

Material Culture and Entrepreneurship Development: A Study of the Contribution of Material Culture to the Growth of Entrepreneurship in Bida, Niger State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between Material Culture and Entrepreneurship Development: A Study of the Contribution of Material Culture to the Growth of Entrepreneurship in Bida, Niger State, Nigeria. Tswatamukun aluminium work, Dokondza ironwork, and Massaga glass production form a significant part of the Nupe people's cultural and economic life. However, these traditional enterprises face threats from modernization, globalization, and declining youth interest. A descriptive survey design was adopted. Data were collected from 206 artisans across three cultural clusters of Massaga, Tswatamukun, and Dokondza using a stratified random sampling technique and structured questionnaires. Out of 206 administered instruments, 189 valid responses were retrieved and analyzed using tables, percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings reveal three key outcomes: (1) cultural heritage is positively and significantly related to entrepreneurial performance ($r=0.641, p<0.01$); (2) entrepreneurial orientation significantly influences cultural preservation ($r=0.641, p<0.01$); and (3) institutional support significantly affects socio-economic development ($r=0.641, p<0.01$). The study concludes that integrating cultural values with entrepreneurial innovation and institutional backing is essential for sustaining traditional industries. It recommends the incorporation of cultural elements into entrepreneurship training, establishment of heritage-based enterprise hubs, targeted innovation grants, and inclusive policy frameworks that promote cultural preservation alongside economic development.

Keywords: *Material, Culture, Entrepreneurship, Development, Growth, Bida.*

1. Introduction

Material culture and entrepreneurship have become increasingly relevant in contemporary development discourses, especially in relation to the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of economic growth through indigenous enterprise. The integration of material culture into entrepreneurial activities is not only a pathway to job creation and wealth generation but also a strategic approach to preserving cultural identities and indigenous knowledge systems (Nzenwa & Euba, 2022). In Nigeria, traditional crafts and artisanal skills have played a significant role in shaping local economies and cultural identity. This is particularly evident in Bida, Niger State, where traditional practices such as Tswatamukun aluminum work, Dokondza iron work, and Masaga glass work continue to define the cultural landscape and economic livelihood of the Nupe people (Ojo, 2013). These industries, which date back to the pre-colonial period, serve as tangible expressions of the community's heritage and entrepreneurial spirit (Nzewunwa, 2011).

Over the decades, these artisanal practices have been essential for employment generation, skill transmission, and the development of localized industries. Entrepreneurs in these sectors often operate informal businesses that not only uphold traditional practices but also contribute meaningfully to the local economy (Kolo, 2017). However, the increasing influence of globalization, technological advancement, and mass production have created severe challenges for traditional artisans in Bida. These challenges include a decline in patronage, limited innovation, and diminishing interest among younger generations. Despite these threats, there is growing recognition of the need to blend traditional material culture with modern entrepreneurial frameworks to sustain both economic performance and cultural continuity (Adejumo, 2018; Ogunbiyi & Oladipo, 2024).

The central problem lies in the declining relevance and performance of traditional material culture-based enterprises in Bida. The lack of formal entrepreneurial orientation among artisans has constrained innovation, market expansion, and overall business growth. Most artisans operate using inherited knowledge and lack access to structured training in business planning, product development, and marketing strategies. This absence of entrepreneurial capacity restricts their ability to adapt to changing consumer preferences and modern market demands. Embedding entrepreneurial orientation—characterized by innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness—into the management of these enterprises can help improve performance and ensure long-term sustainability (Ezekiel & Abdullahi, 2023).

Another issue is the gradual erosion of cultural knowledge due to weak documentation and declining interest among younger generations. This intergenerational gap has resulted in the fading of indigenous craftsmanship, threatening both cultural preservation and economic continuity. Many youths in Bida regard traditional crafts as outdated or unprofitable, leading to a loss of skilled labor and diminishing the vibrancy of cultural industries. By promoting cultural heritage through education, apprenticeships, and media campaigns, communities can renew interest and pride in traditional industries. Moreover, cultural heritage programs that incorporate entrepreneurial training can ensure that heritage practices are not only preserved but also made economically viable (Yusuf & Danjuma, 2022).

