Social Sciences Journal of Policy Review and Development Strategies | **SSJPRDS**
p-ISSN: 2488-9636 | e-ISSN: 2488-9628
Volume 7, Number1 May, 2026

Entrepreneurial Leadership Strategies and Business Performance of Selected Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria

[1]Daniels, Funmilayo Rinsola & [2]Soetan, Timothy Adisa
[1&2]Department of Business Administration and Marketing,
School of Management Sciences, Babcock University, Ilishan –Remo, Ogun State

Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ssjprds.v7.i1.26

Abstract

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are esteemed as a prominent participant in the business sector. They are generally seen as important drivers of economic growth, helping to strengthen a nation's economy. Despite their economic importance, it is observed that their business performance is not as expected as they are posed with challenges of how to consistently meet the performance expectations in terms of their competitive advantage, profitability, productivity and market share. These challenges may be associated with Entrepreneurial leadership strategies such as innovativeness, adaptability, risk-taking, and creativity. Extant studies have provided an understanding of entrepreneurial leadership strategies; however, there is still a need to understand the link between entrepreneurial leadership strategies and the business performance of SMEs in developing economies such as Nigeria. This study investigated the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The study population consisted of 11,643 registered SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The Taro Yamani Formula was used to determine the sample size of 426 SME owners/managers. An adapted questionnaire was used, and data were collected using a valid and reliable questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranging from 0.7 to 0.9. The response rate was 92.5%. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential tools. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine the effect of the variables using a 5% significance level, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27. Findings revealed that entrepreneurial leadership strategies had a significant effect on business performance in selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria (*Adj.* R^2 = 0.464, $F(4, 309)$ = 85.894, $p<0.05$). The study concluded that entrepreneurial leadership strategies improved the business performance of SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommended that SMEs should prioritise entrepreneurial leadership strategies, while emphasising innovativeness, risk-taking, and creativity to improve the business performance of SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Keywords: *Adaptability, Business performance, Creativity, Innovativeness, Risk Taking*

Corresponding Author: Daniels, Funmilayo Rinsola

Background to the Study

At the core of any business organisation, performance is seen as a multidimensional concept that serves as a compass to help achieve its goals and accomplish its mission. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) usually play important roles in the industrial sectors of many countries. They are widely regarded as significant contributors to economic growth and can help strengthen a nation's economy. Despite the significant contributions of SMEs, some of these businesses have continued to face challenges in their performance as reflected in low profitability, decline in market share and productivity, and in their inability to carve-out a niche for themselves, which has resulted in low competitive advantage. As SMEs navigate various business performance challenges, entrepreneurial leadership strategies such as innovativeness, adaptability, risk-taking, and creativity may offer solutions to these issues. Following these prevailing issues on the declining business performance of SMEs, this study examined the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies and the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Globally, SMEs are essential to long-term economic growth because they make up 90% of all businesses and employ about 60% of the global labor force (Asare et al., 2021). However, the performance of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) has declined primarily due to challenges such as low productivity compared to larger companies and adverse economic conditions, with profitability dropping (Madgavkar et al., 2024). According to a recent survey, 67% of SME CEOs are most concerned about survival and growth in the face of economic uncertainty (Kioria et al., 2025). Low profit margins, challenges expanding operations, and gaining a significant market share are among the most prevalent issues (Kindström et al., 2024). In 2020, 68% of SMEs were denied loans because of stringent lending criteria, while 45% reported facing interest rates above 15%, severely limiting their ability to invest in expansion (Ahmed et al., 2021; Gamage et al., 2020). As competition intensifies, 72% of SMEs are struggling to maintain or grow their market share, and average profit margins have plummeted from 14.5% to 9.3% over three years, 36% decline (Bindroo et al., 2022; Keelson et al., 2025).

In North America, specifically in Canada, SMEs with fewer than 100 employees represent 97.9% of all employer businesses and collectively employ 10.9 million individuals, accounting for more than 62% of the total workforce (Statistics Canada, 2023). Despite their significant presence in the Canadian economy, SMEs have struggled with low market share and productivity due to a variety of challenges (Cárdenas et al., 2022). According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (2021), SMEs have consistently represented a significant portion of Brazil's economic landscape. In 2023, the cost of credit for SMEs rose by 6%, while bank lending to SMEs fell by 9%, the steepest drop since the global financial crisis-making it harder for small businesses to finance growth and innovation (Silva et al., 2025).

In Europe, SMEs, most notably in the United Kingdom, constitute a significant portion of the business ecosystem, accounting for around 99.9% of all private sector businesses, and their performance is vital not only for economic growth but also for job creation and innovation

(Liberto, 2024). Notwithstanding, the performance of these SMEs is still not up to expectations, as many of these SMEs still struggle with low profit margins, which are exacerbated by the absence of resources to remain relevant in a rapidly changing market. 41% of SMEs have been forced to raise prices due to rising raw material costs, and 70% of consumers have less to spend on non-essentials, further reducing revenues, compounded by evolving regulatory pressures, which underscores the mounting difficulties UK SMEs face in sustaining competitive advantage (Gibson & Bhattacharya, 2023; Young, 2024).

In the Asia-Pacific region, SMEs comprise more than 98% of the enterprises. These contribute from about 17% to national GDP in the low-income countries, such as India, to about 40 to 50% in higher-income countries (Ata, 2025). The business performance of SMEs in India, for instance, has been analyzed in terms of growth in the number of units and inclusive growth. However, they have challenges in gaining access to markets and have reported struggles to remain profitable as a result of growing operational costs and competition from larger businesses (Rahman et al., 2023). The slowing economic growth projected at a modest 4.5% in 2025 is already creating challenges for micro, small, and medium enterprises, with many experiencing slow profitability. This situation is further constrained by a persistent funding gap of over $21.5 billion, limiting their ability to invest in securing competitive market positions and improving financial performance (Sarabdeen et al., 2025).

In Africa, SMEs are crucial to the economy, contributing approximately 50% to GDP and providing around 80% of jobs across the continent. However, when it comes to Ghana, SMEs face numerous obstacles that limit their performance level. Approximately 70% of Ghana's GDP is made up of MSMEs, which constitute an essential component of the nation's economy (Afrane, 2024; Mugano & Dorasamy, 2024). A report indicated that only 34% of SMEs in Ghana report achieving a high profitability level, with the majority operating at a loss (Tumaku & Agbeko, 2024). The profitability of SMEs in Ghana has declined in recent years due to a combination of high operational costs. These rising expenses make it difficult for small businesses to maintain competitive pricing while trying to attain high profitability (Tarabishy, 2022). In Eastern Africa, Tanzania, the performance of SMEs has been negatively impacted as gaining a competitive advantage and market share has become increasingly difficult amid intensifying competition, operational challenges, and resource constraints (Kioria et al., 2025).

