



## Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism: A Study of Abeokuta, Ogun State

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to survey the female entrepreneurs in tourism, analyze the role of women in tourism business in the economy and to recognize the challenges to their entrepreneurial advancement. Descriptive survey design was adopted and the study employed both primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained with questionnaire, structured in a way that consists four segments: (a) demographic data of the respondents (b) respondent dominant part of tourism related business (c) business challenges, expectations, management (d) factors that influence their choice of business. The questionnaire was administered on 100 women entrepreneurs in Abeokuta, Nigeria. To reduce the number of survey statements, the 5-points Likert scale was employed with assigned number. The challenges the women entrepreneur faces, identified by this research, include inadequacy of fund for business expansion, non-availability of marketing, taxation, nonstandard business location and low patronage. This research recommends business skills training for the women entrepreneurs by the tourism related initiatives such as the localities and NGO and involvement of local media and participation in both local and national exhibition such as World Tourism Day for the publicity of their businesses.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneur; Tourism; Women in tourism business; Tourism business.

### Citation

Sanusi, A.M. & Dada. E.O. (2020). Women Entrepreneurs in Tourism; A Study of Abeokuta, Ogun State, *Journal of Women in Technical Education and Employment (JOWITED), The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro Chapter*, 1(1), 100-108

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: March 29, 2020  
Revised: May 29, 2020  
Accepted: July 8, 2020

## 1. Introduction

An entrepreneur is a person who persistently creates, recognizes and builds around perceived opportunities. Entrepreneurship is a vehicle through which a strong economy can be created and is a facet of industrial growth (Aderinto, *et al* 2018). Entrepreneurship is a mindset. There is an increasing recognition for entrepreneurship as many countries are facing economic downturn that has greatly affected many facets of economic activities especially job creation. The study of Ukonu, (2011) confirmed that entrepreneurial education has recently become a core course in tertiary institutions. The government and academic parastatals tend to focus on encouraging entrepreneurship due to its role in job creation, innovation, importance to large businesses and a dynamic economy.

Women tourism entrepreneurs are simply a group of women who have broken away from traditional limitations to explore new avenues of economic involvement. Alina, *et al* (2014), identified and took advantage of opportunities in their immediate environment through the production and services of tourism goods such as art and craft, souvenirs, accommodation, tour operators, tour guides, textiles and so on. Tourism offers opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment of women. The tourism sector positively provides opportunities for women's employment and self-employment both in small and medium sized enterprise, thus creating paths towards the elimination of poverty of women and local communities in developing countries (Nichola, 2015).

Tourism in Nigeria evolved largely on event. Various ethnic groups within the country display the richness of their culture through various events and festivals. However, tourism is not limited to just festivals and events but includes the several natural attractions such as waterfalls, wildlife reserve, savannah, rainforests etc.

Tourism potentials abound in Nigeria, especially given its natural landmarks and wildlife reserve and Ogun state is one of the states that cannot be sidetracked when talking about natural phenomena and widely recognized cultural tourism. Abeokuta is the capital of Ogun State in Southwestern Nigeria, which comprises nine (9) local governments. The tourism industry has acted as a contributing factor to the state economy. Its tourism monuments such as traditional arts, carving, sculpture and smithery amongst others attract many tourists who troop in day and night to have a feel of nature. The Ogun state people are recognized for making batik known as ‘Adire’. (Punch news, June 2019).

Tourism is seen as a sector that offers relatively bright prospects for women in particular, as reflected in 2007 World Tourism Day; (Anisah, *et al* 2016). In Nigeria, little attention has been paid to female tourism business owners or the promotion thereof. The aim of this study is to survey the female entrepreneurs in tourism, analyze the role of women in tourism business in the economy and to recognize the challenges to their entrepreneurial advancement and its objectives are to understand the need of tourism entrepreneurs to economy growth, the identify factors that influence their choice of business, highlight challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in tourism and to suggest solution to the identified challenges.

Furthermore, tourism has proved its relevance over the years in creating jobs, providing opportunities for self-employment in SME’s, stimulating income-generating activities both to benefits the local and the international destinations area thus creating paths to eliminate poverty in developing countries. Tourism entrepreneurs are those into tourism related businesses. They are entrepreneurs who have carved out a path for themselves to make a living in the tourism world. Tourism businesses stimulate the local economy through promoting entrepreneurship and the growth of SMEs (WTO, 2012). The National Bureau of Statistics, (2008) stated that in Nigeria, tourism contributes 34% to the country’s (gross domestic profit) GDP and generates 24% employment creation in 2017. Chhanda *et al.* (2018), stated that tourism related demand for goods and services can make new job opportunities for locals particularly for women and youth that ultimately can contribute to the poverty reduction of a country, thereby boosting the economy.

