

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING PRACTICES AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE ENTERPRISES IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Entrepreneurial marketing practices and competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises in Enugu State was studied to examine the effect of entrepreneurial marketing dimensions on competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises in Enugu state. The study applied descriptive research design with the aid of survey method in obtaining the data needed. The sample size of the study was 356 owners/managers of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state. Descriptive Statistics and multiple regressions analytical tool were used to analyze the data. Findings reveal that proactiveness has no significant relationship with competitive advantage. Opportunity focus has statistically significant relationship with competitive advantage. Risk-taking has no significant relationship with competitive advantage. Innovativeness has statistical significance relationship with competitive advantage. Customer intensity has no statistical significance relationship with competitive advantage; resource leveraging has no statistical significant relationship with competitive advantage. Value creation has significant relationship with competitive advantage. We conclude that SMEs operators should emphasis on innovativeness, opportunity focus, and value creation, this will enable them compete favorably.*

**KEYWORDS:** Entrepreneurial Marketing, Competitive Advantage, Small and Medium Size Enterprises.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

As Small and Medium Enterprises business organizations face more dynamic and fierce competition, the concept of Entrepreneurial marketing is occupying the thoughts of Academics, Marketing practitioners, and entrepreneurs. Today's business environment is changing and market conditions are shaped by chaos, fragmentation, unsureness, complexity, and ambiguity, Instead of using a planned linear and rational response that is conventional marketing approach, also a new entrepreneurially creative alternative is introduced (Fillis, 2010). Therefore, entrepreneurial marketing can be seen as a new paradigm which integrates critical aspects of marketing and entrepreneurship into a comprehensive concept where marketing becomes a process used by firms

to act entrepreneurially (Collinson, 2002). The term entrepreneurial marketing merges into two formally distinct disciplines and is used to describe the marketing processes of firms pursuing opportunities in uncertain market circumstances often under constrained resources (Hunt & Siat, 2013). Entrepreneurial marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders, and that is characterized by innovativeness, risk-taking, pro-activeness, and may be performed without resources currently controlled (Kraus & Fink, 2009). Morris, Schindehutte & LaForge (2002) developed seven core dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing: proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation. These dimensions distinguish entrepreneurial marketing from traditional marketing (Hills, 2010). First five dimensions are entrepreneurial orientation dimensions and last two are marketing orientation dimensions. Entrepreneurial marketing practices have been identified as one of the most important key ingredients for superior performance and global competitiveness in small and medium-sized enterprises (Junde, 2014).

There is a growing evidence to support the idea that over time, firms that are competitively advantaged are those engaged in entrepreneurial marketing, while the marketing approaches used by entrepreneurs reflect this innovative orientation, this may vary in their relationship or effect on business performance (Becherer, 2008). It is critical for small and medium-sized enterprises to understand which entrepreneurial marketing practices are most effective and therefore important to achieve competitive advantage and ultimately for improved performance. To survive and win, a firm has to gain an advantage over its competitors and earn a profit. The firm gains competitive advantage by being better than their competitors at doing valuable things for their customers (Bateman and Snell, 2004). Competitive advantage has been defined in many different ways. For instance, Porter (1985) says that competitive advantage refers to the comparative positional superiority in the marketplace that leads a firm to outperform its rivals. While Rothaermel (2013) defines competitive advantage as the way that a firm formulates and implements a strategy that leads to superior performance relative to other competitors in the same industry. So, competitive advantage is the ability of an organization to add more value for its customers than its rivals, and thus attain a position of relative advantage (Thompson, 2001).

Small and Medium Enterprises play a vital role in the economic development of Nigeria and are known to be the main engine of economic growth and a key factor in promoting private sector development and partnership. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 1999) defines micro enterprises as those having 1-10 employees and small-scale enterprises as those having 11-50 employees and did not bother to talk about the market spread and capital base. Small and medium-size enterprises are also known to introduce innovations and increase production outputs and exports. It is estimated that small and medium-size enterprises contribute between 40-55% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 50-80% of employment generation in Nigeria (Ocheni, 2015). Although SMEs are significant contributors to economic performance in every country, SMEs are less studied than large organizations (Burke & El-Kot, 2014). According to Ackah (2011), SMEs are facing many challenges in their struggle to keep the business intact. They suffer from limited access to financial sources, in addition to lack of focus, lack of good human resources, lack of skills and management techniques. Small and medium-size enterprises also suffer from unfair

government policy, technological barriers, poor infrastructure, and other obstacles. Most SMEs in the country die shortly after their establishment and the few that survive follow suit soon after the aging or physical incapacitation or death of their owners (Ediri, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of each dimension of entrepreneurial marketing on the competitive advantage of SMEs in Enugu State.

### **Statements of the Problems**

The contributions of small and medium-size enterprises in the economic development of both developed and developing nations have always been acknowledged (Aliyu & Mahmood 2014 and Junde, 2014). According to Ediri (2014), small and medium-size enterprises can only maintain such a position when a good number of strategies including the formulation and application of appropriate entrepreneurial marketing practices are put in place at the right time and in the right proportion to exert a positive effect on performance. The change in the competitiveness of the marketing environment has made competition tougher for small and medium-size enterprises. (Olannye & Eromafuru, 2016). The need for an acceptable understanding of entrepreneurial marketing strategies and its applicability to entrepreneurial firms has gradually become an issue of pivotal concern to many scholars, entrepreneurs, and employees of such firms. The lack of adequate attention to entrepreneurial marketing practices such as proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation has reduced competitive edge of small and medium-sized enterprises. Many scholars have examined how small and medium-size enterprise competitive advantage can be enhanced using the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing (Gungor, 2012; Junde, 2014; Ediri 2014), little or none has explained or linked the contributions of each of the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions on the competitive edge of small and medium-size enterprises in Enugu state. Hence, this study is to address the core research question of the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices on the competitive advantage of small and medium-size enterprise in Enugu state, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to assess the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices (proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation) on competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises in Enugu state. Specifically, the study intends to;

- I. Examine the relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.
- II. Assess the relationship between calculated risk-taking and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.
- III. Examine the relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.
- IV. Examine the relationship between opportunity focus and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.
- V. Determine the relationship between resource leveraging and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.
- VI. Examine the relationship between customer intensity and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.

- VII. Assess the relationship between value creation and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state.

### **Research Questions**

- I. What is the relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?
- II. What is the relationship between calculated risk-taking and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?
- III. What is the relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?
- IV. What is the relationship between opportunity focus and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?
- V. What is the relationship between resource leveraging and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?
- VI. What is the relationship between customer intensity and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?
- VII. What is the relationship between value creation and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- I.  $H_{01}$ : Pro-activeness has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state
- II.  $H_{02}$ : Calculated risk-taking has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state
- III.  $H_{03}$ : Innovativeness has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state
- IV.  $H_{04}$ : Opportunity focus has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state
- V.  $H_{05}$ : Resource leveraging has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state
- VI.  $H_{06}$ : Customer intensity has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state
- VII.  $H_{07}$ : Value creation has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state

### **Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on entrepreneurship marketing practices application by small and medium-size enterprise owners in Enugu state. The scope of the study variables for this study includes SMEs competitive advantage as the dependent variable while entrepreneurial marketing practices, the independent variable, is proxied by proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation variables. The study is domicile on entrepreneurship marketing literature. As this study relates to the activities of small and medium enterprises, firms outside the scope of small and medium-sized enterprise definition were eliminated from this study. In order to assess the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices on the competitive advantage of SMEs, efforts were made to see that firms in the sample originates

from the study area and operate on a full-time basis. The study will concentrate on the following SMEs; Bakery, Grocery, Restaurants, Fuel Stations, and the developed questionnaires will be administered to registered owners in Enugu state. Non registered SMEs will not be included in the study. The choice of Enugu state is that little or no research has been carried out on the subject matter. Also, the rate of business competition among small and medium-sized enterprise in the state has prompted the study. The study will be carried out in four months from October 2017 to May, 2018.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is very significant because the study will unveil the effects of entrepreneurship marketing practices on the competitive advantage of SMEs in the study area. It will be a source of reference to scholars and researchers to carry out further research on the relationship between entrepreneurship marketing and small and medium-sized enterprise competitive advantage. Furthermore, it will be a base for managers and policymakers to make a clear decision on the sustainability of the small and medium-sized enterprise. The outcome of the study will enable the small and medium-sized enterprise to understand and focus on implementing marketing practices that can lead their businesses to improved performance. The study will also contribute to the reduction of the high small and medium-sized enterprise failure rates and increase small and medium-sized enterprise long-term performance and survival. The study is also very significant as its outcome will spell out the relevance of marketing and the correct marketing practices on the sustainability of small and medium enterprises. Finally, the outcome of the study will be a guide for the regulatory agencies of small and medium-sized enterprise to make policies that will coordinate and promote the activities of the small and medium-sized enterprise for its survival and growth.

