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**FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL AND MEDIUM  
SCALE ENTERPRISES PERFORMANCE IN OSHODI:  
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF OSHODI- ISOLO, LAGOS STATE,  
NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

*Traditionally, entrepreneurship is assumed to be a male-dominated area; the participation of women in this arena has been increasing steadily with the support of the transformation into a knowledge economy. Every day entrepreneurs generate economic growth, create new jobs, form new businesses, increase exports, reduce imports, and foster creativity and innovation. This study investigated female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises performance in Oshodi – Isolo, Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objective is to examine the effect competency of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises productivity; determine impact of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises profitability; identify problems affecting female entrepreneurs on employment creation. In attaining the highlighted objectives, a well-structured questionnaire was administered for information and data collection. A simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents from the study areas. Total of 120 respondents were selected across the study area. The analysis of*

*data was done using descriptive tools basically to show the distribution of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, and inferential to estimate influence of female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises performance. Regression and Correlation Models and Chi Square Test were employed. This study findings based on test of the three (3) hypotheses in the study, show that there is no significant relationship between competency of female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises productivity ( $R^2=0.128$ ,  $F_{cal.}= 13.944$ ,  $P<0.05$  at 0.000 significant level); there is no significant relationship between female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises profitability ( $R^2=0.132$ ,  $F_{cal.}= 14.460$ ,  $P<0.05$  at 0.000 significant level); There is no significant relationship between problems affecting female entrepreneurs and employment creation ( $R^2=0.187$ ,  $F_{cal.}= 21.826$ ,  $P<0.05$  at 0.000 significant level). In conclusion, the study reflected that each of these independent variables play a significant role on small and medium scale enterprises performance in a positive way. Based on these findings, the study recommends that following recommendations; the government and all stakeholders should establish women's university to enable girl child to get education. Also, civic education should be done on importance of girl education; the government and policy makers should enforce gender equality in terms of property ownership in order to achieve the set millennium development goals; Women entrepreneurs need be accepted and supported through social networking so that capacity building is made available in the areas of entrepreneurship; Finally, married women entrepreneurs should be given support by their spouse in terms of actual engagement and involvement in running business.*

**Keywords:** *Female entrepreneurs, Knowledge economy, SMEs, Performance, Productivity*

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## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is regarded to be one of the important factors of economic growth and development in most nations of the world (Agwu,

2001). Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) estimates that worldwide, more than 187million women are engaged in activities classed as entrepreneurship (Andersen, 2010). Every day entrepreneurs generate economic growth, create new jobs, form new businesses, increase exports, reduce imports, and foster creativity and innovation (Byrne, 2010). Entrepreneurs are opportunists who must always be aware of the ever-changing environment around them (Muhammad, Li, & Ali, 2020). Entrepreneurship is increasingly considered as a vital mover of productivity, innovation, economic growth, employment, and it is majorly agreed to be an essential aspect of economic vitality (Natanya & Rita, 2020; Okafor & Mordi, 2010).

Global attention has been drawn to female entrepreneurship during the past few decades. It has developed in line with the prolific increase in the number of female-owned businesses and their contribution to employment creation and economic development in many economies (Ojo, 2009). Globally, the potential of any economy to achieve desired growth is greatly hampered by the systematic exclusion of women entrepreneurial activity in the key industries that drive the economy (Vasan, 2021). The number of women-owned businesses is increasing around the globe (Rizwan, Yashar, Sved, & Mazhar, 2021). Female entrepreneurial activities have attracted considerable attention around the world and have developed a substantial literature (Morris, 2006; Vasan, 2021; Annekora, 2001; Byrne, 2010).

Moreso, female entrepreneurs represent the fastest growing category of entrepreneurship worldwide and have received, especially in recent years, the attention of many academics. According to the emerging literature, women can make a significant contribution to entrepreneurial activity (Cole., 2015) and economic development (Fapounda, 2012; GEM., 2012) in terms of creating new jobs and increasing the gross domestic product (GDP) (Bahmani-Epke., 2011; Andersen, 2010), with positive impacts on reducing poverty and social exclusion (Akintoye, 2006; Ojo, 2009). The percentage of women who decide to pursue an entrepreneurial career is, however, lower than that of men (Vasan, 2021), and this difference is

greater as the level of development of the country increases (Okafor, Iyiola, Akinbode & Eke, 2015). Women consist of half the world's population still majority of the women do not have access to micro finance institutions.

In Nigeria, women play a vital role in the economic development of their families and communities. However, women are subjected to gender-related discriminations especially in lower middle countries (Akintoye, 2006). Some of such discriminations, occasioned by culture, are in the areas of distribution of social wealth such as education and health UNIDO, 2001; UNECE, 2004). Yet women contribute to the rural and urban economic development of their countries through their greater involvement in credit schemes (Okafor & Mordi, 2010), and job creation through micro-enterprises (Suleiman, 2006).

Women are becoming increasingly important in the socio-economic development of both developed and developing economies as they account for significant percentage of the operators of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Muhammad, Li, & Ali, 2020). Women entrepreneurs make a substantial contribution to national economies through their participation in start-ups and their growth in small and medium businesses (Porter & Nagarraian, 2005). Their interests and activities in the economic growth and development especially in the area of SMEs have received outstanding interest of researchers. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (2012) confirmed that women participate in a wide range of entrepreneurial activities across the 37 member countries of GEM of which Nigeria is a member and their activities in different countries have paid off in form of many newly-established enterprises for job and wealth creation. This notwithstanding, entrepreneurship is usually seen from the perspective of men driven economy (Fapounda, 2012; GEM, 2012) due to its complexity, particularly its gender issues, the role of women entrepreneurs has not been properly documented. While women's entrepreneurship is a central aspect of economic development and public policy concern in most countries especially in Nigeria and specifically in Abia state, scholarly

research about their entrepreneurial activities is comparatively scarce. The role of entrepreneurs as agents in the labor market for creation of employment, wealth creation, poverty alleviation and provision of resources has helped tremendously to increase the number of women owned entrepreneurial ventures in the world (GEM, 2012). The emergence of the private sector as the major participant/player in the industrial development of many countries has also improved women's access in employment opportunities as against when they experienced denial in employment opportunities as wage workers because of their family responsibilities, lack of skills, social and cultural barriers (Carter & Marlow, 2003). The role of Women Entrepreneurs needs to be considered in the economic development of the nation for various reasons. They have been recognized during the last decade as an important untapped source of economic growth. Women Entrepreneurs create new jobs for themselves and others and by being different also provide society with different solutions to management, organization and business problems as well as to the exploitation of women entrepreneurial opportunities. The operation of SMEs involves considerable risks, hard work, enormous sacrifice and sincerity of purpose which cut across various obstacles.

