

# IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ORIENTATION AND CULTURE ON PERFORMANCE OF FEMALE-OWNED BUSINESSES IN KWARA STATE

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## Abstract

*Female businesses face a lot of challenges and failures especially in Nigeria and other developing economies of the world. But irrespective of their efforts at operating successful and prosperous ventures, the cultural climatic condition is not in their favour. Female fashion designers are not seeking business opportunities, creating new styles and services in order to retain and satisfy their customer. Female fashion designers are not engaged in creative experimentation through the introduction of new products/services as well as technological leadership through Research & Development in new processes. This study investigated the impact of innovativeness and pro-activeness on new product development and customer satisfaction of female-owned businesses in Kwara State. From the population of 1570, 322 sample size was gotten from Researchers Advisors Table. Questionnaire was administered to 322 female fashion designers across Ilorin metropolis, only 308 were returned. Closed ended interviews was also conducted to buttress the study results. This study reveals that the influence of the innovativeness and pro-activeness improves new product development and customer satisfaction of female-owned businesses, this is shown by their p-value of 0.000 and 0.000. The study concluded that most female fashion designers in Kwara State lack access to formal business training on pro-activeness, innovativeness and insufficient support from family. Female fashion designers need to be innovative to satisfy potential customer needs, engage in new exploration, support new ideas, experiment and stimulate creativity. The study recommended that female fashion designers need to focus on technology and innovations, discover new machines that brings out quality in their work. They also need to aim at being at the forefront of development in the fashion industry, getting information on customer needs and trends from their collaborators.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Orientation, Culture, Business Performance, Innovativeness and Pro-activeness of Female-Owned Businesses

## Introduction

In the face of the recent economic meltdown, it has become reality that innovation & entrepreneurship are serious factors for modern affluence in the present century. The prevalence of social & cyber-crime, cultism, kidnapping, unemployment, poverty prostitution etc. are result of poor entrepreneurial activities since not all of us can be engaged in white collar jobs. This is in line with the fact that the Nigerian youth needs to be exposed to the concept of entrepreneurship.

Najla (2015) posits that entrepreneurship has been described with different definitions and theories by authors. Entrepreneurship plays an important role in job creation and economic growth. It creates job and also provides employment to people which in turn reduces poverty. Today, women are very much interested in starting business which will make them independent, improve their standard of living, increase the family's income and above all increase their confidence levels.

Historically, entrepreneurship is a male dominated field, women have been hampered from doing business as a result of male chauvinism and gender inequality in the name of culture. Entrepreneurship has no respect for sex or age, women play equal and similar role to men in economy development (Akpodono, 2016). In the recent times women have changed their attitudes from the "me too" business to real and interesting ventures. Most of these are out of necessity and the fact that they have to provide for their family. Most women have become bread winners due to loss of their husband at very young age. Most female child has become bread winners due to loss of their parents or early marriage. All these are part of the origin of "necessity or forced entrepreneurship".

Entrepreneurial Orientation is a strategic method that organizations use to adapt to the ever dynamic business environment and to outperform their competitors. The principle of entrepreneurial orientation is that entrepreneurial company differs from other kinds of companies; successful business entrepreneurship must have an entrepreneurial orientation. Entrepreneurial Orientation refers to the willingness and preference of business manager/owner to take risks, as well as compete effectively with

other businesses in same industry. During the last few decades, Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) has emerged as a major construct within the strategic management and entrepreneurship literature. In today's dynamic and intensely competitive environment, the importance of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is manifested and rapidly diffused throughout the strategic entrepreneurship literature (Soininen, Kaisu, Helena & Pasi, 2013).

Today, all over the world, women participate in various aspects of work as managers, artisans and in other professional jobs. Women-owned businesses are the fastest growing business population in the world. They contribute significantly to the economic progress of many countries in the world, especially as most are now breadwinners in the family. Therefore, female-owned businesses create wealth and employment by affecting processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to new entries. It involves the intentions and actions of key players functioning in a dynamic generative process aimed at new venture creation (Brusha & Cooper, 2012).