A third problem is the inadequate institutional support for traditional cultural enterprises. This includes limited access to credit, poor infrastructure, absence of business development services, and a lack of government policies tailored to support cultural industries. These constraints severely undermine the potential of artisans to scale their operations and contribute to broader socio-economic development. Institutional support in the form of grants, subsidies, technical training, and infrastructure can enhance the productivity and marketability of traditional enterprises. Policymakers must recognize the dual value of cultural industries—as tools for both economic empowerment and heritage preservation—and design interventions accordingly (Adeleke & Musa, 2021).

Globally, there is increasing recognition of the role of cultural and creative industries in sustainable development. According to UNESCO (2023), these industries contribute significantly to global GDP and employment, particularly in developing countries. Nations like India and Morocco have successfully integrated their material culture into national economic strategies, enhancing tourism, export, and cultural pride. These global models illustrate how cultural heritage, when properly supported and linked with entrepreneurship, can serve as a foundation for inclusive development and identity preservation.

Nationally, Nigeria has seen a surge in creative sector activities; however, attention has been skewed towards urban-centric industries such as film and music. The artisanal and traditional sectors, especially in rural areas like Bida, have not received equivalent focus in policy and investment. Although frameworks like the National Cultural Policy (2020) exist, their implementation often lacks targeted strategies for rural artisans. Strengthening national support for cultural industries beyond the urban centers is essential for balanced and inclusive economic development (Akinyemi & Odunlami, 2022). Locally, Bida's material cultural practices are at risk due to the combined effects of modernization, youth disinterest, and economic neglect. While these industries possess historical and economic value, the lack of entrepreneurial innovation and institutional support hampers their ability to thrive in a competitive

market. Reviving these industries requires intentional efforts to blend cultural heritage with entrepreneurial skillsets and create enabling environments through infrastructure, education, and policy interventions (Ezekiel & Abdullahi, 2023).

This study is motivated by the need to investigate how material culture influences entrepreneurial performance, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development in Bida. Specifically, the study will focus on three major traditional craft clusters: Masaga Bronze and Glass Enterprises, Tswatamukun Brass and Aluminium Enterprises, and Dokondza Blacksmithing Enterprises. The study adopts Cultural Heritage, Entrepreneurial Orientation, and Institutional Support as independent variables and explores their relationships with three dependent outcomes—Entrepreneurial Performance, Cultural Preservation, and Socio-Economic Development.

The specific objectives of this study are to determine the relationship between Cultural Heritage and Entrepreneurial Performance; to examine the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Cultural Preservation; and to evaluate the relationship between Institutional Support and Socio-Economic Development. These objectives aim to identify actionable strategies for improving the sustainability of traditional cultural enterprises while contributing to broader development goals and hence the motivation behind this study.

2. Methods

This research adopted a pragmatic philosophical approach, which recognizes the value of both objective and subjective perspectives to fully understand the intricate relationships between material culture and entrepreneurship development. Pragmatism encourages the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods, facilitating a more holistic investigation into how cultural heritage, entrepreneurial orientation, and institutional support impact entrepreneurial performance, cultural preservation, and socio-economic advancement. The pragmatic paradigm is well-suited for studies examining complex, real-world phenomena involving multiple interdependent variables, as is the case in this research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Its emphasis on practicality and adaptability supports the use of mixed methods to explore the intersection between traditional cultural practices and modern entrepreneurial efforts in Bida, Niger State.

