

Title

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON WOMEN'S
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PIG-PASSING-ON PROGRAM IN
NKHONGO VILLAGE**

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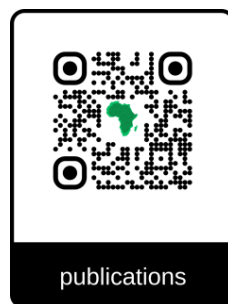
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of integrated entrepreneurship education within a Pig Passing-On Program on women's economic empowerment in Khongo Village, Malawi. Persistent gender disparities limit rural women's access to resources and opportunities, and while training builds skills, standalone programs often fail without capital (*World Bank, 2018*). This program combines livestock asset transfer with education, yet its effectiveness is under-researched (*Smith, 2022*). Grounded in Human Capital and Empowerment theories, qualitative interviews with 20 beneficiaries reveal that training successfully builds practical business skills and financial literacy. This leads to improved business management, increased control over household finances, and greater decision-making power, affirming the link between resources and agency (*Kabeer, 2005*). Participants also engage in sustainable planning and community leadership. However, barriers like limited market access persist. The study concludes that this integrated model is a potent catalyst for holistic empowerment but requires enhanced financial and market linkages to ensure long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Nkhongo Village, Economic, Education, PIG-Passing Program

INTRODUCTION

Women's economic empowerment has become a central strategy in promoting inclusive development, particularly in low-income countries. Entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as a tool for enabling women to gain financial independence and improve their livelihoods (*Kelly, 2017*). In the context of rural development, innovative models such as the Pig Passing-On Program have appeared as viable interventions to enhance women's economic resilience and

community sustainability.

The Pig Passing-On Program is a form of livestock redistribution and micro-enterprise support, where beneficiary women are given a piglet, and upon maturity, they are required to pass on piglets to another community member. When combined with entrepreneurship education, this model not only promotes asset accumulation but also facilitates the development of entrepreneurial skills, business planning, and financial literacy among women (*FAO, 2013*).

Background of Study

Entrepreneurship education has its roots in global economic development strategies, tracing back to the 1960s when nations began incorporating entrepreneurial skills into education systems to fight unemployment and underdevelopment (*Fayolle & Gailly, 2008*). Over time, it has evolved to include not only technical knowledge but also practical business skills, confidence-building, and innovation.

The concept of the Pig Passing-On Program originated in various livestock-based development interventions in Asia and Africa, where livestock transfer programs aimed to improve food security and household income. The Heifer International model, introduced in the 1940s, is one of the most influential programs that institutionalized the "Passing on the offspring of pigs" concept, where beneficiaries pass on the offspring of livestock to other community members (*Heifer International, 2010*).

In Malawi, the Pig Passing-On Program was introduced by various NGOs, including Heifer International and local partners, as a means to alleviate poverty, especially among rural women. Malawi's reliance on agriculture, coupled with high rates of female poverty and limited access to formal employment, makes it an ideal setting for such interventions (*NSO*

Malawi, 2019). Entrepreneurship education was later integrated into these programs as evidence grew of its impact on improving outcomes for women-led businesses (Chowa et al., 2013).

Despite these efforts, there is limited empirical evidence on the extent to which entrepreneurship education, when delivered alongside livestock programs, contributes to meaningful and sustained economic empowerment for women in Malawi. This study intends to fill that gap.

Problem statement

Women economic empowerment remains an fulfilled development priority in rural areas in Malawi where development priority in rural Malawi, where persistent gender disparities limit access to productive resources, financial and economic opportunities (NSO 2019) while entrepreneurship education has emerged as potential solution to provide women with business skills(World Bank), standalone training programs often to address barriers such as lack of startup capital and productive assets (UN Women 2020). The pig passing on program represents an innovation coordinated approach that combines livestock asset transfers with entrepreneurship training, yet its impact in achieving sustainable women's empowerment remains unverified

Despite efforts to reduce poverty and boost gender equality, several women in rural areas continue face severe economic exclusion due to limited access to education, financial resources and income generating opportunities (UN Women, 2020) according to Kabeer (1999) women's empowerment involves gaining the ability to make strategic life choices. Entrepreneurship education has been recognized as a key to plan for proving women with the skills and knowledge necessary to start and manage small businesses (World Bank, 2018).

