EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract
The performance of small and medium enterprises, especially in Benue State has not improved as expected despite government interventions. In this study, the objective is to examine the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the performance of SMEs in Benue State with proxies of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as marketing and management. The study employed a cross-sectional research design on a population of 1,811 and sample size of 328. Employing PLS-SEM as method of data analysis, the study found that while marketing self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, management self-efficacy failed to have a significant effect. The study recommended that the government and private sector can help build the capacity of SMEs in developing marketing as it is an aspect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy that has the most impact on the performance of these SMEs in Benue State.

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are important engine of growth and development of economies in the world, contributing significantly to wealth creation and economic prosperity (Coldwell et al., 2022; Iyortsuun & Shakpande, 2022). SMEs account for 98% of all firms in both developed or emerging economies such as Nigeria (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017). Despite the positive contribution of SMEs to economic growth of the Nigerian economy, much is desired of its performance especially when compared to SMEs in other economies as evidenced by the collapse and failure of these SMEs in Nigeria. Statistics show that the failure rate of SMEs in Nigeria stands at 61.05% compared to 58.73% in Kenya, 54.39% in South Africa, 42.5% in Egypt and 29.41% in Zambia (Wee Tracker, 2020).

As a result, the poor performance of SMEs in Nigeria has attracted government attention in form of the numerous policies and programmes to redress the situation. Such interventions include the Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS) (established in 1999 to require banks to set aside 10 percent of profit after tax for the SMEs) and the Central Bank of Nigeria N220 billion Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund which was established in 2013 to support SMEs among many others. Despite these numerous programmes of the Nigerian government, the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria has not improved as expected. (Iyortsuun & Shakpande, 2022). This has led to empirical research studies to understand the root causes of this phenomenon.

Research studies have argued that the reasons why SMEs perform below expectation can be summarized into three broad categories of personality and disposition of the individual, organizational and environmental factors (Baum & Locke, 2004; Iyortsuun & Shakpande, 2022). In making a contribution to this argument, this study sought to know why SMEs perform poorly in Benue State, Nigeria. As such, the study focused on the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the performance of SMEs in Benue State. Related empirical studies conducted by Eniola (2020) and Oyeku et al. (2020) support the positive role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the performance of SMEs.

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is defined as individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform the roles and tasks of an entrepreneur (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Scherer et al., 2009). A person with high self-efficacy will feel that he is capable and optimistic to complete his work and responsibilities (Huda *et al* 2022). The beliefs in self-efficacy provide a great influence on human beings, since they act on their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, (Bandura 1997, Marco *et al* 2023). The concept has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of the following dimensions of marketing and management (Chen et al., 1998; Ogbuanya et al., 2020; Alessa, 2021). Marketing as a dimension of ESE involves entrepreneurs belief in their marketing abilities which give them confidence or motivate them to set and meet market share goals, set and attain profit goals, establish position in product market, conduct market analysis, expand business, create new products and find market opportunities, in order to have a solid foundation to launch a venture (Chen *et al.*, 1998, Kim, 2019).

Management self-efficacy as a dimension of ESE is defined as the capability that owners of SMEs have to successfully perform the managerial task of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling an organization's human, financial, physical, and information resources to achieve higher levels of performance (Chen *et al.*, 1998, Nathaniel, 2014). In this study, performance is referred simply as the success of SMEs in terms of predetermined goals. In order words, performance is defined as the success achieved by SMEs in terms of growth in sales, market share and competitive advantage.

This study therefore, explores whether entrepreneurial self-efficacy which is characterized as marketing self-efficacy and management self-efficacy have a significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. Arising from the study objectives, the following hypotheses are stated in this study:

Ho_1: Marketing ESE has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: Management ESE has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in in Benue State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to individuals' self-perceptions of their abilities and skills to produce a given attainment in a given domain (Bandura, 1997; Wilson *et al.,* 2007, Liu *et al* 2019, Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) refers to individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform the roles and tasks of an entrepreneur (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Scherer et al., 2009, Selma & Younes, 2023), or the belief in their ability to successfully launch an entrepreneurial venture (McGee et al., 2009). It can also be regarded as individuals' belief regarding their capability to discover and exploit opportunities in the process of starting and growing a business (Klyver & Thornton, 2010, Marco *et al* 2023). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to "the strength of a person's belief that he or she is capable of successfully performing the various roles and tasks of entrepreneurship" (Chen et al., 1998). These beliefs can motivate or give entrepreneurs confidence to perform entrepreneurial tasks effectively. The beliefs in self-efficacy provide a great influence on human beings, since they act on their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, (Bandura 1997). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has been identified as a critical determinant of business success (Poi 2023). In the context of this study, Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is conceptualized as marketing ESE and management ESE as defined by Chen et al (1998).

