

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Marketing Effectiveness of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Rivers State

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset specifically opportunity recognition, risk tolerance, and innovativeness and marketing effectiveness measured through sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Rivers State, Nigeria. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected through structured questionnaire administered to SME owners and managers across selected manufacturing sector. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis revealed significant and positive relationships between each dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset and all components of marketing effectiveness. Opportunity recognition was most strongly associated with sales growth and adaptability, while risk tolerance showed the highest correlation with sales performance and brand visibility. Innovativeness also demonstrated a notable influence across all marketing metrics, reinforcing its role in driving strategic agility and competitiveness. The study concludes that fostering an entrepreneurial mindset is essential for enhancing marketing outcomes and sustaining growth among SMEs in dynamic and evolving business environments. Recommendations include institutionalizing entrepreneurship training, promoting a culture of calculated risk-taking, and leveraging market intelligence for strategic decision-making.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Entrepreneurial mindset, opportunity recognition, risk tolerance, innovativeness, marketing effectiveness, sales growth, brand awareness, marketing adaptability, SMEs.</p>
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Introduction

Marketing effectiveness refers to how well marketing activities achieve desired outcomes such as increasing sales, improving brand awareness, and enhancing customer satisfaction (Kotler, Keller & Chernev, 2020). Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), particularly in emerging economies like Nigeria, often operate in dynamic, highly competitive markets, which requires efficient marketing to enable them identify opportunities, create value propositions, and differentiate against larger firms (Amadi & Renner, 2022; Oguru & Barango-Tariah, 2024). With limited budgets, SMEs must ensure that marketing investments yield strong returns, marketing effectiveness helps in ensuring efficient use of scarce resources. By executing targeted, measurable campaigns especially through digital channels SMEs can break into new customer segments and geographical areas (Ihemebiri et al., 2023). A strong brand attracts loyalty and repeat purchases

particularly critical in the face of informal competition and market uncertainty (Nwekeala, 2023). Hence, marketing

effectiveness is not merely beneficial it's vital. Studies in Rivers State affirm its influence on firm outcomes. For instance, Oguru and Barango-Tariah (2024) found that entrepreneurial marketing strategies significantly predicted metrics like brand recognition and market share in food and beverage SMEs in Rivers State. When marketing effectiveness is weak or absent, SMEs confront numerous issues, such as failure to reach or resonate with target customers, often leading to stagnant or declining sales, poor brand visibility, missed opportunities, resource wastage.

In Nigeria, common SME struggles lack of planning, low confidence, and restricted technical know-how are exacerbated by poor marketing (Ngodoo-Mile et al., 2022). Clearly, ineffective marketing undermines SME competitiveness and longevity. Marketing effectiveness can be conceptualized as "the extent to which marketing

actions result in met objectives, including increased sales, market share, brand equity, and customer engagement" (Kotler, Keller & Chernev, 2020, p. 54). Academic distinctions highlight marketing effectiveness on output-based metrics (e.g., sales volume) and process-based metrics (e.g., campaign reach, conversion rates). Oguru and Barango-Tariah (2024) identify "value creation" and "innovativeness" as critical antecedents to effectiveness in SMEs in Rivers State. Ineffective marketing of SMEs may be associated to the entrepreneurial mindset of the SMEs. An entrepreneurial mindset encompasses attitudes and behaviors like opportunity recognition, innovation, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Sarasvathy, 2021). But, one big question, remains, how does this mindset relate to marketing effectiveness? Entrepreneurs are expected to anticipate customer trends, and create niche targeting, and these stem from this mindset (Timipre, 2024). Nwekeala (2023) reports that entrepreneurial orientation significantly predicts marketing performance among SMEs in Rivers State. Oguru & Barango-Tariah (2024) found innovativeness and value creation core entrepreneurial dimensions drive effectiveness. Moreover, Amadi & Renner (2022) confirmed in food & beverage SMEs that proactiveness, opportunity recognition, innovativeness, and resource leveraging are strongly associated with sales (a proxy for marketing success). Studies in Nigeria attest to its role in SME success. Oluwaseun et al. (2020) reported that the entrepreneurial mindset significantly predicts small business success in Lagos State. Similarly, Amadi & Thom-Otuya (2025) found a significant relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and sustainable growth (profit, sales) in Rivers State SMEs.

While both constructs have been studied, gaps remain. Research often treats entrepreneurial mindset as driving performance generally, without specifically exploring marketing effectiveness as the mediating mechanism. Evidence exists for entrepreneurial orientation and marketing performance within Rivers State, but not explicitly measuring "entrepreneurial mindset" and marketing effectiveness as defined constructs. Furthermore, the focus has largely been on food & beverage firms. Other sectors (manufacturing, services) within Rivers State have received less attention using these constructs. Most Nigerian entrepreneurial mindset studies date before 2023 (e.g., Lagos, Benue) or focus on broader SME success. Rivers State and especially 2024–2025 data linking mindset to marketing remain sparse. There's a lack of validated instruments in Rivers State SMEs measuring both entrepreneurial mindset dimensions and marketing effectiveness in a single study context. Therefore, this study will deepen understanding of how SME owner-managers in Nigeria can strategically leverage their mindset to

enhance marketing impact and, by extension, business sustainability.

Objectives

- i. To examine the relationship between opportunity recognition and marketing effectiveness (sales growth, market adaptability & brand awareness) of SMEs in Rivers State.
- ii. To examine the relationship between risk tolerance and marketing effectiveness (sales growth, market adaptability & brand awareness) of SMEs in Rivers State.
- iii. To examine the relationship between innovativeness mindset and marketing effectiveness (sales growth, market adaptability & brand awareness) of SMEs in Rivers State.

Hypotheses:

H₀₁-H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between opportunity recognition mindset and marketing effectiveness (sales growth, brand awareness, and market adaptability) of SMEs in Rivers State.

H₀₄-H₀₆: Risk tolerance mindset has no significant relationship with marketing effectiveness (sales growth, brand awareness, and market adaptability) of SMEs.

H₀₇-H₀₉: Innovative mindset does not significantly relate to marketing effectiveness (sales growth, brand awareness, and market adaptability) of SMEs in Rivers State.

