

DOI: 10.28934/jwee22.34.pp126-148

ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Women in Nigeria: Examining the Motivations for Engaging in Social Entrepreneurship



Grace Chinonye Ihejiamaizu¹
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, Canada
Juliet John Inyang²
University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

This paper explored the motivation for women's engagement in social entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria. The paper examines the extent to which three factors: gender, penchant for solving social problems, and economic/financial reasons influence the desire of women to engage in social entrepreneurship. The study found that women social entrepreneurs are motivated by the desire to solve a social problem in their community. A qualitative approach was employed to obtain secondary data from 6 successful women social entrepreneurs profiled in the Ashoka.com repository. Data were analyzed using content analysis. The findings drawn from the analysis were discussed within the purview of African feminist theory and the empirical works of other social researchers. The result showed that women social entrepreneurs are majorly motivated by the desire to solve a social problem (rather than make a profit), which either stems from personal experience or those around them. This study recommends that understanding the intrinsic motivation behind their actions can help social activists and feminist organizations support social entrepreneurs in their work. The paper further informs interventions that foster the design of social policies and programmes for successful women's social entrepreneurship practice in Africa.

¹ Corresponding author, e-mail: ihej4140@mylaurier.ca

² E-mail: julijohn@unical.edu.ng

KEYWORDS: *social entrepreneurship, African feminism, gender, women, motivation, Nigeria*

Introduction

In traditional African societies of the past, women were mostly subjugated to the roles of child-bearing, home-keeping, and supporting their husbands, who were often regarded as family heads, to tend to their farms without the freedom to engage in a public activity (Kang'ethe & Nomngcoyiya, 2016). In most Muslim-majority countries in North Africa and some parts of West Africa, it was forbidden for women to be seen talking in public spaces, much less engage in any form of social, political, economic or entrepreneurial activity. This decades-long practice of subjugating women has contributed substantially to the growth and proliferation of patriarchal philosophies and cultures in most African countries today (Çınar, 2008). However, the growth of civilization, women's literacy, innovation and economic integration have revealed the need for women to play active roles in the economic development of their countries (Ravić & Nikitović, 2016; Usman et al., 2015). Consequently, through initiatives such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), and a host of other similar initiatives, government and non-government organizations are now providing social, economic, technical and institutional support to African women with the aim of unleashing their entrepreneurial potential (Okonofua & Omonkhua, 2021). These initiatives are motivated by the notion that women's participation in economic enterprises such as social entrepreneurship will inevitably improve living standards for women as well as generate economic growth and development on the African continent.

Social entrepreneurship is the intentional process whereby individuals or groups create, finance, and execute projects, products and deliver services intended to solve environmental, cultural, and/or social problems confronting society (Hayes, James & Ariel, 2021). It is the pursuit of innovative economic activities targeted at resolving social issues or problems. Social entrepreneurs are individuals or groups with the willingness and perseverance to bear risks in order to establish and manage ventures that improve the social welfare of their communities. Profit

maximization is not the primary objective of social entrepreneurship; instead, social entrepreneurs primarily try to create and execute broad-based development in society through social enterprises and initiatives (Gupta et al., 2020). The practice of social entrepreneurship among women in developed Western countries like the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom is encouraged by the social systems in these countries, which empower and support women's rights to education, and economic independence compared to most developing African countries like Nigeria, with social and political systems that smother the rights and potential of women (Okolo-Obasi, Uduji & Asongu, 2020). Rosca, Agarwal and Brem (2020) argued that the participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria, as in most developing countries, is impeded by social and institutional discrimination, lack of funding, lack of access to quality education, especially related to business and finance, family crises, gender-based biases/discrimination, and patriarchy, which unjustly subjugates women and constrict their rights/privileges. As a consequence, the majority of large-scale business enterprises in Nigeria are owned and controlled by men, while women control just 41 percent of micro-businesses, mostly in the form of kiosks, sole proprietorships, and cooperative-based businesses (Alade, 2020).

The focus of this study is, therefore, specifically on Nigerian women social entrepreneurs because through support from African, regional and international government and non-governmental organizations, a new generation of Nigerian women and young girls are harnessing their potential to create and implement products and services intended to provide solutions to problems and issues facing the Nigerian society. This includes enterprises like WeCyclers, a woman-owned social enterprise focused on providing innovative solutions to waste management through recycling in low-income Nigerian communities. Another is Flying Doctors Nigeria, a Nigerian-based, woman-owned enterprise focused on expanding access to trauma-related medical services for remote West African communities. BellaNaija.com is yet another woman-owned online platform that creates and disseminates social, economic, entertainment, and educational content to enlighten the Nigerian audience and improve social literacy among the youth. Similarly, another woman-owned social enterprise is Future Software Resources Limited, an IT solutions provider which offers internet-based solutions to promote e-learning and IT security in Nigeria. Somewhere in Southern Nigeria, another inspiring example is the iKapture Centre for Development, a nonprofit organization working to educate, engage and empower low-

