

GENDER DYNAMICS IN ZIMBABWE'S SCULPTURE ART SECTOR: AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN SCULPTOR ENTREPRENEURS' STATUS AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This study investigates the status of women sculptor entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe's creative industry (CI), examining institutional marginalisation and barriers to entrepreneurial development. Employing a qualitative methodology incorporating focus group discussions, individual interviews, and observational data, the research reveals significant gender disparities in recognition, resource allocation, and institutional support. Findings indicate systemic marginalisation of women sculptors in key institutions, including art centres and national recognition platforms like National Arts and Music Awards (NAMAs). It is evident that the entrepreneurs face many challenges, including -non-recognition of the effort and years of commitment made to the industry, lack of financial support, exclusion in marketing and exhibition strategies locally and abroad, and fear to embrace digital literacy, lack of knowledge, cybersecurity threats and training on business. The study proposes a Gender-responsive

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Entrepreneurial Development (GRED) model with important antecedents for entrepreneurship development. The model can be used to address identified disparities and enhance women's participation in the sculptural arts sector.

Keywords: *creative industry, entrepreneurship, gender equity, sculpture arts, gender responsive, entrepreneurship (GRED) model*

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Zimbabwe's creative industry, particularly the sculptural arts sector, exhibits significant gender disparities rooted in historical and sociocultural factors (Chiti, 2014; Akinbobola, 2019). Despite women constituting 52% of Zimbabwe's population, female sculptors face substantial barriers to achieving entrepreneurial success in this traditionally male-dominated field (Mugwara, 2020). The creative industry is part of an economy that involves inventiveness and¹belongs to the informal sector. People use their creative skills and talents to make artefacts for sale. It includes visual arts where people produce artefacts like sculptures, textiles and performing arts. The CI, also known as the cultural industry, enhances the capacity to create new jobs, generates income, and increases inflows of foreign currency through the production of objects and selling of services such as the performing arts. Globally, countries have realised the importance of CI as the fastest-growing sector (Kerr, 2019; Carter, 2020). Evidence shows that in developing countries like Zimbabwe, women are lagging in this sector which has become digital after the COVID 19 pandemic (Oakley, 2016; Akinbobola, 2019). However, in Africa, countries like Egypt and Ethiopia have realised the importance of women in this sector and are striving to facilitate culturally inclusive development by strengthening

the entrepreneurial and technical skills of women in the CIs (UNIDO, 2014). Zimbabwe's CI entrepreneurial endeavours still need to be harnessed to achieve gender equality as is the case with the aforementioned countries, especially in the sub-sector of sculpting. The Zimbabwean National Gender Policy (NGP, 2013-2017) states that women are falling far short in the informal entrepreneurial sector where the sculpting industry falls. The NGP reveals that there are no statistics on the activities in this sector. This suggests that more must be done to address the challenges affecting the CI.

CIs are vital in achieving the sustainable development agenda, as the industry stimulates innovation and growth, while also boosting and supporting entrepreneurial development and contribution to cultural diversity (UNCTAD, 2021). CIs have also played a major role in integrating their activities with the digital transformation taking place globally, because of the COVID-19 pandemic which ravaged nations in 2019 and 2020 and pushed most entrepreneurs to do unprecedented online business (UNCTAD, 2021). This is a development that sub-sectors like sculpting should also adopt. The CI is concerned with skills based on the creativity of individuals and groups, and its activities can be used to drive the 2030 United Nations sustainable development trajectory (The Creative Economy Report, 2017). This provides the impetus for Zimbabwean policymakers through ministries responsible for the informal sector, namely the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community Small and Medium Enterprises Development and the Ministry of Youth Sport and Arts and Recreation, to adopt policies and strategies that are inclusive and gender-sensitive. Evidence explored in this article, shows that women in the sculpting industry have been marginalised since the colonial era. Women face challenges in the CI, a sector dominated by men (Okeke-Agulu, 2017). The Zimbabwe Cyber and Data Protection Act of 2021 is a legislative framework aimed at safeguarding personal data and regulating cyber activities within the country. It provides a comprehensive approach to the protection of

data privacy, addressing the increasing concerns related to cybercrime, data breaches, and online security. This study examines these disparities and their implications for women's economic empowerment and participation in the creative economy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS GUIDING THE STUDY

