



Journal Economic Business Innovation

Journal homepage: <https://analysisdata.co.id>

ISSN: 3047-4108 P-ISSN 3048-3751



Exploring the Role of Entrepreneurial Skills Competence and Networks in Enhancing MSME Performance Evidence from a Developing Economy

Mechila Nandez ^a , Eneolla Esayne ^b

^a Department of Entrepreneurship, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA, Scotland, UK

^b Sustainability, Policies and Innovative Development Research, Etim Umana Street, Eniong Office, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Accepted July 23, 2024
 Revised September 20, 2024
 Publication Oct 10, 2024

Correspondence to Author;

Mechila N

Type; Colaboration Research

Keywords:

Entrepreneurial Skills,
 Market Orientation, Sales
 Orientation, Business
 Networking, Firm
 Performance.

ABSTRACT



Purpose: The objective of this study is to investigate the nexus of relationship among entrepreneurial skills as well as market orientation and sales orientation with business networks and performance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) of a developing economy.

Method: We conducted a strong quantitative research design by using structured questionnaires based on established scales to measure the core variable. MSMEs across various sectors in Nigeria were recruited through a purposive sampling method, and the data were analyzed through multiple regression and mediation method, based on the directions of Baron and Kenny 1986.

Findings: The results show that entrepreneurial competence, market orientation, sales orientation and business networks had direct and indirect relationships with firm performance. The essential in these entrepreneurial characteristics on the overall performance of MSMEs was mediated by entrepreneurial competence as an important factor. Conclusions: These findings underscore the multidimensional nature of MSME performance and present entrepreneurial competencies as important drivers of firm growth and continuity.

Novelty: This study is amongst the first to analyse the mediating role of entrepreneurial competence within the MSME context of a developing country, Nigeria. The research extends knowledge on emerging market entrepreneurial dynamics by integrating multiple environmental perspectives with advanced mediation analysis technique, explaining how why diverse entrepreneurial phenomena work in concert to reward entrepreneurs in emerging markets through business outcomes.

Implications: he study highlights implications for managers of MSMEs, policymakers, and researchers, underlining the significant role of entrepreneurial competency improvement in enhancing business performance. It shows that having a skills, market orientation, and strong business network can help the MSMEs that may benefit them grow stiffened in a competitive market.

@2024 Inovasi Analisis Data Inc, All rights reserved

1. Introduction



Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the important contributors in terms of economic growth, employment generation, and poverty alleviation, with special reference to developing nations (Endris & Kassegn, 2022; Maksimov et al., 2017). MSMEs contribute to more than 80% of employment in Nigeria and provide nearly half of the country's two-point-three trillion GDP (Dorasamy & Kikasu, 2024), making them pillars of economic development. Nonetheless, the success of such enterprises is still sporadic as industries evolve, and consumer behaviors change (Dosi & Nelson, 2010). Current research suggests that entrepreneurial competencies, skills, and market-oriented strategies are key factors in creating successful businesses (Georgiou et al., 2023; Solano Acosta et al., 2018). While government policies are aimed at nurturing and developing enterprises, MSMEs are beset by issues of sustainability and growth (Kundurpi et al., 2021; Shkabatur et al., 2022). As a result, researchers are more frequently analyzing determinants of MSME performance in order to increase their competitiveness and sustainability (Farida & Setiawan, 2022; Lopes de Sousa Jabbour et al., 2020). So, examining how entrepreneurship capabilities, skills and strategies are inter-related is crucial key to the creativity and sustainability in this field.

Limited entrepreneurial skills and inadequate market responsiveness that hampers performance levels is a major issue plaguing MSMEs in Nigeria (Rodríguez-Pose & Wilkie, 2019). Some competencies required for developing entrepreneurial skills include opportunity recognition, risk management, and strategic decision-making, which are critical for competitive markets (Ataei et al., 2020; Hatthakijphonng & Ting, 2019). Unfortunately, a lot of Nigerian entrepreneurs are not trained in this regard, resulting in poor business practices and low profitability (Gebremichael et al., 2023; Kouam & Asongu, 2022; McMullen & Bergman, 2018). Moreover, access to limited financial resources and the absence of meaningful networking opportunities further compound performance challenges (Singh et al., 2022). Thus, studies the existing problems and performance of MSMEs underscore a vital need to address these issues through effective

entrepreneurial exposure, education and skill development programs (Asuncion et al., 2023; Bravo-Ortega et al., 2023). Bridging these gaps demands extensive investigation connecting entrepreneurial skills with essential business outcome indicators (Kriz et al., 2021).

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory is an important theory in the strategic management literature that explores how entrepreneurial skills and competencies internal resources create and sustain competitive advantage and corporate performance (Barney et al., 2010; Teece, 2018). This theory postulates that firms exploit such unique and valuable resources like human capital and strategic capabilities to gain superior performance (Baia et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial competencies, as intangible, apply to a firm and increase innovative ability and the adaptation capability to the market (Monteiro et al., 2019). According to the Resource-Based View (RBV) which focuses on internal resources, market and sales orientations can be regarded as the strategic resources for aligning the business operations with consumer needs and competitive pressures (Moreira et al., 2022; Suoniemi et al., 2020). Drawing on RBV theory, this study contributes to the literature by examining the mediating role of entrepreneurial competencies on the relationship between strategic orientations and the performance of MSMEs.

Past studies have produced somewhat conflicting results about the effects of entrepreneurial capabilities and market orientation on performance. Ciampi et al. (2021), Nguyen et al. (2021), Somwethee et al. (2023) demonstrate a positive correlation between entrepreneurial skills talent and improved business performance concerning improved innovation capacity and operational efficiency. In contrast, Awoloye et al. (2019) observed little to no influence of entrepreneurial training on the profitability of Nigerian MSMEs, attributing this inconsistency to unsteady application of competency frameworks. Khurana et al. (2019), Zhao et al. (2023) highlight market orientation as a means of enhancing the level of competitiveness, Nwankwo and Ugochukwu (2023) note that market orientation will not prove sufficient if the business does not invest equally in relationship management with its customers. These mixed findings highlight the necessity of continuing empirical research on the moderating and mediating roles of entrepreneurial

competencies. Compared to existing studies, this study identifies the interactions of entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, and networking on MSME performance in a developing country context and uncovers under-researched mediation channels.

