

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLIS

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### Abstract

*The study assessed entrepreneurial orientation and its effects on SMEs performance in Maiduguri Metropolis. The population of the study was 1,595 SMEs operating in Maiduguri Metropolis. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 320 SMEs owners/managers. Primary data were collected from SME owners/managers employing self-administered and structured questionnaires on a 5-point Likert scale. Analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Multiple regression was applied to examine the relationship between the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. The study's findings revealed that competitive-aggressiveness, innovativeness, pro-activeness and risk-taking have a positive and significant relationship with SMEs performance. The study recommends that SME owners should be open and keen to improve their competitiveness, profitability, growth and survival. They should also innovate to exploit changes as opportunities for diverse businesses/services.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Orientation, Competitive aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Risk-taking, Proactiveness, SMEs performance.

### Introduction

Entrepreneurial activities play an increasingly important role in addressing the high level of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria (Gorondutse, Arshad, & Alshuaibi, 2021; Mohamad, Mustapa, & Razak, 2021; Oliveira, Curado, Balle, & Kianto, 2020). Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs) have become important sources of employment and maximize the efficiency of resource allocation and distribution by mobilizing and utilizing local human and material resources (M Hendri, Fahrana, Listiana, Barkah, & Rosnani, 2024; Ishtiaq, Songling, Hassan, & Hayat, 2020). In Nigeria, SMEs are one of the key elements positioned in addressing economic growth and development. Its importance to the Nigerian economy cannot be over-emphasized (Aminu, 2015; Pulka, 2021; Rogo, Noor, Shariff, & Hafeez, 2017). SMEs contribute to economic growth and development, income generation, self-employment and poverty alleviation. The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector is a primary source of employment and income (Adewoye & Akanbi, 2012). Most SMEs have been featured as

innovative, dynamics efficient and flexible, with immediate feedback, short decision-making chain, better understanding and quicker response to customer needs (Asad, Chethiyar & Ali, 2020; Ishtiaq et al., 2020). The development of the SME sector is one of the strategies that could help the government to achieve the objective of promoting and developing entrepreneurship that could result in rapid industrialization, solving the problem of unemployment and overall economic growth and development (Eniola, 2014; OECD, 2017; Pulka, 2021). An entrepreneur is a role model in a society, who creates something new, something different, always searching for change, responding to it and exploiting it (Abor & Quartey, 2010). Similarly, Aminu and Mahmood, (2015), opine that an entrepreneur is any person who has the idea of a business, is a risk taker, is innovative and puts the business into practice, makes a profit and also has the talent to manage the business to growth, expansion and diversification through management and accountability. Thus, this has portrayed the importance of EO in SMEs in achieving better performance. Entrepreneurial Orientation has been proven to aid in the performance of SMEs. Entrepreneurial Orientation is the processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to the essential act of entrepreneurship, involving intentions and actions (Miller, 2011). Entrepreneurial Orientation is the process of development and utilization of specific entrepreneurial behaviour that is targeted towards enhancing the SME's propensity to take and absorb risk, to be creative, initiative, proactive and innovative toward achieving better SME performance (Pulka, 2019). Also, Entrepreneurial Orientation is perceived as one of the critical resources for SMEs' growth and success, seeing the nature and role it plays in its capability to improve SMEs' performance.

However, despite numerous studies have been conducted on entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance, the majority of these studies looked at EO using a unidimensional approach (Abidemi, Aliyu, Abdulmumin, & Aliyu, 2023; Covin & Miller, 2014; Naudé, Zaefarian, Najafi Tavani, Neghabi, & Zaefarian, 2014; Pulka, 2019). Similarly, there is a paucity of studies that have examined the multi-dimensionality of entrepreneurial orientation and ascertained the contributions of each dimension separately (Abidemi et al., 2023). Therefore, this study fills in these gaps in the literature by examining the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance in Maiduguri. Thus, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (Competitive aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Risk-taking and Proactiveness) and SME performance in Maiduguri

