

INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR ON SALES PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA**Joshua-Dauda Promise Nkeiru****Department of Vocational Education****Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria**promisejoshua2017@gmail.com**&****Muhammed Modibbo Buba, PhD****Department of Vocational Education****Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria**mbmodibbo@mau.edu.ng**Abstract**

This study investigated the influence of entrepreneurial behaviour on the sales performance of women entrepreneurs in the catering industry in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study had three specific purposes, three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses guided the inquiry. A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised 29,015 registered women entrepreneurs in catering services across the 21 local government areas in Adamawa State. A sample of 395 women, drawn from four selected local government areas, was used. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Digital Skills and Sales Performance Questionnaire (EBDSSPQ)." The instrument was validated by three lecturers and achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.88 using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions and inferential statistics (simple regression) to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The results show that innovation (cluster mean = 3.23, SD = 1.34), risk-taking (grand mean = 3.19, SD = 1.33), and self-confidence (cluster mean = 3.21, SD = 1.34) were all moderately practiced and each significantly influenced sales performance. Regression analysis revealed strong positive influences: innovation ($\beta = 0.874$, $t = 33.056$, $p < 0.05$), risk-taking ($\beta = 0.455$, $t = 9.381$, $p < 0.05$), and self-confidence ($\beta = 0.649$, $t = 15.679$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that strengthening entrepreneurial behaviours is essential for the sustained growth and competitiveness of women-owned catering businesses. It recommends capacity-building programs focused on innovative product design, risk assessment, and enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial behaviour, sales performance, catering industry, Adamawa State

Introduction

Globally, women entrepreneurs in the catering and food-service sector face significant challenges in translating business participation into sustained revenue growth due to intense competition, limited access to technology, and uneven market visibility. In many developing economies, structural constraints such as limited access to finance, skill gaps, and low digital tool adoption hinder the scaling of sales performance for women's catering businesses (Adebayo & Otemuyiwa, 2023). At the national level in Nigeria, women-owned catering services frequently report underperformance in revenue growth, market share, and repeat patronage compared to male-owned firms, a disparity attributed to weaker digital adoption and entrepreneurial skills (Okafor & Amoo, 2023). These challenges are compounded by infrastructural deficits, such as unreliable power and internet connectivity, which limit online reach and rapid customer response systems (World Bank, 2020).

Regionally, in Northeast Nigeria, particularly in Adamawa State, women caterers face additional hurdles. These include seasonal fluctuations in demand, heightened rivalry in peri-urban centers like Yola North, Yola South, and Mubi, and limited formal marketing channels, all of which constrain consistent sales growth (Musa & Ikwuakam, 2024). Kamau and Njau (2023) further suggest that without the purposeful integration of digital skills and innovation, many micro catering enterprises fail to convert visibility into purchase behavior, leading to flat or declining monthly sales. Consequently, both global and local studies underscore entrepreneurial behaviour as a critical lever for improving sales performance among women in the catering industry (Adebayo & Otemuyiwa, 2023; Okafor & Amoo, 2023).

Sales performance refers to measurable outcomes that indicate how effectively a business converts its market activities into financial results and customer retention (Inthiyazi & Jayamma, 2017; Joseph, 2023). For women's catering services, this encompasses trends in monthly sales revenue, growth in average order values, frequency of repeat orders, and the number of event bookings secured (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2024). High sales performance reflects successful market penetration and efficient conversion of customer interest, often driven by strategic marketing and innovation (Kamau & Njau, 2023). Studies in developing economies show that improved sales performance among women entrepreneurs correlates strongly with deliberate use of ICT tools and structured customer engagement (Adebayo & Otemuyiwa, 2023). Conversely, poor digital integration and low entrepreneurial self-efficacy are associated with stagnating sales trajectories (Okafor & Amoo, 2023).

Catering services, defined as professional food preparation and delivery for events and functions, involve menu planning, presentation, customer service, and logistical coordination (Adegbite & Amusat, 2019; Oladipo & Farouk, 2022). In Nigeria, this sector spans weddings, corporate events, and community celebrations, where operational efficiency and client relations are critical for competitive advantage (Nwankwo & Eze, 2021; Adebayo & Otemuyiwa, 2023).