Marketing Self-Efficacy

Marketing is defined as the ability of an organization to understand and fulfill customers' needs at the right time, right place and right cost (Chinakidzwa & Phiri, 2020; Pascucci *et al.*, 2023). It can also be defined as comprehensive processes designed to apply a firm's necessary resources to its market-related needs, thus enabling the organization to add value and fulfill competitive demands (Day, 2011; Skålén *et al.*, 2022). Marketing as a dimension of ESE involves entrepreneurs belief in their marketing abilities which give them confidence or motivate them to set and meet market share goals, set and attain profit goals, establish position in product market, conduct market analysis, expand business, create new products and find market opportunities, in order to have a solid foundation to launch a venture (Chen *et al.*, 1998). Thus, marketing self-efficacy is about expertise and skills in the field of marketing. Chen *et al.* (1998), further argued that marketing self-efficacy is an important dimension that varies with entrepreneurs and can affect the businesses performance. Marketing self-efficacy is a level of belief of a person that is capable of achieving the specific roles and task successfully related to marketing activities (Kim 2019)

Antoncic et al. (2016) define marketing self-efficacy as expertise in strategic marketing decision making, sales performance, marketing communications, and marketing calculations. They also emphasize that efficacy in marketing can evidently influence a company's financial performance. Its influence on organizational performance has been noted in entrepreneurship literature (Bakar et al., 2017).

Management Self-Efficacy

Management as a dimension of ESE is defined as entrepreneurs' belief in their management capability which give them confidence or motivate them to successfully perform the managerial task of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling an organization's human, financial, physical, and information resources to achieve organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner. Albert Bandura is credited with recognizing the importance of self-efficacy in managing a firm. He clarified that self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to mobilize personal resources, such as motivation, cognitive, and behavioral skills human, financial, physical, and information resources to achieve organizational goals (Bandura, 1997, Nathaniel, 2014) efficiently and effectively. Management in this context therefore includes the activities of setting the strategy of an organization and coordinating the efforts of its employees to accomplish its objectives through the application of available resources (Nwachukwu, 2018; Phillips & Klein, 2022).

Management ESE refers to the strength of an individual's belief that he or she is capable of successfully performing the managerial roles and tasks of an entrepreneur (Boyd & Vozikis 1994; Nathaniel, 2014, Scherer *et al*., 1989; Zhang & Welch, 2021). These roles include reducing risk and uncertainty, strategic planning and development of information system, managing time by setting goals, establishing and achieving goals and objectives, defining organizational roles, responsibilities and policies (Chen *et al*., 1998; Bakar *et al*., 2017; Nanjundeswaraswamy *et al*., 2023). Self-efficacy in management is the beliefs about one's ability to accomplish specific managerial tasks, influences the tasks employees choose to learn and the goals they set for themselves.

Concept of SMEs' Performance

Generally firm performance refers to the success of the firm. It is a measure of an enterprise's success in achieving its goals, it is the degree to which a feat or a deed is being or has been accomplished. Alchian and Demsetz (1972) defined it as "the comparison of the value created by a firm with the value owners expected to receive from the firm". According to Flapper et al. (1996) it is "the way organization carries its objectives into effect." Studies in firm performance have extended into two main streams (March & Sutton, 1997). The first is to investigate the ways of improving the firm performance and the second is to study the predictors of firm performance. Consequently, firm performance has widely been studied as a dependent variable in organizational research (March & Sutton, 1997). Most of the studies which used performance as a dependent variable have attempted to explain the variation of the performance of SMEs (Carton & Hofer, 2010; Brush & Vanderwerf, 1992).