In Malawi initiative such as the pig passing on programme have been introduced to mix entrepreneurship training with livestock ownership as means of improving women's livelihoods. However, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such integrated methods in achieving sustainable economic empowerment for women (Smith, 2022). Without a clear understanding of the impact entrepreneurship education within these programs it is difficult to identify their value and enhance their design for long term success. This study therefore seeks to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on women's economic empowerment through the big passing on programme, focusing on income generation, decision making, power and self-reliance among rural areas.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main objective

- To assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on women's economic empowerment through pig passing on program

Specific objectives

- To evaluate the level of entrepreneurship knowledge acquired by women in the programs in khongo village.
- To assess the extent to which entrepreneurship education influences women's ability to manage and grow income-generating activities in khongo village.
- To examine the effect of the program on women's control over household financial decisions in khongo village.

- To investigate the sustainability of businesses started through the Pig Passing-On Program in khongo village.
- To recommend the role of entrepreneurship education in enhancing women's participation in community development activities in khongo village.

Research questions

- What level of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills do women acquire through the program in nkongo village?
- How does entrepreneurship education influence women's capacity to operate and expand income - generating activities in nkongo village?
- In what ways does the program affect women's control over financial decisions in their households in khongo village?
- Are the businesses initiated through the program sustainable in the long term in khongo village?

Significance of study

This study was essential as it seeks to close the gap between entrepreneurship education and practical livelihood support for rural women. Concentrating on the pig passing on programme in khongo Lumbadzi Malawi, the research provided knowledge into how to combine businesses training with livestock ownership which can promote income generation, promote decision making, power and improve self-reliance among women.

The study helped inform policy makers NGOs and community practitioners on how these coordinated methods work and how they can be improved or carried out again in similar context foster sustainable women's economic empowerment through pig passing on

programme in khongo village Lumbadzi Malawi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Key Terms

• Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship constitutes the process of identifying market opportunities, mobilizing resources, and creating value through innovative business ventures (*Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd, 2017*). *Schumpeter (1934)* particularly emphasizes its role in driving economic development through creative destruction and innovation. In developing contexts, entrepreneurship often manifests through necessity-driven enterprises, particularly among women (*Bruton et al., 2013*).

• Education

Education represents a formal or informal process of facilitating knowledge acquisition, cognitive development, and skill enhancement (*UNESCO, 2018*). *Sen (1999)* argues that education expands human capabilities, enabling individuals to convert resources into meaningful opportunities – a concept particularly relevant for women's empowerment.

• Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education refers to pedagogical programs designed to develop entrepreneurial competencies, including opportunity recognition, business planning, and financial management (*Fayolle & Gailly, 2015*). *The European Commission (2012)* highlights its dual focus on developing both entrepreneurial mindsets and practical business skills, which is crucial for women in resource-constrained settings.

• Pig Pass-On Program

The Pig Pass-On Program is an asset-based livelihood intervention where primary beneficiaries receive pigs and subsequently pass on offspring to other community members, creating a multiplier effect (FAO, 2020). This model, rooted in traditional rotating livestock systems, has been adapted by development agencies as a women's empowerment tool (Kristjanson *et al.*, 2014).

• Women's Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment encompasses improved access to productive resources, increased participation in economic decision-making, and enhanced control over income and assets (Kabeer, 2016). *The World Bank* (2012) expands this to include freedom from discriminatory constraints in labor markets and financial systems.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives that collectively explain the potential impacts of entrepreneurship education within livestock pass-on programs:

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) provides the foundational rationale for investing in women's entrepreneurship education. The theory posits that knowledge and skills acquired through education constitute a form of capital that enhances productivity and earnings potential. In the context of pig farming enterprises, entrepreneurship training develops specific human capital that improves women's technical and managerial capabilities (Lange *et al.*, 2014). Recent applications in developing countries demonstrate that human capital investments in women generate particularly high social returns through intergenerational effects (Schultz, 2002).

Empowerment Theory (Kabeer, 1999) offers a multidimensional framework for analyzing how the Pig Pass-On Program coupled with entrepreneurship education might enhance women's agency. The theory identifies three interrelated dimensions: resources, agency decision-making, power and achievements. Alsop *et al.* (2006) operationalize this framework by differentiating between intrinsic empowerment (self-confidence and awareness) and instrumental empowerment (access to resources and decision-making power). The pig asset provides the material resource base, while entrepreneurship education builds the cognitive and social resources necessary for effective agency (Mayeux, 2001).

Empowerment Theory and Human Capital Theory provide valuable frameworks for understanding how change occurs. Empowerment Theory explains how women gain control over their lives, improve their self-confidence, and increase their decision-making power when they are equipped with resources like entrepreneurship education and livestock assets; the pig passing on programme, in this context, becomes a tool that boosts women's agency and participation in household and community economic activities. On the other hand, Human Capital Theory emphasizes on how investment in women's knowledge, skills, and training specifically through entrepreneurship education promotes their ability to manage small businesses, increase productivity, and make sustainable incomes, hence improving their economic status. Together, these theories show that it is not only the material asset (the pigs) that empowers women, but also the increase in human capabilities gained through education, which enables them to effectively utilize opportunities, overcome barriers, and achieve long-term economic empowerment.

