

Informal Apprenticeship and Gender Dynamics in the Informal Industry: A Case for Mbare-Magaba Informal Industry, Harare

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Mbare-Magaba informal industry in Harare in 2016. The aim of the study was to establish the extent to which women have penetrated the traditionally stereotyped masculine technical trades in the informal industry. It adopted a qualitative research approach and utilised a case study research design. In-depth interviews and obtrusive observations were used to collect data. The sample of the study comprised 12 research participants (eight women and four men) who were sampled using the purposive sampling technique. The findings of the study show that the practice of informal apprenticeship tends to be informed by the principles of African traditional education which emphasised pragmatic skills. However, unlike traditional education, the informal apprenticeship ceases to emphasise the rigid dichotomy between feminine and masculine skills. The study also found out that although the gender divide line remains conspicuous in the informal industry, some women through the informal apprenticeship have demystified the feminine mystique; that women are better-off in the kitchen. Findings from the study also reveal the robust efficacy of the informal apprenticeship in the informal industry in terms of skills transfer to women and producing goods of high quality at a relatively fast rate. The study recommends that the Ministry of Medium to Small Enterprises avails financial and technical support to women in the informal industry. It is also critical that cooperatives in the informal industry form synergies with technical colleges to expedite transfer of skills to

women in the informal industry. The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development should conscientise women on the importance of women's participation in economic activities particularly their involvement in technical jobs.

Keywords: Efficacy, gender dynamics, informal apprenticeship, informal industry

Introduction and Background

The study explored women's involvement in the traditionally stereotyped masculine technical trades in the informal industry in Zimbabwe. The economic turbulences faced by Zimbabwe in the first decade of the 21st century culminated in almost total demise of the formal industry (Kanyenze, Kondo, Chitambara & Martens 2011). Concomitantly, this resulted in the emergence and proliferation of the informal industry as an alternative solution. In other words, the reconfiguration of the informal industry ushered in a new economic dispensation with peculiar structures and training systems. In this regard Sadomba (2010) observed that the informal sector adopted on the job training systems which expedite skills transfer and acquisition. It is important to point out that most studies in the informal industry have concentrated on women performing activities that have connotations for domesticity. It is against this backdrop that this study explored the efficacy of the informal apprenticeship and challenges faced by women who have traversed into the traditionally stereotyped masculine fields in the informal industry.

Historically, technical jobs and other critical economic activities have remained a preserve for men and jobs in the informal industry had been no exception. According to a report by World Bank (1991:12) women in the informal industry tend to be crowded in the in jobs that have connotations for domesticity and these include textile and garment making activities (knitting, crocheting, tailoring), selling small wares and providing catering services. Such choices of occupations by women tend to be informed by gender stereotypical perceptions on feminine and masculine jobs in the Shona societies (Tatira 2010). It can also be argued that women's subordinate position in the labour market is a result of lack of education and as well as lack of access to training in specific trades and professions valued by society (Mupedziswa

& Gumbo 2001). In the now ailing Zimbabwean formal industry, the formal apprenticeship remained a preserve for men and this created disparities in terms of employability between men and women. It thus becomes critical to explore the efficacy of the informal apprenticeship and gender dynamics in Mbare-Magaba informal industry where women have been seen crossing the gender divide into occupations previously considered masculine.

Related Literature

The Informal Industry and Informal Apprenticeship

The informal sector is increasingly becoming one of Africa's key mechanisms for coping with growing poverty (Mupedziswa & Gumbo 2001). Arguably poverty continues to wear a woman's face as the feminisation of poverty tends to endure even in the informal industry. Due to the almost total demise of the informal industries in Zimbabwe, a new work ethic, marked by a proliferation of informal industries has taken shape (Mupedziswa & Gumbo 2001). Sadomba (2010) concurs and elaborates that the demise of the formal industry gave the impetus to the growth of the informal industry, with small units of production and wider base of recruitment for workers. With this change, the education and skills development have also taken a revolutionary trajectory. It can thus be observed that the informal sector, once derided as exclusive to the uneducated and unskilled individuals has become the life line for the majority of Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular (Mupedziswa & Gumbo 2001). This study therefore explored the diffusion of technical skills through the informal apprenticeship mode of training to women in the informal industry.