In this study, SMEs' performance is defined as growth in terms of sales and market share of SMEs and their competitive advantage occasioned by the level of products and service offering to their target customers. This study defines sales growth as an increase in the volume of business revenue generated by SMEs over a period of time (Davidsson & Wiklud, 2006). Market share on the other hand is described as percentage of the total markets earned by SMEs over a length of time, measured in percentage (Czinkora et al., 1997) while competitive advantage are the significant advantages that SMEs have over their competitors which allows them to add more value, or be more profitable, than their competitors in the same market (Aluko et al., 2007).

Empirical Review

Marketing Self-efficacy and Performance

Puri and Bandi (2022) examined marketing strategy and self-efficacy on MSMEs performance. Quantitative study involved 30 respondents (SMEs) in Surakarta. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software by performing instrument tests, classical assumption test and hypothesis testing. The results revealed that marketing strategy and self-efficacy positively affects the performance of SMEs. Also, a study by Watson (2013) involving Mexican small businesses was able to establish that marketing as a dimension of entrepreneurial self-efficacy was significantly related to business perceived performance.

Kim (2020) conducted a research on the effect of future entrepreneurs marketing self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intension: the mediating role of resilience. The study examined resilience as mediator in the marketing self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions. Questionnaire were employed to collect data from major universities of future entrepreneurs in Korea. A total of 315 completed questionnaire were returned and tested. The results showed that marketing self-efficacy resilience had a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, resilience had a significant mediating effect on marketing self-efficacy. In an earlier study, Kim (2019) examined whether marketing self-efficacy, linked to the skills and competencies predicts new firm formation. Data was collected from 250 firms with regression employed to test the hypothesis. Results showed that marketing self-efficacy had a positive effect on new firm formation.

On their part, Kubeyinje and Bariweni (2020) examined the belief that entrepreneurs have in their ability to utilize the 4Ps of marketing (product, price, promotion, place) in improving the performance of SMEs in Warri Metropolis, Delta State, Nigeria. The authors found that product, price and place all have insignificant relationship with the performance of SMEs in Nigeria. Also, a study by Antoncic et al. (2016) sought to examine the effect of marketing self-efficacy on firm creation using a sample collected from Finland and Slovenia. Employing regression analysis, the authors were able to demonstrate that marketing self-efficacy has a significant effect on firm creation.

Management Self-efficacy and Performance

Khalil et al. (2021) conducted research on *management self-efficacy and small business performance in Pakistan.* The focus of their study was to test the effect of management ESE on the performance of these firms using a sample of 353 small business entrepreneurs in Pakistan. A survey technique was employed for data collection and AMOS was used for data analysis. Results of the analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between management ESE dimensions and performance of small businesses. Ignacio M *et al* (2021) researched on analyzing academic entrepreneurial opportunities. The influence of academic self-efficacy. The study examined the relationship between academic opportunities and management self-efficacy. A structural equation model and partial least squares techniques were used to analyse a sample of 388 Spanish academic. The result showed that management self-efficacy had a positive and significant with entrepreneurial opportunities

Cumberland et al (2015) researched on a topic managerial self-efficacy and firm performance in challenging environments: Evidence from the franchise context using the conceptualization of management self-efficacy developed by Chen et al (1998) namely; marketing, innovation, risk taking, financial control and management. The sample of the study consisted franchises from one Midwestern US state with a population sample size of 420. A total of 268 franchises were randomly selected and multiple regression analysis was adopted. The results showed that management as a dimension of entrepreneurial self-efficacy was a significant predictor of franchise performance.

Nathaniel F. *et al.* (2014) researched on managing to stay in the Dark: Managerial self-efficacy, Ego Defensiveness, and the Aversion to employee voice. A total of 131 adult participants took part in the study in exchange for a US$5 gift certificate from an online retailer. Participants were recruited through an online natural database maintained by a large west coast university. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used. Hypothesis were tested that managers with low managerial self-efficacy seek to minimize voice as a way of compensating ego. In field study 1, managers with low managerial self-efficacy were less likely than others to solicit input, leading to lower levels of employees voice. A follow up experimental study 2 showed that manipulating low managerial self-efficacy led to voice aversion and the observed voice aversion associated with low managerial self-efficacy was driven by ego defensiveness. The study revealed that managerial self-efficacy assist individuals to competently perform managerial tasks and accomplish business objectives.