This study primarily intends to assess the degree of impact of entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation and networking experience on the performance of MSMEs in Nigeria. Moreover, it aims to explore the mediating role of entrepreneurial competencies within these relationships. The results are anticipated to inform the design of better approaches to improving MSME performance in ever-changing business realities. Furthermore, this study is also expected to realize key social implications through the enhanced income generation, employment opportunities, economic stability, and reduction of poverty level. This study aims to develop entrepreneurial competencies to help business owners grow their equitable business to face competition and disrupt through innovation so that they can have an impact on improving the economy of the community.

2. Critical Review

2.1 Entrepreneurial Skills, Entrepreneurial Competence

Skills include opportunity recognition, innovation, and resource management, which all collectively foster entrepreneurial competence (Baron & Tang, 2011). Competency conveys what knowledge and skills are used leading to the outcome of business success. Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013) prove that, people who are superior in strategic thinking and problem-solving, are better competent and make better decisions and also, they are more innovative. Moreover, as Man et al. (2008) highlights that in dynamic market situations make competence comes through entrepreneurial learning and respect. The aforementioned indicates that skills are important to competence whereupon it positively influences the latter and entrepreneurship education programs have positively shown improvements in the aforementioned competencies (Ahmad et al., 2014). This is consistent with Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which states that valuable, non-substitutable

internal resources, such as skills, give rise to sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

H1: Entrepreneurial skills have a positive impact on entrepreneurial competence in MSMEs.

2.2 The link between entrepreneurial skills and firm performance

There are ample management literature available on the relationship of entrepreneurial skills with business performance. In this way, leadership, innovation, and financial acumen which are entrepreneurial skills, directly help a firm in terms of adaptability to market changes and increased profitability (Lerner & Malach-Pines, 2013). Evidence from Oke et al. (2020) show that skilled entrepreneurs in MSMEs achieve higher performance in terms of revenue growth and market share compared to their unskilled peers. Additionally, Rauch and Frese (2007) observed that possessing greater entrepreneurial competencies enhances strategic alignment, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Optimism and taking initiative (opportunity-seeking and risk management) help improve resiliency and innovation ultimately providing Competitive advantages. According to the RBV theory this can be explained as entrepreneurial skills are one of the important internal resources that improve the performance of a firm (Teece et al., 2020). Hence, it is important to strengthen the skills required for entrepreneurship so that our MSMEs achieve successful outcomes in the long run.

H2: Entrepreneurial skills have a positive effect on the business performance of MSMEs.

2.3 Market Orientation and Competence in Entrepreneurship

A firm's entrepreneurial competence is further enhanced through understanding and reacting to customer needs and competitive pressures (Narver & Slater, 1990), which is the philosophy behind market orientation. Sense and Respond Firms (Kohli & Jaworski, 1993) organizations which are consumer-driven, provide every organisation with the opportunity to gain flexible qualities to react to changes in the market. Studies by Chukwuemeka et al. They show how market orientation encourages

innovation, critical thinking, and the strategic foresight that is essential for the necessary competence development (2022). As stated by Nwankwo and Ugochukwu (2023), market orientation practices improve networking capabilities, thus reducing the average entrepreneurial skill set. The strategic value of integrating market intelligence into entrepreneurship abilities is highlighted within the RBV theory as a resource that companies may tap into (Barney, 1991). Therefore, market orientation lays a strong basis for the enhancement of entrepreneurial capability.

H3: Market orientation has an influence on entrepreneurial competence in MSMEs.

2.4 Market Orientation and Firm Performance

Market orientation, which is an essential operational concept driving firm performance based on customer focus, competitor awareness, and integrated marketing (Narver & Slater, 1990). Academic research and practical case-studies, especially in the fields of strategic and marketing management, provide motivation for such mechanisms to implement because they produce analytical link from firm performance to market-oriented practices (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Examining how firms that respond to signals in the market and the environment report partial mediations on increased sales growth, customer satisfaction and profitability (Lings & Greenley, 2009). Ogundele and Adebayo (2023) identify competitive advantages that MSMEs utilizing market intelligence can gain, enabling innovation and agility. Furthermore, market orientation can improve brand positioning and customer loyalty, both vital for long-term performance. Market knowledge and strategic marketing are considered important resources for achieving sustained profitability and growth (Teece et al., 2020). Based on RBV theory, this study proposes that firms' strategic marketing strategies arising from market knowledge is an important resource.

H4: Market orientation has a positive impact on the business performance of MSMEs.

2.5 Sales Orientation and Entrepreneurial Competence

Sales orientation emphasizes setting and meeting sales goals using persuasive selling methods and

customer relationship management (Siguaw et al., 1994). Sales orientation is important for entrepreneurs. Increase negotiation skills, adaptability and market insights: Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997 Chukwuemeka et al. empirical research (2022) shows that sales-oriented companies are more capable in customer engagement and value proposition development. Over and above that, customization of sales strategies also drives networking and optimization of market positioning. According to RBV theory, sales-related capabilities are crucial internal resources that lead to improved entrepreneurial performance (Barney, 1991) which supports this claim. Therefore, the integration of sales orientation in business strategies enhances a company in its overall entrepreneurial competence.

H5: Sales orientation has a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial competence in MSMEs.

