



## Widows' Economic Virility in Southern Part of Ondo State, Nigeria: Imperative of Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programme

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### ABSTRACT

Widows, especially in Africa are experiencing several difficulties including economic challenge. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised, widows in southern part of Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was three hundred (300) respondents, selected through snow balling sampling technique. Thirty (30) respondents were selected from each of the six local governments that constituted southern part of Ondo State, Nigeria (Okitipupa, Ilaje, Ese-odo, Odigbo, Irele and Ile-Oluji). Three research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study. Data were generated through a self-developed research instrument titled "Questionnaire on Strengthening Widows' Economic Virility in Southern Part of Ondo State, Nigeria: Imperative of Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programme". It was fashioned on four likert rating scale: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) rated 4:3:2 and 1 respectively. The research instrument were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, while the reliability was determined through test-retest method at two weeks interval. 0.68 coefficient reliability was obtained. Data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics (simple percentages, frequency counts and mean). Based on the results, conclusions were made that ESDP could reduce unemployment status, boost incomes and expose widows to business opportunities. Recommendations were therefore made based on the conclusions that Government and other providers of ESDP should assist the beneficiary of the programme to overcome the problem of the initial capital. Also, all logistics to guarantee the effective implementation of ESDP should be provided and others.

**Keywords:** Development, Entrepreneurial skills, Economic virility, Strengthening, Widow.

### Background to the Study

Poverty has no gender limit. Generally, economic strategies and indices have shown that widows, specifically in Africa are experiencing diverse challenges. Widows in Africa are facing multiple challenges, including limited health care access, property rights, social supports and harmful traditional practices, impacting their well being across various dimensions (Dube, 2023:1).

A widow is a woman whose husband has died and remains single for the rest of her life (Johnson & Kowalczyk, 2023:1). A state of being a widow has negative impacts, such as; distress, depression, mental challenge, poor physical health, and others.

In Africa, cultural practices subjected widow to some harrowing experiences. According to Okoronkwo and Okoronkwo (2012) "in many cultures, prejudices against women are in fact deep-rooted. Widowhood practices are among the prejudices that have consistently impinged on the dignity and rights of women in our different cultures in Africa".

Being a widow does not only expose women in Africa to series of psychological challenges, also, economic difficulties. Many literatures on economic status of women who are widows. Majority of widows are poor and living a pauperized life (Morgan, 1986:663). In many communities the harmful cultural practices have put widow in poverty state. Beyond cultural practices most widows lack either vocational or entrepreneurial skills needed for economic survival.

Erinsakin (2014) stated that, most people who are experiencing economic hardship lack vocational and entrepreneurial skills for economic self-reliance. Further, that the implementation of Entrepreneurial development skills acquisition by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and some State Government is to alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment level, curb social-vices, promote self-employment for self-reliance, promoting industrial growth and development and others. Since, skills acquisition programme is seeing to have capacity and potential of providing people with skills that would make individuals to be a productive labourer and engender creative and innovative ideas that would foster economic growth. Ekwurudjakpor (2008 and 2009) stresses that entrepreneurial skills programme could give the needed practical skills for self-employment for self-reliance. Akpomi (2009),

opines that entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme could curtail poverty in Nigeria. Osuagu (2002) maintains that unimpressive economic position and status of individuals could be improved through entrepreneurial development training programme.

The above values of entrepreneurial skills acquisition were the consideration for implementing entrepreneurial development training programme specifically, in Ondo State Nigeria for different categories of people (widows, widowers, retirees, unemployed people, interested civil servants, youths) and others.

According to Agagu (2007), Ondo State Entrepreneurial Development Training Programme (EDTP) is a short-term programme aimed at alleviating poverty. Government believes that the programme could give people vibrant, productive entrepreneurship and skills in business development.