- Find out the status of women sculpture entrepreneurs within Zimbabwe's national creative industry framework.
- Find institutional barriers to women's participation and success in sculptural arts.
- Find out how gender-based marginalisation affects entrepreneurial development.
- Find evidence-based interventions for enhancing gender equity and technological skills in the sector.

SCULPTING IN ZIMBABWE

This study notes that colonial history has affected the growth of women sculptor entrepreneurs. As the early mentors in the CI, who were missionaries such as Canon Paterson of Cyrene and Father Grober of Serima denied females to attend their first formal art schools (Zhou, 2017). The art schools' curriculum trained diligent African boys only to be self-reliant and excluded females. Women sculptors practising sculpting today, sailed through to become prominent sculptors because they were nurtured by their family members and husbands through knowledge spill-over in the sense that they were learning by seeing and participating (Zim Sculpt, 2017). This study, however, has been set to examine the status of women sculpture entrepreneurs to ascertain the impact of marginalisation of women entrepreneurs and what is needed to upgrade them.

Sculpting entrepreneurial activities in Zimbabwe fall under the CI and it often reflects Zimbabwean culture, that is, beliefs, ethics, myths,

women issues, poverty, and other issues of livelihoods. Stone sculpture is the result of forming three dimensional visually interesting objects from stones like serpentine portraying Zimbabwean culture and spiritual beliefs on human life and the environment. Zimbabwe's traditional culture and heritage are exemplified in the art of stone sculpture, where carefully shaped stones depict scenes of deep cultural significance, such as the sacred *Nyaminyami*, a Shona snake (Joseph, 2021). The CI, in which stone sculpture is a significant component, serves as an investment in knowledge, economy, and cultural identity, as postulated by UNCTAD (2021). Zimbabwe is a country that has large deposits of stones suitable for sculpting (Zim Sculpt, 2021). Large deposits of stones suitable for sculpting are found around the country and these are serpentine, steatite, verdite, leopard rock, lepidolite, limestone and marble. African stone sculpture done in Zimbabwe, the Shona sculpture, named after the largest ethnic group which lived in Great Zimbabwe between the 11th and 15th centuries.

Sculptors in Zimbabwe comprise of first, second and third generation sculptors. There are only a handful of sculptors who belong to the first generation still alive and they are 70 years old and above and most of them are male, for instance, Tapfuma Gutsa. The second generation is around 50 years-plus old (e.g. Dominic Benhura) and the third generation, 30 years-plus, for example Zayd Menk, Terrence Musekiwa, and Moffat Takadiwa. Females are found in the second and third generation, and examples are Maud Mariga and Agness Nyanhongo. The women sculptors in the second generation acquired the skills by helping their family members polish the sculptures and observing the members sculpting. Zim Sculpt (2017) further elaborates that this is due to a patriarchal society in Zimbabwe, where the traditional female role is to stay at home with children, cook and clean, hence there are only a handful of females. The women who ventured into sculpting deserve profound recognition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives.

The innovation theory, the Knowledge Spill-over Theory of Entrepreneurship (KSTE) and the Stiwanism African Feminist Theory. The KSTE sits very well with this study of women sculptor entrepreneurs who require training through knowledge spill-over to translate the skills gained into viable entrepreneurial ventures marred by gender dynamics in Zimbabwe and beyond (Chiti, 2014) KSTE is supported by the Stiwanism African Feminist Theory which advocates transformation and empowerment of women sculptor entrepreneurs in the CI with technology skills in Zimbabwe. The entrepreneurs have been disadvantaged historically due to patriarchy and colonial influences and their challenges have to be solved in an African context.