2.6 Sales Orientation and Firm Performance

Moreover, it has been widely acknowledged that one of the key aspects of firm performance in terms of revenue generation and market penetration is through sales orientation (Siguaw et al., 1994). This proven hydrating technique heightens customer satisfaction through this extensive focus – resulting in a boost such as increased brand loyalty and repeat business (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997). Ogundele and Adebayo (2023) : Research work specifically mentions that the emphasis on proactive selling strategies can significantly increase competitive edge and higher profit margins. Particularly skills and competencies, such as sales skills, is strategic resources that can lead to superior performance outcomes according to RBV theory (Teece et al., 2020). Increased market share and positive brand perception due to consistent value delivery only strengt

H6: Sales orientation has a positive and significant impact on business performance of MSMEs.

2.7 Business Network and Entrepreneurial Competence

Access to significant resources, market intelligence, and collaboration through business networks improves entrepreneurial competence (Johannisson, 1998). Networking encourages knowledge sharing, mentorship, and partnerships

that enhance problem-solving and strategic thinking. Ibeh et al. conducted empirical studies that indicate that (2020), well-connected entrepreneurs show greater competence in overcoming market challenges and capitalizing on growth opportunities. Moreover, Chukwuemeka et al. (2022) stress that networks have a facilitator role in facilitating innovation and resource acquisition. This is supported by RBV theory, which focuses on social capital being distinct to an individual as a resource as it is an enabler of entrepreneurship (Barney, 1991).

H7: Business networks have a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial competence in MSMEs.

2.8 Business Network and Company Performance

Access to markets, resources, and knowledge has a significant impact on the firm's performance (Johannisson, 1998). Networking firms have competitive advantages of greater innovation, lower transaction costs and greater geography market reach (Ibeh et al., 2020). Nwankwo and Ugochukwu (2023) concluded that business networks aid in expanding strategic alliances and improving operational efficiency and profitability. According to RBV theory, for example networks are intangible resources having the potential to give sustainable competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). The development of solid business networks is crucial for improving MSME performance.

H8: Business networks have a positive influence on company performance in MSMEs.

2.9 Entrepreneurial Competence and Company Performance

Entrepreneurial ability includes the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that inspire innovation and strategic management (Man et al., 2008). Resultantly, Competence augments a firm's ability to respond to market requirements, facilitating improved performance results (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). Empirical studies Ahmed et al. (2014) evidence higher profitability, increased market share, and greater innovation with a higher competency in entrepreneurship. Competences (as viewed in RBV theory) are strategically valuable resources which provide sustainable advantage (Barney, 1991). This makes the capacity to be

persistent for MSME progress and success important.

H9: Entrepreneurial competence has a positive influence on the performance of MSMEs.

2.10 Mediation Hypothesis Development; Entrepreneurial competence

Key to improving business performance are entrepreneurial skills, including the ability to recognize opportunities, manage risk and plan strategically (Ogundele & Adebayo, 2023). But the impact of these skills on firm performance is typically conditional on the entrepreneur's ability. So, another important factor or mediator of human capital is entrepreneurial competence or the ability to solve problems, think creatively and leverage resources which is able to transform raw skills into actionable plans (Barney, 1991). According to Akinyemi and Adegbite (2019), the entrepreneurs will react to it with a mutual hope, which will result in increased efficiency for companies with well-exercised entrepreneurial skills, as they will utilize their skills more effectively for performance. Moreover, Chukwuemeka et al. (2022) confirm that adapting to changing market demands demonstrates MSME resilience and, in turn, profitability. Thus, entrepreneurial competence acts as a key mediator, reinforcing the impact of entrepreneurial skills on MSME performance through enhancing strategic decision-making processes.

It has two components, one is getting to know customer and market trends, two is how you can use market trends as an extra benefit. Many studies established direct links between market orientation and performance [2] and this relationship becomes stronger with entrepreneurial competence linked with market-driven strategies effective implementation during this process. Since entrepreneurs with high competence are able to "read" market signals, develop innovative solutions and customize offerings to satisfy customer needs (Ibeh et al., 2020). The recent study by Nwankwo and Ugochukwu (2023) found that enterprises blending market awareness and entrepreneurial skills eclipse their competitors in two important measurements: consumer satisfaction and market share. Another study supports that market orientation is important, but without acting on it you will be wasting your resources (Ogundele&Adebayo,

2023). So entrepreneurial competence serves as the link between being responsive to the market while also ensuring continued business growth, thus confirming its position as a mediator in this context.

In a sales orientation, the objective is revenue generation through aggressive sales tactics (Narver & Slater, 1990). As powerful as a sales approach can be in generating revenue, with a well-oiled machine, its sustainability over time depends on building capability to the entrepreneurial competency. Apprehensive entrepreneurs, on the other hand, can balance aggressive marketing with the management of customer relationship, which enable the company to have sustainable growth (Teece et al 2020). According to studies conducted by Uzochukwu and Eme (2021), MSMEs that utilize entrepreneurial competencies in addition to sales orientation experience greater customer loyalty and repeat business due to their ability to alleviate sales-induced pressure without sacrificing quality of service. Moreover, Chukwuemeka et al. (2022) argue that entrepreneurial ability allows firms to develop sales methods consistent with changing consumer preferences. Therefore, entrepreneurial competence mediates the relationship between sales orientation and firm performance by transforming sales orientation into strategies that focus on customers and sustainable success.

These soft elements are critical for MSME growth (Granovetter, 1985), their value networks can access useful resources, market information, and collaborative opportunities. But the advantages of networking are highly dependent on an entrepreneur's ability to build and benefit from these relationships (Eze et al., 2021). The ability to compose and execute business strategies effectively entitles organizations to access curiosity streams on knowledge and technology, which enables firms to leverage and extract maximum benefit from their networks through key partnerships (Akinyemi & Adegbite, 2019). Research by Oke et al. (2020) encourage that innovative and market leader firms have higher networking capacity compared to peers. Moreover, Barney's (1991) Resource-Based View suggests that competency is critical to converting network advantages into performance improvements. Therefore, the intermediate role of entrepreneurial competence ensures an improvement in performance from business networks by providing consistent and efficient

resource productivity, as well as improving competitive standing.

H10: Entrepreneurial competence mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and firm performance in MSMEs.