Therefore, since widows are participants of EDTP programme in ONdo State, Nigeria this study was therefore conducted on Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programme to determine whether it has impact or not to strengthen widows' economic virility in southern part of Ondo State, Nigeria.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Widows are experiencing hallowing experiences, hence, necessitated their involvement in Entrepreneurial Development Training Programme (EDTP) of Ondo State, Nigeria aimed at giving them vibrant skills for economic growth and development. It was against this backdrop this study was carried out.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

The broad objective of the study was on widows' economic virility in southern part of Ondo State, Nigeria: Imperative of entrepreneurial skills development programme. The specific objectives were to:

1. determine impact of EDTP on widows' unemployment reduction;
2. ascertain effects of EDTP on incomes; and generating capacity drives among widows
3. investigate influence of EDTP on widows' entrepreneurial values.

### ***Research Questions***

Two research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study.

1. Can EDTP reduce your unemployment status?
2. Do skills acquired through EDTP improve your incomes generating capacity drive?
3. Does EDTP exposes you to business opportunities in your environment?

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## **Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The study population comprised, widows in southern part of Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was three hundred (300) respondents, selected through a snowballing sampling technique in which thirty (30) respondents were selected from each of the six (6) Local Government Areas that constitute southern part of Ondo State; Okitipupa, Ilaje, Ese-Odo, Irele, Odigbo and Ile-Oluji.

Three research questions were raised to guide the study. Data was generated through a self-developed questionnaire by the researcher, titled, "Questionnaire on Widows' Economic Virility in Southern Part of Ondo State, Nigeria: Imperative of Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programme", fashioned on four Likert rating scale; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed (D) and rated on 4:3:2 and 1, respectively.

The research instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation, while its reliability was done through test-retest method at two weeks interval. 0.68 coefficient reliability was obtained. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentages, frequency counts and mean).

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## **Conceptual Framework**

### ***Entrepreneurial Skills Development***

Entrepreneurial skills development has been explained in several ways by some scholars. Benchar and Toulouso (1998), posited that entrepreneurial skills development (ESD) is a collection of formalized training and teaching which informs, educates everyone that is interested in business creation or small business development ESD also entails or focuses on entrepreneurial skills which include development of managerial capability of the business and other self-employment activities (Rao, Wright & Murheje, 1990:101).

Erinsakin (2014) stated that ESD engendered entrepreneurial values, spirit, characteristics and personality, development of technical, technological and professional competencies needed for productive work, employment and development of enterprise building and small business development capacity to

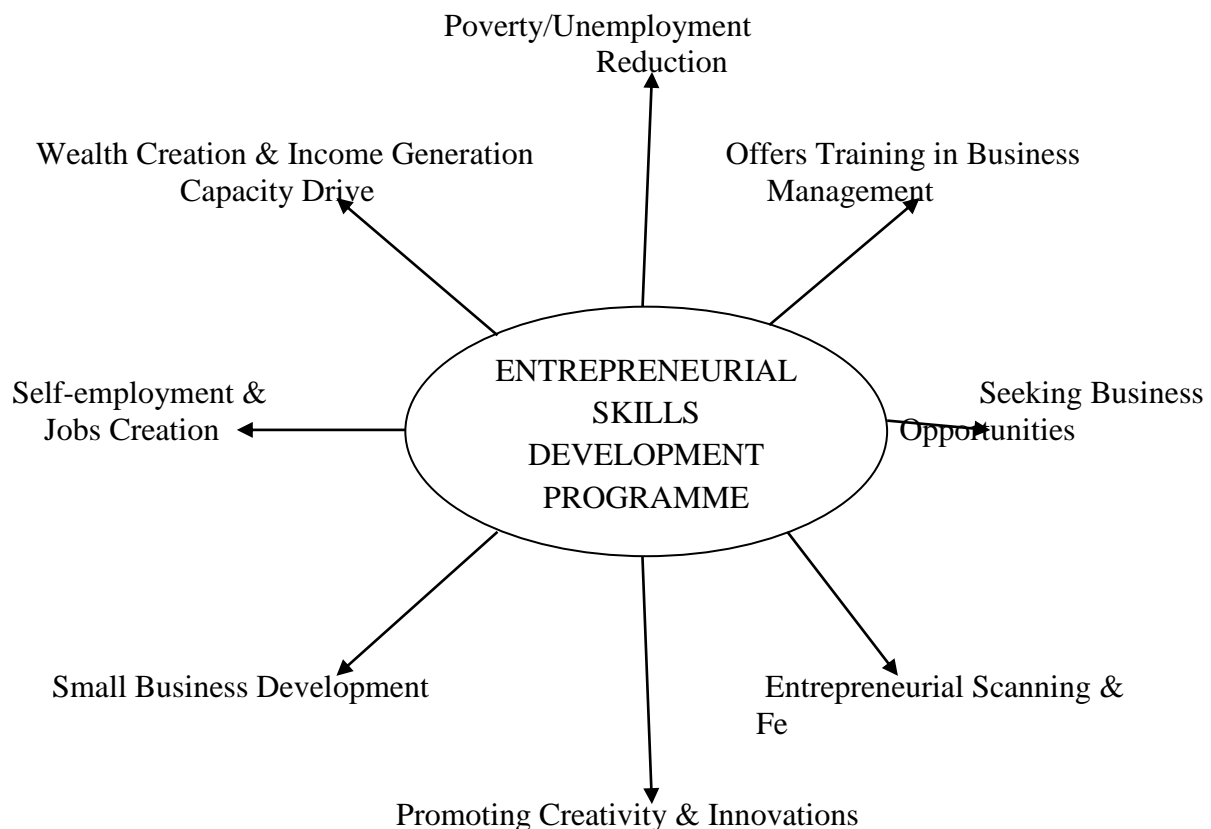
initiate and start one's own business or self-employment. Ogundele (2000) contended that ESD could result into an improved performance in managing entrepreneurial activities.

