

Understanding The Moderating Effect of Entrepreneurial Training and Development on Entrepreneurial Orientation and SMEs Performance.

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Abstract- *Entrepreneurial orientation is a multi-dimensional behavior of an entrepreneur, who is innovative, proactive, autonomy, proactive and ready to engage in competitive aggressiveness in order to encash the opportunities available in the market. The researcher provided insight to this study by examining the moderating effect of training and development on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. Two hundred and eighteen questionnaires were completed and returned. The principal tools for analysis of data are carried out with the help of multiple regression analysis. The study therefore concludes that, all the variables of entrepreneurial orientation (i.e. Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking and competitive aggressiveness) significantly influenced the performance of SMEs except autonomy which does not improve SMEs performance. The study further concludes that training and development do have significant moderating effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation variables and SMEs performance. In the light of the above conclusions, the study recommended that entrepreneurs should improve their training and practices of entrepreneurial orientation in order to further enhances the introduction of new lines of products, cutting-edge technologies, expansion of market share, increase in standard of living and others.*

Indexed Terms- *Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovativeness, Proactiveness, Risk Taking, Competitive Aggressiveness, Autonomy, SME Performance and Training and Development*

I. INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises play a significant role in the development and growth of both developed and

developing economics most especially in the area of employment generation, increase in Gross Domestic Product and redistribution of income and others (Salau 2022a). However, survival and better SME performance depends on the encouraging policy, better organizational culture as well as entrepreneurial ability that can drive and develop the SME sector of a country (Obaji and Olugu, 2014). No wonder, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have been considered as the cornerstone of the business environment in every country, a principal driver of economic development and progress (Qamruzzaman and Jianguo, 2018). Besides, with today's complexity in conducting business transactions, competitive environment with increased risk and inability to forecast in the current unstable economy and the need to sought out for new opportunities by SMEs owners, entrepreneurial orientation can be regarded as a crucial factor which is required to ensure the success of a business performance. Despite the contributions of SMEs to various economic growth, Nigeria inclusive, business continuity problem has been a major challenge confronting the sector (Adeweoye and Salau, 2022b).

Entrepreneurial Orientation reflects the behavior of the entrepreneurs like innovation, proactive and risk taking (Muenjohn and Armstrong, 2008). According to Wiklund and Shepherd (2005), entrepreneurial orientation (EO) provides small businesses with the ability to discover new business opportunities and the discovery of new opportunities enhances their differentiation from other firms. The adoption of an entrepreneurial orientation as an indispensable variable to the growth oriented small firms seems pertinent (Ferreira and Azevedo 2008), because it is a significant contributor to a firm's success (Mahmood and Hanafi 2013). In fact, high entrepreneurial orientation among small business owners enhances the

formation and activation of personal strategies affecting business growth and performance (Omisakin et al. 2016). The contributions of entrepreneurial orientation towards the performance of SME's differs, the differences could be based on sectors and locations. Those SME's operating in cities perform better than SME's in small towns and rural areas so also thus, SME's in industrial sectors perform better than those in the service sectors.

The term entrepreneurial orientation is used to refer to the set of personal psychological traits, values, attributes and attitudes strongly associated with a motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This study adopted the five dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation which was developed by Lumpkin and Dess (1996). These dimensions have been studied by various researchers (Lee, Lim and Pathak, 2011 ;and Nonyane-Mathebula, 2010). According to Mahmood and Hanafi, (2013) and Zainol and Ayadurai, (2011) whom have agreed that Entrepreneurial Orientation is a significant contributor to a firm's success and contribute to a healthier business performance. Besides, many studies such as Tajeddini, (2010) and Hoq and Chauhan, (2011) have acknowledged the importance of entrepreneurial orientation to the firms' performance. Given the current economic challenges facing many countries across the globe caused by COVID-19 pandemic and recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, it has become prominent for entrepreneurial activities to be enhanced through entrepreneurial orientation.

Goldstein and Ford (2002) described training as a systematic method for learning and development to increase skills, experience, person, team and the organisational efficiency. The present needs of an organisation should determine the choice of training and development offered both the entrepreneurs and its employees, such training should also be well monitored to achieve its desired result. SMEs that choose to have good training result should also develop a good training design according to the needs of both the employees and the organisation (Nunvi 2006). The training of entrepreneurs goes a long way on how best to initiate and optimize his entrepreneurial orientation. Therefore, this study examined how training and development moderate the relationship

between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance.

