STRATEGIC ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Onah, James Ikechukwu[1]. Eke, Cyril.Chijioke.[1]

1. Department of Marketing. Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu

Mmoegbunam, Stephen.Chijioke.[2]Ikpo, Kobimdi. Pamela.[2], Okoro, Deborah .Patience[2]

2. Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu Campus, Enugu

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of entrepreneurial orientation strategy on marketing performance of selected small business enterprises in Enugu State Nigeria. The study was quantitative in nature and adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study was owners/managers/ staff of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 384 owners/managers/staff of small business enterprisesin Enugu State selected using purposive sampling. The instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire which was validated using expert opinion. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument whereupon all the variables surpassed the accepted and recommended 7.0. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS. version 26.0). The results showed that all the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation strategyunderstudy including: proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness have significant effect on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State Nigeria. The implication of this is that management of small business enterprises in Enugu State Nigeria and beyond should effectively integrate all the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation strategy within their business operation for effective customer services delivery to meet changes in the market and to improve marketing performance.

Key Words: *Proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, aggressiveness, marketing performance; small business enterprises*

Introduction

Confronted with heightened competition fueled by globalization and shifting consumer preferences, small businesses in Nigeria, particularly in Enugu State, are implementing various strategic approaches to maintain a competitive edge and enhance their marketing outcomes. The central motivation behind these enterprises' marketing strategies and initiatives is the aspiration to optimize their marketing performance which is fundamental to their organizational health and long-term viability within the commercial environment. Furthermore, recognizing environmental awareness as a critical determinant of entrepreneurial success, contemporary business owners understand that such awareness not only aids in carving out a niche in the competitive arena but also contributes to sustained longevity (Saloi, Chanu&Kashyap, 2025).

> Extant literature suggests that entrepreneurial orientation strategy functions as a key mechanism for small businesses to mitigate market volatility and maintain robust performance within highly competitive business landscapes. It encapsulates a firm's strategic orientation toward entrepreneurship, encompassing the processes, methodologies, and managerial decision-making approaches utilized to implement entrepreneurial initiatives. This complex construct embodies a firm's propensity for innovation, risk-taking, and proactive market engagement (Kosa et al., 2020).

Empirical research consistently demonstrates a connection between a firm's entrepreneurial orientation and its marketing performance. Widely considered a critical factor in organizational achievement and economic advancement, entrepreneurial orientation encompasses characteristics such as proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness(Lumpkin &Dess, 2020). Entrepreneurial orientation has long been considered a key capability within organizations. Consequently, it is recognized as a significant determinant of competitive advantage and a predictor of the performance of firms in the market (Lumpkin &Dess, 2020). It is recognized as an essential strategic component in gaining a competitive edge and enhancing marketing performance within dynamic and demanding marketplaces (Erista et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial orientation, a complex construct, encompasses a range of elements that collectively influence a firm's strategic decisions and entrepreneurial behaviors (Sharma &Gogia, 2014). It may be viewed as an institution's general attitude toward entrepreneurship, illustrating its strategic direction and decision-making processes (Kosa et al., 2020). The degree at which an organization integrates these factors determines its entrepreneurial energy and its capacity to identify and capitalize on opportunities within its competitive landscape.

Statement of the Problem

All organizations within the Nigerian business terrain are suffering different forms of challenges due to the growing level of competition in the business environment. Studies have shown that small business enterprises are seen to be affected by some existential problems such as insufficient capital, lack of efficient manpower, inefficient management, fraud, as well as inability to analyze and capture market opportunities (Etuk, Udoh and Udowong, 2021). This has resulted in intensified competitive pressures for small business enterprises leading to their continual failure and closure of business. World Bank Reportsestimate that, in Nigeria, 50% of the small businesses eventually fail (World Bank, 2022).