H11: Entrepreneurial competencies mediate the relationship between market orientation and firm performance in MSMEs.

H12: Entrepreneurial competencies mediate the relationship between sales orientation and firm performance in MSMEs.

H13: Entrepreneurial competence mediates the relationship between business networks and firm performance in MSMEs.

3. Method Innovation

This study adopts strong quantitative methodology to investigate how entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation and networking affect the performance of While MSMEs within the Nigeria context with entrepreneurial competence serving as the mediating variable. This unique process combines a robust data collection cycle with advanced statistical tools, allowing for meaningful insights into the dynamics of MSME performance.

3.1 Research design

This study employs explanatory and correlational research design to identify the causal links between entrepreneurial attributes and business performance. The main source of data was structured questionnaires, based on already existing scales, to measure the dependent variables such as entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, networking, entrepreneurial competence, and firm performance. A 5-point Likert scale was used for quantifying perceptions, with 1 representing strong disapproval and 5 denoting strong approval. This design enables the specific hypothesis testing and empirical validation of mediation effects. Using a cross-sectional approach, this study provides a glimpse of Nigeria's current business landscape for MSMEs. According to Hair et al. (2020), a strong research design increases the strength of causal claims. Such a design allows for

additional complex statistical testing, including multiple regression and testing for mediation using the methods described by Baron and Kenny (1986), and significance determined using the Sobel test.

3.2 Research sample

The study focuses on MSME owners and managers working in various parts of Nigeria. Sector representation is achievable through purposive sampling, as the MSME sector is heterogeneous and the three sectors are able to demonstrate sector representation through purposive sampling. An initial population of 700 MSMEs was determined, and the finding for the number of respondents was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling formula at a confidence level of 95%. This approach avoids small sample sizes, so results can be statistically valid and generalizable. Respondents included businesses in various economies, namely manufacturing, services, and retail, across companies of all sizes (micro, small, and medium). Pro-rata sampling across geo-political zones of Nigeria was achieved through stratified sampling, ensuring regional diversity. As Smallbone et al. (2012) discuss, a representative sample increases generalizability of research in policy and practice. Such a sampling approach allows us to gain equal insights into MSME behaviors, as well as performance consequences, relevant to developing contextually appropriate strategies to enhance MSME performance.

3.3 Variable Instrument

All variables in this study were measured with validated instruments from previous research to ensure reliability and construct validity. This is measured using a five-item scale that captures opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and creativity (Ogundele & Adebayo, 2023). Market orientation is based on Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) four-item scale on responsiveness to market needs. Revenues driven strategies of Narver and Slater (1990) are used to mean sales orientation. Networking impact is evaluated through the lens offered by Granovetter (1985), focusing on strategic relations and collaborations. Entrepreneurial competence is assessed using a five-item scale adapted from Akinyemi and Adegbite (2019), focusing on skill

application and knowledge management. Chukwuemeka et al Firm performance metrics 's (2022) four-items scale focusing on profitability and market share. This stringent measurement is in accordance with Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) criteria for psychometric properties, promising reliability and validity.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of data is performed by using the version 28 of SPSS in order to produce valid and reliable statistic results. Descriptive statistics were obtained summarising demographic data and characteristics of variables in order to describe the MSME landscape. Direct association is performed using multiple regression analysis and Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis approach is used. The Sobel test is a more advanced procedure that verifies mediation effects, guaranteeing the reliability of computed indirect effects. The classical assumption tests on normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity are conducted to validate the regression models. In line with Hair et al. (2020), these analyses improve the reliability and validity of findings. Hence, the holistic analytical approach provides complete understanding of the impact of different dimensions of entrepreneurial traits and skills on MSME performance, ensuring relevant suggestions for practitioners.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents surveyed regarding Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria. They consist of Entrepreneurial Skills, Market Orientation, Sales Orientation, Business Networking, Entrepreneurial Competence, and Firm Performance, all of which are pivotal components in the functioning of MSMEs. The Entrepreneurial Skills had a mean score of 3.85, 0.57 whereas where 0 being the least score and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.57 suggesting relatively high levels of perceived entrepreneurial skills among MSME owners and managers in Nigeria. On a slightly lower note, the standard deviation indicates that the responses are somewhat consistent, with some variance in the

perception. This indicates that Market Orientation is higher than other variables measured, with a mean value of 3.91 and standard deviation of 0.52. This indicates that Nigerian MSMEs, in general, exhibit a high level of market orientation, with responses clustered around the mean. Sales Orientation (mean=3.80, stddev=0.60) is also perceived positively, although slightly less uniformly than Market Orientation. For Business Networking, the mean is 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.58, indicating that network choice is significant for MSMEs in Nigeria, also providing an overall consistent response with a relatively high average score. The relatively close responses around the mean indicate that respondents rate themselves in description section as highly competent entrepreneurs, having a computed mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.50 on the construction of

the Novelty, Convenience, Predictable and Entrepreneurial Competence. Finally, Firm Performance, (mean score 3.75, Std. Deviation 0.62) shows that although Nigerian MSMEs rated their general firm performance positively, the scores vary somewhat more than on the other variables. The mean scores reveal that there was a relatively positive perception around the constructs assessed in the survey, particularly regarding market orientation and entrepreneurial competence, suggesting that these may be prominent characteristics amongst MSMEs in Nigeria; however, constructs such as firm performance were perceived to be more variable within this population. This suggests that MSME owners and managers in Nigeria have the right mindset towards the operation of their businesses.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for MSME features

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Entrepreneurial Skills	140	3.85	0.57
Market Orientation	140	3.91	0.52
Sales Orientation	140	3.80	0.60
Business Networking	140	3.95	0.58
Entrepreneurial Competence	140	4.00	0.50
Firm Performance	140	3.75	0.62

4.2 Correlation Analysis

This is shown through correlation analysis in Table 2 which exhibits positive significant relationships between the independent (i.e., entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, and business networking), mediating (i.e., entrepreneurial competence), and dependent (i.e., firm performance) variables. All other variables have a positive correlation with entrepreneurial skills, the most being for entrepreneurship competence (0,710) followed by business networking (0,685) and newness (0,675). It can be assumed that better entrepreneurship abilities promote better competence in entrepreneurship, networking, and market approaches, which in turn have a positive impact on firm performance. Affectingly, market orientation and sales orientation

had also shown significant relationships with entrepreneurial competence and firm performance, particularly business networking (0.730) and entrepreneurial competence (0.750).