KNOWLEDGE SPILL-OVER THEORY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP (KSTE)

KSTE posits that knowledge transfer is crucial for entrepreneurial opportunity creation and exploitation. In the context of sculptural arts, this theory illuminates how gender dynamics affect knowledge transmission and skill acquisition. The theory stresses the significance of knowledge as a source of entrepreneurial opportunities that seek to introduce new and different products using creativity skills (Ghio *et al.*, 2015). KSTE was developed from the micro-economic foundations of the endogenous theory that views the entrepreneur as the maker of history. This means that for a purposeful investment to take place, the new knowledge acquired and instinctive motivation are vital to be spilled over to the next entrepreneur. KSTE views individuals as significant facets in the growth of an economy, as they have an impact in radical innovation which can create new industries and changes old products by embracing technology. When equipped with knowledge,

entrepreneurs will share through digital platforms; this possibly resulting in profitable opportunities. Knowledge and innovation are significant contributors to the growth of businesses (Acs, Audretsch and Lehmann, 2013). The theory views entrepreneurship as an economic driver that leads to economic growth. Ndiweni and Verhoeven (2013) highlight the importance of small entrepreneurial firms in being innovative and helping to create wealth. KSTE acknowledges the issue of culture, traditions and institutions as other economic factors that have an impact on entrepreneurial activities (Acs and Naude, 2013). Institutions like families especially where patriarchy is practised, can have an impact on knowledge spill-over entrepreneurial activities where skills have to be acquired through interaction (Flores and Made, 2013). The Stiwanism African Feminist Theory supports KSTE as it strives to empower the African woman and seeks to advocate and enhance women's emancipation in a predominantly patriarchal world. African feminism strives to end patriarchy and all its practices and transform all institutions by adopting ways that ensure gender equality (Mama, 2012). Women can find opportunities to acquire skills through knowledge spill-over difficult as they are bound by marriages. Interacting with the opposite sex in a patriarchal society is a taboo for married men and women (Rasmussen, and Friis-Hansen, 2017). This can be an impediment to successful knowledge transfer under knowledge spill-over as these will be bound by the marriage institution which restricts interaction (Anggeria, 2019). Culture and religion can affect economic growth for women. In Angoche District in Nampula Province in Northern Mozambique, women require their husbands' consent to engage in economic activities (Rasmussen, and Friis-Hansen, 2017). This can be an impediment to online marketing to women sculptor entrepreneurs as communities have been engulfed with domestic violence caused by social media.

THE STIWANISM AFRICAN FEMINIST THEORY

This theoretical framework provides a culturally contextual lens for analyzing gender disparities, emphasising the need for African-centred solutions to women's empowerment while acknowledging the impact of patriarchal structures (Mama, 2012; Anggeria, 2019). African feminism tries to portray African women as people who can set their own priorities and agendas as Africans in their own right (Mama, 2011). African feminists believe that for social change and development to be successful in providing lasting and liberating transformation, it needs to be solved by practices grounded in local people's experiences of realities (John, 2017). The theory strives to empower the African woman and seeks to advocate and enhance women's liberation in a world dominated by patriarchy. Mama (2012) criticises preaching of globalisation and the resurgence of marginalisation of women in Africa. She attributes all this to the on-going noticeable poverty, outbreaks of civil wars and militarism as deeply gendered phenomena that demand critical analysis. The African feminist focuses on being conscious on justice and fairness for women in all spheres of life and the movement strives to end patriarchy and all its practices and seeks to change all institutions such as the family, churches and organisations (*ibid.*).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a case study research design and employs a qualitative research approach, utilising the following research tools; semi-structured, individual interviews, focus group discussions, direct observations and document analysis to collect data.

Figure 1 is an extract from the Research Onion Model, showing the aspects which constitute the research strategy.