Human theory and empowerment are both very important to this project as they work together to promote women with leadership skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills and confidence enabling women to

challenge traditional roles and will also eradicate fear of failures due to improved confidence

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process and analyze information about a topic (*cabins, 2002*). This chapter outlined research methodologies which comprise research design, research methods, and the location of the study, target populations, the sampling methods, research instruments and construction of the research instruments. It also includes data collection procedures, pilot study, validity and reliability of the research instruments.

Research Method

Research methods are variety of techniques that researchers use when studying a given situation. There are two general categories for research methods: Qualitative and quantitative. Each approach has characteristics and ways of gathering data.

This research used qualitative method. It deals with contextualization, interpretation, and understanding perspectives of the respondents. This method investigates the quality of information and data. It aimed at collecting information on people's views and perceptions through interviews and surveys. As such, the qualitative method is subjective, the outcome depended on the respondents feeling views and perception (*Faryadi, Q, 2019*). This technique aids in the understanding of participants thoughts and reasons behind their opinions by the researcher. In qualitative research method, interviews was be carried out with the participants, where face to face interviews interaction pursued in khongo village, lumbadzi in lilongwe whereby open ended questions were be involved. This research method was essential in the study as it helped the research respondents to be open in

giving their viewpoints and it also helped the researcher to get in-depth information.

Research Design

Research design refers to the overall plan or structure that guides a research study. It outlines the methods and procedures that was used to collect and analyzed data, as well as the approach to be taken in order to answer the research questions or test hypothesis. The research design helped to ensure that the study is conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner, and that the results are reliable and valid.

This research conducted using exploratory research design. Exploratory research design refers to the initial investigation conducted to gather insights, explore a topic, or understand a problem more thoroughly. It is often used when there is limited information or understanding about a subject. The main emphasis in exploratory studies is on the findings and it is also undertaken to better understand the nature of the problem since very limited studies might have been piloted in that area. Exploratory research design include literature reviews, interviews and focus group discussion or observational studies to gain a broad understanding of the matter

Research Setting

This study was conducted in khongo village lumbadzi which is central region of Malawi. Located in lilongwe.

Study Population

The targeted population for this study were be women.

Sampling Method

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individual or items from a larger

population to represent the characteristics of that population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). In this research the researcher used purposive sampling which is a method of non-probability.

Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the research question or objectives. This method is commonly used in qualitative research, where goal is to gain understanding our insights into particular phenomenon. (Patton, M Q, 2020).

Sample size

The research conducted with 20 participants and administered with interview guide to complete.

Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools or techniques that are used to collect data in a research study. These instruments will vary depending on the nature of the research, the type of data needed and the methodology employed. Therefore, the researcher of this study used interview guide as data collection tool. A systematically list of questions called an interview guide is made to assist researchers in conducting in depth interviews. It provided the interviewer with a structure to make sure that all pertinent subjects are discussed throughout the interview, In order to encourage participants to provide through answers, the guide usually consists of open-ended questions along with follow up prompts to go deeper into particular areas of interest. The interview guide guarantees that the goals of research to be accomplished and it helped to maintain consistency between interviews. As the study goes on, it can also be modified and improve in light of new themes and revelations from previous interviews

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is a process of gathering, and analyzing accurate data from a variety of relevant sources find responses to research problems from the research participants. The main of aim of data collection is to gather quality information from the sample selected that can be analyzed and used to support decisions or provide evidence (Bhandari, 2022). Data collection aims to deepen understanding by investigating phenomena, testing hypothesis, or exploring new avenues within the field.

Data collection for this study used interviews approach; these interviews carried out directly with the selected sample. In this research used interview to obtain the data related to the study, this provided flexibility to the respondents to express themselves when responding to the research questions depending on how they understood the research questions. Respondents/participants were expected to provide information on the methods that are used to address cases of abuse and discrimination their community.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is small -scale preliminary investigation conducted before the main research projects. It helps researchers refine their methods, test feasibility, and identify potential issues. For instance, in psychology, a pilot study might involve testing a questionnaire on a small group to ensure it measures what its intended to. (Polit, D, F, & Beck, C.T.2017). This pilot study helped the researcher to check if the questions prepared by the researcher are clear and well understandable by the respondents, and this helped help the researcher to eliminate all the errors and address the weaknesses that would affect the research study, and this improves the research quality.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the act of analyzing,

cleansing, manipulating and modeling a data in order to identify usable information, draw conclusion and support decision making (Harris, 2018). It is the use of statistical and analytical techniques to interpret patterns, trends and relationships in data sets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation and Analysis of Findings According to Objectives

- **Level of Acquired Entrepreneurship Knowledge in nkhangongo village**

The findings reveal a significant acquisition of practical entrepreneurship knowledge among the participants. The training transformed abstract business concepts into applicable skills.