Consequently, the need for an acceptable understanding of entrepreneurship orientation and its applicability to these small and entrepreneurial based business enterprises has gradually become an issue of pivotal concern to many scholars, entrepreneurs and employees of such business enterprises (Olannye&Eromafuru, 2016). Observation has shown that the concept of entrepreneurial orientation strategy and its influence on marketing performance of small business enterprises has not received the desired attention especially in the area of this study. However, research suggests that the effect of entrepreneurial orientation strategies on the marketing outcomes of small enterprises, particularly within the specific context of this study, remains comparatively underexplored. The lack of adequate attention onhow entrepreneurial characteristics such as proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness affect marketing performance of small business enterprises in the study area has posed a major concern for the owners of these small business enterprises, academics and policy makers.

Based on these scenarios, it becomes necessary to carry out an empirical investigation in this domain to fill the observed research gap. Consequently, the objective of this study is to explore the effect of entrepreneurial orientation strategies (proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness)on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation

The concept of entrepreneurial orientation is recognized as an attribute of an organization that exists to the degree to which that organization supports and exhibits a sustained pattern of entrepreneurial behavior reflecting incidents of proactive newentry. The term 'newentry' describes acts that could be taken by a small business, an individual, or a large corporation's strategic business unit ((Saloi, Chanu&Kashyap, 2025).Entrepreneurial orientation signifies an organization's comprehensive stance on entrepreneurship, embodying its strategic direction and approaches to decision-making (Kosa et al., 2020). The extent to which an organization adopts these facets dictates its entrepreneurial vigor and its ability to recognize and leverage prospects. Furthermore, entrepreneurial orientation is conceptualized as an individual's disposition towards participation in entrepreneurial pursuits, whether within an established entity or through the establishment of a novel enterprise (Kosa et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial orientation is typified by a propensity for ingenuity, a disposition to undertake judicious risks, and a forward-thinking method of discerning and utilizing emergent opportunities (Sharma &Gogia, 2014). In the context of this study, entrepreneurial orientation is seen from the perspectives of Shaher and Ali, (2020) in whichentrepreneurial orientation represents a broad construct encompassing an organization's strategic proclivities for entrepreneurial endeavors. Based on this, entrepreneurial orientation constitutes five dimensions including proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness.

Marketing Performance

Organizations prioritize enhancing their market performance, as successful marketplace outcome is crucial for their corporate well-being. Zainudin and Sugiono (2016) suggest that marketing performance refers to a firm's capacity to adjust to the operating environment and design a strategy that enhances management's ability to align the external environment with the company's internal operations. It is a multifaceted construct encompassing metrics like: client acquisition, revenue, efficiency, earnings, personnel and others such as client contentment, client loyalty, organizational reputation, adherence to legal and regulatory frameworks, and incorporation of ethical conduct standards. Lebans and Euske (2006), opine that marketing performance is a compilation of monetary and non-monetary metrics that offer insights into the attainment of objectives and results. Financial or quantitative performance indicators encompass profitability, revenue, and market capitalization. Non-financial or qualitative performance assessments include customer and employee satisfaction, client fulfillment, and ecological and societal performance (Selvam, et al., 2016; Taouab and Issor, 2019). Marketing performance metrics furnish the data necessary for decision-makers to strategize, oversee, and guide organizational activities. A standardized method for gauging marketing performance remains elusive. Performance measurement poses a significant challenge in marketing and constitutes a primary concern for many organizations. Empirical investigations demonstrate a diverse array of measures employed to operationalize marketing performance. For example, Narver and Slatter (1994) identified key performance indicators such as return-on-investment, market share, and revenue expansion. Harcourt and Ikegwuru (2018) utilized customer acquisition; Nwokah (2008) employed revenue expansion, profitability, and market share, while Didia and Nwokah (2015) used revenue expansion, client retention, return on investment, market share, information acquisition, resource accessibility, and employee motivation as proxies for market performance. Excimiery and Mohammed (2013) posited that entrepreneurial orientation strategies are anticipated to influence both monetary and non-monetary results. Based on a review of existing literature, this study adopts sales growth, customer satisfaction, market share and growth profitability as the measures of market performance.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