## **LITERATURE/THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING**

### **Entrepreneurial Marketing**

Entrepreneurial marketing merges as two formally distinct disciplines and is used to describe the marketing processes of firms pursuing opportunities in uncertain market circumstances often under constrained resources (Hunt & Siat, 2013). According to Gilmore (2011), the term “entrepreneurial” refers to the overall activities and behavior of entrepreneurs, which includes behavior that is competitive and drives the marketing process. While marketing is seen as a practice that has a formalized structure that requires careful planning process which is informed by market and marketing research to guide the selection of target markets and the composition of a marketing mix with which to position the products and services competitively within the marketplace. (Nwaizugbo & Anukam, 2014). The two distinctive disciplines merged together to provide entrepreneurs with surviving strategy in an uncertain business environment.

The concept of entrepreneurial marketing describe the values, skills, and behaviours of entrepreneur in addressing their problems and finding business opportunities, it represents a different approach to envisaging the business itself, its relationship with the market place and the role of marketing function within the firm or as a strategic entrepreneurial posture or behaviour in

marketing which is represented by an individual/organization (Sabrina, 2010). Furthermore, Beverland and Lockstin (2004) see entrepreneurial marketing as “effectual action” or the adaptation of marketing theory for the unique needs of firms. These effectual actions simultaneously address many issues: opportunity, innovation, risk and resources constraints for such firms, these actions are the task of the individual owners/operator. Morris et al (2002) characterize entrepreneurial marketing as an organizational orientation having seven underlying dimensions. Four of these dimensions: pro-activeness, opportunity-focused, risk-taking and innovation-oriented builds directly on research examining the entrepreneurial orientation of the firm. Entrepreneurial activities, therefore, will result in positive macroeconomic outcomes and can lead to improved performance in established organizations, markets which have enough freedom in entrepreneurial marketing processes can be strategically employed to create superior value for the firm's customers and owners. Excimiery and Mohammed (2013) suggested that entrepreneurial marketing practices are expected to affect both financial and non-financial outcomes.

### **Competitive Advantage**

Firms gain a competitive advantage by being better than their competitors at doing valuable things for their customers (Bateman and Snell, 2004). Competitive advantage has been defined in many different ways. For instance, Porter (1985) asserts that competitive advantage refers to as the comparative positional superiority in the marketplace that leads a firm to outperform its rivals. While Rothaermel (2013) defines competitive advantage as the way that a firm formulates and implements a strategy that leads to superior performance relative to other competitors in the same industry. Thompson, (2001) opined that competitive advantage is the ability of an organization to add more value for its customers than its rivals, and thus attain a position of relative advantage. However, to gain competitive advantage, companies can adopt two strategies, either differentiation of their products or cost leadership so as to develop higher quality products and services or by satisfying customer's needs at a lower cost (Gathenya, 2012; Otieno, 2012). Strong emphasis on service differentiation has been found to lead to higher quality of service (Gebauer, Fischer & Fleisch, 2010). However, for the most part, consumers are unaware of the true cost of production for the products they buy. Instead, they simply have an internal feeling for how much certain products are worth to them. Therefore, it is this customer's perceived value of a good or service that ultimately affects the price that he or she is willing to pay for it. From the foregoing, it makes sense to say that competitive advantage is a developed strategy adopted by a firm to provide additional superior value that will most satisfy consumer needs which will, in turn, give the firm an edge over other competitors.

### **Pro-activeness and Competitive Advantage**

Pro-activity refers to how firms relate to market opportunities by seizing the initiative in the marketplace (Li et al, 2009). Pro-activity is a state of mind and the will largely drive by one's consciousness, to sustain a vision, to fulfill a mission, to attain a challenging goal and to achieve defined objectives (Olannye & Eromafuru, 2016). Small firms to be active in identifying and exploiting business opportunities, they need to be pro-active (Gitau et al., 2016). The pro-active dimension makes a firm to adopt continuous environmental scanning and acts in advance towards change to better serve customers and markets. It is envisioning a future towards which one device the strategic parameters for influencing, impacting and recreating the environment within which to operate in line with that vision. Pro-activeness reflects entrepreneurial willingness to dominate

competitions through a combination of proactive and aggressive moves, e.g. introducing new products or services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand to create change and shape the environment (Olannye et al., 2016). Pro-activeness is basically achievement oriented, emphasizing initiative taking, anticipating, creating change, predicting evolution towards a critical situation and early preparation prior to the occurrence of an impending uncertainty or risk. Pro-activeness reveals self through actions in a formulation of "stated belief" and the implantations of these beliefs (Rosemond, 2012). Pro-active tendency gives a firm the ability to anticipate changes or needs in the market and be among the first to act on them and such a first mover advantage translates into superior performance. Therefore pro-active firms can create first-mover advantages, target premium and market segments and skim the market ahead of competitors. This involves two related marketing actions; pro-activeness consists first of practices by which the firm anticipates challenging situations and second, of the actions taken to manage those events (Olannye, 2016). From an entrepreneurial perspective, pro-activity describes marketing actions through which the firm redefines its external conditions to reduce uncertainty and lessen dependency and vulnerability. Ketii (cited in Mehram and Mortzea, 2013), that proactiveness reflects entrepreneurial willingness to dominate competition through a combination of proactive and aggressive moves, which includes introducing new products or services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demands to create changes and shape environment, in order to outperform competitors.

### **Opportunity Focused and Competitive Advantage**

Entrepreneurial marketing emphasizes on pursuing opportunities regardless of available resource (Olannye et al., 2016). Recognition and pursuit of opportunity are marketing activities critical to a firm success. Market potential is evaluated by the degree of fit that relates to the capabilities and resources of the firm. It is the tendency of the firm to identify the "right" opportunity that determines success (Becherer et al, 2008). Although opportunity may occur randomly, entrepreneurial marketers have the tendency to proactively scan for new opportunities. Innovation and creativity are important tools that enable entrepreneurial firms to transform opportunities into realities (Kilenthong et al, 2010).

According to Becherer et al (2008), opportunity focus of a firm is the ability to select the right opportunity that determines success. Alvarez and Barney (2012) posited that opportunities are seen as objective phenomena that exist independently of the entrepreneur and as such resides in a stream experience external to the entrepreneur awaiting discovery and exploitation. Matsune et al (2002) suggested an organization's market knowledge determines whether innovation is implemented at the right time, under less ideal circumstances. Market knowledge serves as a constraint, preventing the firm from squandering resources in vain. Opportunities requiring substantial resource commitments may be unattainable to smaller owner-operated firms. However, for entrepreneurial firms, the recognition and pursuit of opportunity are more closely aligned with the entrepreneur's individual perceptions (Schindehuth and Morris, 2010). Thus, where others perceive problems, entrepreneurs are more likely to see the potential. Hsieh (cited in Ardichvili, 2003) posited that firms opportunity recognition ability have a positive impact on performance based on the following premises. First, Opportunity recognition reflects the firms' ability to seek innovative solutions to customer problems, which in turn increases customer satisfaction, sales volumes and eventually firm performance. Second, in order to identify new opportunities, firms are constantly on the

lookout for new market needs or to create new market needs or to create new fits between supply and demand (Ardichvili et al, 2003). As a result, market needs will be better served and firm's sales volume will be boosted. Third, opportunity recognition often leads to the birth of new business ideas, product services, and process business model or management techniques. As firms endeavor to pursue these opportunities, then overall problem-solving skills and decision-making capabilities will be enhanced. Furthermore, their abilities to immediately adapt to the complications of the institutional environment will be improved. The availability of opportunities tends to correlate with rates of environmental change, indicating a need for marketers to engage in heightened levels of both actions search and discovery. Further, exploitation of opportunity entails learning and ongoing adaption by marketers before, during and after the actual implementation of an innovative concept (Morris et al., 2002). Opportunities represent unnoticed market positions that are sources of sustainable profit potential. They are derived from market imperfections, where knowledge concerning these imperfections and how to exploit them distinguish entrepreneurial marketing.

