



COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION OF WOMEN PALM-OIL SELLERS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract. Women entrepreneurs in palm oil business face significant challenges associated with access to finance and formal institutional support leading to poor entrepreneurial outcomes. An increasing number of women have joined cooperative organizations to boost their entrepreneurial activities. However, the question of whether cooperative membership enables significant support for entrepreneurial success of the women remain unanswered. The study examined the cooperative role of women engaged in the palm oil business in their entrepreneurship drive and determined the factors responsible for entrepreneurship orientation among women and their levels. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were purposively sampled. Descriptive statistics and a multiple regression model were used to analyze the data. The results showed that cooperative membership has a significant influence on entrepreneurship drive among palm oil sellers. Additionally, financial support has a significant influence on the entrepreneurship traits of the women palm oil traders. The findings also indicate that the orientation of women toward risk-taking and business aggressiveness is high. Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to increase their entrepreneurial aggressiveness and supported financially to sustain their palm oil business. Women palm oil sellers who are not members of co-operative societies should endeavor to join one to have access to low-cost financing to undertake entrepreneurship activities.

Keywords:

entrepreneurship,
cooperative, gender,
business, palm-oil

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the development of economic activities that support resource-poor individuals and households. Entrepreneurial activities often reduce economic and

business challenges, such as poverty and unemployment. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in developing countries like Nigeria during the transitional phase. Entrepreneurship involves identifying new market opportunities in uncertain and challenging circumstances and effectively using production factors to offer innovative or modified products or services, ultimately leading to profit and business expansion. Entrepreneurs actively seek out these opportunities, take risks, and optimize the combination of production factors to introduce something new and profitable, thereby ensuring business growth (Gashi et al., 2022).

A cooperative, as defined by the International Cooperative Alliance (1995), is a self-help organization formed by individuals who voluntarily come together to fulfill “their common economic, social, and cultural needs through jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprises”. The goal of cooperatives includes provision of support to address human needs through collective action, promoting equality, fairness, and mutual benefits. The scope of cooperative actions covers different sectors of the economy including agriculture which covers crop related business such as palm oil.

In Nigeria, palm oil production and sales constitute a significant economic activity, particularly in the southern region of the country. This industry is primarily dominated by small-scale farmers and sellers, a substantial proportion of them being women. According to Gebre et al., (2021), women contribute to more than 50% of the agricultural labor force in Nigeria and actively participate in various agricultural sub-sectors, including palm oil production and sales.

Women in the palm oil industry face numerous challenges that impede their entrepreneurial development despite their significant contributions. These challenges include limited access to finance, inadequate business skills and knowledge, poor infrastructure, cultural and societal norms restricting economic participation, and unfavorable government policies. Eboh et al., (2020) found that insufficient capital, limited market access, and a lack of business skills and knowledge are the primary obstacles confronting palm oil sellers in Nigeria.

However, cooperative societies have emerged as a potential solution to the difficulties associated with small-scale entrepreneurs, including those involved in palm oil sales. Cooperatives offer opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs to access financing, technical support, and marketing networks. They also promote collective action, enabling entrepreneurs to pool resources and share risks.

Existing research on women entrepreneurship lacks focus on women in cooperatives, specifically in the palm oil sector. In this study, the identified gap is addressed with a focus on the influence of entrepreneurship among women in cooperative organizations within the palm oil industry. The study seeks to understand how entrepreneurship shapes their decision-making, strategies, and overall entrepreneurial orientation. It investigates the factors driving women’s participation in cooperatives and the benefits they derive from cooperative membership. Additionally, the study explores the factors that influence women’s entrepreneurship in the palm oil industry within cooperative settings. The study seeks to contribute to knowledge by providing supporting insights for the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship in the palm oil sector and inform policies and practices related to cooperative development.