From its inception in the 1970s, the concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation has garnered significant scholarly attention and has been extensively researched (Edmond and Wiklund, 2010; Wales, 2016). Miller (1983) conceptualized entrepreneurial orientation as a strategy with three concepts including proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, and autonomy. To support this conceptualization, the researcher proposed that an entrepreneurial firm partakes in product-market innovation, engages in risky ventures and comes up with proactive ventures that beat competitive forces. In their study, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) added two dimensions including autonomy and aggressiveness to the dimensions of Miller (1983). This implies that from the conceptualization of Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 2020) there are five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation including proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness. Following these two conceptualizations, this study sought to establish the effect of proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Proactiveness and Marketing Performance

Proactiveness, denoting a potential perspective interwoven with pioneering and exploratory actions, is considered a cornerstone of organizational entrepreneurship, as indicated in initial studies (Miller & Friesen, 1983). Beyond merely being trailblazing ventures that initially penetrate novel markets, proactive entities dynamically pursue prospects and adapt to prospective demands (Nazdrol& Breen, 2011). Consequently, proactiveness—characterized by exercising initiative, anticipating and cultivating nascent markets, or participating in evolving ones—is intrinsically associated with entrepreneurship and is a fundamental dimension of entrepreneurial orientation. Research has connected proactiveness to the marketing outcomes of small business ventures. A recent investigation by Okręglicka andFilipowicz, (2023) demonstrated a relationship between elements of entrepreneurial orientation, notably proactiveness, and the marketing success of small and medium-sized firms. Thus, it was hypothesized that;

H_1 There is a significant and positive effect of proactiveness on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Innovativeness and Marketing Performance

Entrepreneurial innovativeness represents the tendency of business founders to conceive and execute pioneering concepts, goods, or procedures that generate market value. This embodies an entrepreneurial perspective focused on opportunity seeking, risk acceptance, and the questioning of established norms to stimulate ingenuity and expansion (Rassool et al., 2022). It also involves specialized expertise regarding improvements over current practices (York &Venkataraman, 2010). Innovativeness entails cultivating imaginative thought, promoting investigation and testing, devising updated methodologies, launching novel offerings, and achieving technological prominence (Lumpkin &Dess, 2020). A focus on novelty enables organizations to secure a leading market position and provides new companies with avenues for achieving market competitiveness (Olanye, 2016). Prior studies suggest a connection between entrepreneurial innovativeness and marketing effectiveness. Recent research by Rassool et al. (2022) demonstrated a notable association between entrepreneurial innovativeness and the performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses in Sweden. Hence, it was hypothesized that,

H_2 There is a significant and positive effect of innovativeness on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Risk-taking and Marketing Performance

Risk taking is defined as the willingness to venture into novel or uncertain situations, frequently involving significant financial investment (Mason et al., 2015). Risk-taking, as described by Lumpkin and Dess (2020), encompasses bold decision-making, such as pursuing ventures with uncertain outcomes, allocating considerable capital to activities with ambiguous prospects, and incurring substantial debt. Prior research has linked an entrepreneurial orientation to a tendency for risk-taking, where organizations may embrace significant financial burdens or allocate substantial resources to capitalize on market opportunities and achieve enhanced returns (Lumpkin &Dess, 1996). Furthermore, Khan et al. (2021) posit that risk taking signifies the readiness of entrepreneurs to pursue initiatives that diverge from established norms and carry the potential for both positive and negative consequences. These scholars underscore the importance of a judicious approach to risk-taking in successful entrepreneurship, requiring careful evaluation and management of potential hazards alongside the pursuit of opportunities for expansion. In their study, Covic etal., (2023) established a significant effect of risk-taking on performance of small and medium enterprises in the digital transformation sphere. Based on this review, it was hypothesized thus:

H_3 There is a significant and positive effect of risk-taking on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Autonomy and Marketing Performance