skilled and vulnerable out-of-school youth. Across the country, younger Nigerian women are gradually fighting against deep-seated cultural, political and institutional barriers by engaging in social enterprises to generate solutions to social, environmental and economic problems in Nigerian society (Akinbami & Aransiola, 2016; Sajuyigbe & Fadeyibi, 2017). It is, therefore, imperative to determine the factors driving the growth and proliferation of women-championed social enterprises in Nigeria to amplify them in order to encourage more Nigerian women to venture into social entrepreneurship to improve the social and economic well-being of Nigerian society. Additionally, given that much research attention has not been given to this subject in the Nigerian context compared to other countries, it is imperative for studies of this nature.

This study was therefore carried out to examine the motivations for women engaging in social entrepreneurship in Nigeria with a particular emphasis on gender, penchant for solving social problems and economic/financial reasons. The structure of the paper comprises five sections, namely: introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and discussions, and conclusion. The conclusion section comprises three subunits namely: limitations, theoretical contributions and implications, and directions for future research.

Literature Review

This study was informed by the African Feminist Theory, which provides a framework for understanding the economic and structural challenges experienced by women social entrepreneurs. By using the theoretical lens of African feminism, the paper explores the extent to which gender, penchant for solving social problems, and economic/financial reasons influence the desire of women to engage in social entrepreneurship in a largely patriarchal society like Africa. Existing studies adopting critical feminist perspectives have shown that across the globe, there are embedded biases and institutional constraints which could separate women from men into what is considered appropriate “entrepreneurial” for their sex category (Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2016). This implies that while it is applauded that women can get self-employed in ventures that create social good, there is the risk of creating biases that unintentionally limit the potential of women toward less lucrative/tasking self-employment. This phenomenon raised some key questions for this paper: Do women only perform better

when it comes to designing enterprises for the social good? Or do the narratives show that they could lead in other forms of entrepreneurship but are not because of existing constraints? The African Feminist Theory provides a framework for addressing the tribulations of women on the African continent emanating from traditional and cultural barriers such as patriarchy with a view to eliminating them. Ultimately, the theory is geared towards promoting fairness and equal opportunities for African women in a variety of circumstances. As such, the African Feminist theory is built from a wide base of membership that includes: urban women, rural women, scholars, activists, politicians, and community workers (Akin-Aina, 2011). The theory also addresses African women-related issues such as economic independence, cultural influences, political representation, gender/sexual identity, and social class. As such, the theory provides a strong basis for understanding the social, economic and structural factors influencing Nigerian women to engage in social entrepreneurship.

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship involves the identification of opportunities for the development of products and services which provide solutions to consumers' needs. However, unlike basic entrepreneurship, the primary aim of social entrepreneurs is not profit maximization but creating and executing broad-based development in society through social enterprises and initiatives. By this, social entrepreneurship is conceptualized as the intentional process whereby individuals or groups create, finance and execute projects, products and deliver services intended to solve environmental, cultural and/or social problems confronting society (Hayes, James & Ariel, 2021). It is the pursuit of innovative economic activities targeted at resolving issues or problems militating against the community. Social entrepreneurs are individuals or groups with the willingness and perseverance to bear risks in order to establish and manage ventures that improve the social welfare of their communities. (Gupta, Chauhan, Paul & Jaiswal, 2020). It involves carrying out continuous research to identify various problems affecting society and mobilizing resources to create a social enterprise to actualize the desired social change in people or societies (Gali, Niemand, Shaw, Hughes, Kraus & Brem, 2020). Such change may be the eradication of social menaces or threats, as well as the mitigation of adverse societal influences or factors causing harmful effects on society.

Even though profit-making is not the primary concern of social entrepreneurs, finance is an important requirement for the success of social entrepreneurship, which is why they have generated effective models of financing their enterprises, such as reserved profit, corporate donations and philanthropy (Canestrino et al., 2020).