The risks, challenges and obstacles (Ojo, 2009) perhaps affect women entrepreneurs more than their men counterparts, making their chances of success to be considerably lower than men (Morris, 2006). In fact, women entrepreneurship has a great potential to contribute massively to employment generation and economic growth in Nigeria. Women entrepreneurs face different issues depending on the stage of their present life cycle, region, legislation and industry. One thing however stands out, that the entrepreneurship space in Nigeria remains a traditionally male dominated territory. Nigerian women entrepreneurs operate in an unfavourable business environment, characterized by various challenges ranging from infrastructural deficiency, low access and high cost of finance, weak institutions and many barriers to formal economic participation. Despite the crucial role of women entrepreneurs in the

economic development of their families and countries, it is however discovered that women entrepreneurs have low business performance when compared to their male counterparts (Akintoye, 2006); women are largely concentrated in the informal, micro, low growth and profit areas where competition is

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Entrepreneurship is often considered a male-gendered concept and carries masculine connotations (Okafor & Mordi, 2010). Traditionally, entrepreneurship is assumed to be a male-dominated area; the participation of women in this arena has been increasing steadily with the support of the transformation into a knowledge economy. According to the "Women's Entrepreneurship" report of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2012), approximately 41 percent of early-stage entrepreneurs were women across the 61 economies that were included in the study. Also, the gender gap, which is defined as the ratio of women to men participating in entrepreneurship, narrowed by six percent in 2014 compared to 2012 (GEM, 2012). If women cannot obtain freedom and get economically self-reliant, they have to remain reliant on a husband or other male figure, and to be dependent on another is not at all the same as being free (Cole, 2015). Gender inequality serves the role of constraint to entrepreneurial ideals or decisions, reducing women's participation in economic activities. This is not limited only to access finance or societal rules, but there are also societal perceptions that affect self perception levels of women or greater fear of failure (Vasan, 2021). Women have restricted access to resources such as land, credit, education, technology, networks, information, and markets (Rizwan et al., 2021). In general, women entrepreneurs have social and operational constraints that continue to restrict them from starting and running economic enterprises (Mordi, Simpson, Singh & Okafor, 2010). According to Wennekers & Thurik (2009), the accepted generalization of 'gender' in the Nigerian set up supposes a female to be mainly a homemaker and not engaged in stressful, high-risk business activities, generalized as entrepreneurial

activities. This has hampered many Nigerian women from establishing, managing, and growing successful firms, as they are confronted with many political, economic, and social obstacles in the society, as shown by the feminist theory. Women are considered as not separable from the family, and most work of keeping the house in is assigned to them. Generally, women are regarded as mainly the carers of the family (Winn, 2005). Women frequently go into entrepreneurship with small resources available to them. As a result, they are likely to venture into areas like retail or services where the cost of entry is low, so is the growth potential (Muhammad et al., 2020).

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the competency of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises productivity?
2. What is the impact of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises profitability?
3. What are the problems affecting female entrepreneurs on employment creation?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

There is no universally agreed upon definition of entrepreneurship. Morris (2006) attribute the existence of many and varied definitions of entrepreneurship to the diversity of entrepreneurship studies in terms of purpose, objectives, questions addressed, units of analysis, theoretical perspectives and methodologies. They argue that “entrepreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon that cuts across many disciplinary boundaries,” (Okafor & Mordi, 2010) Ojo (2009) shares this view and argues that the concept of entrepreneurship has its roots in multiple fields of research including Economics, Sociology, Psychology and Organisational Behaviour. His view is that entrepreneurship is a multi-dimensional concept, which can be defined from various perspectives including “owning a small business (risk theory), being innovative (dynamic

theory), acting as a leader (traits school), or starting up a new company (behavioural school)". Bates (1995) argue that entrepreneurship literature appears to fall into six schools of thought namely the "Great Person" School of Entrepreneurship, the Psychological Characteristics School of Entrepreneurship, the Classical School of Entrepreneurship, The Management School of Entrepreneurship, the Leadership School of Entrepreneurship and the Intrapreneurship School of Entrepreneurship. They further argue that each of the above mentioned schools of thought has its own fundamental beliefs, yet they all provide insights into different aspects of the multifaceted phenomenon of entrepreneurship. It follows that the subject of entrepreneurship is not only wide but also complex.

### **Concept of Women Entrepreneurship**

Women, usually described as the feminine gender, are adult females. Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, according to the United Nations Millennium Campaign (Okafor & Mordi, 2010) to halve world poverty by the year 2015. The overwhelming majority of the labour that sustain life – growing food, cooking, raising children, caring for the elderly, maintaining a house, hauling water – is done by women, and universally this work is accorded low status and no pay. The ceaseless cycle of labour rarely shows up in economic analysis of a society's production and value. Women earn only 10 percent of the world's income. Where women work for money, they may be limited to a set of jobs deemed suitable for women – invariably low pay, low status positions (Cole, 2015). However, the trend is gradually changing as more women are becoming independent entrepreneurs and determine the wages of their employees, including men. Entrepreneurship simply refers to the creation of new business ventures by individuals or small groups. It means creating opportunities for investment and production, establishing an organization capable of introducing non-production process, accumulating capable capital, innovating new production techniques and new products, searching for new sources of raw materials and, above all, selecting an efficient manager to run the organization. Suleiman (2006) defined



entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities to establish and run an enterprise successfully. For us, entrepreneurship is simply creating business outfits and becoming an employer of labour. This includes becoming self-employed and having the capacity to employ others.

The person who risks time, effort and money to start and operate a business is called an entrepreneur (Bates, 1995). Blais & Weber (2001) considered entrepreneurship as synonymous with innovation, creativity and risk-taking. Carter, Williams & Reynolds (1997) defined an entrepreneur as an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of profit and growth. Entrepreneurs are also seen as people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather the necessary resources, to take advantage of them, and to initiate appropriate action to ensure success (Kuzilwa, 2005). The entrepreneur is able to recognize potentially profitable opportunities, to conceptualize venture strategies, and to become the key force in successfully moving an idea from the mind to the market place (Suleiman, 2006). An entrepreneur is one who undertakes a commercial enterprise and who is an organisational creator and innovator (Gartner, 1990; Gartner et al., 2004; Mordi, Simpson, & Singh, 2010); one who prospects for or exploits opportunities and who has a tenacity to face challenges (Winn, 2005; Mordi, Simpson, & Singh, 2010). Entrepreneurs commonly involve creativity and innovation, including the ability to see opportunities when other people cannot see them. Entrepreneurs are committed in entrepreneurship, which is the process of starting a new business venture (Vasan, 2021). From a personality point of view, Cole (2015) saw an entrepreneur to be optimistic, moderate risk-taker, and believing in their ability to control their own destiny rather than just making money. He added that they are usually married, with minimum distractions caused by family life. Taking a more psychological approach, an entrepreneur is a person who is typically driven by certain needs (need to obtain or attain something, need to experiment, need to accomplish or need to escape authority of others). Generally, from discussions and writings about

entrepreneurs it can be concluded that successful entrepreneurs possess distinctive qualities.