Entrepreneurial behaviour encompasses the pattern of attitudes, actions, and decision-making processes through which individuals identify opportunities, mobilize resources, and implement innovative activities to create and sustain business ventures. It is the practical expression of entrepreneurial orientation (Neneh, 2021; Mahmood et al., 2022). This study focuses on three key dimensions of entrepreneurial behaviour: innovation, risk-taking, and self-confidence.

Innovation, the process of creating and implementing new ideas, products, or processes that generate value (Rauch & Frese, 2019), is critical in the catering sector where client preferences change frequently (Adebayo, 2022). For women entrepreneurs in Adamawa State, innovation can include creative menus, thematic catering packages, or customized service offerings, directly affecting sales performance by creating novelty and perceived value (Okeke, 2021). Operational innovations, such as streamlined order processing and digital payment adoption, improve efficiency and customer satisfaction, leading to larger bookings and higher order values (Yakubu, 2022).

Risk-taking refers to the willingness to engage in decisions with uncertainty to achieve higher returns (Kreiser et al., 2019). In the catering industry, this can involve investing in new equipment, expanding service coverage, or experimenting with novel menu options. While carrying potential loss, strategic risk-taking allows entrepreneurs to access untapped revenue streams and differentiate themselves in competitive markets (Afolabi, 2022; Olawale, 2021).

Self-confidence, or entrepreneurial self-efficacy, is an entrepreneur's belief in their ability to achieve business objectives (Bandura, 2021). It shapes decision-making, negotiation, and resilience. For women entrepreneurs, high self-confidence enables them to secure higher-value contracts, set favorable pricing, and maintain strong client relationships (Ojo, 2023; Yakubu, 2022). This psychological resource is fundamental for transforming intentions into measurable business results.

Poor performance in catering services often stems from inadequate capital, limited innovation, weak customer engagement, and poor technology adoption (Loan, 2023). Financial

constraints restrict equipment upgrades and promotional activities (Ahl & Marlow, 2022), while low digital literacy limits market reach and responsiveness (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2024; Kamau & Njau, 2023). These challenges are acute for women caterers in Adamawa State, where infrastructure issues and seasonal demand fluctuations create significant performance bottlenecks (Musa & Ikwuakam, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing participation of women in entrepreneurship across Nigeria, many women-owned catering enterprises in Adamawa State continue to experience low sales performance and limited business growth. In urban and peri-urban areas such as Yola North, Yola South, Mubi, and Girei, women dominate small catering businesses. However, reports indicate that less than 60% of these enterprises achieve consistent growth within their first five years (Falama, 2023). Many struggle with stagnant monthly sales, low average order values, and minimal repeat patronage. Only about 40–45% of women caterers reported increased event bookings from 2018 to 2024, suggesting that high market participation does not automatically translate into sustainable business outcomes (Wankari, 2024). This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of entrepreneurial behaviour (innovation, risk-taking, and self-confidence) on the sales performance of women entrepreneurs in the catering industry in Adamawa State.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain the influence of entrepreneurial behaviour on the sales performance of women entrepreneurs in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the influence of innovation on the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the influence of risk-taking on the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria.
3. Determine the influence of self-confidence on the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does innovation influence the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does risk-taking influence the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
3. To what extent does self-confidence influence the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H01: Innovation has no statistically significant influence on the sales performance of women in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

H02: Risk-taking has no statistically significant influence on the sales performance of women in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

H03: Self-confidence has no statistically significant influence on the sales performance of women in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Methods