Nigerian SMEs are not different from other developing countries. According to the SMEs' Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) (2020), SMEs account for a significant portion of Nigeria's business landscape. Yet, there are major obstacles to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) success, which are causing their market share and operational efficacy to decline (Ojochide & Oluwaseyi, 2024; Sami, 2024). Within five years, more than 95% of SMEs fail, compared to more than 50% in the first year. This statistic shows how inconsistent SME operations are in the country, as many businesses struggle to make a profit (Ezeilo & Ike, 2024; Gajere, 2023). SMEs' profitability drastically decreased as many SME owners reported that their profit margins fell by as much as 30–40% since COVID-19 started,

accompanied by inflation making operations more expensive, which has further reduced profits (Atitebi, 2024). Gaining a competitive advantage and expanding market share are increasingly challenging for SMEs in Nigeria, as evidenced by a dramatic 45% decline in the number of SMEs from 246,200 in 2020 to just 170,098 in 2022, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (Ebi, 2024). Nigerian SMEs are now fewer in number, but their competitiveness and ability to gain or hold market share in the country's dynamic economy have also been undermined (Ayobami et al., 2024).

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) contribute to national income by serving as a link between people and essential goods and services, and despite these contributions, SMEs' performance is considered low. SMEs' performance has not met expectations due to challenges in competitive aggressiveness and proactiveness, leading to a decline in market share and overall business performance (Kabuoh et al., 2020). This can be attributed to the low level of innovation among SME leaders (Nnorom et al., 2023). Entrepreneurial leaders often prioritize short-term survival over long-term innovation, worsening these issues and leaving SMEs vulnerable to larger competitors with more robust risk management frameworks (Apaloo & Bright, 2022). Different studies have examined the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on performance across different regions (Asad et al., 2024; Imran & Aldaas, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021; Tukiran et al., 2021). However, their findings remain inconsistent due to variations in regional characteristics, industry dynamics, and research methodologies. Despite this growing body of literature, there is a significant research gap in Nigeria, particularly in the context of Lagos State. The performance of SMEs is crucial to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy; however, small and medium enterprises have experienced a notable decline in business performance due to a combination of economic, structural, and managerial challenges (Otokiti et al., 2022; Yakubu et al., 2024). The aforementioned calls for the objective of this study which examined the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on the business performance of selected Small and Medium-scale Enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria.

To achieve the above objective, a research question and hypothesis were formulated;

Research Question

What is the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on business performance of selected Small and Medium-scale Enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H_0: Entrepreneurial leadership strategies have no significant effect on business performance of selected Small and Medium-scale Enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Review of conceptual, empirical and theoretical views of both independent and dependent variables of this study were done in this section.

Entrepreneurial Leadership Strategies

Entrepreneurial leadership strategies can be defined as methods for organizing and guiding a group to achieve a common goal by employing proactive entrepreneurial behaviors such as optimizing risk, innovating to seize opportunities, taking personal responsibility, and managing change within dynamic environments for the benefit of the organization (Pauceanu et al., 2021). This form of leadership emphasizes the cultivation of entrepreneurial individuals and teams who leverage their creative potential to generate value, using leadership practices that foster self-generation, selfreflection, and self-correction among employees (Mendo et al., 2023). In the words of Nguyen et al. (2021), entrepreneurial leadership strategies include leadership styles that create visionary scenarios to mobilize participants toward the discovery and exploitation of strategic value creation. Mehmood et al. (2021) describe entrepreneurial leadership strategies as a relational process that goes beyond individual leader traits to emphasize collaboration, opportunity identification, and action in uncertain contexts.

Entrepreneurial leadership strategies offer several key advantages, including fostering innovation, enhancing organizational resilience, and driving sustainable growth. By encouraging teams to think creatively and develop ground-breaking solutions, entrepreneurial leaders improve team morale through empowerment and a sense of ownership (Pitassi, 2024). Moreover, entrepreneurial leadership strategies drive industry changes by motivating and inspiring progress, especially when its innovative vision helps the company create new markets or growth phases (Tukiran et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial leaders inspire their teams to pursue challenging goals and experiment with new ideas, providing feedback and support to foster growth (Hussain & Li, 2022). By centralizing responsibility and building a positive work environment, entrepreneurial leaders enhance employee morale, reduce turnover, and increase profitability, positioning organizations for sustained success (Asad et al., 2024). In this study, entrepreneurial leadership strategies are defined as leadership strategies that combine the innovative, risk-taking mindset of an entrepreneur with traditional leadership skills to guide and inspire a team or organization. Entrepreneurial leadership strategies are measured in this study using innovativeness, adaptability, risk taking and creativity.

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is the capacity of an organization to conceive and implement new ideas, products, processes, or services that provide value and enhance its performance (Khan et al., 2022). It plays a pivotal role in helping firms gain a competitive advantage and achieve long-term success, especially in markets that are evolving rapidly (Rezaei & Ortt, 2018). Innovativeness does not only refer to the development of entirely new products or services, but also to the modification and refinement of existing processes and business models to adapt to changing consumer needs and market conditions (McKinsey, 2023). Innovativeness offers some advantages for organizations. First and foremost, it provides a competitive advantage by helping firms differentiate themselves from their competitors, enhancing their market position, and cultivating customer loyalty (Khan et al., 2022). It enhances business performance by fostering the development of new products, services, and processes, which

can lead to increased efficiency and cost savings, as well as higher revenue streams through market expansion and customer loyalty (Hacardiaux et al., 2024).

Innovativeness faces several significant challenges and disadvantages that can hinder its successful implementation. Financial constraints are among the most critical barriers, limiting firms' ability to invest in research and development or innovation activities, particularly for start-ups and small enterprises (Alonso et al., 2024). Demand uncertainty and market obstacles, such as a lack of customer interest or dominance by established firms, also reduce the likelihood of innovation success (Volkov et al., 2021). Organizational factors like high bureaucracy, poor communication, resistance from middle management, and risk aversion impede the adoption and diffusion of innovative ideas (Koc & Bozdag, 2025). In the context of this study, innovativeness is defined as an organization's capacity to develop and implement new ideas, products, or processes that lead to improved efficiency, competitiveness, and value creation.