Women entrepreneurs are merely entrepreneurs who are females. According to Okafor & Mordi (2010), “women entrepreneurs are simply women that participate in total entrepreneurial activities, who take the risks involved in combining resources together in a unique way so as to take advantage of the opportunity identified in their immediate environment through production of goods and services”. Unique characteristics of women entrepreneurs include adaptability, innovativeness, creativity, strength, accountability, managerial skills, and credit risk. Women entrepreneurs fight against „glass ceiling“ as they desire for independence and freedom for their career (Okafor & Mordi, 2010). The main differences between male entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs are the problems that they face in participating in entrepreneurial activities. While women entrepreneurs face common economical and business environmental issues than their male counterparts, they also have to deal with issues such as inequality and sexism. Under such circumstances, these can prevent women entrepreneurs to maximize their productivity and hinder their business opportunities. Entrepreneurships generally, and women entrepreneurships specifically, are vital to the economy of a nation with respect to economic development and poverty reduction. Agwu (2001) argued that the economy of developing nations can be improved through entrepreneurship development. He, however, added that economic development is multidimensional; not only dependent on the traditional economic model of factor inputs but issues such as culture, gender, and type of enterprises, among others, should be considered. Essentially, the government of a country is required to provide the enabling environment for entrepreneurship development in terms of favorable financial, economic, socio-cultural, legal policies and functional infrastructure (ILO, 2006; Halkias, Nwajinba, Harkiolakis & Caracatsonis, 2011; Gartner, 1988; Greene , Brush, Hart, 2004, Gatewood & Carter, 2003).

However, entrepreneurs themselves have roles to play so as to compliment governments effort in enterprise development. These include making good business decisions, having the right motive, making effort to acquire appropriate education or training, business experience or skills, innovation, market information, social networks and so on. For a woman entrepreneur to succeed in her business, appropriate decision making is required of her especially in application of funds or credits acquired because misuse of acquired funds will result to business failure and continued payment of interest. Other essential success attributes of entrepreneurs are entrepreneurial skills, ability to network (to get finance and information) and strategic planning (GEM, 2012). Having the right motive (Mitchell, 2004; Porter & Nagarajan, 2005); ambition, self-confident, high level of energy and being less emotional (Akintoye, 2006) and other characteristics without which an entrepreneur may not succeed in her entrepreneurial activity.

### **Concept of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises**

According to ILO (2006) , small- to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are those companies which have the number of employees up to 250 people and a maximum annual turnover of 50 million euro. The definition of small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Nigeria has changed over the years not only in consonance with the changing fortune of the country but also in accordance with the diversity of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) supporting institutions in the country.it appear that the more advanced a country, the larger the formal SME sector. In developed countries, SMEs contributes 60% of employment and 50% of gross domestic product (GDP). In developing countries, the figures are only about 30% to 17% respectively UNIDO (2001).Prior to 1992, different institutions in Nigeria adopted varying definitions of small enterprises. The institutions include the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry (NBCI), Centre for Industrial Research and Development (CIRD), Nigerian Association of Small-Scale Industrialists (NASSI), Federal Ministry of Industry (FMI) and the

National Economic Reconstruction and Fund (NERFUND). However, in 1992, the issues of conflicting definition was resolved with the establishment of National Council on Industry, which is now policy making organ on all matters relating to industry in Nigeria. Among the conceptual issue that was resolved is whether Small-Scale Industry definition should include all economic activities such as trading, buying and selling or whether it should be restricted to productive industrial activities especially manufacturing. Accordingly, a clear distinction was made between small-scale enterprises consisting of trading, buying and selling activities and small-scale industries engaged in manufacturing industry.

Nigeria is the second largest economy in Africa with a GDP of about \$43.4 billion in 2004 (Vasan, 2021). However, 70% of its population lives below the poverty line with an average per capital income of \$300 (UNECE, 2004). The role of SMEs in developing countries is an important one, contributing to economic growth and thereby job creation and poverty alleviation (Morris, 2006; Ojo, 2009; Okafor & Mordi, 2010). SMEs are of particular significance to the economic development of Nigeria since they account for around 97% of privately owned businesses (Annekora, 2001). They have been recognized as the backbone of the economy, employing approximately 50% of the work force and providing more than 50% of Nigeria's industrial output (Cole, 2015). They play a significant role in enhancing the quality of human resources, generating employment, building a culture of entrepreneurship, supporting large scale industries, and encouraging the creation of new business opportunities (Muhammad et al., 2020).

According to existing literature, the definition differs in distinct economics but the fundamental idea is similar. Ojo, (2009); argues that the “definition of small and medium scale enterprises varies according to context, author and countries”. Small and medium scale enterprises are certainly not multinational company, transnational collaboration, publicly owned organizations or large facility of any form. Nevertheless, they can count on business and ownership structure to become a large business unit

(Bates (1995),) while it can be indicated that 80% of the funding of SMEs come from owners, friends and families, business form can take various form including private ownership, limited partnership, contract and subcontracts, cooperatives or association (Chinonye, Iyiola, Akinbode & Eke., 2015). Small and medium scale enterprises have a narrow context within which their activity is carried out. However, where it is effectively operated it has capability to develop the economic growth and national development. In every economics, small and medium scale enterprises has been seen has a crucial instrument of economic growth and development either in developed for developing economics. Several studies have confirmed this (Bates, 1995; Ojo, 2009, Akintoye, 2006; Barron & Kenny, 1986; Kozak, 2007; Baker, Aldrich & Lion, 1997). According to Cole (2015), SMEs could be characterized by the following characteristics, which distinguish them from large enterprises:

- **Specialization and individuality:** SMEs act on business markets that are not covered by large enterprises. Characterized by a high specialization and individuality .many SMEs pursue a segmentation or niche strategy that leads to a certain strength in competition.
- **Proximity to markets:** Compared with large enterprises, SMEs are strongly focused on their end-users allowing a high proximity to markets. Instead of focusing on exchangeable products or services for anonymous markets like large enterprises SMEs provide services oriented at the customer's needs.
- **Flexibility:** Quickness to react and reorient themselves on business changes is a major characteristic of SMEs. This flexibility in decision making and implementing organizational changes is archived by preferring simplicity and flexibility regarding their processes and organizational structures.
- **Limited resources:** SMEs are limited like all companies by tight resources, especially missing IT literacy and financial resources. Missing know-how can be compensated with basis knowledge of many areas due to the fact that employees at SMEs are generally "all-rounders" and are good at multi-tasking.

- **Technical heterogeneity:** Smaller firms often lack coherent Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy or the related skills. For instance, IT landscapes consist of heterogeneous systems, reaching from Enterprise Resource Planning Systems (ERP) to spreadsheet-based island applications for conducting their every-day business transaction.