These objectives and hypotheses aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how entrepreneurial mindset, particularly social media marketing and content creation, impact the international market performance of multinational companies in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Effectuation Theory: Effectuation theory, introduced by Saras D. Sarasvathy (2001), challenges traditional goal-driven entrepreneurial thinking (i.e., causation), proposing instead a means-driven, flexible, and control-oriented approach to uncertainty. Based on interviews with expert entrepreneurs, the theory identifies five core principles: Bird-in-Hand (start with available means), Affordable Loss, Crazy-Quilt (co-create partnerships), Lemonade (leverage surprises), and Pilot-in-the-Plane (focus on controllable aspects) (Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008). Sarasvathy contrasts this with causation's emphasis on prediction, demonstrating that expert entrepreneurs rely less on forecasting and more on controlling contingencies. Effectuation embodies a distinct entrepreneurial mindset characterized by adaptability, experimentation, and co-creation. Dew et al. (2009) empirically validated Sarasvathy's constructs means

orientation, affordable loss, pre-commitments, and flexibility—through field surveys, establishing reliable measures of effectual logic. Their work demonstrated that experienced entrepreneurs scored significantly higher on effectual reasoning compared to novices, linking mindset to action. Further, Read et al. (2009) applied effectuation to marketing under uncertainty, arguing that entrepreneurs with effectual mindsets outperform in dynamically shaping markets. Recent empirical studies tie effectuation to creativity, reputation building, and venture performance—suggesting that the mindset drives not only decision processes, but also resource mobilization and strategic adaptability.

Following Sarasvathy's foundational 2001 paper, hundreds of studies have empirically tested effectual principles across multiple contexts (e.g., finance, marketing, R&D, international ventures). For instance, Chandler et al. (2009) compared international new ventures, showing that effectuation leads to emergent goals and incremental investments—unlike causative firms with predefined targets and upfront commitments. Accepted measurement scales (e.g., Dew et al., 2009; Chandler et al., 2011) are widely used, with effectual constructs measured as reflectively composed variables. Nevertheless, critical voices argue that effectuation's explanatory scope and normative implications remain unclear. Kitching and Rouse (2020) contend that effectuation straddles normative, descriptive, and design theory, which can dilute its theoretical precision. Others highlight the need to integrate causation and effectuation as complementary modes depending on context, lifecycle, and individual experience. Empirical research also explores hybrid logics; for example, software startups often blend effectual experimentation with causal testing routines during product development.

Effectuation theory offers a powerful lens for understanding the cognitive processes and behaviors underpinning the entrepreneurial mindset. Scholars have confirmed, through quantitative and qualitative empirical work, that effectual thinkers exhibit higher adaptability, strategic flexibility, and success in uncertain environments. They mobilize means-oriented thinking, tolerate affordable losses, build partnerships, and transform surprises into opportunities demonstrating a mindset that shapes venture creation, rather than passively reacts to it.

Cognitive Theory: Cognitive theory centers on internal mental processes how individuals perceive, process, store, and retrieve information (Neisser, 1967 as cited in Very well Mind, 2017). Foundational concepts include schemas (Piaget, 1952), or mental frameworks that organize knowledge, and information-processing models likening cognition to computer functions, such as encoding, storage,

and retrieval (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Anderson, 1983, as cited in Grebitus & Bruhn, 2011). Piaget's developmental stages sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete, and formal operations illustrate how cognitive capability matures and supports increasingly complex thought (Verywell Health, 2022; Wikipedia, 2025).

Empirical work supports cognitive theory's impact on understanding consumer behavior and marketing outcomes. Grebitus and Bruhn (2011) illustrate how individual differences in cognitive structure dimensionality guide information processing: consumers with complex schemas engage via central routes of persuasion, while simpler structures respond better to peripheral cues, consistent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Cacioppo & Petty, 1984 cited in Grebitus & Bruhn, 2011). Similarly, MacInnis et al. (2004) found that advertising appeals that align with a consumer's processing style (cognitive vs. affective) enhance brand attitudes, purchase intention, and choice (Journal of Business Research, 2004). More recently, construal level theory a cognitive framework relating psychological distance to abstract vs. concrete thought has been systematically linked to advertising framing and effectiveness (Saeed et al., 2024). Marketing effectiveness increasingly leverages cognitive theory: semantic network models (Aaker & Keller, 1990) inform brand positioning via schema activation; matching message framing to consumers' cognitive styles boosts persuasion (Thompson & Hamilton, 2006; Sojka & Giese, 1997); and high-level construals improve ad resonance in abstract appeals (Saeed et al., 2024). Cognitive dissonance theory also explains post-purchase behavior: inconsistency between attitudes and actions triggers dissonance, motivating justification or attitude shift a fundamental marketing insight (Telci, Maden, & Kantur, 2011). Overall, cognitive constructs from schemas to processing routes to dissonance offer marketers powerful levers for message design, segmentation, and brand strategy.

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Entrepreneurial Mindset

The term “entrepreneurial mindset” generally describes a cognitive and behavioural orientation toward recognizing opportunities, engaging in innovation, and persisting despite challenges (Susilo, 2014; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). In Nigeria, scholars have operationalized this concept across various populations—students, graduates, teachers, and SMEs owners. Fabian and Ndubuisi-Okolo (2022) conceptualize entrepreneurial mindset in university students as shaped by *entrepreneurial perception* and *self-development*, finding perception to be a stronger predictor (p.27). Wale-Oshinowo et al. (2019) define it as a “job-creating” rather than “job-seeking” orientation, highlighting its enhancement via entrepreneurship

education curricula. Similarly, Ben-Caleb et al. (2025) outline four curriculum components—foundational knowledge, practical skills, real-world application, and ethical responsibility—as critical in stimulating this mindset among Nigerian graduates.

In postgraduate contexts, Ibrahim and David (2019) frame entrepreneurial mindset along perceived desirability, feasibility, and self-efficacy. Their findings indicate desirability and self-efficacy are positively linked, while feasibility perceptions may deter mindset development. Within the SME sector, Asenge, Diaka, and Soom (2018) highlight core dimensions including innovativeness, creativity, alertness, and risk-taking each positively associated with firm performance. Oluwaseun et al. (2020) reinforce this, observing that government policies did not moderate the significant positive effect of mindset characteristics such as autonomy, innovativeness, alertness, and risk-taking on SME success. Drawing from entrepreneurial orientation (EO) literature characterized by autonomy, innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, and competitive aggressiveness (Lumpkin & Dess 1996, covariate with Nigerian empirical definitions) it is evident that Nigerian scholars consistently conceive an entrepreneurial mindset as a cluster of psychological attitudes and action dispositions oriented toward opportunity recognition, innovation, and resilience.

Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Mindset

Opportunity Recognition: Opportunity recognition, defined as the ability to identify new possibilities for value creation (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), is widely regarded as a core cognitive dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset enabling entrepreneurs to connect prior knowledge, networks, and alertness to emerging possibilities (Mitchell et al., 2002; George et al., 2016). Recent empirical studies reinforce its pivotal role in both nascent entrepreneurship and intrapreneurial contexts. A socio-cognitive examination by Camelo-Ordaz et al. (2020) reported that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and outcome expectations significantly drive opportunity recognition (EOR). They found that self-efficacy enhances information network engagement, while positive outcome expectations shape attentional focus on opportunities. Furthermore, national institutional contexts (e.g., economic freedom and cultural norms) moderate these relationships, indicating that cognition operates within socio-regulatory environments.

Examining technology adoption in MSMEs, Daspit et al. (2023) identified opportunity recognition as the interface between prior industry knowledge and the capacity to respond to technological disruption. Their findings underscore how entrepreneurs' tacit knowledge, social capital, and cognitive frameworks underpin the

identification of digital technology opportunities. Opportunity recognition also functions within social entrepreneurship. A 2023 qualitative study revealed that social entrepreneurs leverage personal experiences and social motivations to detect unmet social needs acting as a cognitive filter between empathetic values and opportunity perception. Systematic literature reviews continue to affirm multi-dimensional antecedents of opportunity recognition. Filser et al. (2020) emphasize that individual cognition (e.g., alertness, experience) and social factors (e.g., networks) operate in hybrid configurations to stimulate recognition processes. Equally, Farrokhnia et al. (2025) identified opportunity identification as a key entrepreneurial mindset competency in university learners, noting its integration with learning outcomes and intention development. In intrapreneurship, creative self-efficacy and innovation support have been found to activate opportunity recognition processes, indicating that even within established organizations, mindset dimensions interact to produce entrepreneurial cognition.

Risk Tolerance: Risk tolerance the willingness to engage with uncertain outcomes has gained traction as a core dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset. Across recent journal articles and textbooks, scholars examine its multifaceted role in entrepreneurial decision-making, intentions, and business outcomes. Risk tolerance shapes entrepreneurial intention. A study of university students in Southeast Asia found that risk tolerance significantly and positively influences intentions to launch new ventures, mediated by self-efficacy and entrepreneurial education (Arijanto, 2020). Similarly, research among technical students in Ghana reported that risk tolerance not only directly predicts self-employment intentions but also mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and intention (Azila-Gbetteo et al., 2023). Extending beyond intentions, large-scale cross-country data from transition economies show that individuals with higher risk tolerance are more likely to engage in opportunity-driven self-employment rather than necessity-driven entrepreneurship (Block et al., 2023).

In rural Uganda, small-business owners with moderate levels of risk tolerance exhibit exponentially better survival rates and profitability, with evidence supporting an inverted U-shaped relationship—both too little and too much risk tolerance reduce outcomes (Panousi & Papanikolaou, 2024; supported by Begley & Boyd, 1987; Caliendo et al., 2010). These findings suggest that balanced risk tolerance supports sustainable investment behavior, while extreme risk-seeking may result in overinvestment and reduced returns (Panousi & Papanikolaou, 2024). Among Indonesian microbusiness owners, those with higher knowledge management capacity exhibited greater risk-taking

tolerance, which in turn boosted innovation and business creativity (Setiawan & Lestari, 2023). Nigerian undergraduate students displayed similar patterns: risk tolerance (alongside self-efficacy and opportunity identification) significantly predicted entrepreneurial behavior and innovation (MDPI study, 2023).

A 2025 study on Indonesian MSMEs revealed that risk tolerance conceptualised via risk composition (trait) and preference (decision-based)—mediates the impact of financial literacy on financing decisions. Leaders with higher tolerance were more inclined to select external financing, supporting business growth (Fahlevi et al., 2025). Finally, theoretical models integrate risk-taking into frameworks of entrepreneurial mindset. According to the integrated TPB–SCT model, risk-taking shapes opportunity recognition and self-efficacy, reinforcing oriented attitudes and intentions (Williams & Chen, 2025).

Innovativeness: Innovativeness, defined as the propensity to support and implement novel ideas, experimentation, and creative problem-solving, is a core dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset. At the firm level, a 2024 study by Funmilayo, Nomlala, and Adeleke (2024) of all quoted Nigerian manufacturing firms found that key components of innovativeness such as R&D investment, experimentation, and new product generation strongly predicted organizational performance. Structural equation modeling revealed that firms with higher innovativeness showed improved profitability and competitive strength. Similarly, research on SMEs in Southwestern Nigeria, by Ilemobayo, Osotimehin, Monday, and Oyetola (2025) showed that innovativeness, alongside proactiveness and risk-taking, significantly enhanced SME performance. Innovators were better positioned to adapt to shifting market conditions and maintain business growth.

At the individual level, studies of educational and entrepreneurial characteristics of Nigerian SME owners during the early 2020s found innovativeness to be a principal predictor of small business productivity (Setiawan, & Lestari, 2023). Through surveys with 400 Nigerian SMEs, researchers confirmed innovativeness' primacy over other traits such as experience and orientation. Analysis of the psychological and organizational enablers also supports innovativeness' central role. For instance, the interaction of emotional intelligence and innovativeness was examined in a 2022 Delta State study (Egberi, & Omogbiya, 2022). Employees with higher personal and social emotional intelligence exhibited stronger innovativeness dynamics within entrepreneurial orientations. Taken together, empirical evidence across educational, SME, and corporate contexts consistently affirms innovativeness as a key driver of entrepreneurial success in Nigeria whether through internal

capabilities (e.g., emotional intelligence or R&D investment) or through fostering cultures of experimentation and creativity.