### **Innovation and Competitive Advantage**

Innovativeness refers to proactive firms that explore new opportunities rather than just exploiting current strengths and therefore it seems essential to an innovative effort capable of exceeding the customer's expectations (Santos-vijande & Alvavez, 2001). According to Lumpkin and Dess (1996) innovativeness include fostering a spirit of creativity, supporting research and development and experimentation, developing new processes, introducing new product and services and technological leadership. Innovation-oriented marketing actions enable the firm to focus on ideas that lead to new markets, products or processes.

The extent to which a successful organization places innovation in its marketing activities can evolve from the highly innovative new market knowledge. Firms may choose to focus on innovative means of marketing since the firm may not have the resources to meet or maintain industry standards (Carson and Gilmore, 1991). Marcati et al (2008) are of the view that entrepreneurs exhibit a general innovativeness or openness to newness and they also display a specific domain in a study comparing traditional, corporate marketing to entrepreneurial marketing. According to (Olannye et al., 2016) It could be said that, in the case of the entrepreneur, the marketing strategy supersedes traditional marketing theory by the creativity, flexibility and innovation exhibited by the today entrepreneurs. An innovation consists of certain technical knowledge about how things can be done better than the existing state of art (York and Venkataraman, 2010) .Thus being innovative will help firms expand new businesses and sell business opportunities and successfully compete in transition economy (Olannye et al., 2016). This helps firms establish a dominant competitive position and can afford a newcomer firm an opportunity to gain an edge in the market. Firms which are effectively innovators are likely to sustain very well in the dynamic and competitive markets in as such as it's in line with an intuitive understanding of market needs (Stokes, 2000). Innovations and creativity are conditions inherent in the role of entrepreneurship and reflects a firms desire to develop methods that may result in new products, services or technological processes.

According to Olannye et al., (2016) Innovation comes in many different forms; technological innovativeness consists primarily of research and engineering efforts aimed at developing new products and processes. Product-market innovativeness may include market research, product



design and innovations in advertising and promotion. Innovation hence may provide an important resource that contributes to firm's competitive advantage. Innovativeness is a critical determinant of a firm's performance (Cooper, 2000). In entrepreneurial marketing, entrepreneurs tend to be innovation-oriented (that is driven by ideas and intuition rather than customer-oriented), that is driven by assessment of market needs. This innovativeness of entrepreneurial orientation would promote change and creative behaviours, which encourage active exchange of ideas, increase information flows and novelty in new product development. In a study comparing traditional, corporate marketing to entrepreneurial marketing, Daniellas (2012) found that as it relates to the entrepreneur, the marketing strategy supersedes traditional marketing theory by the creativity, flexibility and innovation exhibited by the day-to-day entrepreneurs. Cooper (2000) opined that innovativeness is a critical determinant of business competitive advantage. Vande et al (2009) stated that innovativeness has become a pre-requisite for a firm's competitive advantage and survival. It seems particularly vital to small entrepreneurial firms with limited resources.

### **Customer Intensity and Competitive Advantage**

Firms making effective use of EMPs acknowledge that the reason they are in business is that of current customers. These firms exist to serve customers and to meet explicit and latent customer needs. These firms, however, also have a deep understanding that the product-market-technology space in which they operate is dynamic, and, as a consequence, customers can become bored with current product offerings and are often enticed to switch to newly developed, superior product offerings. Therefore, not only do these firms need to work closely with current customers to ensure products offered remain competitive but also need to constantly seek to identify new customers, new needs to satisfy, and even create new product-market-technology spaces. We also argue that firms that adopt EMPs, because of their high levels of customer intensity, have a superior ability to identify opportunities and possess an in-depth understanding of explicit and latent needs of both current and future customers. Many studies suggested successful organizations are those that place a greater emphasis on customer intensity (Sheth, Sisodia & Sharma 2000; Han, Kim, & Srivastava 1998; Hamel & Prahalad 1994). Spence and Essoussi (2010) confirmed that entrepreneurs need to be aware that their public image may reflect consumers' perceptions of their firm. However, it has also been suggested that extreme customer orientations might inhibit the breakthrough innovations that create markets and disrupt equilibrium since these radical changes are out in front of customers (Deshpande, Farley & Webster, 1993). The dimension of customer intensity builds on what is often viewed as a central driving force of marketing in the organization—a "customer-centric" orientation employing innovative approaches to create, build, and sustain customer relationships.

### **Value creation and Competitive Advantage**

As well as understanding the importance of customers to the long-term survival of the business, firms that adopt EMPs also understand the importance of value creation – that is, the need to provide customers and stakeholders with something of value, even more, valuable than that offered by competitors. Value propositions can be enhanced by either increasing the offering's set of benefits (such as product, service, personal, or image-related benefits) or decreasing the total cost (including monetary, time, energy, and psychic costs) to the customer of the acquisition, use, and disposition of the offering (Kotler, 2003). Again, because of the superior ability to identify and exploit opportunities, we argue that firms that adopt EMPs are better able to identify attractive entrepreneurial opportunities and exploit them by leveraging innovation to enhance the offering's

benefits and/or decrease the offering's costs, resulting in a superior value for the customer. Value creation, central in the definition of entrepreneurial activity, is also integral to the marketing orientation of a firm (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Slater & Narver 1995). While value creation is an essential condition for exchange to occur, successful firms emphasize the value creation activities best suited to their strategic intent within their competitive niche (Miller & Floricel, 2004). While traditional marketing has placed more focus on the transaction and customer relationship, the focal point of entrepreneurial marketing is innovative and is oriented toward value creation (Morris, Schindehutte, & LaForge, 2002). Entrepreneurs achieve better results when they find new ways to create or discover value (Becherer, Finch, & Helms, 2005/6). According to Li, Huang, and Tsai (2009) entrepreneurial orientation is positively related to firm performance. They further assert the knowledge creation process plays a mediating role in the relationship.

### **Resource Leveraging and Competitive Advantage**

We argue that firms that adopt EMPs are not only opportunistic when examining their external environments, but are also opportunistic when examining their internal environments, in this case, their resource bases. Therefore, an EMP firm exhibits a capability in reassigning and leveraging value from resources (either owned or controlled) in order to exploit external opportunities (Stevenson and Gumpert, 1985). Examples of corporations that effectively leveraged their resources in the field study include Siemens AG and Saab, German and Swedish technology conglomerates. Siemens and Saab have cultures that require leveraging the risk of innovation commercialization through business development. In both organizations, if an entrepreneurial initiative fails to attract outside risk capital, then internal support is withdrawn. Siemens and Saab both seek innovations and strategic benefits from the venturing process that they can capture as a minority investor more effectively and efficiently. The dimension of resource leveraging is not simply a matter of effectively using limited resources, but instead a creative synergistic process. In some cases, it is recognizing a resource not seen by others (Morris, Schindehutte, & LaForge, 2002). In SMEs, instead of being constrained by resource limitations, the firm devises an innovative marketing strategy and is thus able to access resources so more can be done with less, often mitigating risk through a greater use of leveraging. Schindehutte and Morris (2001) found successful SMEs were more likely to employ resource leveraging practices such as resource sharing and outsourcing of key functions. Studies found that access to resources increases innovation and risk-taking while resource constraints stifle entrepreneurial efforts (Hamel 2000; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Conversely, studies have found resource constraints led to greater entrepreneurial efforts, suggesting the entrepreneur's perception may be more important than the resource availability (Wiklund & Shepherd 2005; Schindehutte & Morris 2001).

