

Female Entrepreneur Leadership Style and Business Success

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of leadership styles in enhancing business success. The objective of the study was to identify leadership styles adopted by female entrepreneurs and examined the key characteristics of leadership style differences by gender. Data collected were statistically analyzed using frequency distribution, chi-square and correlative methods were used to establish basis for accepting or rejecting the stated hypotheses. The study revealed that female entrepreneurs have engaged themselves in varieties of leadership styles, amongst are transformational leadership, democratic style, autocratic leadership, etc. However, while making gender comparison, findings revealed that male performs excellently in entrepreneurial leadership compare to female who faces constraints from social structure, culture and tradition. Meanwhile, some of the challenges women faced in their entrepreneurial endeavours was attributed to poor communication skills, poor time management, lacking of basic management skills and information, and insufficient fund to influence cash flow. The study therefore, recommends that women entrepreneurs should be given full support against all issues that may be affecting their progress in entrepreneurship. Issues such as social/family structure, culture, tradition, lacking of basic management skills and information, and insufficient fund should be dealt with through the cooperation of family empathy and support, personal growth management and government support programme should be transformed in this favour.

Keywords: *Entrepreneur, Leadership, Female, Business success*

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1. Introduction

The word 'female entrepreneur' is described as the feminine populations that are into industrial and economic activities such as assembling, servicing/repairs, manufacturing, and other enterprises. Female entrepreneurs are women who initiate and operate a business establishment. Thus, we can say those female entrepreneurs are those entrepreneurs who have taken resourcefulness in promoting

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and managing an enterprise by having a controlling interest in that particular enterprise/innovativeness (Urmila, 2021).

The Female Entrepreneurship Resource Point, an innovation under the World Bank Program (2012), reacts to demands for best practices and resources include private sector development opportunities for every gender and business, discussed the requirement and challenges of women in their entrepreneurship journey. The resource was designed for two objectives, provide guidance and advice, and serve as a clearinghouse of schemes, producing data and a body of knowledge for the discourse.

The significance of the contribution of female entrepreneurs to poverty reduction and economic growth around the world is enormous. For instance, in the United States, the growth of females led organizations to double in rate more than other establishments contributing about \$3 trillion to the economy and responsible for more than twenty-three million employment opportunities. As the number of women operating their own business is increasing globally, women continue to face enormous obstacles that stunt the growth of their companies, such as lack of capital, strict social constraints, and limited time and skill (World Bank Group, 2021).

Meanwhile, in respect of women entrepreneurial consideration, the World Bank in the year 2012 initiated the clearinghouse of scheme and research to support female entrepreneurship and gathered the observations on the state of women in small businesses to include the fact that women more often than not practice as entrepreneurs in the informal sector or in traditionally female business space (Adhikari, Karki, Rawal & Agrawal, 2016).

Due to lack of required skills and funding, female entrepreneurs in Africa mostly restrict themselves to traditionally female sectors but majorly disheartening that most women lack information to run a business. In Uganda, it was revealed while young women who were under the mentorship of men who inspired them to play in the male-dominated sectors are more likely to become entrepreneurs without boundaries. In Guinea and the Republic of Congo, schemes that motivate women who moved in the line of profession believed to be exclusive for men are equipped with information and coaching, among others, are being tested to have progressively impacted women's entrepreneurship processes (The World Bank Group, 2021).

Meanwhile, for lack of alternative opportunity, in Africa, women walk the entrepreneurship part more than men, not as a result of passion or expertise. There is a scarcity of wage job opportunities in Africa because of the poor level of education of many women.

Though women are seen to be more suitable for house chores and care of children, thereby doing businesses that can be run from their homes is one of the income-generating options available to them to support their family needs. When considering that Africa is a leader in women business enterprises, it could be seen that unlocking women's potential could contribute to the Africa's prosperity and

growth. This induced the reality that empowering women entrepreneurs is smart economics (The Agence Française De Development, 2021).

Regardless of challenges, Nigerian women have created their enterprises, even in an environment where the male as head of the household takes economic decisions. The concern for women's economic participation could be seen within the general situation to alleviate the economic conditions of the low-income families, particularly those in the villages. The vulnerable position of women in Nigeria stems from the fact that they face a variety of obstacles and consistently struggle and remain dormant (Adamu, 2018).

Businesswomen who wish to succeed in business must expect to lose honor and regard as they are perceived to have abandoned their families and being too business-minded (Kitching & Woldie, 2004).