Innovation is also an essential element in the enterprises as it creates new business ideas and activities for survival for an existing business in order to gain a competitive advantage. Through a successful innovation, customers will pay a premium price and purchase more frequently enhancing customer loyalty when the purchased products/services meet their particular requirements. Pro-activeness is a core ingredient of entrepreneurship; it is seeking new opportunities that are not in practice currently, so entrepreneurs are required to keep eyes on the horizons and to take benefits of upcoming opportunities before their competitors. Pro-activeness in the fashion world include being the first to create/adopt a new sewing method, import a new designing machine, first to introduce a new style of wears to mention but a few.

Historically, fashion business has gone through many successful innovation processes which were widely marketed, thanks to good functionality and the ability to create value. Innovation is important for the future development of fashion industry in the form of competitive businesses. Fashion brands for their part strive for innovation, differentiation and appeal. This is because the fashion business is essentially a progressive sector and one of the core characteristics of fashion brands is innovation, which has been an essential aspect for centuries.

## **Statement of the Problem**

New product development is as a result of innovativeness in entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs usually lack the courage to adopt innovative methods that can lead to better performance of their businesses. Firms that embrace and manage innovation effectively have superb performance than those that did not. Most women have not been able to take proactive measures to introduce new products and services ahead of the competitors in order to maintain their customers and acting in anticipation of future demand (Okon & Nwonye, 2015). Female fashion designers are not engaged in creative experimentation through the introduction of new products/services as well as technological leadership through Research & Development in new processes.

Female fashion designers are not seeking business opportunities, creating new styles and services in order to retain and satisfy their customer. This lead to poor performance, leaving only few of them as survivors in the very competitive business environment, this is a serious issue of concern to all stakeholders (Gjini, 2014). Female fashion designers are not stimulating domestic demands which have not enlarge their markets and so not provided opportunities for the development of the industry in future. Most of their fashion brands are not providing outstanding services that matter most to customers (Allino & Igwe, 2017). Women entrepreneurs generally are not proactive in nature due to the fact that women are naturally shy and might not be able to take bold steps in starting new businesses, trying out new equipment, bringing out new styles of cloth and adopting new methods for the fear of non-acceptability from the member of the public, (Emmanuel, 2012).

This study examined the impact of female entrepreneurship orientation and culture on performance of women-owned business but the following objectives were helpful in achieving the general objective, which is to: Investigate the impact of innovativeness and pro-activeness on new product development and customer satisfaction of female-owned businesses in Kwara State. The study hypotheses are innovativeness has no significant effect on new product development and pro-activeness has no significant effect on customer retention.

## **Literature Review**

### **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is also claimed as the major driver of economy in the developed and developing countries (Ramadani, Hisrich & Gerguri, 2015). Entrepreneurship can also be seen as turning new ideas into product or service which consequently provides increasing productivity and employment. Morrish (2011) defined entrepreneurship as the process of creating value by bringing together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity, adopting an entrepreneurial culture, business orientation or intensity that is innovative, risk accepting and being proactive. He further posits that it means engaging in opportunity creation or discovery, assessment and exploitation of attractive opportunities.

Entrepreneurship is a method of exploiting opportunities that exist in the environment or that are created through innovation in an attempt to create value. It often includes the creation and management of new business ventures by an individual or a team, (Kittichai & Nancy 2010). It also involves application of focused strategies, new ideas and insights to create a product or a service that satisfies customers' needs and solves their problems. Entrepreneurship promotes resourcefulness in youth and adults. It serves as a major link in the process of innovation, development and economic growth and revitalization.

### **Entrepreneurship Orientation and Culture**

The concept of entrepreneurial orientation was developed by Miller (1983) as comprising three dimensions of innovativeness, pro-activeness and risk taking. Entrepreneurial Orientation refers to a specific level of corporate behaviour in the face of risk, independent activities, engaging in innovation and reacting positively and aggressively to outperform competitors in the market. Miller (1983) further defines Entrepreneurial Orientation at the firm level, as the reflection of strategic orientation of a firm by affecting procedures, business process, and decision-making activities that lead to business success. It involves the intentions and actions of key players functioning in a dynamic generative process aimed at new venture creation. However, Lumpkin & Dess (1996) suggested that there are two additional salient dimensions to the construct of entrepreneurial orientation. These are competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. According to Lumpkin & Dess, an

organization does not have to use a fifth dimension, but it could be using the other several dimensions depending on the context to be studied.