Lumpkin and Dess (2020) aver that autonomy within an organizational context, signifies the degree to which personnel are granted latitude and self-governance in decision-making, risk assessment, and opportunity pursuit, unhindered by excessive oversight or control. This independence can empower organizational actors with the liberty and adaptability to initiate and execute ventures exhibiting entrepreneurial characteristics. It allows a collective (or an individual) not only to address challenges, and attain the predetermined objectives for resolution but also to define the problem and objectives (Saloi, Chanu&Kashyap, 2025). Consequently, studies suggest that a substantial level of autonomy at the strategic level is conducive for a heightened level of entrepreneurial orientation (Lumpkin, Cogliser, & Schneider, 2009). Therefore, autonomy represents a vital element of entrepreneurial disposition. Individuals demonstrating significant self-reliance are more disposed to innovation, pro-activity, and calculated risk-taking to realize their aspirations. This aspect of entrepreneurial inclination is indispensable for cultivating an environment of ingenuity, experimentation, and malleability within an organization. A study by Venzon (2023) established a correlation between autonomy and performance of small businesses. Hence, it was hypothesized that;

H_4 There is a significant and positive effect of autonomy on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Aggressiveness and Marketing Performance

Aggressiveness is the tendency of a business to actively and directly fight its rivals in order to gain market share or strengthen its position in order to surpass competitors in the same industry. Competitive aggressiveness is the responsiveness of the firms towards competitors which can be either 'reactive' like lowering prices in response to a competitive challenge or 'head-to-head' like when a company enters a market that another competitor has identified. Aggressiveness also indicates a readiness to go against the grain and not rely on conventional strategies to win. Mason *et al.* (2015) aver that aggressiveness refers to a company's intense pursuit of outperforming industry competitors and confronting them head-on whenever possible. It is meant to talk about rivals. An aggressive company is one that isn't afraid to try new things instead of sticking to the tried-and-true ways of competing (Lumpkin &Dess, 2020). Competitors can be attacked directly or through head-to-head competition, as happens when a company enters a market where another company is already established. Therefore, aggressiveness can be said to be the motivation for facing the fierce, sharp competition that rivals present in the marketplace. It is the company's calculated reaction to rivals in an attempt to hold onto its competitive market position. In their study, Okręglicka and Filipowicz, (2023) established a significant relationship between aggressiveness and the marketing success of small and medium-sized firms. Thus, it was hypothesized that;

H_5 There is a significant and positive effect of aggressiveness on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Resource Based View of the firm (RBV) which lays emphasis on the internal environment of a firm as a key predictor for competitive advantage and the resources that firms have developed to compete with others in the business environment. The Resource Based View was conceived by Wernerfelt (1984) who saw the firm as a bundle of assets or resources which are tied semi-permanently to the firm. Barney (1991) argues that the resources of a firm are its primary source of competitive advantage. Miller and Shamise, (1996) posit that the resources of a firm can be classified into categories such as property based and knowledge-based resources. Besides the above categorization, other resources of a firm include physical capital, human capital and organizational capital resources (Barney, 1991). Later, Barney and Wright (1998) added human resource management-related resources to this list of additional resources of a firm. The resources of a firm can be tangible or intangible (Ray et al., 2004). Resources might also be tied semi-permanently to the firm (Wernerfelt, 1984). In a similar argument, Barney (1991) drew attention to all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information and knowledge controlled by a firm that enables the firm to conceive and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Ultimately, firms that are able to leverage resources to implement a "value creating strategy" not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitor can achieve competitive advantage.

Empirical Review

In this research domain, various empirical investigations have been conducted from diverse literary viewpoints. A thorough review of pertinent literature as shown below aids researchers in identifying and comprehending the key issues essential for conducting their study.

Imran, *et .al,* (2019) investigated the relationship between Entrepreneurial Traits and Small-Firm Performance with Entrepreneurial Orientation as a Mediating Factor. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Structured questionnaire was used for collection of data from business owners of the selected small firms. Smart PLS (partial least squares path modeling was used for hypothesis testing on a sample of 353 business owners. Self-efficacy and entrepreneurial orientation have a positive association with firm performance. Creativity and internal locus of control are fully mediated by entrepreneurial orientation.