According to Sadomba (2010) the informal apprenticeship is a training system that emphasises hands on, relevance and instrumentality of vocational skills hence it can be regarded as an emancipatory and self-empowering trajectory. The big picture portrayed in the informal industry indicates that women tend to be excluded in technical skills training and that women are more likely to remain in poverty than men. If looked at from this perspective, the informal apprenticeship miracle becomes a preserve for men. It can also be argued that, the acquisition of skills in the informal industry tends to be informed by the ideology of African traditional education.

The African traditional education emphasised a clear dichotomy between feminine and masculine skills (Fafunwa & Aisiku 1982; Adeyemi &

Adeyinka 2002). However the fact that many women have penetrated the once male dominated public sphere is clear testimony that the rigour of a patriarchal ideology is slowly loosening its grip in the Zimbabwean society. Thus, the reconfiguration of the employment structure in Zimbabwe points to a transforming social structure.

The informal apprenticeship training approach becomes miraculous in terms of the rate of skill acquisition and perfection of skills in particular trades and specialisation. According to Sadomba (2010) the informal industry mentors rely on informal apprenticeship training which takes place at the ordinary work places and makes production tasks part of the instruction as a means of acquiring relevant productive skills. In other words, by performing the different tasks in the manufacturing process, the apprentices acquire the skills and knowledge of their particular trades. Findings from a study by Muchabaiwa and Jakachira (2015) in Mbare-Magaba informal industry in Harare indicate that the training rate through informal apprenticeship makes it a miracle; it has been observed that it takes 6 months to one year to train a competent artisan in different trades. By implication the informal apprenticeship as an integrated approach to skills training has proven to be effective and efficient in the diffusion of skills to prospective artisans. The study thus explored the efficacy of the informal apprenticeship in diffusing technical skills to women in the informal industry.

Conceptual Framework: Liberal Feminism and Human Capital Theory

The acquisition of technical skills can be a route to emancipation from poverty. According to the World Bank (1991) report, it is increasingly acknowledged that people's skills and capabilities and investment in education and training (human capital) are critical for self-empowerment and development. Human capital; the stock of productive skills and technical knowledge embedded in labour refers to the acquired and useful abilities of all people to prepare them for their world of work (Becker in Jermolajeva & Znotna 2014:1-2). The liberal feminists observe that women in society are treated differently and unequally with men in all spheres of life (Abbot, Wallace & Tyler 2005) and this may include the informal industry. Thus from a liberal feminist perspective, women have mental capacities as their male counterparts and should be given the same opportunities in acquiring technical skills in different trades.

The human capital theory by Becker cited in Reimer and Schroder

(2006) suggests that women acquire less human capital than men because of society's stereotypical perceptions on gender roles and therefore occupy roles that require less technical skills. In the same vein, it is also assumed that women invest less in human capital than men because of the anticipated division of labour which emphasises women's confinement in the domestic sphere. However, liberal feminists emphasise the respect for women's rights and equal opportunities between men and women including opportunities in acquiring technical skills. It is also important to note that from a liberal feminist perspective, such differentiation in skills transfer is caused by sexism; the belief that men are superior to women (Abbot *et al.* 2005) The human capital theory also argues that education, training skills and experiences all increase a worker's present and future productivity and that organisations recognise and reward these differences in human capital. It can therefore be argued that the concept of feminised poverty comes about because of differential skills acquisition between men and women.

Becker in Reimer and Schroder (2006) argues that because of patriarchy, (married) women economise on the effort they expend on the market work by seeking less demanding jobs. This study thus explores the efficacy of the informal apprenticeship as a skill resource base for women in the informal industry. Liberal feminists would therefore argue that women's participation in economic activities should be increased and that there is need to challenge directly the ideology of patriarchy. The human capital theory and liberal feminism are thus combined into single conceptual framework to understand technical skills acquisition and gender dynamics in the informal industry.

Problem Statement

The reconfiguration of the formal industry in Zimbabwe into the informal industry seems to have created an opportunity for some women to traverse into the previously stereotyped masculine technical field. In this new economic dispensation, it can be observed that through the informal apprenticeship training model, some women in Mbare-Magaba informal industry have demystified gender stereotypical perceptions on masculine and feminine jobs. The study thus explores the challenges experienced by those women who have crossed over the gender divide into occupations previously considered as

masculine. The study also sought to explore the extent to which women are involved in the once stereotyped masculine technical trades in the informal industry and how competent they are in such technical trades. Thus it becomes critical to explore the efficacy of the traditional or informal apprenticeship in skills transfer and gender dynamics in the informal industry.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the characterisation of the informal industry in terms of gender?
- How effective is the traditional apprenticeship in the diffusion of technical skills to women in the informal industry?
- To what extent have women penetrated the traditionally stereotyped masculine trades in the informal industry?

