

The Effect of Sociocultural Factors on the Performance of Women Owned Enterprises in Kano Metropolis

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Abstract

The performance of women-owned enterprises is a concept that includes various indicators like number of employees, profit levels, and sales volume, reflecting the outcomes of their business efforts. This performance is deeply connected to sociocultural factors, which involve the social systems and cultural dynamics that shape how entrepreneurship emerges, behaves, and develops in a community. This study explores the conceptual relationship between sociocultural factors and the performance of women-owned enterprises in Kano metropolis. By examining existing literature and theoretical models, the research seeks to develop a framework that explains how factors such as social networks, educational training and culture influence the success and growth of these enterprises. The study provides a conceptual understanding of the key sociocultural elements that impact women entrepreneurs, offering insights for future research and policy formulation. It suggests that creating supportive environments and policies can enhance the performance of women-owned enterprises by addressing the sociocultural challenges they face.

Key words: performance, social network, educational training and culture

1.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship is globally recognized as the foundation of any economy. It is also seen by many as the driving force behind economic growth and development worldwide. Numerous countries have successfully harnessed entrepreneurship to stimulate economic growth and achieve sustainability (Agbionu, 2014). Entrepreneurship is particularly crucial for uplifting developing economies (Vasudevan & Paralkar, 2016) and is a key driver of job

creation, improved living standards, and poverty reduction (Nasir, Iqbal, & Akhtar, 2019).

The global emphasis on entrepreneurship is unsurprising given the economic challenges faced by many nations, including recessions and depressions. These economic downturns have significantly impacted economic activity, especially job creation (Aderinto, David & Alabi, 2018). Socio-cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping the

performance and success of women entrepreneurs. These factors include social and cultural norms, values, beliefs, and family dynamics, all of which influence the extent of entrepreneurial activity in a given context and time period (Poggesi et al., 2016).

Based on the 2022 Survey on the State of Entrepreneurship in Nigeria, male entrepreneurs dominate the Nigerian business landscape. This trend is consistent across most states. Specifically, the survey revealed that 61% of businesses were male-led, while 39% were female-led. Despite constituting 40% of the entrepreneurial population (Oluseyi, 2017), women are undeniably crucial for national development. Saidi et al. (2017) conclude that women entrepreneurs significantly contribute to economic growth worldwide, emphasizing the need for equal treatment of male and female entrepreneurs to foster greater female participation. Education level, access to capital, and cultural factors significantly impact women entrepreneurs' success and performance. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2020) found that while women account for 41% of micro-business owners in Nigeria, their businesses exhibit lower average growth rates compared to male-owned enterprises. However, as Fafchamps et al. (2011) and Golla et al. (2011) observed, some women entrepreneurs have successfully established businesses, created jobs, and increased their income within their communities.

In Nigeria and other developing nations, women's overrepresentation in entrepreneurship is often attributed to

societal factors such as reproductive roles, domestic responsibilities, stereotypes, and cultural beliefs that disadvantage them relative to men (Olateju et al., 2017). According to state of entrepreneurship in Nigeria 2023, female-led businesses outperformed male-led businesses in terms of business growth. 73.6% of female-led businesses recorded growth in the past year, higher than 70.6% for male-led businesses. African women-owned enterprises frequently face constraints limiting their growth to the micro-enterprise level. In Nigeria, these challenges include limited access to finance, entrepreneurial training, education, and skills (Aderemi et al., 2008). Women also experience restricted access to resources like land, credit, education, technology, networks, information, and markets (Quiñones, 2016).

McGowan et al. (2012) highlight the commercial disadvantage faced by women entrepreneurs due to the burden of balancing family responsibilities with their businesses, leading to increased stress and hindered growth. Overall, social and operational barriers impede women's ability to start and scale enterprises (Tuyishime, Shukla, & Bajpai, 2015). The prevailing gender roles in Nigeria often confine women to domestic spheres, discouraging them from pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours perceived as high-risk and stressful. Consequently, numerous political, economic, and social obstacles hinder Nigerian women's establishment, management, and growth of successful businesses, as elucidated by feminist theory (Aladejebi, 2020).

