

# Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme on the Performance of Women Fish Vendors in Mwanza City-Tanzania

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**Abstract:** In Mwanza city women form a major part of the fish vendors especially in the shore of lake Victoria, and unorganized markets at street markets in Mwanza city. This paper examines the Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme on the Performance of Women fish vendors in Mwanza city. Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme for women fish vendors is a vital mechanism for women entrepreneurial activities to make a meaningful contribution to the performance of their business.

Therefore the study employed the cross sectional design. It was utilized to collect data through research questionnaires and interviews administered to respondents. The data was collected by questionnaire instrument and then analyzed. The Data collected were coded and analyzed using computer software programme SPSS.

The results revealed that women fish vendors who have attended skill upgrading programme still face competition and problems on markets for selling their fish. Many skill upgrading programme given to women were not relevant to the business performed by women fish vendors. Majority of women fish vendors in Mwanza city are engaged in selling fish of various species and they are still poorly improved. Basing on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, efficiency of skill upgrading programme given to women had not yet improved the performance of the women fish vendors, therefore, women fish vendors need efficiency of skill upgrading which is relevant to their business performed in order to improve its performance. Further it is recommended that; providers of skill upgrading programme to women fish vendors should provide the skills basing on the type of business performed by them.

**Keywords:** Skill Upgrading Programme, Women Fish Vendors.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Across the world, women fish vendors are seen as one of the most important solutions to unemployment, poverty and low economic growth. The creation of new ventures and growth of existing businesses are vital contributing factors to any economy. Active working women in big cities of the world, most of them are working in informal sectors like fisher women vendor, petty retail traders, and market women food sellers or as family workers in household-based enterprises. Women's status and living conditions are considerably different in Asian and African countries, which raise some difficulties with comparability. Being economically active gives women more independence in the family and community (Chen, 1994).

In Sub-Saharan Africa women are traditionally active in economic affairs, as they contribute to family expenditures. However, Fish selling had been considered as a traditional occupation that has been a means of livelihood for thousands in Tanzania with the majority of fish vendors being women. Unlike men, whose labor is largely confined to the lake or river; fisher women vendors have to travel with their product to market places. They have to cooperate with both the public and the law. In the process, they are often forced to deal with inherited prejudices and problems of various kinds (Biswas and Rao (2014:298).

In Tanzania opportunities to find salaried employment are few, especially for uneducated poor women (URT, 2002). Most of Tanzanians women are employed in small holder agriculture. Outside agriculture, the informal sector is by far the most important employer: 'a national survey in 1990-91 showed that 2.4 million people were employed by informal sector, of whom 40 % were in the urban areas' which means is more than all the jobs provided by the country's formal sector (i.e. government, parastatals and formal private enterprises). The informal sector employment is 75% of self-employment (GoT/Technical Task Group on Poverty Alleviation, 2000). Informal sector manufacturing has been gaining ground, in part through advances of agro-processing (GoT/Technical Task Group on Poverty Alleviation, 2000). The informal sector is also important for women, although many of them are engaged in small- scale activities as family workers who receive no or below-average remuneration.

Therefore, the key to enhance women's opportunities, and hence their position in the productive sector and the economy, is to provide them with access to know-how, technologies and credit. Training to upgrade women's technological capabilities and to enhance their entrepreneurial business skills, whether in simple artisan production or in high technology industries, is the heart of enabling women to advance in more rewarding positions (Obijole, 1999). Skill upgrading programmes acquired by fisher women vendors are among the key issues of the society.

Discrimination of women by men supremacy in social, economic and political environment is said to be the reason for current skill upgrading to women fish vendors in mwanza city and Tanzania in particular (Bhasin, 1992). Women fish vendors' position in society is left behind in terms of job training, promotion and leadership position due to their dual roles of home and work place, which is believed to originate from the traditional division of labour as well as lack of basics education. Additionally have no access to assets such as land and household properties (Mbughuni, 1994).

Women like men in Tanzania guaranteed protection of their basic human rights, social security to be able to engage in productive activities, the right to develop and utilize their talents, fair pay for the work they perform, and the right to participate in the management of their societies as intellectuals, policy makers and consumers (Meena, 1992).