The study’s general objective is to appraise entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers in cooperative society. Specifically, the objectives are to determine the factors influencing entrepreneurs among palm oil sellers; determine the influence of finance on entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers; and determine the influence of cooperative membership on entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers. Existing studies on women or gender issues have largely ignored the relevance of cooperative organisations towards enhancing the entrepreneurial potentials of women and most especially those in oil-palm business. Hence, the question of whether cooperative membership enables significant support for entrepreneurial success of the women remain unanswered. This study benefits from the theoretical principle of social capital theory which emphasizes the role of association as one of the most important means of acquiring economic-enhancing capital.

METHOD

Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional concept that has received significant attention across disciplines such as economics, business, and sociology. (Schumpeter, 1942) defines entrepreneurship as the creation of novel products or processes, identification of untapped markets or customer needs, and the establishment of innovative organizational structures. It is commonly associated with innovation and the willingness to take risks. Recently, there is remarkable increase in the participation of women in economic development through their involvement in the labour force. This trend has been observed globally, with more women entering both employment and self-employment positions (Butler, 2021). In the United States, for instance, women-owned businesses have experienced significant growth, surpassing other small businesses by one and a half times over the past 15 years. Almost 30 percent of all businesses are now managed and owned by women. According to USCCF (2016), the contribution of women's entrepreneurs is not less than 8% in the private sector which accounts for 4.3% revenue addition.

The concept of cooperative entrepreneurship explains how a group of individuals pool their resources, including finances, and materials, to achieve their specified goals. It operates across diverse economic and social activities, representing joint business activities, collectivism, and joint business ventures where members contribute their skills and resources to the success of the enterprise (Cooperative Education Trust Scotland, 2018). Through cooperatives, relationships are formed, like-minded members share opinions and ideas to fulfill goals that may have been unmet by other firms. The cooperative model is being explored as a means of fostering sustainable businesses amid rising youth unemployment. Cooperatives are recognized by society and international organizations for their role in job creation and addressing financial constraints. These, according to Como et al., (2016), are achieved through proper training and sharing of knowledge.

Women entrepreneurs face various challenges in spite of their substantial contributions to social and economic growth (Kelley et al., 2023). According to a survey conducted by GEM in 2018, out of the 49 economies analyzed, equal rate of entrepreneurial activity between men and women is only proved in six countries. In the East and South Asia, there are Indonesia and Thailand; in Latin America, there is Panama while Africa and Middle East are represented by Angola, Madagascar, and Qatar. Many women entrepreneurs struggle with issues of sustainability, as unsuccessful businesses prevent them from recovering their costs, leading to increased rates of unemployment and poverty (Franco & Haase, 2019). Wasef Hattab (2023), identified the determinants of women's participation in entrepreneurship to include demographical factors such as ethnicity, age and marital status. Other factors include education, and religious beliefs. Despite the high participation rate of women in self-employment, there has been limited research on the challenges they face.

Women entrepreneurs often face a lack of self-confidence, particularly in societies that evaluate women based on their performance in family responsibilities (Vander Merv, 2023). Psychological factors such as a high self-concept related to business commitment and effectively managing conflicting roles are important for women's entrepreneurial success (Umoren & Ehigie, 2023). Additionally, strong motivation is often identified as a primary determinant of success and a characteristic exhibited by women entrepreneurs when entering business ventures (Mitchell, 2020).

Women entrepreneurs often face limited access to market information, which can be attributed to their lack of social networks that provide credit and market insights (Naidu & Chand, 2017). In the context of small businesses, marketing performance becomes particularly important when market access is constrained (Swierczek & Ha, 2023). In terms of e-commerce, a significant portion (76 percent) of small businesses have yet to adopt this technology, highlighting the challenges and barriers they face in this area. On a positive note, research indicates that social capital impart positively on female entrepreneurial activities (Lawal & Oludimu, 2022). Dewi et al., (2022) conducted a study on

women entrepreneurship and its impact on social and economic well-being. They found that significantly, factors such as education, social support and access to loans influence the positive outcome of women entrepreneurship.