Senna and Agbolosoo (2021), Saranya and Chandrasekar (2023), Giwa and Babakatun (2019), Maziku et al. (2014), Adiza, Alamina, and Aliyu (2020), Khan et al. (2021), Chen et al. (2018), Mahanta (2016), Thapa (2015), Balogun, Bustamam, and Johari (2016), Boateng and Poku (2019), Guci and Ghazali (2017), Roy, Tripathy, and Tripathy (2017), Alene (2020), Rajni and Mehta (2018), and Olateju, Aminu, et al. (2017) have all conducted research similar to this study. However, there has been limited research on the impact of sociocultural factors on the performance of women-owned enterprises, particularly in Kano metropolis, which is the commercial hub of Nigeria and the economic center of northern Nigeria (K-SEEDS, 2004). Additionally, there is a noticeable gap in research that combines social networks, educational training, family roles, attitudes, and culture as sociocultural factors. This aligns with the recommendation by Jha, Makkad, and Mittal (2018), who suggested that future research should consider adding or removing performance factors based on varying demographics. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effect of sociocultural factors on the performance of women-owned enterprises and contribute to the existing body of knowledge. The study will specifically examine sociocultural factors such as social networks, educational training, and cultural norms and values.

1.2 Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of cultural norms and values on the performance of women owned enterprises?

- ii. What is the effect of social network on the performance of women owned enterprises?
- iii. What is the effect of educational training on the performance of women owned enterprises?

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to determine the effect of sociocultural factors on the performance of women owned enterprises. The specific objectives are:

- i. To determine the effect of culture on the performance of women owned enterprises.
- ii. To determine the effect of social network on the performance of women owned enterprises.
- iii. To determine the effect of cultural norms and values on the performance of women owned enterprises.

2.1 Literature Review

This section provides the review of relevant existing literature on sociocultural factors and performance of women owned enterprises.

2.2 Concept of Entrepreneurship

The term "entrepreneur" originates from French, literally translating to "between-taker" or "go-between." Historically, it encompassed both actors and managers of large-scale production projects. Unlike modern entrepreneurs, these early figures did not assume significant risks but primarily managed projects using provided resources.

In contemporary terms, an entrepreneur is an individual who organizes, manages, and bears the risks of a business venture. Their capacity to successfully operate a business is referred to as competency. Entrepreneurship, as Schumpeter emphasized, is a force of "creative destruction," replacing obsolete innovations with superior alternatives across markets and industries. This process drives industrial dynamism and long-term economic growth (Imhonopi, Urim & Ajayi, 2013). Entrepreneurship is more than just starting a business. It is about creating an environment where ongoing innovation and adaptation are essential for staying successful. Entrepreneurs do more than run businesses as they help shape the future of industries and contribute to overall economic growth.

2.3 Concept of Women Entrepreneurs

According to Schumpeter, "women who are innovative, initiative or adopt a business activity are women entrepreneurs." A woman entrepreneur is a visionary, risk-taking individual possessing commercial acumen and perseverance. Kalyani and Mounika (2016) further define women entrepreneurship as women's involvement in value creation, product or service offerings, and various economic initiatives driven by passion, potential, or identified opportunities. A woman entrepreneur is characterized by a willingness to overcome challenges in pursuit of personal and economic independence. In developing nations, women entrepreneurs are particularly valuable contributors to economic growth, creating jobs and fostering innovation. By cultivating an environment that supports women's

entrepreneurial endeavors, developing countries can address unemployment and enhance their global competitiveness (Mozammel & Zaman, 2018). In conclusion, Women entrepreneurs work hard to become independent, both personally and financially, even when they face big challenges. In developing countries, they are very important because they help grow the economy by creating jobs and coming up with new ideas. Supporting women in starting businesses in these countries can help reduce unemployment and make the country stronger in the global market.

2.4 Performance of Women Entrepreneurs

The performance of a woman entrepreneur is measured by her business's achievement level, often assessed by metrics such as employee count, profit, and sales volume. It also reflects the outcome of her entrepreneurial efforts, influenced by various factors (Nneka, 2015). Understanding women entrepreneurs' characteristics, motivations, and performance is crucial (Ramos et al., 2014). Women entrepreneurs often prioritize control, client relationships, and value creation (Elenurm & Vaino, 2011). Their performance has become a significant policy and academic focus, especially in Nigeria (Abiodun & Amos, 2018). Determining factors influencing women entrepreneurs' performance is essential for overall economic stability. Numerous internal and external factors contribute to their involvement in entrepreneurial activities (Saidi et al., 2017).