One of the key factors in determining the success of development in any country is if women’s economic rights which entail their sexual & reproductive rights and rights to education, mobility, voice, ownership; leadership are promoted Dr. Sarah Bradshaw, (2013). Chhanda *et al.* (2018), emphasized on the community participation through entrepreneurial activities so that development for the tourism sectors can be possible which would ultimately boost the country’s economy.

It is expedient to note that as in many other business sectors, women in tourism businesses face similar challenges. There is a significant gender segregation of the labour market in tourism; the lower levels and occupations with few career development opportunities are being dominated by women and the key managerial positions being dominated by men; Nichola, (2015). This has resulted in under-utilization of the women’s potential in socio economic activities in the Nigeria business environment.

One of the major challenges face by female entrepreneurs is the inability to access capital for start-up and for those who are already in the business, for sustainability of their businesses. Others are lack of experience, risk perception, poor educational background. Anisah, (2016) indicates that the lack of education and training can be problematic, especially for those entrepreneurs coming from relatively disadvantaged background. The study of Aina, (2003) cited by Chinonye, *et al*, (2015) also confirmed that generally in Africa, the literacy level for women is low; which limit their entrepreneurial activities to retailing and micro businesses.

This study carries out a survey of female entrepreneurs in tourism to analyze the role of women in tourism business in the economy and to recognize the challenges to their entrepreneurial advancement.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Study Area

Abeokuta is the capital of Ogun State, it is in southwestern Nigeria. It is located at an elevation of 77 meters above sea level and its coordinates are 7°0'0" N and 3°34'60" E. It has a population of 113,841. This city has a tropical climate. The temperature here averages 27.1 °C. Precipitation here averages 1238 mm. The temperatures are highest on average in March, at around 29.1 °C. At 25.1 °C on average, February is the coldest month of the year. The language of the people of Ogun State is Yoruba but this is however broken into scores of dialects. There are 20 Local government areas and several cities and towns, which include Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Ilaro, Ikenne, Sagamu etc. Abeokuta indigenes are known for making ‘Adire’ fabric, which means “tied and dyed”.

### 2.2 Data Collection

The data collection instrument used in this study is structured questionnaires on women entrepreneurs in small and medium scale enterprises in Abeokuta, Ogun state. The questionnaire consists of four sections: (a) demographic data of the respondents (b) respondent dominant part of tourism related business (c) business challenges, expectations, management (d) factors that influenced their choice of business.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1 Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Marital Status

Variable	Category	Percentage %
Marital status	Single	5.4
	Married	67.5
	Divorced	21.7
	Widow	5.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

This indicates that married women (67.5%) dominate the respondents, followed by the divorced (21.7%), single (5.4%) and widowed (5.4%).

Table 2: Age

Variable	Category	Percentage %
Age range	20-30	7.6
	31-35	39.1
	36-48	8.70
	49&above	44.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

Table 2 reveals that majority of these women entrepreneurs (44.6%), were in the age range of 49 and above followed by those in the range 31-35 (39.1%), 36-48 (8.7%) and 20-30 (7.6%).

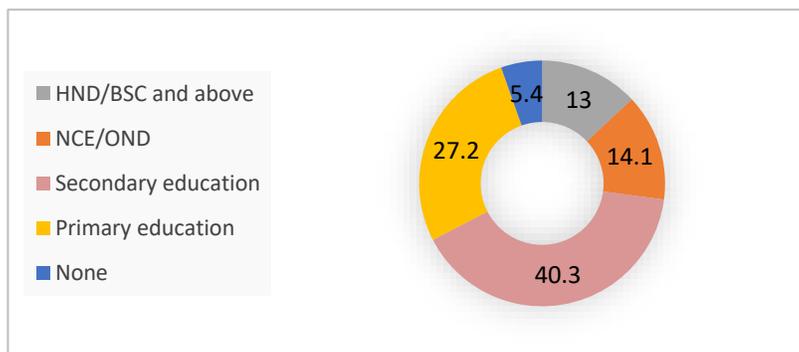


Fig. 1: Level of education of respondents

In Fig. 1, apparently, most of the respondents are averagely educated with secondary school education (40.3%). Primary education is 27.2%, followed by ND/NCE holders (14.1%) and BSC/HND have 13.0% while 5.4% have no education.