Due to poverty and poor economic conditions, women were made to work out of their status, which leads them to many economic ventures whilst they still perform their role at home. The above situation has social and economic implications. On a daily basis, women are made to work for hours taking care of their children, putting the house in order and still doing business to generate income. What women do daily is managing the homes and business at the same time. Still, it is doubly taxing for women in developing countries, especially Africa; in the absence of basic infrastructure and presence of poverty create challenges for basic tasks and consumer time. Starting a new enterprise can be tasking for female entrepreneurs for lack of expertise, the right education, and the required support that can give their business a boost. Also, women lack access to other important resources such as technology, credit facilities and land; they are mostly confined to micro-enterprises in the informal sector. These include trading and small-scale manufacturing enterprises (Lincoln, 2012).

In Nigerian society, traditional women roles are highly regarded and such qualities as supportiveness and submissiveness are to be met with approval. Career businesswomen, therefore, often face a conflict since the qualities that make them acceptable in traditional terms can undermine their self-confidence and their ability to assert themselves, assume responsibility and succeed in their businesses (Lincoln, 2012). This requires a lot of their leadership styles, skills in becoming a successful entrepreneur.

2. Methodology

2.1 Results and Discussion

Table 1. Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	-	-
Female	120	100%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 shows the sex distribution of respondents. The table indicates that 100% of the respondents are Females, as no men were sampled in the study.

Table 2. Age of Respondents

Age Brackets	Frequency	Percentage %
18 – 30 years below	12	10%
31 – 40 years	32	27%
41 – 50 years	25	21%
51 – 60 years	19	16%
61 years and above	32	26%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 shows the age range of the respondents.

According to the table, 10% of the respondents are between the ages of 18 years and 30 years, while 27% are between 31 years and 40. Those between 41 years and 50 years consist of 21%; 16% of the respondents range from ages of 51 years and 60, while the remaining 26% respondents are 61 years and above.

Table 3. Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	25	21%
Married	87	72%
Others	8	7%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 shows the marital status of the respondents. The table indicates that 21% of the respondents are single; 72% are married; the remaining 7% preferred not to choose between either single or married. This shows that the majority of the respondents are responsible human beings.

Table 4. Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage %
FSLC	40	33%
S.S.C.E	41	34%
Diploma/NCE	12	10%
First Degree	17	14%
Higher Degree	10	9%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4 reveals the educational qualifications of respondents. It is obvious that 33% of the respondents are holders of primary school certificate; the first school leaving certificate (FSLC), 34% are Senior Secondary School Certificate

holders, 10% are holders of Diploma or National Certificate of Education while 14% have either the Higher National Diploma (HND) or First Degree (B.Sc.). The remaining 9% are holders of Higher Degrees.

Table 5. Respondents' Number of Years in Business

Experience	Frequency	Percentage %
Less than 2 years	8	6%
2 years to 5 years	39	33%
6 years and above	73	61%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 indicates that 6% of the respondents have been in business between 1 and 2 years, while 33% have been in business between 2 and 5 years. The remaining 61% of respondents have been in business for six years and above. The above suggests that most of the respondents are well knowledgeable and experienced in their respective business.

Test of Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, the calculated chi-square value denoted by X^2 is compared with the critical values. The formula for chi-square (X^2) is expressed below:

$$X^2 = \text{chi-square} = \frac{(O^1 - E^1)^2}{E}$$

Where

O^1 = Observed Frequency

E^1 = Expected Frequency

DF = Degree of Freedom

C = Column of Data

R = Row of Data

N = Size of Data

DF = $(R - 1)(C - 1)$

= $(2 - 1)(5 - 1)$

= $(1) \times (4)$

= 4

The critical value = $\frac{(120 - 30)^2 - 0.05}{30}$

$$= \frac{(90)^2 - 0.05}{30}$$

$$= \frac{30 = (3)^2 - 0.05}{30}$$

$$= 9 - 0.05 = 8.95$$

Therefore, at 0.05 level of significance and 4 degrees of freedom, our critical value is $x^2 = 8.95$

Decision Rule: We shall reject the null hypothesis if the table value is greater than the critical value.

Hypothesis One Testing:

H₀: Leadership style has no significant effect on the performance of the female entrepreneur

Table 6. Chi-Square Table

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{O-E)^2}{E}$
40	45	5	25	0.555
48	45	3	9	0.2
25	30	5	25	0.833
25	30	5	25	0.833
62	55	7	49	0.890
55	45	10	100	2.222
30	35	5	25	0.714
35	35	0	0	0
35	40	5	25	0.625
29	35	6	36	1.028
5	10	5	25	2.5
22	19	3	9	0.473
12	15	3	9	0.6
12	15	3	9	0.6
12	15	3	9	0.6
10	8	2	4	0.5
15	8	7	49	6.125
18	15	3	9	0.6
18	15	3	9	0.6
2	5	3	9	1.8
10	5	5	25	5
5	5	0	0	0
30	25	5	25	1
30	25	5	25	1
15	20	5	25	1.25
TOTAL				30.548

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Decision: The critical value is lesser than the table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis one is rejected.