Problems facing Women Social Entrepreneurs in Nigeria

As is the case in other developing African countries, women social entrepreneurs in Nigeria are confronted with a number of serious challenges which undermine their entrepreneurial drive and performance. One of the most pressing challenges is the lack of start-up and expansionary capital (Idris & Agbim, 2015). Given that Nigeria is a patriarchal country, most Nigerian women are full-time housewives depending largely on their husbands for daily provisions to run the family. This entails that they often look up to their husbands as a source of finance, and if their husbands are unable or unwilling to provide finance, Nigerian women are deprived of realizing their entrepreneurial dreams. In such cases, soft loans from family members and relatives become the alternative, even when such loans are rarely available to effectively finance a start-up enterprise. Another important challenge facing potential women entrepreneurs is institutional or societal gender-based discrimination, which denies Nigerian women who are willing and able to work the prospects of well-paying jobs simply because they are women (Aladejebi, 2020; Omotayo, Sajuyigbe & Oluwayemi, 2017). The inability of Nigerian women to get jobs further undermines their ability to amass and raise meaningful wealth from which they can finance their intended start-up enterprises. Female job seekers seeking employment opportunities to raise start-up capital are often discriminated against or subjected to sexual assault by potential employers (Omotayo, Sajuyigbe & Oluwayemi, 2017), thereby diminishing women's entrepreneurial morale. The entrepreneurial ambition of Nigerian women could also be impeded by a lack of education and entrepreneurial skills due to inadequate access to education for women in most Nigerian communities, especially rural settlements (Halkias et al., 2011). Without quality education and innovative entrepreneurial skills, the growth and success of women-owned enterprises will inevitably be adversely impacted. Domestic violence and disagreements with women's spouses could also pose a threat to Nigerian women's entrepreneurial ambition (Idris & Agbim, 2015). Being a

patriarchal society, some traditional Nigerian husbands oppose the idea of letting their wives seek employment or venture into entrepreneurship for fear of infidelity or ineffective home management, including raising the children. In such a society, women need to constantly battle with and surmount their spouses' opposition to their entrepreneurial ambition in order to win the freedom to start enterprises. However, not every woman will be able to emerge triumphant in such battles in a patriarchal society like Nigeria. Other key inhibitors of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria are culture and family-related issues such as a spouse, children, extended families, and insufficient support structures for women. Despite these challenges, there are many female social entrepreneurs on the rise, hence the need to examine the factors that lead them to social entrepreneurship in the Nigerian context.

Factors leading Women into Entrepreneurship

Over the years, there have been scholarly attempts to identify the factors leading women to venture into entrepreneurship to promote the practice of women entrepreneurship around the world, including in Africa. In their studies, Holienka, Jančovičová and Kovačičová (2016); Maden (2015); Zhu, Kara and Zhu (2019); Fatoki (2014); Ingalagi et al. (2021) revealed that personal (self-achievement, family, marital crises, working for the good of society, personal satisfaction, avoidance of work-family conflict, and gaining public recognition), economic/financial (household income, financial independence, and self-employment), sociocultural and psychological factors (self-confidence, and fear of failure) are the key factors driving the rise of female entrepreneurs in countries like India, South Africa, China, Vietnam, Turkey, Czech Republic and Poland. In the Nigerian context, existing literature shows that the factors driving women into entrepreneurship include the need for survival, family traits, education/skills, independence, and the need for achievement (Abass, 2019). There is, however, a paucity of empirical evidence to specifically determine the factors driving Nigerian women to venture into social entrepreneurship, as the scope of most existing studies failed to address social entrepreneurship among Nigerian women. Therefore, this study shall use a qualitative research approach to explore the motivations for women engaging in social entrepreneurship in Nigeria with a particular emphasis on gender, penchant for solving social problems, and economic/financial reasons.

Methodology

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy in which the researcher's role was only limited to data collection and objective interpretation without subjective manipulations of data or respondents (Wilson, 2010). A qualitative research methodology was applied, given that the data obtained for analysis were not numerical. In terms of epistemology, positivist qualitative research focuses on uncovering regularities and causal links between distinct parts of reality using non-statistical methods and then synthesizing those patterns into generalized findings (Su, 2018). As such, an exploratory research approach was followed to gain deep insights into the motivations for women engaging in social entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

Secondary data were obtained from the Ashoka.com repository (<https://www.ashoka.org/en/country/western-africa>). Ashoka is a reputable global social entrepreneurship organization providing seed funding and other resources to social entrepreneurs. In addition to this, they profile successful social entrepreneurs globally. Secondary data were preferred for the study because the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic stood as an obstacle to the researcher's efforts to visit Nigeria and obtain primary data from respondents. Since the profiles are in the public domain, there was no need to anonymize the data. Nevertheless, they are obtained within the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

A total of 6 research subjects were randomly selected for the study. The sample was drawn from the list of published profiles based on the year of fellowship, country and sector of operation. As seen from Table 1, the selected profiles were based on the following inclusion criteria: i) women social entrepreneurs, ii) Resident in Nigeria, iii) Ashoka fellow within the last ten years, and iv) own a global social entrepreneurship brand. Based on the research question: what are the motivations for women getting into social entrepreneurship?, the text found in "The Person" section of the fellows' page is analyzed to determine the motivations. This section contains the drive or the personal history of the women social entrepreneurs that influenced their choice of a social venture. The text data were analyzed using content analysis, which involved defining units and categories of analysis, coding the text, and reporting the findings (Lacy et al., 2015).