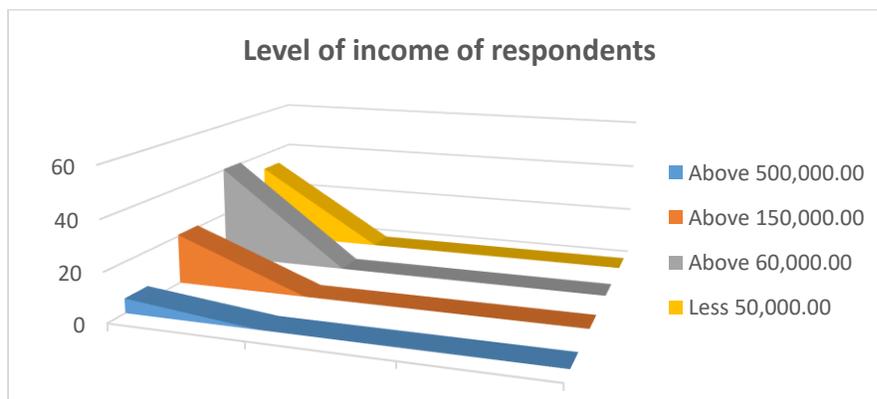


Fig. 2: Level of income of respondents

Fig. 2 reveals a high percentage (40.5%) of the respondents earn above N60,000.00 monthly, followed by 32.9% who earns below N50,000.00 while 20.7% earn above N150,000 and 5.9% above N500.00.

Table 3: Stakeholders in tourism entrepreneurs

Variable	Category	Percentage %
<b>Women in tourism businesses</b>	Owner	44.6
	Partner	30.4
	Manager	25.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that a good number (44.6%) of the respondents own their businesses while the others were either partners (30.4%) or managers (25.0%).

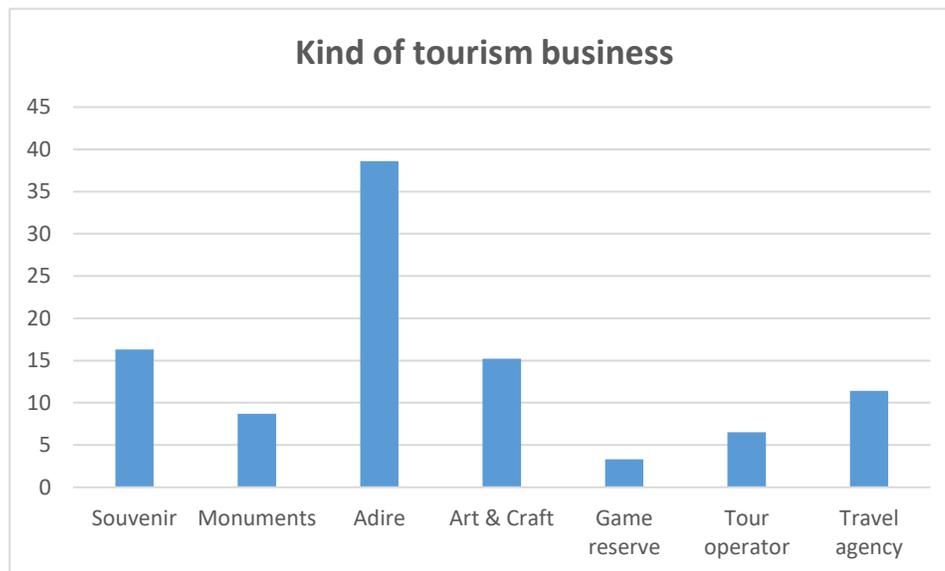


Fig. 3: Kinds of tourism business respondents are involved in

Fig. 3 shows that the popular tourism business owned by these women is Adire (Batik) production with (38.6%); this further ascertains the fact that the Abeokuta people are well known for Adire production, Other businesses operated by women in the town include souvenir (16.3%), art and crafts (15.7%), travel agency (11.4%), monuments (8.7%), tour operator (6.5%) and finally game reserve which has the lowest percentage (3.3%).