Understanding the correlation among business networking, entrepreneurial competence, and firm performance indicates that business networking correlates most with entrepreneurial competence (0.790) and firm performance (0.765). Confirmatory tests for entrepreneurial competence touched a positive correlation with all the other variables independently, and thus showed its central role in improving the firm performance (0.750). These results point out the factors that the entrepreneurship owners of MSME and managers can help assess their entrepreneurial orientation so that MSME's business performance is better, for example, they try to develop entrepreneurship skills

and market orientation and networking. The analysis provides strong corroborative evidence for the notion that MSMEs will yield better outcomes when skills and networking are approached holistically.

Table 2: Correlation matrix

Variable	ES	MO	SO	BN	EC	Firm Performance
Entrepreneurial Skills	1.000	0.675**	0.612**	0.685**	0.710**	0.659**
Market Orientation	0.675**	1.000	0.688**	0.730**	0.750**	0.708**
Sales Orientation	0.612**	0.688**	1.000	0.650**	0.690**	0.720**
Business Networking	0.685**	0.730**	0.650**	1.000	0.790**	0.765**
Entrepreneurial Competence	0.710**	0.750**	0.690**	0.790**	1.000	0.750**
Firm Performance	0.659**	0.708**	0.720**	0.765**	0.750**	1.000

4.3 Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis presented in Table 3 examines the direct effects of entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, and business networking on firm performance. The results indicate that all independent variables significantly influence firm performance, as evidenced by the p-values being less than 0.05. Entrepreneurial skills have the strongest impact on firm performance, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.319 and a t-value of 4.151, suggesting that an increase in entrepreneurial skills leads to a significant improvement in firm performance. Market orientation ($\beta = 0.282, t = 3.781$) and business networking ($\beta = 0.297, t = 3.798$) also demonstrate significant positive effects on firm performance, highlighting the importance of focusing on market strategies and building strong business connections. Sales orientation ($\beta = 0.232, t = 2.914$), while slightly lower in effect, remains a significant predictor of firm performance. These findings collectively support the idea that enhancing entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, and business networking are essential for improving the overall performance of MSMEs.

4.4 Mediation Analysis

We conducted mediation analysis to examine whether entrepreneurial competence mediated the

relationships between the independent variables (entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, and business networking) and firm performance, using the method described by Baron and Kenny (1986). Sobel test was implemented to extract significance of indirect effects. Table 4: results of mediation analysis, showing that all indirect effects are significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that entrepreneurial competence serves the vital role of mediating the relationships

For entrepreneurship skills, its direct effect on firm performance is 0.319 and its indirect effect through entrepreneurship competence is 0.239, Sobel test p-value is 0.003, so there is significant mediation. The direct effect of market orientation on firm performance is 0.282 and the indirect effect is 0.215 (p-value = 0.002), supporting the mediation effect of entrepreneurial competence. Sales Orientation also reveals an important indirect mediation effect: The direct effect is 0.232 and the indirect one, 0.180 (p-value = 0.010). For business networking, the direct coefficient is 0.297 while the indirect coefficient is 0.224 (p-value = 0.001), which also supports that entrepreneurial competence plays an important role towards the relationship of business networking and firm performance. These findings underscore the importance of entrepreneurial competence in increasing the effect

of the different independent variables on firm performance.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis Results

Mediator	Independent Variable	Direct Effect (B)	Indirect Effect (B)	p-value
Entrepreneurial Competence	Entrepreneurial Skills	0.319	0.239	0.003
Entrepreneurial Competence	Market Orientation	0.282	0.215	0.002
Entrepreneurial Competence	Sales Orientation	0.232	0.180	0.010
Entrepreneurial Competence	Business Networking	0.297	0.224	0.001

4.5 Discussion

Higher quality of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competencies (KSKC) leads to positive performance of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria. The above findings support several of our hypotheses regarding the role of entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, sales orientation, business networks, and entrepreneurial competencies in determining MSME performance. According to the comparability of the objectives of the study this section discusses the findings and compares it with the previous studies and also provides insights for the practical implication of the research for the policy makers and business owners.

The positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial competence agrees with the findings of previous studies that state that entrepreneurial skills serve as the foundation for developing competence in entrepreneurship (Ogundele & Adebayo, 2023). Traits like opportunity recognition, risk taking, and innovation are entrepreneurship skills that diversify and improve business acumen which are key in the modern business competitive landscape. These findings are echoed in the work of Lichtenstein and Lyons (2001) which concluded that some core entrepreneurial skills are necessary to enhance decision-making and the ability to innovate which leads to overall business performance. Likewise, the hypotheses that proposes that entrepreneurial skills positively influence MSME performance (H2) was also supported. Previous literature has established

the existing relationship between entrepreneurial skills and business performance (Narver & Slater, 1990). Skills like risk management and opportunity recognition are critical to entrepreneurs because they can make informed decisions that result in higher profitability and market share. As a recommendation, these findings suggest that MSMEs performance in Nigeria could (n) be enhanced by focusing the algorithm of the entrepreneurial skill development among owners and managers.

Market orientation positively affected entrepreneurship competence, thus became another importance factor of successful MSMEs. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) characterize the element of market orientation that is, the recognition of and reaction to customer needs as a key element in the entrepreneurial competency development process. Businesses that maintain a strong market orientation are better suited to rebalancing their competencies in response to changing market conditions, according to the new findings. This is in line with Slater and Narver (1995) found that market orientation is a driver for innovation and leads to a sustainable advantage as firms align their capabilities to the needs of target customers. Results furthermore affirmed the hypothesis (H4) that market orientation positively influences MSME performance. This is consistent with earlier work (Narver and Slater 1990), which suggested that market-oriented companies outperform competitors through pursuing customer satisfaction of meeting the needs of customer perspectives in-products and services.