Adaptability

Adaptability is broadly defined as the ability or willingness to change to suit different conditions or environments. It involves adjusting behavior, thoughts, or strategies to effectively respond to new or changing situations (Askar et al., 2021). Adaptability is also defined as the ability or willingness to change to suit different conditions, emphasizing the importance of this quality in dynamic work contexts (Hamida et al., 2021). Similarly, Mlote et al. (2024) describe adaptability as "the capacity to make appropriate responses to changed or changing situations," emphasizing behavioral modification in response to environmental demands. From a psychological and developmental perspective, adaptability is seen as a self-regulation process that promotes a good fit between a person and their environment, supporting psychological health and positive outcomes such as employability and work engagement (Rossier, 2024).

Adaptability offers significant benefits that enhance an entrepreneur's ability to succeed in a rapidly changing business environment. One primary advantage is the capacity to respond swiftly to changing market conditions, customer demands, and emerging opportunities. Adaptable entrepreneurs can pivot their strategies, embrace innovation, and seize new growth opportunities, which helps them stay relevant and competitive (Ibrahim & Adeniyi, 2024). Another key benefit of entrepreneurial adaptability is the development of stronger relationships and a customer-centric approach. Adaptability, while a crucial trait for entrepreneurs, presents some challenges and disadvantages. One major challenge is the constant demand for learning and unlearning as market conditions, technologies, and customer preferences change rapidly. Entrepreneur have to stay agile and continuously update their skills, which can be mentally and physically exhausting. This continuous push to remain flexible can spread entrepreneurs too thin, making it hard to focus deeply on any single core aspect of their business (Hendrik et al., 2024; Ibrahim & Adeniyi, 2024). In this study, entrepreneurial adaptability is defined as an entrepreneur's ability to adjust and respond effectively to changes in the market, environment, or business model.

Risk Taking

Risk-taking in entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability to make decisions that involve uncertainty, potential loss, and the possibility of failure, a fundamental component of entrepreneurship (Khan et al., 2022). It embodies the courage to step outside the comfort zone, challenge the status quo, and explore uncharted territories in the pursuit of goals or rewards (Brown et al., 2019). Risk-taking is often associated with entrepreneurship, where individuals or organizations venture into new markets, introduce innovative products, or undertake financial investments with varying levels of uncertainty and potential rewards (Guo & Jiang, 2020). Risk-taking brings adequate advantages to entrepreneurs and organizations. Risk-taking is important because it drives innovation, fosters growth, and allows for adaptation to changing surroundings. It is a critical component of entrepreneurial behavior and a catalyst for exploring new opportunities and market niches (Dvorsky et al., 2021). One disadvantage of risk-taking is that it exposes individuals and organizations to financial and livelihood uncertainties, which can demoralize participants and reduce overall willingness to engage in innovative but uncertain activities (Engidaw, 2022). The non-observability of risk and effort complicates the design of incentive systems that effectively encourage risk-taking without imposing excessive personal or organizational costs (Saiyed, 2025). This study defines risk-taking as the act of engaging in behaviors or decisions that involve exposure to uncertainty or potential loss, with the hope or expectation of achieving a desired outcome or reward.

Creativity

Creativity is broadly defined as the capacity to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating, or entertaining oneself and others (Beaty & Kenett, 2023). This concept encompasses the ability to view things from new perspectives and to generate unique alternatives, which relies on cognitive qualities such as flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, and openness to new experiences (Green et al., 2024). In psychological literature, creativity is often described as involving both originalities, the production of something novel, and usefulness or appropriateness, meaning that the new idea or product must also serve a purpose or solve a problem effectively (Runco, 2025).

Creativity offers numerous advantages that positively impact individuals and society. It enhances problem-solving skills by enabling people to generate novel and effective solutions, fostering adaptability in various contexts such as work and daily life (Iwon et al., 2021). Creativity also contributes to emotional well-being, as engaging in creative activities can elevate mood, increase happiness, and promote psychological growth, as seen in therapeutic settings and creative professions (Ratcliffe et al., 2022). However, creativity also has its disadvantages and potential costs. Research indicates that creativity can be associated with increased moral flexibility, leading some individuals to justify unethical behavior or dishonesty more easily, which poses ethical challenges in personal and professional domains (Schiemer et al., 2023). Creativity is defined in this study as the ability to form novel and valuable ideas or works using one's imagination, provide new solutions to problems, or new methods to accomplish a goal.

Business Performance

Business performance refers to the ability of enterprises to achieve key business objectives, including profitability, growth, market share, innovation, and sustainability. According to Hussain et al. (2022), business performance is shaped by internal factors such as leadership, financial resources, and innovation capabilities, as well as external influences like market conditions and government policies. The measurement of SME performance often includes both financial indicators, such as revenue growth and profitability, and non-financial indicators, including customer satisfaction and employee engagement (Khan et al., 2022). It is a key indicator of a firm's competitiveness and sustainability, reflecting how well the company attracts and retains customers, penetrates the market, and drives revenue growth (Llovet & Lencioni, 2020). Similarly, according to Emeh (2024), business performance is often seen as a reflection of how effectively a business organization can achieve its objectives, including financial, operational, and strategic goals.

Achieving strong performance provides numerous advantages for businesses. One of the most significant benefits is its contribution to economic growth, as high-performing business organisations drive job creation and GDP expansion (Hussain et al., 2020). Additionally, business enterprises are often at the forefront of innovation due to their agility and ability to target niche markets effectively (Baker & Barlow, 2022). Another advantage is resilience during economic downturns, as businesses with strong performance metrics are better equipped to navigate financial crises and market disruptions (Khan et al., 2022). However, achieving high business performance is not without challenges. One major obstacle is resource constraints, as limited access to financial and human capital can hinder business growth and innovation (Nguyen et al., 2021). Market competition is another significant challenge, with intense rivalry from larger firms often posing threats to SME survival and profitability (Zhang & Liu, 2020). Moreover, operational risks, such as inadequate risk management practices, can expose SMEs to instability during periods of economic uncertainty (Smith & Jones, 2020). Given the review of existing studies, business performance refers to how effectively a business organisation executes its strategies to meet objectives, often measured through financial and non-financial metrics like profitability, productivity, market share, and customer satisfaction, etc.