### **Calculated Risk Taking and Competitive Advantage**

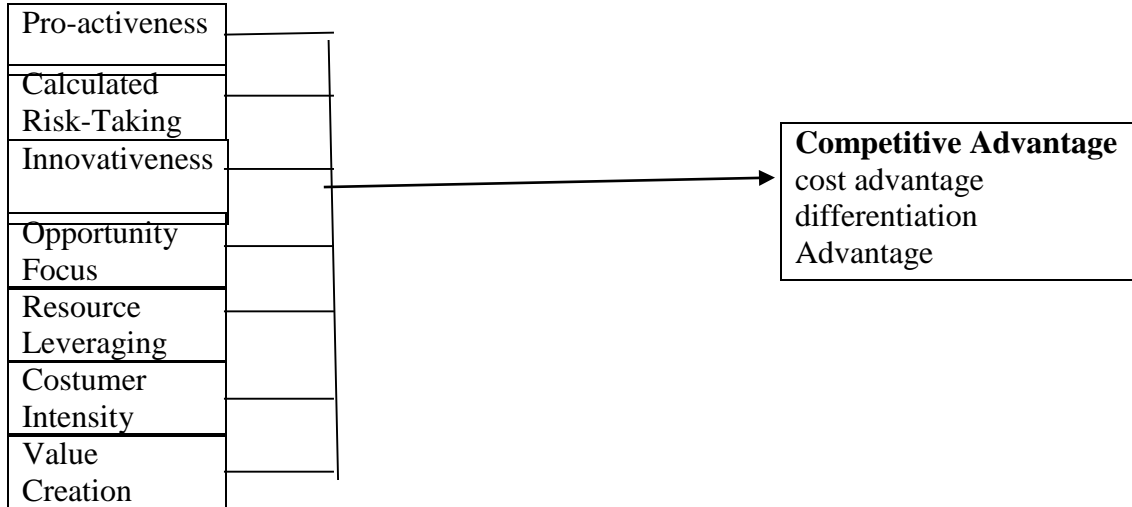
Consistent with the conceptualization of entrepreneurship, we suggest that EMP firms take calculated, rational, measured risks (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Firms that have adopted EMPs are not gamblers but risk accepters who understand that innovation in the current social, technological, and economic environments is inherently uncertain and requires rational betting on long shots. One method for managing risk is to work in alliance with other parties, which these firms believe will both provide complementary capabilities and help shift the risks to other parties. Early studies of risk-taking centered on the premise that entrepreneurs are predisposed to take on risky ventures (d'Ambrose & Muldowney, 1988). As opportunities represent possible gains, the

pursuit of that gain must be tempered by the potential of loss through miscalculated efforts. Within an entrepreneurial framework, risk-taking is not only the willingness to take a chance on an opportunity; it is the ability of the organization to use calculated actions to mitigate the risk inherent in opportunity pursuit. Owner-operator risk-taking attitudes play a crucial role in determining the actions a firm undertakes, with entrepreneurs viewing risk-taking as simply part of their job (Mullins & Forlani, 2005). Dushnitsky (2010) characterized entrepreneurs as optimistic individuals who consciously pursue their goals. He agreed too that these goals may often be self-serving.

While a firm’s bold market-breaking actions might be viewed as high risk, entrepreneurs view those actions as well within their capabilities and perceive less risk than others. Rather than having a higher propensity for undertaking risky ventures, entrepreneurs instead have a lower level of risk perception (Palich & Bagby, 1995). In a differing approach to risk-taking, an SME might choose a more incremental process and take actions to pursue a series of smaller, less risky outcomes (Venkatraman, 1989; Dickson & Giglierano, 1986). In their 2010 study of entrepreneurial persistence, Gompers, Kovner, Lerner, and Scharfstein found entrepreneurs with a record of past success are tenacious in selecting the right industry and the right time to start new ventures. They agree to entrepreneurs who demonstrate market timing skills are more likely to outperform industry peers.

**Entrepreneurial Marketing Practice**

**Competitive Advantage**



**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**

**The conceptual framework of the study**

**Source;** Morris, M. H., Schindehutte, M. & LaForge, R.W. (2002). Entrepreneurial Marketing: A Construct for Integrating Emerging Entrepreneurship and Marketing Perspectives, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 10(4), 1–19.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Resource-Based View (RBV)**

The Resource-Based View which was first coined by Birger Wernerfelt in 1984 (Yahya, 2014) attempts an explanation of the relationship between the firm resources and sustenance of modest advantage of superior firm performance (Ringim, 2012) and provides a theoretical ground for the assessment of the firm's specific factors that affect their performance and if any of these factors is lacking the performance of the firm will be affected (Aliyu, 2014). It describes a firm as a unique bundle of tangible and intangible resources (assets, capabilities, competencies, organizational processes, firm attributes, information and knowledge and so forth) that are controlled by the firm (Barney, 1991). These resources enable a firm to implement strategies designed to improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991). The resource-based view suggests that valuable firm resources are usually scarce, imperfectly imitable and lacking in direct substitutes. A firm's resource must have four attributes: 1) it must be valuable; 2) it must be rare among a firm's current and prospective competition; 3) it must be imperfectly imitable, and 4) it cannot be substituted for strategically equivalent resource (Barney 1991).

According to the Resource-Based View theory, organizations can have the competitive advantage through the development of resources that are peculiar and diversely distributed (Aliyu & Mahmoud, 2014). The RBV does not have a single accepted definition, hence, the term resources and capabilities are used interchangeably (Aliyu, 2014). It holds much promise as a framework for understanding strategic marketing issues. Similarly, understanding a firm's resource-base is central to effective positioning.

### **Resource-Advantage Theory (R-A)**

It is important to provide a theoretical foundation for entrepreneurial marketing. Although EM fits with a number of theoretical frameworks, it is especially consistent with resource-advantage (R-A) theory (Hunt, 2000). Resource-Advantage Theory is an evolutionary, process theory of competition in which each firm in an industry is a unique entity in time and space as a result of its history (Almansour, (2012). The theory defines resources broadly to include such phenomena as organizational culture, knowledge, and competencies and argues that many of these non-economic resources are replicable rather than scarce (Aliyu, 2014). It is a theory that clearly allows both for conventional approaches to marketing and for entrepreneurial marketing. Consistent with the dynamics of competition under R-A theory, marketing can facilitate the ability of firms to create new resources and greatly enhance the productivity of current resources (a) through the various leveraging approaches mentioned earlier and (b) by championing innovation in the form of new combinations of resources. Sustainable innovation lies at the heart of the R-A theory of competition, and this implies a role for marketing in providing both leadership and support for an innovation portfolio within the firm (Aliyu, 2014). Such a portfolio includes an array of product, service and process innovations reflecting different degrees of innovativeness and risk. Further, the ongoing seeking of new markets in which the firm's resources provide comparative advantage would be a core role for marketing in the context of R-A theory. Moreover, under R-A theory, firms must learn and then adjust when their resource portfolios result in positions of competitive disadvantage. It would seem that, in such circumstances, a firm must be able to exhibit strategic

flexibility, again, justifying marketing role as a conduit for enhancing such flexibility (Aliyu, 2014).

Competition is also defined in R-A theory as a knowledge discovery process (Aliyu, 2014). The competitive interplay of firms results in marketplace positions that reflect the relative efficiency and effectiveness of each entrant, which in turn allows firms in disadvantaged positions to learn where they need to acquire additional resources or to use existing resources more efficiently/effectively. The firms, therefore, are motivated to neutralize and/or leapfrog advantaged competitors by better managing existing resources and/or by acquisition, imitation, substitution, or major innovation. It is clear that all the performance variables in the study have a direct link to the theories as their success or failure is directly a function of availability and management of resources.