Research Methodology

This research study adopted the qualitative research paradigm to guide the process of collecting, presenting and analysing data on the efficacy of the informal apprenticeship and gender dynamics in the informal industry. The qualitative paradigm allowed an in-depth exploration of experiences, attitudes and perceptions on the informal apprenticeship as a skill training approach and women involvement. Neuman (2006) observes that qualitative research emphasises direct experiences of research participants as they engage in their day to day activities. Data collecting methods and instruments in the form of in-depth interviews and interview guides respectively were used to explore the informal apprenticeship as a skill training approach and gender dynamics in the informal industry. Obtrusive observations were also made on female apprentices at work under the tutelage of their either male or female seasoned mentors.

Purposive sampling was utilised in identifying female artisans and their apprentices in different areas of specialisation in Mbare-Magaba informal industry. The thrust of purposive sampling is to identify information rich sites (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:114). By implication I selected practising female artisans who had trained through informal apprenticeship, men with

female trainees and female apprentices in different trades of specialisation. Thus two skilled female artisans (mentors) in different areas of specialisation, and three male mentors who were mentoring female apprentices and seven female apprentices in different areas were sampled as participants. To enhance confidentiality and privacy of participants the study utilised pseudonyms.

Characterisation of the Informal Industry

Table 1.1 Demographic data of Participants (names are pseudonyms)

NAME	SEX	AGE	EDUCA- TION LEVEL	EXPERI- ENCE	TRADE	POSITION
Patty	F	36	O'level	6 years	carpentry	Trainer
Charity	F	24	Form 2	4 months	Motor Mechanic	Trainee
Thandiwe	F	26	O'level	4 months	Motor mechanic	Trainee
Alice	F	29	O'level	5 years	Motor mechanic	Trainer
Senzeni	F	23	Form 3	3 months	Welder	Trainee
Nyasha	F	26	O'level	4 months	Welder	Trainee
Nelly	F	29	Form 3	6 moths	Engineer	Trainee
Kelly	F	22	Form 3I	5 months	Fitter and Turner	Trainee
Grace	F	25	O'level	3months	Fitter and Turner	Trainee
Ben	M	38	A'level	16 years	Fitter and Turner	Trainer
Benjamin	M	42	O'level	17 years	Carpentry	Trainer
Tariro	M	37	O'level	10 years	Carpentry	Trainer
Stanley	M	44	O'level	18 years	Carpentry	Chairperson of Cooperatives

The table shows that women in the informal industry have less experience in technical jobs as compared to their male counterparts. It is also evident that

some women dropped out of school before attaining their Ordinary level qualification. This shows the historical gender disparities in accessing education in the Zimbabwean society which results in gender disparities in employment. The table also confirms that penetration into the technical jobs by women is a recent phenomenon.

Women and Carpentry in the Informal Industry

Findings of the study indicate that some women in Mbare-Magaba informal industry have penetrated the carpentry field which was once a preserve for men. It is also noted that for women who venture into such technical fields they become very competent just like their male counterparts. Once they have mastered the skills of the trade they become very confident and would dare men in 'their own field'. An interview with Patty a female carpenter reveals:

I believe that what men can do women can do better. All my siblings (4 of them) 3 boys and 1 girl are into carpentry. We were all taught carpentry by our father. As you can see from the workshop I am the best carpenter around. My furniture is in high demand because I am perfect with my tools. I can even confirm that my sister is better than our brothers in terms of job craftiness and creativity.

Tariro, another male participant who is a carpenter expressed a similar opinion by remarking that:

Yes, we have women who have penetrated the men's fields. But in terms of skills acquisition they are a bit sluggish as compared to their male counterparts. However, they are perfect working with tools like a chisel.

Traditionally the carpentry industry has been a preserve for men, while women remained confined in the domestic sphere. Such a dichotomy created disparities between men and women in terms of their employability. However, obtrusive observations made in the Mbare-Magaba informal industry show that women can make furniture of high quality that can be sold to reputable furniture shops. At her workshop Patty displayed beds wardrobes and kitchen chairs of high quality.