ESD has been identified as indispensable tool in small scale or business management, unemployment is a common feature of development nations. Hence, Erinsakin (2014) asserted ESD therefore becomes an indispensable weapon to equips people with vibrant and productive entrepreneurial skills to set-up a small business for self-economic sustainability.

According to Gambaru (2011), "if Nigeria is to attain the much desired socio-economic development of the 21st century, ESD is therefore an important means to achieve the aspiration". This buttress why ESD programmes becomes a constant factor in Nigerian policy, hinges mainly to promote self-dependence or self-employment.

The above values of ESD explains why in Nigeria a comprehensive and inclusive programme on entrepreneurial activities is one of the top priorities of governments at all tiers.

## OBJECTIVES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Field Survey, 2024

## Theoretical Framework

### Katz's Managerial Skills Theory (KMST)

The theory that was adopted for the study was Katz's Managerial Skills Theory (KMST). The theory was developed and propounded by Katz in 1955.

Robert Katz identifies three types of skills which are essential for a successful management process. The skills are: technical, conceptual and human or interpersonal management skills. For anybody to be successful in managing any organization these skills are very necessary. According to Katz's theory, a successful management had triplet managerial skills (conceptual, human and capital). The deficiency on each skill loses the chance of being a successful manager and generally successful organization. Managerial skills are needed to implement quintuplet functions of management ((planning, organizing, directing, controlling, evaluating). In modern organizations, successful manager can hardly be imagined without the three basic skills (Ahmadi, 2011).

Peterson (2004), believes that management skills has led to improve the performance of management thus, helps the organization to achieve its goals. Sambasiran (2009), stated also that personal qualities and management skills have positive association with opportunities recognition skills. The point or

fact of relevance of KMST to the study hinges on the promise that ESK objectives are to develop or equips with the relevant and appropriate skills which will enable individuals to manage business organization successfully which is also the concern or focus of KMST.