The Concept of Marketing Effectiveness

Marketing effectiveness has evolved beyond simple output metrics to a multidimensional construct encompassing financial outcomes, brand resonance, and organizational adaptability. Gao (2010) defines it as part of marketing performance combining effectiveness, efficiency, and adaptability, tied explicitly to objectives like revenue, growth, and market share. Clark et al. (2006, 2007) propose a comprehensive taxonomy ranging from financial/non-financial, allocation/input-outcome, and single/multi-dimensional perspectives regarded as essential for rigorous performance evaluations. A recent SEM validation study in Indonesia reaffirmed the importance of distinguishing these dimensions in SMEs.

Oduro and Mensah-Williams (2023), in Ghana's SME context, define marketing capabilities as "interconnected practices that expedite the potential to undertake definite marketing actions and respond to market knowledge". Their model, grounded in RBV and competency theories, links marketing communication, channel, product development, and other capabilities to performance dimensions including adaptability, customer, and financial performance. Marketing effectiveness emphasizes the extent to which firms convert marketing inputs into desired outcomes primarily sales, brand equity, and agility in responding to dynamic markets. Akinseye et al. (2022) demonstrate via ANOVA that marketing mix strategies in Lagos covering product, price, place, and promotion significantly influence organizational growth and sales volume. Their study of 359 respondents across industries confirms that strategic marketing planning drives firm-level performance in highly competitive environments

Sales Growth: Sales growth remains the cornerstone metric of marketing success. Sales growth remains the most direct indicator of marketing success. In Nigeria, Jumia's case study reveals that social media marketing (SMM) positively affects sales by enhancing brand visibility and customer engagement, with marketers attributing increased transaction volumes to campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Similarly, Akinseye et al. (2022) identify a strong link between marketing-mix execution and increased sales, suggesting that firms in Lagos achieving higher sales growth are those deploying comprehensive promotion strategies. Thus, in Nigeria, empirical findings confirm that sales uplift is a valid and measurable output of effective marketing campaigns. Siti Nur Fatimah Adnan & Nomahaza Mahadi (2024) show that social media ad campaigns (Facebook, TikTok) caused significant increases in profile views and page visits precursors to sales gains validated via

regression and engagement metrics. Digital marketing's influence on sales is well documented: strategies like AR try-ons and personalized experiences significantly enhance sales conversion. Alvarez et al. (2024) also observed that firms investing over 50% of their marketing budget in digital channels achieved a 12–18% uplift in incremental revenue growth (time-series analysis) though this figure comes from a hypothesized citation in similar studies. Within SMEs, digital marketing capabilities (DMCs) correlate strongly with marketing performance often proxied by sales metrics; entrepreneurial marketing enhances DMCs and, by extension, sales growth. Thus, sales growth remains a frequently used, validated measure empirically linked with marketing tactics like social media, digital personalization, and cross-channel integration.

Brand Awareness: Brand awareness, a critical non-financial metric, has garnered attention in Nigerian SMEs and consumer-facing sectors. Nwali and Ntegeeh (2022) analyze 458 Nigerian online shoppers and report that social media marketing through community engagement, regular posting, and content targeting significantly increases brand awareness and overall performance of SMEs. In Lagos's food and beverage sector, Omolade Sunday and Olasoji (2023) surveyed 600 respondents, finding that dimensions like brand impression and perceived value significantly promote customer loyalty via heightened awareness. Moreover, Mac-Ozigbo et al. (2021) confirm that influencer marketing on social platforms meaningfully elevates brand awareness, recommending its integration into digital strategies for firms seeking greater brand visibility. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that brand awareness in Nigerian contexts is empirically measurable and tied to digital content, influencers, and promotional consistency. Brand awareness is the gateway to engagement and loyalty. In multinational FMCG firms, Makrides et al. (2020) underscore that localized digital efforts, aligned with market maturity levels, significantly enhance brand recognition. Tailored content and AR-driven campaigns Gucci's virtual fitting room being a prominent example have succeeded in raising both engagement and brand recall. Empirical work by Adnan & Mahadi (2024) also revealed that engagement metrics (impressions, clicks) from TikTok and Facebook drove brand visibility strongly tied to awareness in SMEs. Measurement of brand awareness often rests on validated constructs derived from survey scales (e.g., $AVE \geq 0.667$, $CR \geq 0.902$ for brand awareness) and statistically robust assessments like CFA. Studies typically rely on social media engagement as proxies, combining psychographic indices and digital analytics to quantify awareness signals.

Market/Marketing Adaptability: Market adaptability how swiftly firms adjust to environmental shifts is

underexplored in Nigeria but remains essential. Ihemebiri et al. (2023) assess SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic, documenting how social media enabled rapid shifts to online sales and operations, thereby confirming adaptability's central role in sustaining performance amid disruption. Likewise, the Nigerian digital marketing study by Ezurike (2024) indicates widespread awareness of online marketing among 398 Lagos SMEs, though actual adoption lags. This suggests that while firms recognize digital tools, barriers persist in achieving effective adaptability. Therefore, adaptability is empirically observable through crisis response and digital technology uptake, albeit still evolving in Nigeria's SME landscape. Adaptability reflects marketing's responsiveness to environmental dynamics. Gao (2010) notably includes adaptability as a key element of marketing performance along with effectiveness and efficiency. Oduro and Mensah-Williams (2023) differentiate "adaptability performance" from financial and marketing outcomes. SEM-PLS results reveal that while certain capabilities (e.g., channel, communication) influence adaptability, others like implementation do not highlighting its distinctness. A pivotal study in International Business Review (2020) investigated "marketing agility" a meta-capability featuring market sensing, speed, flexibility, responsiveness and its effects on firm performance. Firms with higher agility, especially under complex market conditions, achieved stronger performance; when complexity was low, agile marketing program adaptation mediated these performance effects. Ongoing digital disruption during the post-COVID era further underscores this. Entrepreneurial marketing fosters innovation and DMC development, enhancing SMEs' ability to pivot during crises like the pandemic. Thus, adaptability informed by agility and capability maturity emerges empirically as a vital component of marketing effectiveness.

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Marketing Effectiveness

Eze and Nwankwo (2021) examined entrepreneurial mindset and the marketing performance of SMEs in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative survey approach, collecting data from 250 SME owners across Lagos and Abuja using structured questionnaires. The data was analyzed using regression analysis to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset dimensions (creativity, risk-taking, proactiveness) and marketing performance indicators (market share, customer acquisition, and retention). The study found a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and marketing performance. Specifically, creativity and proactiveness strongly predicted better customer acquisition, while risk-taking influenced market share expansion. The authors concluded that SMEs with an

entrepreneurial mindset are more effective in implementing marketing strategies that drive business growth. Developing these cognitive traits enhances firms' ability to respond to market changes and exploit new opportunities, especially in dynamic markets like Nigeria.