Terziovski and Samson (2000) identify three performance levels within organizations: financial, business, and organizational effectiveness. Traditionally, financial ratios like ROI, ROA, profits, cash flow, and sales growth have been used to measure small business performance (Altman, 1968; Barth et al., 2001; Balogun et al., 2016). Balogun et al. (2016) also consider employee count, profitability, gross revenue, and income. Business survival is another critical measure (Reijonen & Komppula, 2007). Welsh, Kaciak, and Shamah (2017) employ business revenue, geographic sales expansion, firm size, and business longevity as performance indicators. Notably, business revenue is a widely accepted measure of financial performance (Mari, Poggesi, & De Vita, 2016). This means that the performance of a woman entrepreneur is a key indicator of her success and the overall impact of her business. Measuring this performance through metrics like profit and sales, understanding these socio-cultural influences is especially important in entrepreneurship, as they determine not only how businesses start and grow but also how successful they become.

2.5 Cultural Norms and Values

According to Haralambos and Heald (2006), culture is comprised of norms, beliefs, customs, laws, values, and expectations shared by members and groups within a society, influencing various activities and processes. Culture encompasses the traits and knowledge of a specific group, defined by aspects such as language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts. It represents the development of a group identity shaped by social patterns unique to

that group, as well as the complex system of meanings and behaviors that define a society's way of life. Cultural norms serve as specific guides for acceptable and appropriate behavior in particular situations, while values are the shared ideas about what is considered good, right, and desirable within a society. Anikpo and Atemie (2006) stated that cultural value is a clear and unique conception held by an individual or group about what is desirable, influencing the choices made from available options and methods of action. Additionally, there are cultural values that promote women's roles in society, while others limit their full potential, particularly in commerce and business. Traditionally, women are expected to manage the household and care for their families, while men are seen as the primary earners. This traditional view prevents many women from pursuing business opportunities that take them away from household responsibilities (Aderinto, David & Alabi, 2018). Cultural norms and values impact women's entrepreneurial performance. According to Ihinmoyan (2022), values and norms establish standard human behavior patterns that shape cognition and motivation, guiding choices and behaviors. The system of values influences the human mind, defining the group or society that it motivates, which may not apply to other societies due to differences in values (Mueller, 2000). However, For women entrepreneurs, cultural norms and values can have a big impact. In many cultures, traditional roles expect women to focus on managing the household rather than pursuing business opportunities. This can limit their ability to engage fully in

business activities. On the other hand, some cultural values support women's roles in business and entrepreneurship.

2.5 Social Network

Social networks consist of a group of actors, such as individuals and organizations, and the connections between them (Brass, 1992). These networks represent relationships through which individuals gain access to opportunities for utilizing financial and human capital. Ownership within these networks is not held solely by an individual but is shared among all members (Burt, 1992). Social networks also shape the perception of communities, whether they are business-related or more broadly defined societal communities (Jack & Anderson, 2002). In an abstract sense, society can be seen as a series of interconnected or "tied" nodes (Narayan and Pritchett, 1999). Social networks play a crucial role in influencing entrepreneurial behavior. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, individuals who start businesses are more likely to interact with other entrepreneurs compared to those who do not. In today's competitive world, developing a robust entrepreneurial and social network is essential (Oke, 2013). Information serves as a vital resource for entrepreneurs, both men and women, enabling them to connect to marketplaces, suppliers, customers, and technology. Networking has become a valuable policy for supporting female entrepreneurs (Frazier & Niehm, 2004). A key concept in the social network structure approach is the degree to which an individual is connected to others in their network (Seibert et al., 2001). These

connections, or ties, can be "strong" or "weak," with their strength determined by factors such as emotional bonds, time spent on the relationship, interaction frequency, intimacy, and mutual services (Granovetter, 1973). Oke (2013) found a strong positive correlation between social networks and the business growth or success of entrepreneurs, especially among women in the small-scale tailoring industry in Ado Ekiti, southwestern Nigeria. The study also revealed that family and friends constituted the largest portion of the social networks for the group studied.