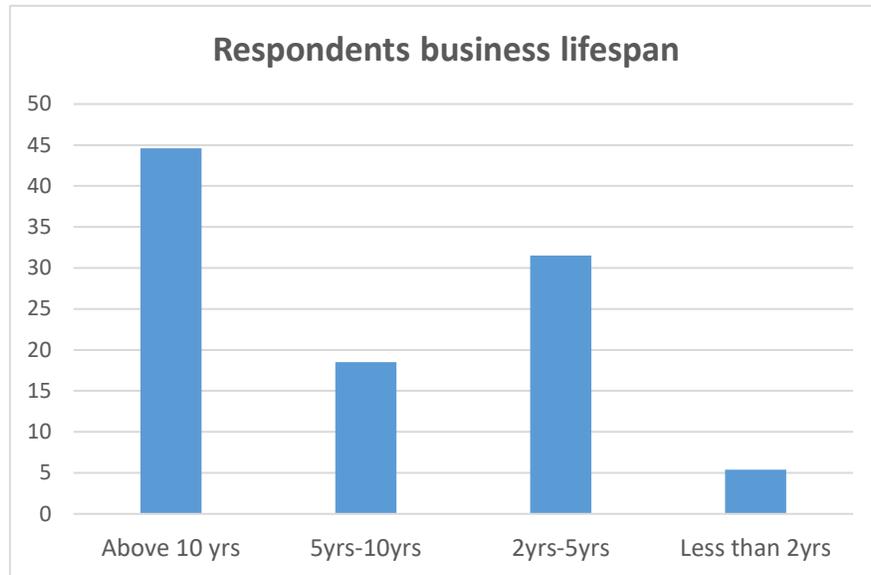


Fig. 4: Respondents business lifespan

Fig. 4 indicates that businesses that have been in operation for over 10 years has the highest percentage of (44.6%) followed by business operation of between 2-5yrs (31.5%), 5-10yrs (18.5%) and few of the respondents with (5.4%) have only started recently between 0-2yrs.

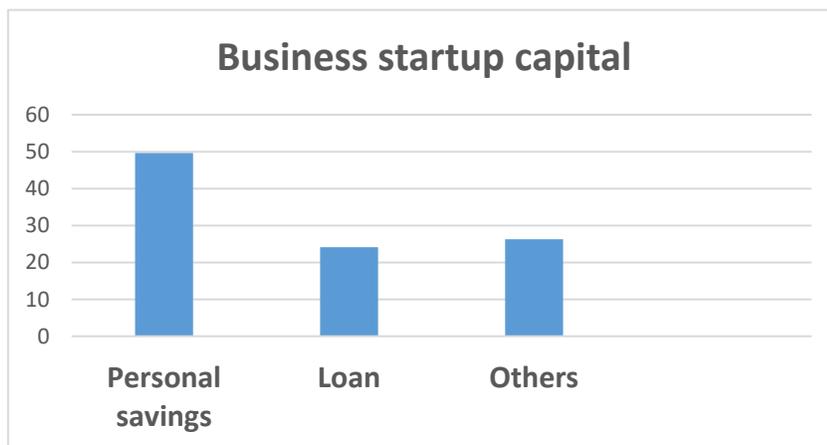


Fig. 5: Business startup capital

Fig. 5 above shows that 49.6% of the respondents got their startup capital from personal savings, follow by others (26.3%) - this may include family setup, inheritance etc. and (24.1%) obtained loans.

**Table 4: Tourism related education/experience**

Variable	Category	Percentage %
Tourism related education/experience	Yes	16.3
	No	83.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

It is seen from table 4 above that most of the women (83.7%) have no tourism related education/experience and (16.3%) have tourism related education/experience.

