

**Non-Governmental Organizations as Tools for Women Empowerment:
A Study of Development Education Centre, Enugu-Nigeria**

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Abstract

The study is dwelt on assessing the effort of Development Education Centre (DEC) in enhancing livelihood of the women in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study because of its explanatory simplicity and simple random sampling technique was used to select 232 registered members. Paired Z Test was used to test Hypotheses one (1) and Two (2) while Likert options of Exposed and Not Exposed was used to test Hypothesis three (3). The result revealed that majority of the members are still in their productive stage of life cycle, majority of the women's occupations are farming for years, major services provided by DEC to their members are centred on empowerment provisions and finally members annual savings, credit acquisition and skill acquisition indicated increased positive change after joining DEC. It was recommended that government should encourage DEC by giving grants and donating agro-allied equipment to the who shall in turn allocate to the women according to their registered skill programmes because DEC cannot sustain it all alone; DEC should upgrade their Group formations from mere women group associations to registered Cooperative Societies. By so doing, each of these trades will be registered as specialized Cooperative Societies in order to increase capacity building and finally DEC should concentrate on these viable trades/services by putting more efforts in place towards surmounting the major challenges faced by these rural women in the course of their participation as beneficiaries for sustainability and promotion of women empowerment.

Keywords: Non-governmental Organization, Women Empowerment

JEL Classification Codes: L31, B54

1. Introduction

The term "non-governmental organization" (NGO) was first publicized when the United Nations (UN) was established in 1945. It refers to non-profit groups that operate independently of government affiliation and do not pursue profit-making activities. Consequently, any private organization that does not engage in criminal activities or solely function as an opposition political party can be recognized as an NGO by the UN. By excluding government officials from their board of directors and membership, NGOs maintain their non-governmental identity. NGOs encompass a diverse range of entities that serve various purposes, typically aligned with the objectives of their founders or members. These objectives commonly encompass economic, social, educational, and enlightening spheres, along with closely associated goals such as environmental enhancement and the promotion of the welfare of the organization's members or beneficiaries (Streeten, 2017).

NGOs have diverse purposes and serve to advance the objectives of their founders or members in various areas, including the economic, social, educational, and enlightenment realms. According to Umebali (2006), non-governmental organizations are involved in a range of development initiatives aimed at improving the overall quality of life. These organizations support local institutions that are accountable to the community, self-directed, and self-financing, thereby initiating a bottom-up approach to people-centered development.

Iriye (2014) outlines various categorizations of NGOs based on their level of collaboration and orientation. These classifications include charitable, service-oriented, participatory, and empowering non-profit organizations. Some focus on alleviating poverty by providing essential resources and knowledge to individuals in need, such as access to food and safe drinking water. Others specialize in investigating and documenting human rights violations, extending legal aid to victims affected by such abuses (Bond, 2020).

On women empowerment, Women need essential means of livelihood particularly the rural women who in most cases are regarded as the poorest of the poor notwithstanding their role in development. Women are key agents for development and they play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economy, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care, skill acquisition and education are among the many challenges they face. These are further aggravated by the global economic crisis and climatic change. Empowering them is essential, not only for the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also for overall economic

productivity and rural development, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide. Participation of women in shaping laws, policies and programmes on all issues that affect their lives including improved food and nutrition, security and better livelihoods will go a long way in empowering them. Training equips women with skills to pursue new livelihood and adapt technologically to their need towards achieving rural development (United Nations [UN], 2021).

Empowerment is a set of activities necessary for everyday life activities such as provision of basic necessities of life that will collectively ensure rural development. It is an enablement to achieve all round life sustainability. The study area being Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State is a rural local government area with rural women residing in it. The Rural women are those women who live in the villages or interior communities. The majority of the poor live in rural areas of Enugu State and about 70% are women. In spite of the tremendous contribution of women to development, rural women in Enugu state and Nkanu West LGA continue to suffer invisibility, low level of formal skill acquisition, low income, low decision-making involvement, low access to credit and limited access to infrastructural development.