2.6 Educational Training

Alberti and Poli (2004), define entrepreneurship education as "the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competence, which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures." Entrepreneurship education and training then is about the development of personal skills and behavior change. Entrepreneurial education is a success factor that influences the performance of women run small enterprises, such that, high levels of education is associated with high levels of business performance. Training as an experimental means of obtaining behavior pattern, refers to the systematic modification of behavior (Ajuna, Ntale, & Ngui, 2018). According to Bello and Kofarmata (2017) occupational success of individuals and subsequent upgrading of their technical skills are closely linked to the possession of basic formal education. In essence, basic formal education is the key for further

vocational training. Women entrepreneurs in developing countries are lacking training (Ekpe, Mat & Razak, 2016), and entrepreneurial activity is a source of human capital development that plays the role of providing an opportunity for learning ability, attitudes, and skills to individuals. The impact of training in developing countries on women entrepreneurs' performance has not been addressed adequately in literature because most women are facing societal discriminations, poverty, and low educational level (Mtey & Sulle, 2013; Abdulkadir et al., 2012). According to Abdulkadir et al. (2012), training is an important factor in the MSMEs as it provides women entrepreneurs with the abilities and practical experience required for business development. A broader education helps young women understand their unique situation regarding historical, economic, ethnic, legal and religious contexts. Also, they further argue that as the enrolment of women in business schools continues to increase; these young women are provided with the tools and skills so important in empowering their strategic focus and thus the success in their entrepreneurial ventures. Moreover, education expands their horizon and stimulates aspirations of women entrepreneurs while broadening the perspectives on the essence of planning for growth. (Gathenya, Bwisa & Kihoro, 2011). In short, the researcher believes that education and training programs should be designed to meet the specific needs of women in developing countries. This way, they not only learn new skills but also gain

the confidence and support they need to succeed in business.

2.8 Empirical Literature Review

2.8.1 Culture and Performance of women owned enterprises

Saidi et al., (2017), in Malaysia, use questionnaire-based surveys to propose the conceptual framework which focus on the determinants of women entrepreneurs' performance, in which result indicated that women entrepreneurs are significant in economic growth of most countries around the world. The study lacked contemporary theories.

Cansiz and Tekneci (2018), conducted research on innovative and technology-based women entrepreneurship in Turkey and used Descriptive statistics and correlation in order to understand the relative role of different capital factors in women's success as entrepreneurs. Findings revealed that performance of women entrepreneurs operating in technoparks in Turkey is found to be statistically associated with certain elements of cultural and social capital. However, a statistically significant distinction between successful entrepreneurs and others in terms of the selected economic capital proxies could not be identified. Aderinto, David and Alabi (2018) in their research used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the effect of the cultural values on the involvement of women in small scale enterprises and further concluded that there is significant relationship between cultural values and women involvement in small scale business and also there is a positive correlation

(although low) between cultural values and women development in small scale business in the South Western region of Nigeria.

Ihinmoyan (2022) use descriptive design to examine the effect of cultural factor on entrepreneur performance in Ondo state. The population of the study is small scale owners in Akoko south-west local government area of Ondo state. The study made use of Yamane formula to get 100 small scale business owners from the population. The results in the study revealed that cultural factor have significant influence on entrepreneur performance. In conclusion, the findings show that there is a positive relationship between culture and performance of women owned enterprises.

2.8.2 Social Network and Performance of women owned enterprises

In Nigeria, Balogun, Bustamam and Johari (2016), conducts a pilot study on the determinant factors affecting women social enterprise performances in Sokoto state, Nigeria. Business performance, Human capital, Social norms, Religious believe, Network affiliation and Source of finance are the variables considered for the research. The variables proposed for this study are confirmed to be good for the final research study, as proven from the result the pilot study, the items used in measuring them had good internal consistencies. Baranik, Gorman and Wales (2017), use OLS regression analyses to determine what makes Muslim women entrepreneurs successful, a field study examining religiosity and social capital in Tunisia. The problem investigated is due to the lack of

empirical attention paid to the role of the culture, language, and customs associated with Islam on women's empowerment. It is therefore concluded that social capital is a critical asset on Muslim women entrepreneurs. Religiosity, on the other hand, had no statistically significant relationship with entrepreneurial performance.

Welsh, Kaciak and Shamah (2017), in Egypt analyzed the determinants of women entrepreneurs' firm performance in a hostile environment. The study employed descriptive statistics (including means and correlations) and further used a generalized structural equations model (GSEM) to analyze the data. Two major findings emerge from the study. First, the study shows a positive relationship between human capital and firm performance in the context of women entrepreneurs in Egypt. Second, the study finds no relationship between women's social capital and gender-related personal problems and firm performance. Ademola, Adegboyegun and Adegoke (2020) in their study, determined the impact of social networks on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. A sample of 348 women entrepreneurs was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Data were analyzed using Frequency and Percentages, Linear Regression Analysis and Spearman Rank Correlation. Findings revealed that social networks impacted positively and significantly on the performance of women entrepreneurs. Result further showed that social network variables like network size, diversity and resources had positive and

significant relationship with performance of women entrepreneurs. In conclusion, the findings show that there is a positive relationship between social network and performance of women owned enterprises.