Ukwueze et al., (2022) investigated the function of social inclusion in Nigerian women-owned enterprises. The study found that household size, grants or loans to new enterprises, the number of female account holders, and financial institution accounts in rural areas all had a beneficial impact on women-owned businesses in Nigeria. Shah et al., (2021) analyzed the factors affecting women entrepreneurship and its impact on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They highlighted the importance of supporting women entrepreneurs to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of nations. Osakwe & Ogona, (2021) explored the relationship between entrepreneurship practice and sustainable development in Nigeria. They stressed the importance of empirical and systematic research to understand impacts, trade-offs, and synergies in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The factors impacting the success of women-owned micro and small businesses in Jordan were examined by Thaher et al., (2021).

To increase the sustainability of women entrepreneurs' businesses and reduce the likelihood of failure, they underlined the significance of combining strategies that address women entrepreneurs, the business environment, and micro financial institutions. Brownson, (2023) investigated the factors affecting women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The study highlighted the positive economic and socio-cultural factors influencing women entrepreneurs and recommended providing more support to foster their business growth and contribution to the world economy. This is more collaborated by the findings of Okafor (2021), with empirical evidence on the positive effect of years of membership in women agricultural cooperatives on the profitability of farm operations. The findings on the effect of association on the profitability of farm operations highlight the role of social capital in providing support to women in entrepreneurship. The earlier study of Bastida et al., (2020) provided theoretical basis for the benefit of cooperatives in supporting female entrepreneurship. The findings showed that female cooperative owners perceived the cooperative model as aligned with their values and well-suited to their work and lifestyle. The study emphasized the need for policies and programs that promote the cooperative model to foster female employment and women's entrepreneurial activity, particularly in challenging economic times. The framework for the study is illustrated in Figure 1.

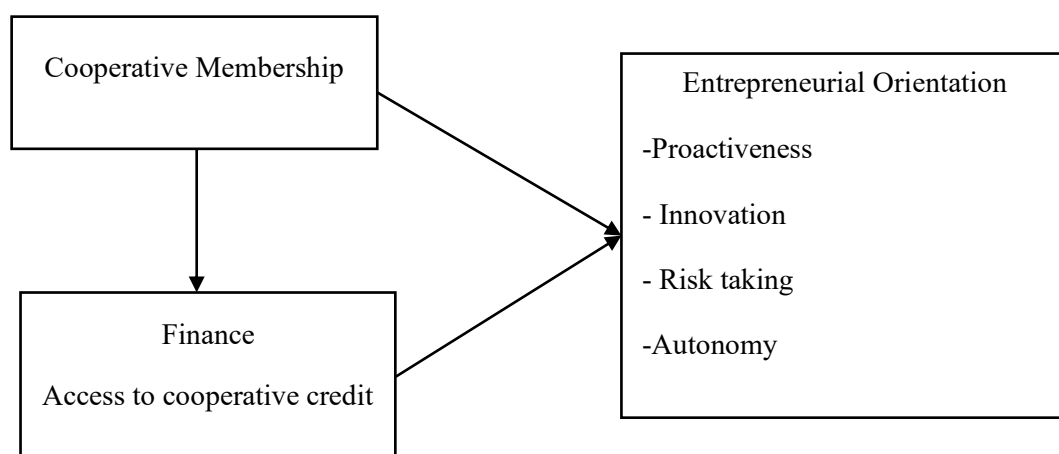


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors' conceptualization

In this study, the research was carried out in Ijebu ode and Ago-Iwoye, located in Ogun State, Nigeria, providing an appropriate setting for conducting the study effectively. The research population comprised a group of 500 palm oil sellers located in the study area. These individuals shared similar characteristics and were the primary focus of the research. A combination of purposive sampling and simple random sampling (SRS) was chosen as the appropriate method for selecting the sample. Purposive sampling was used to select specific individuals based on predetermined criteria, whereas SRS made certain that each person in the population had an equal chance of being a part of the study. The sample size was determined using the formula published by Taro Yamane in 1961. Therefore, the formula is given in equation (1).

$$N = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where:

N : Sample size

e : Level of significant error (5%)