According to Wales et al. (2011), entrepreneurial orientation studies were majorly conducted in Europe and USA and suggested for further research across different countries. Empirical evidence suggests that the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance is moderated by several factors such as technology or marketing actions, but also the results of these effects vary by industry (Choi, and Williams, 2016). Nevertheless, in line with the suggestions of Koe, (2013) and Fatoki, (2012) to consider the moderating role of different variables on the entrepreneurial orientation and to the best of our knowledge, none has empirically assessed the moderating role of training and development on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and Nigeria SME performance relationship. Also, the significance and contributory role of entrepreneurial orientation has not been well investigated in the developing countries. In order to provide answer to the questions of whether innovations affect performance of SMEs? If proactiveness influence performance of SMEs in Nigeria? If risk taking impact on the performance of SMEs? Do training and development moderate the relationship between entrepreneurship orientation and SMEs performance? And others. This study sought to critically appraise the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on the performance of SMEs. Therefore, the findings of this study will enable small firm owner/manager to better understand how to enhance their business performance.

- Research Hypothesis

The researcher intends to test the following null hypothesis

H₁: Innovativeness does not influence SMEs performance.

H₂: Proactiveness does not affect SMEs performance.

H₃: Risk-taking does not influence SMEs performance.

H₄: Competitive aggressiveness does not affect SMEs performance.

H₅: Autonomy does not influence SMEs performance.

H₆: Training and Development does not moderate the relationship between entrepreneurship orientation and SMEs performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- An Overview of Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is a multi-dimensional behavior of an entrepreneur, who is innovative, proactive, autonomy, proactive and ready to engage in competitive aggressiveness in order to encash the opportunities available in the market. It can also be viewed as firm's ability to innovate, take risks, proactively pursue market opportunities, engaged in market aggression and be autonomous. It allows a firm to develop ideas and realize them in the form of new products and services, participate in risky projects, predict future requirements, and find new market opportunities (Covin and Slevin 1989). According to Lumpkin and Dess (1996) who developed five dimensions that characterize the entrepreneurial orientation of a firm which includes: innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. Innovativeness reflects the tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation and creative processes resulting in newness. Proactiveness reflects firm's actions in exploiting and anticipating emerging opportunities by developing and introducing as well as making improvement towards a product (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Risk-taking represents the willingness to commit resources to undergo activities and projects which resulted in uncertainty of the outcomes (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Risk-taking is defined as the extent to which a firm is willing to make large and risky commitments (Covin and Slevin, 1991). Competitive aggressiveness is the intensity of the firms to improve their position to outdo and overtake their competitors in the market (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). It is characterized by a strong offensive posture directed at overcoming competitors and may be quite reactive as when a firm aggressively enters a market that a rival has identified (Lumpkin and Dess, 1997). Autonomy refers to an independent action of individual or teams in ensuring ideas and concepts are being carried out till completion (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Autonomy gives employees the chance to perform effectively by being independent, self-directed, and creative.

- Innovativeness

Innovativeness is a significant factor to characterize entrepreneurship which could be described as the

efforts to discover new opportunities and which comprise experimentation and creativity that results in new products and services, or and enhanced technical traits of existing services and products (Mahmood and Hanafi, 2013; Hoque et al., 2018). Innovativeness represents a firms' propensity to involve into creative processes, experiments, and support novel ideas and these kinds of activities would create and facilitate new and innovative methods, opportunity recognition, processes and technologies (Runyan et al., 2006). Small firm owners may apply innovative techniques in performance enhancement.

- Proactiveness

Proactiveness is a firm's ability to think ahead, foresee, initiate a change or take a first mover leap rather than being reactionary or defensive in its strategic posture. Proactiveness demonstrates a firm's anticipatory action in the future market demand to gain competitive advantages over its market competitors, followed by opportunity scanning (Wales et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial proactiveness can also be seen as alertness of the company. Alvarez and Barney (2002) submit that entrepreneurial proactiveness is the ability of the firm to predict where products/services do not exist or have become unsuspected valuable to customers and where new procedures of manufacturing are unknown to others become feasible. Proactiveness refers to an on-going perspective where a firm actively seeks to anticipate and take advantage of opportunities to develop and introduce new products and implement changes to existing firm's strategies and tactics.

- Risk Taking

Risk taking is one of major features that can define an entrepreneur, it refers to a tendency to take bold steps such as venturing into unknown new markets, committing a large portion of firm resources to ventures with uncertain outcomes and/or borrowing heavily (Lumpkin and Dess, 2001). According to Rauch et al. (2009) risk-taking, is associated with undertaking certain activities of assigning valuable resources to venture capitals in changeable environments. The ability to take risk has been linked with entrepreneurs and this is what made them different from other human beings. According to Naldi, Nordqvist, Sjoberg and Wiklund (2007) who observed that a too low risk-tolerance prevents a firm

from progressing. Firms with high risk-seeking tendency tend to obtain superior growth and profitability in the long run (Wang and Poutziouris, 2010), if it is successful. It is expected that firms that have better performance would also have a higher level of risk propensity (Leko-Simic and Horvat, 2006).