2.8.3 Educational Training and Performance

Bouzekraoui and Ferhane (2017), from Morocco used quantitative approach supported by a qualitative approach to provide a general view on women entrepreneurship in Morocco through various indicators: the profile, the characteristics of the company created and the main barriers behind the low rate of women business creation in Morocco. The study concluded that, the type of activity she (woman Entrepreneur) carries out is related to the training she has acquired. She is often surrounded by entrepreneurs of her family, spouse, father or mother, brothers or sisters. She gained experience before embarking on business. Regarding the profile of the companies created, Moroccan women's companies are small in terms of turnover and number of employees.

In Kenya, Ajuna et al., (2018) conducted a study employing a Descriptive survey design to investigate the impact of training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Meru Town. The research focused on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as the industry of interest. The specific reasons behind the failures of women-owned SMEs remain unclear. A lack of information has been identified as a contributing factor to the limited success in enhancing the performance of women-owned SMEs. This

led to the motivation behind the study, which aimed to determine the influence of training on the performance of women entrepreneurship in Meru Town, Kenya. Various theories including Entrepreneurship theory, Traits theory, Entrepreneurial orientation theory, Social cognitive career theory, and Human capital theory were considered in the study. The findings revealed that apprenticeship significantly impacted the performance of women entrepreneurship in Kenya. Moreover, mentorship programs were found to have a significant influence on the performance of women entrepreneurship in Kenya. Coaching also exerted a considerable influence on the performance of women entrepreneurship. Additionally, personal characteristics such as education, marital status, and location were identified as moderators affecting the impact of training on the performance of women entrepreneurs in Kenya, with age having a moderate effect.

Mahanta (2016), in India used descriptive survey method to examine the prospects and challenges of women entrepreneurship in Tezpur town of Sonitpur district of Assam. There has been considerable development of women entrepreneurship in Assam. But the field of women entrepreneurship in Assam is full of problems. expansion of education, financial assistance, training for entrepreneurship, infrastructural development, marketing facilities, family and society support, etc. are also very much important for revolution to entrepreneurship among women. Kumar and Patrick (2018), conducted research to explore the motivational factors among the women

entrepreneurs who started their beauty parlors in Bangalore city in which a mixed method approach was adopted. The study found that the triggers which influenced women to start beauty parlor included external, internal factors and meaningful engagement such as perks/rewards and education/competencies. In conclusion, the findings show that there is a positive relationship between educational training and performance of women owned enterprises.

2.9 Underpinning theory

2.9.1 The socio-cultural theory

The theory emphasized the influence of culture on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs in a given society. The theory states that certain groups are believed to possess beliefs, values/norms and traditions that enable them to succeed in business regardless of where they find themselves. Weber in his theory noted that the socio-cultural systems in which individuals live give a set of value from which individual value thinking pattern of people are based and these values influence the individual's decisions to become a successful entrepreneur. He further argues that culture has great impact on the attitude and behavior of individuals and their disposition to life. The culture and social systems of an individual affect the entrepreneurial spirit, adventurous spirit and innovations by displaying values that fuel entrepreneurship behavior and practice. Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) argue that the cultural perspectives do not unearth why individuals in the same group behave differently towards the same life situation. Fundamentally, the point of

Weber's theory is that the socio-cultural systems in which individuals live provide a set of values from which personal values and thinking pattern of people are based, and these in turn influence the decision by individuals positively or negatively towards entrepreneurship, that is whether or not to be entrepreneurs. Fundamentally, social systems and culture affect the development of entrepreneurial spirit and motivation by exhibiting values that either enhance or inhibit entrepreneurship behavior and drive amongst people. In conclusion, this study appreciates the Max Weber's theory to support the sociocultural factors of women owned enterprise performance. However, this theory is seen to be more relevant to this study by emphasizing on culture, social network and educational training. In terms of culture, the attitudes towards women's participation in business and cultural beliefs about appropriate roles for women can impact the support and opportunities available to women entrepreneurs. Also, positive attitudes towards women entrepreneurship can foster an environment supportive of women owned enterprises. Furthermore, educational training provides available training programs that can impact women's access to relevant training opportunities. Finally social network as a sociocultural factor influences the composition and strength of women entrepreneurs' social network and access to influential contacts and mentors.