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis Development.**

### **2.1 SMEs Performance**

SME performance measures are indispensable for entrepreneurial and small firms because it helps them to ascertain the success or failure of the firm. It also acts as an indicator to achieve sustainable improvement in entrepreneurial and business activities (Musa, 2018). SME performance can also be

defined as “the abilities of the SMEs to harness, integrate and utilize various internal and external resources with timely and right reconfiguration to achieve a targeted set of objectives and performance capable of providing employment opportunities, growth of GDP, export and to uplift the standard of living of the society” (Pulka, 2019). However, the concept of performance is very hard to operationalise in the field of research, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship and small business. Nevertheless, one cannot rule out the issue of performance because when it comes to the discussion regarding small firms, they (firms) are being measured by their performance. Along the same lines, consensus does not exist on appropriate measures for small business success (Acs, 1999). However, according to Antony & Bhattacharyya (2010), SME performance is the firm performance which measures the firm success through the value it creates and delivers to internal as well as external customers. The empirical literature reports a high diversity of performance indicators (Combs, Crook, & Shook, 2005; Wu, 2009). The bulk of measurement of performance is limited to the context of financial and non-financial. They argued that financial measures of SMEs appear to be common and extensively used mentioning that a financial indicator seems to gain the upper hand when discussing performance. This might be owing to the simplicity of understanding where it could be used in classification and judging in what manner a firm performing is. Similarly, on the other side of the coin, non-financial measures of performance which are equally known as operational are also vital in gauging SMEs performance. The argument above indicates that one set of performance measurements may not be sufficient enough to measure SMEs' performance, therefore, there is the need to adopt both financial and non-financial measures as suggested by some scholars (Ferreira, Shamsuzzoha, Toscano, & Cunha, 2012; Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009). According to Vij and Bedi, (2016) and Santos and Brito (2012) the financial and non-financial measure firm performance include; the financial indicators are, sales growth, return on investment, market share and so on. While, the nonfinancial indicators include employee turnover, service quality, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, product innovation, process innovation and product quality.

## **2.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation**

EO is the process of development and employment of precise behaviour that is directed towards improving the SMEs inclination to take and absorb risk, to be creative, initiative, proactive and innovative toward attaining superior SMEs performance (Covin & Slevin 1991; Miller, 1983). Similarly, Lan and Wu (2010), defined EO as the inclination of SMEs to discover and absorb innovative, risky and uncertain entrepreneurial activities in the market, distinctively explore, and use fresh entrepreneurial opportunities ahead of other SMEs that are operating in the same industry.

Therefore, George and Marino, (2011) elucidated that the purview of entrepreneurial orientation enclosed fewer or more dimensions. Covin and Miles (1999) and Covin and Miller (2014) explain how entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurship have a distinction between content and process on the subject of strategic management entrepreneurship being the content and entrepreneurial

orientation explaining the process of how to be an entrepreneur. Pulka (2019) defined entrepreneurial orientation as the process of development and deployment of explicit activities that are directed towards improving the SME's predisposition to take and absorb risk, to be creative, initiative, proactive and innovative toward attaining better SME performance.

Entrepreneurial Orientation has emerged as an important concept in the internationalization and entrepreneurship literature over the past two decades (Huang, Wang & Tseng, 2010). Therefore, an entrepreneurial firm is considered to participate in product market innovation, undertakes risky ventures and develops proactive innovations ahead of competitors (Baker & Sinkula, 2009). Miller (1983) has identified three dimensions of EO, namely, innovativeness, risk-taking propensity and proactiveness. Thereafter, Covin & Slevin (1991) extended three dimensions namely; proactiveness, risk-taking, innovativeness, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy.

Competitive aggressiveness denotes to the manner a SME is relating to their competitors and how it answers back to the existing demand in the markets. It could be explained as organizations in the market competing for demand (Chang, Lin & Chen, 2007). The reason for competitive aggressiveness is thus to outperform rivals in the market and to be prepared for possible competition (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Competitive aggressiveness likewise reflects the readiness to be progressive rather than to relying on old-style approaches of competing. This breadth is important to guide the entrepreneurial SMEs to get a grip of and retain the competitive advantage in the markets.