Resource-Based View Theory

The Resource-Based Theory (RBT) was first popularized by the notable economic study of Penrose (1959), who wrote that an organization may achieve superior performance not only because it is endowed with better resources but also because it is better able to use those resources. Marketing capabilities, financial control capabilities, and managerial competencies or practices are built around the Resource-Based View (RBV). RBV posits that a firm's competitive advantage is based on resource management and capabilities control, which are rare, valuable, difficult to imitate, and not substitutable (Apriliyanti, 2022). Additionally, resources and capabilities can take the form of internal processes, assets, business skills, managerial competencies, financial control capabilities, and knowledge and information management, among others (Ristyawan et al., 2023). According to resource-based theory, firms perform well and create value when they implement strategies by exploiting their internal resources and capabilities. Firms' resources and capabilities such as marketing capabilities, managerial competencies, and financial control capabilities can be leveraged to increase SMEs' internal resources and enhance their competitive advantage and performance (Uyanik, 2023). RBV is highly pertinent to the study of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and performance. Entrepreneurs can use RBV to identify and leverage their personal resources, such as marketing and managerial self-efficacy beliefs with its attendant impact on performance. It highlights the need for resource utilization, encouraging entrepreneurs to use their self-belief as a resource to confront challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

Research design is the "procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies" (Cresswell & Clark, 2007). The specific research design used in this study is a cross-sectional research design. In a cross-sectional study, the researcher measures the independent and the dependent variables in the study at the same time which also covers a large population size. Questionnaire was used for data collection on the entrepreneurs who own and operate SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria while regression analysis was used as the tool of data analysis. However, the population of the study is based on owners/managers or entrepreneurs of SMEs that are operational in Benue State, Nigeria, which stands at 1,811 (SMEDAN, 2017). Applying the Taro Yamane (1967) formula in calculating the sample size of this study, approximately 328 owners/managers or entrepreneurs of SMEs were selected and used in this study based on the following calculation:

$$s = \frac{N}{1+Ne}^2$$

Where:

s = required sample size

N = population size (N = 1,811)

e = acceptable sampling error (e = 0.05)

The calculation of the sample size is as follows:

$$s = \frac{1811}{1+1811(0.05)}^2$$

$$s = \frac{1811}{1+1811(0.0025)}$$

$$s = \frac{1811}{1+4.5275}$$

$$s = \frac{1811}{5.5275}$$

$$s = 327.6$$

$$s = 328$$

Hence the sample size of the study is 328. However, Mokkink et al. (2022) argued that to maintain a high sample size, 10% of the calculated sample size to be added. Based on their suggestion, approximately 33 was added to the calculated sample size of 328 to produce a sample size of 361 for this study. Therefore, 361 questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in this study.

Convenience sampling was also adopted in this study implying that only available and willing owners/managers or entrepreneurs of SMEs in Benue State were selected. In terms of source of data, primary data was achieved using questionnaire which was divided into Section A and Section B. Section A sought information about the respondents' characteristics such as age, sector of operations etc while Section B sought information about the respondents' opinion concerning the variables of marketing, management and performance of SMEs. Since the central objective of this study is to explore the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy dimensions of marketing and management on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis was used in testing the hypotheses of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, 361 questionnaire were distributed to owners/managers or entrepreneurs of SMEs in Benue State. However, 340 questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents out of which 12 were discarded due to errors leaving 328 questionnaires that were used for further data analysis. This represent an effective response rate of approximately 91%. This response rate is adequate for research in entrepreneurship as argued by Kock and Hadaya (2018). According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), data analysis using PLS-SEM involves evaluating the measurement and structural models. While the measurement model helps in evaluating the validity and reliability of the latent constructs, the structural model tests the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables, which in this study is entrepreneurial self-efficacy and performance of SMEs in Benue State.