Entrepreneurial orientation is a multidimensional appraisal of firm level entrepreneurship, comprised of innovativeness, pro-activeness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. Earlier researchers contributed to the gradual establishment of entrepreneurial orientation as a theoretically and logically legitimate construct representing the entrepreneurial nature of a firm (Covin, Miller & Slevinscale, 2006) as cited in Gathungu, Aiko & Machinki, (2014). It is the combined presence of innovation, pro-activeness and risk taking in a firm that leads to the organization having an entrepreneurial orientation (Miller & Friesen, 1983). It is important to note that these same variables have been common across measurements of concepts such as strategic posture, corporate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation, with the Miller, Covin & Slevin scale commonly referred to as the MCS scale is the most commonly utilized measurement tool. In all of these studies, the core variables are innovation, pro-activeness and risk-taking.

Culture impacts on people and organization behaviour, and a great deal of management research has been directed towards understanding organizational culture which refers to the peripheral or more easily influenced values and beliefs that an individual hold (Hofstede 2001). An organization's culture has a relatively weak influence on an individual's core cultural beliefs and values. The influence of culture on entrepreneurship was first emphasized by Max Weber at the beginning of twenty century. "Culture" is a shared meaning or system, found among those who speak a particular language or dialect, during a specific historic period, and in a definable geographic region (Triandis, 2000). It functions to improve the adaptation of members of a culture to a particular ecology, and it includes the knowledge that people need to have in order to function effectively in their social environment (Triandis, 2000). Hill, (2003) said the values and norms of a culture do not emerge or fully formed rather, they are the evolutionary product of a number of factors, including the prevailing political and economic philosophy, the social structure of a society, and the dominant religion, language and education.

In Ilorin which is the study area, the residents are predominant Muslims. Their culture does not allow women to own property as they are guided by Sharia Law. A woman cannot even borrow loan without the husband's consent. By property law, a woman is entitled to half property of man;

therefore even availability of capital to women for business is limited. Their culture does not support some particular styles of clothing which is trending in some other parts of the state. The most popular outfits worn by the residents are kaftan and trousers for men and blouses and skirts/wrappers for women. The hijab tailors are in good business: for a large percentage of women and children use it. There is hardly a weekend when the residents do not have something to celebrate, be it naming ceremony, wedding, housewarming, Hajj welcome party to mention but a few. During all these occasions, they usually buy uniform outfits "Aso Ebi" to grace it. These habit that is popular with the indigenes (especially women) results into increased patronage of the Female Fashion Designers in Ilorin.

In Ilorin town, most women are full housewives whom are not allowed to work or work within the confine of their husband's compound. They don't have access to capital, good education and are restricted to some particular job type. Even women participation in politics was forbidden and the few that come out are not elected until recently. The culture strictly follows Islamic and Northern culture. Female fashion designers do not usually have male customers although the male fashion designers have female customers. Most men because of the cultural setting cannot allow a female fashion designer to sew their cloth. The general believe is that no female fashion designer can sew a perfect trouser free of error. Due to their patriarchal nature, they cannot even allow a woman to take their measurement.

### **Women Entrepreneurs**

Women Entrepreneurship can be defined as a situation where women play intriguing role by frequently interacting and adjusting herself with socio-economic, financial and support spheres in the society. Tambunan (2009) categorized women entrepreneurs into three categories namely; chance, forced and created and these categories are based on how they started their businesses. He further explained that women, who do not have any clear objective or goal in their mind at the time of initiating their business, fall in the chance category as with time their businesses evolve from their hobbies. Women forced into entrepreneurship are the necessity or force category, for such women they start their businesses after being constrained by circumstances. On the other hand, women who start their businesses by being motivated or encouraged by others fall in the category of creative entrepreneurs (Aliu, 2012).

Women entrepreneurs therefore refer to women who owned or run enterprises. Hence, the women entrepreneurs are those women who start and own a business. Such women exist in societies both in advanced and developing countries like Nigeria. In the view of Ahmad, Xavier, Perumal & Nor, (2011), a female entrepreneur is a woman who has initiated a business, is actively involved in managing it, and owns at least 50% of the firm and have been in operation for one year or longer. Women entrepreneurship is a potential means of empowering people, developing rural women and solving other social problems. Women entrepreneurs can be positioned to play an important role in promoting sustainable practices in economics, social system and ecology, to reach sustainable development.

