacitation to participate in solving them due to lack of empowerment tools. The UN women further reiterates that these problems get worse in the African sub-region particularly, in the communities where women and children are mostly affected.

In Nigeria, the level of poverty in most households and communities, especially in the South-East geopolitical zone is on the high side and this may be as a result of women's inability to participate in community development activities due to lack of empowering tools such as education and entrepreneurial skills. There is increase in illiteracy rate and school drop-out among children, increased infant and maternal deaths, wide spread diseases such as malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, malaria, typhoid fever among others. These problems exist as a result of lack of economic power among girl child and women (Agbo, 2008).

In the current world economic recession, there is high rate of economic hardship in many households in Nigeria. Bizarre happening such as stealing of foods on fire has become the order of the day in some parts of the country (Ezea, 2017). Some parents tend to sell their children in order to help them feed others in the family (Ugwuanyi, 2017). Ugwuanyi also reported that a man sold his 3-year old niece for ₦150, 000 (One hundred and fifty thousand naira only) to meet up with the family's demands. In addition, there is dearth of necessary infrastructure such as health centers, schools, markets, electricity, good roads among others, and even the available ones are in states of disrepair, waiting for community intervention. This makes people of the area travel far distances in search of necessary basic facilities that promote the quality of life in the community. In the same vein, Aruma (2011) stated that most women in the communities spend about 70-80 percent of their time per day working in the farm without adequate yields because, they lack the knowledge, skills and resources that help to make better yields and profits. Most young women have turned to itinerant and roadside fruit and vegetable sellers as well as food vendors. This yields little or nothing to the women, that might expose them to prostitution, adultery, contraction of sexually-transmitted diseases as well as other maternal health problems.

The South-East zone is not left out in the scenario of the challenges women are facing. From personal observation, it seems that majority of women in the communities in South-East are still illiterates as personal observation shows that patriarchy which denies women education and skills acquisition is practiced in the area. Patriarchy refers to a situation where women are denied education and other rights (Oluwo, 2011) and this could result to low participation of women in community development. Consequently, there is high rate of economic, political and social problems resulting to high rate of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ignorance in the area. A lot of women and children roam the streets in search of some necessary human basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing.

Community development is one of the processes of development which generally connotes growth or increase in something, be it material or non- material things. According to Border (2012), development is a process that results to growth and positive change of lives of people in all round ramification of life through some material and human efforts. This means that development helps to improve lives of people in the society and when such effort is carried out by the people of a community themselves, it is referred to as

community development. Community development is a type of development where citizens of a particular community carry out their community projects by themselves in order to improve their quality of lives and that of other members of the family and community.

Community development has become a very important issue in the development efforts of many nations. It means the entire group processes undertaken by the people themselves with or without any support by an external body to improve the general well-being of people in a community (Orie, 2004). It involves the provision and maintenance of structural facilities such as potable water, access roads, electricity, functioning health care facilities among others. Onyechi, Bappah and Baraya (2016) posited that community development is concerned with improvement and transformation of lives of community members generally such as provision of necessary facilities as well as knowledge and skills. Ngwu (2014) added that community development involves other non-economic or non-structural resources such as awareness-building, good leadership, and accumulation of knowledge as well as some good social behavior such as peace, honest, obedience among others. This implies that community development covers every aspect of people's lives which include economic, political, infrastructural, and other social and mental issues but the study focuses on economic, health, infrastructural and good leadership. Economic development is the aspect of development that is concerned with the creation of wealth to improve the standard of living of people in the community. According to World Bank (2011), economic development is the creation of wealth so as to increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of individuals as this serves as the indicator of people's well-being as it regards to women education and entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

Infrastructure is the basic facilities and installations that help the government or community run, including roads, schools, phone lines, industrial and agricultural production and foreign and domestic businesses. Infrastructural development according to Ngwu (2014) is the aspect of development that deals with building of physical and socio-economic facilities in the community. It is the aspect of development that focuses on building or improving infrastructural facilities such as access roads, bridges, water bore-holes, schools, markets etc. It is believed that the provision of these facilities in the community will help to reduce the suffering of people in the community and as well, promote the quality of the community life.

Health development deals with the improvement of the health conditions of people in the community as well as the provision and maintenance of health facilities in the community. According to Ukwuaba and Igbo (2015), health development helps to reduce infant and maternal mortality, disease outbreaks, boosts environmental cleanliness and encourages good nutrition in families and communities. Good leadership and governance covers the political aspect of community development and deals with promoting quality leadership/governance. According to Esseyin, Okafor and Uchendu (2014), good leadership/governance leads to reduction in: abuse of power; violation of human rights; mis-management of available resources and promotes good maintenance of law and order, peace and unity in the society.