A primary theme was the shift from informal to formal business practices. Many participants, like and a certain women emphasized learning costing, pricing, and basic bookkeeping, which allowed them to move from guessing profits to calculating them accurately. This aligns with studies by (Malebana & Swanepoel, 2015) who note that financial literacy is a foundational pillar for entrepreneurial success, especially for novice entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the training fostered opportunity recognition and value creation. Participants did not just see pigs; they identified related business opportunities such as selling manure exploring value addition like smoked pork and even branding their livestock. This demonstrates a move beyond subsistence to strategic thinking, a key outcome of effective entrepreneurship education (Henry 2005).

Perhaps the most significant finding was the development of business-mindedness. Participants spoke about understanding core concepts like separating capital from profit, calculating opportunity cost and seeing time as a valuable resource. This cognitive shift is critical, as (Sánchez, 2013) argues that entrepreneurship education's greatest impact is often in changing mindsets and fostering an

entrepreneurial identity.

- **Influence on Managing and Growing Income-Generating Activities in nkhangongo village**

The application of acquired knowledge led to tangible improvements in business management and revealed persistent systemic challenges.

Participants showed markedly improved financial and operational management. Strategies included maintaining separate business accounts creating business schedules, planning for seasonal price fluctuations, and forming bulk-buying partnerships to reduce costs. This systematic approach to management reduces risk and increases efficiency, a finding supported by (Lerner & Malmendier, 2013), who link formal business training to improved firm practices among micro - entrepreneurs.

However, the findings also highlight a gap between individual capability and environmental constraints. While women gained skills, they still face external challenges such as accessing affordable loans dealing with complex licensing, gender bias in the marketplace and the lack of animal insurance products. This underscores the limitation of training alone; as (Alvarez & Barney, 2014) suggest, entrepreneurial success is also dependent on the external environment and available resources. The training empowered them to identify and articulate these barriers more clearly.

- **Effect on Control over Household Financial Decisions in nkhangongo village.**

The program had a profound, multi-layered impact on intra-household dynamics and women's financial agency.

A clear trend was the expansion of decision-making domains. Influence ranged from autonomous spending on children's daily and managing family healthcare to joint, more respected decision-making on major investments like school fees home

improvements and even family farm sales. This reflects the concept of “*negotiated agency*” described by (Kabeer, 1999), where economic resources increase a woman’s bargaining power within the household, allowing her to negotiate a more influential role.

The findings also point to a shift in perceived value and self-reliance. Participants reported increased respect from their spouses after contributing significantly to household expenses. One of the women expressed a strong feeling of self-reliance. This increased confidence and social standing is a key component of empowerment, moving beyond income to include psychological and social dimensions (Malhotra 2002). Their control often started with “soft” budgets (Participant 11) and grew as their consistent financial contribution demonstrated competence and reliability.

CONCLUSION FROM THE STUDY

This project set out to examine the impact of the Pig Passing-On Program and its entrepreneurship training. The findings clearly show that the program is more than an income-generation project. It is a catalyst for holistic empowerment. The women of Khongo village have gained knowledge, income, confidence, and a powerful voice. They have transformed from beneficiaries into businesswomen, household decision-makers, and community leaders.

Recommendations

- **Provide Advanced, Specialized Training:** Move beyond basic training. Offer follow - up modules on digital marketing, value-added processing for example meat, leather and navigating formal business registration.
- **Facilitate Access to Financial Services:** Partner with microfinance institutions to

design loan products suited for small-scale pig farmers. Help women build credit histories through their Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).

- **Provide Advanced and Specialized Training:** Organizations should offer follow-up training sessions on more advanced topics. These could include digital marketing for selling products, training on how to process pork into sausages or smoked meat to add value, and guidance on how to formally register a business.
- **Create a Stronger Support System:** Help the women form an official cooperative or business association. A formal group will give them more power to buy supplies cheaply, sell their products for better prices, and access services as a united group.
- **Include Family and Community Awareness Sessions:** Future programs should include meetings with husbands, fathers, and community leaders. This will help everyone understand the benefits of women's entrepreneurship and create a more supportive environment for the women to work in.

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