

# Empowerment through event management: A project management approach for women entrepreneurs

Onyinye Gift Ejike <sup>1,\*</sup> and Angela Omozele Abhulimen <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Velvet Expression, Lagos, Nigeria.*

<sup>2</sup> *Independent Researcher, UK.*

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## Abstract

This review paper explores the unique challenges women entrepreneurs face in the event management industry and proposes strategies for their empowerment. Women in this sector encounter various barriers, including gender bias, limited access to funding, insufficient networking opportunities, and difficulties balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Societal expectations and industry-specific factors further exacerbate these challenges, hindering women's advancement. The paper highlights the importance of promoting gender equality, improving access to financial resources, enhancing networking and mentorship opportunities, and supporting work-life balance. Additionally, it emphasizes the need to increase women's visibility in leadership roles within the industry. The recommendations aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women entrepreneurs, fostering their growth and innovation in event management. Future research directions are suggested to identify best practices for supporting women entrepreneurs and to provide data-driven insights for policy and industry practices.

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs; Event Management; Gender Bias; Financial Resources; Networking Opportunities

## 1 Introduction

Event management is a dynamic and multifaceted field that encompasses the planning, organizing, and execution of various types of events, ranging from corporate conferences and trade shows to social gatherings and cultural festivals. Event management offers a unique blend of creativity, strategic planning, and logistical coordination as a form of entrepreneurship, making it an attractive venture for many aspiring business owners. The significance of event management in the entrepreneurial landscape cannot be overstated, as it generates economic value and fosters community engagement, brand building, and innovation (Bullough, Guelich, Manolova, & Schjoedt, 2022; Govender, 2021; Rosca, Agarwal, & Brem, 2020).

In the broader context of entrepreneurship, event management serves as a powerful tool for economic development and social cohesion. Events can drive tourism, stimulate local economies, and create job opportunities. They also provide a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and showcasing innovations. For entrepreneurs, particularly those entering the market with limited capital, event management presents an accessible and scalable business model. It allows for leveraging skills and creativity over large initial investments, offering a pathway to business growth and sustainability.

### 1.1 Overview of Women Entrepreneurs in the Event Management Industry

Women entrepreneurs have been making significant strides in the event management industry, leveraging their organizational skills, attention to detail, and creative vision to carve out successful careers. Historically, event

\* Corresponding author: Onyinye Gift Ejike

management has been a field where women have found considerable opportunities as employees and business owners. This trend reflects the broader movement towards greater gender diversity in entrepreneurship, where women are increasingly breaking barriers and establishing themselves in various industries (Afolabi, 2024; Allen, Harris, & Jago, 2022; Kitole & Genda, 2024).

The rise of women entrepreneurs in event management is particularly noteworthy in the context of gender empowerment. Event management provides a flexible career path that can accommodate different life stages and responsibilities, making it appealing for women balancing professional and personal commitments. Moreover, the industry's inherent need for multitasking, empathy, and collaboration aligns well with the strengths and skills often associated with women leaders (Kumar, Mandal, & Yadav, 2022). Despite these opportunities, women in event management still face numerous challenges. These include gender biases, access to funding, and balancing work-life demands. Nonetheless, women-led event management businesses' increasing visibility and success are inspiring a new generation of female entrepreneurs. Initiatives aimed at supporting women in this field, such as mentorship programs, networking events, and financial support schemes, are crucial in driving this positive trend forward.

## **1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Research**

This research aims to explore the role of event management as a means of empowerment for women entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on applying project management principles. By examining how event management can serve as a platform for women to develop their entrepreneurial skills, gain economic independence, and achieve personal and professional growth, this research aims to highlight the transformative potential of this industry.

This research is grounded in the belief that empowering women through entrepreneurship benefits the individuals involved and contributes to broader societal and economic development. We can foster a more inclusive and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing women with the tools and opportunities to succeed in event management.

The scope of the research encompasses several key areas. Firstly, it will investigate the specific ways in which event management can empower women entrepreneurs. This includes examining the skills and competencies required for success in this field and the opportunities it offers for professional development and business growth. Secondly, the research will delve into the project management principles that are particularly relevant to event management. Understanding these principles is crucial, as effective project management is often the difference between the success and failure of an event.

Additionally, the research will address the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the event management industry. Identifying these challenges is essential for developing strategies to overcome them and creating a supportive environment enabling women to thrive. Finally, the research will offer recommendations for fostering empowerment through event management. These recommendations will be based on the research findings and will provide practical guidance for women entrepreneurs, policymakers, and industry stakeholders.