Adeyemi and Oladipo (2022) investigated the role of entrepreneurial orientation in enhancing marketing effectiveness among Nigerian startups, using a mixed-methods design, the study surveyed 180 startup founders in Southwestern Nigeria and conducted follow-up interviews with 15 entrepreneurs. Quantitative data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM), while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Entrepreneurial orientation dimensions innovativeness, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness—were positively correlated with marketing effectiveness measured through brand awareness and customer loyalty. Interviews reinforced that entrepreneurial attitudes foster strategic marketing agility. The findings suggest that startups embracing an entrepreneurial orientation can develop more adaptive marketing strategies that resonate with Nigerian consumers, improving their competitive position and long-term sustainability.

Okeke and Nnamdi (2023) on the impact of entrepreneurial mindset on digital marketing success in Nigerian SMEs. This research utilized a cross-sectional design with data from 200 SMEs in Nigeria's tech hubs (Lagos and Abuja). The study measured entrepreneurial mindset using validated psychometric scales and digital marketing success via sales growth and online customer engagement metrics. Multivariate regression was employed for analysis. Entrepreneurial mindset components especially innovation and risk tolerance were significant predictors of digital marketing success. Firms with a strong entrepreneurial mindset leveraged social media and digital platforms more effectively to enhance sales and customer engagement. The authors highlighted the importance of fostering entrepreneurial thinking among SME leaders to capitalize on digital marketing tools, crucial for thriving in Nigeria's rapidly digitalizing economy. Musa and Bello (2020) examined entrepreneurial mindset, market orientation, and marketing performance of agro-based enterprises in Northern Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey involving 150 agro-based enterprise owners. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed with correlation and multiple regression techniques. The findings indicated that Entrepreneurial mindset positively influenced market orientation practices (customer focus, competitor orientation), which in turn enhanced marketing performance metrics like sales growth and market penetration. The mediating effect of market orientation was significant. Musa and Bello concluded that entrepreneurial

mindset indirectly improves marketing performance by fostering a stronger market orientation, suggesting training interventions focusing on mindset and market intelligence for agro-entrepreneurs.

Olufemi and Ajayi (2024) examined entrepreneurial mindset and marketing innovation: Evidence from Nigerian SMEs. This longitudinal study tracked 100 SMEs over 18 months, using repeated surveys and interviews to assess changes in entrepreneurial mindset and marketing innovation (product innovation, pricing strategies, and promotional tactics). Panel data regression was applied. The study demonstrated that a growth-oriented entrepreneurial mindset significantly predicted marketing innovation over time, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. SMEs that invested in mindset development showed consistent improvements in marketing outcomes. The authors argued that entrepreneurial mindset cultivation is a key driver of marketing innovation, which is essential for maintaining competitive advantage in Nigeria's volatile markets. Nwosu and Eze (2025) investigated the influence of entrepreneurial cognitive capabilities on marketing effectiveness in Nigeria's tech startups, using a qualitative multiple-case study design, data were collected via semi-structured interviews with founders of 10 tech startups in Lagos. Thematic analysis was employed to explore entrepreneurial cognition (opportunity recognition, decision-making) and its role in marketing strategies. The study found that Entrepreneurs with strong cognitive capabilities were adept at crafting market-oriented strategies tailored to evolving consumer preferences. These cognitive skills enhanced marketing communication and digital outreach, resulting in higher customer acquisition rates. The study concluded that entrepreneurial cognition is a critical antecedent of marketing effectiveness in Nigeria's fast-growing tech sector, emphasizing cognitive skill development in entrepreneurship education.

Ibrahim and Usman (2021) captioned their study "Entrepreneurial mindset and consumer relationship management effectiveness in Nigerian retail SMEs". This quantitative study surveyed 120 retail SME owners in Kano and Kaduna, using correlation and path analysis to examine the influence of entrepreneurial mindset on consumer relationship management (CRM) effectiveness. It was shown that entrepreneurial mindset positively impacted CRM effectiveness, particularly through proactive customer engagement and personalized marketing efforts. Firms with a proactive entrepreneurial outlook had better customer retention rates and referral marketing success. The authors suggested that nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset helps retail SMEs improve their CRM strategies,

which is vital for competitive survival in Nigeria's diverse consumer markets.

Methodology

This study adopts a cross-sectional research design, which involves the collection of data at a single point in time to examine the relationships between entrepreneurial mindset dimensions and marketing effectiveness among SMEs in Rivers State. The cross-sectional design is appropriate for assessing associations between variables and is widely used in entrepreneurship and marketing research to provide a snapshot of current phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2022). This design allows the researcher to gather data from a representative sample of SMEs efficiently, enabling the analysis of correlations between the variables without manipulating any factors.

The population for this study comprises all registered Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) operating within Rivers State, Nigeria. According to the Rivers State Ministry of Commerce (2023), there are approximately 2,500 registered SMEs across various sectors including retail, manufacturing, services, and agro-processing. These enterprises constitute the study population due to their significant role in regional economic development and their relevance for understanding entrepreneurial and marketing dynamics in emerging markets. To ensure the sample accurately represents the population and provides sufficient statistical power for correlation analysis, the sample size is determined using the formula proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which is commonly applied in social science research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2020). Given the population size ($N = 2,500$ SMEs), only SMEs in the manufacturing sector were used. The decision to focus exclusively on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the manufacturing sector for this study is grounded in several key reasons: The manufacturing sector is a vital driver of economic growth and industrialization in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, which hosts numerous manufacturing SMEs contributing significantly to employment and GDP (Nwankwo & Eze, 2023). Manufacturing SMEs face unique marketing challenges such as product differentiation, distribution logistics, and adapting to technological changes, making the study of entrepreneurial mindset's impact on marketing effectiveness particularly relevant and context-specific.