It is likely that the provision of these material and non-material resources in communities in South-East will help to boost maximum growth of goods and services, adequate health care delivery as well as ensure a continuous functioning of the available infrastructure and promotion of good leadership and good governance for a high quality life in the communities. It is obvious that this can only be achieved through human effort and input via participation because observation shows that government alone can no longer do the job. In the words of Onyechi, Bappa and Baraya (2016), community development is determined by the level of involvement of the immediate citizenry (women inclusive) of the community who come together to achieve common goals. This means that community development involves men and women activities that can be achieved through active participation.

Participation is a process of being involved in an activity and as a citizen, it means making input in an organization or activity which can be material or non material. According to Egenti (2002), participation is an avenue where people come together to interact and exchange ideas that can enable them to achieve a purpose. The author stressed further that participation in community development involves making input of ideas, wealth, potentialities and capacities by the citizens of the community. This helps them to identify their needs and assume responsibilities to plan, manage and execute their needed activities based on their collective decision-taking. In other words, participation is a collective effort where participants (may

voluntarily or involuntarily) bring out their potentialities, skills, power, ideas, wealth and knowledge to work together and achieve a set goal. In this regard, every individual brings out his or her own ideas, skills and abilities and as well, use such qualities to achieve their set goals in the community. Supporting this view, Smith (2006) emphasized that participation utilizes skills, resources as well as efficiency of individuals (women inclusive) in order to achieve set goals.

Participation therefore, involves working together of men and women in the community and outside the community to make decisions on identifying their needs, plan and execute programmes in their communities in order to make a change and exert influence on the lives of people in the community. In this study, participation means involving women in all developmental activities to perform their roles in order to change their lives and the lives of other people in their families and communities. These activities include identifying community needs, planning, decision-making, leadership roles, creation of wealth as well as provision of goods and services for people in the communities as this will promote community development.

Participation of women in community development should not be under-emphasized because generally, women are large in number. Madumere (2009) asserted that women form almost half of the Nigerian population and are imbued with the potentials to contribute substantially to the economy. Ngwu (2014) maintained that no meaningful development can be achieved without the participation of women. Emeronye (2017) also noted that participation of women in community development boosts economic growth and stability as well as increase in decision-making process. Ngwu (2014) pointed out that many countries of the world have succeeded in reducing poverty through women participation in community development. Such areas according to Ngwu include some parts of Nigeria, Swaziland, India, Tanzania, Kenya, Latin America and many others. That may be one of the reasons why in Nigeria, the government and non-governmental organizations and even communities are taking it upon themselves to create awareness and make campaigns for individual women and groups to participate in community development activities such as community services, servicing self help group, running support and social action groups, building community networks, participating in inter-agency meetings, undertaking needs assessment, increasing people skills, resourcing the community to meet needs, improving quality of lives, defining priorities, working towards social justice and empowering individual and communities.

Women participation therefore is very crucial in community development. Mama (2011) defined women participation as a process of women involvement in an activity. As it concerns community development, it means the engagement of women in all the development activities for community growth. Women participation therefore means women involvement in community activities for growth and advancement as this will help to boost economy. Edoja (2014) stated that women need to be encouraged to participate in community development because, they possess some attributes and potentialities such as being more honest, resilient, thrifty and being more organized. In this context, women participation refers to women involvement in every activity of community development which include need identification, planning and execution of projects in the communities to achieve economic, infrastructural, health and good governance development.

It is assumed that when women in South-East participate in community activities, it reduces poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ignorance among households in the area. It will also help to boost basic needs of life such as food, shelter and clothing as well as basic amenities such as electricity, good road networks, hospitals among others in communities in the zone. But it seems that majority of women in the area, either lack the empowerment tools especially women education and entrepreneurial skills to participate effectively or they acquire them at a low level. This is in line with Ngwu (2014) view that the mobilization of women for community development is very difficult because of the complications of high rate of illiteracy among them. It seems that women education and entrepreneurial skills are correlated to women participation in community development. This study therefore intends to find out women entrepreneurial skills acquisition as correlate with women participation in community development in South-East, Nigeria.

In South-East, Nigeria, it seems that majority of women find it difficult to participate in community development activities and it seems also that they lack the empowerment tools of women entrepreneurial skills. Personal observation shows that majority of women in the area are mere house-wives with no empowerment skills and employment to earn an income. Most of the women in South-East Nigeria depend

on their husbands, children and relations for survival. Worse still, parents' preference for male education (patriarchal tradition), ignorance, laziness and poverty have imposed some socio-economic and political restrictions on them to engage in education and entrepreneurial skills training that can empower them to be employed.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate women entrepreneurial skills acquisition as correlates of their participation in community development in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. ascertain the relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development in communities in the South-East, Nigeria.
2. determine the relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in communities in South-East, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

For purposes of this study, the following research questions are raised:

1. What is the relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development?
3. What is the relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in communities in South-East, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development in communities in South-East, Nigeria.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in South-East, Nigeria

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopted a co-relational survey research design. A co-relational survey study according to Nwogu (2017), is a study which determines the relationship between X and Y variables, that is, between the independent and dependent variables.