In conclusion, this research seeks to illuminate the significant role that event management can play in empowering women entrepreneurs. Combining insights from entrepreneurship and project management aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how women can leverage this industry to achieve their personal and professional goals. Through this exploration, the research aspires to contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and economic empowerment, ultimately leading to a more vibrant and equitable entrepreneurial landscape.

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## **2 Empowerment through Event Management**

Empowerment through event management presents a multifaceted approach to fostering economic independence and personal growth among women entrepreneurs. As a sector, event management offers a unique combination of creative expression, strategic planning, and logistical coordination, which can significantly contribute to women's empowerment. This section explores the definition and dimensions of empowerment in the context of entrepreneurship, the role of event management in empowering women entrepreneurs, and the benefits and opportunities provided by event management for women.

### **2.1 Definition and Dimensions of Empowerment in the Context of Entrepreneurship**

Empowerment in the context of entrepreneurship refers to the process through which individuals gain the ability, confidence, and agency to take control of their economic activities and personal development. It encompasses various dimensions, including economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment. Economic empowerment involves access to financial resources, income generation, and economic independence. Social empowerment includes the ability

to participate in social networks, community activities and having a voice in societal decisions. Psychological empowerment pertains to self-confidence, self-efficacy, and the belief in one's ability to succeed. Political empowerment involves access to decision-making processes and influencing policies that affect one's life (Bharti, 2021; Kitole & Genda, 2024).

In entrepreneurship, empowerment is often achieved through education, skill development, resource access, and supportive networks. For women, empowerment through entrepreneurship can lead to significant positive outcomes, including improved self-esteem, financial independence, and enhanced social status. By gaining control over their economic activities, women can better support their families, contribute to their communities, and challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Badaruddin, Kariono, Ermansyah, & Sudarwati, 2021).

## **2.2 Role of Event Management in Empowering Women Entrepreneurs**

Event management is crucial in empowering women entrepreneurs by providing a platform for creativity, leadership, and economic growth. The event management industry is characterized by its dynamic nature, requiring skills in planning, coordination, marketing, and execution. These skills are transferable and valuable across various sectors, making event management an attractive field for aspiring women entrepreneurs (Ameyaw, Idemudia, & Iyelolu, 2024; Kamberidou, 2020; Udeh, Amajuoyi, Adeusi, & Scott, 2024).

Women in event management often leverage their inherent strengths, such as multitasking, attention to detail, and strong interpersonal skills, to excel in the industry. The nature of event management, which includes organizing corporate events, social gatherings, and cultural festivals, allows women to showcase their creativity and organizational prowess. Furthermore, the industry offers flexibility, enabling women to effectively balance their professional and personal responsibilities (Moran, Abramson, Chan, & Marie-Marguerite, 2023).

Empowerment through event management can be observed in several ways. Firstly, it provides women opportunities to start their businesses, thereby achieving economic independence. Women entrepreneurs in event management can cater to various niches, such as wedding planning, corporate event coordination, or community festivals, allowing them to carve out unique spaces in the market. Secondly, event management fosters leadership and decision-making skills as women take on roles that require managing teams, negotiating with vendors, and ensuring client satisfaction. These roles enhance their confidence and managerial capabilities (Raines, 2023). Additionally, the collaborative nature of event management encourages networking and relationship-building. Women entrepreneurs can connect with other business owners, clients, and industry professionals, creating supportive networks and facilitating knowledge exchange and business growth. These networks can also serve as a source of mentorship and guidance, further empowering women to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavors (Bello, Ige, & Ameyaw, 2024; Komolafe et al., 2024).

## **2.3 Benefits and Opportunities Provided by Event Management for Women**

The benefits and opportunities provided by event management for women entrepreneurs are manifold. One of the primary benefits is economic empowerment. By establishing successful event management businesses, women can achieve financial independence, generate income, and contribute to the economic stability of their families and communities. The event management industry is known for its relatively low entry barriers, allowing women with limited initial capital to start their ventures and gradually scale up their operations (Parent & Ruetsch, 2020).

Another significant benefit is the development of a diverse skill set. Event management requires a blend of strategic planning, creative thinking, marketing, and operational efficiency. Women entrepreneurs in this field acquire valuable skills applicable in various business contexts, enhancing their overall employability and career prospects. These skills also enable women to adapt to market conditions and client needs, fostering resilience and innovation (Rudhumbu, Du Plessis, & Maphosa, 2020).