Hypothesis Two Testing

H₀: Leadership style has no significant difference by gender (Men and Women), especially in entrepreneurship performance

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Gender and Entrepreneurship Performance

	Gender	Entrepreneurship Performance
Pearson Correlation	1	.962**
Gender Difference. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	120	120
Pearson Correlation	.962**	1
Entrepreneurship Performance of Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Gender Difference N	100	120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The level of significance is 5%, while the P-value was the deciding factor. If the p-value is greater than 5% level of significance, Ho is accepted, and Hi rejected. However, if the p-value is less than a 5% level of significance, Ho is rejected, and Hi is accepted. From the test above, the value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05; hence Ho is rejected. This shows leadership style has significant differences by gender (Men and Women), especially in entrepreneurship performance.

Hypothesis Three Testing:

Ho: Female entrepreneur has no significant challenge facing her leadership styles toward business success

Table 8. Chi-Square Table

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
40	50	10	100	2
12	15	3	9	0.6
25	30	5	25	0.833
62	48	14	196	4.083
62	55	7	49	0.890
55	50	5	25	0.5
8	10	2	4	0.4
35	40	5	25	0.625
29	35	6	36	1.028
27	30	3	9	0.3
5	10	5	25	2.5

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
15	10	5	25	2.5
30	25	5	25	1
12	15	3	9	0.6
24	25	1	1	0.04
10	15	5	25	1.666
50	45	5	25	0.555
18	15	3	9	0.6
2	10	8	64	6.4
7	5	2	4	0.8
10	10	0	0	0
35	30	5	25	0.833
12	10	2	4	0.4
15	10	5	25	2.5
-	2	2	4	2
TOTAL				33.653

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Decision: The critical value is lesser than the table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis three is rejected.

Hypothesis Four Testing:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between female entrepreneur and leadership style in enhancing business success

Table 9. Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Female Leadership Style and Business Success

	Female Entrepreneurs	Business Success
Pearson Correlation	1	.962**
Female Entrepreneur. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	120	120
Pearson Correlation	.962**	1
Leadership Style of Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
Business Success	N 100	120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The level of significance is 5%, while the P-value was the deciding factor. If the p-value is greater than 5% level of significance, H_0 is accepted, and H_1 is rejected. However, if the p-value is less than a 5% level of significance, H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted. From the test above, the value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05; hence H_0 is rejected. This shows there is a significant relationship between female entrepreneurs and leadership style in enhancing business success.

3. Discussion of the findings

Hypothesis One: Findings from the survey revealed majority of the respondents engage themselves in employing transformational leadership style constantly to improve their business. Though, the female entrepreneurs affirmed that they enjoy using a democratic leadership style because it enables teamwork and favourable decision making. At the same, findings revealed that women entrepreneurs are encouraged to adopt an autocratic style because it enables them to make quick decisions to accomplish business goals. It also gives their team members the freedom to enable them to manage their time well for business achievements. However, the highest number of respondents affirmed that they make use of strict procedures for their business problem solving and future accomplishments. This is the autocratic type of leadership style; it is suitable for small and medium scale enterprises, as Bennett (2021) elucidates autocratic leadership as a management style wherein one person controls all the decisions and takes very little inputs from other groups members. This is based on their own principles, while they do not engage others for their submissions or advice. Therefore, while considering the above respondents' effects, findings deduced that the leadership style has a significant effect on the performance of the female entrepreneur.

Hypothesis Two: The majority of the respondents attest to the reality that 'male performs excellently in entrepreneurial leadership compare to female,' as some of the reasons for this assertion involves culture and tradition constraints, which gives men more advantages over women in entrepreneurial leadership. To some extent, findings discovered that women's failure to business success is due to poor communication skills, though it was justly believed that women entrepreneurs learn more in failures while they repeatedly committed to growth. Women entrepreneurs, while comparing to men, an average number of respondents attest that women are superlative leaders in entrepreneurship management. This may be difficult to believe, as examples induced men more performed excellently than women. Therefore, the findings deduced that leadership style has significant differences by gender (Men and Women) in entrepreneurship performance.

Hypothesis Three: The majority of the female entrepreneurs affirmed that they faced poor time management, lacking management skills and information for business growth and development. At the same time, the higher number of respondents inferred that insufficient fund to influence cash flow in their trades, biased social structures; cultural tradition and family-related issues possess the

major challenges to contribute to poor business management among female entrepreneurs. As social and cultural traditions plays a crucial role in determining who becomes an entrepreneur, cultural and social conditions inhibit women from creating their own businesses; women are highly regarded as subordinate to men regardless of educational status or age. Based on this, all the five questions that were used to test the third null hypothesis were rejected: base on the fact that the table value was greater than the critical value at a significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the conclusion is that female entrepreneur has no significant challenge facing her leadership styles toward business success.