Entrepreneurial Leadership Strategies and Business Performance

Different studies (Afriyie et al., 2019; Asad et al., 2024; Getaneh Kebede et al., 2024; Ismanu & Kusmintarti, 2019; Kimathi, 2021; Messikh, 202l; Nguyen et al., 2021; Nor-Aishah et al., 2020; Omede & Aghanenu, 2021; Ofosu et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2021; Senthilkumar, 2020; Sulistyo & Ayuni, 2020; Tukiran et al., 2021; Udriyah et al., 2019) have been carried out on entrepreneurial leadership strategies and business performance in different contexts with mixed results. Rahman et al. (2021) examined whether risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactivity affect the business performance of SMEs in Bangladesh. The Result of the study revealed that risk-taking had a positive effect on SME performance. This indicates that SMEs willing to undertake calculated risks are more likely to achieve better growth, profitability, and competitive advantage in dynamic market conditions. This suggests that embracing risk-taking as part of entrepreneurial orientation can enhance SME success in emerging economies like Bangladesh.

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) Theory

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) theory, first propounded by Danny Miller in 1983, is grounded on the assumption that certain firm-level strategic postures, namely innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness, are central to understanding and measuring a firm's entrepreneurial behavior and its impact on performance (Wales et al., 2020). These core dimensions reflect a company's willingness to engage in product-market innovation, undertake ventures with uncertain outcomes, and proactively seize opportunities ahead of competitors, thereby shaping the organization's strategic decision-making and actions (Mrabet & Barka, 2023). The theory assumes that firms exhibiting high levels of EO are more likely to achieve superior innovation and performance outcomes, although the relationship may vary depending on contextual factors such as environment and organizational structure (Cheng et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) theory has been supported and developed by several key scholars. Jeffrey and Dennis, who initially helped define EO as a firm's propensity for innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness, continue to be influential in recent research emphasizing EO's role in driving firm performance (Covin & Slevin, 1989; Miller, 2011; Wales et al., 2013). Clark et al. (2025) have advanced entrepreneurial orientation theory by developing and validating an individual entrepreneurial orientation scale that measures entrepreneurial dispositions and behavior at the individual level, highlighting the multidimensional nature of entrepreneurial orientation beyond the firm level. Additionally, studies by Wales et al. (2020) have underscored entrepreneurial orientations' strategic importance in dynamic markets, showing how they motivate firms to innovate, take risks, and proactively pursue opportunities, thus enhancing entrepreneurial performance (Wales et al., 2020; Yi et al., 2025).

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) theory has faced several criticisms from recent scholars highlighting its limitations and inconsistencies. One major criticism is its oversimplification and unidimensional approach, which fails to capture the diverse and evolving entrepreneurial behaviors within firms, thereby challenging EO's longevity and relevance (Cowden & Tang, 2021). The Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) theory provides a foundation for understanding how entrepreneurial leadership strategies, qualities such as innovativeness, adaptability, risk-taking, and creativity, affect business performance in Lagos State SMEs by emphasizing these traits as key dimensions that drive firm proactiveness, innovation, and risk propensity. EO theory explains how entrepreneurial leadership strategies shape SMEs' internal orientation toward opportunity-seeking and innovation, which drives sustainable competitive advantage and improved financial and market performance in Lagos State's dynamic business environment.

Methodology

The positivist research philosophy and quantitative research approach were adopted to guide the research process. The study adopted survey research design. The study population consisted of 11,643 registered SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The Taro Yamani Formula was used to determine the sample size of 426 SME owners/managers. An adapted questionnaire

was used, and data were collected using a valid and reliable questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranging from 0.7 to 0.9. The response rate was 92.5%. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential tools. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine the effect of the variables using a 5% significance level, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27.

Analysis: Data Analysis, Results, and Discussion of Findings

The research questions were answered via the descriptive tables. Analysis of the variables was done using the percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation which described the dependent and independent variables of the research. The research question instruction requested each respondent to respond based on their level of agreement with the statements which was done on a six-point Likert-type scale.

Response Rate

The researcher distributed 426 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents, of which 394 copies of the distributed questionnaire were duly filled, returned, and used for this analysis. This represents a response rate of 92.5% of the population employed in the study, which was considered an excellent response rate according to survey research benchmarks, where rates above 80% are deemed excellent.

Restatement of Research Objective and Research Question

Objective: Evaluate the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on business performance.

Research Question: What is the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on business

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. To actualize this, respondents were asked to evaluate various statements related to different components of the entrepreneurial leadership strategies. The descriptive statistics for the entrepreneurial leadership strategies components were presented in Tables 1 to 4 that cannot be presented due to limited number of pages required, followed with an analysis and interpretation. Additionally, the descriptive statistics for business performance components was presented on Tables accordingly followed by their interpretations. These points formed the weights for calculating the score for each item.

Restatement of Research Hypothesis

$\mathbf{H_0}$: Entrepreneurial leadership strategies have no significant effect on business performance.

To test the hypothesis that states that entrepreneurial leadership strategies have no significant effect on the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, multiple linear regression was utilized, and the results are presented in Table 1 below

Table 1: Summary of multiple regression analysis for the effect entrepreneurial leadership strategies on business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria

Model	N = 394							
	B	**t**	**Sig.**	**R**	**R^2**	**Adj. R^2**	**F (4, 389)**	**ANOVA**
(Constant)	1.709	9.880	.000	.685[a]	.469	.464	85.894	.000[b]
Innovativeness	.096	4.216	.000					
Adaptability	**.055**	**2.116**	**.035**					
Risk taking	.280	8.996	.000					
Creativity	.218	6.724	.000					

i. Dependent Variable: Business performance
j. Predictors: (Constant), Innovativeness, Adaptability, Risk taking, Creativity

Source: Researchers' Findings, 2026

Interpretation

Table 1 presents the multiple regression analysis results for the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results indicate that innovativeness ($\beta = 0.096$, $t = 4.216$, $p<0.05$), adaptability ($\beta = 0.055$, $t = 2.116$, $p<0.05$), risk taking ($\beta = 0.280$, $t = 8.996$, $p<0.05$) and creativity ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 6.724$, $p<0.05$) all have positive and significant effects on business performance. Therefore, SMEs should emphasize these factors of entrepreneurial leadership strategies to improve their business performance.