Conceptual framework

The figure 1 below presents the conceptual framework. There is only one dependent variable (women owned enterprise

performance) with five independent variables namely; social network,

vocational/educational training, family roles, attitude and culture.

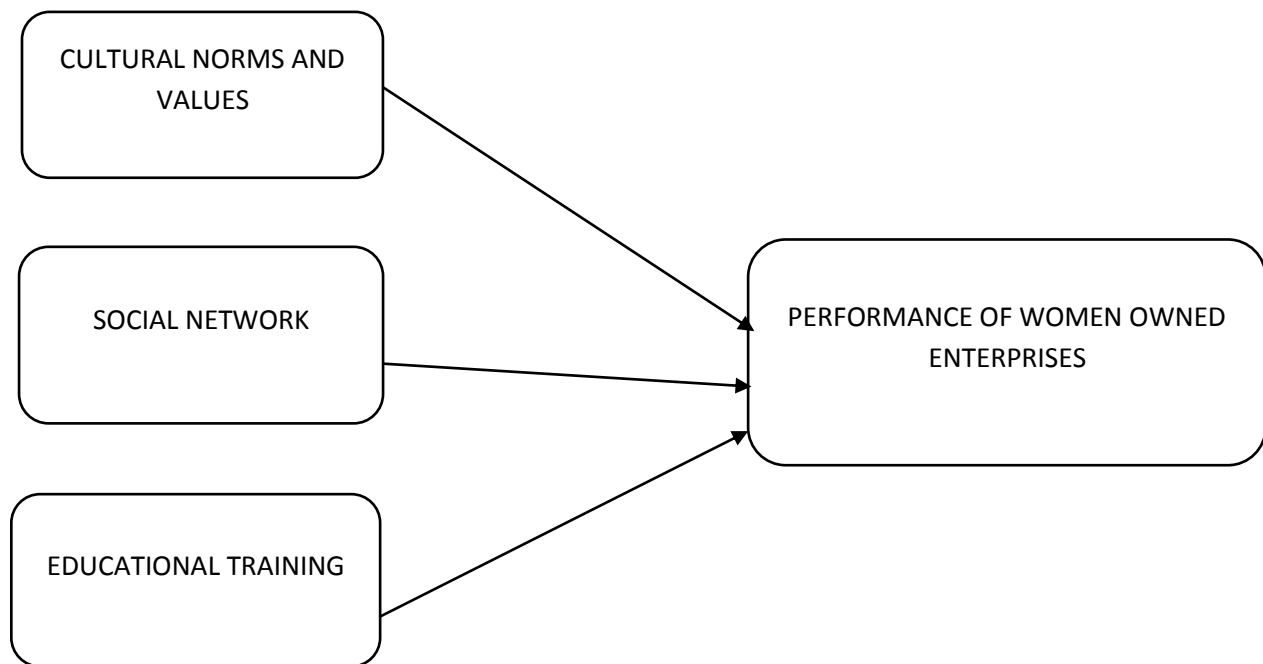


Figure 1: Source Researcher, (2024)

3.1 Methodology

As a conceptual paper, this study was built on the critical review of the literature and the foresight of previous research results on sociocultural factors and women-owned enterprise performance. Articles were retrieved from academic databases including Google Scholar, Science Direct, Emerald, and Taylor & Francis. Additionally, peer-reviewed papers published in international journals and conferences were reviewed throughout the research period. As supported by Cronin et al. (2008), the findings of the study will provide the rationale for future studies and contribute to the current knowledge in the area.

4.1 Conclusion

The research aims at studying the effect of sociocultural factors on the performance on women owned enterprises in Kano metropolis. The findings of this study indicate that sociocultural influences significantly predict the enterprise performance of women in Kano Metropolis. These influences suggest that women are often relegated to domestic roles. However, women owned enterprises can achieve success by pursuing education that equips them with the knowledge to challenge restrictive cultural norms. Many men in the region adhere to outdated ideas, fostering negative attitudes toward female entrepreneurship.

You should recommend an empirical investigation of the study base on your framework.

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