Event management offers substantial opportunities for personal growth and self-fulfillment. Planning and executing successful events can be highly rewarding, boosting self-esteem and reinforcing a sense of accomplishment. Women entrepreneurs often find fulfillment in creating memorable experiences for their clients, whether corporate seminars, weddings, or community festivals. This sense of achievement contributes to their psychological empowerment, enhancing their belief in their abilities and potential (Animashaun, FAMILONI, & Onyebuchi, 2024; Lavine, 2021).

Moreover, the event management industry allows women to influence and inspire others. Successful women entrepreneurs in event management can serve as role models and mentors, encouraging other women to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations. By sharing their experiences and insights, they can help create a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Finally, event management allows women to contribute to social and cultural

development. Women entrepreneurs can foster social cohesion, celebrate cultural diversity, and promote community engagement by organizing community events, cultural festivals, and social gatherings. These activities enhance their social standing and create a positive social impact, reinforcing the broader societal benefits of empowering women through entrepreneurship (Ahmadian & Scheib, 2021; Olutimehin, Ofodile, Ejibe, Odunaiya, & Soyombo, 2024).

In conclusion, empowerment through event management represents a powerful avenue for women entrepreneurs to achieve economic independence, personal growth, and social influence. By leveraging their skills, creativity, and networks, women in event management can build successful businesses that contribute to their empowerment and the development of their communities.

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### **3 Project Management Principles in Event Management**

Event management is a dynamic and multifaceted industry that demands meticulous planning, coordination, and execution. The success of any event, whether a corporate conference, a wedding, or a music festival, hinges on the effective application of project management principles. This section explores key project management principles and practices relevant to event management, the importance of effective project management in successful event planning and execution, and the tools and techniques used in managing events.

#### **3.1 Key Project Management Principles and Practices Relevant to Event Management**

Project management principles provide a structured approach to planning and executing projects, ensuring that all aspects are covered systematically. The following principles are particularly relevant to event management (Allen et al., 2022; Anaba, Kess-Momoh, & Ayodeji, 2024; Bladen, Kennell, Abson, & Wilde, 2022):

- **Initiation and Scope Definition:** The first step in any project is clearly defining its scope. This involves understanding the event's objectives, target audience, budget, and timeline. The scope sets the boundaries for the project's delivery and helps manage stakeholders' expectations.
- **Planning and Scheduling:** Detailed planning is crucial for successful event management. This includes creating a comprehensive project plan that outlines all tasks, deadlines, and resources required. A well-defined schedule helps track progress and ensure all activities are completed on time.
- **Resource Management:** Effective resource management involves identifying and allocating the necessary resources, including personnel, equipment, and materials. Ensuring the right resources are available at the right time is critical to avoiding delays and bottlenecks.
- **Budgeting and Cost Management:** Keeping the project within budget is essential for success. This involves estimating costs, setting a budget, and monitoring expenses throughout the project. Cost management ensures that the event is financially viable and prevents overspending.
- **Risk Management:** Identifying potential risks and developing mitigation strategies is a key aspect of project management. In event management, risks can range from weather conditions to vendor issues. Having contingency plans in place helps in handling unexpected situations effectively.
- **Communication Management:** Clear and consistent communication is vital for coordinating efforts among team members, stakeholders, and vendors. This includes regular updates, meetings, and documentation to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- **Quality Management:** Maintaining high-quality standards throughout the event planning and execution process ensures that the event meets or exceeds expectations. This involves setting quality criteria, conducting inspections, and making necessary adjustments to ensure satisfactory outcomes.
- **Execution and Monitoring:** During the execution phase, the project plan is put into action. Monitoring progress against the plan helps identify any deviations and take corrective actions. Regular status updates and performance metrics are essential for keeping the project on track.
- **Closing and Evaluation:** After the event, a formal closing process includes reviewing the project's outcomes, documenting lessons learned, and conducting a post-event evaluation. This helps in understanding what worked well and what could be improved for future events.

#### **3.2 Importance of Effective Project Management in Successful Event Planning and Execution**

Effective project management is crucial for the success of any event. It ensures that all aspects of the event are meticulously planned and executed, leading to a seamless and memorable experience for attendees. A well-managed project ensures that all tasks are completed on schedule. This is particularly important in event management, where delays can significantly affect the event's success. Effective project management helps in making the best use of available

resources. By carefully planning and allocating resources, event managers can avoid wastage and ensure that everything needed for the event is available when required (Ejibe, Olutimehin, & Nwankwo, 2024; Irfan et al., 2021).

Keeping the event within budget is essential for its financial viability. Project management practices such as cost estimation, budgeting, and expense tracking help manage costs effectively and prevent overspending. Clear communication is vital for coordinating efforts and ensuring everyone is aligned with the event's objectives. Project management practices promote effective communication, reducing misunderstandings and ensuring smooth collaboration (Allen et al., 2022; Eyieyien, Adebayo, Ikevuje, & Anaba, 2024).