1 : Constant

The sample size is therefore 200 as extracted from the formula above. Data for this study were collected through the administration of a well-structured questionnaire. Section A focused on demographic distribution of the respondents, while section B of the questionnaire will be based on five (5) modified likert scale, strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The data were analysed using ordinal regression method and the ordinary least square (OLS) regression methods. The ordinal regression method was chosen because of the statistical measure of the dependent variable which is measured in a likert form (ordinal measure). The research instrument (questionnaire) was valid and reliable based on the high value of the Cronbach Alpha' test. A value of 0.858 was obtained indicating over 85% level of reliability. Hinged on the study of Wossen et al., (2017), the composite model in equation 2 to 5 are expressed in achieving the objectives of the study.

Model I

$$\text{ENTR} = F(\text{AGE}, \text{FINA}, \text{CMEM}, \text{RIS}, \text{AGR}, \text{AUT}, \text{EMP}) \quad (2)$$

$$\text{ENTR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{AGE} + \beta_2 \text{FINA} + \beta_3 \text{CMEM} + \beta_4 \text{RIS} + \beta_5 \text{AGR} + \beta_6 \text{AUT} + \beta_7 \text{EMP} + \mu_1 \quad (3)$$

Where:

ENTR: Entrepreneurship

AGE : Age

FINA : Finance

CMEM: Cooperative Membership

RIS : Risk Taking

AGR : Aggressiveness

AUT : Autonomy

EMP : Employment Status

β_0, β_1 - β_7 : coefficients for cooperative society dimensions; μ represents the error term.

Model II

$$\text{ENTR} = f(\text{FINA}) \quad (4)$$

$$\text{ENTR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \quad (5)$$

Where:

ENTR : Entrepreneurship

FINA : Finance

β_0 , and β_1 are parameters to be estimated.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Demographic Data

Table 1 shows the result of the analysis on demographic data of participants. It was revealed that 30% of the participants were between 19-24 years while the remaining 70% were between ages 25-31 years. This implied that majority of the respondents were under 25-31 years. The employment status of the respondents, 84% of the respondents were self-employed while the remaining 16% were unemployed. This implied that majority of the respondents were self-employed.

In the same vein, 11.5% of the participants have less than 5 years' experience, 59% have 5-10 years' experience while the remaining 29.5% have above 10 years of experience. This implied that majority of the respondents have 5-10 years' experience. Also, 81.5% of the participants were members of a cooperative society while the remaining 18.5% did not belong to any cooperative society. This implied that majority of the respondents were members of a cooperative society

More so, 36% of the respondents had spent less than a year with cooperative society, 25.5% have spent 1-3 years with cooperative society, 21.5% have spent 4-6 years with cooperative society, while the remaining 17% have spent 7-10 years with cooperative society. This implied that majority of the respondents have spent less than a year with cooperative society.

Table 1: Demographic data of participants

Respondent Profile	Frequency	Percent
Age		
19-24 yrs	60	30.0
25-31 yrs	140	70.0
Employment		
Self-employed	168	84.0
Unemployed	32	16.0
Years of Experience		
Less than 5yrs	23	11.5
5-10yrs	118	59.0
Above 10yrs	59	29.5
Coop Member		
Yes	163	81.5
No	37	18.5
Years of Cooperative		
Less than 1yr	72	36.0
1-3yrs	51	25.5
4-6yrs	43	21.5
7-10yrs	34	17.0

Source: Data Processed, 2023

Analysis of Research Questions

Factors influencing entrepreneurship orientation

Table 2 showed the result of each item used in the research instruments. In relations to Pro-activeness, it was revealed that 63.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that there was always business action in market, while the remaining 36.5% agreed that there was always business action in market. This implied that there is always business action in market. 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is always a strong tendency to drive ahead business invention of competitors, while the remaining 55% agreed. This implied that there is always a strong tendency to drive ahead business invention of competitors. More so, 24% of the respondents strongly agreed to unlocking the prevailing competitor's strategies, 45.5 agreed, while the remaining 30.5% were undecided. This implied that majority of the respondents tried unlocking the prevailing competitor's strategies. Also, 23% of the respondents