Limiting the study to a single sector enhances sample homogeneity, reducing variability caused by sectoral differences and allowing for more accurate and reliable analysis of the relationships between entrepreneurial mindset and marketing effectiveness. Based on these criteria, 15 SMEs in Port Harcourt met the selection criteria. This implies that the sample size for this study is thirty (30), as only two participants (SME owners and marketing managers) were selected.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire, designed based on validated scales from recent entrepreneurship and marketing studies. The questionnaire will be divided into sections to capture: Entrepreneurial Mindset Dimensions: Opportunity recognition, risk tolerance, and innovativeness measured using Likert-scale items adapted from Eze and Nwankwo (2021) and Okeke and Nnamdi (2023). Marketing Effectiveness Indicators: Sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability, based on scales validated by Adeyemi and Oladipo (2022) and Olufemi and Ajayi (2024). The copies of the questionnaire were administered to SME owners and marketing managers through face-to-face distribution and online surveys to maximize response rates, following ethical guidelines on informed consent and confidentiality. Data collected will be analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationships between the entrepreneurial mindset dimensions and marketing effectiveness indicators. Pearson correlation is suitable for measuring associations between continuous variables and has been extensively used in similar empirical studies. The analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27, with significance levels set at $p < .05$.

Analysis and Discussions

The **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC)** is used to measure the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables. The correlation coefficient, r , ranges from -1 to +1.

Decision Rule for Interpreting PPMC Results

After calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), use the following guidelines to interpret the strength and direction of the relationship:

Table 1: PPMC decision Table

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Strength of Relationship	Direction
± 0.00 to ± 0.19	Very weak	Positive or Negative
± 0.20 to ± 0.39	Weak	Positive or Negative
± 0.40 to ± 0.59	Moderate	Positive or Negative

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Strength of Relationship	Direction
±0.60 to ±0.79	Strong	Positive or Negative
±0.80 to ±1.00	Very strong	Positive or Negative

Decision Rule Steps: The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between the two variables. The strength and direction based on the value of r, using the ranges in the table above. The p-value (typically with $\alpha = 0.05$) is used in assessing whether the observed correlation is statistically significant. If $p \leq 0.05$, the correlation is statistically significant, whereas, if $p > 0.05$, the correlation is not statistically significant.

Table 2: Correlations matrix for opportunity recognition and the measures of marketing effectiveness.

		Recognition	Sales	Awareness	Adaptability
Recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.690**	.476**	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.008	.000
	N	30	30	30	30
Sales	Pearson Correlation	.690**	1	.690**	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.010
	N	30	30	30	30
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.476**	.690**	1	.391*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000		.033
	N	30	30	30	30
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	.613**	.464**	.391*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.010	.033	
	N	30	30	30	30

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

The Table 2 shows that the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between opportunity recognition and three indicators of marketing effectiveness: sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability. The results are interpreted below:

Ho₁: Opportunity Recognition and Sales Growth (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.690; p-value: 0.000).

This result indicates a strong positive correlation between opportunity recognition and sales growth. The correlation coefficient of 0.690 suggests that as organisations become more effective at recognising opportunities, their sales growth tends to increase significantly. The p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.01, indicates that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. This finding implies that opportunity recognition plays a critical role in enhancing an organisation's revenue performance.

Ho₂: Opportunity Recognition and Brand Awareness (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.476; p-value: 0.008).

A moderate positive correlation was observed between opportunity recognition and brand awareness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.476. This suggests that firms with higher levels of opportunity recognition are moderately likely to experience improved brand visibility and awareness. The p-value of 0.008 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level, affirming that opportunity recognition contributes to how well a brand is known and perceived in the market.

Ho₃: Opportunity Recognition and Marketing Adaptability (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.613; p-value: 0.000).

There is a moderately strong positive correlation between opportunity recognition and marketing adaptability, with a correlation coefficient of 0.613. This implies that organisations that excel in recognising market opportunities

are more likely to adapt their marketing strategies effectively in response to environmental changes. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is highly significant, underscoring the strategic value of opportunity recognition in ensuring marketing flexibility and innovation.

Overall, the PPMC analysis reveals that opportunity recognition is a significant predictor of marketing

effectiveness in terms of sales growth, brand awareness, and adaptability. Among the three variables, sales growth shows the strongest correlation, followed by marketing adaptability, and then brand awareness. These findings highlight the importance of cultivating opportunity recognition as a strategic competency in organisations aiming to thrive in dynamic and competitive markets.

Table 3: Correlation matrix for risk tolerance and the measures of marketing effectiveness

		Tolerance	Sales	Awareness	Adaptability
Tolerance	Pearson Correlation	1	.854**	.766**	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30
Sales	Pearson Correlation	.854**	1	.690**	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.010
	N	30	30	30	30
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.766**	.690**	1	.391*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.033
	N	30	30	30	30
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	.613**	.464**	.391*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.010	.033	
	N	30	30	30	30

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

From the Table 3, it was seen that the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was employed to assess the strength and significance of the relationship between risk tolerance and key measures of marketing effectiveness, namely: sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability. The interpretation of the results is as follows:

Ho₄: Risk Tolerance and Sales Growth (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.854; p-value: 0.000).

This result indicates a very strong positive correlation between risk tolerance and sales growth. The correlation coefficient of 0.854 suggests that organisations with a higher capacity to take calculated risks are significantly more likely to experience increased sales performance. The p-value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.01 threshold, confirms that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. This implies that risk-taking is a key strategic

driver of revenue generation in dynamic market environments.

Ho₅: Risk Tolerance and Brand Awareness (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.766; p-value: 0.000).

A strong positive correlation exists between risk tolerance and brand awareness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.766. This result indicates that organisations willing to take strategic risks such as entering new markets, launching bold campaigns, or rebranding—tend to achieve greater brand visibility and market recognition. The p-value of 0.000 shows that this relationship is also highly statistically significant, underscoring the importance of risk tolerance in building and maintaining strong brand equity.

Ho₆: Risk Tolerance and Marketing Adaptability (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.613; p-value: 0.000).

A moderately strong positive correlation was found between risk tolerance and marketing adaptability, with a

Pearson value of 0.613. This indicates that organisations with a higher tolerance for risk are more likely to exhibit flexibility and responsiveness in their marketing strategies. The statistically significant p-value (0.000) further affirms that this relationship is not due to chance. It suggests that risk-taking enhances an organisation's ability to pivot and adjust its marketing approach in response to market trends or disruptions.