- **Competitive Aggressiveness**

Aggressiveness represents a business firm's degree of responsiveness to its rivals (Runyan et al., 2006). Companies must adopt and encourage a competitive aggressive approach in decision making to improve business performance and maintain relevance in its industry. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) described aggressiveness as a firm's proclivity to straightaway challenge its market competitors and to surpass the rivals. Valeria (2013) states that competitive advantage can be achieved through entrepreneurial orientation, environmental adaptability, and innovation, creativity, where the competitive advantage generated by a company can improve business performance. Covin and Covin (1990) exhibited that high performing firms are likely to be more aggressive in a hostile environment.

- **Autonomy**

Autonomy is associated with organization freedom and flexibility, which is concern with encouraging the organizational members to develop entrepreneurial initiative (Johanssen, Keränen, Hinterhuber, and Andersson, Johanssen et al. 2015). Autonomy represents an individual's independent action and self-direction in search of a new opportunity (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Autonomy is what the people's need to perceive that they have choices, that what they are doing is of their own volition, and that they are the source of their own actions (Fowler 2014). Entrepreneurial autonomy plays a pivotal role for achieving strategic advantages and entrepreneurial outcomes. Rauch et al. (2009) found a positive relationship between a firm's performance and autonomous attitude.

- **Training and Development**

The distinct role of training and development in achieving organizational goals and objectives by

harnessing organizational interest with employees' interest enhance the capabilities and efficiency of employees (Salau 2022). Cole (2002) see training as more of a learning activity that leads to the acquisition of better skills and knowledge needed to perform a task. Training is incorporated in the human resource planning; proper training can increase knowledge sharing and creation. Training programmes targeted at changing the world view of learners, from job seekers to job creators. According to Salau (2022a), the present needs of an organisation should determine the choice of training and development offered. However, entrepreneurs should have special training that will boost their entrepreneurial orientation. Amongst other things, entrepreneurship training seeks to promote creativity, risk-taking, leadership, team-spirit, autonomy, sense of initiative, self-employment, self-confidence and innovation; it is a combination of all these features which set entrepreneurship education apart from general economic or business studies (Lee, Chang and Lim,2005; Matuluko,2015). Training and development are the organizational activities concerned with improving the performance, skills, and competency of individuals and groups in organizational settings. While training is the preparation of an employee tasks required for his or current role, development, on the other hands is the practice of equipping an employee for future roles and responsibilities (Salau, 2022a).

III. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

- **Entrepreneurial Orientation and SMEs Performance**

The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance has arose the interest of many researchers across the globe. In dynamic environments with abundant opportunities, there is tendency for firms with a greater entrepreneurial orientation to perform better because they tend to pursue new market opportunities ahead of their competitors, couples with their aggressiveness, proactiveness, autonomy and risk taking. Previous studies showed that entrepreneurial orientation could significantly improve business performance (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Lumpkin and Dess, 2001). Many studies on entrepreneurial orientation and business performance have been associated to have positive results (Jantunen, Puumalainen, Saarenketo, and Kylaheiko, 2005;

Chow, 2006; Coulthard, 2007). However, there is no doubt that there are also studies that revealed that entrepreneurial orientation does not give positive results to business performance (Hart, 1992; Matsuno, Mentzer and Ozsomer, 2002; Morgan and Strong, 2003).

Serna, Martínez and Montoya (2017) evaluated the strength of the relation of entrepreneurial orientation and business performance in the context of 81 small and medium agribusinesses of Aguascalientes, México. The data was analyzed with structural equations model. The findings indicate that entrepreneurial orientation has a strong positive relationship in the performance of agribusiness.

Kosa1, Mohammad and Ajibie (2018) investigated the contribution of entrepreneurial orientation towards the performance of small ventures in the context of different business sectors and the location of the businesses. Primary data was obtained from selected 210 small firms from the central part of Ethiopia using two level multi-stage sampling. The finding of the study indicates that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences ventures performance.

Akande, Raheem, Jimoh, and Olagbemiro, (2021) examined the effect of entrepreneurial behaviour on small business. Three hundred and twenty-three questionnaires were administered and the data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, linear regression statistical techniques. The study concluded that risk taking and innovation are determinant factors of entrepreneurial behaviour and it has major significant effect on the small business performance.

- Innovativeness and SMEs performance

Entrepreneurial organization that are innovative are often the first to market new product offerings (Covin and Slevin 2001). Innovativeness help in sustaining SMEs and that innovativeness is a crucial part of firm survival strategies. A number of research have found a positive relationship between innovation and firm performance (Rauch et al. 2009; Chiang and Yan, 2011; Justine, Anthony, and Max, 2005). As a result, the importance of innovation as a contributing variable to the measurement of entrepreneurial orientation and

performance is incontrovertible (Omisakin et al. 2016).