### **Performance of Female Owned-Businesses in Kwara State**

As entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment, so also is female involvement imperative. However, studies (Julio & Daouda, 2016; Industry Canada, 2015) have reported that majority female-owned enterprises are far below majority male-owned enterprises in terms of sales, profits, employment, innovation, loan approvals, exports, sales growth and employment growth. This lesser performance is credited to the business sectors within which women entrepreneurs participate, their personal physical appearance and predilections, their management strategies and established constraints.

### **Innovativeness and Pro-activeness in Female Fashion Business**

Schumpeter argued that innovation is a chance for firms to pursue economic rent in the short-term through the establishing of a monopoly and continuous innovation activities (Porter, 1980). Lomberg, Urbig & Stockman (2017) refers to innovativeness as the propensity of business enterprises to inculcate the spirit of generating creative ideas or processes to introduce new products or services through experiment or feasibility study. Innovation is an essential element in enterprises by creating new business activity, ingenerating growth and ensuring survival for an existing business in order to gain a competitive advantage. However, the point is that innovation is driven by creative and enterprising individuals and does not occur spontaneously (Lowe & Marriott, 2006).

Pro-activeness is an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective characterized by the introduction of new products and services ahead of the



competition and acting in anticipation of future demand that are not restrained to current operation. This the ability of the firm to harvest and exploit a future-focused perspective that enables the organization to react to opportunities that are identified for new products, markets or ventures as well as developing a product. It is related to initiative and first-mover advantages and to “taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities” (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Pro-activeness is core ingredient of entrepreneurship, in the fashion world include being the first to create/adopt a new sewing method, import a new designing machine, first to introduce a new style of wears to mention but a few. Pro-activeness relates to market opportunity in entrepreneurship by “seizing initiative and acting opportunistically in order to shape the environment, that is, to influence trends and, perhaps, even to create demand”.

### **Creativity in Fashion Industry**

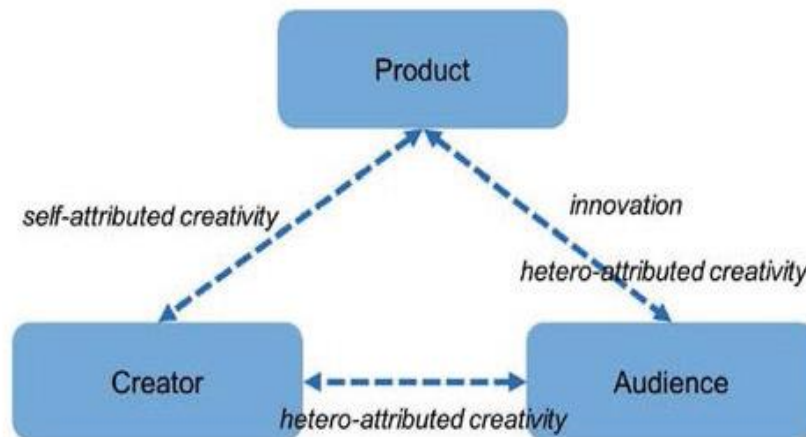
Creativity is the ability to develop new ideas and to discover new ways of looking at problems and opportunities. Innovation is the ability to apply creative solutions to those problems and opportunities to enhance or enrich people’s life. Harvard’s Theodore Levitt says that creativity is thinking new things, and innovation is doing new things. In short, entrepreneurs succeed by thinking and doing new things or old things in new ways. Simply having a great new idea is not enough; transforming the idea into a tangible product, service or business venture is the essential next step (Scarborough, 2011)

The terms creativity and innovation are often used interchangeably in academic literatures, obviously, this is because researchers in creativity and innovation come from different backgrounds and fail to make the necessary agreement. The field of creativity is closer to the behavioural sciences (like psychology and education) while researchers in the field of innovation come from areas like to management, economics, public administration or political science. Therefore, depending on the origins, both terms have been used with similar or different meanings, often contradicting each other (Soussa, Pellissier & Monteiro, 2012).