Innovativeness focuses on the application and development of creative solutions to common challenges arising in the business environment (Kraus, Rigtering, Hughes, & Hosman, 2012). Innovativeness is vital for maintaining a firm's viability because it is the source of ideas that lead to the improvement of new products and thus help in sustaining a thriving firm (Lumpkin, Brigham & Moses, 2010). Innovativeness reflects a fundamental willingness to depart from existing technologies or practices and venture beyond the current state of the art (Baker, & Sinkula, 2009). Innovativeness refers to an SME's propensity to creatively initiate and support new ideas, experimentation and creative processes that may result in new products, services or technological processes, or the exploitation of new markets (Kropp, Lindsay, & Shoham, 2006; Li, Su, Liu, & Li, 2011). Most of the explanations of innovation represent a starting point from practices or conditions already in existence (Schilling & Phelps, 2007). (Cho & Pucik, 2005) observed that process innovation can be regarded as any change in the way a product or service is created or delivered and, in most instances, this innovative process would be invisible to the user, except for physical changes.

Proactiveness is a behaviour that is necessary for anticipating and performing on the future requirements of the market (Madsen, 2007). (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Sharma & Dave, 2011) further explained that a proactive business should be considered a leader rather than a follower. Applying modifications in SMEs or in products and services that the SMEs offers does not describe proactiveness, however a simple response to the existing business situation. Presence of proactiveness in

MSEs could assist in identifying and predicting future business expectations which would give SMEs and entrepreneurs the opportunities to prepare themselves accordingly to reap the maximum benefits from future happenings (Dai, Maksimov, Gilbert, & Fernhaber, 2014; Kreiser, Marino, Kuratko, & Weaver, 2013). Thus, pro-activeness denotes to the institution of completely new products and brands afore competitors, and likewise to reduce those operations which have turned or are turning to be unprofitable.

Proactiveness refers to an SME anticipating and acting on future wants and needs in the marketplace, to create a first-mover advantage ahead of the competition (Kropp et al., 2006; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Thus, pro-activeness refers to taking initiative, anticipating and carrying out new opportunities and creating new markets or participating in emerging ones, which is also associated with entrepreneurship and is an important dimension of Entrepreneurial Orientation (Awang, Yusof, Kassim, Ismail, Zain, 2009; Walter, Auer and Ritter, 2006).

Risk-taking denotes to prompt and clear activities taken in moments of business uncertainty. A risk is often an opportunity not yet recognized. Dewett (2007) explained risk as the extent to which there is uncertainty about the outcome of a decision. The risks ought to be measured and should additionally be controlled or eradicated to safeguard Organisational Advantages Accordingly, (Kraus et al., 2012; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001), Organizations and their executives face three types of risk, which are business risk, financial risk and personal risk. Business risks denotes to the propensity of an SME to take the courageous step of entering an unknown/untested market or committing to unproven technologies. Financial risk is related to obligating a large portion of the firm's resources to undertakings with uncertain outcomes and/or borrowing heavily (Cam, Tran, & Nguyen, 2019; Coulthard, 2007; Walter, Auer, & Ritter, 2006). Personal risks is linked to an individual typically a decision-maker who resolves to favour a definite strategic paths of actions.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Dwumah, Amaniampong, and Kissiedu, (2024) measured the connection between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The outcomes showed that proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking propensity, and competitive aggressiveness are expressively related to SMEs' performance. Ibrahim, Mustapha, Zubairu, and Sunoma (2023) found that there is entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. Abiodun and Thomas, (2023) surveyed the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on the export performance of SMEs. The results presented that risk-taking has a significant outcome on the export performance of the SMEs.

Moreover, Catanzaro, Omri, and Library, (2024) measured the role of international entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance. The results spotted that international entrepreneurial orientation has a substantial positive effect on both SMEs' performance. Coelho, Ferreira, and Proença, (2023) inspected the influence of green entrepreneurial orientation on sustainability performance. The

findings reveal that green entrepreneurial orientation positively impacts green processes and product innovation. Fan, Li, and Souza, (2024) empirically looked relationship between entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance. The outcomes resolved that entrepreneurial orientation is impacting on SMEs' performance. Hendri et al., (2024) explored the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on marketing performance. The results showed that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive consequence on marketing ability and marketing performance.