Analysis and Discussions

This study aimed to examine the motivations for women engaging in social entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The texts were analyzed to pick codes to be categorized under three themes: gender motives, social problems motives, and economic/financial motives. The themes from the data analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Profiles of Social Entrepreneurs in Nigeria

Name	Organization	Sector	Location	Year	Link to story
Nneka Mobisson	Mdoc	Health	Lagos	2018	https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/nneka-mobisson
Rita Melifonwu	Stroke Action Nigeria	Health	Abuja	2017	https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/rita-melifonwu
Salamatu Garba	Women Farmers Advancement Network	Development & Prosperity, Economic Development, Environment & Sustainability	Abuja	2017	https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/salamatu-garba
Detoun Ogwo	After School Graduate Development Centre	Education and Employability	Lagos	2014	https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/detoun-ogwo
Oreoluwa Somolu	Women's Technology Empowerment Centre	Technology	Lagos	2013	https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/oreoluwa-somolu
Njideka Harry	Youth for Technology Foundation	STEM	Owerri	2011	https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/njideka-harry

Source: Ashoka.com

Table 2. Identification of Themes and Codes

Research Question: *What drives women's engagement in social entrepreneurship?*

Theme: Motivation Sub-themes	References to Content
Gender Motives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic gender-based violence • Gender inequalities in STEM 	<p><i>“Salamatu stumbled on a Northern woman who was heavily pregnant, uneducated and suffered severely as a result of the belief system and the fact that she was poor and lacked the means to better her livelihood, even though at that time she offered the little support she could, after two months that woman died” – Salamatu, (Para. 3; L1-3)</i></p>
	<p><i>“Oreoluwa realized the vast gender inequities that persisted in STEM fields across the world and began to think about the barriers that prevented women from participating in the tech field in her own country, Nigeria.” – Oreoluwa (Para. 3; L3-5)</i></p>
	<p><i>“Oreoluwa returned home to work. She began a side project that was dedicated to helping young women to build community through online expression and blogging.” – Oreoluwa (Para. 4; L1-2)</i></p>
Social Motives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersectionality • Policy gap • Skills Gap 	<p><i>“While working at a hospital in a predominantly white community, staff would often direct black patients to her ward. She first felt she was being marginalized; but, then she saw it as an opportunity when she started recognizing a pattern that black and minority ethnic people had more risk factors for stroke than their white counterparts” – Rita (Para. 2; L3-6)</i></p>
	<p><i>“Winning the award allowed her to conduct research and led to her starting Stroke Action UK, through which she started mobilizing volunteers to help stroke survivors and their families. Ultimately, the work of Stroke Action</i></p>

Theme: Motivation Sub-themes	References to Content
	<p><i>UK led to a national stroke strategy for the UK and became the prototype for Stroke Action Nigeria.” – Rita (Para 3; L9-12)</i></p>
<p>Economic Motives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women livelihoods 	<p><i>“Detoun discovered that thousands of young people applied and showed up for interviews, but out of the thousands of applications, only a few of them were employable; the young people did not have employable skills.” – Detoun (Para 2; L2-4)</i></p> <p><i>“Detoun realized this was a huge problem and she decided to intervene. She started by training 15 young people to go through the employment process in her company. She eventually resigned and decided to get young people the needed employability skills they require to get jobs.” – Detoun (Para. 2; L4-6)</i></p> <p><i>“While her peers started clicking away on their computers, Njideka grabbed her pen. “I’m so behind and I haven’t even started yet,” Njideka recalls thinking. She immediately started teaching herself how to use a computer, and then at the library, realizing the pivotal role technology plays in education.” – Njideka (Para. 2; L4-6)</i></p> <p><i>“A few years later, Njideka resigned from her comfortable position at Microsoft to pursue her calling to partner with developing nations to meet their challenges in facing a continuously widening digital divide.” – Njideka (Para. 3; L5-6)</i></p> <p><i>“This experience prompted her to take a turn around, and she decided to use the most available tool which women had to give them a voice in Northern Nigeria” – Salamatu, (Para. 3; L3-4)</i></p>

Theme: Motivation	References to Content
Sub-themes	
Health Motives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Trauma 	<p><i>“This was especially because her father, who was 53 at the time, had died of complications from a massive stroke that he suffered simply because he didn't have access to knowledgeable providers to help him manage his uncontrolled high blood pressure” – Nneka (Para. 2; L 2-3)</i></p> <p><i>“In 2012, Rita’s aunt in Nigeria suffered a stroke. She became interested in the services available to stroke patients in Nigeria and realized that Nigeria had no agenda for stroke patients. This prompted her to relocate to Nigeria and start Stroke Action Nigeria.” – Rita (Para. 4; L1-2)</i></p>

Source: Field Work

As presented in Table 2, the data analysis saw the emergence of 4 sub-themes that can be used to explain the motivations for women’s engagement in social entrepreneurship in Nigeria. These sub-themes are broadly categorized as Gender, Social, Economic, and Health Motives.