strongly agreed to increasing the level of market aggressiveness, 30% agreed, 28% were undecided, while the remaining 19% disagreed. This implied that majority of the respondents tried to increase the level of market aggressiveness. 79% of the respondents strongly agreed to continue scanning of business environment, 11.5% agreed, while the remaining 9.5% were undecided. This implied that majority of the respondents continued scanning of business environment. 73% of the respondents strongly agreed that market opportunities are frequently researched, 14% agreed, 9.5% were undecided while the remaining 3.5% disagreed. This implied that market opportunities are frequently researched.

Innovativeness

In the same vein, results on innovation as determinants of entrepreneurship showed that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that cooperative society favor innovativeness of products, 21.5% agreed, while the remaining 18.5% were undecided. This implies that cooperative society favor innovativeness of products. 47.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that there has been new line of product and services in the last three years, 49% agreed, while the remaining 3.5% were undecided. This implies that there has been new line of product and services in the last three years. 70.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that cooperative society help with special approach to business, 11% agreed, while the remaining 18.5% were undecided. This implies that cooperative society help with special approach to business. 77% of the respondents strongly agreed that there are changes in the idea of new products while the remaining 33% agreed. This implies that there are changes in the idea of new products.

Risk-Taking

Regarding risk-taking in business, 15% of respondents strongly agreed there is a high tendency for risk, 27.5% agreed, 9.5% were undecided, 38.5% disagreed, and 9.5% strongly disagreed. This implies that there is no strong proclivity for high risk business. 16% of the respondents strongly agreed that there are intuitive actions in prevailing business environment, 18.5% agreed, 62% disagreed, while the remaining 3.5% strongly agreed. This implied that there are no intuitive actions in prevailing business environment. 60% of the respondents strongly agreed to taking bold decisions with respect to service, 21% agreed, 9.5% disagreed, while the remaining 9.5% strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of the respondents take bold decisions with respect to service. 53.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that they are aggressive in making decision, 17.5% agreed, 3.5% were undecided, 16% disagreed, while the remaining 9.5% strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of the respondents are aggressive in making decision. 65.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that they have mastered the culture of risk taking, 22% agreed, while the remaining 12.5% strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of the respondents have mastered the culture of risk taking

Autonomy

Likewise, as regards autonomy; 62% of the respondents strongly agreed that independent action is needed to bring out ideas, 6% agreed, while the remaining 32% strongly disagreed. This implies that independent action is needed to bring out ideas. 63.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that cooperative society pursue self-directed opportunities, 21.5% agreed, while the remaining 15% were undecided. This implies that cooperative society pursue self-directed opportunities. 47.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that there are independence actions among cooperative members, 13% agreed, 15% were undecided, 21% disagreed, while the remaining 3.5% strongly disagreed. This implies that there are independence actions among cooperative members.

Aggressiveness

In relation to aggressiveness; 97% of the respondents strongly agreed that organizations are reactional to business trends while the remaining 3% agreed. 79.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that market changes attract aggressive behaviors, while the remaining 20.5% agreed. This implies that market changes attract aggressive behaviors.