Measurement Model Evaluation

According to Hair et al. (2019), measurement model the relationship between the item indicators and their respective latent constructs. It primarily helps in evaluating the reliability and validity of the latent construct. In PLS-SEM, reliability covers the item reliability and the latent construct reliability. To evaluate item reliability, Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) recommends item loadings to be greater than 0.40. The results as captured in Table 1 shows that all the items loaded on their respective latent constructs with values > 0.40 indicating that the requirement for item loadings is satisfied. For instance, marketing has loadings that ranged from 0.636 – 0.875; management (0.578 – 0.830) and performance (0.680 – 0.895). As indicated above, all the values are above the minimum threshold value of 0.40 indicating item reliability of study. In terms of internal consistency reliability, the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha (α) were evaluated. Hair et al. (2019) recommended a minimum threshold value of 0.70 for both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values. Based on the result presented in Table 1, the values are as follows for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha respectively: marketing – 0.860 (α = 0.810); management – 0.853 (α = 0.780); and performance – 0.838 (α = 0.833). The result indicates that the latent constructs all demonstrate reliability.

In terms of validity, convergent and discriminant validity was tested in this study. Convergent validity is "an analysis of the links between question-statements and latent variables based on loadings and cross-loadings" (Amora, 2021) while discriminant validity evaluates "assumes that items should correlate higher among them than they correlate with other items from other constructs that are theoretically supposed not to correlate" (Zait & Bertea, 2011). To test convergent validity, average variance extracted was evaluated (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Based on the suggestion by Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE should be at least 0.50. As the result in Table 1 shows, AVE for marketing, management and performance was 0.562, 0.525 and 0.672 respectively, which shows that convergent validity was satisfied in this study. Shrestha (2020) also advised that a test of multicollinearity be conducted which was achieved via test of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). As recommended by Shrestha (2020), VIF values < 5 are satisfactory. Based on the result shown in Table 1, the VIF ranged from a minimum of 1.304 to a maximum of 3.079. This shows that multicollinearity is not an issue in this study.

Table 1: Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE, VIF

	MGT	MKT	PERF	α	CR	AVE	VIF
mgt1	0.830			0.780	0.853	0.525	1.665
mgt2	0.643						1.304
mgt3	0.814						1.918
mgt4	0.725						1.651
mgt5	0.578						1.369
mkt1		0.663		0.810	0.860	0.562	1.868
mkt2		0.733					2.134
mkt3		0.875					2.705
mkt4		0.815					2.262
mkt5		0.636					1.398
perf2			0.680	0.833	0.838	0.672	1.264
perf3			0.895				3.079
perf4			0.842				2.624
Perf1			0.845				2.232

Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2023)
Notes: MGT: management self-efficacy; MKT: marketing self-efficacy; PERF: performance; α: Cronbach's alpha; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted

Another validity test evaluated in this study is discriminant validity. To help in evaluating discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation criterion was conducted. Based on the recommendations of Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT value below 0.90 indicates that discriminant validity is satisfied. As Table 2 shows, the HTMT values range from 0.516 to 0.821, which is less than the maximum recommended threshold value of 0.90. Based on these result, discriminant validity is achieved in this study confirming that the latent variables are valid.

Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Criterion

i.		ii.	Management Self-Efficacy	iii.	Marketing Self-Efficacy	iv.	Performance
v.	Management self-efficacy	vi.		vii.		viii.	
ix.	Marketing self-efficacy	x.	0.821	xi.		xii.	
xiii.	Performance	xiv.	0.516	xv.	0.757	xvi.	

Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2023)

Structural Model Evaluation

Structural model evaluation involves exploring the relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables in a study. In evaluating the structural model, the model fit was first evaluated via the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value to determine whether it is < 0.08 as suggested by Henseler et al. (2015). Based on the PLS-SEM result, the SRMR value was 0.062 which is less than the recommended threshold value of 0.08 indicating the fitness of the model. The result of the structural and measurement model (as shown in Figure 1) and the test of hypotheses as captured in Table 3 is shown.

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one stated that marketing self-efficacy has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. Based on the result of the PLS-SEM analysis, marketing self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria indicating that the hypothesis is rejected. This is captured in Table 3 as follows: $\beta = 0.644$, $t = 10.141$, $p = 0.000$.

Hypothesis Two

For hypothesis two, the researcher stated management self-efficacy has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. The result of the PLS-SEM analysis reveals that management self-efficacy has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State indicating that the stated hypothesis is accepted as captured in Table 3: $\beta = 0.035$, $t = 0.516$, $p = 0.606$.