The Government agencies, NGO's and FBO's had taken several initiatives and effort towards improving the position of women fish vendors in the society through provision of education, training and loan. Additionally, other interventions include skill upgrading programs in entrepreneurship skills (Mgaya, 1976). Despite the interventions done to provide skills to women, majority of women involving in selling fish use relatively simple technologies with small scale investments, lack technical and entrepreneurial skills and non-supportive policy environment; hence they do not perform well in terms of producing goods and uncertain markets for their outputs. Therefore the study aimed at examining Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme on the Performance of Women fish vendors in Mwanza city

## 2. RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology:

The type of study design carried out was a cross-sectional design. This study provided the researchers Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme on the Performance of Women fish vendors in Mwanza city. Both primary and secondary data were used in undertaking this study. The primary data was obtained through interview and questionnaires where as the secondary data was collected through a review of various literature such as journals, articles, text books and the internet.

For the aim of the study, women fish vendors in the city were the target population. Four (4) wards out of the twenty-one (21) in the district namely Kirumba, Nyakato, Mkuyuni and Nyamagana, were selected by a simple random technique. With this method, the names of the 21wards were written separately on pieces of papers, folded and put in a container. They were thoroughly mixed and one picked out randomly at a time without replacement until the required four (4) wards were obtained. Fifteen (15) respondents were contacted in each of the four (4) selected wards to solicit for data concerning the study. The simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of the respondents respectively.

The simple random sampling technique was used because it gave each wards equal opportunity to be selected from the (21) wards whilst the purposive sampling technique was also used to ensure that only respondents who are women food vendors were contacted from the study area. The sample size for this study therefore, was eighty (90).

The data collection methods to obtain information in the field from respondents were used both closed and open ended questionnaire and interview. The interview was used because most of the women in the study area cannot read and write. It also ensured that systematic and uniform questions (mostly open-ended) were answered by each respondent based on the translations and explanations of questions that were given to them.

The data collected was categorized and coded. The data were carefully entered and managed effectively, with the use of a computer software program known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data gathered from the field by the researchers were then organized, summarized, and presented by using frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The personal characteristics of the respondents were observed in light of the varied distinction in area under study. However, the study focused on Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme on the Performance of Women fish vendors in Mwanza city, it was relevant to examine the personal characteristics of women fish vendors in Mwanza city in order to illustrate the relationship between characteristics and the Effectiveness of Skills Upgrading Programme on the Performance of Women fish vendors in Mwanza city in order to empower women fish vendor and alleviate poverty. The demographic characteristic used includes the Ages, educational level and marital status.

#### Age:

The age of individual has an influence on labour availability, productivity as well as consumption. In this study the findings revealed that the age groups of 29-39 were active group that are engaged in fish vending. The mentioned groups were considered active group in socio-economic activities because they were energetic and majority of them are responsible with household care. The detailed findings are provided in table 1 below.

**Table 1. Age of Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-28	3	3%
29-39	52	52%
40- 50	25	25%
51- 61	18	18%
> 62	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Field Study 2015)

#### Marital status:

Many African women depends their husband for household needs. To take care of the families that hinder them to engage in production activities like other women in the world. The study gives evident that, women fish vendors and married women in particular were engaged in fish vendor because they are more responsible for household and community organization

**Table 2: Marital Status of the Respondents**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
married	40	40%
single	35	35%
separated	15	15%
widow	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: field study 2015

#### Education level of the respondent:

Many urban women particularly women fish vendors have low level of education. They lack competence skills that are necessary in the formal sectors to employ them. Additionally lack of competence make them to choose an alternative way

out to be employed and thus informal sectors especially fish vendors become an alternative for majority of women living in mwanza city as shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Education Level of Women Food Vendors in Mwanza City**

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Never gone to school	10	10%
Primary school	71	71%
Secondary school	17	17%
College and university education	2	2%
Total	100	100%

(Source: field study 2015)

#### Size of household:

In this study, the findings found that, most of women fish vendors have large household size with 8 persons and above other have medium household of 5 to 6 individuals while small household have 1 to 4 individuals as shown in table 3.