### **Problems, Challenges, and Prospects of Female Entrepreneurs**

In a research titled Problems, challenges, and prospects of female entrepreneurs by Andersen (2010), the following are the Pull and Push Factors in women entrepreneurship in Gwagwalada, Abuja: poor salary, no job, self-satisfaction, and desire for autonomy, Retrenchment, family support, challenges, unwillingness to be confined as a housewife, widowhood, poor educational background, money-making, and increase in self-confidence. Research analysis from International Labour Organization (ILO, 2006) indicates work-life balance (ability in overcoming poverty), independence, and ability to earn income, easy access to funding for business expansion (capital), increased literacy and educational skills (networking) easy access to potential customers, suppliers and business partners and global presence (domestic and international recognition) are the major determinant of women entrepreneurs economic empowerment. In a study carried out by Chinonye et al., (2015) revealed that there is inadequate government support, while other significant challenges faced by women in business include cultural related, funding and lack of information. The findings from empirical studies conducted by Adetoye (2006) revealed that women entrepreneurs face the challenges of financial constraints, low level of education, inadequate management experience, lack of information, inadequate infrastructural development. In a research titled "women entrepreneurship in Nigeria" Policy Framework, Challenges, and Remedies by Chinonye et al., (2015), among 570 Female entrepreneurs in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States within South, West, Nigeria using descriptive statistical analysis. The study revealed that although women

entrepreneurs were gaining recognition in entrepreneurial activities, however, they are faced with some difficulties which include: availability of funds for a start-up and scale-up, inadequate infrastructure, hostile business environment, high level of competition, untrustworthy personnel, lack of adequate business knowledge, family pressure, socio-cultural hindrances.

### **Women Entrepreneurship**

The women participation in a wide range of entrepreneurial activities in many countries has paid off in form of many newly-established enterprises for job increased standard of living and wealth creation (GEM, 2012). It is because of their participation in rotational savings and credit association (ROSCA) that uncover their business potential and enable them acquire all the resources need for new and existing venture such as capital, manpower and material to satisfy their organizational performance. Thus, an entrepreneur is the originator and organiser of new business venture that brings innovation and changes in newly establish firm (Kuzilwa, 2005).

Entrepreneurs are level-headed and hard working people putting their eggs in one basket to achieve organizational superior performance. In developing economy like Nigeria female continue to take part in micro enterprises business to overcome family and domestic constraints such as Pura De Nono centres, Bakery, Livestock, Restaurant, Hair dressing salon etc (Ekpe, 2011). The rural entrepreneurs are owner managers that initiate and develop new ideas and innovation to create wealth. However, the modern entrepreneurs are also passing through the transition period. They experience in credit access limitation that will uphold and extend their opportunities to the socio- economic growth of the society. Nigeria rural economy is also experiencing behaviour of entrepreneurial. Aim of most women entrepreneurs is to earn profits from their micro-farming and other related ventures, if they determine the objectives. A farm business necessary require planned decision and proper risk taking assessment, finance, investment and resources available to maximize profit. Therefore,

entrepreneurship is not simply adoption of new activity but it is transformation of a person from traditional to modern society.

Women entrepreneurship has over the past 30 years seen a dramatic increase in scholarly interest, with research on the topic expanding to a myriad of disciplines, methods and countries (Hisrich, Peter & Shepherd, 2008). While business ownership by women spans decades, published academic work only dates back to the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter & Weither, 2012) highlight three of the major milestones achieved by women entrepreneurship as a field of research: first, the first special issue dedicated to women entrepreneurship was published in the *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development Journal* in 1997. Second, the first policy and academic conferences dedicated to the subject were held in 1998 and 2003. Third, in 2009 the *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* was established as a specialty niche Journal. The historical inattention to the subject of women entrepreneurship demonstrated in the above milestones has in recent years been corrected by the field's rapid expansion, leading some (Hughes *et al.*, 2012) to describe it as a field of research that is "at the brink of adolescence".

Women's entrepreneurship research finds its roots in two research areas: (1) the gender and occupations literature and (2) feminist theory and research (Jennings & Brush, 2013). The gender and occupations literature "examines the evolving roles and experiences of men and women in the global workplace" (Powell, 2011). These studies have generally revealed gender-segregated labour markets where men and women are clustered in different occupations, with women often found at lower level positions associated with lower levels of pay, skills and status compared to their male counterparts (Morris, 2006). This gender-based segregation and stratification has provided important insights into how entrepreneurship is structured on the part of both men and women (Greene *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, gender and occupations literature informs women's entrepreneurship research by suggesting that restricted opportunities in the labour market may act as a push factor for people to venture into self-



employment (Fapounda, 2012). For example, labour market discrimination and “glass ceiling” career difficulties may give rise to more women opting to be self-employed (Carter et al , 1997). Also, venturing into self-employment is seen to be easier than overcoming barriers to entering formal employment in some countries (Andersen, 2010). Another insight is that women may opt to be self-employed because it offers them flexibility to reconcile work and family responsibilities, which may not be possible in formal employment (Vasan, 2020).

### **Women Entrepreneur in Nigeria**

Among the majority of rural and low-income urban dwellers, women perform all domestic tasks, while many also farm and trade. They are responsible for the care of children, the sick and the elderly, in addition to performing essential social functions within their communities. Many rural and urban women belong to women-only mutual-aid societies, benevolent groups in churches, cooperatives and market women's groups, some of which allow them to pool resources to reduce their workload and to invest in savings societies or cooperative ventures. Cooperative societies have provided women access to resources. Informal rotating credit associations have been used by the estimated 55 per cent of economically active women in the non-agricultural informal sector to invest in businesses and farms, home improvements and school costs for their children. Women rarely have the same access to resources as men. In the past some resources were available to them. Wives in many Nigerian societies were not fully economically dependent upon their husbands. Agwu (2001) affirms that women's power and spheres of influence largely disappeared under the impact of colonialism and external religions, which upset existing economic and social complementarity between the sexes. New "customary" laws on marriage created in response to men's anxieties about the independence of women transformed the previously fluid and negotiable relations between them into rigid duties and obligations of wives and women. Women came to be regarded as primarily dependent on men, making it unnecessary to plan

and provide for their needs; they were to work in the fields and home to produce food and other crops to support their men, who worked in visible, documented activities.

Epke (2011) asserts that initially women shared in the promises of independence and saw gains in their access to education, formal sector employment, health care and nutritional profiles; their life expectancy at birth rose from 37 to 50 years by the end of the 1960s. But development plans continued to be formulated and implemented without an adequate understanding of women's contributions to the economy. Women were also absent from formal positions of decision-making and power. The lives of women in Nigeria have been profoundly affected by three main developments since the onset of economic and social decline in the 1970s and 1980s.

First, the Structural Adjustment Programme implemented in the country in 1983 emphasized demand management and supply-oriented measures narrowly focused on export-led growth and efficiency, often to the detriment of social welfare. The programmes also introduced liberalization of trade regimes and of the financial sector, as well as privatization and reduction in the role of the state in economic life. Owing to their specific roles and positions within society, women have been among the worst affected by cuts in social sector spending, where substantial costs have been shifted from the state to the household. Therefore, women have been forced to take on an increasing burden of unpaid work in caring for the sick, obtaining food and ensuring the survival of their families more generally. Second, there has been increased civil strife, unrests and conflicts. UNIDO (2001) notes that most displaced persons and post-conflict returnees are usually women and children. Conflicts and civil unrests have increased violence against women and worsened the social and economic conditions under which they live. Third, there is the AIDS crisis, high and increasing rates of HIV infection and the costs in human lives. UNECE (2004) reports that just over half of the estimated 20 million cases of HIV in Africa are female.