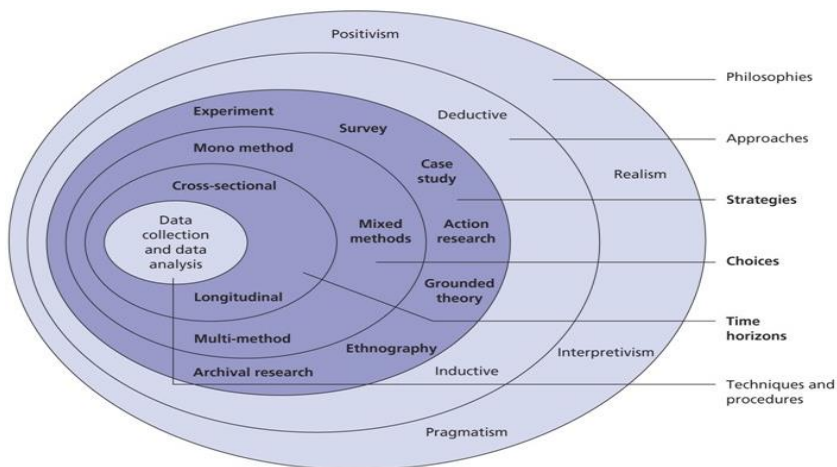


Figure 1: Summary of the methodology used in the research study (*The Research Onion Model* Saunders, Phillip, and Thornhill, 2019,p.128).

SAMPLING AND PARTICIPANTS

Purposive sampling was used to come up with the following sample: 10 women sculptors from four sculpture villages and two government officials from relevant departments responsible for the CI and women empowerment institutions such as the National Art Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and Ministry of Women Affairs, Community Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Basing on interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis, data triangulation was employed to ensure reliability and validity of findings. Thematic analysis created by NVivo was conducted to identify emergent patterns and themes.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

INSTITUTIONAL MARGINALISATION

Analysis revealed systematic exclusion of women sculptors.

National recognition platforms (e.g., NAMAs), resource allocation mechanisms and leadership positions in art centres

Despite women representing 52% of the population in Zimbabwe, female entrepreneurs have not been able to achieve their full potential in a male-dominated businesses like sculpting due to numerous constraints they face in their efforts to set up feasible business ventures. The issue of non-recognition of women sculptors for the NAMAs was raised. The entrepreneurs elaborated that entrepreneurs have no access to information on how and when they should register to be nominated for the awards. Information from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), according to Shumba (2019), claims that artists who perform at all the NAMAs are supposed to complete forms on the internet to enter the competition and submit their works. However, most women sculptor entrepreneurs have no access to the internet and others cannot upload the information needed. The entrepreneurs' sentiments are reinforced in the National Gender Policy (NGP) (2013-2017), which states that women are falling far short in most areas of development, especially entrepreneurial activities and this affects the achievement of gender equality. The NGP further elaborates that many women have not yet benefited from land redistribution for entrepreneurs to also benefit.

During interviews, the entrepreneurs disclosed lack of important antecedents for entrepreneurship development, especially land, training, information, funding, and the absence of associations that represent them. The entrepreneurs emphasised the importance of land which is required as collateral when one wants to apply for loans at banks. Training in business management is very vital for entrepreneurial growth. Arts centres should be registered and funded. The women sculptor entrepreneurs acclaimed the formation of associations to lobby grievances and access information in line with their businesses so that they can also benefit.