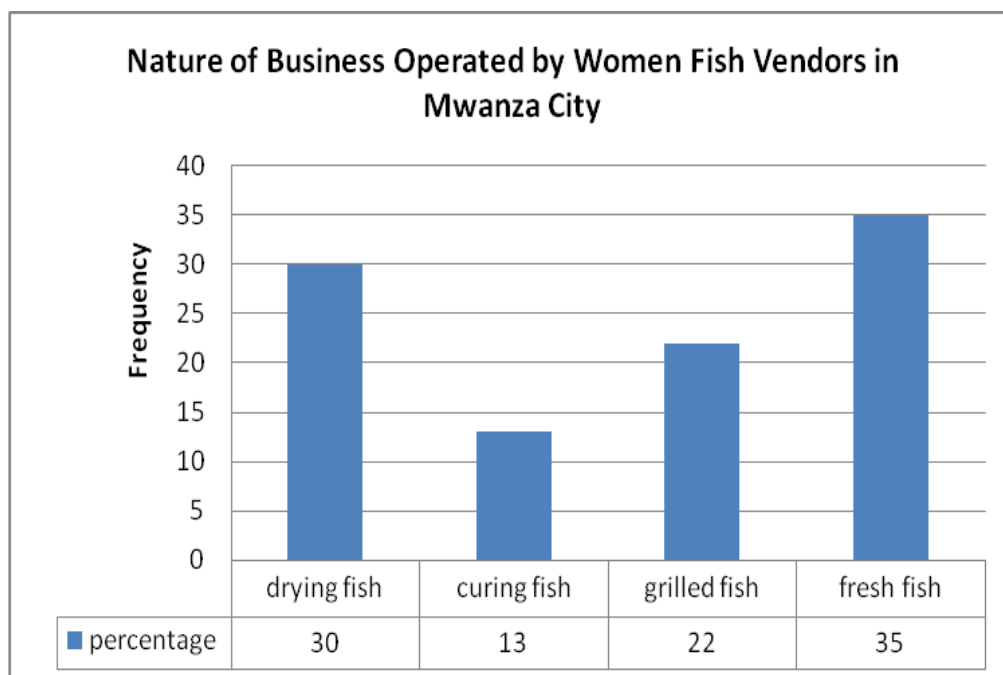
**Table 3: Size of the Household**

Household size	frequency	percentage
Large < 8	48	48%
Medium size 5-6 person	36	36%
Small size 1-4 person	16	16%
Total	100	

(Source: Field study 2015)

#### Nature of Business for Women fish vendors in Mwanza City:

The nature of business operated by women fish vendors in mwanza city were in the following categories; drying fish (30%), curing fish (13%), Grilled fish (22%), fresh fish (35%).

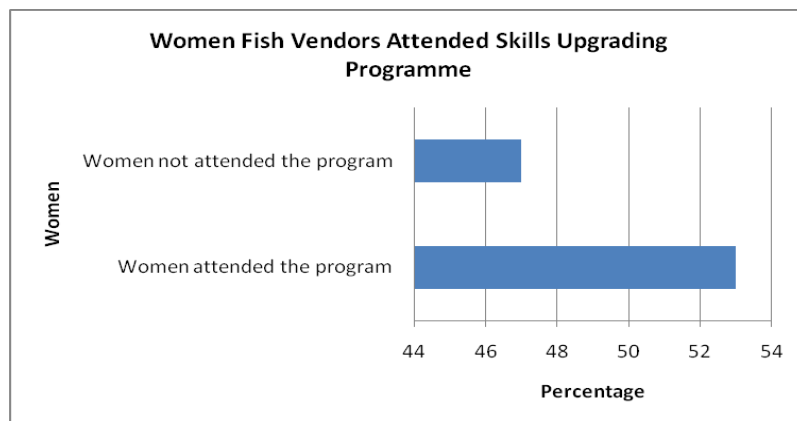


(Source: field study 2015)