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable because of their lack of power over their sexuality and reproductive functions.

### **Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs often have a special personality. They value autonomy and independence. They possess energy and a high need for achievement. Women Entrepreneurs often have a strong internal locus of control. They perceive change as opportunity and are willing to take careful risks. They usually have social skills and possess a balance between intuition and thinking. According to Mattis (2001) women business owners generally have the same characteristics and motivations with men business owners. Their entrepreneurial characteristics include adaptability, competitiveness, discipline, drive, honesty and organization (McClelland, 1961), internal locus of control (Gartner, 1988; Bates, 1995; Ojo, 2009; Vasan 2021, Okafor & Mordi, 2010), scepticism, flexibility, impulsiveness and self-interestedness, propensity to take risks (Mattis, 2001), leadership, readiness for change, and endurance (Hughes et al., 2012 and high tolerance for ambiguity (Andersen, 2010).

Entrepreneurship has made women to be able to set up economic activities and build independent resources base. This advantage helps them in providing financial support for themselves towards improving their social status and decision making ability. Women in entrepreneurship enjoy a number of potential advantages such as; possession of dual characteristics; (entrepreneurial and women characteristics) which gives them extraordinary ability to carry out their role as entrepreneurs. These characteristics include the following:

**(a) Adaptability.** Women find it easier to adapt their work to family life than their men counterparts. Adaptation to culture, behavioural norms, professional networks, and family relationships all affect the attitudes of women entrepreneurs (Chinonye et al. , 2015). According to Muhammad et al., (2020) adaptability enhances entrepreneurship and women's stability nature makes it easier for them to adapt in their environment better than their men counterpart.

**(b) Innovativeness/Creativity:** Women entrepreneurs are highly innovative and creative (Bates, 1995). They can easily generate idea(s), initiate business plans and nurture it to maturity stage. They are potentially creative and more innovative than men (Ojo, 2009; Gartner, 1988). To confirm this, Annenkora (2001) affirms that several studies revealed that there are multiple general individual characteristics of women business owners that promote their creativity and generate new ways of doing things.

**(c) Strength:** Most women have strength and energy for multidisciplinary assignment (Epke, 2011). This is why you are likely to see them combining many things at the same time. For instance a woman can be in business, plays the role of a daughter, a student, wife, a community developer and a mother at the same time. Hence, strength and energy are among the characteristics and unique attributes usually portray by women. Characteristics reflected in research of women entrepreneurs show that women are highly motivated, initiates actions and activities with less supervision. This is an indication of strength (Annenkora, 2001)

**(d) Internal Locus of Control:** Most women believe in their ability towards achieving their assigned task. They have a high internal locus of control and propensity toward achievement (Annenkora, 2001).

**(e) Ability to think fast:** Women have been proved to be fast in reasoning and thinking. This is a good potential for business success. The skills involved in managing households may significantly add to women's capabilities in thinking fast about business operations (Stevenson, 1986).

**(f) Ability to endure:** The potential of endurance and patience have been proved to be a requirement for achieving steady growth in business. To maintain a steady business growth, an entrepreneur must be patient. Patience as a virtue is peculiar mostly to women. Women ability to endure helps them to relate to people effectively. Women have superior abilities, compared with men in human relations or caring for people (Bates, 1995).

**(g) Accountability and Credibility:** Patience as a unique attribute of women helps them to be accountable and credible. It has been proved that women are more reliable and accountable in financial recordings. This is

the main reason why most MFIs have more women than men as customers. For instance, report from the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh showed that the bank has over two million members; 94% of the borrowers are women, who have proven a three times better credit risk than men (Vasan, 2021).

**(h) Managerial Skill:** Women are unique in that they have the skills and competencies that help them to merge both business and family lives, managing both effectively and intentionally (Morris, 2006). Managerial skill is an in-born trait in women because of their peculiar nature of home keeping. Home keeping and management have made women to be better business managers. Women entrepreneurs portray personal qualities such as self-confidence, autonomy, responsibility, determination, and leadership that help them to be successful in the formation and management of their own businesses (Morris, 2006). Report from the analysis of ten MFIs conducted by Agwu (2001) confirmed that the MFIs are of the view that women perform better than men in managing of resources and promotion of micro enterprises.

### **Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Economic Development**

Entrepreneurship has no respect for sex, color, height, individuals, race or culture. Women in different nations play equal role with their men counterparts in economic development through entrepreneurship. An entrepreneur, whether male or female play important role in a particular economy. In an attempt to offer an acceptable definition of an entrepreneur, Wennekers & Thurik (2009) identified thirteen roles of an entrepreneur in every economy. According to them “An entrepreneur is: a person who assumes the risks associated with uncertainty, an innovator, a decision maker, an industrial leader, an organizer and a co-ordinator of economic resources, a contractor, a resource allocator, a person who realizes a start up of a new business, an employer of other factors of production, the owner of an enterprise, manager or super rider, a person who supplies financial capital. Wennekers & Thurik (2009) further classified the above roles of entrepreneurs into static and dynamic

theories; while roles ten to thirteen form the static theories, which see an entrepreneur as merely a passive component of economy. Under these theories, the emphasis of entrepreneurship is focused on activity that is based on repeating technique. On the other hand, roles one to nine were grouped under dynamic theories. The dynamic theories assumed that an entrepreneur must play an active role for every economic development. This theory sees entrepreneurship as an agent for economic growth. Economic growth according to Wennekers & Thurik (2009) “is a function of entrepreneurial development”. As Muhammad et al., (2020) argued that women entrepreneurs play the role as mothers, wives, daughters and their need to generate income for the family as important economic ‘driver’ for business ownership, whereas other researches on men shows that men tend to give reasons such as “to generate income” while women usually give reason for starting business that is in line with their various roles in the family. Women entrepreneurship development has been recognized as important because of the contributions of women’s entrepreneurs to the economic development in both developed and less developed countries. Women entrepreneurs therefore enhance economic development through:

**i. Employment Creation:** Women entrepreneurship development can help women –owned businesses generate more income which then can be used to support their households and improve their family welfare outcomes (Porter & Nagarraian, 2005). This income can help women to start and grow their businesses which will in turn help them to offer employment to others in their community. More than 20% employment in Nigeria is being generated by women entrepreneurs. This in turn would create jobs and add economic value to a region and community and at the same time keep scarce resources within the community. To accelerate economic development, it is necessary to increase the supply of entrepreneurs, by encouraging female gender and other minorities through empowerment thus building up the critical means of first generation entrepreneurs.

**(ii) Poverty alleviation:** Many women support themselves and their families through the income they receive from their entrepreneurial activities (Annenkora, 2001). Women also are more involved in organizing programmes that focused on empowering women and youths for poverty alleviation. For instance, in Nigeria, COWAN is a NGO formed by women and they are doing a lot in line with their set objective -to alleviate poverty among the Nigerian women. In India, the SEWA Bank has been a catalyst for much changes in laws and practices in addition to the changes in the institutional arrangements and processes. Others include Micro-finance Scheme in Zimbabwe, Credit Program of Grameen Foundation in Bangladesh, women participating in AQUACULTURE and Fisheries in Bangladesh and others (Morris, 2006).