The study envisages that there should be enticing antecedents that are conducive to entrepreneurial development, such as a stable political and economic environment, and motivation through government subsidies and support. Women sculptors should be incentivised so that they get motivated and participate fully. As alluded above, it is evident that there are no 50:50 opportunities for both males and females in, among others, registration of business by the government, forming associations by the women sculptor entrepreneurs, funding, support, training, exhibitions locally and abroad by the government and encouraged keeping of records, monitoring, and evaluation. As a remedy, registration should be open to everyone without strings attached, especially on the aspect of collateral. Women involved in sculpting should be encouraged to form their association which will lobby for their empowerment and acquisition of necessary resources and services. The government should also allocate land to the women in sculpting as they have done at Siyaso in Mbare and Glen View Area 8 Home Industries where major players are male. While it might not appear beneficial to the government, the allocation of land means the government can raise taxes and increase its revenue base. This has a diverse effects, the government should come forward with proper records of the women involved in sculpting enterprises. If the government is offering support through funding, exhibitions and training, they should monitor and evaluate the activities for sustainable development.

TECHNO-BASED CHALLENGES

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

Many women sculptors lack access to tangible and intangible essential computer tools and resources, such as computers, software, and reliable internet connectivity (Williams, 2020), which can hinder their ability to market their work online or connect with potential clients. Lack of the information of the Data Protection Act and principles bring

discomfort in using the technologies in the processes and production of the products (Mackey and Jacobs, 2022). The women sculptor entrepreneurs revealed that information on registering to take part in the NAMAs is advertised on the Arts Council website and, as alluded above, resources like laptops to get the information are not available.

DIGITAL LITERACY

The level of what ICTDs bring has been violated due to the lack of these ICT skills among entrepreneurs. A significant barrier can be the lack of digital skills among women sculptors as they are failing to participate in the NAMAs by not uploading their work of art for assessment. Without proper training in using ICT tools, they may struggle to effectively promote their art, manage online sales, or engage in digital networking (Desantis and Fulkerson, 2023). There is need to embrace these skills through enrolling on short courses, even though the planned and certified courses like the International Computer Driver's License (ICDL) which is internationally recognised (ICDL, 2020; Williams, 2020).

ONLINE PRESENCE

Mackey and Jacobs (2022) posit that building and maintaining an online presence is crucial for reaching wider audiences and brings in global reach and makes the product much more visible on social media platforms. Women sculptors are facing challenges in creating professional websites or using social media effectively (Williams, 2020), limiting their visibility and market reach. They end up having to pay more money site managers for their social platforms.

E-COMMERCE OPPORTUNITIES

While e-commerce platforms provide opportunities to sell art, women sculptor entrepreneurs face difficulties in navigating the online platforms (Ala, 2019), including understanding pricing, shipping, and customer service, which can affect their business growth.

Ashikuzzaman (2011) notes that failing to use e-commerce effectively has an impact on growth of the entrepreneur's businesses.

CYBERSECURITY CONCERNS

Women entrepreneurs face risks related to cybersecurity, including online harassment or fraud, which discourage them from fully engaging in the digital marketplace. Fear of fraud also leads to the issue of insecurity to these women in undertaking mobile and online transactions. Awareness is important. Desantis and Fulkerson (2023) indicate that there is need to raise awareness to impact the issues of cybersecurity to the Zimbabwean women sculptor entrepreneurs and remove the ignorance that reside in business women, which leads them to continue operating using traditional processes.

NETWORK BARRIERS

Women sculptors might find it challenging to connect with mentors or peers in the digital space (Ashikuzzaman, 2011), leading to isolation and a lack of support networks, crucial for professional development. Network barriers and power cuts also emerge as issues of concern, especially in the Zimbabwean setup where alternative sources of power and individual internet services are needed for one to have a stable connectivity for cyberspace transaction and processes in the business.