On the other hand, a group of concerned citizens founded the Development Education Center (DEC) Enugu in March 1988 with the help of Cecilia Asogwa, who had previously collaborated with organizations such as the Center for Applied Religion and Education (CARE) and Christian for A New Society (CANS) in Ibadan, Nigeria. The primary objective of the center's establishment was to support the self-sufficiency of women. Mrs. Cecilia Asogwa had extensive experience working with groups dedicated to promoting women's advancement. She worked for groups that supported initiatives for the advancement of women. She saw there was an urgent need to help rural women's groups in communities to establish strong cooperative associations so they could eradicate poverty, participate in self-help, functional literacy and skill acquisition programs. She discovered that she can accomplish this through inspiring, empowering, and allowing rural women group leaders who have lived in rural areas all of their lives to become animators among women and other members of their communities (Cecilia (2020)). In Enugu State this prestigious non-governmental organization exist in many Communities including Nkanu West Local Government Area.

Women play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition, security, income generation, savings mobilization, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing. They contribute to agriculture and rural enterprises and fuel local and global

economy (Ukwuaba, 2013). Women are often concentrated in low-skilled, low-productivity and low income or unpaid jobs, poor working conditions, violation of their affirmative action rights and limited social protection (UN, 2021). Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformation economic, environmental and social changes. Rural women form the backbone of the agricultural labour force across most of the developing countries. Bruce and Demasson (2017) stated that rural women constitute the social and economic environment of the total population. Rural women play crucial roles in eradicating rural poverty and improving the well-being of their families yet continue to face stereotypes discrimination that deny them equitable access to opportunities, resources, assets and services (Adekola, Omisore & Adeoye, 2015). It is therefore important to empower women to obtain skills that will enable them to survive in this challenging time.

Over the years, government has channeled a lot of resources on empowerment programmes and policies such as Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE); International Women Right Action Watch (IWRAP); National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); among others, which did not yield much anticipated result due to neglect by successive governments, cultural practice and various social impediments (Afolabi, 2005). Magaji (2004) earlier findings showed that women have been marginalized throughout the 20th century and have also formed a substantial majority of the poor since the fight to eradicate poverty began. There are now many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are complimenting the efforts of the Government in uplifting women with their empowerment activities and service delivery to especially rural women such as Women Information Network (WINET) Enugu, Women Protection Organization (WOPO) Lagos, Women Law and Development Center (WLDC) Lagos, among others.

Some studies have been carried out by researchers (Afolabi, 2005; Magaji, 2004; UN, 2021; World Bank, 2000; Okeowo, 2014) which targeted at women empowerment through government agencies and programmes. None of such studies to the researcher's knowledge have investigated women empowerment through Nongovernmental Organizations and the same time dwelling on women Cooperative Groups basis. This study therefore became necessary to explore the empowerment activities of DEC among rural women in Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State. The pertinent questions therein are: What are the activities of DEC in empowering rural women in Nkanu West LGA? What are the savings and credit acquisition opportunities of rural women before and after joining DEC in Nkanu West

LGA? Is there level of skill development exposure of women before and after joining DEC in Nkanu West LGA?

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant improvement on the savings mobilization of the women after joining DEC.

H₀₂: There is no significant improvement on the credit acquisition of the women after joining DEC.

H₀₃: Skill acquisition of the women has no significant different after joining DEC.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Nongovernmental Organization

Streeten (2017) opines that non-Governmental Organizations are working to lessen human suffering and help underdeveloped areas grow. They accomplish this in a variety of methods, including by providing funds for initiatives, providing services, creating capacity, raising awareness, and encouraging different groups to organize themselves. According to Bond (2020), NGOs are crucial in assisting men, women, and households in meeting their needs. He listed various roles and responsibilities for NGOs, including counseling and support services, advocacy and awareness-raising, legal help, and microfinance. With the use of these programs, people can develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities, take charge of their own life, and eventually feel empowered. It demonstrates how NGOs are taking on a bigger role in development cooperation and how they might close the gap between the state and the populace. Bond (2020) observed that NGOs support community development by improving their capabilities.