Additionally, Abidemi et al., (2023) investigated the relationship that exists between entrepreneurial orientation dimensions on SME performance. The results indicated that autonomy, risk-taking, innovativeness and aggressiveness have a noteworthy and positive consequence on SMEs' performance. Except for proactiveness is negatively related to SME performance. Abdelnaby, (2024) examined the relationships between entrepreneurial orientation and the success of SMEs. The results acknowledged a healthy and positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SME success. Mashuri and Moko, (2024) studied entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance. The results specified that entrepreneurial orientation certainly influences SMEs' performance. Nasution, Dalimunthe, and Siahaan, (2024) studied entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage. The results displayed that Entrepreneurial Orientation impact on Performance Plus Competitive Advantage.

Triatmanto and Supriadi, (2024) analysed the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance. The results showed that risk-taking and innovativeness have the highest contribution to SME performance than other dimensions. Razak, Ramli, and Azis, (2024) examined entrepreneurial orientation and its impact on SME performance. The outcomes showed that Entrepreneurial Orientation has an affirmative and noteworthy outcome on SME Performance. In the same vein, Sultan, Hudson, and Habash, (2024) explored entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of family-owned businesses. Findings indicated that the innovation, risk-taking and proactiveness dimensions have a noteworthy and affirmative impact on the SME performance of Palestinian family-owned businesses, while competitive aggressiveness and autonomy were negatively related to performance. Markus Hendri, Fahrana, Listiana, Rosnani, and Hendri, (2024) in their study investigated the impact of entrepreneurial orientation and performance of SMEs. The outcomes displayed that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive consequence on performance. Yuliana, Alpiansah, and Pratama, (2024) found that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant effect on SMEs' Performance.

Mustapha, Abdulrazaq, and Tsoho (2023) conducted a study on entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. The study found that proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking are expressively related to SMEs' performance. Satria, Economics, and Udayana (2023), studied the influence of Entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs' financial performance. The results displayed that the Entrepreneurial orientation has a significant effect on the SME's financial performance. While innovation, proactive and risk do not have a significant influence on SMEs' financial performance. Kehinde (2023) investigated the interaction between entrepreneurial orientation and SME

performance. The findings emphasise the significant innovativeness and proactiveness in attaining a high level of SME success. Similarly, Rifqi, Rahmat, Nisa, and Nurcholifah, (2023) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance and found that entrepreneurial orientation is related to SME performance. Fahira, Faidah, Rusdianto, and Nugroho (2024) studied entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. The results discovered a significant relationship among entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance

Nasir, Gunawan, and Bahri, (2023) investigated entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The consequences of the study showed entrepreneurial orientation directly and significantly improved SMEs' performance. Permana, Utami, and Purnomo, (2023) examined the connection between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The results presented that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant influence on SMEs' performance. Aftab, Veneziani, Sarwar, and Abid, (2024) looked at green entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The results provided that green entrepreneurial orientation significantly improves SMEs' performance.

Furthermore, Ben, Ben, and Zouaoui, (2021) considered entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The results discovered that entrepreneurial orientation aids in enhancing SMEs' performance. Aloulou (2024) inspected the association between entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance. The findings revealed significant relationships between innovativeness, proactive and risk-taking and SME performance.

Consequently, Kocak et al., (2017) and Matikainen, Terho, Parvinen, and Juppo (2016) recommended more studies need to be conducted in diverse sectors, different nations with different level of economic growth and development, examine the effect of additional strategic orientations on SMEs performance. Buli (2017), Luu (2017), Adomako, Narteh, Danquah, and Analoui (2016) suggested for additional studies on EO and SMEs performance connection. Precisely, in different setting and businesses. They also recommended for studies on EO, perceived environmental turbulence and strategic orientations in emerging nations. Therefore, it is put forward that:

H1: Competitive aggressiveness is significantly related to SMEs performance.

H2: Innovativeness is significantly related to SMEs performance.

H3: Pro-activeness is significantly related to SMEs performance.

H4: Risk-taking is significantly related to SMEs performance.

H5: Autonomy is significantly related to SMEs performance.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 shows the Entrepreneurial Orientation as the independent variable which is operationalized by using five dimensions namely: innovation, competitive aggressiveness, pro-activeness and risk-taking. Similarly, SME performance is considered a dependent variable.