## Presentation of Findings and Discussion of Results

**Research Question One:** Can EDTP reduce your unemployment status?

**Table 1: Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (x) on can EDTP reduce your unemployment status**

N = 300, C = 2.5								
S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	N	Mean (X)	Decision
1.	EDTP has engendered on my business skills	236 78.66	37 12.33	16 5.33	11 3.66	300	3.66	Accepted
2.	EDTP contributes nothing to my business skills.	12 4	19 6.33	23 7.66	246 82	300	1.32	Rejected
3.	EDTP has makes me to have job.	226 75.33	33 11	19 6.33	22 7.33	300	3.54	Accepted
4.	Despite my involvement with EDTP I am still jobless	32 10.66	16 5.33	56 18.66	196 65.33	300	1.61	Rejected
5.	EDTP equipped me with several skills to venture with several entrepreneurial activities.	255 85	33 11	9 3	3 1	300	3.8	Accepted
6.	EDTP does not develop my ability to embark on several entrepreneurial activities.	23 7.66	27 9	38 12.66	212 70.66	300	1.53	Rejected

N = Total Number of Respondents, C = Cut off points, Mean =  $\bar{x}$ , SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed, D = Disagreed, SD = Strongly Disagreed

**Source: Field Survey, 2024**

Table 1 above, shows the findings on research question one. On item 1, responses obtained revealed 236 (78.66); 37 (12.33); 16 (5.33) and 1 (3.66) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 2, the following responses were also got; 12 (4); 19 (6.33); 23 (7.66) and 246 (82) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 3, responses obtained indicated 226 (75.55); 33 (11); 19 (6.33) and 22 (7.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

On item 4, the following responses were obtained; 32 (10.66); 16 (5.33); 56 (18.66) and 196 (65.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 5, responses obtained revealed; 255 (85); 33 (11); 9 (3) and 3 (1) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Finally, on item 6, the following responses were got; 23 (7.66); 27 (9); 38 (12.66) and 212 (70.66) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. The total weight of the result shows that the average scale of four ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ) is lesser than the mean of average rating scale of four ( $\bar{x} = 2.57$ ).

**Research Question Two:** Do skills acquired through EDTP improve your incomes generating capacity drive?

**Table 2: Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (x) on do skill acquisition through EDTP improve your incomes generating capacity drive**

N = 300, C = 2.5								
S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	N	Mean (X)	Decision
7.	My income generation has improved through EDTP	233 77.66	42 14	16 5.33	9 3	300	3.66	Accepted

8.	EDTP has not improved my capacity to generate income.	33 11	15 5	29 9.66	223 74.33	300	1.52	Rejected
9.	EDTP opens different incomes generating avenues for me.	266 88.66	19 6.33	14 4.66	1 0.33	300	3.83	Accepted
10.	EDTP does not opens different ways to generate incomes for me.	16 5.33	23 7.66	39 13	222 74	300	1.44	Rejected
11.	My incomes has improved better before involving in EDTP programmes.	211 70.33	39 13	31 10.33	19 6.33	300	3.47	Accepted
12.	My involvement in EDTP has no effects on my incomes	17 5.66	23 7.66	47 15.66	213 71	300	1.48	Rejected
	<b>Total Weight</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>687</b>		<b>2.56</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

N = Total Number of Respondents, C = Cut off points, Mean =  $\bar{x}$ , SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed, D = Disagreed, SD = Strongly Disagreed

**Source: Field Survey, 2024**

Table 2 above shows the findings on research question two. On item 7, responses obtained were 233 (77.66); 42 (14); 16 (5.33) and 9 (3) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 8, responses got indicated 33 (11); 15 (5); 29 (9.66) and 223 (74.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 9, the following responses were also obtained 266 (88.66); 19 (6.33); 14 (4.66) and 1 (0.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

On item 10, responses obtained revealed 16 (5.33); 23 (7.66); 39 (13) and 222 (74) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 11, 211 (70.33); 39 (13); 31 (10.33) and 19 (6.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Finally, on item 12, the following responses were obtained; 17 (5.66); 23 (7.66); 47 (15.66) and 213 (71) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Generally speaking, the total weight indicated that average rating scale of four ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ) is lesser than the mean of average rating scale of four ( $\bar{x} = 2.56$ ).