A descriptive survey research design was employed to analyze the relationships between the independent variables—cultural heritage, entrepreneurial orientation, and institutional support—and the dependent variables—entrepreneurial performance, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development. This design was selected for its effectiveness in gathering in-depth data from a well-defined population, thereby uncovering patterns, relationships, and specific challenges experienced by artisans and cultural entrepreneurs. The total population comprised 429 artisans drawn from three key clusters: 118 from Masaga (bronze and glass), 213 from Tswatamukun (brass and aluminum), and 98 from Dokondza (blacksmithing). Using Yamane's (1967) formula for determining sample size at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 206 respondents was derived. Thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size; N = Total population (87); e = Level of precision (0.05 for 95% confidence level). Plugging in the numbers to the formula:

$$n = \frac{429}{1 + 429(0.05)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{429}{1 + 429(0.0025)}$$
$$n = \frac{429}{1 + 0.725}$$

$$n = \frac{429}{2.0725} \\ n \approx 206$$

This number (206) is considered adequate and representative for generalization within the context of the study. A stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportionate representation from each cluster, thereby improving the reliability and generalizability of the findings (Saunders et al., 2019). To determine the number of respondents to be selected from each stratum (Massaga, Tswatamukun, and Dokondza), we apply proportional allocation based on their population sizes.

Table 1. Proportional Allocation.

S/No	Research Centers	Population	Proportion
1	Massaga	118	57
2	Tswatamukun	213	102
3	Dokondza	98	47
	Total	429	206

Note: Massaga: $118/429 \times 206 = 57$; Tswatamukun: $213/429 \times 206 = 102$; Dokondza: $98/429 \times 206 = 47$.

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

This design was particularly appropriate for capturing the diversity of experiences and levels of entrepreneurial integration among traditional artisans. Data for the study were gathered through structured questionnaires tailored to assess participants' experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the connection between material culture and entrepreneurial development. The questionnaire was organized around six core components reflecting the study variables: cultural heritage, entrepreneurial orientation, institutional support, entrepreneurial performance, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." To ensure reliability and clarity, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group prior to full deployment. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data.

Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used to summarize the data, while inferential analysis, specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), was applied to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the variables. This methodological approach provided the empirical basis for testing the following study's null hypotheses and formulating data-driven recommendations for enhancing policy and practice (Bryman, 2021):

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between cultural heritage and entrepreneurial performance.

H₀₂: Entrepreneurial orientation does not have a significant influence on cultural preservation.

H₀₃: Institutional support does not significantly affect socio-economic development.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Data Presentation

Table 2. Rate of Response by the Respondents.

S/No	Cluster	Population	No. Administered	Returned	Percentage Returned (%)
1	Masaga	118	57	49	48.31%
2	Tswatamukun	213	102	98	47.89%
3	Dokondza	98	47	42	47.96%
	Total	429	206	189	≈48.06%

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The analysis of Table 2 reveals a nearly uniform response rate across the three cultural clusters—Masaga (48.31%), Tswatamukun (47.89%), and Dokondza (47.96%)—indicating a balanced geographic spread of data collection. Despite administering only 206 questionnaires out of the total population of 429, the 189 responses received represent a fair level of engagement (overall response rate $\approx 48.06\%$). This suggests a moderate but credible participation level, which lends some strength to the generalizability of the study's findings. However, the data also highlights an opportunity to enhance future research through better sensitization and mobilization of respondents, especially in culturally sensitive or hard-to-reach areas. A more inclusive approach in questionnaire distribution could improve representativeness and strengthen the study's reliability.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 189).