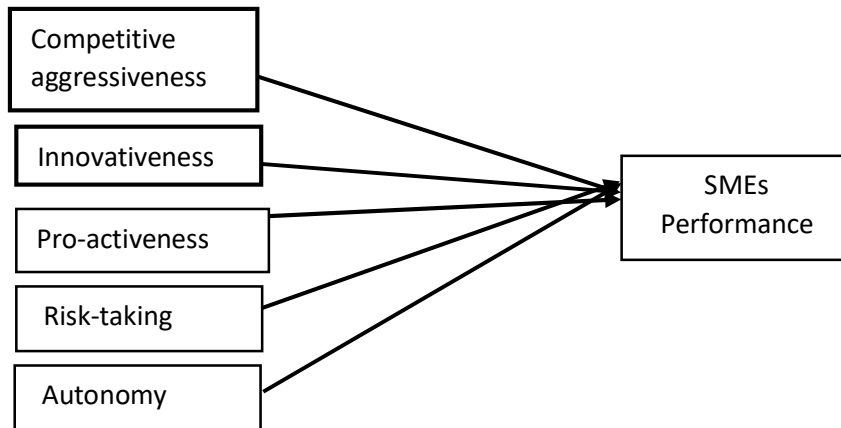


Figure1: conceptual frame work for the study

## 2.5 Theoretical framework

The Resource-Based View was postulated to explain the importance of firm resources in achieving competitive and better performance (Barney, 2017; Barney, 1991; Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001). The theory emphasises that the bundle of tangible and intangible resources possessed by the firm plays an energetic role in the SME success. The theory highlighted the significance of firm internal resources, skills and capabilities which the SMEs need to possess. These resources need to possess certain features (Lin & Wu, 2013; Pearson, Pitfield, & Ryley, 2015). In the perspective of this study, entrepreneurial orientation behaviour by the SMEs which includes innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy are resources of the SMEs that could lead to better performance if they are utilized prudently (Kraaijenbrink, Spender, & Groen, 2010). Therefore, entrepreneurial orientation is one of the intangible resources of SMEs that can be used to promote and attain better SME performance (Abidemi et al., 2023; Aminu, 2015; Pulka, 2019).

## 3. Methods

This study engaged a survey research pattern in gathering data from the respondents of the study. The population of the study is made up of 1,595 registered SMEs in Maiduguri Metropolis. The sample size of 320 SMEs was drawn from the study population using the Taro Yemini formula. A simple random sampling technique was embraced in selecting the respondents for the study. The study employed a structured questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. To measure pro-activeness, risk-taking, innovativeness, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy the instrument was adapted from the work of Covin & Slevin (1989), on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree. To measure SMEs performance, the instrument was adapted from the

work of (Santos & Brito, 2012). Analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25 to test the hypothesis using linear regression analysis.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 4.2 present the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The 41% of the businesses under study are between the ages of 1 to 5 years. 45% are between the ages of 5 to 10 years. 10% are within the ages of 10 to 15 years old. While 3.3% are within the ages of 15 to 20 years. Regarding the gender of the respondents, 75.8% are male, while 24.2% are female. Similarly, 2.9% of the respondents' age falls between 18 to 25 years old. 29.6% are between 25 to 39 years old, 40.4% are between 39 to 40 years old 23.8% are between 39 to 40 years old.

Concerning educational qualifications, 1.7% possess PhD, 11.3% possess MBA/M.Sc., 42.9% are having B.Sc./HND, 30% have NCE/ND, and 13.3% are having SSCE and below qualification. 25% of the SMEs are in Agricultural sector, 10.8% are in Accommodation sector, 24.2% are in Construction sector, 9.6% are in Transportation sector, and 17.1% are in ICT, while 13.3% fall under others sectors.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
SMEs Performance	1.8489	1.01901
Competitive Aggressiveness	1.7846	1.12532
Innovativeness	1.1897	1.64209
Pro-activeness	1.1350	1.58566
Risk-Taking	1.1222	1.47300
Autonomy	1.1890	1.64200