**(iii) Economic Vitality:** Economic vitality is a necessary condition for achieving social vitality which improves the standard of living of the citizens of nation. Important factors that make living attractive are flow of information, education, health, housing and transportation which are developed and sustained through entrepreneurship. The easiest approach to economic vitality is through women entrepreneurship development. Women have been known for their ability to combine different activities that have the potential to enhance the standards of living and quality of life of the citizenries. To support this, Epke (2011) argued that women are more likely to juggle their working time between the market sector and non-market economic activities. Non-market production whether it involves subsistence crop production, water and fuel gathering, food preparation and housecleaning or care for the children and elderly is a crucial element in determining the quality of life.

**(iv) Economic and Socio-Political Empowerment:** Women now have access to and control over income and working conditions. This has empowered them for full involvement and participation in economic, social and political policy making that might result to changes in gender inequality and discrimination especially in the labour market. It is believed that with self-employment and entrepreneurship, women gained

confidence, self-esteem and decision-making experience leading to greater control over their lives in social, economic and political spheres (Mend & Liedholm, 1998; Miller, 1983).

(v) **Financial Sustainability:** Small enterprises tend to have the flexibility and innovativeness that are critical business needs in developing economy. As women form micro and macro enterprises and bring their values, products and services to the market place, they become involved in changing the face of the nation's business. As Morris (2006) noted, women entrepreneurs tend to take a "holistic approach to balanced life, work, family, economic, and cultural values. They integrate economic techniques such as job training, job creation, marketing and management with work place innovations such as flexible scheduling, childcare, language workshop for immigrants". In support of this, ILO (2006) opined that "women are bringing their values, (many of which have been unrecognized in this culture as business values) into the process of creating and operating business. However, the importance of women in business and economic development depends to some extent, on the existence of political, social and cultural climates of the country that encourage the formation of business by women (ILO, 2006; Vasan, 2021).

(vi) **Economic growth:** The increase of women prominence in entrepreneurship has positive contribution to the country's GDP and Gross National Income (GNI) (Morris, 2006). Statistically, more than 30% of the contributions of the country's GDP, comes from women that are self-employed especially in micro and small sized enterprises (Okafor & Mordi, 2010). This sector of business and its entrepreneurial characteristics are viewed by many to be central to innovation and is considered the engine of economic growth (Bates, 1995). Obviously, if women make up a large number of SMEs which add to the growth of the economy, then it only makes sense to promote the development of women entrepreneurs in SME's for this reason (Ojo, 2009). Sourcing for external funds and experts for nation's economic development might be a waste of resources. On the contrary, a nation should invest its resources to develop women entrepreneurs whose major focus is the country's economic



development. Byrne (2010) was right when she asserted that: As evidence suggested, it is false to assume that socially and economically depressed areas will transform into fast growing areas by injection of external investment funds and external expertise. Without women entrepreneurial capabilities, which are well developed or potentially available, external funds will be wasted on projects that will not provide long term economic growth. Consequently, instead of becoming more and more integrated into other economically, socially and increasingly, isolated, depopulated, efforts should be devoted in attracting women to entrepreneurship who, given other available resources, would make an impact from a development stand point. To accelerate economic development, government and private agencies should be committed in developing women entrepreneurial talents and micro and small industries for job creation and economic vitality. Women entrepreneurs, if well empowered, will definitely operate better than foreign investors in the rural development even in the period of uncertainty. Investment in foreign human and capital assets for nation development capabilities will therefore amount to waste of resources.

(vii) **Wealth Creation:** Wealth creation and social vitality are the economic goals of both men and women entrepreneurs. To achieve this, women entrepreneurs usually combine their efforts to form a strong base either in the rural or urban areas and channel the same towards economic development. Teamwork (baker et al , 1997), networking (Gatewood & Carter, 2003) and managerial competence (Epke, 2011) have been recommended as good promotional strategies that can be adopted by women entrepreneurs to pull their resources together towards best business practices, contacts, and references.

### **The Informal Sector and Women Entrepreneurship in Nigeria**

The concept of the informal sector was introduced into international usage in 1972 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its Kenya Mission Report, which defines informality as a „way of doing things“ characterized by ease of entry; reliance on indigenous resources; family

ownership; small scale operations; labour intensive and adaptive technology; skills acquired outside of the formal sector; unregulated and competitive markets. The ILO (2006) proposed that the informal sector workforce can be categorized into three broad groups: (i) owner-employers of micro enterprises, which employ a few paid workers, with or without apprentices; (ii) own-account workers, who own and operate one-person businesses, work alone or with the help of unpaid workers, generally family members and apprentices; and (iii) dependent workers, paid or unpaid, including wage workers in micro enterprises, unpaid family workers, apprentices, contract labour, homeworkers and paid domestic workers. Since its invention the concept of informal sector has attracted much interest, discussion and disagreement.

Ojo (2009) affirmed that the informal sector consists of small scale units engaged in production and distribution of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and income, notwithstanding the constraints on capital (both physical and human) and the technical-knowhow. According to Adetoye (2006), cited in Fapohunda (2012), the informal sector comprises those employment generating activities undertaken for survival in the absence of formal employment. These activities are characterized by lack of regulations by institutions of society in a social and legal environment in which similar activities are regulated. Akintoye (2006) asserted that the informal sector in Nigeria refers to economic activities in all sectors of the economy that are operated outside the purview of government regulation. Informal economic activities in Nigeria encompass a wide range of small-scale, largely self-employment activities. Most of the informal sector activities are traditional occupations, financial and economic endeavours of subsistence nature as: retail trade, transport, restaurant, repair services, financial inter-mediation and household or other personal services. Activities in the informal sector in Nigeria are difficult to measure; they are highly dynamic and contribute substantially to the general growth of the economy. The informal sector plays a significant role in Nigeria's national development. It has shown some dynamism in creating new jobs. The Federal Office of Statistics

(FOS) estimates in 2006 that job creation in the informal sector may average 25,000 to 35,000 a year. The sector also provides needed linkages among small-scale manufacturers, promotes labour-intensive production processes and integrates local and regional markets. It provides jobs and reduces unemployment and underemployment. It also helps alleviate poverty but in many cases the jobs are low-paid and the job security is poor. It bolsters entrepreneurial activity, but at the detriment of compliance with state regulations particularly regarding tax and labour regulations (Fapohunda, 2012).