The R value of 0.685 supports this result, indicating that entrepreneurial leadership strategies have a strong positive relationship with the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The coefficient of multiple determination (Adj. $R^2 = 0.464$) suggests that approximately 46.4% of variations in business performance can be attributed to entrepreneurial leadership strategies, while the remaining 53.6% is explained by other factors not included in the model. The predictive and prescriptive multiple regression models are thus expressed as follows:

$BP= 1.709+ 0.096INV + 0.055ADP + 0.280RT + 0.218CY+ U_i$--------Eqn i (Predictive Model)

$BP= 0.096INV + 0.280RT + 0.218CY+ U_i$--------Eqn ii (Prescriptive Model)

Where:
BP = Business Performance
INV = Innovativeness

ADP = Adaptability
RT = Risk Taking
CY = Creativity

The regression model suggests that if entrepreneurial leadership strategies were held constant at zero, business performance would be 1.709. The predictive model highlights that all the entrepreneurial leadership strategies factors have a significant and positive effect on business performance. The prescriptive model indicates that increasing entrepreneurial leadership strategies (innovativeness, risk taking and creativity) by one unit would lead to increases of 0.096, 0.280, and 0.218 in business performance respectively.

Additionally, the F-statistics (df = 4, 389) = 85.894 at p = 0.000 ($p<0.05$) confirms that the overall model is statistically significant in predicting the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on business performance. This underscores the importance of entrepreneurial leadership strategies as a determinant of business performance in selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results suggest that SMES should focus on enhancing entrepreneurial leadership strategies, particularly innovativeness, risk-taking and creativity, to improve business performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that entrepreneurial leadership strategies have no significant effect on business performance, is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the effect of entrepreneurial leadership strategies on the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis, which revealed that entrepreneurial leadership strategies have a significant and positive effect on business performance. The findings confirm that risk taking and creativity are crucial determinants of business performance in these organisations.

These results align with prior research on entrepreneurial leadership strategies and business performance of SMEs and other organisations. However, the differences in research contexts may account for variations in findings across studies. For instance, Rahman et al. (2021) examined whether risk-taking, innovativeness, and proactivity affect the business performance of SMEs in Bangladesh. The Result of the study revealed that entrepreneurial leadership strategies such as risk-taking had a positive effect on SME performance which agrees with the findings of this study. Result of this also aligns with that of Omede and Aghanenu (2021) who indicated in their study that innovation had a significant effect on SMEs' performance in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. This corroborates the result of the study by Ofosu et al. (2023), which revealed that innovation had a positive effect on the organisational performance in SMEs in Ghana.

This study findings, also agrees with the result of Tukiran et al. (2021) in their study which revealed that entrepreneurial leadership strategies had a significant effect on overall organizational performance. This is also in line with the result of the study of Kimathi (2021), which revealed that creativity had a positive and significant effect on the performance of

small and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya. The empirical results of the study by Nguyen et al. (2021) also support this by revealing that entrepreneurial leadership strategies had a positive effect on the performance of IT SMEs.

Theoretically, the findings of this study support Schumpeter's entrepreneurial innovation theory by demonstrating through multiple regression analysis that entrepreneurial leadership strategies, manifested via risk-taking and creativity, significantly enhance business performance in Lagos SMEs. This theory posits entrepreneurs as innovators who drive economic progress by introducing novel combinations in products, processes, or markets, often entailing calculated risks to overcome inertia, "creative destruction," a dynamic directly mirrored in the study's confirmation of these traits as pivotal performance drivers. The empirical evidence thus corroborates the theory's emphasis on creativity and risk propensity as essential mechanisms for superior outcomes, validating its relevance to resource-constrained contexts like Nigerian SMEs.

However, the findings of this study contradict the results of Nor-Aishah et al. (2020), who revealed in their study that entrepreneurial leadership strategies had no significant effect on the sustainable performance of manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia. This suggests that entrepreneurial leadership strategies alone may not be sufficient to drive sustainability outcomes; other factors or variables might play more critical roles in achieving sustainable performance in these SME.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that entrepreneurial leadership strategies affected the business performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. These results clearly show how vital it is for SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, to put entrepreneurial leadership strategies such as innovativeness, adaptability, risk-taking and creativity into practice to boost their business performance. The study's findings prove that focusing on these simple, yet powerful approaches can be beneficial, helping these businesses stand stronger in a tough market. In short, leaders of SMEs must make these strategies a top priority to drive performance.

Based on the specific findings of the study, the following recommendations were proposed for the management of SMEs:

1. Owners/managers of SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, should actively cultivate entrepreneurial leadership strategies by promoting innovativeness through ideageneration workshops, fostering adaptability via flexible decision-making processes, encouraging calculated risk-taking with pilot projects, and nurturing creativity via team brainstorming sessions. These steps, grounded in the study's findings, will directly enhance competitive advantage by enabling quicker market responses, unique offerings, and sustained outperformance against rivals. Prioritizing leadership training programs tailored to these traits will empower managers to drive long-term growth in a dynamic environment.
2. There is a need for managers in Lagos State, Nigeria, to prioritize embedding entrepreneurial leadership strategies traits into daily operations by running regular

innovation workshops to spark new ideas, building adaptability through cross-training and flexible workflows, supporting calculated risk-taking with small-scale trials, and boosting creativity via collaborative brainstorming. These practical steps, directly supported by the study's findings on productivity gains, will streamline processes, motivate teams, and lift overall output. Committing to targeted leadership development ensures these SMEs thrive amid local challenges.

3. It is recommended for SME managers to actively foster entrepreneurial leadership strategies by organizing regular innovation sessions to generate fresh ideas, promoting adaptability through agile team structures and quick pivots, embracing calculated risk-taking via low-stakes experiments, and encouraging creativity with open brainstorming forums. These targeted actions are backed by the study's findings on profitability improvements. The leadership of SMEs should champion entrepreneurial leadership strategies by hosting frequent innovation challenges to uncover new opportunities, enhancing adaptability with responsive market monitoring and flexible strategies, promoting calculated risk-taking through targeted pilot initiatives, and stimulating creativity via diverse team collaborations.
4. The management of SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, should embrace entrepreneurial leadership strategies by launching regular innovation workshops to spark fresh ideas, building adaptability through agile planning and team flexibility, encouraging calculated risk-taking with small pilot projects, and fueling creativity via open brainstorming sessions. These straightforward steps, drawn directly from the study's findings on business performance gains, will streamline operations, boost efficiency, motivate staff, and drive overall business performance.

References

Afriyie, S., Du, J., & Ibn Musah, A. A. (2019). Innovation and marketing performance of SME in an emerging economy: the moderating effect of transformational leadership. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, *9*(1), 2-25. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40497-019-0165-3.

Ahmed, N. U., Montagno, R. V. & Firenze, R. J. (2021). Operations strategy and organizational performance: an empirical study. *Int. J. Oper. Prod. Manag*, 16, 41-53. https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3551044.