**Source:** SPSS Results 2022.

The descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables used in the study are presented in Table 3. An evaluation shows that SME performance, the mean is 1.8489 and with a standard deviation value of 1.01901. Competitiveness has a mean worth of 1.7846 and a standard deviation of a worth of 1.12532. Similarly, Innovativeness has a mean of 1.1897 and a standard deviation of 1.64209. Pro-activeness has a mean worth of 1.1350 and a standard deviation is 1.58566. Risk-Taking has a mean value of 1.1222 and a standard deviation of a value of 1.47300. While Autonomy has a mean value of 1.1890 and a standard deviation of the value of 1.64200.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics (Skewness and Kurtosis)

Variables	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
SMEs performance	311	1.596	0.138	2.385	0.276
Competitive Aggressiveness	311	1.485	0.138	1.267	0.276
Innovativeness	311	4.147	0.138	18.533	0.276
Proactiveness	311	5.207	0.138	28.456	0.276
Risk-Taking	311	4.970	0.138	28.544	0.276
Autonomy	311	4.167	0.138	19.533	0.276

**Source:** SPSS Results 2022.

Also as shown in Table 4, the skewness values were as follows: SMEs performance = 1.596, competitive aggressiveness = 1.485, innovativeness = 4.147, pro-activeness = 5.207 and risk-taking = 4.970. While kurtosis values were found as follows: SME performance = 2.385, competitive aggressiveness = 1.267, innovativeness = 18.533, pro-activeness = 28.456 and risk-taking = 28.544. All these indicated that the data is normally distributed.

#### 4.2 Testing of Hypotheses

The outcomes of the hypotheses analysis are captured in Table five. Hypothesis one, which states that there is no significant effect among competitive aggressiveness and SME performance among selected SMEs in the Maiduguri metropolis is not accepted and therefore, rejected ( $\beta = 0.201$ , T stat. = 2.975,  $P = 0.000$ ) indicating that there is substantial influence among competitive aggressiveness and SMEs performance among selected SMEs in Maiduguri metropolis. Hypothesis two, which states there is no significant effect amongst innovativeness and SME performance among selected SMEs in the Maiduguri metropolis is also rejected ( $\beta = 0.290$ , T stat. = 3.096,  $P = 0.002$ ) indicating there is a significant influence amongst innovativeness and SMEs performance among selected SMEs in Maiduguri metropolis.

Hypothesis three which states that there is no significant outcome amongst pro-activeness and SME performance among selected SMEs in the Maiduguri metropolis is also rejected ( $\beta = 0.367$ , T stat. = 2.366,  $P = 0.000$ ) indicating that there is a significant consequence amongst pro-activeness and SMEs performance among selected SMEs in Maiduguri metropolis. hypothesis four which states there is no significant effect among risk-taking and SMEs performance among selected SMEs in Maiduguri metropolis is also rejected ( $\beta = 0.214$ , T stat. = 4.747,  $P = 0.001$ ). This means that there is a significant influence between risk-taking and SME performance among selected SMEs in the Maiduguri metropolis. Lastly, the Hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence among autonomy and SME performance among selected SMEs in the Maiduguri metropolis is also rejected

( $\beta = 0.260$ , T stat. = 3.346, P = 0.000) indicating that there is a significant consequence between autonomy and SMEs performance among selected SMEs in Maiduguri metropolis. Table 5 presents the results of the hypothesis testing.

Table 5. Results for the Study Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Beta	Std. Error	T Stat.	Sig.	Decision
Competitive Aggressiveness	0.201	0.051	2.975	0.000	Accepted
Innovativeness	0.290	0.090	3.096	0.002	Accepted
Pro-activeness	0.367	0.099	2.366	0.000	Accepted
Risk-Taking	0.214	0.123	4.747	0.001	Accepted
Autonomy	0.260	0.190	3.346	0.000	Accepted

Source: SPSS Results 2022.