**Figure 1: the Nature of Business of Women Food Vendor in Mwanza City**

#### 4. WOMEN FISH VENDORS ATTENDED THE SKILLS UPGRADING PROGRAMME

In this study, the results reveals that, (72.6%) women fish vendors attended skills upgrading program while (27.4%) women fish vendors didn't attend skill upgrading program as shown in figure 2. From the findings, skills are essential which people needs in order to be effective's members of a flexible, adoptable and cooperatives work force. They are also valuable in helping people to function within societies and for lifelong learning. This is achieved through imparting knowledge to an entrepreneur particularly women fish vendors that enables them to handle and execute the business successfully (Lavoie, 1992).



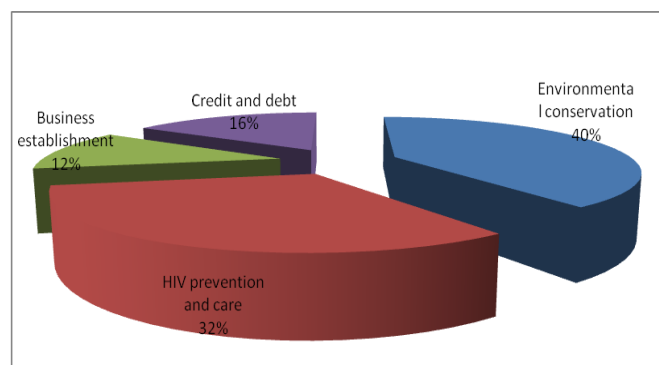
(Source: field study 2015)

**Figure 2: Women Fish Vendors Attended Skills Upgrading Programme**

#### Issues Discussed During Skills Upgrading Programme:

Various issues discussed during skills upgrading programme and major ones were environmental conservation (41%) and HIV prevention and care (35%). Credit and debt (12%) and business establishment (16%) were discussed in a nutshell as shown in table 8 below.

Environment conservation is vital issues concerning with then community development as environment provides resources for various activities. But in this case entrepreneurial skills were imperative for the women entrepreneur to improve their business knowledge that they have. Education should encourage individual initiatives, conceptual thinking, conflicting ideas and unstructured problems solving. Although the intention of women entrepreneurs was to acquire entrepreneurial skills for upgrading their business but they fails to get those skills. This pull down them participating in skills up grading provided to them.



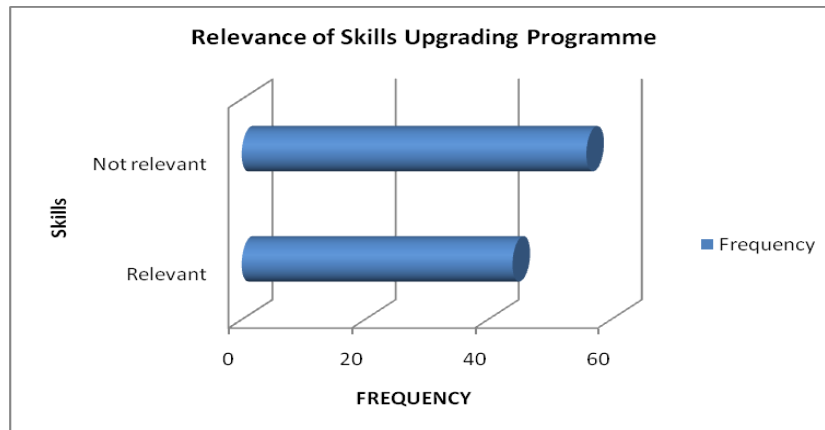
(Source: Field study 2015)

**Figure 3: Issues Discussed During the Skills Upgrading Programme**

#### Relevance of Skill Upgrading Programme:

The figure below shows that the skills provided to women fish vendors were not relevant (59%) while (41%) says the skills were relevant. This means that majority women fish vendors did not obtain skills that they intended. The major aim of these women fish vendors was to attain entrepreneurs' skills for them to improve and establish new business but this

was against their intention. Due to competition and problem faced majority of women fish vendors, they were encouraged much to attend the programme as they see this programme as the big helps for them. And this was due to the fact that, they expect to produce better and catch the market or demand of their customers. Also the figure above show the facts of issues discussed during skills upgrading program in the study area. Environmental conservation was given first priority which is quite different with entrepreneurial skills. The need was to put more emphasis in debt and credit as it relates much with business. For more detail see figure 4