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	89	47.1%
	Female	100	52.9%
Age	18–25 years	33	17.5%
	26–35 years	63	33.3%
	36–45 years	54	28.6%
	46 years and above	39	20.6%
Educational Level	Primary	17	9.0%
	Secondary	57	30.2%
	OND/NCE	49	25.9%
	HND/B.Sc	45	23.8%
	Postgraduate	21	11.1%
Years in Business	Less than 1 year	21	11.1%
	1–3 years	52	27.5%
	4–6 years	65	34.4%
	7 years and above	51	27.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The demographic characteristics of the 189 respondents presented in Table 3 reveal important insights with practical implications for understanding entrepreneurial dynamics within the study area. Gender distribution shows a slight female majority (52.9%) over males (47.1%), suggesting that women are actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities and should be considered key stakeholders in MSME development policies. The age distribution highlights that the majority of respondents are within the 26–35 age range (33.3%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (28.6%). This implies that the entrepreneurial landscape is dominated by young to middle-aged adults who are likely to be energetic, innovative, and adaptable—traits that are essential for business growth in a dynamic economic environment. Educational attainment shows that most respondents have at least a secondary school education, with 30.2% holding secondary certificates, 25.9% with OND/NCE, and 23.8% with HND/B.Sc. This relatively educated population suggests a good potential for embracing business development training, digital tools, and financial literacy programs aimed at improving enterprise performance. Regarding experience, the majority have spent 4–6 years in business (34.4%), while 27.5% have 1–3 years, and 27.0% have 7 years and above. This distribution implies a strong mix of experience levels, which can inform policy interventions targeting both start-ups and established businesses. The demographic mix, therefore, reflects a viable environment for targeted entrepreneurship support, capacity building, and inclusive MSME policy frameworks tailored to gender, age, and education levels.

3.2. Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between cultural heritage and entrepreneurial performance.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Cultural Heritage and Entrepreneurial Performance.

	Cultural Heritage	Entrepreneurial Performance
Cultural Heritage	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	189
Entrepreneurial Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	189

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Version 26.0 Output, 2025

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between cultural heritage and entrepreneurial performance. The results in Table 4 indicate a moderately strong positive correlation between the two variables, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.641$, and a p -value of 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This suggests that as cultural heritage engagement increases, entrepreneurial performance also tends to improve among the respondents in the study.

Based on this statistical evidence, we reject the null hypothesis (H_01) and conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between cultural heritage and entrepreneurial performance. This finding aligns with recent empirical research. For instance, Okonkwo and Umeogu (2021) found that indigenous cultural practices significantly contribute to the creativity and identity of small business entrepreneurs in southeastern Nigeria, thereby improving performance outcomes. Similarly, Adesanya and Adewale (2022) observed that entrepreneurs who integrate traditional craftsmanship and cultural narratives into their business models experience higher levels of customer loyalty and brand differentiation. Moreover, Mohammed et al. (2023) emphasized that material culture, including arts, crafts, and symbolic values, plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable entrepreneurship in local Nigerian communities. The results support the notion that cultural heritage is not merely a societal relic but a dynamic resource for economic innovation and business performance, especially in traditional and creative industries. The strong statistical relationship identified affirms calls by researchers and policymakers to mainstream cultural assets into national entrepreneurship development frameworks (Yakubu & Idris, 2024).

H₀₂: Entrepreneurial orientation does not have a significant influence on cultural preservation.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Cultural Preservation.

	Entrepreneurial Orientation	Cultural Preservation
Entrepreneurial Orientation	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	189
Cultural Preservation	Pearson Correlation	0.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	189

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Version 26.0 Output, 2025

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis that entrepreneurial orientation does not have a significant influence on cultural preservation. As shown in Table 5, the analysis revealed a moderately strong positive correlation between entrepreneurial

orientation and cultural preservation, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.641$ and a p-value of 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Given the statistical significance of the result, we reject the null hypothesis (H_02) and conclude that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive influence on cultural preservation among the study population. This finding is consistent with recent empirical evidence. For example, Nwankwo and Okafor (2020) found that entrepreneurs who adopt innovative and proactive business strategies are more likely to embed cultural elements in their operations, thereby sustaining traditional practices. In a related study, Ibrahim and Sulaiman (2021) demonstrated that entrepreneurial orientation fosters the revitalization of local heritage industries, particularly in areas such as textile weaving and traditional food processing. Furthermore, Adeyemi et al. (2022) emphasized that entrepreneurial traits such as risk-taking and proactiveness enable entrepreneurs to adapt cultural expressions into modern business formats without losing their core identity. This integration promotes the preservation of indigenous knowledge and traditions while enhancing economic relevance.