Although entrepreneurial marketing fits with a number of theoretical foundations, it is especially consistent with the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory of the firm and the Resource-Advantage (R-A) theory (Aliyu, 2014). The two theories were used to underpin this study with a major focus on how a firm resource or knowledge develops and affects its performance (Kanyabi & Devi, 2012). The decision to use more than one theoretical framework in this study is premised on ensuring that any weakness that may emanate from any of the theories used, it will be covered by the strength of the other theory (Igbe, 2014). Similar research studies including Babajide, (2011) Ringim, (2012), Aliyu, (2014), Yahya, (2014) etc, all used two theories in their studies for the same reason.

In view of this, the two theories provide a suitable framework for constructs formation to measure the effect of firm's resource characteristics on the firm's competitive advantage. This theory has been adopted by numerous researchers' constructs on entrepreneurial marketing (Hatak *et al.*, 2013; Hisrich, 2012; Morris *et al.*, 2002; Aliyu, 2014; Yahya, 2014). Hence, the need for the current study to adopt the two theories.

### **Empirical Review**

**Mohammed & Rusinah (2017)** in their study, the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on competitive advantage moderated by financing support in SMEs in Iraq. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage (CMA) and to investigate the moderated role of financial support (FNC) between the influences of entrepreneurial orientations on CMA. The study adopted a quantitative approach using survey instruments. The used sample size of 680 from a total manager population in 3526 SMEs working in Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) in Iraq. The total number of usable questionnaires was 580. Structural equation modeling was employed to examine the relationship between the variables. The statistical result showed that entrepreneurial orientations significantly influenced on CMA. The results also highlight that FNC had a moderated role in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and CMA in SMEs in Iraqi KRG.

**Olannye & Eromafuru (2016)** in their study, the dimension of entrepreneurial marketing on the performance of fast food restaurants in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. The study examined the effect of entrepreneurial marketing on the performance of fast food restaurants in Asaba, Delta State.

The study applied survey research design method and sample objects were 160 staff and customers of some selected Fast Food Restaurants in Asaba, Delta State. They used 20-item validated structured questionnaire served as the research instrument. The correlation and multiple regression analysis were used as major analytical tools. The findings revealed that entrepreneurial proactiveness, entrepreneurial innovation, and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition as indicators of entrepreneurial marketing exhibited a significant positive effect on competitive advantage. The study concluded that entrepreneurial innovation determined the development of new markets; products or processes which help firms establish an edge over competitors. They agree that entrepreneurial innovation is pertinent in gaining competitive advantage. The study, therefore, recommends that firms should display a general innovativeness or openness to newness, and a specific predisposition to be among the first to adopt innovation within a specific domain. Being innovation focused, allows firms to concentrate on new ideas that lead to new markets, products and processes. The study established that entrepreneurial marketing is a multidimensional construct whose aspects have a direct effect on competitive advantage in the fast food restaurants.

**KAMAU (2016)** studied the influence of entrepreneurial marketing orientation on competitive advantage among mobile service providers in Kenya. The research aimed at determining the influence of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) on competitive advantage (CA) among mobile service providers (MSPs) in Kenya. It was based on a population of about 30.4 million MSPs, with sample size  $n=291$  obtained from a systematic random sample of customers visiting MSP's customer service centers in Nairobi on a cross-sectional survey. The research design was explanatory with a mixed research method including both quantitative and qualitative items in questionnaires. Four explanatory variables (entrepreneurial orientation (EO), market orientation (MO); strategic orientation (SO) and resource leveraging (RL) were adopted from reviewed literature to develop a conceptual framework on EM as a means to develop a marketing function that is alert to opportunities for creating, promoting, and delivering value to consumers so as to cause favourable CA to the MSP. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS version 23.0 and reported using descriptive and inferential statistics. The correlation coefficient was used to determine any relationship between the research variables while multiple linear regressions models were used to describe the nature of these relationships. He found that except for resource leveraging, all the hypothesized explanatory variables had a significant contribution to competitive advantage ( $p=0.05$ ). He concludes that the phenomenon of skewed competitive advantage among the MSPs in Kenya was due to the different EM orientation of the firms. Based on the findings obtained, the study recommends that CAK should focus on encouraging the MSPs to adopt EM instead of concentrating on price controls of services. It also recommends that the out-competed MSPs should focus more on creating, promoting, and deliver superior value to their consumers by being innovative, pro-active and taking necessary risks to exploit potential opportunities instead of price-wars.

**HANMAIKYUR (2016)** studied the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. The study investigated the effect of Entrepreneurial Marketing practices on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue state, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was put in place for the study. The unit of analysis was organizations while the owner/managers of SMEs were the respondents. Systematic, simple

random and snowball sampling techniques were employed to collect the needed data for the study. A sample size of 401 SMEs covering all sectors that exist in the study area was drawn from a population of 1101 SMEs. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to empirically and statistically analyze the data collected for the study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Performance variables include Return on Investment, Customer Satisfaction, Market share and Sales Growth. The findings of the study revealed that Entrepreneurial marketing practices made up of Customer Relationship Management with a p-value of 0.012, Market segmentation with 0.038, Quality with 0.026 and Market Promotion 0.031 have significant positive effect on SMEs performance, while cooperation with 0.002 was not found to be a predictor of SME performance in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. The study found that marketing practices have a positive effect on the performance of SMEs in the study area. The study recommended among others that SMEs managers and operators should always employ appropriate marketing practices for their firms. They should also regularly and effectively evaluate the marketing practices employed to ensure they are positively impacting on their firm's performance.

**Nwaizugbo & Anukam (2014)** in their study, assessment of entrepreneurial marketing practices among small and medium scale enterprises in Imo State Nigeria: prospects and challenges. The study seeks to explore with empirical evidence the extent of overlap, similarities, and dissimilarities between entrepreneurial practices and the marketing concepts among Small to Medium size Enterprises (SMEs) in Owerri, Nigeria. It inquires and assesses approaches to marketing practices entrepreneurs apply. They employed Primary data collection tools consisting of structured instruments for personal interviews and guide for focused-group discussion (FGD) and the questionnaire was used to collect survey data. Secondary data were sourced from firms' records, periodicals, and related literature. The study through convenient sample examined twenty (20) SMEs and found that traditional marketing is structured and its framework requires certain conditions to thrive-formal planning and theoretical structures. Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) improvises and does not seek for a perfect condition to grow a firm. Thus, the highlights of the interface between entrepreneurship and marketing as discussed in the findings on the areas of differences, similarities, overlap, and collaboration will give practitioners, academics and scholars greater synergetic leverage over unstable marketplace in the application of marketing and entrepreneurial processes for greater results.

## METHODOLOGY

A good research should have a careful sampling, precise measurement, and sophisticated design and analysis in the test of hypotheses derived from tentative general laws (Beri, 2006). From the above, the study will use descriptive research design with the aid of survey method in obtaining the needed data. The choice of the survey method is consistent with Hair, Money, and Samuel & Pages' (2007) submission that such a method is usually interested in the assessment of the characteristics of the population of study. The population of the study will be owners/managers of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state. According to [businesslist.con.ng](http://businesslist.con.ng) (2017), the registered entrepreneurs in Enugu state is 3,252. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane (1994), and the sample size was 356 business owners/managers in Enugu state. The study

employed quota sampling and the aim was to ensure that respondents from the various demographic characteristics were involved in the sample. Descriptive Statistics was used to analyze the bio-data of the respondents and questionnaire response while multiple regressions analyzes was used to test the hypotheses using SPSS version 20.0.