Table 6 depict the results of the R square. Based on the results of the regression analysis, the predictor variables (Risk-Taking, Competitive Aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Pro-activeness and autonomy) are significant predictors of SME performance with  $F = 7.724$ ,  $P = 0.006$  explaining 0.009 or 0.9% of the variation in the SMEs performance of small and medium scale enterprises.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson	
				R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.		
1	.148 <sup>a</sup>	.022	.009	1.01428	.022	1.724	4	306	.006	1.146

a. Predictors: (Constant), Risk-Taking, Competitive Aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Pro-activeness

b. Dependent Variable: SMEs performance

Source: SPSS Results 2022.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

This study is designed to assess the influence of Entrepreneurial Orientation on SME performance in selected SMEs in the Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State. It proposed that Entrepreneurial Orientation does not predict the SMEs performance of SMEs and thus calls for empirical proof. To statistically verify the above statement, Multiple Regression with the aid of SPSS was used to analyse data and test the FIVE hypotheses of the study.

Statistically, it was found that all the five dimensions suggested (Covin, Slevin, & Heeley, 2000; Miller, 1983) were found to be positively and significantly related to SME performance in Maiduguri.

This implies that the higher the levels of Risk-Taking, Competitive Aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Pro-activeness and autonomy in the SMEs, the greater will be the SME's performance. Thus, the findings from this study concurred with some previous findings on entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance

Dwumah, Amaniampong, and Kissiedu, (2024) measured the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The results showed that proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking propensity, and competitive aggressiveness are expressively related to SMEs' performance. Ibrahim, Mustapha, Zubairu, and Sunoma (2023) found that there is entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. Abiodun and Thomas, (2023) surveyed the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on the export performance of SMEs. The results presented that risk-taking has a significant effect on the export performance of SMEs.

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Additionally, Abidemi et al., (2023) investigated the relationship that exists between entrepreneurial orientation dimensions on SME performance. The results indicated that innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, aggressiveness and autonomy, have significant and positive effects on SMEs' performance. Except for proactiveness is negatively related to SME performance. Abdelnaby, (2024) examined the relationships between entrepreneurial orientation and the success of SMEs. The results acknowledged a healthy and positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SME success. Mashuri and Moko, (2024) studied entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance. The results indicated that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences SMEs' performance. Nasution, Dalimunthe, and Siahaan, (2024) studied entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage. The results displayed that Entrepreneurial Orientation impact on Performance and Competitive Advantage (Fahira et al., 2024; Markus Hendri et al., 2024; Kehinde, 2023; Mustapha et al., 2023; Razak et al., 2024; Rifqi et al., 2023; Satria et al., 2023; Sultan et al., 2024; Triatmanto & Supriadi, 2024; Yuliana et al., 2024).

## **6. Conclusion**

The results from the study established that the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation positively and significantly help SMEs in achieving high performance. Therefore, the study is significant to the government, its agencies, nongovernmental organizations, SME owners, SME managers, potential entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in understanding and application of the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation. Thus, entrepreneurs, owners and managers of SMEs should know in this context that innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, aggressiveness and autonomy are critical to the achievement of SMEs' performance. That means the combination of all the dimensions could lead to SMEs' success. As such government, nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders should endeavour to provide the required rain to the entrepreneurs, owners and managers of the SMEs to ensure SMEs sustainability and great success.

## **7. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that: 1. SMEs owners/managers should put more effort by implementing sound entrepreneurial orientation to enable their SMEs in achieving its goals and objectives. 2. SMEs owners/managers should intensify efforts of increasing employee knowledge on entrepreneurial orientation in order to enhance the performance of their SMEs. 3. Government and NGOs should focus on the activities that would improve the skills and capabilities of the SMEs owners/managers to achieve desired performance that would contribute to economic growth and development. This is because understanding the connection between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance is of vital importance.

## **8. Contribution to Knowledge**

The study complements and improve on the previous studies that are been conducted on this field. It also gives a deeper insight and better understanding of the relationship between the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. Furthermore, the study would help the owners and managers of the SMEs with a guide towards understanding and application of the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation to achieve SMEs performance in their organisations. The study would also educate entrepreneurs to see and appreciate the importance and values of entrepreneurial orientation and the role it is playing in achieving SMEs performance. Additionally, the study generates and present evidence materials to enable government agencies, non-governmental organizations and professional bodies with knowledge entrepreneurial orientation needed by SMEs. The results would also help in widening the frontiers of the existing literature and prompt further research in this field.

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