Identifying potential risks and developing contingency plans help mitigate the impact of unforeseen issues. This proactive approach ensures the event can proceed smoothly even when challenges arise. Ensuring high-quality standards throughout the event planning and execution process leads to a better attendee experience. Project management practices help set quality benchmarks and monitor adherence to these standards. A well-managed project ensures that the event meets its objectives, whether generating revenue, promoting a brand, or providing an enjoyable experience for attendees. Clear goals and a structured approach to achieving them are essential for success (Bladen et al., 2022; Obeng, Iyelolu, Akinsulire, & Idemudia, 2024).

### **3.3 Tools and Techniques Used in Managing Events**

Various tools and techniques are employed in event management to facilitate effective planning and execution. These tools help organize tasks, manage resources, and ensure the event runs smoothly. Some of the commonly used tools and techniques include (Allen et al., 2022; Bladen et al., 2022; Raji, Ijomah, & Eyieyien, 2024; Raymond et al., 2020; Toromade, Soyombo, Kupa, & Ijomah, 2024):

- **Project Management Software:** Tools like Microsoft Project, Asana, and Trello provide platforms for planning, scheduling, and tracking progress. They allow event managers to create detailed project plans, assign tasks, and monitor deadlines.
- **Budgeting Tools:** Software like Excel and specialized budgeting tools help estimate costs, set budgets, and track expenses. These tools provide financial oversight and help manage the event's finances effectively.
- **Communication Tools:** Platforms like Slack, Zoom, and email facilitate clear and consistent communication among team members, stakeholders, and vendors. These tools help coordinate efforts and ensure everyone is informed about the project's progress.
- **Risk Management Tools:** Risk assessment matrices and contingency planning tools help identify potential risks and develop mitigation strategies. These tools enable event managers to prepare for unforeseen issues and minimize their impact.
- **Resource Management Tools:** Software like Resource Guru and Teamdeck help in managing resources, including personnel, equipment, and materials. These tools ensure that the right resources are available at the right time.
- **Quality Management Tools:** Checklists, inspection forms, and quality assurance software help maintain high-quality standards throughout the event planning and execution process. These tools ensure that the event meets or exceeds expectations.
- **Event Management Software:** Platforms like Eventbrite and Cvent provide comprehensive solutions for managing various aspects of an event, including registration, ticketing, marketing, and attendee management. These tools streamline the event planning process and enhance the attendee experience.

In conclusion, applying project management principles in event management is essential for the successful planning and execution of events. By adhering to key principles and practices, event managers can ensure that events are delivered on time, within budget, and to a high-quality standard. Using various tools and techniques further enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of event management, leading to successful and memorable events. Effective project management not only ensures the smooth execution of events but also contributes to the overall success and growth of the event management industry.

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## **4 Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Event Management**

Women entrepreneurs in event management face unique societal, economic, and industry-specific challenges. Significant barriers remain despite the growing recognition of women's contributions to this vibrant sector. Understanding these challenges and identifying strategies to overcome them are essential for enhancing the empowerment of women entrepreneurs in event management.

#### **4.1 Common Challenges and Barriers**

Women in the event management industry often encounter obstacles hindering their progress and success. One of the primary challenges is gender bias and discrimination. Despite strides towards gender equality, many women still face prejudices that question their capabilities and leadership qualities. This can lead to difficulties in securing high-profile contracts or gaining respect from peers and clients. Another major challenge is access to funding and financial resources. Women entrepreneurs often struggle to secure adequate financing for their ventures. Studies have shown that women are less likely to receive venture capital funding than their male counterparts. This financial disparity limits their ability to scale businesses and invest necessary resources and technologies (Lekchiri & Kamm, 2020).

Networking and mentorship opportunities are also less accessible to women in event management. The industry often relies on established networks and relationships to secure clients and contracts. Women may find it challenging to penetrate these predominantly male-dominated networks and gain the mentorship needed to navigate the industry successfully. Additionally, work-life balance poses a significant barrier. The event management industry is demanding, with irregular hours and high-pressure deadlines. Women, particularly those with family responsibilities, often struggle to balance their professional and personal lives. This can lead to burnout and impact their overall productivity and career longevity (Akanji, Mordi, & Ajonbadi, 2020; Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022).