#### **Area of the Study**

The area of the study comprised communities in the South-East Zone of Nigeria. The South-East Zone is an Igbo speaking area and is made up of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study were 9,315 women who engage in the 2021/2022 in Community-Based Development Education Programmes in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States of South-East Zone, Nigeria.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size for the study was 384 women drawn from the population. Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select the sample. This procedure was adopted because the sample selection was carried out in various stages.

#### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled Women Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (WESAQ) and Women Participation in Community Development Questionnaire (PCDQW). Women Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (WESAQ) helped the researcher to find out the opinion of respondent as it regards to entrepreneurial skills acquisition by women in the south east Nigeria.

In instrument B; Women Participation in Community Development Questionnaire (PCDQW) has forty (40) items.

**Method of Data Analysis**

In answering the research questions, data collected from the respondents were analyzed using Pearson product moment Correlation coefficient. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using analysis of variance which is an aspect of Simple Linear Regression.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development.

**Table 1: Correlation Coefficient of women entrepreneurial skills acquisition and their participation in economic development**

	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial skills</b>
Economic Development	1,0000 (372)	.795 (372)
Entrepreneurial Skills	.795 (372)	1,0000 (372)
	$r = 0.79$	$r^2 = 0.63$

**Source:** Researcher’s field work, 2023

The result in table 1 shows a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.79 which indicates a high positive relationship between women entrepreneurial skill acquisition in South East Nigeria. This means that 63% of the women participation in economic development in their various communities was a result of their acquisition of entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) is 0.63 which means that women participation in economic development in their various communities is 63% due to women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. This value explains the variation in economic development as explained by women in South East Nigeria.

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in communities in South east, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Correlation Coefficient of women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development.**

	<b>Infrastructural Development</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial skills</b>
Infrastructural development	1,0000 (372)	.600 (372)

Entrepreneurial skills	.600 (372) r= 0.60	1,0000 (372) r <sup>2</sup> = 0.36
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**Source:** Researcher’s field work, 2023

As can be seen from in table 3, the correlation coefficient is 0.60 indication a positive relationship. This signifies that there is a high relationship between women acquisition entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in communities in Nigeria. However, the coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) is 36% when converted, which shows the variation in women participation in infrastructural development in the various communities.

**Test of Hypotheses one**

There is no significance relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development in communities in South East, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Significant Relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in Economic development**

Computed r (r)	r-squared	Adjusted square	r-	Standard error	Beta	Tcal
795	.633	.632		.21833	.795	10.219

**Source:** Researcher’s field work, 2023.

From table 5, r represents the coefficient of correlation which is established on relation. The coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) for computed r value is 0.633. This values explains the variation in economic development as explained by women in South East Nigeria on the test of significance of the hypothesis as indicated in table 5, the calculated ‘t’ value is 10.219 while the significance of ‘t’ is 0.0000. From the two, values the null hypothesis (H0<sub>1</sub>) which states there is no significance relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development in communities in South East, Nigeria.

was rejected. The researcher therefore concludes that there is significant relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development in various communities in south east, Nigeria.

**Test of Hypothesis two**

There is no significant relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural Development in communities in south east.

**Table 4: Significant Relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in communities in south east**

Computed r (r)	r-squared	Adjusted square	r-	Standard error	Beta	t-cal	Sig.t
.600	.36	.359		.35528	.600	7.149	.000

**Source:** Researcher’s field work, 2023.

From table 7, r represents the coefficient of correlation which is established a relationship between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) computed r value is 0.360. This value explains that there is variation in women participation in infrastructural development in the various communities.

on the test of significance of the hypothesis as indicated in table 7, the calculated ‘t’ value is 7.149 while the significance of ‘t’ is 0.0000 from the values the null hypothesis (H0<sub>3</sub>) which states that is no significant relationship between was rejected. The researcher therefore concludes that there is significant relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural Development in communities in south east.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study were discussed based on the following sub-headings:

1. Women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development in South-East, Nigeria.
2. Women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in communities in South-East, Nigeria;

### **Women entrepreneurial skills and their Participation in Economic Development**

The finding in this study revealed the correlation between women education and their participation in economic development. According to the finding, there is a high positive correlation between level of women education and the extent of their participation in economic development, meaning that women requires education especially at a higher level to enable them participate to a high extent in economic development. It was further revealed from the analysis of hypothesis number one, that there is a significant positive relationship between women education and their participation in economic development of their communities. Thus, the higher the women's education level, the higher their level of participation in economic development of their communities.