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to quantify the relationships between entrepreneurial behaviour (innovation, risk-taking, self-confidence) and sales performance among women operating catering services. A cross-sectional approach is appropriate as the constructs were measured at a single point in time, allowing for the estimation of population parameters and testing of hypothesized associations (Creswell, 2014; Nworgu, 2015). The descriptive orientation supports the systematic documentation of current practices, while the survey method enables standardized data capture using a structured questionnaire. The target population comprised 29,015 registered women caterers operating in Adamawa State as of 2024, according to records from the Adamawa State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (2024). This population is distributed across the 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state. The sample size for the study was 395 women engaged in catering services, determined using Taro Yamane's formula. They were drawn from four purposively selected LGAs: Yola North, Yola South, Mubi North, and Girei. These areas were selected because they are major urban and semi-urban commercial centers with a high concentration of catering businesses. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Digital Skills and Sales Performance Questionnaire" (EBDSSPQ). The instrument was validated by three lecturers from the Department of Vocational Education. Its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.88, indicating high internal consistency. Data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics, specifically simple regression analysis, were used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does innovation influence the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Innovation Influences Sales Performance

S/N	Item (n = 340)	Mean	S. D	Remarks
1	Introducing new menu items regularly to attract new customers	3.19	1.29	Moderate Extent
2	Introducing seasonal or special menu options to expand market reach	3.00	1.22	Moderate Extent
3	Designing new catering packages for different events	3.40	1.42	Moderate Extent
4	Improving food presentation and packaging methods	3.34	1.41	Moderate Extent
5	Introducing new service delivery options for catering orders	3.23	1.52	Moderate Extent
6	Adopting online order systems for catering services	3.06	1.24	Moderate Extent
7	Developing creative promotional meal bundles	3.38	1.27	Moderate Extent
8	Introducing special menus for specific dietary preferences	3.29	1.46	Moderate Extent

S/N	Item (n = 340)	Mean	S. D	Remarks
9	Creating event-based catering packages (weddings, festivals, corporate events)	3.23	1.27	Moderate Extent
10	Using order tracking to reduce food waste	3.53	1.40	High Extent
11	Introducing promotional offers to encourage repeat patronage	3.10	1.31	Moderate Extent
12	Developing special promotional campaigns during festive periods	3.01	1.32	Moderate Extent
	Cluster Mean	3.23	1.34	Moderate Extent

The results in Table 1 show a grand cluster of 3.23 (SD = 1.34), indicating that innovation influences sales performance to a moderate extent. While most items were rated as having a moderate influence, "using order tracking to reduce food waste" (M = 3.53, SD = 1.40) was rated to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does risk-taking influence the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Risk-Taking Influences Sales Performance

S/N	Item (n = 340)	Mean	S. D	Remarks
13	Investing in new catering service business opportunities despite uncertainty	3.01	1.37	Moderate Extent
14	Spending money on paid advertisements to reach new consumers	3.13	1.28	Moderate Extent
15	Purchasing new kitchen equipment to increase production capacity	3.38	1.21	Moderate Extent
16	Trying new catering service ideas even when outcomes are uncertain	2.96	1.23	Moderate Extent
17	Entering new market segments such as corporate or institutional catering	3.47	1.40	Moderate Extent
18	Introducing unfamiliar menu items to test market demand	3.24	1.33	Moderate Extent
19	Expanding catering services to new locations	2.94	1.37	Moderate Extent
20	Participating in food exhibitions to promote the business	2.69	1.30	Moderate Extent
21	Providing catering services for large events despite operational risks	3.61	1.35	High Extent
22	Offering promotional discounts to penetrate competitive markets	3.46	1.48	Moderate Extent
	Cluster Mean	3.19	1.33	Moderate Extent

The results in Table 2 show a cluster mean of 3.19 (SD = 1.33), indicating that risk-taking influences sales performance to a moderate extent. The practice of "providing catering services for large events despite operational risks" (M = 3.61, SD = 1.35) was rated to a high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does self-confidence influence the sales performance of businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Self-Confidence Influences Sales Performance

S/N	Item (n = 340)	Mean	S. D	Remarks
23	Confidence in negotiating catering prices and service contracts	3.22	1.36	Moderate Extent
24	Making important business decisions independently	3.21	1.34	Moderate Extent
25	Setting clear monthly sales targets for the business	3.04	1.51	Moderate Extent
26	Setting profit goals for catering operations	3.02	1.31	Moderate Extent
27	Handling challenging customer negotiations confidently	2.89	1.33	Moderate Extent
28	Managing catering service delivery effectively	3.27	1.20	Moderate Extent
29	Leading and coordinating workers during catering events	3.22	1.28	Moderate Extent
30	Managing the business operations independently	3.25	1.38	Moderate Extent
31	Pursuing large catering contracts with confidence	3.14	1.25	Moderate Extent
32	Building strong business relationships with clients	3.67	1.32	High Extent
33	Taking quick decisions to solve operational problems	3.12	1.33	Moderate Extent
34	Maintaining consistent effort to grow the business	3.43	1.47	Moderate Extent
Cluster Mean		3.21	1.34	Moderate Extent