According to Langran (2012), NGOs should work to give women a real voice in every institution of government, including the judicial system, the civil service, the private sector, and civil society, so they can participate equally with men in public discourse and decision-making and have an impact on decisions that will shape the future of their families and nations. Again, the conceptual linkage between NGOs and empowerment is that there is an increasing recognition of the significance of economic empowerment in advancing women's rights and achieving broader development objectives, including economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education, and well-being (Linderberg & Bryant, 2021).

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been evaluated as key actors in promoting women's empowerment and have committed themselves to supporting economic empowerment initiatives for women. These efforts are driven by the understanding that empowering women to

exercise their rights and enhance their well-being can lead to reductions in household poverty, improved economic growth, increased productivity, and enhanced efficiency (Benneth, 2012).

2.1.2 Concept of Women Empowerment

NGOs both domestically and abroad play a significant role in aiding and enticing governments to carry out the policies that they have endorsed in international fora, driving general development and empowerment (Linderberg & Bryant, 2021). Afolabi (2015) explains that the process of empowerment entails enhancing a woman's capacity to organize herself, strengthen her self-reliance, assert her autonomy in decision-making, and effectively manage resources. This process enables women to challenge and overcome their subordination by promoting their independence. Considering that women constitute the majority of the world's poor, economic empowerment emerges as a crucial avenue for women to unlock their potential and advance their rights (Boer, 2012).

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Theory of Collective Action

This theory is linked to authors such as Bourdieu and Coleman (Hauberer, 2011). The theory emphasizes on collective effort of grass roots groups in a community in which people come together to work in order to improve their socio-economic standard of living for the development of their community through collective effort.

The theory emphasizes collective social economic benefits derived from cooperation between individuals and groups in our communities through collective efforts. The theory is perceived as bond that binds individual and groups together for socio-economic reasons. It involves people and groups working together in trust to achieve stated developmental objectives. This theory holds that women in large group should come together to work for the development of their communities and to help one another in coordinated form.

2.2.2 Theory of Power and Change

There has been much review of the theoretical literature relating to women's empowerment. In an effort to comprehend the meaning of the word empowerment, this study will integrate two theories—the comprehension of theories of Power and theories of Change—to build a theory of empowerment. It has been made easier to understand power in the plural as "powers" by Foucault (1984). According to him, empowerment is the process of acquiring "power" on both an individual and a group level. It is

the capacity to act independently and the process of being able to act and make one's own decisions about life and society among individuals or a community. By connecting power with ideas of authority and rule, Weber (1947) related power with his interest in bureaucracy. Based on his interests in economics or female emancipation, Weber was interested in power as a factor of dominance. This perspective has been embraced by various feminist organizations, advocating for a multi-tiered approach to empowerment, encompassing different levels of power. Like capability to make decisions, exercise authority, solve issues and to be able to access and manage production resources.

Parenti (1978) describes change theory as the ability to control powerful resources in order to get what you want such as income generation, skill acquisition, savings mobilization, etc, despite resistance. He stated that an important aspect of change in empowerment is having access to valued resources such as land, housing, technical resources such as money and skills. Having access to the same valued resources and opportunities as others was important for people's empowerment process. (Boer 2012) outlined common theories of change to include; Providing services that improve welfare, building the capacity of organizations to represent people's interest. Empowerment requires that power can change. If power cannot change, then employment is not possible, in other words, if power can change, then employment is possible.

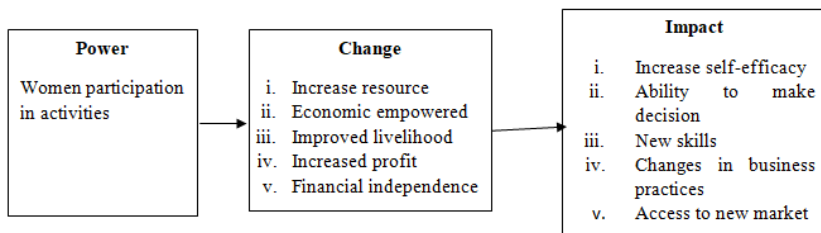


Figure1: Summary on Theory of Power and Change

Source: Researcher's own Concept 2023

The above concept shows that women would have socio- economic powers when they participate in activities that will bring about socio- economic changes and will in turn impact their lives in terms of Self- efficacy, ability to make decisions, posses' new skills, changes in business practices and wider access to new market models that will increase their savings, among others in the study area.