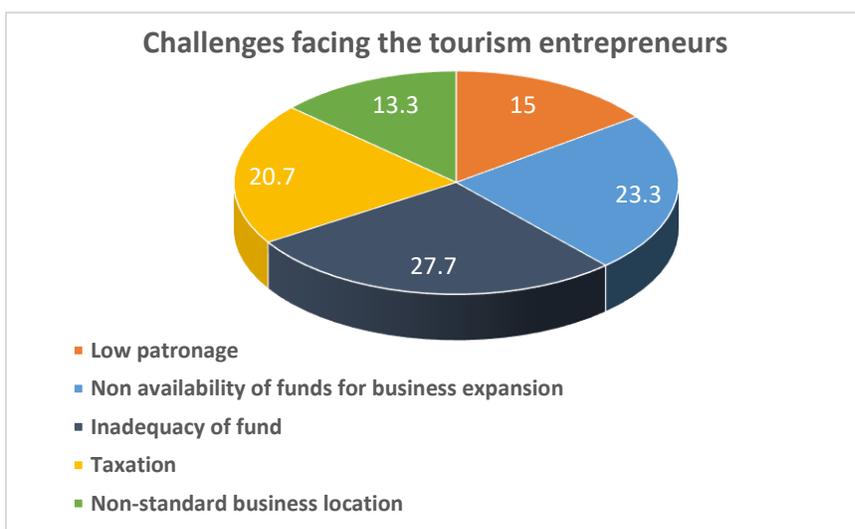


Fig. 6: Challenges faced by the respondents

The chart above indicates that the respondents face challenges as tourism entrepreneurs. Inadequacy of funds has the highest percentage of 27.7%, followed by non-availability of funds for business expansion (23.3%), taxation has 20.7%, low patronage 15.0% and lastly non-standard business location 13.3%.

**Table 5: Business choice influence**

Variable	Category	Percentage %
What influenced the business choice	Personal Interest	17.2
	Family(Inheritance)	44.6
	Lack of job	27.5
	Others	10.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

It is seen from table 5 that the dominant influence of choice of business is family inheritance (44.6%), followed by lack of job (27.5%), personal interest (17.0%) and others (10.9%).

#### **4. Discussion**

Women entrepreneurs in tourism business faces challenges and constraints like any other business entrepreneur in the country. One of the challenges this study reveals faced by the respondents is inadequacy of capital for business expansion. According to Ikechukwu, *et al* (2016), many entrepreneur women do not know how to go about sourcing for business funds; and the few respondents that do admit to the fear of taking risk while others view the difficulty of accessing this from financial institutions as obstacles. Ultimately, they could not afford a good location for their businesses as the proposed location were expensive which made them settle for a road side store or kiosk. This is supported by the study of Mba *et al* (2014) who stated in their study that the high rents charged by store owners on good locations have forced small-scale operators into the streets or at best into accessible places.

Multiplicity of taxes and levies is another issue that limits the entrepreneurship disposition of the interviewed women, some of them admitted that a good portion of income from the business goes to taxes. Since governments are realizing the benefits of tourism and the revenue generated, the tourism industry gets taxed significantly higher than other industries (Kevin, 2018). The women surveyed conceded of lacking tourism-related education. Hence, they either have less or no marketing tactics (radio advertisements, jingle or any social form of marketing) for their business, which ultimately bring about low patronage. This supports Aina, (2003) study cited by Chinonye *et al* (2015) that Africa women literacy level is generally low; which limit their entrepreneurial activities and micro business.

This study further supports Chinonye, *et al* (2015) who stated in their research, family of women makes tremendous impact on their entrepreneurial lives as majority of the women chose their line of business by family influence (inheritance). A hand full of them ventured into the business because of job scarcity as tourism sector provides opportunities for women's employment and self-employment both in small and medium sized enterprise, thus creating paths towards the elimination of poverty of women and local communities in developing countries Nichola, (2015). This study however does not discover any gender segregation. Many of the women conceded to hold managerial position as their male counterpart. This opposed the findings of Nichola, (2015) which stated that there is a significant gender segregation of the labour market in tourism; the lower levels and occupations with few career development opportunities are being dominated by women and the key managerial positions being dominated by men.

The women admitted that their startup capital was through personal savings and their monthly income is not in anyway encouraging. As a wife and mother, a good portion of their income goes to support their husbands and taking care of the family basic needs. This however, has greatly affected their entrepreneurial advancement.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The study concluded that majority of the women in tourism business in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, generally lacked professional education or training related to tourism. This points to the fact that tourism graduates are not pursuing the entrepreneurship aspect of their profession. Family business inheritance appear to be the major influence the women are in business followed by lack of job. The respondents stated that government should look into the challenges they faced in relation to financial constraints such as lack of access to fund for start-up and business expansion. The government and funding institutions might need to lower their guards on offering assistance and



granting support. This may require collaboration of governments, intergovernmental bodies, local government, trade unions, NGO's and community-based tourism initiatives.

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