

# EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

Mukaila. A Ijaiya, <sup>1</sup> Ijaiya, T.A<sup>2</sup>, Ijaiya, G.T,<sup>3</sup> Dauda C.K <sup>4</sup>, Umar J<sup>5</sup> & Bernard O.A<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1&6</sup>Department of Economics, Airforce Institutes of Technology, (AFIT) Kaduna, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Postgraduate Student, Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Department of Economics, University of Ilorin, Kwara State. Nigeria

<sup>4 & 5</sup>Department of Entrepreneurship and Business Studies, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria

## Abstract

**T**his study investigates the effect of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. The paper assesses the influence of three basic features of entrepreneurs, which are risk taking, innovation and managerial skills and how these features have impacted on the poverty reduction in the study area. Data for the study were collected through questionnaire administered to owners of Small-scale businesses that cut across six local government areas of Niger state. 479 responses were received from the respondents and the responses were analyzed using the structural equation model (SEM/AMOS). Results of the analyses show that there exist a statistically significant between entrepreneurship and poverty reduction and  $R^2$  of 77%. The results also revealed that all the three components of entrepreneurship (risk taking, innovation and managerial skills) are statistically significant to poverty reduction in the study area. The findings of this paper have practical for policy makers in the study area as well as Nigeria as a whole. The study therefore, make recommendations that would improve entrepreneurship and how it will reduce poverty in the study area.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Risk taking, Innovation, Managerial skill, Poverty reductions, Niger State, Nigeria

**JEL Classification:** F13, F14, F15, F16, F18 J14, J18

## 1. Introduction

The discourse on the problem of poverty and poverty reduction in the world and Nigeria in particular cannot be overemphasized. However, economic growth in the recent decades has been moving faster and widespread in which it has enable large numbers of people to get out of poverty, but despite this tremendous improvement by some countries and regions, the rate of poverty is still on the increase. Evidence shows that Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa in the year 2020 and 26<sup>th</sup> in the world, but still has its difficulties both in economic and socio-political that have subjected its people liable to poverty (Ijaiya *et al.*, 2021).

Nigeria government had, since independent, comes up with policies to reduce the level of poverty both at local, state and national levels, policies such as; Austerity Measure and Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), Directorate of food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure(DFRRI), Integrated Rural Development Projects, Better Life Program, Family Support Program, Mass Transit Program, National Directorate of Employment, Peoples' Bank, Family Economic Advancement Program, National Poverty Eradication Program, Subsidy Re-investment Program (SURE-P), have been put in place, without appreciable impact poverty reduction in the country For instance, report shows that 40.1 percent of the total population, that is almost 83 million people are living below the country's poverty line of N137, 430.00 (i.e., \$381.75) per year in 2019 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2019).

Economists and management scholars have recognised that entrepreneurship may offer a significant part of the solution to poverty around the world (Steven *et al.* 2020). A related focus regarding the ways in which poverty can be reduced is through entrepreneurship and new venture creation (Chen, *et al.*, 2017). Adekunle & Kayode (2014), described entrepreneurship as an act of being an entrepreneur. According to Paul (2014) entrepreneurship is the effective manipulation of human intelligence as demonstrated in creative performance. It is the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek out a new investment opportunity, establish an enterprise based on this and run it successfully either for profit making or social benefit. However, this study focuses on the impact of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: section two provides the literature review of entrepreneurship and poverty reduction, section three provides methodology and data source, section four present and interpret the result, while conclusion and policy implication are provided in the last section.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Concept of Entrepreneurs

According to Adekunle & Kayode (2014), entrepreneurship can be described as the act of being an entrepreneur. However, the word 'entrepreneur' can be taken to mean an individual who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods and the result of one effort in entrepreneurship may be the creation of a new organisation or revitalising an existing organisation in response to a perceived opportunity. An entrepreneur is an individual who creates a new business, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. The process of setting up a business is known as entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator, a source of new ideas, goods, services, and business/or procedures (Adam, 2021).

### 2.2 Concept of Entrepreneurship

Scholars has described entrepreneurship differently, however, there is no definite definition of entrepreneurship, the concept depends upon the usage. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor studies, entrepreneurship has become an essential tool for job and wealth creation, which highlights the relationship between economic growth and entrepreneurship (Acs *et al.*, 2005; Gómez-Grass *et al.*, 2010; Seunke *et al.*, 2013; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Thurik *et al.*, 2008). Entrepreneurship is defined as a multidimensional concept (Verheul *et al.*, 2002), involving a range of business activities from the process of "creative destruction" (Schumpeter, 1934) to innovative creation of additional value for an existing or "new organization" (Harbi and Anderson, 2010). Entrepreneurship is also defined as an attempt at new business or venture creation, such as self-employment, new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business (Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring Report, 2014). More importantly, in recent times, entrepreneurship is seen as a pathway to reducing poverty and conflicts in developing countries (Bruton *et al.*, 2013; Sutter *et al.*, 2018; Tobias *et al.*, 2013). Entrepreneurship has to do with the acquisition of skills, creativity, confidence and courage in order to create employment and wealth for oneself and others. It involves exploring, setting up of a business enterprise and then nurturing it to success (Charles and Philip 2014). This necessitates the important to investigate the effect of small business entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in the study area.