2.4 Empirical Review

Empowerment has been studied from a variety of angles by scholars. In Shiraz, Iran, Kalma-Raj (2017) assessed the influence of NGOs' strategies for women's emancipation. He conceptualizes and analyzes empowerment in his study at the individual and communal levels. Data from 195 women who participated in NGOs' activities were included in the study. Regression modeling was used for the studies, and the results revealed that their employment level is moderate, indicating that they are neither enough nor insufficiently enabled.

Fabunmi (2014) did a study on the advancement of women's education. making use of secondary school data from Edo state. The mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variance were used to measure the data. According to the findings, there were 77 more men than women enrolled overall, at 51. The results, however, indicated that there is a gender gap in schooling between men and women.

A study on the contribution of microfinance through the Self-Help Organization (SHO) program to women's empowerment was also carried out by Sarumathiand *et al.*, (2009). In this study, the psychological, social, and economic components of microfinance's contribution to women's empowerment were taken into account. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study, which was conducted in rural Kaduna. For analysis, the researcher employed cross tabulation, the paired t test, and the simple correlation coefficient. The findings indicated that participation in the microfinance through Self Help Organization (SHO) program had positively impacted rural women's psychological wellbeing and sense of social empowerment, with all three indicators gradually increasing among these women.

In India, Rabindra (2018) conducted research on the position of women in agriculture. The National Sample Survey (NSS) provided the data. 72% of all rural families are made up of people who work in agriculture. To examine the data, simple percentages, means, and coefficient variance were utilized. According to the analysis, 53% of farmers were women and only 19% were men. Furthermore, 53% of the women were revealed. 11% of them had less than 0.8 hectares of land, while 42% had no land at all. While 15.5 hectares were owned by about 17% of men indicating that there are a lot of farming women in the Indian states of Bihar and Goa, but they have limited access to resources like land, which keeps them from being able to scale it economically.

3. Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study because of its explanatory simplicity. Nkanu-West Local Government area of Enugu State is the area of study. Nkanu West local government area has its headquarters in the town of Agbani with fourteen (14) Political wards and Eight (8) major traditional Communities but DEC has registered members only in Six (6) of these communities and there are 17 women groups as tabulated below. Therefore, the population of the study was from the 232 members, and 25 DEC Staff. This information was produced by DEC Senior Program Officer; Helen Ifeji. Data was analyzed solely with descriptive statistics and tested with inferential statistics.

Table 1: Summary of the Population

Nkanu West LGA	Registered Women Group of DEC	Membership	DEC Staff
Agbani	4	59	6
Amurri	3	43	4
Akpugo	3	38	5
Amodu	2	27	3
Obe	2	26	3
Ozalla	3	39	4
Total	17	232	25

Source: Field Data, 2023.

Sampling is the process of selecting from the population, those elements which the researcher will have access to for the purpose of collecting data to execute the research (Cletus 2001). The total membership of 232 will be adopted to determine the sample size of the members. (Yamane, 1973) formula was adopted for the study. The formula is given as:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where; *n* = Samplesize

N = Populationsofmembers

e = Levelofsignificance (5%) *i* = Cons tan *t*

$$N = 232$$

$$n = 232 / 1 + 232(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 232 / 1.58$$

$$n = 146$$

Therefore, the membership sample size = 146

Based on Bowey proportionate allocation formula, the sample sizes were allocated among the sampled six communities in Nkanu West LGA as follows;

$$\text{numberofmembership} / \text{totalPopulation} \times \text{Sample}.....(2)$$

Table 2: Summary of the Sample

Nkanu West LGA	Registered Women Group of DEC	Membership	DEC Staff
Agbani	4	59	59/232 × 146 = 37
Amurri	3	43	43/232 × 146 = 27
Akpugo	3	38	38/232 × 146 = 24
Amodu	2	27	27/232 × 146 = 17
Obe	2	26	26/232 × 146 = 16
Ozalla	3	39	39/232 × 146 = 25
Total	17	232	146

