

EXAMINING THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined how women and youth entrepreneurship contributed to inclusive development in Nigeria, with particular attention to access to finance, entrepreneurial skills development, digital transformation, and institutional support. A quantitative survey design was adopted, and structured questionnaires were administered to women and youth entrepreneurs operating small and medium-sized enterprises in selected entrepreneurial centres across Nigeria. Of the 420 questionnaires distributed, 386 were properly completed and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 91.9%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis with SPSS Version 28. The results showed significant positive relationships between access to finance, entrepreneurial skills development, digital transformation, institutional support, and inclusive development. The regression model produced an R-value of 0.81 and an R^2 of 0.66, indicating that the four predictors jointly accounted for 66% of the variation in inclusive development. Access to finance had the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$), followed by entrepreneurial skills development ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$), digital transformation ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$), and institutional support ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that improving access to finance, strengthening entrepreneurial capabilities, expanding digital opportunities, and providing effective institutional support can enhance the contribution of women and youth entrepreneurship to inclusive development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship; youth entrepreneurship; inclusive development; access to finance; entrepreneurial skills development; digital transformation; institutional support.