Alonso, A. D., Vu, O. T. K., Tran, T. D., Nguyen, T. T., Dang, Q. T., & Maheshwari, G. (2024). Perceived advantages and disadvantages of information communication technology adoption among restaurants in an emerging economy: A diffusion of innovations view. *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* 122, 103837. https://ouci.dntb.gov.ua/en/works/7Xk616r9/ .

Apaloo, S., & Bright, D. (2022). The effect of risk management practices on performance of small and medium scale enterprises, *Enterprise risk management*, *7*(1), 1-16. https://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/erm/article/view/19287

Asad, M., Bait Ali Sulaiman, M. A., Ba Awain, A. M. S., Alsoud, M., Allam, Z., & Asif, M. U. (2024). Green entrepreneurial leadership, and performance of entrepreneurial firms: does green product innovation mediates?. *Cogent Business & Management*, *11*(1), 2355685. https://ideas.repec.org/a/taf/oabmxx/v11y2024i1p2355685.html.

Asare, E. K., Nketia, J., Beldona, S., & Wysong, S. (2021). The role of culture on SME access to credit: Implications for developing nations, *Journal of Accounting and Finance*, *21*(5). https://articlegateway.com/index.php/JAF/article/view/4734.

Askar, R., Bragança, L., & Gervásio, H. (2021). Adaptability of buildings: a critical review on the concept evolution. *Applied sciences, 11*(10), 4483. https://www.mdpi.com/20763417/11/10/4483.

Ata, A. (2025). *The role of SMEs in Asia's economic growth.* https://www.smefinanceforum.org/post/the-role-of-smes-in-asias-economic-growth

Atitebi, A. (2024). Building resilience Strategies for MSME success in a changing landscape. Chromeextension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/msme-survey-report-july-2024.pdf .

Ayobami, K, A., Fadekemi, A. A. (2024). Insecurity, inflation, and the sustainability of Small and Medium Enterprise in Nigeria, *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review, 7*(6), 477-481. https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2024.7623.

Baker, T., & Barlow, D. (2022). The role of small businesses in innovation: A case study approach. *Journal of Business Research*, *135*, 345–352. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.06.045.

Beaty, R. E., & Kenett, Y. N. (2023). Associative thinking at the core of creativity. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, *27*(7), 671-683. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2023-78063-001.

Bindroo, V., Mariadoss, B., J. & Pillai, R., G. (2022). Customer clusters as sources of innovation-based competitive advantage. *Journal of International Marketing, 20*(3), 17-33. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1509/jim.11.0159.

Brown, J. R., Wilson, M. A., & Smith, K. R. (2019). Risk-taking and corporate policies. *Journal of Financial Economics, 134*(2), 475-500. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228196777_CEO_Personal_RiskTaking_and_Corporate_Policies.

Cárdenas, D. L. B., Huerta, R. M., Castro, E. L., & Valenzuela, K. C. S. (2022). Innovation management in small and medium enterprises: A bibliometric analysis approach between 1985 and 2019. *Cuadernos de Gestión*, *22*(2), 155-166. https://ideas.repec.org/a/ehu/ cuader/56550.html.

Cheng, P., Wu, S., & Xiao, J. (2025). Exploring the impact of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation on entrepreneurial performance in the context of environmental uncertainty, *Scientific reports*, *15*(1), 1913. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-86344-w .

Clark, D. R., Covin, J. G., & Pidduck, R. J. (2025). Individual entrepreneurial orientation: Scale development and validation. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 49*(3), 668-710. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/10422587241279900 .

Covin, J. G., & Slevin, D. P. (1989). Strategic management of small firms in hostile and benign environments. *Strategic Management Journal, 10*(1), 75–87. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250100107.

Cowden, B., & Tang, J. (2021). Enhancing entrepreneurial orientation research: From theorizing to measuring. In *Entrepreneurial Orientation: Epistemological, Theoretical, and Empirical Perspectives* (Vol. 22, pp. 69-86). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348536897_Enhancing_Entrepreneurial_Orient ation_Research_From_Theorizing_to_Measuring.

Dvorsky, J., Belas, J., Gavurova, B., & Brabenec, T. (2021). Business risk management in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja, 34*(1),1690-1708. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1331677X.2020.1844588.

Ebi, U. (2024, May 29). *Number of SMEs in Nigeria Decline by 45%, NBS Data Shows*. https://businesselitesafrica.com/number-of-smes-in-nigeria-decline-by-45-nbs-datashows/?v=66e10e9ff65e.

Ezeilo., F. I., & Ike., R. C. (2024). Government policies and performance of SMEs in Nigeria. (a study of selected SMEs in Asaba Delta State, Nigeria). *Advance Journal of Management, Accounting and Finance, 9*(6), 49–70. Retrieved from: https://aspjournals.org/ajmaf/index.php/ajmaf/article/view/99 .

Emeh, N. (2024). Management of artificial intelligence and the performance of manufacturing firms in Enugu State Nigeria. *Tec Empresarial*, *6*(1). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392359749_.

Engidaw, A. E. (2022). Small businesses and their challenges during COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries: in the case of Ethiopia. *Journal of innovation and entrepreneurship, 11*(1), 1. https://innovation-entrepreneurship.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13731021-00191-3 .

Gamage, N., Kumara, S., Kumara Naradda Gamage, S., Ekanayake, E., Abeyrathne, G., Prasanna, R., ... & Rajapakshe, P. (2020). Global challenges and survival strategies of the SMES in the era of economic globalization: A systematic review (98419). https://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/98419/.

Gajere, M. C. (2023). Strategic orientation and performance of SMEs in Nigeria: moderating role of competitive intensity. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, *13*(1), 7. https://ideas.repec.org/a/spr/jglont/v13y2023i1d10.1007_s40497-023-00347-3.html.

Gibson, J. A., & Bhattacharya, A. (2023, September 26). *Skills crisis holding back 7 in 10 SMEs from scaling up.* https://www.smf.co.uk/skills-crisis-holding-back-7-in-10-smes-fromscaling-up/.

Green, A. E., Beaty, R. E., Kenett, Y. N., & Kaufman, J. C. (2024). The process definition of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, *36*(3), 544-572. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2024-29685-001.

Guo, Z., & Jiang, W. (2020). Risk-taking for entrepreneurial new entry: Risk-taking dimensions and contingencies. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, *16*(2), 739-781. https://ideas.repec.org/a/spr/intemj/v16y2020i2d10.1007_s11365-019-00567-8.html

Hacardiaux, T., Tancrez, J. S., Defryn, C., & Verdonck, L. (2024). The impact of product characteristics and innovativeness on the benefits of collaboration. *International Transactions in Operational Research, 31*(1), 370-395. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/itor.13158

Hamida, M. B., Jylhä, T., Remøy, H., & Gruis, V. (2023). Circular building adaptability and its determinants–A literature review. *International Journal of Building Pathology and Adaptation, 41*(6), 47-69. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ijbpa-112021-0150/full/html.