Source: Field Data, 2023

While the DEC staff = 25

Thus, the sample size is 146 add total number of DEC staff = 171
 Descriptive statistical tools such as simple percentage, frequency tables were used in analysing the research questions. They were presented in tables in the subsequent section. The percentage formula is:

$$n \times 100 / N \times 1.....(3)$$

Where;

n = Samplesize

N = Numberof Re sponses

100 = Percentages

Thus, Likert-scales and tables were used in analyzing research question 3, in which 3.0 was used as mean rating whereby mean variation of below 3.0 was considered ineffective and above was effective.

Z tests were used to test hypotheses formulated for the study. The Z test analysis was run using SPSS so as to determine changes in savings, credit acquisition and skill acquisition of the members BEFORE and AFTER joining DEC.

Z test was used since the sample size is large. A sample size is considered large when the size is equal to or greater than 30 (ie $n \geq 30$) formula for Z test is stated below:

$$Z = \frac{X1 - X2}{\sqrt{S1^2 \div N1 + S2^2 \div N2}}.....(4)$$

Where;

$X1$ and $X2$ = Sample mean

$S1^2$ and $S2^2$ = Deviation standard

$N1$ and $N2$ = Sample size

4. Data and Result Discussion

The data generated during the field survey were presented and analyzed in this section.

4.1 Socio economic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3: Distribution of Response Rate

Variables	DEC Staff		DEC members	
	Frequency (N = 25)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (N = 121)	Percentage (%)
Gender				
Female	19	76	121	100
Male	6	24	-	-
Age				
10 - 18 years	-	-	-	-
19 - 30 years	3	12	8	7
31 - 40 years	13	52	37	30
41 - 50 years	7	28	53	45
51 years and above	2	8	23	19
Marital Status				
Married	19	76	78	65
Single	4	16	1	0.8
Widow	2	8	43	35
Divorce	-	-	-	-
Number Of Children				
1 - 4	21	84	15	12
5 - 8	4	16	45	37
9 - 12	-	-	56	47
13 and above	-	-	5	4
Number of Years in DEC				
0 - 2 years	4	16	9	7
3 - 5 years	5	20	40	33
6 - 8 years	6	24	61	51
9 - 11 years	7	28	7	6
12 years and above	3	12	4	3
Educational Qualification				
First School Leaving certificate	-	-	33	27
O' Level/SSCE	2	8	13	11
NCE/OND	7	28	7	6
	16	64	2	2
	-	-	62	55

HND/OND No Formal Education				
Occupation				
Farming	25	-	52	44
Civil Servant	-	100	22	18
Trading	-	-	41	33
Unemployed	-	-	4	3
Retired	-	-	2	2

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 3 displays the socio-economic characteristics of both the DEC staff and the members of DEC women group. The responses on the age of the respondents indicates that they are above forty years of age (45%) indicating that they are all matured adults who needs to be empowered in order to improve their welfare and that of their community. Majority (76%) of the respondents are married. The highest number of years (51%) of DEC members experience of membership falls between 6 – 8 years while the highest number of years (28%) of DEC staff working experience falls between 9 -11 years.

Table 4: Respondents on Services Delivered to Rural Women by DEC

Variables	DEC Staff		DEC members	
	Frequency (N = 25)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (N = 121)	Percentage (%)
Health service	20	80	83	65
Adult Education	25	100	91	74
Skill acquisition	25	100	102	83
Small scale business development	20	80	72	59
Human rights / Advocacy	18	72	112	91
Micro savings	20	80	101	82
Micro credit (loan) services	25	100	107	89
Family planning	7	28	38	30
Marketing processing of cassava	10	40	40	33
Agro Extension Service deliver	21	84	98	80

Source: Field Survey 2023.

* Multiple Response

Table 4 indicates multiple responses of the DEC staff and DEC women group on the activities and services delivered by DEC to the women. The one that seem to be most delivered to women includes; human rights / advocacy (91%), micro credit service (89%), skill acquisition (83%), micro savings (82%), agro extension service delivery (80%) and adult education (74%).