The fashion design industry, with its seasonal cyclic demand, requires intense creativity over a short time cycle that repeats every three months. The fashion industry is a knowledge intensive industry that is dependent on the continuous development of new capabilities, such as creativity. The nature of this industry and its customer’s forces companies to create new materials and products in rapid cycles four times a year the seasonally driven cycle and for different age groups. Creativity is seen as a process of communication

between the creator (or the product) and the judges or audience (hetero-attributed), or between the creator and the product (self-attributed).

**Figure 1.1 The Creativity Process**



**Source: Soussa, Pellissier & Monteiro, (2012)**

According to Jennings & Brush, (2013), the creative process is a product of seven steps which can be described as follows:

- i. **Preparation:** This step involves getting the mind ready for creative thinking. This might include a formal education, on- the- job training, work experience and taking advantage of other learning and training opportunities.
- ii. **Investigation:** This step requires developing a solid understanding of the problem or situation at hand in order to create new ideas and concepts in any field, an individual must study the problem and understand its basic components.
- iii. **Transformation:** This involves looking the similarities and the differences in the information collected. This stage requires two types of thinking: convergent and divergent thinking. Convergent thinking is the ability to see the similarities and the connections among various data and events. Divergent thinking is the ability to see differences among various data and events.
- iv. **Incubation:** The step requires spending time to reflect on the information collected. Incubation occurs while the individual look like being away from the problem and is often engaged in some totally unrelated activity.

- v. **Illumination:** This stage of the creative process occurs at some point during the incubation stage when a spontaneous breakthrough causes “the light bulb to go on”. It may take after five minutes or several years. In the illumination stage, all of the previous stages come together to produce the “Eureka Factor”- the creation of the innovative idea. In a study of 200 scientists, 80 percent said that at least once, a solution to a problem usually just “popped into their heads”- when they are away and not thinking of the problem.
- vi. **Verification:** Validating the idea as being accurate and useful. For entrepreneurs, this may include conducting experiments, running simulations, test marketing a product or service, establishing small-scale pilot programs, building prototypes, and many other activities designed to verify that the new idea will work and is ready for implementation.
- vii. **Implementation:** The focus of this step is to transform the idea into reality. Plenty of people come up with creative ideas for promising new products and services, but most never take them beyond the idea stage. What sets entrepreneurs apart is that they act on their ideas. An entrepreneur’s philosophy is “ready, aim and fire”, not “ready, aim, aim, aim, aim and not firing at all or firing in the nearest future.

## Theoretical Review

### Anthropological Theory of Entrepreneurship

The study is anchored on anthropological theory, the theory affirmed that cultural norms, beliefs can positively affect an individual’s value system. It can also help the system to develop entrepreneurial skill for economic vitality (Akpodono, 2016). The theory further explained that new venture is created as a result an individual’s cultural influence. Mitchell, Smith, More, Seawright, Peredo & Mckenzie (2002) affirmed that an individual’s attitude, ethnic and culture can have significant impact on their entrepreneurial behaviour.

In a society where entrepreneurship traits and culture such as innovation, creativity, pro-activeness and competitiveness is promoted, and where social processes are not rigid then such personalities become interested with starting and operating their own enterprises (Mwaura, Gathenya & Kihoro, 2015). The theory presents a holistic view of entrepreneurship by considering the influence of factors such as innovation, managerial skills, social class,

leadership skills and personal traits (Deakins & Freel, 2012; Khanka, 2012) on Business Performance.

### Gaps in Literature

Most extant literatures on women entrepreneurial orientation and culture concentrates on developed countries, while limited knowledge exists on women entrepreneurship orientation in developing countries or emerging economies which are characterized by inadequate regulations, dynamic culture and inefficient systems (Kimosop, Korir, & White, 2016; Tur-Porcar, & Sánchez-Masferrer, 2015). The existing body of knowledge was not sufficient to show the influence of entrepreneurial orientation and culture on the performance of female -owned enterprises especially female fashion designers in Ilorin.

### Methodology

This study design is descriptive in nature and it adopts the combination of quantitative and qualitative data to answer the study questions. Yin (2004) describe the combination of quantitative and qualitative data as a mixed method approaches and that more than one method can be adopted for a single study depending on the users' understanding and complexity of the study. This study adopts cross-sectional and longitudinal survey because most articles related to this study made use of it.