Conceptualising small business entrepreneurship as an entrepreneur, a small business entrepreneurship is a person who owns and runs their own business, they are most likely to make a profit that supports their family and live a modest lifestyle. They are not interested in making huge profits or venture capital funding. Typically, the business is run by hiring local employees and or family members. Part of this category of entrepreneurship are local grocery stores, hairdressers, small boutiques, consultants and plumbers (Sutter *et al.*, 2018). In this paper, small business entrepreneurship is defined based on the value addition of small business by households that engaged in other businesses to augment their earnings.

### 2.3 Concept of Poverty

According to Alkire and Santos, (2014); and Venot, (2016), poverty has various meanings and dimensions, which can either be rural or urban poverty. Chowdhury and Mukhopadhyaya, (2012) and Ravallion, (2011), consider poverty as a condition in which people are economically, culturally, educationally and environmentally disadvantaged. Poverty is a multidimensional in nature; scholars have described it in different ways. There is no precise agreement on the definition of poverty. Depending on the societies and changes over time, the perception contexts, meanings and usages may differ among the observers and researchers. For example, World Bank (2000) defined poverty as a condition of having insufficient resources or income. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic needs, such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water, and health services.

#### 2.3.1 Poverty and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Table 1, shows poverty trend in Nigeria between 1980 and 2019, statistics shows poverty is on the increase in Nigeria not until recently in 2019 when the country witness a dropped in the rate of poverty to about 40.1 percent which represent 82.9 million of the nation's total population (Ijaiya *et al.*, 2021).

Table 1: The Poverty Profile of Nigeria 1980 – 2019

Year	Poverty Incidence (%)	Estimated Population (Million)	Population in Poverty (Million)
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.4
2019	40.1	190	82.9

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), (2010), (2019).

The situation of poverty in Nigeria can also depicts regional/state variations. For example, in 2019 the poverty rate in North East stood at 71.86 percent when compared to South West which is 12.12 percent (NBS, 2019). When socio-economic indicators such as life expectancy at birth, access to education, Human Development Index and per capita income are used to measure the rate of poverty, the rate of poverty in Nigeria shows no significant reduction. For example, Nigeria's HDI was 0.539 (ranked 161 out of 189 countries) in 2019, per capita income stood at (\$4,910), life expectancy at birth in years was (54.7 years), and maternal mortality ratio gives (917deaths per 100,000 live births). These figures were very low compared to countries such as Mauritius whose HDI was 0.804 (ranked 61 out of 189 countries), per capita income (\$25,266), life expectancy at birth in years (75 years), and maternal mortality ratio (61 deaths per 100,000 live births) (UNDP, 2020).

Related to the concept and trends of poverty in Nigeria is the causes of poverty, which can be attributed to the outbreak of diseases as recently witnessed with COVID-19, environmental disasters (flood experienced along major river banks in Nigeria (Rivers Niger and Benue) and drought in the Sahel areas of Northern Nigeria, crops and livestock diseases that affected most farmers, conflicts as being experienced in the North West (bandits) and North East (Boko Haram) which may eventually leads to the shortages of farm products, adult illiteracy, lack of access to basic needs, such as food, shelter, drinkable water, health, sanitation, epileptic electric supply among others (Atoyebi, & Ijaiya, 2005; Campbell, 2010; Ijaiya *et al.*, 2016; Odinkalu, 2018; Ijaiya, *et al.*, 2020; Orijinmo, 2020; Britannica, 2021; Ijaiya *et al.*, 2021). The effects of increase in the rate of poverty in the state and Nigrria at large can lead to poor nutrition and physical health problems, which will eventually lead to malnutrition and starvation, infectious disease, mental illness and drug dependence related crime and violence, as well as increase in the rate of "Almangiri" menace (Ijaiya *et al.*, 2016).