ECONOMIC BARRIERS

The women sculptor entrepreneurs were facing many challenges in their line of business and were more focused on survival strategies than advancement and not worried about recognition. They revealed that they required support from the government in the form of land and loans to upgrade their status as they were operating from land owned by men sculptors. Women sculptors confirmed they did not have tools for sculpting and collateral needed by banks for them to access loans. Most women were not owners of land and the gender

parity gap for redistribution of land was still far below the expected as postulated by the NGP (2013-2017). This can be linked to the existence of colonial policies that upheld traditional gender relations, for instance, the "Customary Law of Zimbabwe", developed by colonial administrators in consultation with traditional chiefs, headmen, and elders, all of which were meant to be used as a mechanism of controlling and subordinating women. Colonial administrators designed policies that treated women as either dependents or mothers. Some pieces of legislation in Zimbabwe still have laws inherited from the colonial times, like the Customary Law which affects women's entrepreneurial activities. The adoption of these policies in this era has an impact on achieving gender equality especially in areas that were most affected, like sculpting. However, with all these disadvantages women should rise and take their position in the CI. Some of the women entrepreneurs in the research were not aware of their status and other aspects that are of importance in their entrepreneurship growth. Manyoni (2011), cited in Nhuta and Mukumba (2017), blame little education and lack of information and encourages women to fight for their space and be aware of issues that concern their line of business. Nhuta and Mukumba (2017) agree that women are generally perceived as unequal players compared to males.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Education, business training, and research in entrepreneurial development.

The women sculptor entrepreneurs revealed that most of them had not received formal education and needed training in business management and ICT skills. They requested for workshops and training where they would be awarded with certificates of competency, such that they can access high profile symposiums. They explained that to attract symposium invitations sculptors need to have a commendable brand, certified by some paper qualifications. Formal

education is very vital for any entrepreneurial activity to be a success. Oluatase (2014) on his TICE entrepreneurship-based economic development model agrees with the above assertion that education is a vital factor in entrepreneurship development approaches. Resultantly, developing countries should invest in ICT, research, innovation and development to add value to their primary commodity (Nhuta, and Mukumba, 2017). Education and research are a strong base for economic development as evidenced by the economic trajectory adopted by developed countries such as China and Brazil.

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Women in the sculpting industry revealed that most of them were single because men do not like women involved in this type of business. This is attributed to gender roles expected of women, in sync with the dictates of the patriarchal society. Gender roles are based on different expectations that societies have on members of society. Zimbabwe is a patriarchal and women are expected to perform duties of housewives and jobs like sculpting are viewed as unsuitable for women, because of African societal values and beliefs about gender (Anggeria, 2019). Socio-cultural and psychological factors play important roles in developing entrepreneurs. Individuals draw values from societal values, morals and institutional frameworks within which the entrepreneur lives (Mbiti *et al.*, 2015). The female entrepreneurs were observed operating under male sculptors, who owned the means of production, namely, land, sculpting tools and ICT gadgets. Most the men had active websites where they are selling their artifacts (Ala, 2019). These socio-cultural factors are major determinants of disposal of duties and success of entrepreneurial activities (FAO, 2011). Consequently, society should change to meet the global frameworks on development like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Business Model

Canvas, an ICT framework which help entrepreneurs in visualising and designing the business model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, this study proposes a Gender-responsive Entrepreneurial Development (GRED) model encompassing policy frameworks, support, advertising/digital marketing, trade associations, exhibitions, addressing techno-based challenges, advocacy for awareness campaigns, road shows, mobile advertising and symposiums.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Implementation of Gender-Inclusive Policies, Strategies, and Quota Systems for Resource Allocation in Entrepreneurship Development

The gender responsive policies and strategies model includes policies and strategies which simply guide actions and stipulates rules and regulations, for example, how the resources should be distributed and who is to benefit, and how long the policy or strategy runs. Enforcement is vital for the success of the strategies.

SUPPORT

The model includes important antecedents for entrepreneurship development support, such as, funding, resources, training, education, workshops certifications, and awards, such as the NAMAs lifetime achievements. Associations too are very important in motivating entrepreneurial activities. The GRED model of the creative industry in Zimbabwe acknowledges the aspects as critical to entice entrepreneurial activities. Training is aimed at developing requisite knowledge and skills to improve an entrepreneur's performance and techno-entrepreneurship. Associations would create platforms to influence actors like non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to invest in resources needed by the entrepreneurs and communication of vital information and digital marketing. Business associations like the

Musicians' Association play a significant role in sourcing funding and opportunities for members to network and share information and resources. Associations protect the needs and interests of that industry and ensure that they are registered and considered for communication with government and other stakeholders.