Hypothesis Four: Findings revealed a reasonable number of female entrepreneurs affirmed that they make use of transformational leadership style more regularly to achieve success in their businesses, consider it flexible in nature. Findings discovered a higher number of respondents affirmed that they make use of the democratic style for enabling teamwork and favourable business endeavor. At the same time, it was affirmed that female entrepreneurs employed the use of the autocratic style of leadership as it enabled them to perform admirably in their business endeavors. The reality learned among the female entrepreneurs is that to solve the majority of their problems, they employ the use of servant leadership style, as this empowers them to achieve their business goals. Additionally, findings showed that women entrepreneur focus more on idea of transactional leadership style for effective time management and completion of their tasks plan. This finding is opposed to the empirical review, which suggests that few women practice transactional leadership, as this study reveals to a reasonable extent. Women entrepreneurs make use of transactional leadership style to enhance the exchange of discussion with their employees. Based on this, female entrepreneurs stated that they liked to supervise their employees and clarify tasks to be performed (Lincoln, 2012), supporting the notion that while female entrepreneurs often exhibit transformational leadership qualities, they can be transactional leaders when necessary to attain set objectives. However, while testing the fourth hypothesis, all responses in favour of the null were rejected base on the fact that the table value is greater than the critical value. Thus, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between female entrepreneurs and leadership style in enhancing business success.

Additionally, on the assessment of the business success among the female entrepreneurs in Lagos Island markets, findings revealed a reasonable number of the respondents affirmed that they manage their business well to make profits. In the same vein, it was discovered that they manage employees well to attain business success, as an employee is one of the predominant factors for business success. Furthermore, more than an average number of respondents approved that they put in some marketing strategy to improve their business sustainability. These strategies include business-to-business, and business consumers approach, amongst are content marketing, social media, referral programs, industry event, conversational marketing, paid media, direct selling, internet marketing, point of sales marketing, paid marketing advertising and storytelling marketing. Woschnick

(2020) recommends these strategies as part of the most effective strategies for business success. Meanwhile, each and every one of these strategies requires an effective marketing plan that an entrepreneur must be ready to ramp up his/her marketing efforts. Also, it was learnt that to achieve business success is not only determined by effective marketing strategies and it also includes effective management pricing strategies to improve cash flow in the business, and this is important so far, the business has been able to solve a consumer problem, income should be generated effectively.

4. Conclusion

From the findings, it was established that business success could be achieved through effective leadership style management. Female entrepreneurs are delightful business leaders despite the challenges confronting their sustenance in Africa societies. They strive with every opportunity they could make use of as a tool for running a successful enterprise. Recognition of the corporations of women entrepreneurs in Nigerian's both small and large markets, cannot be over sighted or denied while considering their contribution in handling not only expensive goods, also includes petty, which are necessary for human existence in everyday consumption.

It is important to reflect on the challenges female entrepreneurs face, including social discrimination against women, lack of adequate training, skills, insufficient working capital and poor family support, including spousal support. Therefore, this challenge called for constructing a model that transcends the western leadership models and depicts Africa's contextual and culturally situated leadership. As a result, this study proposed a working definition of leadership in the entrepreneurship context that certifies business success processes in Nigeria.

5. Recommendations

The following are therefore recommended based on the findings of the study:

- i. Women entrepreneurs are to be given full support against all issues that may be affecting their progress in entrepreneurship. Issues include social structure, culture and tradition, lacking basic management skills and information, and insufficient funds, as they created employment for themselves but also other people and the benefit of their families.
- ii. Entrepreneurs, especially females, are advised to put more effort and improve on their functional approach to efficiently and effectively use leadership styles to ascertain progress in their general endeavors and profitability performance.
- iii. For business organizations, particularly small-scale businesses, to have high productivity, there is a need to critically look for a good leader who passes the democratic leadership style for good teamwork and positive business outcomes.

iv. For a business organization to succeed its targets, they need not put anybody in the position of leadership; they need to be selective and scrutinizing, because leaders need to possess some qualities that will enable them to lead, guide and control the sub-ordinate, for this reason, they need to be observant in choosing someone as a leader.

v. For the attainment of business success, a good leader has to be chosen, a leader carrying the subordinate along in the decision-making process, to enable the subordinate to achieve the organizational goals.

vi. Female entrepreneurs are advised not to be afraid to fail as they will surely get up on their feet. As far as they are continuously learning from their failures, they become experts and minimize their negativities. They should be confident, seek support as not to do things alone, and pursue a big plan,

vii. This study recommends that businesses should have effective and working leadership styles. This will help identify problems likely to bring a significant increase in the business performance by properly dealing with potential working procedures and respond effectively to challenges whenever they emerge, thus ensuring effective performance of small-scale business.

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