### 2.3.2 Poverty reduction in Nigeria

In other to reduce the level of poverty, Nigeria government have come with different development plans, policies and programmes. Among these are development plans, policies and programmes which includes: the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth National Development Plans between 1960s and 1970s, the introduction of Cost of Living Allowance in the 1960s; while the Adebo and Udoji Wage Review Panels came later in 1960s and early 1970s and the National Minimum Wage Act of 1981 which were meant mostly for civil servants; Operation Feed the Nation, the establishment of River Basin Development Authorities, the Agricultural Development Programmes, the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme, the Rural Electrification Scheme and the Green Revolution; the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures, the National Directorate of Employment, the Better Life Programme, the Peoples' Bank, the Community Banks, the Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme (Olayide, 1976; Ayida, 1987; Ayo, 1988; Anyanwu, *et al.*, 1997; Ijaiya *et al.*, 2021).

With the return of democracy in 1999, here comes the introduction of the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) later change to the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); the Seven-Point Agenda; the Transformation Agenda [e.g. Community Service, Women and Youth Employment Scheme and Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE- P)]; the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (with emphasis on social inclusion and social investment programmes such as the conditional cash transfer, the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) [through trader money and market money, job creation and youth empowerment (e.g. N-Power programme and improvement in human capital), investment in infrastructure, improvement in the business environment and promotion of Digital-led growth] (Ogwumike, 2001; Ibeanu, 2004; Igbuzo, 2004; NPC, 2004; Ijaiya, 2007; Ole, 2009; Dodo, 2010; FGN. 2012, 2014; NSIO, 2016; NASSCO, 2020; Ijaiya *et al.*, 2021).

However, in 2020, the Nigeria government launched the Economic Sustainability Plan with the aim of facing the challenges emanated from COVID-19 Pandemic. The Plan was meant to inspire the economy by averting businesses to collapse and ensuring liquidity, retaining or creating jobs using labour-intensive methods, especially

in the areas such as, agriculture, facility maintenance, housing and direct labour interventions. The Plan also undertook growth-enhancing and job-creating infrastructural investments in roads, bridges, solar power, and communications technologies, manufacturing and local production of goods and services at all levels and advocates the use of local content in the production of goods and services and extend safety to the very poor and other vulnerable groups (including women and persons living with disabilities) through pro-poor spending (BOF, 2020).

### 2.3 Theory Underpinned the Study

The concept of the capacity approach (Just and Carpenter 1992), according to Robeyns (2005), is a broad normative framework used for evaluating, measuring and assessing the well-being of individuals in order to help formulate policies and programs to effect the socioeconomic transformation of societies. The causes of poverty can be varied and wide, but many scholars attribute the incidence of poverty to lack of basic human capabilities to convert opportunities by “smart” individuals (entrepreneurs) into profitable business ventures. The capacity approach was developed by Sen (1981), and it seeks to measure human well-being from the perspective of expansion of people’s capabilities and not just the maximization of utility or income.

The capacity approach mainly focuses on the functions or living conditions of individuals and defines them as “what people can do or cannot do, or what they can or cannot be” (Sen, 1985). This is concerned with the ability of persons to achieve freedom of development. Since its introduction into mainstream research as a method for measuring poverty, inequality and distribution justice in social theory, the United Nations has adopted it for the annual Human Development Reports (HDR) since 1990 (UNDP, 2010). Shepherd (2015) identifies the need to explore entrepreneurial opportunities that build on identifying people’s capabilities to create businesses to help alleviate poverty. Greco *et al.* (2015) evaluated a community-based participatory intervention that sought to improve maternal health in rural Malawi using the capacity approach. They realized that the quality of rural women’s lives is shaped by social relations and norms of society. Based on the wide use of the capacity, this paper adopts the approach to examine the impact entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Niger State.

In this paper, three capabilities of farm entrepreneurs, namely, education, economic and socio-cultural, are used to develop and test four hypotheses.

### 2.4 Empirical Review

Ali and Abdel (2013) explores the relationship between the entrepreneurship development and economic growth, the study employed correlation research design. The overall sample consists of 80 participants in Benadir region. The study found weak positive relationship between entrepreneurship development and poverty reductions. The Significant or P-value was less enough, suggesting that the two variables indicated that the computed R-value was -0.195; this indicates that there was weak positive correlation between entrepreneurship development and poverty reduction.

Kareem, (2015) investigate the impact of entrepreneurship on poverty alleviation. The study focuses on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area; the relationship between entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation; non parametric method of analysis which involves Chi-Square method, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis w adopted to achieve the stated objectives. The study concludes that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation at 1% probability level.