## RESULTS AND FINDING

**Table, 1 Questionnaire Distribution and Return Rate**

	No. Distributed	No. Returned	% Returned	No. Not Returned	% Not Returned
<b>Respondents</b>	356	347	97%	9	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3%</b>

As shown in Table 1, questionnaire distribution demonstrates an approximately 97% response rate. The researcher was able to gather 347 out of the 356 distributed to the various family businesses and these formed the nucleus of the data analysis

### Data Analysis

#### Analysis Demographic Questions

In order to achieve the main purpose of this study, the researcher found it useful to find out the general information of the respondents. The general information of the respondents included gender, age, marital status, and education qualification.

**TABLE 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender:	Male	298	85.9	85.9	85.9
	Female	49	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	100.1	
Age:	20-30 years	10	2.9	2.9	2.9
	30-40 years	135	38.9	38.9	41.8
	40-50 years	98	28.2	28.2	70
	50 and above	104	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	347	100	100	
Marital Status:	Single	35	10.1	10.1	10.1
	Married	290	83.6	83.6	93.7
	Divorced	22	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	347	100	100	
Educational Qualification:	WEAC	90	25.9	25.9	25.9
	First Degree	200	57.6	57.6	83.6
	Masters Degree	45	13.0	13.0	96.5
	PhD	12	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	347	100	100	



The gender of the respondents was studied in order to ascertain the pattern of distribution of the respondents according to their gender. From the demographic characteristics of respondents, it is evident that male participants out-numbered their female counterparts. As many as 298 (85.9.6%) who participated in the study were males. While the female participants were 49 representing (14.1%).

The age of the respondents shows that the participants are mature enough to give reasonable information to the research questions. The result reveals that only 10 of the respondents are in the bracket of 20-30 years, representing (2.9%). 135 respondents are between the ages of 30-40years representing (38.9%). 98 and 104 are between the ages of 40 to 50 years and above representing (28.2%) and (30%) respectively.

From the table 2 above it indicate that 35(10.1%) of the respondents are single, while 290(83.6%) are married. 22 of the respondents representing (6.3%) are a divorcee.

From the findings, the majority of the respondents had attained academic qualifications commensurate with their job position implying that the family businesses are led and managed by professionals. The result shows that 90, 200, 45, and 12 are holders of WEAC, First Degree, Masters Degree and Ph.D. qualification respectively. Representing (25.9%), (57.6%), (13.0%), (3.5%) respectively.

### Analysis of Research Questions

**Table: 3. The relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my company.	156	45.0	102	29.4	12	3.5	26	7.5	51	14.7	347
2	I excel at identifying opportunities for my company.	119	34.3	150	43.2	15	4.3	25	7.2	38	11.0	374
3	I am great at turning problems at my company into opportunities.	186	53.6	99	28.5	8	2.3	29	8.4	25	7.2	347
4	When it comes to my company, I am more action-oriented than reaction oriented	115	33.1	179	51.6	9	2.6	21	6.1	23	6.6	347

Table: 3. above shows that 156(45%) and 102(29.4%) respondents agreed with the statement I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my company and 12(3.5%) were neutral while 26(7.5%) and 51(14.7%) totally disagree with the statement. However, the statement on I excel at identifying opportunities for my company, 119(34.3%) and 150(43.2%) respondent supported the statement. 15(4.3%) were indifference while 25(7.5%) and 38(11%) respondent did not agree with the statement. The statement on I am great at turning problems at my company into opportunities, while 186(53.6%) and 99(28.5%) strongly agreed 29(8.4%) and 25(7.2%) disagreed on the statement and 6(2.3%) were indifference. On the statement, when it comes to my company, I am more action-oriented than reaction oriented 15(33.1%) and 179(51.6%) supported the statement while 21(6.1%) and 23(6.6%) disagrees with the statement but 8(2.6%) were indifference.

**Table: 4 The relationship between opportunity focus and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	My management approach looks beyond current customers and markets for more opportunities for our company.	121	34.9	70	20.2	113	32.6	15	4.3	28	8.1	347
2	I am good at recognizing and pursuing opportunities for my company.	140	40.3	159	45.8	10	2.9	27	7.8	11	3.2	374
3	I would characterize my company as opportunity driven.	137	39.5	159	45.8	16	4.6	20	5.8	15	4.3	347
4	My company is always looking for new opportunities.	214	61.7	105	30.3	2	.6	16	4.6	10	2.9	347

The table above shows that respondents strongly agreed on the statement my management approach looks beyond current customers and markets for more opportunities for our company 121(34.9%) and 70(20.2%) respectively while 15(4.3%), 28(8.1%) respondents disagree with the statement, 113(32.6%) respondents were indifferent. Again, 140(40.3%) and 159(45.8%) respondents agreed on the statement I am good at recognizing and pursuing opportunities for my company, 10(2.9%) were indecisive, however, 27(7.8%) and 11(3.2%) disagreed with the assertion. I would characterize my company as opportunity driven was supported by 137(39.5%) and 159(45.8%) respondents respectively while 20(5.8%) and 15(4.3%) respondents did not support the statement but 16(4.6%) respondents were neutral. The statement on my company is always looking for new opportunities was supported by 214(61.7%) and 105(30.3%) respondents respectively. 16(4.6%) and 10(2.9%) disagree with the assertion while 2(.6%) respondent were neutral.

**Table: 5 The relationship between calculated risk-taking and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	My business would rather accept a risk to pursue an opportunity than miss it altogether.	121	34.9	140	40.3	28	8.1	30	8.6	28	8.1	347
2	My business is willing to take risks when we think it will benefit the company.	155	44.7	139	40.1	12	3.5	21	6.1	20	5.8	374
3	My company would not be considered gamblers, but we do take risks.	119	34.3	185	53.3	18	5.2	15	4.3	10	2.9	347
4	My company pursues new opportunities despite the risk involved	159	45.8	137	39.5	20	5.8	15	4.3	16	4.6	347

Table 5. shows that respondents supported the statement My business would rather accept a risk to pursue an opportunity than miss it altogether 121(34.9%) and 140(40.3%) respectively while 30(8.6%) and 28(8.1%) disprove the statement but 28(8.1%) respondent were indifferent

.155(44.7%) and 139(40.1%) respondents agreed on the statement my business is willing to take risks when we think it will benefit the company while 21(6.1%) and 20(5.8%) did not agree with the statement, however, 12(6.1%) respondent were indifferent On the statement my company would not be considered gamblers, but we do take risk was strongly supported by 119(34.3%) and 185(53.3%)respondent respectively while 15(4.3%)and 10(2.9%) did not support it, but 18(5.2%) respondents were neutral. Again, 159(4.5.8%) and 137(39.5%) respondents agreed on the statement my company pursues new opportunities despite the risk involved but 15(4.3%) and 16(4.6%) did not support the assertion while 20(5.8%) respondents were neutral.

**Table: 6 The relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	My company tries to use innovative approaches if it will help them get the job done more efficiently.	180	51.9	105	30.3	18	5.2	29	8.4	15	4.3	347
2	Being innovative is a competitive advantage for my company	119	34.3	175	50.4	9	2.6	21	6.1	23	6.6	374
3	My company tends to be more innovative than most of my competitors.	124	35.7	150	43.2	20	5.8	30	8.6	23	6.6	347
4	My company's top management creates an atmosphere that encourages creativity and innovativeness.	130	37.5	159	45.8	16	4.6	20	5.8	22	6.3	347

The table above show that 180(51.9%) and 105(30.3%) respondents agreed on the statement my company tries to use innovative approaches if it will help them get the job done more efficiently while 29(8.4%) and 15(4.3%) respondents did not support the statement but 18(5.2%) were indifferent. Being innovative is a competitive advantage for my company, 119(34.3%) and 175(50.4%) respondents supported the assertion while 21(6.1%) and 23(6.6%) did not but 9(2.6%) respondents were indecisive. Again the statement my company tends to be more innovative than most of my competitors was agreed by 124(35.7%) and 150(43.2%) respondents. 30(8.6%) and 23(6.6%) did not support the assertion while 20(5.8%) respondents were indifferent. The statement my company's top management creates an atmosphere that encourages creativity and innovativeness were agreed by 130(37.5%) and 159(45.8%) respondents respectively but 16(4.6%) were indifferent but 20(5.8%) and 22(6.3%) did not agree with the assertion.