ILO (2006) Annual Report indicated that the informal sector employs 46 per cent of the female labour force, mainly in petty trading and home-based processing and manufacturing, where they have little access to official sources of credit or information. The International Labour Organization (ILO) report reveals that in 1996 in the African region, agriculture offered the highest employment opportunity for women (33 percent), services (27 percent) and industries (16.9 percent). The agricultural sector is further segmented into cash and subsistent cropping, the former dominated by men while a vast majority of women are found in the non-monetized sector. Ojo (2009) observed that Nigerian women have worked side by side with men in agriculture with some marked divisions of labour between them. It is disheartening to know that only few women are employed in the formal sector or “organized” sector, which covers the public sector and medium or large private sector enterprises that recruit labour on a permanent and regular basis for fixed rewards. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), women are two-thirds less likely than men to get waged employment; only 3 out of 10 women in the labour force in sub-Saharan Africa are paid employees. The UNDP reports that in 2005, about 5 per cent of the female labour force worked in industry, 20 per cent in services, 23 per cent in sales, and only 6 per cent in professional, technical, administrative or managerial positions. Employees in both the public and private sectors earn steady, albeit low, incomes. They also work to predictable schedules, in contrast to the self-employed, who are more

insecure and who often must make substantial investments in time and energy. The International Labour Organization (2006) report suggested that women's formal sector participation rates dropped from 57 per cent in 1980 to 53 per cent in 2006, with 2.5 million women losing their jobs between 1995 and 2000. In Nigeria, women accounted for 30 per cent of retrenched workers, although they were only 18 per cent of formal sector workers. Majority of the Nigerian women are in the informal sector. This is due largely to the fact that employment opportunities in the formal sector are often denied women as a result of family responsibilities, lack of skills and low education, and socio-cultural barriers, among others. Thus, self-employment or setting up of their own enterprise becomes an appreciable option for women to get access to employment and earn an income. In Nigeria, the 2006 Census reveals that 67.6 percent of employed women in the country were enumerated as sales workers while 8.4 percent were craft and production workers, all in the informal sector. Women engage in informal finance activities to assist their families, businesses, their communities and nation in general.

The Economic Commission for Africa ECA affirmed that in Africa, next to the agricultural sector, the informal sector is the largest employer of women. ILO (2006) estimates showed that 19.5 million women in sub-Saharan Africa engaged in the informal sector in 2005. But Muhammad et al., (2020) asserted that the representation of women in the informal sector is higher than that of men. Women's increasing participation in the informal sector is also due to the global recession, and the current economic hardship in Nigeria. More than before, women are under serious pressure to contribute to household income; this is even truer of women whose husbands have been laid off by the formal sector as a result of rationalization, privatization of public enterprises and cuts in government spending. The number of entrepreneurs in Nigeria has increased in recent times, as opportunities are rising in different sectors including agriculture, textile, transportation, and information and technology (Vasan, 2021). According Winn (2005), there is a positive correlation between increased gross domestic product (GDP) and entrepreneurial activity. Women

entrepreneurs also contribute to the high economic growth, as Nigerian women owned about 25-30 percent of registered businesses (Halkias et al., 2011).

The industrial sector in Nigeria has come to be dominated by small-scale enterprises, which constitute 66 percent of all industrial establishments (Agwu, 2001), and the majority of this sector is female entrepreneurs (Andersen, 2010; Morris, 2006). Even though women constitute more than 50 percent of the population in Nigeria (Okafor & Mordi, 2010), the important roles that female entrepreneurs play in the Nigerian economy has not been fully realized because they are still largely hidden within the informal sector (Aqwu, 2001; Miller, 1983). Mattis (2004) suggested that Nigerian women start their own businesses because they need to raise income for their families. While Agwu (2001), Halkias et al (2011) opined that they were engaged in the commercial activities in the pre-colonial era in order to supplement their family's income.

### **Research Methodology**

This study generally aims to fill the research gap by analyzing female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises performance in Oshodi – Isolo., Lagos state, Nigeria. The work also observed that depending on the objectives of the research and associated problems, research work necessitates the use of one or a mixture of two or more methods. This research therefore adopts a mixture of methods. In this study, one of the hypotheses was using warranted quantitative techniques while the remaining one was make a responsive to qualitative analysis. The selections and subsequent mix of strategies that was adopted give credence to research methods that was adopted, hence, survey, observation and ipso facto methods were considered as appropriate at firm and enterprise level analyses. This approach was based on (i) the acceptable and generability of survey method used in the research (Suivanto & Rahab, 2012) (ii) applicability and need for large standardised data (Winn 2005) (iii) precise despondence on the sectoral questions associated with research questions and objectives used in this

study (Vasan, 2021). In addition to the above, both survey and ipso facto that was adopted offer high capacity high capacity of accuracy, while data to be collected was amenable to advance statistical techniques, multivariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) as applicable to the four constructs of Transaction, Database , Interaction, and Network Marketing. The study population include genders, various age groups and educational qualifications, and employees at various levels of management. For the purpose of this study, population of respondents of Oshodi - Isolo L.G.A., Lagos State, in the aforementioned area constituted the population of the study

### Presentation of Data

A sample size of 120 was derived from small and medium scale enterprises in Oshodi – Isolo Lagos State, Nigeria, which represents the total number of questionnaires and respondents.

### Analysis of Questionnaire

A total number of 120 structured questionnaires were distributed among the respondents, out of which ninety seven (97) were appropriately filled and returned. Given this, it implies that approximately 80.83% of the administered questionnaires were retrieved. The tabular presentation of the questionnaire analysis is given below:

**Table 1 Analysis of Response Rate**

<i>Questionnaires</i>	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Returned	97	80.83%
Not returned	23	19.17%
<b>Total distributed</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 2 Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by their demographic characteristics**

*n = 120*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	19	19.6	<b>1.4</b>
	Female	78	80.4	
	Total	97	100.00	
<b>Age</b>	21 – 30 years	37	38.1	<b>2.0</b>
	31 – 40 years	33	34.0	
	41 – 50 years	17	17.5	
	51 years and above	10	10.3	
	Total	97	100.0	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	36	37.1	
	Married	38	39.2	<b>2.0</b>
	Divorce	14	14.4	
	Separated	9	9.3	
	Total	97	100.0	
<b>Religion</b>	Christianity	54	55.7	<b>1.4</b>
	Muslim	43	44.3	
	Total	97	100.0	
<b>Academic Qualification</b>	S.S.C.E	15	15.5	
	OND/NCE/BA	23	23.7	<b>3.1</b>
	B.sc/HND	21	21.6	
	M.sc/BA	21	21.6	
	Ph.D	9	9.3	
	Other	8	8.2	
Total	97	100.0		
<b>Years of Experience</b>	0-3 years	23	23.7	
	4-6years	40	41.2	<b>2.3</b>
	7-9years	14	14.4	

	10years and above	20	20.6	
	Total	97	100.0	

*Source: Field Survey, 2021*

### **Gender**

Analysis of response rate by gender, explains that 19 (19.6%) were male while 78 (80.4%) of the respondents were female. This implies that majority of the respondents were Female.

### **Age**

Explains that, 37 (28.2%) were between 21 – 30 years of age, 33 (34.0%) were between 31 – 40 years of age, 17 (17.5%) were between 41 – 50 years, while 10 (10.3%) were between 51 years and above. This implies that majority of the respondent's falls between the ages 21 – 30 years

### **Marital Status**

Classifies the respondent by marital status, the table explains that, 36 (37.1%) of the respondents were single, 38 (39.2%) were married, 14 (14.4%) were divorce while 9 (9.3%) were separated. This implies that majority of the respondents were married

### **Religion**

Revealed respondents by religions, from the findings, 54 (55.7%) of the total respondents were Christians, while 43 (44.3%) were Muslims. This implies that majority of the respondents were Christianity.