**Table 1.1 Population of Study**

S/N	Local Government Area	Population
1	Ilorin East	526
2	Ilorin South	475
3	Ilorin West	567
	Total	<b>1570</b>

**Source: (Association of Female Fashion Designers, Kwara State Branch) Pilot study, 2020**

The study area is Ilorin metropolis which consist three local government area namely Ilorin East, Ilorin South and Ilorin West. The study areas were chosen due to the fact that the three local government areas constitute the metropolis.

The Population of the Study is 1570 which include female fashion designers and their allied industry. The allied industries in this context are embroiders

and stone designers, the sample size of 322 was gotten through research advisors table, determined using 5% margin of error. But 308 copies of questionnaires were returned from the respondents.

The formula used for these calculations according to the table stated as thus:

$$n = \frac{X^2 \times N \times P \times (1 - P)}{(ME^2 \times (N - 1) + (X^2 \times P \times (1 - P)))}$$

n = Sample size,  $X^2$  = Chi-square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom, N = Population Size, P = Population Proportion (0.50 in the table), ME = desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion).

$$\frac{0.95 \times 1570 \times 322 \times (1 - 322)}{(0.05^2 \times (1570 - 1) + (0.95^2 - 322 \times (1 - 322)))} = 308$$

**Table 1.2 Proportional Method of Assigning Sample Size**

S/N	Local Government Area	Population	Sample Size
1	Ilorin East	526	103
2	Ilorin South	475	94
3	Ilorin West	567	111
	Total	<b>1570</b>	<b>308</b>

**Source: (Association of Female Fashion Designers, Kwara State Branch) Pilot study, 2020**

To obtain an accurate result in this study, proportional sampling was used to determine the numbers of questionnaire to be administered at each local government area, and simple random sampling technique was being adopted for administering the questionnaire.

Simple random technique was adopted for this study because it gives an equal chance of being selected to everyone in the population and eliminates arbitrary or biased selection of sample elements. The study instruments that were used in this study were closed-ended questionnaire and structured interview. The method of data analysis includes descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, it was adopted for analyzing the data, and Multiple Standard Regression and Correlation analysis were adopted to test the hypotheses under the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 16.0) software. And thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data.

### Test of Hypotheses

The study hypotheses are (a) Innovativeness has no significant effect on new product development (b) Pro-activeness has no significant effect on customer retention

**Table 1.2 Summary of Empirical Findings**

<i>Items</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R-Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Innovativeness - New Product Development	0.623 <sup>a</sup>	0.790	0.721	2.88598	10.190	0.000
Proactiveness - Customer Retention	0.651 <sup>a</sup>	0.720	0.709	3.96735	12.082	0.000

**Source: Researcher's Computation (SPSS version 20)**

Table 1.2 result shows R-Square value of 0.790 of variable of innovativeness which explained 79% of the variance in perceived new product development. While the significance value of 0.000, which is less than p-value of 0.10 ( $p < 0.10$ ) which means that explanatory variable elements as a whole can jointly influence change in the dependent variable (new product development). Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted, innovativeness has a significant effect on new product development.

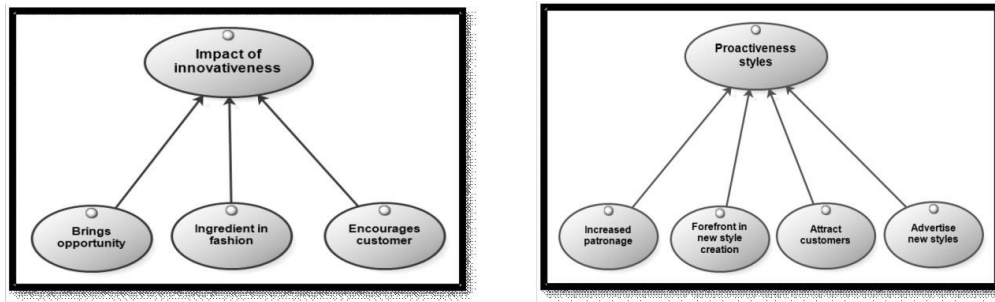
For the second hypothesis, R-Square value of 0.720 of pro-activeness which explained 72% of the variance in perceived customer retention.