Gender Motives

From the stories of Oreoluwa and Salamatu, the Gender motives were evoked by the structural and institutionalized gender-based discrimination and violence that women and girls face. It is further categorized as Socioeconomic- gender-based violence and gender inequalities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Several cultural practices in patriarchal societies have kept women in poverty due to their lack of education and/or employment, thereby forcing them into economic dependency on their spouses and family (Halkias et al., 2011). In circumstances where there is partner abuse in such marriages, the woman becomes trapped because her total survival is dependent on the husband. The need to break out from this entrapment has motivated some females to engage in entrepreneurship (Idris & Agbim, 2015). The inequalities of access to STEM learning opportunities have resulted in girls not having the right opportunities to advance their careers beyond notoriously “genderized”

career roles for women like nursing, social workers, cleaners, and babysitters.

Social Motives

Intersectionality, Policy gaps, and Skills gaps have also inspired Ashoka fellows such as Rita, Detoun and Njideka to act on social issues driving system change. The intersectionality that exists based on demographics, health risks, and health-seeking behavior of certain members of the population increase the severity and impact of high-risk diseases such as diabetes, stroke, and hypertension, especially where there is an absence of specific policies to curb this. These issues are largely linked to the social and structural challenges highlighted by the African Feminist Theory. Two categories of skills gaps were observed by the Ashoka Fellows including Lack of employability skills and Lack of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Skills. Both skill sets are highly relevant for accessing employment opportunities in the 21st century; employability skills are broadly categorized as core, and technical skills provide access to employment opportunities; expertise in technical skills such as ICT skills empowers the employee to perform on the job and attain growth in their career pathways be it in ICT or non-ICT related fields. As advocated by the AFT, such skills will promote fairness and equal opportunities for African women in a variety of circumstances and regions. This is reinforced in the study by Bouzari et al. (2021), which revealed that online social networks (Facebook and Instagram) significantly facilitate women's participation in entrepreneurship.

Economic Motives

As Salamatu's story projects, women's livelihood is a key economic motive for engaging in social entrepreneurship. A critical discovery of why women stay in abusive marriages and families is due to their lack of economic power. This led the Ashoka fellows to transform economic conversations in households – from the status quo where women were seen as “helpmates” to their spouses to income earners as co-directors of the family's small business. This finding aligns with the argument by Aladejebi (2020) and Omotayo et al. (2017) that institutional and societal gender-based discrimination denies Nigerian women who are willing and able to work well-paying jobs like their male counterparts. Economic motive as a

driver of women entrepreneurship is also reinforced in the study by Radović-Marković and Achakpa (2018), who found that most female entrepreneurs in developing economies are motivated to start their businesses out of necessity, which reflects a lack of employment alternatives or dissatisfaction with existing employment.

Health Motives

Although not originally part of the initial themes, health motive was also traced in the analysis of the women entrepreneurs' profiles. The experience of family trauma was a major determining factor for the Ashoka fellows to act in the health sector. Both fellows (Rita & Nneka) decided to focus on areas of health care that were not being prioritized by the Nigerian government. This is even more critical in a country where the National Health Insurance Scheme covers only 12% of the population, and 95% of health expenditure is made via out-of-pocket payments (Onwujekwe et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The outcome of the analysis has shown that social motives are the most dominant among women social entrepreneurs. This does not erode the fact that other motives such as economic, gender, and, lately, health are drivers of women's social entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It can be concluded that the 21st-century woman entrepreneur is not so much driven by the marginalization of the feminine gender. This is true because this century has seen the highest number of women empowerment programs and policies by individuals and private and public institutions (Okonofua & Omonkhua, 2021). Instead, the results reveal that women social entrepreneurs in Nigeria are driven by the need to solve social problems they have identified in their communities. These problems emerge from existing gaps such as policy gaps, skills gaps, and technological gaps. The health motives could be subsumed under the social gap as there is intersectionality between both motives. The findings of this study deviate from those of Holienka et al. (2016); Zhu, Kara and Zhu (2019); and Fatoki (2014), which revealed that women are motivated into entrepreneurship by the following factors: self-confidence, household income, fear of failure, age category, personal satisfaction, financial independence, avoidance of work-family conflict, and gaining public recognition. However, Maden's (2015) findings corroborate

the findings of this study by revealing that women are motivated to entrepreneurship by the desire to work for the good of society. This entails that women become social entrepreneurs by their desire to mitigate social problems in their communities and maximize the good of society.