It is quite evident that the informal apprenticeship has performed a miracle in capacitating women with technical skills that were once a preserve for men. It can therefore be strongly argued that historically women have been oppressed because of patriarchy and sexism (Abbot *et al.* 2005). Women's competences have been overshadowed by gender role socialisation and the kind of education they receive in school. Findings from a study by MacDonald (1980) indicate that women's future occupations are predestined by the education they receive in school. She argues that women in the public sphere perform jobs that have connotations for domesticity. In this regard education is seen reproducing and reinforcing the same culture and stereotypical perceptions on masculine and feminine jobs. However, through the informal apprenticeship in the informal industry, It can be observed that women are defying the odds; demystifying the feminine mystique (that women are good at domestic chores).

It can thus be argued that the reconfiguration of the industry brought with it an end to gender discrimination in the public sphere. At least women have penetrated the once male dominated arena although the gender divide line is still conspicuous as illustrated by the kind of jobs done by most women in the informal industry. This implies that although the industry has reconstituted in terms of gender, the culturally embedded gender stereotypical roles tend to permeate the informal industry. Through obtrusive observations, I also noted that women are over represented in the informal sector but what is worrisome is what kind of jobs women do in the informal sector. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2014) observes that there are more women than men in the informal sector. However, the majority of women are into selling and catering service; jobs that have connotations for domesticity.

Women and Engineering in the Informal Industry

Generally, interviews with men and women in the Mbare-Magaba informal industry revealed that women are slowly traversing the gender divide into the engineering field, a traditionally no-go area for women. The informal apprenticeship has been seen to be a very effective approach in terms of skill transfer to women. The change of mind-set by some men and women in the contemporary society is quite encouraging and progressive. An interview with Nelly, a female engineer trainee in the informal industry is quite revealing:

I was taught by my uncle how to assemble grinding mills, water pumps and drilling machines. I can dismantle all the machines that you see here and re-mount them without any challenge.

Looking at Nelly one could be easily convinced that she has taken her new trade seriously as she is clad in oily and greasy overalls. Sentiments by Ben, a male engineer tends to buttress the point that women are slowly penetrating the previously stereotyped masculine fields. He had this to say during an interview:

Although a few women have penetrated the men's fields, they are doing quite well. Some of them are actually better than men. I have one female trainee (my brother's daughter) who is doing quite well here.

It is surprising here that the uncle; who represents the father in the Shona culture is seen initiating a daughter into the so called masculine fields. However, obtrusive observations in the Mbare-Magaba informal industry show that although women have penetrated the engineering field, men still tend to dominate in this field. According to Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982) in traditional education the father would initiate his son into the instrumental roles while the mother initiates her daughter into affective roles. Such an education model created inequalities between men and women in terms of their employability. It is important to note that traversing into the traditionally perceived masculine fields has its own challenges. Kelly, a female fitter and turner apprentice explains how it feels to be working in a male dominated environment:

At first it was difficult working with men. They always look down upon us. I am the only female apprentice, the other two are men and our mentor is a man too. I am enjoying every moment of our training; challenging work is motivating and interesting. One day I will become one of the best fitters.

Grace another female fitter and turner apprentice concurs with Kelly that there are challenges working with men in the informal industry and she elaborates that:

The problem with men is that they think we are less competent and tend to give us too much support. I hate it. I can master some skills by merely observing someone performing the task. My mentor thinks otherwise; he is too elaborative. However gradually they are beginning to appreciate my work. It's me who mounted the cart that you see over there.

Looking at the jobs done by women in the informal industry, one can be persuaded to believe that women have the capacity to outdo men in terms of skills acquisition. The only challenge has been gender stereotyping of roles and perceptions on femininity and masculinity (Abbot *et al.* 2005). By implication the informal industry has performed a miracle by gradually breaking the once robust gender line through demonstrating women's capacity in technical jobs. The informal industry thus becomes an arena for women's empowerment and emancipation from oppression by men. The practices of informal apprenticeship in the informal industry are thus informed by the principles of the Gender and Development (GAD) approach which considers both men and women as equally important in the development process.

Women and Vehicle Maintenance in the Informal Industry

In Mbare-Magaba informal industry, I also interacted with Alice (a mechanic by training) who actually runs a garage. She employs one man as a mechanic and two apprentices, one woman and one gentleman. Findings of the study show that Alice is not only a competent mechanic but also a competent trainer. She had this to say during the interview:

The lady is very quick to master skills. She came much later than the gentleman over there. In terms of skill craftiness in vehicle maintenance and sorting mechanical problems, she is far ahead.