Table 5: Annual Savings Mobilization of Members

Savings Range in Naira	X	BEFORE		AFTER	
		F N = 123	FX	F = 123	FX
₦ 1000 – 15,000	12500	81	1012500	7	87500
₦ 15,000 – 20000	17500	31	542500	15	262500
₦ 20,000 – 25,000	22500	8	180000	35	787500
₦ 25,000 – 30,000	27500	2	55000	44	1210000
₦ 30,000 and above	32500	1	32500	22	71500
Total	117, 500	123	1,822500	123	3,062500
Mean (X) = Fx / F	Average Annual savings	1,822,500/123 = N14,817	₦ 14,817 BEFORE becoming a member	3,062500/123 =N24,898	₦ 24,898 AFTER becoming a member

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 5 represents the estimated annual savings range of members of DEC before and after joining DEC in Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State. It indicated that the members annual savings mean range were low before, compared to their current annual savings after joining DEC. ranging from ₦14,817 to ₦ 24,898. This indicates a positive change on the annual savings after joining DEC programme.

4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There are no significant improvements in the saving mobilization of women BEFORE and AFTER joining DEC.

Table 6: Paired Z Test Result

	Paired Differences					Z	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair Savings Mobilization Before Joining Dec – Savings Mobilization After Joining DEC	.000	59.358	29.679	-94.451	94.451	.897	3	1.000

Source: SPSS Result

From the result of Z test calculated, it shows that there is significant improvement in the annual savings mobilization of women after joining DEC in Nkanu west LGA of Enugu State. Since the calculated Z value .897 is greater than the table value of 0.825, therefore, we reject the null and accept the alternate.

Table 7: Annual Credit (Loan) of Women Before and After Joining DEC

Savings Range in Naira	X Mean	BEFORE		AFTER	
		F N = 123	FX Average Annual credit Before	F = 123	FX Average Annual credit After
₦ 10,000 – 15,000	12500	110	1,375,000	12	150,000
₦ 15,000 – 20000	17500	11	192,500	10	175,000
₦ 20,000 – 25,000	22500	2	45,000	21	472,500
₦ 25,000 – 30,000	27500	-	-	42	1,155,000
₦ 30,000 and above	32500	-	-	38	1,235,000
Total	117, 500	123	1,612,500	123	3,187,500
Mean (X) = Fx / F		1,612,500/123 = N13,109	₦ 13,109	3187500/123 = N25,914	₦ 25,914

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 7 shows the estimated average and annual credit (loan) of the members BEFORE and AFTER joining DEC Programme. The result indicated that the mean of the annual credit of the members showed a positive change from thirteen Thousand, One Hundred and Nine Naira

(N13,109) to Twenty-Five Thousand Nine Hundred and Fourteen Naira (N25, 914) after joining DEC Programme in Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State. Before joining the group, the average loan or credit accessible annually by each of the women group was N1,612,500 while individually was N13,109 while after joining the group as a member the group’s annual credit increased to N3,187,500 while individual members’ average credit increased to N25,914 signifying 98% tremendous increase as result of the group action.

Testing of Ho₂

Ho₂: There is no significant improvement on the credit acquisition of the women after joining DEC

To test hypothesis two on credit acquisition of women after joining DEC, Z test is adopted and presented as:

Table 8: Paired Z Test Result

	Paired Differences					Z	D f	Sig. (2 tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair Annual credit before joining DEC – Annual credit After joining DEC	.000	59.485	26.603	-73.861	73.861	.991	4	1.000

Source: SPSS Result

Decision

Since the calculated Z value of .991 is greater than the table value of .729, the null hypothesis is rejected. The implication here is that there is significant improvement on credit acquisition of members after joining DEC