While the significance value of 0.000, which is less than p-value of 0.10 ( $p < 0.10$ ) which means that explanatory variable elements as a whole can jointly influence change in the dependent variable (customer retention). Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted, pro-activeness has a significant effect on customer retention.

The implication of the above F values is that there is significance impact of innovativeness and pro-activeness on new product development and customer retention.

This implies that innovativeness (first in the market, initiating ideas, reward for new styles, quick to introduce new styles and services to the market place, perceived opportunities, active innovation and marketing methods), all these put together can influence new product development of female owned businesses in Kwara State.

Pro-activeness (market opportunities, setting the pace, forefront of development, introducing new styles, customer needs and trends, planning for the future, adding value, opportunity to learn and anticipating for the future). If all these are applied, it will enhance customer retention of female



**Figure 1.2 Interview Response**  
Source: Nvivo Output, 2020

The fashion industry is a familiarity concentrated business that is reliant on the continuous development of new capabilities, such as creativity. The nature of this industry and its customers' forces companies to create new materials and products however, the main aim of these efforts is basically to achieve some impacts.

## Discussion of Findings

The quantitative results indicate that there is a positive relationship between innovativeness and new product development, and pro-activeness and customer retention of female fashion designers in Kwara State.

It is to understand the role of pro-activeness in satisfying and retaining customers, anticipating future wants, getting information of customer needs. Another way pro-activeness influence customer satisfaction/retention are constant exploitation of market opportunity, setting the pace in introducing new styles. This finding supports the position of (Kimosop, Korir & White, 2016).

Findings reveal that seeking new product and services, being the first in the market to introduce new styles. This is also in agreement with the findings of

Hakala, (2013), Gautam, (2016) who affirm that creativity and innovativeness enhances performance of any business organization. This finding supports the position of Siraj, Isaac & Danja (2016) which states that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship orientation and innovation of the firm. Innovativeness can also influence new product development through launching and suggestion of new products/service to customers.

The interview responses were analyzed thematically, where each theme answered each study question, the result anchored on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of female owned business focusing on fashion designers as case study. The study identified four themes and eight sub-themes and that described how entrepreneurship orientation dimensions and business performance of female owned businesses. The thematic analysis shows that pro-activeness involves fashion designers creating and adopting a new sewing method, importing a new designing machine, first to introduce a new style of wears to mention but a few. Pro-activeness relates to market opportunity in entrepreneurship by seizing initiative and acting opportunistically in order to shape the environment, that is, to influence trends and, perhaps, even to create demand.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that if female fashion designers put their efforts on innovation, they can perform better, if they are pro-active to market changes they can maintain their performance by retaining their position in the market. However, it is noted that entrepreneurial orientation is better practiced among fashion designers who have higher educational qualifications than the lower educationally qualified fashion designers. It was also observed that the younger fashion designers are more ready and willing to take the risk of innovating than the older ones.

The study also concluded that most female fashion designers in Kwara State lack of access to formal business training on pro-activeness, innovativeness and insufficient support from family. Female fashion designers need to be innovative to satisfy potential customer needs, engage in new exploration, support new ideas, experiment and stimulate creativity. As a result, female business association can enhance the potential by providing necessary information to female fashion designers in Kwara State.



## Recommendations

- i. Female fashion designers need to introduce new styles to customers by constant search and exploitation of market opportunities to promote performance. They need to create superior value for customers, when competitors bring in new styles or products. Furthermore, the study highlighted innovation as a catalyst for new product development, female fashion designers need to actively seek innovative product and ideas, and individuals should be rewarded for new ideas/styles that are trending. Female fashion designers need to focus on technology and innovations, discover new machines that bring out quality in their work.
- ii. Pro-activeness has been identified as an important tool for new customer retention, female fashion designers need to focus on customer needs and always anticipate future wants and needs in the fashion industry. They need to aim at being at the forefront of development in the fashion industry, getting information on customer needs and trends from their collaborators.
- iii. Government at all level should discourage gender disparities, inequality and underestimated economic right of women in our society in the name of culture. This will encourage women to start and manage more businesses for national development.

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