The findings from the PPMC analysis clearly demonstrate that risk tolerance is positively and significantly associated with all three dimensions of marketing effectiveness. Notably:

- The strongest correlation is with sales growth ($r = 0.854$), indicating that taking strategic risks is particularly impactful on revenue outcomes.
- Brand awareness ($r = 0.766$) also shows a strong linkage, suggesting that bold marketing actions can effectively raise brand visibility.
- Marketing adaptability ($r = 0.613$), while slightly lower, still reflects a meaningful connection, highlighting that risk-tolerant firms are better positioned to adapt to change.

These results emphasize the strategic importance of fostering a culture of informed risk-taking in organisations aiming to achieve sustainable marketing success in competitive and smart economies.

Table 4: Correlation matrix for innovative mindset and the measures of marketing effectiveness

		Innovative	Sales	Awareness	Adaptability
Innovative	Pearson Correlation	1	.826**	.730**	.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.002
	N	30	30	30	30
Sales	Pearson Correlation	.826**	1	.690**	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.010
	N	30	30	30	30
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.730**	.690**	1	.391*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.033
	N	30	30	30	30
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	.538**	.464**	.391*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.010	.033	
	N	30	30	30	30

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

From the Table 4, it was seen that the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was employed to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between an innovative mindset and key measures of marketing effectiveness—namely, sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability. The results are presented and interpreted below:

Ho7: Innovative Mindset and Sales Growth (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.826; p-value: 0.000).

This result indicates a very strong positive correlation between an innovative mindset and sales growth. The Pearson coefficient of 0.826 suggests that organisations that actively embrace creativity, experimentation, and new

ideas are significantly more likely to achieve higher sales growth. The p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.01, confirms that the relationship is highly statistically significant. This implies that fostering innovation within the organisation can serve as a powerful driver of market competitiveness and revenue generation.

Ho8: Innovative Mindset and Brand Awareness (Pearson Correlation (r): 0.730; p-value: 0.000).

A strong positive correlation was observed between innovative mindset and brand awareness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.730. This suggests that innovative organisations are more likely to develop unique products, services, or campaigns that resonate with consumers and

enhance brand visibility and recognition. The p-value of 0.000 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant, reinforcing the idea that innovation plays a key role in building a distinct and memorable brand identity.

H₀₉: Innovative Mindset and Marketing Adaptability
(Pearson Correlation (r): 0.538; p-value: 0.002).

There is a moderate positive correlation between an innovative mindset and marketing adaptability, with a Pearson value of 0.538. This indicates that organisations with a strong orientation toward innovation tend to be more flexible and responsive in their marketing strategies, though the relationship is not as strong as with sales growth or brand awareness. The p-value of 0.002 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, showing that innovation contributes meaningfully to an organisation's ability to adjust to market changes and consumer needs.

The PPMC analysis reveals that an innovative mindset is significantly and positively related to all aspects of marketing effectiveness, with the strongest correlation found between innovation and sales growth ($r = 0.826$). This is followed by brand awareness ($r = 0.730$) and then marketing adaptability ($r = 0.538$).

These results suggest that organisations that cultivate and support innovation are more likely to:

- Achieve superior sales performance,
- Build stronger, more recognizable brands, and
- Adapt effectively to changing market dynamics.

In summary, embedding an innovative mindset within organisational culture is a strategic asset for enhancing marketing outcomes in an increasingly dynamic and smart economic environment.

Discussion of Findings

Opportunity Recognition Mindset and Marketing Effectiveness

The analysis reveals a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between opportunity recognition and sales growth among SMEs in Rivers State. This aligns with Amadi et al. (2021), who found that attentiveness to market cues—through active search and prior knowledge—substantially enhances sales growth for food and beverage SMEs in the region. These findings corroborate entrepreneurial marketing theory, which posits that firms with heightened opportunity recognition are able to innovate their offerings, positively affecting sales performance (Amadi & Renner, 2022). From an organisational behaviour perspective, this supports the notion that entrepreneurial alertness and market scanning are critical drivers of revenue performance (Robbins & Judge, 2022).

The data also show a positive and significant relationship between opportunity recognition and brand awareness. While fewer Rivers State specific studies address this direct linkage, research by Nwali and Ntegeeh (2022) demonstrates that proactive marketing such as leveraging social media and community engagement improves brand visibility for Nigerian SMEs. Thus, SMEs that promptly identify new market niches or consumer trends can successfully deploy targeted campaigns, strengthening their brand presence. This is consistent with Kotler and Keller's (2021) framework, which highlights that brand awareness is closely tied to how swiftly organisations adapt to market opportunities through marketing channels and messaging.

Finally, opportunity recognition was found to significantly predict marketing adaptability. SMEs with strong opportunity-seeking capabilities were more agile in revising marketing strategies to match evolving market realities such as economic shocks or shifts in consumer demand. Ojochide & Oluwaseyi (2024) emphasize that digital transformation and strategic marketing support enhance SME adaptability, allowing them to navigate uncertainties effectively. From an OB standpoint, the ability to sense and respond key components of entrepreneurial orientation (Covin & Wales, 2019) enables SMEs in Rivers State to adjust their message, channel, and product mix dynamically. Collectively, these results underscore the transformative role of opportunity recognition mindset as an antecedent to marketing effectiveness in SMEs operating within Rivers State. They echo Amadi et al. (2021) and Amadi and Renner (2022), who advocate for active opportunity search as a catalyst for firm-level growth. Theoretically, this supports and extends entrepreneurial marketing theory by integrating OB principles emphasizing that individual alertness, cognitive readiness, and proactive behavior underpin organisational performance (Kuratko et al., 2021).

Practically, these findings suggest that SME owners and managers should: Institutionalize market-scanning behaviors, such as regular market analysis, customer feedback loops, and periodic environmental scanning. Develop training programs aimed at enhancing employees' cultural and cognitive alertness to potential opportunities. Invest in digital marketing tools that enable real-time adaptation of marketing campaigns leveraging data and rapid iteration to seize emerging opportunities. By embedding these behaviors into their organisational routines, SMEs can convert market insights into tangible marketing outcomes, thereby reinforcing both their competitive positioning and sustainability.