Table 9: Responses on the Areas of Skill Acquisition of Women

S/NO	Skill Areas	FX	Mean	Decision
i	Crop Farming	476	3.8	Exposed
ii	Cloth making	408	3.3	Exposed
iii	Tie and dye	417	3.3	Exposed
iv	Soap making	462	3.7	Exposed
v	Pomade making	447	3.6	Exposed
vi	Hair making	322	2.6	Not Exposed
vii	Bee – making	319	2.5	Not Exposed
viii	Snail	414	3.3	Exposed
ix	Bead making	431	3.5	Exposed
x	Auxiliary Nurse training	426	3.4	Exposed
	Grand Mean (X)	33	3.3	Exposed

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 9 shows that Areas of Skill Exposure by DEC to the members was drawn from responses on 5-point likert scale with mean 3.0, that is, any skill areas below 3.0 means that members are not exposed to and above 3.0 means that members are exposed to. Indications from the table showed that the members are exposed in majority (grand mean of 3.3) of the skills which include crop farming (3.8), soap making (3.7), pomade making (3.6), bead making (3.5), auxiliary nurse training (3.4), cloth making, tie and dye and snail (3.3) respectively, hair making (2.6) and bee-making) (2.5). These shows that the members are highly exposed. But there is still need to expose them in the areas of hair making and bee-making so as to strengthen their skills and enhance their exposition.

Table 10: Extent of Skill Acquisition BEFORE and AFTER joining DEC

Variables	BEFORE		AFTER	
	Frequency (N = 123)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (N = 123)	Percentage (%)
To a very large extent	-	-	85	69
To a large extent	14	11	24	20
To a small extent	64	52	11	9
To a very small extent	38	31	3	2
Not at all	7	6	-	-
Total	123	100	123	100

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table10 represents the extent of the exposition of members to skill acquisition before and after joining the DEC Programme. Seventy-eight

(63%) of the members, indicated positively that they were exposed to skill acquisition before joining DEC. however, their extent of skill acquisition rose positively as one hundred and twenty (98%) after joining DEC.

Test of Ho₃

Ho₃: Skill acquisition of the members was not significantly different after joining DEC.

Table 11: Paired Z Test Result

	Paired Differences					Z	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
PairSkill Acquisition Dec Member Before Joined Dec- Skill Acquisiton of Dec Members After Joining DEC.	.000	54.378	21.319	-67.520	67.520	.982	4	1.000

Source: Field Survey 2023

There is need to reject the Ho since the Z calculated is greater than the table value. Therefore, we uphold the Ha, with the conclusion that the skill acquisition of members was significantly different after joining DEC.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, the contributions of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the overall development of women cannot be overlooked due to the roles they play as tool for empowerment in the local and national economy. Development Education Center (DEC) in Nkanu West LGA has played pertinent roles in achieving development at the grass root especially in empowering rural women. The findings of this study have shown that Non-Government Organization recognized that economically empowering women is essential both in terms of promoting women’s rights and to achieve broader development goals including self-independent will lead to economic growth, poverty reduction, Skill acquisition, savings and credit mobilization for financial freedom.

The following recommendations are made for strengthening DEC Programme in Nkanu west LGA of Enugu State as a tool for women empowerment:

- i. Since the socio-economic variables of members revealed that majority of them are still in their productive stage of their life cycle and have been with the DEC for many years and majority of the women's occupations are farming, government should encourage the programme by giving grants and donating agro-allied processing equipment through NGOs who shall in turn allocate to the women according to their registered skill programme, because DEC in Nkanu West cannot sustain it all alone.
- ii. Again, since the major activities or services provided by DEC to their members are centred on human rights advocacy, micro credit service, skill acquisition, micro savings, agro extension service and adult education service; DEC as an NGO should upgrade their Group formations from mere women group associations to registered Cooperative Societies. By so doing, each of these activities, services or trades will be registered as specialized Cooperative Societies in order to increase capacity building.
- iii. Finally, Since members annual savings, credit acquisition and skill acquisition indicated positive change after joining DEC and has exposed their members on various skills, such as; crop farming, cloth making, soap making, pomade making, bead making and auxiliary nurse training, we strongly advice DEC as an NGO to concentrate on these viable trades and services and put more effort in place towards surmounting major challenges faced by these rural women in the course of their participation as beneficiaries.

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