**Research Question Three: Does EDTP expose you to business opportunities in your environment?**

**Table 3: Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) on does EDTP expose you to business opportunities in your environment**

N = 300, C = 2.5								
S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	N	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Decision
13.	Through EDTP, I am better expose to various business opportunities in my environment than before.	254 84.66	33 11	9 3	4 1.33	300	3.79	Accepted
14.	Despite my involvement with EDTP, I am still ignorant on business opportunities in my environment than before.	28 9.33	29 9.66	33 11	210 7	300	1.53	Rejected
15.	EDTP enable me to venture with best lucrative business in my environment.	241 80.33	35 11.66	19 6.33	5 1.66	300	3.70	Accepted
16.	EDTP does not enable me to venture with best lucrative business in my environment.	34 11.33	16 5.33	31 10.33	219 73	300	1.55	Rejected
17.	EDTP has equipped me with skills to become a successful entrepreneur.	255 85	24 8	5 1.66	16 5.33	300	3.72	Accepted

18.	EDTP does not make me to become a successful entrepreneur.	3 1	43 14.33	54 18	200 66.66	300	1.49	Rejected
	<b>Total Weight</b>	<b>815</b> <b>45.27</b>	<b>180</b> <b>10</b>	<b>15</b> <b>8.38</b>	<b>654</b> <b>36.33</b>		<b>2.63</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

N = Total Number of Respondents, C = Cut off points, Mean =  $\bar{x}$ , SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed,  $\bar{D}$  = Disagreed, SD = Strongly Disagreed

#### Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 above shows the findings on research question three. On item 13, the following responses were obtained 254 (84.66); 33 (11); 9 (3) and 4 (1.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 14, responses obtained show 28 (9.33); 29 (9.66); 33 (11) and 210 (7) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 15, 241 (80.33); 35 (11.66); 19 (6.33) and 5 (1.66) responses were obtained for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

On item 16, responses obtained indicated, 34 (11.33); 16 (5.33); 31 (10.33) and 219 (73) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item 17, the following responses were obtained; 255 (85); 24 (8); 5 (1.66) and 16 (5.33) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Finally, on item 18, the following responses also were got; 3 (1); 43 (14.33); 54 (18) and 200 (66.66) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

The total weight of findings indicates that average rating scale of four ( $\bar{x} = 2.5$ ) is lesser than the mean of average rating scale of four ( $\bar{x} = 2.63$ ).

## Discussion of Results

The result obtained on research question one show that Entrepreneurial Skills Development (ESD) could reduce unemployment status of widows in southern part of Ondo State. The results align with Erinsakin (2014) submission that Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is the best strategy to reduce unemployment status of agile people who are physically fit to work and be gainfully employed. Agagu (2007) opinion of relevance of ESD also in consonance with the result that a tool to curtail unemployment in the State is ESD programme.

The result on research question two also shows that ESD could improve incomes generating drives of widows in the southern part of Ondo State. The finding aligns with the opinion of Aina and Salako (2008) that Entrepreneurial skills development could make individuals to seek investment opportunities, thus, raises one's income generating ability.

This is also corroborated by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012), that the contributions of entrepreneurial skills development to individual nations economy are health creation and income generation.

The findings on research question three is in consonance with the view of Erinsakin (2014). Awogbenle and Chijoke (2010) corroborated by Erinsakin (2014) that ESD is a mechanism to channel people's mindsets and energy to business activities by discouraging business opportunities in the environment. In essence, ESD could make widows and other beneficiaries of the programme to be more alive and exposed to business opportunities in the environment.

## Conclusion

Based on the results, the following conclusions were made that ESD could reduce unemployment, improve incomes and also expose widows to business opportunities.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions of the study;

1. The providers of ESD should make the programme more accessible by establish more centres in southern part of Ondo State, Nigeria.
2. There should be public enlightenment and education on the benefits of ESD to economic status of individuals and the nation.
3. Government should assist widows and other participants of ESD after graduation to secure the initial capital needed to embark on business.
4. All logistics needed to sustain implementation of ESD programme should be provided by government and other providers of the programme.
5. ESD programme should be given political will. Also, government policy on ESD programme should be made constant, and others.

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