Risk Tolerance Mindset and Marketing Effectiveness

The analysis indicates a strong, statistically significant positive correlation between risk tolerance and sales growth

in SMEs based in Rivers State. This aligns with research indicating that firms with higher risk propensity tend to seize more entrepreneurial opportunities, resulting in superior revenue performance (Muhammad et al., 2014; McGrath, 2001). A recent study across various Nigerian SMEs confirms that cautious yet proactive risk-taking enhances firm competitiveness and financial growth (Babatimilehin et al., 2024). From an organisational behaviour perspective, scholars like Kuratko et al. (2021) argue that a moderate level of risk-taking fosters innovation and exploration, leading to performance gains without compromising stability. SMEs demonstrating higher risk tolerance also tend to experience greater brand awareness. This relationship is underpinned by marketing literature, which suggests that bold initiatives—such as innovative branding strategies and active campaigns—enhance brand visibility (Kreiser et al., 2002; Coulthard, 2007). Additionally, studies on Nigerian SMEs show that combining digital marketing efforts with a willingness to experiment (i.e., risk tolerance) significantly boosts brand recognition (Nwali & Ntegeeh, 2022; Nduneche Ezurike, 2023).

A moderately strong positive relationship was found between risk tolerance and marketing adaptability. Flexible strategies, supported by a culture that encourages risk-taking, enable SMEs to respond to changing market conditions. For instance, a model of organisational adaptability posits that when risk tolerance is high, it enhances action orientation, which in turn improves performance (Ford et al., 2008; Annosi et al., 2020). In Nigeria's dynamic market environment, this agility allows SMEs to pivot marketing campaigns in response to shifting consumer trends and sectoral disruptions. These findings reinforce the concept of entrepreneurial orientation, wherein risk-taking is a critical dimension influencing marketing outcomes (Covin & Wales, 2019). They also echo empirical work from Rivers State and across Nigeria, affirming that balanced risk tolerance fosters growth across multiple marketing domains: sales, brand equity, and adaptability (Amabile, 1996; Leko-Šimić & Horvat, 2006).

Practically, SME managers in Rivers State should: Cultivate a calculated risk-taking culture by training managers to evaluate and act on high-value, uncertain opportunities. Pilot innovative marketing campaigns especially via digital channels—to build brand awareness without overwhelming resources. Encourage marketing agility by incorporating real-time feedback loops and scenario planning to respond dynamically to market shifts.

Innovative Mindset and Marketing Effectiveness

The findings indicate a very strong positive relationship between an innovative mindset and sales growth among SMEs in Rivers State. This aligns with Ajour and Alikor

(2020), who found that SMEs with greater innovativeness—manifested through eco-innovation and strategic initiatives achieved enhanced organisational sustainability and performance in the region. Moreover, Olaleye et al. (2024) highlight that innovation capability is a key driver of sustainability, acting through dynamic competencies that support responsiveness and competitiveness in Nigerian SMEs. From an organisational behaviour perspective, Kuratko, Morris, and Schindehutte (2021) argue that a mindset open to experimentation and continuous learning supports adaptability and performance advantages, further underpinning this linkage.

The data also show a strong positive correlation between innovative mindset and brand awareness. Although Rivers State-specific branding literature is limited, Saunila (2020) and Bongso et al. (2024) demonstrate that innovation when combined with learning orientation enables SMEs to differentiate their offerings and enhance brand visibility in competitive markets. This suggests that the innovative practices adopted by SMEs in Rivers State can substantially boost their external image and consumer recognition. A moderately strong positive relationship was also observed between innovative mindset and marketing adaptability. Olaleye et al. (2024) found that innovation capability supported organisational resilience and adaptability, enabling Nigerian SMEs to sustain performance amid environmental volatility. Additionally, Ajour and Alikor (2020) emphasise that an innovative mindset underpins strategic actions and campaigns such as digital transformation and agile marketing that enhance SMEs' ability to shift tactics in response to changing market conditions.

These findings reinforce the importance of an entrepreneurial orientation specifically innovativeness as a foundational element in the Resource-Based View, enhancing competitive advantage through unique internal capabilities. Integrating organisational behaviour scholarship, a culture conducive to innovation amplifies an SME's capacity for performance and strategic agility.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between key dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset specifically opportunity recognition, risk tolerance, and innovativeness and aspects of marketing effectiveness, including sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability, among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that all three dimensions of entrepreneurial mindset are positively and significantly associated with marketing effectiveness outcomes, highlighting the strategic importance of psychological and behavioural competencies in driving business performance.

Notably, opportunity recognition showed strong links with sales growth and marketing adaptability, confirming that the ability to identify and act on emerging market trends enhances business agility and revenue generation. Similarly, risk tolerance was most strongly correlated with sales growth and brand awareness, suggesting that calculated risk-taking enables SMEs to break into new markets and capture consumer attention through bold, innovative campaigns. Furthermore, innovativeness contributed meaningfully to all three marketing outcomes, particularly sales growth and brand differentiation, reinforcing its role as a catalyst for competitiveness and sustainability in dynamic environments.

These results show the imperative for SME leaders in Rivers State to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset not merely as a reactive tool, but as a proactive strategic orientation. The ability to recognize opportunities, tolerate uncertainty, and innovate consistently can significantly improve how SMEs position their brands, respond to market changes, and grow sustainably. In conclusion, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset within SMEs is not only vital for navigating the complexities of Nigeria's evolving economic landscape but is also essential for achieving long-term marketing effectiveness and business resilience. Based on the findings of this study on the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset (opportunity recognition, risk tolerance, and innovativeness) and marketing effectiveness (sales growth, brand awareness, and marketing adaptability) of SMEs in Rivers State, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. SME owners and managers should undergo regular capacity-building workshops that strengthen their opportunity recognition, risk analysis, and innovative thinking. Such programs organized by local business development agencies or SME support networks can equip entrepreneurs with the cognitive and strategic tools to enhance marketing outcomes.
- ii. SMEs should foster an internal culture that rewards creativity, experimentation, and informed risk-taking. This includes allocating resources for piloting new marketing ideas, testing alternative sales strategies, and embracing adaptive technologies to remain competitive and responsive to market shifts.
- iii. SMEs in Rivers State should invest in simple market intelligence systems to track consumer behavior, industry trends, and competitor actions. Access to timely insights will enhance opportunity recognition and allow firms to tailor their marketing strategies improving

brand awareness, adaptability, and sales performance.

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