Hendrik, N., Ala, H. M., Fanggidae, H. C., & Manafe, M. W. N. (2024). The Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Mindset and the Adaptability and Resilience of Business Owners During Economic Crises. *Technopreneurship and Educational Development Review (TENDER)*, *1*(3), 93-100. https://journal.literasisainsnusantara.com/index.php/tender/article/view/224.

Hussain, N., & Li, B. (2022). Entrepreneurial leadership and entrepreneurial success: The role of knowledge management processes and knowledge entrepreneurship. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 829959. https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.829959/full.

Imran, R., & Aldaas, R. E. (2020). Entrepreneurial leadership: a missing link between perceived organizational support and organizational performance, *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, *16*(4), 377-388. https://pure.hud.ac.uk/en/publications/entrepreneurial-leadership-a-missing-link-betweenperceived-organ.

Iwon, K., Skibinska, J., Jasielska, D., & Kalwarczyk, S. (2021). Elevating subjective well-being through physical exercises: an intervention study. Frontiers in psychology, 12, 702678. https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.702678/full .

IBGE (2021). Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (2021), SMEs Report.

Ibrahim, I. D., & Adeniyi, A. (2024). Cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset to address unemployment through innovation, Adaptability and Interdisciplinary Research. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies*, *6*(1), 1-11. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ijbpa-11-2021-0150/full/html.

Ismanu, S., & Kusmintarti, A. (2019). Innovation and firm performance of small and medium enterprises. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, *8*, 312. http://buscompress.com/uploads/3/4/9/8/34980536/riber_8-s2_28_h18-093_312-323.pdf

Kindström, D., Carlborg, P., & Nord, T. (2024). Challenges for growing SMEs: A managerial perspective. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *62*(2), 700-723. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00472778.2022.2082456

Kioria, K., Kavale, D. S., & Chebii, D. P. (2025). The moderating effect of SMEs size on competitive advantage and the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Mombasa Island. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *9*(1), 48964908.

Keelson, S. A., Cúg, J., Amoah, J., Petráková, Z., Addo, J. O., & Jibril, A. B. (2024). The influence of market competition on SMEs' performance in emerging economies: does process innovation moderate the relationship? *Economies*, *12*(11), 282. https://doi.org/10.3390/economies12110282.

Kabuoh, M. N., Iwuchukwu, R. C., Onyia, V. A., & Akintaro, A. A. (2020). Competitive aggressiveness and market share of selected small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos State Nigeria. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research, 6*(5), 576-585. https://ideas.repec.org/a/arp/tjssrr/2020p576-585.html .

Khan, M. A., Khan, A., & Ali Shah, S. Z. (2022). The impact of entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance in SMEs: The mediating role of innovation capability. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge, 7*(1), 23-30. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/21582440231203035 .

Koc, T., & Bozdag, E. (2025). Organizational innovativeness: the role of innovation adoption capability. *Engineering Management Journal, 37*(2), 135-149. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10429247.2024.2372517 .

Kimathi, B. M. (2021). Effect of creativity on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Kenya. *Journal of International Business, Innovation and Strategic Management*, *5*(1), 94-108. https://www.jibism.org/core_files/index.php/JIBISM/article/view/147.

Liberto, D., James M., & Velasquez, V. (2024, June 19). *Small and midsize enterprise (SME): definition and types around the world*. https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/smalland midsizeenterprises.asp.

Llovet, J. M., & Lencioni, R. (2020). mRECIST for HCC: Performance and novel refinements. *Journal of hepatology*, *72*(2), 288-306. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhep.2019.09.026.

Madgavka, A., Piccitto, M., White, O. (2024, May 2). *A microscope on small businesses: Spotting opportunities to boost productivity*. https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/ourresearch/a-microscope-on-small-businesses-spotting-opportunities-to-boost-productivity.

Mendo, A. Y., Singh, S. K., Yantu, I., Hinelo, R., Hakri Bokingo, A., Febriani Dungga, E., ... & Win, T. (2023). Entrepreneurial leadership and global management of COVID-19: A bibliometric study. F1000Research, 12, 31. https://f1000research.com/articles/12-31 .

Mehmood, M. S., Jian, Z., Akram, U., & Tariq, A. (2021). Entrepreneurial leadership: The key to develop creativity in organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *42*(3), 434-452. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/lodj-012020-0008/full/html .

McKinsey & Company. (2023). *What is risk-taking in entrepreneurship?* Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-risk-taking-inentrepreneurship.

Mlote, D. S., Budig, M., & Cheah, L. (2024). Adaptability of buildings: a systematic review of current research. *Frontiers in Built Environment*, *10*, 1376759. https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/builtenvironment/articles/10.3389/fbuil.2024.1376759/full .

Messikh, A. (2022). Does entrepreneurial risk-taking affect the business performance of Microenterprises? Evidence from Skikda in Algeria. *Nase Gospodarstvo: NG*, *68*(2), 65-77. https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/ngoe-2022-0012 .

Mrabet, M. & Barka, H. (2023) Entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance: the moderating effects of the CEO's characteristics. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, **13**, 1024-1043. doi: 10.4236/ajibm.2023.1310057.

Miller, D. (2011). Miller (1983) revisited: A reflection on EO research and some suggestions for the future. Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 35(5), 873–894. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2011.00497.x.

Mugano, G., & Dorasamy, N. (2024). SMEs perspective in Africa. *Springer Books*. https://books.google.com/books/about/SMES_Perspective_in_Africa.html?id=aK MrEQAAQBAJ.

Nguyen, P. V., Huynh, H. T. N., Lam, L. N. H., Le, T. B., & Nguyen, N. H. X. (2021). The impact of entrepreneurial leadership on SMEs' performance: the mediating effects of organizational factors. *Heliyon*, *7*(6). https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844021014298

Nnorom, G., Ikponmwonba, P., & Enyinnaya, G. (2023). Innovation and competitiveness of selected small and medium-scale enterprises (SMES) in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Adeleke University Journal of Business and Social Sciences (AUJBSS)*, 176-184. https://aujbss.adelekeuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/aujbss/article/view/63 .