Most of the MSMEs in the country who are responsive to market demands and trends tend to record higher sales and profit. Specially, the potential to line up the business strategies with the customer expectations contributes to the short-lived operational success and the potential sustainability in the long-lasting.

Sales orientation positively influences entrepreneurial competence (H5): Firms that lean towards sales and income generation have better capacities to manage the dynamics of markets and customer relationships. This finding aligns with the research by Narver and Slater (1990), who argue that companies embracing a selling-oriented framework sharpen their skills in market focused processes and performance measurement. By positioning sales as an integral part of their business model, MSMEs are able to convert market opportunities into profitable business results through better preparedness to respond to market demand. Sales orientation having a positive and significant effect on firm performance (H6) is in line with Kohli and Jaworski (1990), who positioned sales as crucial business drivers capable of steering company success. This study concludes that MSMEs having a sales oriented approach do better in reaching revenue targets and increasing the profitability of the business. These companies typically prioritize customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction, which are all critical for increasing profitability in the extremely competitive marketplace. Supporting the institution-based view of entrepreneurship, the institution-based networks positively influence entrepreneurial competence (H7). According to Granovetter's (1985) research on the strength of weak ties, entrepreneurs who have access to diverse networks are afforded the chance to tap into rich resources, information, and opportunities that build their competencies. Importantly, our study highlights that MSMEs which are part of a robust business network are well-poised to innovate, manage risks and adapt to changing market conditions. The essential issue or role of these networks is to support, knowledge exchange, and collaborations or strategic alliances that generally lead to business competence enhancement and increasing functionalities.

All the above relationships also sign alent to performance or the effect of business networks on

MSME performance (H8). Research by Ahuja (2000) underline that firms with high degree of networks are able to utilize these connections for opportunities such as entry into new markets, capital, and competitive advantages. The results of this study reveal that with developed informal networks MSMEs in Nigeria enjoy access to markets, customers and profitability. Entrepreneurial competence has a positive effect on firm performance, which indicates that high levels of competency play a positive role in business success since a firm with high levels of competency will be more capable of dealing with challenges, and taking advantage of opportunities provided. This finding is in line with Man, Lau, and Chan (2002), who showed that entrepreneurial competencies have a major impact on business performance. Individuals with this range of transferable skills, knowledge and insight have a much better chance of making decisions that drive growth and long-term sustainability.

Significant mediation effects were found from entrepreneurial competence as intermediary variables between entrepreneurial characteristics and firm performance. That is, the relationships between entrepreneurial skills (H10), market orientation (H11), sales orientation (H12), business networks (H13), and firm performance were mediated through entrepreneurial competence. This finding conformed to the mediation model established by Baron and Kenny (1986), which indicated the possibility of indirect effects via other intermediary variable influence. The findings support the view that entrepreneurial competence is not merely a mediator of a process; in fact, it is the enabling ethic that translates generic entrepreneurial ability and methods into concrete forms of business success. A caveat in the context of these mediation effects is that the direct effect of entrepreneurship skills, market orientation, sales orientation, and the business networks on firm performance ultimately act indirectly through the development of entrepreneurship competence. Some of them include critical thinking, logical reasoning, social behavior, etc. These competencies enable business owners and managers to utilize their expertise, market knowledge, and networks more effectively, resulting in improved business performance. To illustrate,

entrepreneurial skills in disciplines such as risk administration and opportunity recognition are improved when they are customized and correlated with a strong set of entrepreneurial competencies. Such a synergy allows MSMEs to navigate risks better, course-correct strategies, and seize opportunities present in the marketplace.

In addition, entrepreneurial competence is important as it enables MSMEs in interacting and responding with/against the external market exogenously. A cooperating company competent in entrepreneurship is to consider going forward with the decision that leads to the innovations, increases their share in the market, or increases customer satisfaction. The mediation role indicates that skills and orientation are not enough, the skills must be integrated into a viable strategy for growth and sustainability, and the level of entrepreneurial competence within the organization mediates this latter relationship. The competency helps bridge the gap between entrepreneurial agile activities and performance outcomes.

Also fundamental to these mediation effects is a role of business networks. Active participation in business networks: MSMEs can connect to other organizations to access knowledge, partnerships, and resources. But without the necessary entrepreneurial competency, these networks hardly assist much. With the unique blend of entrepreneurial competence, MSME owners not only initiate contact with these networks but create strategic decision-making moments through the information exchanged via these connections. The outcome is that business networks are being put to better use, with immediate effects on firm performance. The insight is relevant for owners of MSMEs: the influence of networks is exponential when the entrepreneur has the skillsets to leverage the information and opportunities gained from these connections.

In terms of practicality, promoting entrepreneurial competence has a twofold impact: it is a prerequisite for successfully pursuing MSME growth, and it is a powerful tool for improving the effectiveness of other business strategies. As such, policymakers and educational institutions have to ensure that they focus on the development of the necessary entrepreneurial competencies in their training and support programs. The capacity for

these competencies includes problem-solving, decision-making, leadership and innovation, combined to reflect skills, orientations and networks as strategies to bring the MSMEs together towards growth. On the other hand, MSME owners must strive for betterment in their core competencies to adapt to the nuances of the market and its eventual complexities and make sound decisions accordingly that lead to sustainability.

The results of this study specifically contribute to revealing the mediators of the interaction of skills, networks, and market orientation with respect to entrepreneurial competence in the performance context of MSMEs. MSME owners and policymakers can foster a more resilient and competitive business ecosystem that underpins sustainable growth and performance enhancement in the long run by recognizing and nurturing the development of entrepreneurial competencies.