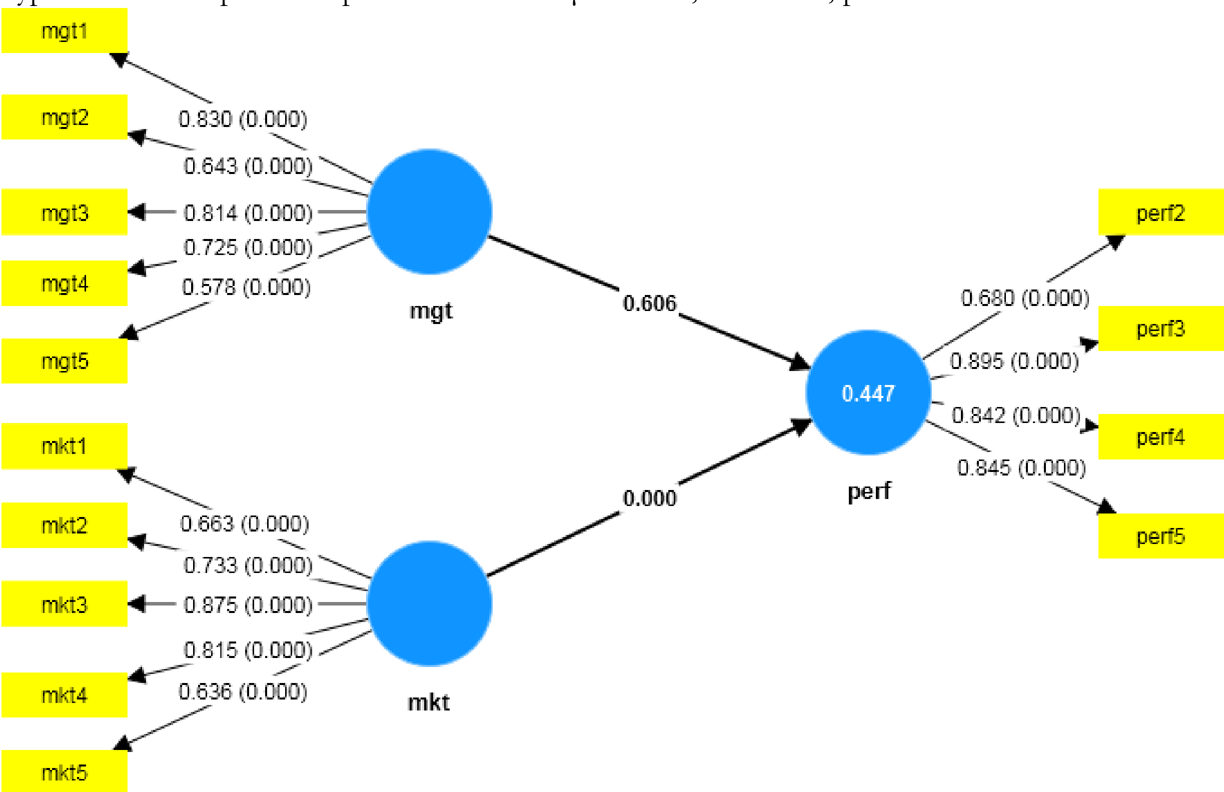

Figure 1: Measurement and Structural Model Results
Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2023)

Further analysis was conducted to evaluate the predictive relevance of the model via the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the effect size (f^2). The R^2 evaluates the level of the variation in the endogenous variable from the impact of the dependent variable while the effect size captures "the degree to which the phenomenon [of interest] is present in the population" (Cohen, 1988). Henseler et al. (2009) recommends that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 represent substantial, moderate and weak effect while Cohen (1988) suggest f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 to represent small, medium and large effects. The result shows an R^2 value of 0.447 (adjusted R^2 = 0.442) which shows a moderate effect of marketing and management on performance of SMEs in Benue State. In terms of the effect size, a value of f^2 was 0.412 (large effect) and 0.001 (no effect) for marketing and management respectively.