The above sentiments confirm that the informal apprenticeship performs miracles in terms of job skills diffusion and acquisition. In other words informal apprenticeship contrasts sharply with formal education which emphasises theoretically oriented knowledge. Education should be instrumental and pragmatic, such that it can be used to solve real life problems. In this regard the informal industry emerges as the proving ground for the girl

child; in terms of her skill craftiness in the so called masculine technical jobs. This would therefore argue for equal opportunities between the boy child and the girl child in all spheres of life. As argued by the human capital theory, true emancipation and empowerment for women lie in technical skills acquisition which increases their employability and ultimately ameliorating poverty (Becker in Reimer & Schröder 2006).

Charity and Thandiwe who work under the tutelage of Alice indicated that they are very happy with the training they have received from their mentor. Putting on an oiled and greased overall Charity had this to say during the interview:

I have been here for more than four months and I think I have mastered most of the critical skills in vehicle maintenance. What is left is to perfect my skills and in the next two months I should be a competent mechanic.

Thandiwe shared the same sentiments with Charity as she revealed that she had started her training almost at the same time with Charity. In concurrence with Charity she said:

It has been four months of serious training. The training is thorough because we combine training with production. So, there is no room for making mistakes because we service and repair people's car here.

Such sentiments confirm the efficacy of the traditional apprenticeship in the transfer of technical skills. From a liberal feminist perspective, the traditional apprenticeship enhances equal opportunities between men and women in terms of their employability.

In the same interview Alice revealed that she inherited the garage from her father. She said:

I inherited this garage from my father who is now deceased. We are all three girls in our family and being the eldest daughter I was initiated into motor mechanics by my father through the informal apprenticeship model of training.

Here we notice changing trends in family organisation, gender dynamics and parents' responsibilities in initiating children into their roles. According to

Tatira (2010) in the traditional Shona family the father would initiate the son into instrumental roles which included maintenance roles while the mother would initiate the daughter in to affective roles which were centred on domestic chores. Such gender role socialisation had tremendous ramifications for the girl child's future occupational opportunities. Consequently, the dichotomy between the so called feminine and masculine jobs has remained conspicuous and pervasive across all public spheres. The liberal feminists thus argue that gender role socialisation assisted in extending family patriarchy into industrial patriarchy (Abbot *et al.* 2005). However, the developments in the informal industry are proving otherwise. Through the informal apprenticeship in the informal industry, some women are realising true emancipation and empowerment. They have penetrated the so called masculine fields and in some cases outdoing men in technical skill acquisition.

Women and Welding in the Informal Industry

Findings from the study also reveal that women in Mbare-Magaba informal industry are also doing quite well in welding particularly in window frames and door frames manufacturing. An interview with Senzeni, a female welder reveals:

I have been into welding for three years now. I gained these skills under the tutelage of my late brother, who used to own this workshop. I have expanded this work to include ox-carts manufacturing, as well as wheel barrows and ploughs assembling. As you can see, here we have one female and two male apprentices. Our female student is competing well with her male counterparts.

The above sentiments argue for a voice of total women emancipation and empowerment. Listening to this woman speaking, one would realise that she is confident and determined to challenge men in 'their own domain'. Through obtrusive observations, I noted that the informal apprenticeship model tends to capacitate women with technical skills that are emancipatory and empowering as evidenced by the displayed door frames and window frames. The pedagogical principles of the informal apprenticeship training tend to emphasise practical training as it tends to combine production and training. According to Freire (1990) education must be liberating and relevant to the

people's situation. Thus for some women in Mbare- Magaba informal industry success knows no gender boundaries. Skill training therefore becomes a disembodied phenomenon; that has neither gender nor class. Meaning to say anyone can acquire technical skills, regardless of gender, as long as they are committed.

In this regard Nyasha, a female door frames manufacturer boasted:

I am not here to sell small wares as other women do. No, I am into door and window frames manufacturing. I supply big hardware shops in town. I have trained my sister and she is doing well although she took long to master skills.

Nyasha displayed door frames and window frames of different types and sizes all of which were of high quality. Benjamin, another welder and door frame manufacturer expressed the same sentiments with Nyasha during an interview.

I have observed that women take a little bit longer to master a skill. But once they master a particular skill, they can perform it better than men.