### **Academic Qualification**

Shows respondents according to their highest academic qualifications, where 15 (15.5%) of the respondents had S.S.C.E, 23 (23.7%) had OND/NCE/BA, 21 (21.6%) represented those that had B.sc/HND, 21 (21.6%), had M.Sc/BA, 9 (9.3%) had Ph.D, while 8 (8.2%) had Others. This implies that majority of the respondent had OND/NCE/BA



### Years of Experience

Revealed the respondents according to years of experience. The table shows that those within 0-3 years were 23 (23.7%), those that were within 4-6 years accounted for 40 (41.2%), those within the category of 7-9 years were 14 (14.4%), respondents within 10 years and above were 20 (20.6%) of the total respondents. From the data gathered, majority of the respondents were those who had spent 4-6 years at the enterprise.

### Test of Hypotheses

Regression analysis was used to test the effect between the independent and dependent variable of the formulated hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

### Hypothesis One

**Ho1: There is no significant relationship between competency of female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises productivity.**

**Table 3a**

**Model Summary**

<i>Model</i>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted Square</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
<i>1</i>	.358 <sup>a</sup>	.128	.119		2.16380

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Competency of Female Entrepreneurs*

**Table 3b**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>1</i>	Regression	65.288	1	65.288	13.944	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	444.795	95	4.682		
	Total	510.082	96			

*a. Dependent Variable: SME Productivity*

*b. Predictors: (Constant), Competency of Female Entrepreneurs*

**Table 3c**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
/ (Constant)	4.228	.609		6.940	.000
Competency of Female Entrepreneurs	.315	.084	.358	3.734	.000

*a. Dependent Variable: SME Productivity*

The result from the model summary table 3a-c revealed the extent to which the variance of small and medium scale enterprises productivity can be explained by competency of female entrepreneurs. Looking at the result above, it shows a significant effect of competency of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises productivity at ( $R^2 = 0.128$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.119$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). These indicate that of the variation in small and medium scale enterprises productivity, competency of female entrepreneurs accounted for (12.8%). Also, the F-values statistics of (13.944) shows that the overall equation is significant at (Significant level = 0.000;  $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which state that there is no significant effect of competency of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises productivity is hereby rejected and accept the alternative. Hypothesis one stated that competency of female entrepreneurs has no significant effect on small and medium scale enterprises productivity. Following the analysis of the results on research hypothesis one, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that there is a significant effect of competency of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises productivity(Mayoux, 2001).

**Hypothesis Two**

**Ho2: there is no significant relationship between female entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises profitability.**

**Table 4a Model Summary**

<i>Model</i>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
<i>1</i>	.363 <sup>a</sup>	.132	.123		2.15870

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Female Entrepreneurs*

**Table 4b ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>1</i>	Regression	67.384	1	67.384	14.460	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	442.699	95	4.660		
	Total	510.082	96			

*a. Dependent Variable: SME Profitability*

*b. Predictors: (Constant), Female Entrepreneurs*

**Table 4c Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>		<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
<i>1</i>	(Constant)	4.384	.562		7.803	.000
	Female Entrepreneurs	.353	.093	.363	3.803	.000

*a. Dependent Variable: SME Profitability*

The result from the model summary table 4a-c revealed the extent to which the variance of small and medium scale enterprises profitability can be explained by female entrepreneurs. Looking at the result above, it shows a significant effect of female entrepreneurs on small and medium

scale enterprises profitability at ( $R^2 = 0.132$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.123$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). These indicate that of the variation small and medium scale enterprises profitability, female entrepreneurs accounted for (13.2%). Also, the F-values statistics of (14.460) shows that the overall equation is significant at (Significant level = 0.000;  $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which state that there is no significant effect of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises profitability is hereby rejected and accept the alternative. Hypothesis two stated that female entrepreneurs have no significant effect on small and medium scale enterprises profitability. Following the analysis of the results on research hypothesis two, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that there is a significant effect of female entrepreneurs on small and medium scale enterprises profitability.

### Hypothesis Three

**Ho3: There is no significant relationship between problems affecting female entrepreneurs and employment creation.**

**Table 5a**

**Model Summary**

<i>Model</i>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted Square</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
<i>1</i>	.432 <sup>a</sup>	.187	.178		2.08954

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Problems Affecting Female Entrepreneurs*

**Table 5b**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>1</i>	Regression	95.295	1	95.295	21.826	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	414.787	95	4.366		
	Total	510.082	96			

*a. Dependent Variable: Employment Creation*

*b. Predictors: (Constant), Problems Affecting Female Entrepreneurs*

**Table 5c**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
/ (Constant)	3.797	.586		6.476	.000
Problems Affecting Female Entrepreneurs	.375	.080	.432	4.672	.000

*a. Dependent Variable: Employment Creation*

The result from the model summary table 5a-c revealed the extent to which the variance of employment creation can be explained by problems affecting female entrepreneurs. Looking at the result above, it shows a significant effect of problems affecting female entrepreneurs on employment creation at ( $R^2 = 0.187$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.178$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). This indicates that of the variation in employment creation, problems affecting female entrepreneurs accounted for (18.7%). Also, the F-values statistics of (21.826) shows that the overall equation is significant at (Significant level = 0.000;  $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which state that there is no significant effect of problems affecting female entrepreneurs on employment creation is hereby rejected and accept the alternative. Hypothesis three stated that problems' affecting female entrepreneurs has no significant effect on employment creation. Following the analysis of the results on research hypothesis three, we therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that there is a significant effect of problems affecting female entrepreneurs on employment creation.

**Conclusion**

From this study it was observed that although there is the possibility of women entrepreneurs operating business enterprises in the same capacity

and magnitude as men, traditional roles and practices such as domestic commitments, low levels of education, lack of property ownership, reproduction and lack of opportunity driven motive to start enterprises continues to influence the performance of women entrepreneurs negatively in terms of monthly income from sales, profit margin and types of business enterprise. However, findings from the study reveals that all the three variables which represent female entrepreneurs plays a significant role in small and medium scale enterprises performance of the entire system at large.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher has discussed the findings and conclusions extensively, hereby makes the following recommendations:

- i. The government and all stakeholders should establish women's university to enable girl child to get education. Also, civic education should be done on importance of girl education.
- ii. The government and policy makers should enforce gender equality in terms of property ownership in order to achieve the set millennium development goals. For this to be done, there is need to find ways of reconciling conflicts between customary law and women's human rights in order to enhance women's ability be productive in entrepreneurship world
- iii. Women entrepreneurs need be accepted and supported through social networking so that capacity building is made available in the areas of entrepreneurship. Women should also be supported financially so that they engage in a more opportunity based enterprises
- iv. Married women entrepreneurs should be given support by their spouse in terms of actual engagement and involvement in running business

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