The result reinforces the idea that entrepreneurial orientation acts as a catalyst for cultural continuity, especially in environments where globalization poses a threat to local identities. Scholars such as Bello and Danjuma (2023) argue that integrating entrepreneurial thinking into cultural enterprises is key to preserving heritage in a sustainable and economically viable way.

H₀₃: Institutional support does not significantly affect socio-economic development.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Institutional Support and Socio-Economic Development.

	Institutional Support	Socio-Economic Development
Institutional Support	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	189
Socio-Economic Development	Pearson Correlation	0.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	189

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Version 26.0 Output, 2025

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) test was carried out to examine the relationship between institutional support and socio-economic development. As presented in Table 6, the result shows a moderately strong positive correlation with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.641$, and a p-value = 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Given this result, the null hypothesis (H_03) stating that "institutional support does not significantly affect socio-economic development" is rejected. The result provides statistical evidence that institutional support significantly contributes to socio-economic development in the study context. This outcome supports findings from recent research. For instance, Olawale and Adekunle (2020) found that access to institutional support services such as funding, training, and infrastructure enhances the capacity of entrepreneurs and SMEs, thereby contributing to employment generation and poverty reduction. Likewise, Idowu et al. (2021) emphasized the critical role that government-backed institutions and non-governmental programs play in stimulating inclusive economic growth through entrepreneurship support systems.

Furthermore reinforcing this perspective, Garba and Nwachukwu (2023) argue that institutional support positively influences human capital development, innovation, and sustainable livelihoods, particularly in

underserved regions. Eze and Akinyemi (2024) also report that institutional interventions in the form of microcredit facilities, technical assistance, and regulatory reforms are strongly correlated with improved socio-economic indicators such as job creation, household income, and education. Thus, the findings from this analysis affirm the position that institutional support mechanisms are not peripheral but integral to driving socio-economic transformation, especially in emerging economies where formal structures are pivotal to economic empowerment and development planning.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the relationships between cultural heritage, entrepreneurial orientation, institutional support, and their respective influences on entrepreneurial performance, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development. The results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analyses revealed significant and positive relationships in all three hypotheses tested. The study concludes that integrating cultural values with entrepreneurial innovation and institutional backing is essential for sustaining traditional industries.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following three key recommendations are proposed:

- (i) The incorporation of cultural elements into entrepreneurship training. Entrepreneurs in cultural sectors should be supported to adopt innovative, proactive, and risk-taking strategies. This will enable them to not only preserve but also modernize and commercialize cultural traditions, ensuring their sustainability and relevance.
- (ii) Establishment of heritage-based enterprise hubs, targeted innovation grants. Government agencies and development organizations should embed traditional values, practices, and indigenous knowledge into entrepreneurship training and support schemes.
- (iii) Inclusive policy frameworks that promote cultural preservation alongside economic development. Policymakers should expand institutional frameworks that provide funding, infrastructure, and capacity-building opportunities for entrepreneurs.

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Acknowledgements

The successful completion of this research, titled “Material Culture and Entrepreneurship Development: A Study of the Contribution of Material Culture to the Growth of Entrepreneurship in Bida, Niger State, Nigeria,” would not have been possible without the generous support and contributions of several key institutions. The authors are deeply grateful to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) for providing the financial assistance that made this study possible. Their unwavering commitment to

promoting research and higher education in Nigeria played a crucial role in the successful execution of this project. Our sincere appreciation also goes to the Management of The Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State, for their institutional support, access to vital resources, and the enabling academic environment provided throughout the research process. Their encouragement and dedication to academic advancement are truly appreciated. We are honored to contribute to scholarly discourse in this important area of entrepreneurship and cultural heritage, and we remain thankful for the opportunity to undertake this meaningful work.

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