Khan, *et .al, (*2020) investigated the nexus between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Small Sized Enterprises' Performance;: Does 'Access to Finance' Moderate the Relation in Emerging Economies? The study employed a descriptive survey design in which structured questionnaire was used for collection of data from business owners of the selected small enterprises. Confirmatory factor analysis was utilized in analysis of data. The findings indicated that access to finance moderates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance of small sized enterprises.

Sorama andJoensuu-Salo, (2022) studied the nexus among entrepreneurial orientation, firm growth and performance in Small and Medium Enterprises in Finnish: Testing the Scale of EO in SME Context. A descriptive survey design was utilized while structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 260 Small and Medium Enterprises Finnish. The data collected was analyzed using Smart Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The findings revealed that two dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation: innovativeness and risk-taking were studied and Innovativeness positively affects SME performance, while risk-taking positively affects SME growth.

Okręglicka and Filipowicz(2023) carried out a study to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial orientation and economic performance of small and medium- sized enterprises – a comparative analysis. The study employed a descriptive survey design in which structured questionnaire was used for collection of data from 200 owners of small and medium-sizedenterprises. Statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and Kendalls tau correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed that entrepreneurial orientation has an impact on economic performance. Also there is a significant correlation between entrepreneurial orientation dimensions and economic performance.

Venzon, (2023) investigated entrepreneurial orientation among student entrepreneurs. The study employed a descriptive survey design in which structured questionnaire was used for collection of data from student entrepreneurs. Correlations and t-tests were utilized for test of external validity. Factor analysis and reliability estimations for psychometric qualities were carried. The results indicated that five characteristics of entrepreneurial orientation among student entrepreneurs include innovation, autonomy, risk-taking, proactiveness, and aggressiveness.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design. This is in line with the submission of Hair, Money, and Samuel & Pages (2007) that such a method is usually used in assessment of the population characteristics. The population of the study was owners/managers of small business enterprises in Enugu state. A sample size of 396 managers was used and selected using quota sampling. The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire. All the items were adequately assessed on a five-point balanced likert scale which ranged from strongly agree represented by 5, to strongly disagree represented by 1. To validate the instrument, content validity was carried and expert opinion was also sought from few research experts, after which the questionnaire was subjected to a minor revision. To confirm the validity of the constructs, discriminant analysis was carried out using correlation.The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Index; the result showed favourable reliable scores in which all the itemswere above the recommended and accepted value of 0.7. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the bio-data of the participants while multiple regression analysis was utilized to ascertain the collective influence of the entrepreneurial orientation dimensions on marketing performance. The statistical analysis was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26.0).

Results and Discussion

Respondents Demographic Characteristics

Out of the 396 distributed questionnaires, 384 were accurately completed and returned by the respondents, while 12 were not indicating a 97% response rate, which is notably significant to facilitate valid generalizations regarding the respondents surveyed in this study. Out of the 384 respondents that participated in the survey, 200 (52.1%) were male, while 184 (47.9%) were female. Then, 229 (57.3%) were married, while 164 (42.7%) were unmarried. Concerning the ages range, 37 (9.6%) were under 25 years old, 99 (25.7%) were between 25 and 34 years old, 82 (22.3%) were 35 to 44 years old, 96 (25.0%) were in the 45 to 54 years age group, and 67 (17.4%) were 55 years of age or older. Regarding their educational qualifications, 67 (17.4%) held WASC/GCE certificates, 82 (22.3%) were ND/NCE holders, 100 (26.0%) possessed B. Sc/HND degrees, 37 (9.6%) had postgraduate qualifications, and 95 (24.7%) were identified as professionals. The table below shows the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	52.1	Married	220	57.3
Female	184	47.9	Single	164	42.7
Total	384	100.0	Total	384	100.0
Age			**Education**		
< 25yrs	37	9.6	WASC/GCE	67	17.4
25 – 34yrs	99	25.7	ND/NCE	82	22.3
35 – 44yrs	82	22.3	BSc/HND	100	26.0
45 – 54yrs	96	25.0	Postgraduate	37	9.6
≥ 55yrs	67	17.4	Professionals	95	24.7
Total	384	100.0	Total	384	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Reliability and Validity Analyses