Table 2: Description of entrepreneurship orientation of women palm oil sellers*

Variable	SA	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	SD	Mean	SD
1. Proactiveness							
Business Action	63.5	36.5				4.64	4.13
Strong Drive	45	55				4.45	3.95
Competitors Strategy	24	45.5	30.5			3.94	3.48
Increase Aggressiveness	23	30	28	19		3.57	3.20
Business Scanning	79	11.5	9.5			4.70	4.21
Frequent Research	73	14	9.5	3.5		4.57	4.11
2. Innovation							
Cooperative	60	21.5	18.5			4.42	3.96
New Product	47.5	49.0	3.5			4.44	3.95
Special Approach	70.5	11.0	18.5			4.52	4.07
Idea Changes	77.0	23.0				4.77	4.26
R&D Investment	58.5	41.5				4.59	4.08
3. Risk Taking							
Strong Proclivity	15.0	27.5	9.5	38.5	9.5	3.00	2.76
Intuitive Actions	16.0	18.5		62.0	3.5	2.82	2.58
Bold Decision	60.0	21.0		9.5	9.5	4.13	3.84
Aggressiveness	53.5	17.5	3.5	16.0	9.5	3.90	3.65
Culture	65.5	22.0			12.5	4.28	3.97
4. Autonomy							
Independent Action	62.0	6.0			32.0	3.66	3.62
Cooperative Pursues	63.5	21.5	15.0			4.49	4.02
Independence Action	47.5	13.0	15.0	21.0	3.5	3.80	3.52
5. Aggressiveness							
Business Reactionary	97.0	3.0				4.97	4.45
Market Changes	79.5	20.5				4.80	4.28
6. Finance							
Finance Availability	74.0	16.5		9.5		4.55	4.12
Lack Of Finance	55.5	35.0		9.5		4.37	3.94
Managed Finance	80.5	19.5				4.81	4.29
Large Money Startup		12.5	3.5	84.0		2.29	1.84
Differentiate Business Money	42.5	48.0	9.5			4.33	3.85

*Values are in percentages; SA-Strongly Agree; SD-strongly Disagree

Source: Data Processed, 2023.

Influence of Finance

Regarding finance, 74% of respondents strongly agreed that business ideas require available funding, 16.5% agreed, and 9.5% disagreed. This implies that business ideas can only be achieved by availability of finance. 55.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of finance will kill a great business, 35% agreed, while the remaining 9.5% disagreed. This implied that lack of finance will kill a great business. 80.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that a well-managed finance can grow a business from scratch, while the only 19.5% agreed. This implied that a well-managed finance could

grow a business from scratch. 12.5% of the respondents agreed that an entrepreneur need large sum of money before that can start a business, 3.5% were undecided, while the remaining 85% disagreed. This implies that an entrepreneur does not need large sum of money before that can start a business. 42.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that an entrepreneur need to learn how to differentiate between business money from personal money, 48% agreed, while the remaining 9.5% were undecided. This implied that an entrepreneur needs to learn how to differentiate between business money from personal money.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Age, finance, cooperative membership, risk-taking, aggressiveness, autonomy and employment status were not significant determinants of entrepreneurship participation among palm oil sellers in the study area show in Table 3.

The result (Table 3) showed that age, and employment status were not significant determinants of entrepreneurship. It was shown that the variables of finance, years of cooperative membership, risk-taking and aggressiveness contributed significant to the entrepreneurship intention of palm oil sellers. This means that having sufficient finance, being active member of cooperative, high propensity for risk-taking and sufficient level of aggressiveness are required to increase entrepreneurship spirit among palm oil sellers. The positive sign associated with finance variable is an indication that potentials for increasing entrepreneurial capacity of women is tied to convenient access to finance. However, like many businesses operated at levels below large scale in most developing countries, the negative sign associated with entrepreneurship aggressiveness of the women indicates a lower-level individual capacity to independently drive business related activities. This aligns with the earlier findings of Sofoluwe (2020) who found a reduced level of aggressiveness for market competitiveness.

Table 3: Estimated determinants of entrepreneurship among women

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value
Age	-2.259	1.6915	-1.34
Finance	2.572	0.5112	5.03**
Coop. Memb.	0.185	0.0580	3.189**
Risk Taking	3.762	1.0211	3.69*
Aggressiveness	-0.916	0.5203	-1.76*
Autonomy	-1.711	0.6317	-2.71**
Employment Status	1.016	3.1016	0.33
LR chi2(7)	= 202.03		
Prob > chi2	= 0.0000		
Log likelihood	= -64.4642		
Pseudo R2	= 0.6104		

**, *, significant at 5% and 10%

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of finance on cooperative women's entrepreneurship among women palm oil sellers in Ogun State.