Jie and Steven (2018) argue that poverty reduction through entrepreneurship has often emphasized external help from government or charitable institutions. Evidence from China is used to argue that poverty reduction through entrepreneurship is an internal process which helps the poor to undertake positive actions to reduce their poverty. To conventional analyses emphasizing endogeneity and sustainability, social networks rooted in nostalgia are proposed as another determinant of the success of entrepreneurial poverty reduction initiatives. That expanded theoretical framework provides a refined and deeper understanding of how poverty reduction through entrepreneurship succeeds or fails.

Adebayo and Nassar (2014) assess impact of Micro and Small business entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Ibadan metropolis, South Western Nigeria. The study population was drawn from a register of relevant trade associations and published government documents, which yielded a total of 383 enterprises. The study used proportional sampling method. The main Statistical tool was the Counterfactual or Difference-in-Difference model of impact assessment. With  $\exp(\beta_3) = 1.385$ , the empirical results indicated that the odds of individuals in micro and small business entrepreneurship in Ibadan metropolis to earn more than US\$1.25 per day increased by 39 %. The study found that the impact could have been more pronounced but for some socio-economic, infrastructural and management challenges. Study recommends strengthening of youth entrepreneurship, increased publicity of government Business Development and Support Services, liberalization of access to and

usage of business premises, reduction in cost of production, improvement of infrastructural facilities among others.

### 3. Methodology and Data Source

This study was carried out in Niger State of Nigeria. Niger State is part of North Central Region. It's located in an area of about 150 Kilometer from Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria and on Latitude 8022'N and 11030'N and Longitude 3030'N and 7020'E. Data was collected through structured questionnaire administered among small business owners between the month of March 2021 and June 2021. A multistage sample design was used to collect cross sectional data from small business owners in the study area. Specifically, a purposive sampling method were used in the selection of the respondents. The first stage was to identify the sample areas which comprise 25 local government areas, which was divided into 3 senatorial districts that are Niger East, Niger North and Niger South. Two local government areas were randomly selected from each of the senatorial districts in the state, this was based on the proximity, ecological, socio-cultural, language speaking, and economic variations. This was necessary for equal representation of the study area. The second stage was to identified the number of small business owners in each study area, while the third stage of the sampling involves purposive random selection of 87 small business owners in each of the selected study areas. In all a total sample of about 522 business owners were purposively selected to respond to the questions in the questionnaires, out of which 479 were found useful for the analysis of this study.

In determining the influence of small business entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria, an econometrics model of simultaneous equation modeling through structural equation model was built around the indicators of entrepreneurship and poverty reduction as the main objective of this paper. The model was used in estimating the impact of these indicators on the poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. The variables considered for this study are as follows: Risk taking, innovation and managerial skills.

These can be represented in the following model:

$$PovR = F(ENT) \quad (1)$$

Where:

$$ENT = (RT, INN, MS) \quad (2)$$

When substituting equation 2 into 1, then equation 1 becomes:

$$PovR = F(RT, INN, MS) \quad (3)$$

Transform equation 3 into linear equation, equation 3 then, becomes

$$PovR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 RT + \beta_2 INN + \beta_3 MS + u_i$$

Where:

PovR = Poverty reduction of the female heads of household in the study area.

RT = Risk taking by the owners of small business in the study area.

INN = Innovative ideas of the owners of the small business in the study area.

MS = Management skill acquired by the owners of the small business owners in the study area.

$\beta_0$  = the intercept

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_3$  = parameter estimates (or co-efficient) associated with the influence of the entrepreneurship indicators on poverty reduction in Niger State.

$U_i$  = Error terms.

our *a-priori* expectations or the expected pattern of behaviour between the dependent variable (Poverty reduction) and independent variable (Components of Entrepreneurship), are  $RT > 0$ ,  $INN > 0$ ,  $MS > 0$ .

The responses to the questionnaires by the respondents were coded and then analyzed using SPSS version 22. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was conducted using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS). All tests were at 95 percent confidence interval.

## 4. Results and Discussions of Findings

### 4.1 Measurement Model Fit

In the measurement model, the generated model fit together with the output generated were the Comparative fit index (CFI), Normed fit index (NFI), Goodness of fit index (GFI), Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) and Relative Chi-square, all meet their expected range to justify the validity of the measurement model.