The findings, therefore, call for actions and interventions in the areas of addressing these gaps. Feminists and social activists should carry out collaborative advocacies toward creating a socially conducive environment for women. Although social problems may persist, creating an eco-system that encourages such collaboration will go a long way to addressing these social issues and making the works of women entrepreneurs more effectively and efficiently felt even at the grassroots. By addressing social problems, women entrepreneurs will improve their economic value, health/well-being and self-esteem as women. Hence, the need to bridge the gap and encourage cordial relationships between social activists and feminist groups in Nigeria.

Limitations

Although this paper has provided a basis for understanding women's social entrepreneurship from a social and feminist perspective, it is not without limitations. The use of reported (secondary) data is not ideal for generalization, as the data was not obtained firsthand from the women social entrepreneurs. This limitation is further compounded by the small sample analyzed. Future studies should validate the findings of this work by examining primary data obtained firsthand and analyzed using big data techniques.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the theory and extant body of literature on African women's entrepreneurship by providing evidence that underscores that what really drives African women into the terrain of social entrepreneurship is the penchant for solving social problems. It clearly emphasizes that gender and economic/financial reasons are insufficient to motivate the entrepreneurial ambition of African women because they are more concerned with finding meaningful solutions to social challenges than with financial benefits. This evidence could be used to broaden the premise of the African Feminist theory because it demonstrates that in addition to

economic and structural challenges, social challenges also serve to drive women's entrepreneurship in Africa. With such a theoretical modification, researchers and policy-makers can begin to prioritize efforts and programmes geared towards empowering African women to provide solutions to the myriad of social challenges confronting African societies through social entrepreneurship.

Implications And Directions For Future Research

The findings of this study have uncovered a useful insight necessary to understand the key driver of engagement in social entrepreneurship by African women. The desire of African women to restore social tranquility to their communities is the primary factor driving them into social entrepreneurship. This means that without a significant number of African women who can identify the social problems they face in their communities, women would be less likely to embrace social entrepreneurship. Therefore, this calls for collaborative advocacies and women's empowerment to enable them to recognize their community's social problems and venture into social entrepreneurship to mitigate them. Hence, it is critical for future researchers to identify exactly which collaborative advocacies and empowerment programmes are best suited to reinforcing the social entrepreneurship capabilities of African women. Also, future researchers could explore how other factors (education level, peer influence, and civilization) could impact African women's participation in social entrepreneurship. This will provide a more comprehensive set of potential factors with the capacity to drive the participation of African women in social entrepreneurship programmes, thereby enhancing extant literature.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ashoka.com for making data available for this paper. I extend my appreciation to Dr. Magnus Mfoafo-M'Carthy for the technical guidance provided through the class on Writing for Publication. Sincere gratitude also goes to the reviewers for providing early feedback.

This paper does not have any competing interests to declare.

References

- [1] **Abass, Salimat M.** 2019. "Women entrepreneurship determinants in Nigeria." *Journal of Business and Economics* 10, no. 4: 356-367.
- [2] **Akinbami, C. A., and Aransiola, J. O.** 2016. "Qualitative exploration of cultural practices inhibiting rural women entrepreneurship development in selected communities in Nigeria". *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 28, no. 2: 151-167.
- [3] **Alade, Benjamin.** 2020. "41% of Nigeria's micro-businesses owned by women." *Guardian Nigeria*, April 2. <https://guardian.ng/business-services/41-of-nigerias-micro-businesses-owned-by-women/>.
- [4] **Aladejebi, Olufemi.** 2020. "21st century challenges confronting women entrepreneurs in Southwest Nigeria." *Archives of Business Research* 8, no. 3: 261-280.
- [5] **Bouzari, P., Salamzadeh, A., Soleimani, M., and Ebrahimi, P.** 2021. "Online social networks and women's entrepreneurship: A comparative study between Iran and Hungary". *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 3, no. 4: 61-75.
- [6] **Canestrinoa, Rossella, Marek Ćwiklickib, Pierpaolo Maglioccac, and Barbara Pawelekd.** 2020. "Understanding social entrepreneurship: A cultural perspective in business research." *Journal of Business Research* 110: 132-143.
- [7] **Çınar, Alex.** 2008. "Subversion and subjugation in the public sphere: Secularism and the Islamic headscarf." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, no. 4: 891-913.
- [8] **Clarke, Victoria, and Virginia Braun.** 2013. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London, SAGE. MLA. 7th edition.
- [9] **Fatoki, Olawale.** 2014. "Factors motivating young South African women to become entrepreneurs." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 no. 16: 184-191.
- [10] **Gali, Nazha, Thomas Niemand, Eleanor Shaw, Mathew Hughes, Sasha Kraus, and Alexander Brem.** 2020. "Social entrepreneurship orientation and company success: The mediating role of social performance." *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 160: 120230.
- [11] **Gupta, Parul, Sumedha Chauhan, Justin Paul, and Jaiswal, M. P.** 2020. "Social entrepreneurship research: A review and future research agenda." *Journal of Business Research* 113: 209-229.
- [12] **Halkias, Daphne, Chinedum Nwajiuba, Nicholas Harkiolakis, and Caracatsanis Sylva M.** 2011. "Challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Nigeria." *Management Research Review* 8, no. 1: 56-68.
- [13] **Hayes, Adam, Margaret James, and Ariel, Courage.** 2021. "Social