It is quite true that the majority of women in the informal sector concentrate on activities that have a link with their gender stereotyped domestic responsibilities. I observed that the majority of women are still selling some small wares or are employed in the caring service. According to Muyoyeta (2004) traditionally, the informal sector was informed by the Women in Development (WID) approach where women were allowed in the public sphere but concentrated in such activities as weaving doyleys, selling second hand clothes, textiles and food catering services. It can therefore be argued that some women in the informal industry have realised that the WID approach does not yield total emancipation hence opting for the GAD approach (Muyoyeta 2004 & Wekwete, 2005). The Gender and Development approach sees the gender division of labour as the root of inequality and recognises women as agents of development and not merely as passive recipients of development assistance (Moser 1993). Therefore, through the informal apprenticeship we see successful gender mainstreaming as women partake similar challenging technical jobs with men. Admittedly men continue to outnumber women in technical jobs but the good thing is that women have made strides into the once

male preserve areas. When compared to the formal industry there seems to be more female apprentices in technical jobs in the informal industry.

Arguably the number of women penetrating the ‘male domain’ remains relatively small, however the most important thing here is that the girl child in the informal sector now has a role model for women empowerment. At least women have demystified women’s incompetence in technical jobs in the informal industry through the informal apprenticeship. It is also important to appreciate the change in mind-set by some men who are prepared to initiate women into the so called masculine technical jobs.

An interview with one male executive member of the board for the consortium of cooperatives in Mbare- Magaba informal industry reveals:

The robustness of the informal apprenticeship can never be doubted. Most of the artisans that you see working in different trades here went through informal apprenticeship training. Yes, there seems to be a paradigm shift as we tend to see some women crossing into the once male preserve trades and these women are doing comparably well.

Through obtrusive observations I noticed that some women in Mbare-Magaba informal industry have resorted to productive economic activities which assembling ox-carts, manufacturing ox-drawn ploughs and vehicle maintenance among others. Generally, perceptions of people in the informal industry seem to confirm that human capital as a resource is critical for economic transformation and informal apprenticeship is the most effective and efficient mode of skill transfer. Unlike in the African traditional education people in the informal industry tend to disregard the once rigid gender divide line. Women in the informal industry are challenging the feminine mystique that women are better- off in the kitchen as they venture into the so-called masculine trades. At the same time men have changed their mind-set as they are seen training women in jobs that have been traditionally defined as masculine.

Since there are already female artisan role models in the informal industry, it would be easier and important to encourage other women to train in important technical jobs in a bid to emancipate themselves from poverty. In other words, it is important to encourage the adoption of the GAD approach in an effort to emancipate and empower women. According to Abbot *et al.* (2005) drawing from the socialist feminine perspective, the GAD approach argues that

women's status is deeply affected by their material conditions of life and by their position in the national, regional and global economics. Thus skill acquisition through the informal apprenticeship could be one avenue for women to play an important part in the development process. This view therefore argues that merely involving women in the development agenda (the WID approach) may not be enough. Total emancipation and empowerment for women entails that women be active participants of the development process. The government may thus extend small to medium loans to women for both training and establishing their own enterprises. This could see synergies being formed involving the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, the Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises as well as cooperatives in the informal industries to capacitate the girl child by acquiring technical skills to enhance their employability.

Conclusion

The informal apprenticeship has thus performed a miracle in the informal industry in terms of skills transfer to women and producing goods of high quality at a relatively fast rate. Of great interest is the fact that the informal apprenticeship has been capitalised by women in denouncing the famine mystique; that women should be confined in domestic chores and occupations that have connotations for domesticity. As the human capital is critical for economic transformation and development, the efficacy of the informal apprenticeship proves to be responsive to the demands of human capital in a developing economy like that of Zimbabwe. In this matrix, women become part of that important human capital resource in the development agenda through the informal apprenticeship in the informal industry.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

- The Ministry of Medium to Small Enterprises should avail financial and technical support to women in the informal industry.
- It is also critical that cooperatives in the informal industry form synergies with technical colleges to expedite transfer of skills to women in the informal industry.

- The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development should conscientise women on the importance of women's participation in economic activities particularly their involvement in technical jobs.
- Since the new curriculum framework in Zimbabwe has adopted a more practical approach, the classroom activities may be linked with skills development centres that can be established in the informal sector. This will assist in expediting the acquisition of technical skills by learners.

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