The results in Table 3 show a cluster mean of 3.21 (SD = 1.34), indicating that self-confidence influences sales performance to a moderate extent. "Building strong business relationships with clients" (M = 3.67, SD = 1.32) was rated to a high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 4: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on the Influence of Innovation, Risk-taking, and Self-confidence on Sales Performance

Variable	β	t	p-value	Decision
Innovation	0.874	33.056	<0.05	H ₀ ¹ Rejected
Risk-taking	0.455	9.381	<0.05	H ₀ ² Rejected
Self-confidence	0.649	15.679	<0.05	H ₀ ³ Rejected

Dependent Variable: Sales Performance

The results in Table 4 show that innovation ($\beta = 0.874$, $t = 33.056$, $p < 0.05$), risk-taking ($\beta = 0.455$, $t = 9.381$, $p < 0.05$), and self-confidence ($\beta = 0.649$, $t = 15.679$, $p < 0.05$) all have a statistically significant positive influence on the sales performance of women in catering services. Therefore, all three null hypotheses were rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that innovation is practiced at a moderate level among women caterers in Adamawa State (cluster mean = 3.23) and that it has a significant positive influence on sales performance ($\beta = 0.874$, $p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with studies in Nigeria's informal food sector, where innovative capabilities significantly affect performance (Adedeji et al., 2024). The strong beta coefficient highlights innovation through new menu development, process improvement, and product differentiation as a dominant factor for business success in the catering sector. This supports the views of Adebayo and Otemuyiwa (2023) and Najib et al. (2020), who reported strong effects of innovation on SME performance and restaurant marketing performance.

The study also revealed a moderate level of risk-taking practice (cluster mean = 3.19) with a significant positive influence on sales performance ($\beta = 0.455$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that businesswomen who engage in calculated risks, such as expanding services or investing in new equipment, experience improved sales outcomes. This cautious yet active entrepreneurial posture aligns with findings from Adim and Bassey (2022), who found risk-taking positively affects sales growth, and Baba (2021), who identified it as a component of resilience in food firms. The significant coefficient indicates that flexibility and experimentation are essential for success.

Similarly, self-confidence was practiced at a moderate level (cluster mean = 3.21) but significantly influenced sales performance ($\beta = 0.649$, $p < 0.05$). This highlights that higher confidence levels are associated with better sales outcomes, likely through enhanced customer engagement, decisive action, and persistence. This result agrees with Okafor and Amoo (2023), who identified self-confidence as a characteristic of high-performing women entrepreneurs, and with Otache (2021), who found it a significant mediator in translating entrepreneurial intentions into action.

Conclusion

This study concludes that innovation, risk-taking, and self-confidence are all moderately practiced by businesswomen in catering services in Adamawa State. However, each of these entrepreneurial behaviours significantly contributes to improved sales performance. The findings underscore the importance of building women's capacity in these areas to promote sustained growth and competitiveness in the catering industry.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since innovation significantly enhances sales performance, businesswomen in catering services should be encouraged to adopt more creative product designs, diversify menus, and explore new service delivery methods. Relevant government agencies and business associations should organize training sessions to deepen innovative thinking and practices.
2. Given the significant influence of risk-taking on sales performance, catering entrepreneurs should be supported to engage in calculated business risks, such as trying new market segments or investing in improved equipment. Workshops on risk assessment and management can help them make informed decisions.
3. As self-confidence significantly affects sales performance, programs that build entrepreneurial self-efficacy such as mentorship schemes, leadership training, and peer-support groups should be promoted to help women strengthen their belief in their business capabilities.

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