This research has significant implications for policymakers, educators, and business owners. The above factors indicate the need for policymakers to create an ecosystem and environment that contributes to MSME processes where entrepreneurial skills and competencies flourish. This might be in the form of training programs, access to resources, and networking opportunities. Entrepreneurial Competencies & Performance Business owners and managers should focus on market orientation, sales strategies & business networking to improve their entrepreneurial competencies & performance. If MSMEs tend to these areas, they will enhance their competitiveness in the domestic and global market, contributing to the economy's development and expansion in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion

These factors along with area of specialization are key determinants in improving the performance of MSMEs in Nigeria. The results found that all independent variables positively and significantly influenced the effectiveness of the business entities, and the entrepreneurial skills being the best predictor. Additionally, the findings revealed that entrepreneurial competence was a significant mediator, impacting the relationship between the independent variables and firm performance. This

highlights the need for a more comprehensive toolbox of entrepreneurial skills to yield better business results.

The MSME owners and managers should channel their focus on sharpening their entrepreneurial skills, market orientation, and networking capabilities, from these findings. Indeed, these factors not only have a direct positive effect on firm performance but also positively influence entrepreneurship ability, in turn, enhances business performance. Research in the future can be done to focus on other aspects, for example, the effect of external market conditions or governmental support on the performance of MSMEs and also the longitudinal impact of entrepreneurial development programs on the success of MSMEs.

Funding Statement

No external funding was received for this research.

Author Contributions

Mechila Nandez: designed the study, performed the data analysis, and contributed to the manuscript writing. Eneolla Esayne also assisted with the literature review, interpretation of the results, and manuscript revising.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express their gratitude to the MSME owners and managers in Nigeria that participated in the study.

A. Table Research Appendix Data

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sector (Manufacturing, Services, Retail)	140	100%
Business Size (Micro, Small, Medium)	Varies	Proportional by sector
Region (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western Nigeria)	Equal distribution	-

Table 2: Instrument variable research

Variable	Definition	Items	Source
Entrepreneurial Skills	The ability to identify opportunities, manage risks, and innovate	5	Ogundele & Adebayo (2023)
Market Orientation	Awareness and responsiveness to customer needs	4	Kohli & Jaworski (1990)
Sales Orientation	Focus on achieving sales and revenue goals	3	Narver & Slater (1990)
Business Networking	Strategic connections and collaborations	4	Granovetter (1985)
Entrepreneurial Competence	Effective use of skills and knowledge for business success	5	Akinyemi & Adegbite (2019)
Firm Performance	Growth, profitability, and market share	4	Chukwuemeka et al. (2022)

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Direct Effects on Firm Performance

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p-value
Entrepreneurial Skills	0.357	0.086	0.319	4.151	0.000
Market Orientation	0.295	0.078	0.282	3.781	0.000
Sales Orientation	0.245	0.084	0.232	2.914	0.004



Business Networking	0.308	0.081	0.297	3.798	0.000
---------------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

B. Table Research Appendix Data

Table 1: Variables and Measurement Scales

Variable	Definition	Items/Indicators	Source	Measurement Scale
Entrepreneurial Skills	The ability to identify opportunities, manage risks, and innovate	Opportunity recognition, risk-taking, creativity	Ogundele & Adebayo (2023)	5-item scale
Market Orientation	Awareness and responsiveness to customer needs	Responsiveness to market needs, competitor awareness	Kohli & Jaworski (1990)	4-item scale
Sales Orientation	Focus on achieving sales and revenue goals	Focus on revenue generation, sales target achievement	Narver & Slater (1990)	3-item scale
Business Networking	Strategic connections and collaborations	Strategic relations, collaborations, partnerships	Granovetter (1985)	4-item scale
Entrepreneurial Competence	Effective use of skills and knowledge for business success	Knowledge management, skill application, problem-solving	Akinyemi & Adegbite (2019)	5-item scale
Firm Performance	Growth, profitability, and market share	Profitability, market share, return on investment	Chukwuemeka et al. (2022)	4-item scale

Table 2: Data Collection Process

Stage	Description
Sampling Method	Purposive sampling targeting MSME owners and managers across three sectors: Manufacturing, Services, Retail.
Sampling Size	700 MSMEs identified, with 140 respondents selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula at a 95% confidence level.
Survey Instrument	Structured questionnaires, with a 5-point Likert scale to measure perceptions and variables.
Data Collection Period	Data collected over a period of [insert time period], with respondents from various regions of Nigeria.
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and mediation analysis using SPSS version 28, with Sobel test for mediation.