#### **4.2 Societal, Economic, and Industry-Specific Factors Affecting Women Entrepreneurs**

Several societal factors exacerbate the challenges faced by women in event management. Cultural expectations and stereotypes about gender roles can undermine women's confidence and deter them from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities. Societal norms prioritizing men's careers over women's can also influence the distribution of domestic responsibilities, limiting women's availability for entrepreneurial activities.

Economically, the gender pay gap continues to be a pervasive issue. Women often earn less than men for the same work, translating into lower savings and fewer financial resources to invest in their businesses. Economic instability and lack of supportive policies, such as maternity leave and childcare support, further disadvantage women entrepreneurs (Ocobock et al., 2022).

Within the event management industry, specific factors hinder women's progress. The industry is characterized by its informal networking culture, which often excludes women from crucial business opportunities. High competition and the need for constant innovation mean that women must continuously prove their worth, often more so than their male counterparts. The lack of representation and role models is another industry-specific challenge. Women entrepreneurs in event management rarely see other women in leadership positions, which can be discouraging and lead to feelings of isolation. This lack of representation also means fewer opportunities for women to receive mentorship and guidance from those who have successfully navigated the industry (Coleman, 2020).

#### **4.3 Strategies to Overcome These Challenges**

Addressing the challenges women entrepreneurs face in event management requires a multifaceted approach. One crucial strategy is to promote gender equality and combat bias. This can be achieved through industry-wide initiatives that educate and sensitize stakeholders about the importance of gender diversity and inclusivity. Encouraging companies and organizations to adopt gender-neutral hiring and promotion practices can also help level the playing field.

Improving access to funding and financial support is essential for empowering women entrepreneurs. Financial institutions and venture capitalists should be encouraged to recognize the potential of women-led businesses and provide equal funding opportunities. Establishing grants, loans, and financial programs targeting women entrepreneurs can also help bridge the funding gap.

Creating networking and mentorship programs tailored for women in event management can provide the support and guidance they need to succeed. Industry associations and organizations should facilitate events and platforms where women can connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. Mentorship from successful women entrepreneurs can inspire and provide practical advice on overcoming industry challenges.

Work-life balance can be improved by implementing supportive policies and flexible work arrangements. Employers in the event management industry should recognize the importance of family-friendly policies, such as flexible hours and remote work options, to accommodate the diverse needs of women entrepreneurs. This can help retain talented women in the industry and prevent burnout.

Finally, increasing the visibility of women in leadership roles can have a significant impact. Celebrating the achievements of successful women entrepreneurs and providing them with platforms to share their stories can inspire others and challenge existing stereotypes. Media representation and industry awards highlighting women's contributions to event management can also play a vital role in changing perceptions.

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## 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

The research on women entrepreneurs in event management highlights several key findings. Women in this industry face significant challenges, including gender bias, limited access to funding, inadequate networking opportunities, and difficulty balancing work and personal life. These barriers are compounded by societal expectations and industry-specific factors that limit women's advancement. However, strategies to overcome these challenges and empower women entrepreneurs can make a substantial difference.

Several recommendations are essential to support and empower women entrepreneurs in event management. Firstly, promoting gender equality within the industry is crucial. This can be achieved through education and awareness campaigns that challenge stereotypes and encourage inclusive practices. Organizations should adopt gender-neutral hiring and promotion policies to ensure that women have equal opportunities for advancement.

Improving access to financial resources is another critical recommendation. Financial institutions and venture capitalists must recognize the potential of women-led businesses and provide equitable funding opportunities. Additionally, establishing grants and loans specifically targeted at women entrepreneurs can help bridge the funding gap and enable them to invest in their businesses. Networking and mentorship programs tailored for women in event management are also vital. Industry associations and organizations should create platforms where women can connect, share experiences, and learn from successful peers. Mentorship from experienced women entrepreneurs can provide guidance and inspiration, helping newcomers navigate the industry's challenges.

Employers should implement supportive policies such as flexible working hours and remote work options to address work-life balance issues. Recognizing the diverse needs of women entrepreneurs and accommodating family responsibilities can prevent burnout and retain talented women in the industry. Increasing the visibility of women in leadership roles can also make a significant impact. Celebrating the achievements of successful women entrepreneurs and providing them with platforms to share their stories can inspire others and challenge existing stereotypes. Media representation and industry awards highlighting women's contributions to event management can further change perceptions and encourage more women to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

Future research should focus on identifying best practices for supporting women entrepreneurs in event management. Studies could explore the effectiveness of various empowerment strategies and provide data-driven insights to inform policy and industry practices. Additionally, practical implications for organizations include integrating gender equality initiatives into their core values and operations, ensuring that support for women entrepreneurs is sustainable and impactful.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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