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for each variable to establish the reliability of the items associated with each construct. The results of the reliability analysis for each construct were as follows: proactiveness; (0.758), innovativeness; (0.855), risk-taking; (0.943; autonomy; (0.840), aggressiveness; (0.823), and marketing performance; (0.925). The reliability scores for each construct exceeded the recommended and acceptable threshold of 0.7. The results of the reliability analysis are depicted in the table below.

Table 2: The Reliability Statistics of the Variables

S/N	ITEM	NO OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
1	Proactiveness	5	.759
2	Innovativeness	5	.855
3	Risk-taking	5	.943
4	Autonomy	5	.840
5	Competitive aggressiveness	5	.823
6	Marketing Performance	5	.925

Source: Filed Survey, 2025

After content validity, correlation analysis was utilized to determine the discriminant validity of the constructs. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level. The table below shows all correlations and their correlation values.

Table 3: Correlations and test of discriminant validity

Variable	PR	IN	RT	AU	CA	MP
Proactiveness-PR	1	.759**	.702**	.681**	.624**	.611**
Innovativeness-IN	.759**	1	.695**	.653**	.649**	.639**
Risk-taking-RT	.702**	.695**	1	.658**	.677**	.683**
Autonomy-AU	.681**	.653**	.658**	1	.597**	.586**
Competitive aggressiveness-CA	.624**	.647**	.677**	.597**	1	.576**
Marketing Performance-MP	.611**	.639**	.683**	.586**	.576**	1

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

As indicated in Table 3 above, all the elements representing the theoretical constructs showed satisfactory positive and significant correlations. Particularly, procativenessand innovativeness exhibited the strongest correlation, with a coefficient value of 0.759. Proactivenesswas positively and significantly correlated with marketing performance (r = 0.611, ** P<.01); innovativeness was (r = 0.639, ** P<.01); whilerisk-taking was (r = 0.638, ** P<.01). Additionally, autonomy exhibited a positive and significant correlation with marketing performance (r = 0.586, ** P<.01), and competitive aggressiveness displayed a positive and significant correlation with marketing performance (r = .576** P<.01)

Multiple Regression Analysis of the constructs

To determine the effect of the independent variable—entrepreneurial orientation components, including proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy and aggressiveness—on the dependent variable, marketing performance, regression analysis was utilized.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**Standard Error**	**F Change**	**Change ST Df**	**Sig**
1	0.830[a]	0.794	**0.**786	73.19583	35.874	5	0.000

a. Dependent variable: Marketing performance
b. Predictors: (constant), proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, competitive aggressiveness

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis of Entrepreneurial Orientation Constructs and Marketing Performance

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig**
	B	Std. Error	Beta	-	-
Constants	12.911	4.082	-	738	.465
Proactiveness	.897	.230	.767	894	.038
Innovativeness	.184	.637	.635	1.137	.026
Risk-taking	.378	.139	.565	.226	.002
Autonomy	.583	.116	.459	1.019	.031
Competitive aggressiveness	.646	.109	.608	.459	.012

a. Dependent *Variable: Marketing Performance*

Discussion

The research focused on empirically investigating the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study examined the effect of five variables of entrepreneurial orientation-proactiveness,

innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness on marketing performance. The correlation analysis involving all the five entrepreneurial orientation constructs exhibited positive correlation coefficients, indicating their suitability as dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation.
The regression analysis revealed a positive and significant influence of these dimensions on the marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, proactiveness(β = .767, P< 0.01), innovativeness (β = 635, P< 0.01), risk taking (β = .579, P< 0.01), autonomy (β = .459, P< 0.01), and aggressiveness (β = .608, P< 0.01) each exhibited statistically significant and positive effects on marketing effectiveness.