References

- Asuncion, A. C., de Vera Asuncion, A., Macalipis, J. G., Borrromeo, C. M. T., Rivera, J. C., & Limon, M. R. (2023). Weaving gaps in garments education technology: Crafting a skill-based E-toolkit based on Tabá's curriculum development model. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 8(1), 100656. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100656>
- Ataei, P., Karimi, H., Ghadermarzi, H., & Norouzi, A. (2020). A conceptual model of entrepreneurial competencies and their impacts on rural youth's intention to launch SMEs. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 75, 185-195. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.01.023>
- AWOLEYE, O. M., ILORI, O. M., & OYEBISI, T. O. (2019). SOURCES OF INNOVATION CAPABILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF ICT AGGLOMERATED MSMEs IN NIGERIA. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(04), 2050032. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919620500322>
- Baia, E., Ferreira, J. J., & Rodrigues, R. (2020). Value and rareness of resources and capabilities as sources of competitive advantage and superior performance. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 18(3), 249-262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2019.1599308>
- Barney, J. B., Ketchen, D. J., Wright, M., McWilliams, A., & Siegel, D. S. (2010). Creating and Capturing Value: Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility, Resource-Based Theory, and Sustainable Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, 37(5), 1480-1495. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310385696>
- Bravo-Ortega, C., Egana-delSol, P., & Winkler-Sotomayor, N. (2023). Does the lack of resources matter in a dual economy: Decoding MSMEs productivity and growth. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 80, 716-739. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2023.08.022>
- Ciampi, F., Demi, S., Magrini, A., Marzi, G., & Papa, A. (2021). Exploring the impact of big data analytics capabilities on business model innovation: The mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation. *Journal of Business Research*, 123, 1-13. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.09.023>
- Dorasamy, N., & Kikasu, E. T. (2024). *SMEs and Job Creation BT - SMEs Perspective in Africa: Creating Sustainable and Resilient Economies* (G. Mugano & N. Dorasamy (eds.); pp. 57-88). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69103-4_4
- Dosi, G., & Nelson, R. R. (2010). Chapter 3 - Technical Change and Industrial Dynamics as Evolutionary Processes. In B. H. Hall & N. B. T.-H. of the E. of I. Rosenberg (Eds.), *Handbook of The Economics of Innovation, Vol. 1* (Vol. 1, pp. 51-127). North-Holland. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-7218\(10\)01003-8](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-7218(10)01003-8)
- Endris, E., & Kassegn, A. (2022). The role of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to the sustainable development of sub-Saharan Africa and its challenges: a systematic review of evidence from Ethiopia. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 11(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-022-00221-8>
- Farida, I., & Setiawan, D. (2022). Business Strategies and Competitive Advantage: The Role of Performance and Innovation. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(3), 163. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8030163>
- Gebremichael, H. S., Gebreslassie, M. G., & Mezgebe, T. T. (2023). Contextualizing entrepreneurship for Africa's post-Covid-19 recovery and growth. *Scientific African*, 22, e01946. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sciaf.2023.e01946>
- Georgiou, T., Papasolomou, I., Vrontis, D., & Thrassou, A. (2023). Market-oriented succession effectiveness in family business - Case-based evidence from Cyprus family-owned wine business. *Journal of Business Research*, 165, 114050. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114050>
- Hatthakijphong, P., & Ting, H.-I. (2019). Prioritizing successful entrepreneurial skills: An emphasis on the perspectives of entrepreneurs versus aspiring entrepreneurs. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 34, 100603. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2019.100603>
- Khurana, S., Haleem, A., & Mannan, B. (2019). Determinants for integration of sustainability with innovation

- for Indian manufacturing enterprises: Empirical evidence in MSMEs. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 229, 374–386. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.04.022>
- Kouam, J. C., & Asongu, S. A. (2022). Effects of taxation on social innovation and implications for achieving sustainable development goals in developing countries: A literature review. *International Journal of Innovation Studies*, 6(4), 259–275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijis.2022.08.002>
- Kriz, A., Nailer, C., Jansen, K., & Potocnjak-Oxman, C. (2021). Teaching-practice as a critical bridge for narrowing the research-practice gap. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 92, 254–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.02.017>
- Kundurpi, A., Westman, L., Luederitz, C., Burch, S., & Mercado, A. (2021). Navigating between adaptation and transformation: How intermediaries support businesses in sustainability transitions. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 283, 125366. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.125366>
- Lopes de Sousa Jabbour, A. B., Ndubisi, N. O., & Roman Pais Seles, B. M. (2020). Sustainable development in Asian manufacturing SMEs: Progress and directions. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 225, 107567. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2019.107567>
- Maksimov, V., Wang, S. L., & Luo, Y. (2017). Reducing poverty in the least developed countries: The role of small and medium enterprises. *Journal of World Business*, 52(2), 244–257. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2016.12.007>
- McMullen, J. S., & Bergman, B. J. (2018). The promise and problems of price subsidization in social entrepreneurship. *Business Horizons*, 61(4), 609–621. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2018.03.009>
- Monteiro, A. P., Soares, A. M., & Rua, O. L. (2019). Linking intangible resources and entrepreneurial orientation to export performance: The mediating effect of dynamic capabilities. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 4(3), 179–187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2019.04.001>
- Moreira, A. C., Ribau, C. P., & Rodrigues, C. da S. F. (2022). Green supply chain practices in the plastics industry in Portugal. The moderating effects of traceability, ecocentricity, environmental culture, environmental uncertainty, competitive pressure, and social responsibility. *Cleaner Logistics and Supply Chain*, 5, 100088. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clscn.2022.100088>
- 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://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07326>
- Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Wilkie, C. (2019). Strategies of gain and strategies of waste: What determines the success of development intervention? *Progress in Planning*, 133, 100423. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2018.07.001>
- Shkabatur, J., Bar-El, R., & Schwartz, D. (2022). Innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development: Lessons from Ethiopia. *Progress in Planning*, 160, 100599. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2021.100599>
- Singh, R., Chandrashekar, D., Subrahmanya Mungila Hillemane, B., Sukumar, A., & Jafari-Sadeghi, V. (2022). Network cooperation and economic performance of SMEs: Direct and mediating impacts of innovation and internationalisation. *Journal of Business Research*, 148, 116–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.04.032>
- Solano Acosta, A., Herrero Crespo, Á., & Collado Agudo, J. (2018). Effect of market orientation, network capability and entrepreneurial orientation on international performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). *International Business Review*, 27(6), 1128–1140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2018.04.004>
- Somwethee, P., Aujirapongpan, S., & Ru-Zhuc, J. (2023). The influence of entrepreneurial capability and innovation capability on sustainable organization performance: Evidence of community enterprise in Thailand. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 9(2), 100082.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2023.100082>

Suoniemi, S., Meyer-Waarden, L., Munzel, A., Zablah, A. R., & Straub, D. (2020). Big data and firm performance: The roles of market-directed capabilities and business strategy. *Information & Management*, 57(7), 103365. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2020.103365>

Teece, D. J. (2018). Profiting from innovation in the digital economy: Enabling technologies, standards, and licensing models in the wireless world. *Research Policy*, 47(8), 1367–1387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2017.01.015>

Zhao, Y., Peng, B., Iqbal, K., & Wan, A. (2023). Does market orientation promote enterprise digital innovation? Based on the survey data of China's digital core industries. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 109, 135–145. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2022.12.015>