**Table: 7 The relationship between customer intensity and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	I frequently measure my company's customer satisfaction.	123	35.4	140	40.3	26	7.5	30	8.6	28	8.1	347
2	I expect that all employees in our firm recognize the importance of satisfying our customers.	113	32.6	173	49.9	8	2.3	29	8.4	24	6.9	374
3	My business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction.	179	51.6	96	27.7	18	5.2	29	8.4	25	7.2	347
4	I pay close attention to after-sales service.	139	40.1	115	33.1	26	7.5	39	11.2	28	8.1	347

Table 7. Depicts that respondents 123(35.4%) and 140(40.3%) respectively agreed on the statement I frequently measure my company's customer satisfaction but 30(8.6%) and 28(8.1%) did not support the assertion but 26(7.5%) were indifferent. On the statement I expect that all employees in our firm recognize the importance of satisfying our customers 113(32.6%) and 173(49.9%) respondents supported the statement while 29(8.4%) and 24(6.9%) respondents did not agree with the statement. Again, the statement my business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction was supported by 179(51.6%) and 96(27.7%) respondents agreed with the assertion but 29(8.4%) and 25(7.2%) did not support the assertion while 18(5.2%) respondents were indifferent. The assertion I pay close attention to after-sales service was supported by 139(40.1%) and 115(33.1%) respondents but 39(11.2%) and 28(8.1%) did not agree with the assertion while 26(7.5%) respondents were indecisive.

**Table: 8 The relationship between resource leveraging and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	I have used networking and/or an exchange of favors to our advantage in my company.	124	35.7	147	42.4	20	5.8	33	9.5	23	6.6	347
2	I have been able to leverage our resources by bartering or sharing.	119	34.3	150	43.2	19	5.5	25	7.2	34	9.8	374
3	People who know me well would say that I am persistent, even tenacious, in overcoming obstacles.	130	37.5	157	45.2	18	5.2	20	5.8	22	6.3	347
4	I use creative approaches to make things happen.	137	39.5	149	42.9	16	4.6	30	8.6	15	4.3	347

Table 8 shows how respondents agreed on the statement I have used networking and/or an exchange of favors to our advantage in my company 124(35.7%) and 147(42.4%) agreed, 33(9.5%) and 23(6.6%) respondents did not agree while 20(5.8%) respondents were indifferent. Furthermore, 119(34.3%) and 150(43.2%) respondents supported this statement I have been able to leverage our resources by bartering or sharing while 25(7.2%) and 34(9.8%) did not agree with the assertion, 19(5.5%) were neutral. Furthermore, 130(37.5%) and 157(45.2%) respondents

agreed that People who know me well would say that I am persistent, even tenacious, in overcoming obstacles while 20(5.8%) and 22(6.3%) did not agree with the assertion, meanwhile, 18(5.2%) neither agree nor disagree. The statement I use creative approaches to make things happen was supported by 137(39.5%) and 149(42.9%) respondents while 30(8.6%) and 15(4.3%) respondents did not support the assertion, meanwhile, 16(4.6%) respondents were indifference.

**Table: 9 The relationship between value creation and competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprise in Enugu state?**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	I make sure that my company creates value for consumers with excellent customer service.	153	44.1	138	39.8	12	3.5	24	6.9	20	5.8	347
2	I make sure that my company does an excellent job of creating value for customers.	183	52.7	89	25.6	21	6.1	29	8.4	25	7.2	374
3	I make sure my company's pricing structure is designed to reflect value created for customers.	146	42.1	112	32.3	12	3.5	26	7.5	51	14.7	347
4	I integrate business functions in my company to better serve the target market needs.	123	35.4	144	41.5	21	6.1	25	7.2	34	9.8	347

Table 9. shows the response of the respondents on the questions asked them. 153(44.1%) and 138(39.8%) of respondents agreed with the statement I make sure that my company creates value for consumers with excellent customer service but 24(6.9%) and 20(5.8%) did not support the assertion while 12(3.5%) respondents were indifference. The statement I make sure that my company does an excellent job of creating value for customers was supported by 183(52.7%) and 89(25.6%) respondents while 29(8.4%) and 25(7.2%) respondents did not support it and 21(3.5%) were not sure of the answer to give. 146(42.1%) and 112(32.3%) respondents agreed, and 26(7.5%) and 51(14.7%) respondents did not agree while 12(3.5%) were indecisive on the statement that I make sure my company's pricing structure is designed to reflect value created for customers. Furthermore, 123(35.4%) and 144(41.5%) respondents agreed with the statement that I integrate business functions in my company to better serve the target market needs but 25(7.2%) and 34(9.8%) respondents did not agree while 21(6.1%) respondents were undecided.

**Table: 10 Responses on Compleitive Advantage**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Total
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Our company works towards being the best in the market	159	45.8	137	39.5	20	5.8	15	4.3	16	4.6	347
2	The product we offer helps us to be number one	119	34.3	175	50.4	9	2.6	21	6.1	23	6.6	374
3	Customer care we provide gives us competitive edge	113	32.6	173	49.9	8	2.3	29	8.4	24	6.9	347
4	New ideas we offer helps to project our firm in good light	153	44.1	138	39.8	12	3.5	24	6.9	20	5.8	347

Table 10 shows the responses on the statement our company works towards being the best in the market, 159(45.8%) and 137(39.5%) respondents supported the statement while 15(4.3%) and 16(4.6%) disagree with the statement meanwhile 20(5.8%) respondents were indecisive. The statement, the product we offer helps us to be number one was supported by 110(34.3%) and 175(50.4%) respondents while 21(6.1%) and 23(6.6%) did not agree with the assertion however, 9(2.6%) respondents were indifference. Furthermore, the statement customer care we provide gives us competitive edge was agreed with 113(32.6%) and 173(49.9%) respondents while 29(8.4%) and 24(6.9%) respondents did not support the statement, 8(2.3%) respondents were indecisive. Again, the assertion, new ideas we offer helps to project our firm in good light was supported by 153(44.1%) and 138(39.8%) respondents while 24(6.9%) and 20(5.8%) respondents did not support the statement but 12(3.5%) respondents were indecisive.

**TABLE: 11. Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Proactiveness1	347	2.1758	1.44282
Proactiveness2	347	2.1729	1.27858
Proactiveness3	347	1.8703	1.23668
Proactiveness4	347	2.0144	1.09509
Opportunityfocused1	347	2.3055	1.21838
Opportunityfocused2	347	1.8761	1.00816
Opportunityfocused3	347	1.8963	1.02606
Opportunityfocused4	347	1.5677	.93913
Risktaking1	347	2.1470	1.21824
Risktaking2	347	1.8818	1.10980
Risktaking3	347	1.8818	.90304
Risktaking4	347	1.8242	1.03728
Innovativeness1	347	1.8300	1.12636
Innovativeness2	347	2.0029	1.10044
Innovativeness3	347	2.0720	1.16450
Innovativeness4	347	1.9769	1.10675
CustomerIntencity1	347	2.1354	1.21958
CustomerIntencity2	347	2.0720	1.14195
CustomerIntencity3	347	1.9193	1.24434
CustomerIntencity4	347	2.1412	1.27909
ResourceLeveraging1	347	2.0893	1.17811
ResourceLeveraging2	347	2.1499	1.24488
ResourceLeveraging3	347	1.9827	1.10947
ResourceLeveraging4	347	1.9539	1.08492
ValueCreation1	347	1.9049	1.12494
ValueCreation2	347	1.9164	1.25225
ValueCreation3	347	2.2046	1.42893
ValueCreation4	347	2.1441	1.25251
CompetitiveAdvantage1	347	1.8242	1.03728
CompetitiveAdvantage2	347	2.0029	1.10044
CompetitiveAdvantage3	347	2.0720	1.14195
CompetitiveAdvantage4	347	1.9049	1.12494
Valid N (listwise)	347		

The descriptive statistics shows that majority of the variables have mean above 2 which show positive response and agreement with the dimensions of the research model. Many of the items however have standard deviations above one which is an indication of variation in the opinions of the respondents.