The outcome of the regression analysis revealed that proactiveness significantly and positively affects marketing performance (β = .767, P< 0.01).. This result corroborated the H_1 hypothesis, demonstrating that proactivenesssignificantly and positively affects marketing effectiveness. This result is supported by findings of Okręglicka and Filipowicz, (2023) which demonstrated a relationship between elements of entrepreneurial orientation, notably proactiveness, and the marketing success of small and medium-sized firms.
Likewise, the result of the regression analysis indicated that innovativeness significantly and positively affects marketing effectiveness (β = .635, P< 0.01), supporting H_2, which posited the significant positive effect of innovativeness on marketing effectiveness. This is corroborated by the findings of Anders et al. (2023) which demonstrated a notable association between entrepreneurial innovativeness and the performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses in Sweden.Similarly, the findings of the regression analysis affirmed that risk-talking has a significant and positive effect on marketing effectiveness (β = .565, P< 0.01). This supported H_3which asserted that risk–taking significantly and positivelyaffects marketing effectiveness. This is consistent with the findings of Covic et al., (2023) which established a significant effect of risk-taking on performance of small and medium enterprises in the digital transformation sphere.
Furthermore, the findings of the regression analysis indicated that autonomy significantly and positively affects marketing effectiveness (β = .459, P< 0.01). This supported H_4, which proposed the significant and positive effect of autonomy on marketing effectiveness. This aligns with the findings of Venzon (2023) which established a significant and positive effect of autonomy and performance of small business enterprises. Also, the outcomes of the regression

analysis revealed that a competitive aggressiveness significantly and positively affects marketing effectiveness (β = .608, P< 0.01). This result support H_5, which indicated that responsiveness significantly and positively affects marketing effectiveness. This corresponds with the result ofOkręglicka and Filipowicz, (2023) which established a significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the marketing success of small and medium-sized firms.

Conclusion

From the data analysis this study has established that the entrepreneurial orientation dimensions including proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness significantly and positively affects marketing performance of small business enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria. This implies that small business enterprises that adopt proactiveness innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness in engaging in their operational and entrepreneurial activities will enjoy improvement in marketing performance in the highly competitive marketing environment in Nigeria. Hence, to thrive in a fiercely competitive environment, organizations must align their operations with customer demands and preferences, as well as the entrepreneurial requirements of the environment necessitating an entrepreneurial-oriented approach that encompasses proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking, autonomy, and aggressiveness. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that entrepreneurial -oriented entities achieve superior market performance, whereas those lacking such orientation tend to exhibit results that are below expectations. This study agrees with previous researchers, affirming that entrepreneurial orientation can significantly and positively enhance organizational performance in the marketplace. Consequently, it is imperative for owners and managers of small business enterprises to advocate for entrepreneurial orientation as a key predictor of their organizational performance.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered. To achieve improve marketing performance; small business enterprises should display proactiveness which reflects entrepreneurial readiness to control competitors through a perfect mix of proactive and aggressive actions. The firms should be proactive in understanding and satisfying the underlying, unstated customer needs by gathering customer and competitor based information.

These enterprises should exhibit a wide-ranging innovativeness or openness to newness and be disposed to be in the forefront in adoption of innovation in their domain of operation. This will enable them to concentrate on novel ideas that result in new markets, products or processes.

The firms should always be willing to take bold decisions and venture into novel or uncertain situations to discover and grab opportunities for improved operational success. These enterprises must demonstrate the capacity to recognize and exploit novel possibilities overlooked by rival organizations, strategically position offerings in underserved markets where demand is unmet, and pioneer the utilization of previously unexploited assets. The firms should inculcate and embrace autonomy in their managerial operations and decision making process. The personnel of the enterprises should be granted the latitude and independence in decision-making, risk assessment, and opportunity pursuit, unhindered by excessive oversight or control. The enterprises should develop the attitude of aggressiveness in their operations in the competitive market. This means they should embrace the tendency to actively and directly fight rivals in order to gain market share or strengthen their position to surpass competitors in the same industry. They should be actively responsive towards competitors in the market.

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