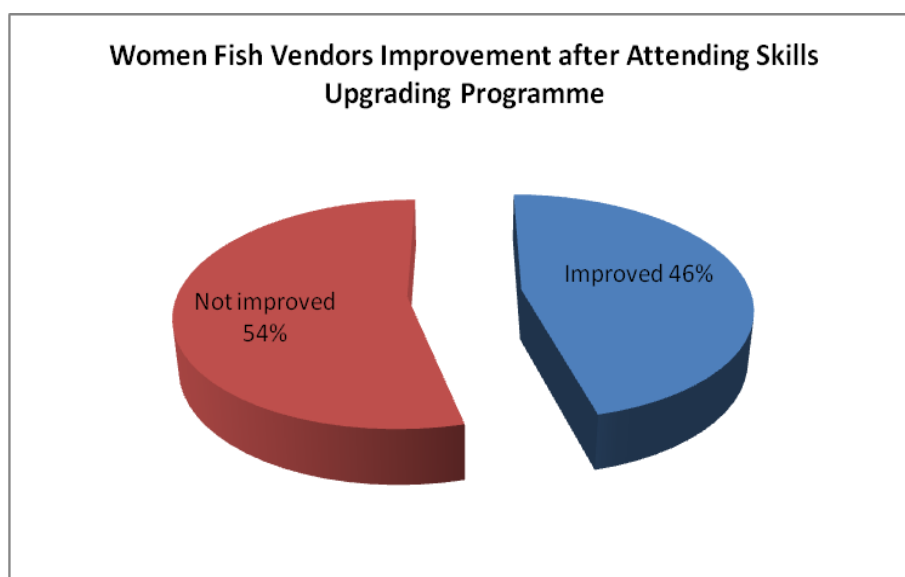


(Source: field Study 2015)

**Figure 4: Relevance of Skills Upgrading Programme**

#### Women Fish Vendors Improvement after Attending Skills Upgrading Programme:

Majority of the women fish vendors attended the skill upgrading programme have not yet performed their business effectiveness. Many of them claim that, they did not perform much because the skills they acquired were not relevant to their business they perform. Figure 4 below shows that, the women fish vendors (54%) have not improved their business after attending skill upgrading programme, and other (46%) of the respondents pointed out that there is improvement in the business they perform after attending skill upgrading programme. Women fish vendors expressed that, their participation in skill upgrading programme have not given them an opportunity to accumulate savings, something which they could not have done in the past. Rutherford (1999) noted that poor people have the ability to save and they need a savings mechanism in order to turn their savings into a functional lump-sum of money. Table 4 below shows women fish vendor's improvement after attending skills upgrading programme



(Source: field Studies 2015)

**fig 4: Women Fish Vendor's Improvement after Attending Skills Upgrading Programme**

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General business Skill upgrading includes basic business skills such as costing, marketing, accounting and negotiation, and is usually a central element of an integrated service package. However, training in skills is often not enough and successful for women fish vendors, therefore the need for confidence building, entrepreneurship development training, fostering the attitudes are important for starting and managing their fish selling. Some programmes do not confine themselves to Skill upgrading Programme existing or potential for women fish vendors but also make efforts to reach girls in order to encourage them to become entrepreneurs (Jayadeva, 2000).

For effectiveness of the skill upgrading programme, women entrepreneurs should to formulate groups according to the type of business they perform, and the existing groups should be promoted in order to help them in provision of loan. For instance, SIDO provide loan to groups, so women entrepreneurs through groups can acquire the loan. This should be done by educating the women on the importance of formulating women entrepreneurs` groups. When facing with difficulties, women entrepreneurs should present their situation to their group members, who can advice on how the situations have to handle.

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