### Hypotheses Testing

To test the hypotheses, multiple linear regressions were used to test the hypotheses and the results are shown below:

**TABLE 12 Hypotheses Testing**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.975 <sup>a</sup>	.951	.950	.23252

a. Predictors: (Constant), Value Creation, Opportunity focused, Proactiveness, Innovativeness, Resource Leveraging, Risk taking, Customer Intensity

The model summary of the regression analysis shows that the coefficient of multiple correlation R is .975, which is a strong correlation. The coefficient of multiple determination  $R^2$  is .951, while the adjusted  $R^2$  which slightly adjusts the  $R^2$  downwards taking care of error is .950. which means that 95.1% and 95% of variations in competitive advantage are accounted for by the seven independent variables.

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

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	353.949	7	50.564	935.266	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	18.328	339	.054		
	Total	372.277	346			

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage

b. Predictors: (Constant), Value Creation, Opportunity focused, Proactiveness, Innovativeness, Resource Leveraging, Risk taking, Customer Intensity

The regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) which has F-value of 935.266 and is highly statistically significant at .000 below the .01 margin of error. This implies that the research model is a good-fit in explaining the effect of entrepreneurial marketing practices on competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises.

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

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.076	.028		2.724	.007
	Proactiveness	-.029	.030	-.040	-.958	.339
	Opportunity focused	.138	.030	.162	4.557	.000
	Risk taking	-.058	.121	-.068	-.482	.630
	Innovativeness	.149	.044	.161	3.403	.001
	Customer Intensity	.110	.131	.129	.838	.403
	Resource Leveraging	-.133	.067	-.151	-1.972	.049
	Value Creation	.729	.046	.791	15.733	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage

The coefficient regression analysis shows that proactiveness with ( $\beta=-.040$ ) this shows that it has no significance hence, hypothesis one was accepted in the null form. Opportunity focused shows ( $\beta=.162$ ) and it is significant at 0.000 hence, hypothesis two was rejected in the null form. Risk taking with ( $\beta=-.068$ ) and it has no significance, base on that hypothesis three was accepted in the null form. Innovativeness has ( $\beta=.161$ ) which is significant at 0.001 hence, hypothesis four was accepted in the alternate form. Customer intensity has ( $\beta=.129$ ) and no significance hence, hypothesis five was accepted in the null form. Resource leveraging has ( $\beta=-.151$ ) and no significant at, hence, hypothesis six was accepted in null form. Value Creation has ( $\beta=.791$ ) and significant at 0.000 hence, hypothesis seven was rejected in null form.

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that proactiveness has no significant relationship with the competitive advantage of SMEs in Enugu state ( $\beta=-.040$ ,  $t= -.958$ ,  $p<.339$ ). This is opposite of the findings of Lumpkin and Dess (1996) which state that proactiveness shows a strong positive relationship with competitive advantage. This implies that Entrepreneurial proactiveness is not a significant factor critical to create an edge over competitors.

Furthermore, the result of the regression analysis revealed that opportunity focused has statistically significant relationship with competitive advantage ( $\beta=.162$ ,  $t=4.557$ ,  $p<.000$ ). This is in agreement with Gungor et al (2012) findings which stated that opportunities engender unnoticed market positions, as sources of sustainable profit potential. In order to identify new opportunities, firms are constantly on the lookout for new market needs or to create new fits between supply and demand (Ardichvili et al, 2003).

The result of regression analysis shows that risk- taking has no significant relationship with competitive advantage ( $\beta=-.068$ ,  $t=-.482$ ,  $p<.630$ ). The study does not support the findings of Gomper (2010) which state that risk-taking is essential element in competitive advantage,



believing that entrepreneurs who demonstrate market timing skills are more likely to outperform industry peers.

The analysis shows that innovativeness has statistical significance relationship with competitive advantage ( $\beta=.161$ ,  $t=3.403$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The finding is supported by the views of Stokes (2000) that entrepreneurial marketing concept is focused on innovations and the development of new ideas in that reflect an intuitive understanding of market needs, and it can create a substantial competitive advantage for firms that proactively search for innovative options for their customers (Becherer et al, 2006).

Customer Intensity in our study was not found to be statistically significant to competitive advantage ( $\beta=.129$ ,  $t=.838$ ,  $p<.403$ ). the finding did not support the assertion of Spence and Essoussi (2010) which confirmed that entrepreneurs need to be aware that their public image may reflect consumers' perceptions of their firm rather, it however, tend to agree that extreme customer orientations might inhibit the breakthrough innovations that create markets and disrupt equilibrium since these radical changes are out in front of customers (Deshpande, Farley & Webster, 1993).

The current study revealed that resource leveraging has no statistical significant relationship with competitive advantage ( $\beta=-.151$ ,  $t=-1.972$ ,  $p<.049$ ). This result is not supportive to the study of (Hamel 2000; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990) which found that access to resources increases innovation and risk-taking while resource constraints stifle entrepreneurial efforts.

This study revealed that value creation has a significant relationship with competitive advantage ( $\beta=.791$ ,  $t=15.733$ ,  $p<.000$ ). This finding is supported by the assertion of (Miller & Floricel, 2004) which state that value creation is an essential condition for exchange to occur, successful firms emphasize the value creation activities best suited to their strategic intent within their competitive niche. Furthermore, (Becherer, Finch, & Helms, 2006) believe that Entrepreneurs achieve better results when they find new ways to create or discover value

### **Implication to Research and Practice**

Base on the findings of the analysis, the following recommendations were made in relation to entrepreneurial marketing and SMEs competitive advantage.

To gain competitive advantage, SMEs operators should exhibit innovativeness which is the spirit of willingness to create and develop quality products through research and development. This will enable them present better products than the competitors. Quality product remains the best option in the market environment, therefore SMEs should always present good quality product to have competitive edge over rivals.

Opportunity focused often leads to the birth of new business ideas, product services, and process business model or management techniques. SMEs operators should identify opportunities untapped in the industry; provide products where they are needed and be the first to tap into unused resources, this will enable them compete favorably.

We recommend that SMEs operators should leverage on available resources in order to provide quality products to customers this will ensure competitive advantage

To provide quality products and expand market share, it is recommended that SMEs operators should always emphasis on value creation to enable them compete favorably.

Finally, we recommend that SMEs operators should focus less on proactiveness, risk- taking, customer intensity, and resource leveraging to avoid wasted effort. However, SMEs should focus more on innovativeness, opportunity focus, and value creation, it will help compete favorably.

## CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study is to assess the application of entrepreneurial marketing practices (proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation) and their resultant effects on the competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises in Enugu state. Several literatures were reviewed and entrepreneurial marketing dimensions according to Morris et al (2002) were adopted. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship of independent and dependent variables. The outcome of the analysis shows that entrepreneurial marketing is appropriate for small and medium size enterprises in Enugu state to compete favorably among their rivals. Moreover, proactiveness, risk- taking, customer intensity and resource leveraging were found not to have significant relationship with competitive advantage, we therefore, conclude that entrepreneurs should focus less on them to avoid wasted effort. However, innovativeness, opportunity focus, and value creation were found to have statistical significance with competitive advantage. We therefore conclude that SMEs can use entrepreneurial marketing dimensions to develop their competitive advantage to create value and retain customers. SMEs should focus more on being innovative because it will help them to compete favorably. Again, emphasis should be on opportunity focus; Opportunity focus of a firm is the ability to select the right opportunity to determine success, identifying needs will make SMEs to have competitive edge. Value creation was found to be the most important element in the study, therefore SMEs should focus more in creating quality product to enable them compete favorably. Finally entrepreneurship marketing strategy appears to be much better than traditional marketing theory and seems more appropriate for SMEs to compete favorably.

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