Table 4: Simple regression result on finance and entrepreneurship

	R	R ²	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	0.389	0.152	-0.335	0.167		-2.012	0.045
Finance			0.747	0.125	0.389	5.949	0.023

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurship

Source: Data Processed, 2023

The result showed that finance had significant influence on entrepreneurship among palm oil seller ($\beta = 0.389$; $t = 5.949$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, this study concluded that finance improved entrepreneurship among women palm oil sellers

Hypothesis Three

H_{03} : There is no significant influence of cooperative membership on entrepreneurship among women palm oil sellers.

Table 5: Regression Result on Cooperative Membership and Entrepreneurship

	R	R ²	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.238	0.056	.008	.058		.135	.893
Coop Mem			.150	.044	.238	3.442	.001

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurship

Source: Data Processed, 2023

The result in Table 5 revealed that cooperative membership had significant influence on entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers in Ogun State ($\beta = .238$; $t = 3.442$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, this study concluded that being members of cooperative society improved entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers in the study area.

The study was conducted to determine factors responsible for entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers in Ogun State. It was designed to achieve three objectives which were to: determine the factors influencing entrepreneurs among palm oil sellers; determine the influence of finance on entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers; and determine the influence of cooperative membership on entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers. The result showed that finance, cooperative membership, risk-taking and aggressiveness were determinants of entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers. The study agreed with the findings of Brownson (2023), who found finance, cooperative membership, risk-taking and aggressiveness as factors accounting for entrepreneurship among the women sellers. Also, the result revealed that finance influenced entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers. This result agreed with the submission of Adelekan & Dansu (2016), who found finance as a potent determinant of entrepreneurship. Lastly, the study found that cooperative membership had significant influence on entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers. These findings agreed with the submission of Karpak & Topcu (2022), who reported a significant relationship between cooperative membership and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that women in cooperative settings tend to exhibit high levels of proactiveness and innovation, as evidenced by their frequent scanning of the market environment and the introduction of new product lines. This resonates with the findings of Dewi et al. (2022), who argued that supportive social networks, education, and access to resources significantly enhance women's innovation capacity and business sustainability. The cooperative framework thus serves as a catalyst for building entrepreneurial capabilities through collective knowledge-sharing and mentorship.

In policy terms, the findings suggest the need for strengthening cooperative-based financing mechanisms and capacity development initiatives targeting women entrepreneurs. Government agencies, microfinance institutions, and non-governmental organizations should prioritize gender-responsive cooperative programs that integrate business training, digital marketing, and financial literacy. Enhancing cooperative governance and transparency would also increase women's trust and participation in these organizations.

Ultimately, the study provides evidence that cooperative membership is not only a financial mechanism but also a social empowerment tool that builds confidence, facilitates innovation, and nurtures entrepreneurial orientation among women in the palm oil business. By leveraging the social

and financial capital embedded in cooperative associations, women can overcome structural barriers and achieve sustainable economic advancement within the informal agricultural economy.

CONCLUSIONS

The study appraised the determinants of entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers in Ogun State. It was concluded that finance, cooperative membership, risk-taking, and aggressiveness contributed positively to enhancing entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers. This means that an increase in the level of finance, cooperative membership, risk-taking, and aggressiveness would improve entrepreneurship among palm oil sellers in Ogun State. Also, having sufficient finances would improve entrepreneurship activities among palm oil sellers in the state. Finally, the study concluded that membership of cooperative society is a necessary condition for increase entrepreneurship activities among palm oil sellers. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations, more finances should be provided to the women in palm oil business in order to improve entrepreneurship among the traders, the women palm oil sellers should increase their aggressiveness towards entrepreneurship in order to increase their orientation towards entrepreneurial activities, The women palm oil sellers who are not member of co-operative societies should endeavor to join one in order to have access to finances at low cost to undertake entrepreneurship activities, the women palm oil sellers should endeavor to be innovative and creative, as this would improve their entrepreneurial activities and intention in their locality, risk taking is very essential for entrepreneurial activities, hence, it is important to for the women entrepreneurs and other market women to increase their propensity to take risks in order to increase entrepreneurship activities.

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