Ojochide, P. F., & Oluwaseyi, P. A. (2024). Enhancing market performance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria through digital transformation. *African Journal of Business and Economic Development*, *4*(1), 35-43. https://www.openjournals.ijaar.org/index.php/ajbed/article/view/369 .

Otokiti, B. O., Igwe, A. N., Ewim, C. P., Ibeh, A. I., & Sikhakhane-Nwokediegwu, Z. (2022). A framework for developing resilient business models for Nigerian SMEs in response to economic disruptions. *Int J Multidiscip Res Growth Eval*, *3*(1), 647-659. https://www.allmultidisciplinaryjournal.com/uploads/archives/20250211180537_MGE2025-1-344.1.pdf

Omede, K., & Aghanenu, A. (2021). Innovation and entrepreneurship performance in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. *Journal of Management: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)*, *14*(3), 257-275. https://doi.org/10.35508/jom.v14i3.4810 .

Pauceanu, A. M., Rabie, N., Moustafa, A., & Jiroveanu, D. C. (2021). Entrepreneurial leadership and sustainable development a systematic literature review. *Sustainability*, *13*(21), 11695. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/21/11695.

Rahman, F. B. A., Akbarruddin, M. N. A., Osman, S., Ismail, F. H., Mahmut, I. B., & Musa, R. B. (2023). Financial Sustainable of Bumiputera SMEs: Food Processing Industry Perspectives. *Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *13*(5), 185212.

Rezaei, J., & Ortt, R. (2018). Entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance: The mediating role of functional performances. *Management Research Review, 41*(7), 878-900. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/mrr-03-2017-0092/full/html

Rossier, J. (2024). *Adaptability. Institute of Psychology, University of Lausanne.* https://serval.unil.ch/resource/serval:BIB_8B46A8E9DDFB.P001/REF.pdf.

Ratcliffe, E., Gatersleben, B., Sowden, P. T., & Korpela, K. M. (2022). Understanding the perceived benefits of nature for creativity. *The Journal of creative behavior*, *56*(2), 215-231. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jocb.525.

Runco, M. A. (2025). Updating the standard definition of creativity to account for the artificial creativity of AI. *Creativity Research Journal*, *37*(1), 1-5. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2024-17973-001 .

Silva, D. J. C. D., Matos, G. P. D., Gibbon, A. R. D. O., Veiga, C. P. D., Teixeira, C. S., Lopes, L. F. D., & Pique, J. M. (2025). Barriers to innovation in Brazilian small-and medium-sized enterprises. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*. https://merit.url.edu/en/publications/barriers-to-innovation-in-brazilian-small-andmedium-sized-enterp-2.

Statistics Canada. (2023). Table 33-10-0661-01 Canadian business counts, with employees, december 2022 [Data table]. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid= 3310066101

SMEDAN, (2020) Annual report on small, medium enterprises in Nigeria.

Sami, T. (2024, June 24). *Data reveals number SME's operating in Nigeria declined by 45% in two years.* https://nairametrics.com/2024/05/27/data-reveals-number-smes-operating-innigeria-declined-by-45-in-two-years/ .

Saiyed, A. (2025). AI-Driven Innovations in Fintech: Applications, Challenges, and Future Trends. *International Journal of Electrical and Computer Engineering Research*, *5*(1), 8-15. https://ijecer.org/ijecer/article/view/437 .

Schiemer, B., Schüßler, E., & Theel, T. (2023). Regulating nimbus and focus: Organizing copresence for creative collaboration. *Organization Studies, 44*(4), 545-568. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/01708406221094201 .

Smith, J. A., & Jones, R.B. (2020). Governance structures in family-owned SMEs: Implications for performance and sustainability practices in emerging economies. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, *11*(3), 100351. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfbs.2019.100351 .

Senthilkumar, K. (2021). The influence of entrepreneurial leadership in the performance of micro and small enterprises the case for eastern Tigray, Ethiopia. *Samvad*, *21*, 1-15. https://samvad.sibmpune.edu.in/index.php/samvad/article/download/155246/11355.

Sulistyo, H., & Ayuni, S. (2020). Competitive advantages of SMEs: The roles of innovation capability, entrepreneurial orientation, and social capital. *Contaduría y administración*, *65*(1). https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S0186-10422020000100110&script=sci_abstract&tlng=en.

Tumaku, J., & Agbeko, D. (2024). The relationship between regulatory focus and innovative performance of SMEs in Ghana: The role of entrepreneurial resilience, orientation and learning. *Management Science Letters, 14*(2), 127-138. https://www.growingscience.com/msl/Vol14/msl_2023_22.pdf.

Tarabishy, A. (2022, April 7). *Challenges of Services Sector SMEs in a Developing Country: A Case of Ghana.* https://icsb.org/ayman-tarabishy/challenges-of-services-sector-smes-in-adeveloping-country-a-case-of-ghana/

Tukiran, M., Herlina, E., & Anwar, S. (2021). The effect of entrepreneurial leadership on organizational performance: literature review. *Marginal*, *1*(1), 25-33. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d0d5/8a890712f3c983b75e5396d88cf0077fa817.

Udriyah, U., Tham, J., & Azam, S. J. M. S. L. (2019). The effects of market orientation and innovation on competitive advantage and business performance of textile SMEs. *Management Science Letters*, *9*(9), 1419-1428.

Volkov, D. O., Avramchikova, N. T., Rozhnov, I. P., & Anikina, Y. A. (2021). *Problems of assessing effectiveness of public administration innovative development of Region*.

Wales, W. J., Covin, J. G., & Monsen, E. (2013). Entrepreneurial orientation: The necessity of a multilevel conceptualization. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 7*(2), 101–125. https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1150 .

Wales, W. J., Covin, J. G., & Monsen, E. (2020). Entrepreneurial orientation: The necessity of a multilevel conceptualization. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, *14*(4), 639-660. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/sej.1344.

Yakubu, M., Adamu, A., & Umar, H. U. (2024). Effect of socio-cultural and technological factors on performance of small and medium scale enterpriseS (SMEs) in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *FULafia International Journal of Business and Allied Studies*, *2*(2), 168-189. https://fijbas.org/index.php/FIJBAS/article/view/82 .

Yi, X., Liu, Y., & Makhloufi, A. (2025). Exploring the impact of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation on performance. *Scientific Reports, 15*, Article 86344. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-86344-w.

Zhang, Y., & Liu, X.Y. (2020). Cost structure analysis of small and medium-sized enterprises: Evidence from China's manufacturing sector. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, *31*(5), 1037–1054. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMTM-03-2019-0118 .