- entrepreneur.” In the Investopedia website. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-entrepreneur.asp> (accessed November 13, 2021).
- [14] **Holienka, Marian, Zuzana Jančovičová and Zuzana Kovačičová.** 2016. “Drivers of women entrepreneurship in Visegrad Countries: GEM Evidence. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 220: 124-133
- [15] **Idris, Adama J., and Kenneth C. Agbim** 2015. “Micro-credit as a strategy for poverty alleviation among women entrepreneurs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.” *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 3: 122-129.
- [16] **Ingalagi, Sanjeev, Nishad Nawaz, Habeeb Ur Rahiman, A. Hariharasudan, and Vanishree Hundekar.** 2021. “Unveiling the crucial factors of women entrepreneurship in the 21st century.” *Social Sciences* 10: 153-161.
- [17] **Kang’ethe, Simon M., and Thanduxolo Nomngcoyiya.** 2016. “An exploration of subjugation of women among the communities practising traditional male circumcision rite in Eastern Cape, South Africa.” *Journal of Human Ecology* 54, no. 2: 124-130.
- [18] **Khan Rizwan U., Yashar Salamzadeh, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, and Mazhar Hussain.** 2021. “Factors affecting women entrepreneurs’ success: a study of small- and medium-sized enterprises in emerging market of Pakistan.” *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* 10, no. 11: 1-21.
- [19] **Lacy, Stephen, Brendan R. Watson, Daniel Riffe, and Jennette Lovejoy.** 2016. “Issues and best practices in content analysis.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 92, no. 4: 791-811.
- [20] **Maden, Ceyda.** 2015. “A gendered lens on entrepreneurship: Women entrepreneurship in Turkey.” *Gender in Management* 30, no. 4: 312-331.
- [21] **Muntean Susan C., and Banu Ozkazanc-Pan B.** 2016. “Feminist perspectives on social entrepreneurship: critique and new directions.” *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* 8, no. 3: 221-241.
- [22] **Naser, Kamal, Wojoud Rashid Mohammed, and Rana Nuseibeh.** 2009. “Factors that affect women entrepreneurs: evidence from an emerging economy.” *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 17, no. 3: 225-247.
- [23] **Okolo-Obasi, Elda. Uduji, Joseph and Asongu, Simplicie** 2020. “Strengthening women's participation in the traditional enterprises of Sub-Saharan Africa: The role of corporate social responsibility initiatives in Niger Delta, Nigeria”. *African Development Review*, 32, 78-90.
- [24] **Okonofua, Friday, and Akhere Omonkhua.** 2021. “Women empowerment: A new agenda for socio-economic development in Saudi Arabia.” *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 25, no. 1: 9-12.
- [25] **Omotayo, Ikotun A., Ademola Sajuyigbe, and Oloyede Oluwayemi.** 2017. “Role of microfinance on the performance of women entrepreneurs in

- South Western Nigeria.” *International Journal of Innovative Research and Knowledge* 2, no. 5: 120-129.
- [26] **Onwujekwe, Obinna, Chinyere Mbachu, Uche Ezenwaka, Ifeyinwa Arize, and Nkoli Ezumah.** 2020. "Characteristics and effects of multiple and mixed funding flows to public healthcare facilities on financing outcomes: a case study from Nigeria." *Frontiers in Public Health* 7: 403.
- [27] **Patil, Prachita, and Yogesh Deshpande.** 2019. "Why women enter into entrepreneurship? An exploratory study. *Journal of Organizational Studies and Innovation* 6, 2: 30-40.
- [28] **Radović-Marković, M., and Achakpa, P.** 2018. "Employment women through entrepreneurship development and education in developing countries". *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 1, no. 2: 17-30.
- [29] **Ravić, N., and Nikitović, Z.** 2016. "Entrepreneurial education as a new paradigm of the development of women entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia". *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 3, no. 4: 102-116.
- [30] **Rosca, Eugenia, Nivedita Agarwal, and Alexander Brem.** 2020. "Women entrepreneurs as agents of change: A comparative analysis of social entrepreneurship processes in emerging markets." *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 157: 120067.
- [31] **Sajuyigbe, A. S., and Fadeyibi, I. O.** 2017. "Women entrepreneurship and sustainable economic development: Evidence from Nigeria". *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics*, 5, no. 2: 19-46.
- [32] **Su, N.** 2018. "Positivist qualitative methods." In *The sage handbook of qualitative business and management research methods* (pp. 17-31). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- [33] **Usman, B., Buang, N. A, and Yousaf, S. U.** 2015. "Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Malaysia: Need to nurture women entrepreneurship". *Journal of Women's Entrepreneurship and Education*, 3, no. 4: 77-96
- [34] **Wilson, J.** 2010. *Essentials of business research: A guide to doing your research project.* Sage Publications.
- [35] **Zhu, Lei, Orhan Kara, and Xiaowei Zhu.** 2019. "A comparative study of women entrepreneurship in transitional economies: The case of China and Vietnam." *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies* 11, no. 1: 66-80.