**Table 2. Established Criteria for fit Indices**

Fit Indices	Authors	Recommended Values	Values from current model
CFI	Bentler, (1990) Hatcher, (1994),	>.90	9.32
NFI	Bentler & Bonett, (1987)	>.90	9.53
GFI	Yuan, K.H, (2005) Steiper, J.H, (2007)	>.90	8.68
RMSEA	Hair et.al., (2010) Byrne, (2001), Hu & Bentler (1999)	>.80 < 0.50 or <= 0.08	0.06
Relative Chi-square	Marsh & Hocevar, (1985), Bentler (1990)	0.05 or < 5.0	3.321

The CFI generated for this study was 9.32, NFI was 9.53, GFI was 8.68, RMSEA is 0.06 and Relative chi-square is 3.321. The unidimensionality was also tested and this was achieved because all factors loading were positive and greater than 0.5.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity Testing**

	RT	INN	MS	Pov
RT	<b>0.83</b>			
INN	0.35	<b>0.76</b>		
MS	0.32	0.17	<b>0.81</b>	
Pov	0.39	0.26	0.31	<b>0.85</b>

The value in diagonal and bold is the square root of AVE of the construct while other values are the correlation between the respective constructs. The discriminant validity is said to be achieved when a diagonal value (bold) is higher than the values in its row and column. Therefore, this study exhibits sufficient discriminant validity since the value in bold is higher than the values in its row and column. Also, there is the absence of multicollinearity since the correlation coefficient among the latent variables did not exceed 0.85 (Zainudin 2015).

**Table 3: Results of SEM on the Impact of Gender equality on Poverty Reduction in Niger State, Nigeria**

Construct	$\beta$	SE	Beta	CR	$\rho$	Results
RT	0.314	0.041	0.252	5.342	0.002	Significant
INN	0.153	0.053	0.432	6.437	0.000	Significant
MS	0.249	0.033	0.351	4.581	0.000	Significant

R = 0.88  
R<sup>2</sup> = 0.77

Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis on the impact of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.77 shows that 77 percent variation in the dependent variable poverty can be explained by the explanatory variables (Entrepreneurship Components). According to Chin *et al.* (2003), R<sup>2</sup> values greater than 0.67 is having practical value. R<sup>2</sup> value between 0.33 and 0.66 is assumed to have moderate explanatory value, while R<sup>2</sup> value between 0.19 and 0.32 has weak explanatory value. Therefore, R<sup>2</sup> for this study is 0.77 and it has a practical explanatory power. Looking at the individual variables, all independent variables, that is, entrepreneurship components are statistically significant, an indication that the model is fit and acceptable. Risk taking (RT) has a coefficient of 0.314, with critical ratio of 5.342 was positively related to poverty reduction and statistically significant at 1 percent level. The beta result of 0.252 indicates that risk taking has 25.2 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction in Niger State, this can be attributed to the level of risk taking by the entrepreneurs in the study area for them to get out of poverty. Innovation (INN) has coefficient of 0.249 with critical ratio of 6.437 been positively related to poverty reduction and statistically significant at 1 per cent level. The beta result of 0.432 indicates that innovation has 43.2 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. This could be as a result of the fact that most respondents think outside the box by bringing in innovative activities to be able to get out of poverty. Managerial skills (MS) have coefficient of 0.249 with critical ratio of 4.581 was positively related and statistically significant at 1 percent level. The beta result of 0.351 indicates that managerial skills have 35.1 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. This can be attributed to the fact that most entrepreneur in the study area are literate and well trained and have what it takes when it comes to managerial skills. This result goes in line with our a priori expectation also similar with the work of Eric *et al.* (2018) in their study the relation between entrepreneurship and rural poverty alleviation in China and Kabeer, (2015) who were of the view that entrepreneurship components such as risk taking, innovation and managerial skills have impacted positively on poverty status of the people in rural China.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper investigated the impact of entrepreneurship components on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria, using Structural Equation Model technique (SEM/AMOS). The findings of this study showed that risk taking (RT), innovation (INN), and managerial skills (MS) all have positive impact on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. This study focused on investigating the causal relationship between entrepreneurship and poverty using Niger state, Nigeria. The result of the study showed clearly that there is a very high level of poverty in the study area. There is a feedback causality effect between entrepreneurship and poverty in Niger State, Nigeria. Risk taking, innovation and managerial skill has far reduced poverty in the study area. This is consistent with the few studies that have investigated the causal relationship between both. The result of the study further showed that risk taking, innovation and managerial skills drastically reduced poverty in the study area. Thus, there is a direct link between poverty and entrepreneurship in the study area.

Despite the results of this study, the following recommendation were suggested. It recommends that small business owners in the study area, should endeavor to take economic risk in their day-to-day activities, this will go a long way in putting them out of poverty. It is also recommended that the issues of innovation should be taken into consideration, this can be done through empowerment. This should not be left for the government alone; the private sectors are also encouraged to be actively involved in this as well as individuals through imbining the spirit of entrepreneurship training. The study also recommends that both the small business owners and individuals in the study area should be encouraged to improve their managerial skills, this will go a long way in assisting them managing their businesses and be able to sustain the businesses and get them out of poverty.

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