Table 3: Structural Model Evaluation

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STD EV	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Remarks
H_{o1}: MKT ---> PERF	0.644	0.645	0.064	10.141	0.000	Rejected
H_{o1}: MGT ---> PERF	0.035	0.043	0.068	0.516	0.606	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2023)

Notes: MKT: marketing self-efficacy; MGT: management self-efficacy; PERF: performance of SMEs

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one was stated that marketing self-efficacy has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. The evidence fails to support this hypothesis and was therefore rejected in favor of the hypothesis that marketing have a significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State. This implies that SMEs that are confident of setting achievable market share goals, sales and profit goals will be able to diligently manage the enterprise to reduce overall risks. Additionally, SMEs who believe in their capability to establish competitive advantage position in product market and successfully conduct market analysis will have complete confidence in their ability to engage in strategic planning and to clearly define organizational roles, responsibilities, and policies. These findings align with the earlier research studies conducted by Chukuemeka et al. (2022); Garba (2020); Kubeyinje and Bariweni (2020); Yalo et al. (2019); Kim (2019) and Antonic et al. (2016). Their studies were able to establish the significant impact of marketing strategies and practices on the performance of SMEs.

Hypothesis two was stated that management self-efficacy has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. The evidence indicates that management has no significant effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. This shows that the stated hypothesis two is accepted. The management dimension of entrepreneurial self-efficacy is insignificant because of probably the poor level of managerial skills in owner/managers or entrepreneurs of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. SMEs that have confidence in their ability to clearly define organizational roles, responsibilities and policies and establish achievable goals will be able to achieve sales growth, market share growth, competitive advantage and employee productivity. However, studies by Masoud and Khaleed (2020), Fatoki (2014) and Zhang and Welch (2021), which were conducted outside Nigeria, were able to establish contrary findings which showed that management has a significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to examine the effect of marketing self-efficacy and management self-efficacy on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, Nigeria. Employing cross-sectional research design and PLS-SEM as the tool of data analysis, the study found that while marketing self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on the performance of SMEs in Benue State, management self-efficacy failed to have a significant effect with variation in performance of SMEs also found to be 0.447 (44.7%). Based on these findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1) SMEs in Benue State should focus on improving their marketing self-efficacy, which may be in form of training and development programs that focus on marketing topics such as market research, branding, advertising, and public relations. Such training can cover skills such as digital marketing, sales and public relations training and branding. Another way is to seek out mentorship from

experienced marketing professionals. This way, entrepreneurs or owner/managers of SMEs in Benue State will have belief that they will succeed in their marketing activities.

2) Owner/managers of SMEs in Benue State should focus on improving their management self-efficacy despite the dimension having no significant effect on performance. The owner/managers can participate in strategic planning, financial management, human resource management and operations management. Another way is to seek out mentorship from experienced business leaders. This may help these individuals develop their management self-efficacy better.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY (ESE) SCALE

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the following dimensions of Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy: Marketing (Mkt) and Management (MGT) using the scale: **SD**= Strongly Disagree (1); **D=**Disagree (2), **U=** Undecided (3), **A=**Agree (4), and **SA=** Strongly Agree (5).

Marketing

Item Code	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Mc_1	I am confident of setting achievable market share goals	5	4	3	2	1
Mc_2	I am confident of setting achievable sales goals	5	4	3	2	1
Mc_3	I am confident of setting attainable profit goals	5	4	3	2	1
Mc_4	I believe in my capability to establish competitive advantage position in product market	5	4	3	2	1
Mc_5	I believe in my ability to successfully conduct market analysis	5	4	3	2	1

Management

Item Code	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
Mgt_1	I believe in my capability to diligently manage the enterprise to reduce overall risks.	5	4	3	2	1
Mgt_2	I have complete confidence in my ability to engage in strategic planning.	5	4	3	2	1
Mgt_3	I am confident of managing time by setting goals	5	4	3	2	1
Mgt_4	I am confident of easily establishing achievable goals	5	4	3	2	1
Mgt_5	I have confidence in my capability to clearly define organizational roles, responsibilities, and policies.	5	4	3	2	1

PERFORMANCE OF SMEs SCALE

Item Code	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
	I am confident that my enterprise has experienced improvement in its performance in terms of the following indicators:					
Pf_1	Sales growth	5	4	3	2	1
Pf_2	Growth in market share	5	4	3	2	1
Pf_3	Competitive advantage	5	4	3	2	1

Pf_4	Customer satisfaction	5	4	3	2	1
Pf_5	Employees' productivity	5	4	3	2	1