The findings are in agreement with Ukwuaba (2008) who agreed that there is a positive relationship between women education and their participation in economic development. The author stated that if women acquire skilled education, they can take advantage of credit facilities available to people, have income, reduce financial dependencies on their husbands and relations and make them to have a voice in decision-makings. This will in turn increase their economic participation in family and communities' affairs. The findings also are in agreement with the report of Alewayehu (2013) which indicated that through education, women are informed and convinced to take loans, get involved in money contributory activities, educate their children and engage in weaving activities. This will enable them to earn income to sustain their lives and the lives of people around them, the author maintained. These findings generally indicate that women education has a great impact on economic development as it will help the women in communities to be self-sustained for economic support in the family and community. Relationship between women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in Economic Development

The findings of this study showed that there is a low positive relationship between women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development. This means that the correlation coefficient of women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation on economic development is low. This could be attributed to their low level of Entrepreneurial skills acquisition. The finding also revealed that there is a significant relationship between women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in economic development. This implies that the higher the level of acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills participation among women, the higher their level of participation in economic development in their communities and vice versa.

The findings are in agreement with the findings of Kpelai (2013) and Acholonu (2017). Kpelai asserted that women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills correlates with their participation in economic development. The author revealed through a study titled, "The Impact of Women Entrepreneurship on Economic Growth in Benue State, Nigeria", that Entrepreneurial skills in agriculture reduces food crises in the communities especially in the areas of food production, processing and preservation. These findings are plausible in the sense that women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills determines their participation in economic development.

### **Women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development in the communities.**

The findings of this study showed that there is low positive relationship between women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and the extent of their participation in infrastructural development in the communities. Besides, the co-efficient of determination of variation in women's participation in infrastructural development indicated that it could be as a result of their level of Entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This means that the lower the level of Entrepreneurial skills such as food processing skills, tailoring, hair dressing

among others, the lower the level of women participation in infrastructural development. Also, the findings of hypothesis number six revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills and their participation in infrastructural development. This means that women acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills correlates with their participation in infrastructural development, thus, the higher the level of participation of Entrepreneurial skills, the higher the level of participation.

According to the result, the women participation is low due to their low level of Entrepreneurial skills participation. The result indicates also that women married very early without much Entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This therefore, affects their participation level in infrastructural development because they revealed that they lacked the resources such as money, knowledge and skills to enable them participate at a high level. The result revealed that they could participate at a higher level only in taking good care of available facilities such as the town halls, water boreholes, schools and churches which they mobilize themselves to clean regularly.

These findings are in accord with the report of Mbagwu (2020) which indicated that Entrepreneurial skills prepare women for establishment of agro-based industries and to engage in indepth training in special areas using new technological gadgets that will improve their yields for infrastructural development. The findings of this study is also in agreement with the report of WEAVE (2017) which indicated that women's participation in community development (infrastructural development inclusive) is associated with their development of Entrepreneurial skills and interests through training. This means that the development of Entrepreneurial skills among women boosts their level of participation in infrastructural development. Hence, the level of Entrepreneurial skills of women in South-East, Nigeria is so low that it needs to be boosted.

This means that their level of Entrepreneurial skills acquisition need to be developed to enable them to solve their infrastructural development problems.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it has been established that inspite of all the policies, conferences and awareness creations that government and non-governmental organizations have continued to make about improvement of women entrepreneurial skills acquisition, women have continued to be deprived. It seems that men and the general public have not seen women entrepreneurial skills acquisition as a way of ameliorating their community development problems. More efforts therefore, should be made by all stakeholders to mitigate this scenario so as to help solve the developmental problems that are increasing daily in communities.

Besides, women constitute about half of the Nigerian population. The enhancement of their status in the areas of entrepreneurial skills acquisition will help to translate the lives of people in the communities into an improved life in the areas of economic, health promotion, infrastructural development and promotion of good leadership/governance. It has been established in this study that there is a high positive relationship between women acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and their participation in community development in the areas of economic and infrastructural development. More women therefore should be encouraged through moral and financial support to entrepreneurial skills acquisition to enable them bridge the gap of community development problems facing them in their communities.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made by the researcher:

1. Women Entrepreneurial skills acquisition should be encouraged to bolster women's participation in community development.
2. The society should encourage girl-child education, women education and entrepreneurial skills acquisition that will prepare women for public sector employment and private sector Entrepreneurial practice for self sustenance, and for effective participation in community development.

3. Curriculum experts should overhaul educational curricula content at every level of education so that education attained at any level should be skill-oriented for meaningful development. This will ensure that any education that women acquire will enable them to participate in community development.
4. Women should encourage and support themselves to go into education and Entrepreneurial skills acquisition by discussing the need for such acts in their women groups and cooperative societies.

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