ADVERTISING

Advertising is very important for any entrepreneurial activity. Advertising using digital marketing strategies plays an important role, especially for sculptors. Potential buyers are made aware of available artifacts. This can be achieved through the use of diverse media, such as banners, pamphlets, television, social media handles, newspapers, radio, and websites. Being visible on the web represents the global reach of the business and extends the market to include international clientele. The internet is the best mode for advertisement for sculpture entrepreneurs since it reaches potential buyers globally. Potential buyers of sculptures are tourists from overseas and most of them easily access the internet. To a large extent, the CI's viability can be linked to marketing through the internet. Furthermore, indigenous art centres were observed to be the overarching backbone for the development of sculpting. Indigenous artists are mentored at these arts centres. The art centres also play a and important role in bringing economic returns to indigenous artists and their communities. The availability of art centres furnished with internet facilities accessed by both female and male artists would help to grow the Cland this would help indigenous and foreign citizens appreciate indigenous art.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Creation of social media pages is a good tactic which the entrepreneur can employ for monitoring and evaluation through clientele feedback, the shares and likes on the pages. Social media has gained global use and, therefore, can be a good way the women entrepreneurs can employ to enhance marketing, instant responses and advertising. The

ability to reach more and extend business working hours are major benefits digital marketing brings to entrepreneurs. Multiple ways of presenting product sells the product better. The ability to use audio, videos, pictorials, graphs and animations, improves digital marketing. The social pages can even allow users to translate the content into any language and the use of sign languages is also a benefit to enhance inclusivity in digital marketing.

EXHIBITIONS, LIVE PERFORMANCE, AND SYMPOSIUMS

An exhibition is an organised demonstration showing a selection of pieces of artifacts like sculptures. Artists showcase their skills by displaying their finished works and their skills. These exhibitions can be technologically based using digital spaces where access is unlimited and is not selective. Exhibitions usually occur within a cultural or educational setup, locally or abroad. An exhibition can be mounted following the organiser's themes. Sculptor entrepreneurs exhibit their sculptures in sculpture villages, gardens or galleries to make potential clients be aware of their products. This gives room to potential buyers to see sculptures that are good to purchase and their exhibitors to showcase their skills while other people who are interested in the skill can learn by seeing and copying. The model recommends the use of symposia since these are social gatherings for artists where they freely interchange ideas. As a result, local sculptors would cross-pollinate ideas with both clients and visiting sculptors. Usually, the formal exhibition meetings are attended by several specialist sculptors and prospective buyers, and short addresses are delivered on specific topics related to their industry for their personal growth in their entrepreneurial activities. The more symposia artist attends, the more powerful he/she becomes in the industry, enriching his/her profile.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the marginalisation of female sculptor entrepreneurs, acknowledging the historical context and systemic

factors that have contributed to their disadvantaged position. Drawing on intersectional feminist and entrepreneurship theories, the research proposes ways to address this inequity. Specifically, the study analyses the gender-based barriers facing female sculptors, arguing that such barriers can be dismantled and reconstructed to promote gender equity in the sculpting industry. The study recommends policies and interventions that support the inclusion and advancement of women in this field. This research stress the critical need for addressing gender disparities in Zimbabwe's sculptural arts sector through systematic, evidence-based interventions such as availing important antecedents for entrepreneurship development. The study proposes a GRED model with comprehensive framework for enhancing women's participation and success in this field. These include: (i) implementing 50/50 opportunity policies in business opportunities, and (ii) encouraging and supporting women sculptor entrepreneurs to adopt digital marketing strategies.

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