Appendix 1

A summary of the reviewed empirical studies is presented in below.

Multi-national empirical review of factors driving women entrepreneurship

Author(s)	Article topic	Country scope	Study design / instrument	Factors driving women ent.	Gaps
Holienka, Jančovičová and Kovačičová (2016)	Drivers of women entrepreneurship in Visegrad Countries: GEM Evidence.	Visegrad countries (i.e. Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland)	Quantitative study which obtained and analyzed secondary data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) database	Self-confidence, household income, fear of failure, and age category	-Different study area -Study was not on social entrepreneurship among women
Maden (2015)	A gendered lens on entrepreneurship: Women entrepreneurship in Turkey	Turkey	Type of study: Qualitative Instrument: Semi-structured interviews Sampling frame: 10 successful women entrepreneurs in Turkey	Exploiting unique opportunities in the business environment, working for the good of society and financial independence	-Different study area -Inadequate emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women
Zhu, Kara and Zhu (2019)	A comparative study of women entrepreneurship in transitional economies: The case of China and Vietnam	China and Vietnam	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Survey questionnaire Sampling frame: 170 women entrepreneurs in Vietnam and 180 women entrepreneurs in China.	Income earning, personal satisfaction, financial independence, avoidance of work-family conflict, and gaining public recognition	- Different study area - No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women

Author(s)	Article topic	Country scope	Study design / instrument	Factors driving women ent.	Gaps
Fatoki (2014)	Factors motivating young South African women to become entrepreneurs	South Africa	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Self-administered questionnaire Sampling frame: Female owners of new micro enterprises	Self-employment, income generation to support family, unemployment, marital crises, financial independence, and self-achievement	- Different study area - No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women
Ingalagi, Nishad, Rahiman, and Vanishree (2021)	Unveiling the crucial factors of women entrepreneurship in the 21st century	India	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Structured questionnaire Sampling frame: Women entrepreneurs in India	Social (social acceptance, family moral support, motivation from family, family welfare), psychological (higher self-esteem, confidence against failures and risk), financial (governmental aid/support, support from financial agencies, motivation from business income, self-awareness about government schemes), and resource factors (raw material availability, market demand for product, availability of infrastructure, availability of warehousing)	- Different study area - No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women

Author(s)	Article topic	Country scope	Study design / instrument	Factors driving women ent. facilities)	Gaps
Naser, Rashid and Nuseibeh (2009)	Factors that affect women entrepreneurs: evidence from an emerging economy	United Arab Emirates	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Structured questionnaire Sampling frame: 750 women entrepreneurs in the UAE	Government financial support, self-fulfillment, knowledge, skills and experience, and involvement in spouse/father's business	- Different study area - No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women
Prachita and Deshpande (2019)	Why women enter into entrepreneurship? An exploratory study	India	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Research questionnaire Sampling frame: 60 start-ups and established women entrepreneurs	Economic necessity, financial burden, loss of job/death of bread winners, passion, financial independence, availability of capital, and self-achievement	- Different study area - No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women
Abass (2019)	Women entrepreneurship determinants in Nigeria	Nigeria	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Research questionnaire Sampling frame: 422 women entrepreneurs	Need for survival, family traits, education and skills, independence and need for achievement	- No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women
Khan, Salamzadeh, Shah and Hussain (2021)	Factors affecting women entrepreneurs' success: a study of small- and medium-sized enterprises	Pakistan	Type of study: Quantitative Instrument: Structured questionnaire Sampling frame: 181 women-owned	Internal factors (need for achievements, risk-taking, and self-confidence) and external factors (economic factors and socio-cultural	- Different study area - No emphasis on social entrepreneurship among women

Author(s)	Article topic	Country scope	Study design / instrument	Factors driving women ent.	Gaps
	in emerging market of Pakistan		SMEs in Pakistan.	factors)	

Source: Fieldwork

Article history: Received: February 6th, 2022

Accepted: November 14th, 2022