In developed country, Salavou and Avlonitis (2008) investigated the influence of product innovativeness on the performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing, food and beverages, and textile enterprises in Greece and concluded that product innovativeness influenced performance.

In turkey, Alpay, Bodur, Yilmaz and Buyukbalci (2012) examined the relationship between innovativeness and SME growth. The results indicated that there was a strong linear relationship between innovativeness and performance of SMEs.

In developing country, Ayepa, Boohene and Mensah (2019) examined the effects of innovativeness and firm resources on the growth of small enterprises in the Ga South Municipality in Ghana. The study concluded that, to enhance their growth, small enterprises must be encouraged to be more innovative, reinforce and maximize the effective use of resources. Proactiveness and SMEs performance

According to Brownhilder, and Johan, (2017), entrepreneurial orientation in term of pro-activeness has been widely touted as a fundamental ingredient for enhancing firm growth. Many studies on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance/growth have found positive relationship between proactiveness and performance (Hughes and Morgan 2007; Rauch et al. 2009; Sascha et al. 2012). Lumpkin and Des, (2001) found that proactiveness was more important to firms in the early stages of industry development than in more mature industries. In developed country, Rahman, Civelek, and Kozubíková, (2016) explore the differences in the entrepreneurial orientation (on the basis of proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy) between micro versus small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Czech Republic. Empirical results of this study show significant differences between micro versus small and medium enterprises in terms of proactiveness and autonomy.

In Nigeria, Oni, (2012) investigates the existing relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness characteristics and performance. The findings showed

that the enterprises performance was found to be a function of a wider based entrepreneurial proactiveness.

- Risk taking and SMEs Performance

Lumpkin and Dess (2001) argue that risk-taking refers to taking calculated business opportunities when the outcome of the risk cannot be determined immediately. Similarly, Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) suggest that risk-taking orientation is the willingness of an entrepreneurial firm to invest resources in a venture where the outcome may be highly uncertain or unknown (Omisakin et al. 2016).

In developed country, Ključnikov, Belás and Smrčka (2016) examined the role of risk-taking and competitive aggressiveness in management of SMEs. The study findings showed that companies should include male and higher educated managers who are more intensively incline to initiative, to the realization of riskier projects and to aggressiveness against competitors, in order to formulate riskier and more competitively aggressive strategies.

In developing country, Wambugu, Gichira, Karatina and Mung'atu (2015) establish the influence of entrepreneurial risk taking and firm performance of Agro processing small and medium enterprises in Kenya. The study findings revealed that risk taking has a positive impact on firm performance of Agro processing SMEs in Kenya.

- Competitive aggressiveness and SMEs performance

The aggressive dimension in competition reflects the company's ability to take aggressive actions in dealing with its competitors by increasing product quality, production capacity and others in order to attract consumer-buying interest. Competitive aggressiveness has been found to enhance firm performance (Lyon et al. 2000). Previous studies such as, Koe, (2013), Justine et al. (2005) and Campos et al., (2013) found a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and firm's performance. Abdullahi et al. (2019) found that competitive aggressiveness has a positive impact on financial performance in different economic sectors and contexts. Some studies such as Hughes and Morgan (2007) and Casillas and Morino (2010) however,

failed to establish positive correlations between competitive aggressiveness and firm performance. Similarly, a study among Tanzanian construction firms by Okangi and Letmathe (2015) also failed to establish any significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and firm growth as a facet of firm performance

In developing country, Panjaitan, Cempena, Trihastuti and Panjaitan (2020) examine the causal relationship between network capability, knowledge creation, innovativeness, competitive aggressiveness, and business performance of private universities. The results showed that competitive aggressiveness is proven to be a positive mediating variable in the relationship of network capability, knowledge creation, innovativeness, and business performance. The results also show that knowledge creation, and innovativeness, have an effect on competitive aggressiveness.

In Nigeria, Asika, Obianuju and Konya (2020) evaluated the influence of competitive aggressiveness on business performance of event management firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study concluded that competitive aggressiveness significantly influenced profitability and effectiveness of event management firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

- Autonomous and SMEs performance

Autonomy reflects the strong desire of a person to have freedom in the development and implementation of an idea within an organization (Lumpkin et al. 2009). Evidence of autonomy in firms may vary as a function of size, management style, or ownership (Lumpkin and Dess 1996), for example Justine et al. (2005), (Omisakin et al. 2016) and Boohene et al. (2012) find that autonomy have a positive impact on the performance. While Hughes and Morgan (2007) find no relationship between autonomy and performance of firms in its embryonic stage of growth. In Indonesia, Aluisius, Rosalia and Darwina (2018) examine the impact of technological turbulence on the relationship between autonomy, pricing capability, and firm performance. The results indicated that the pricing capability provides mediating effect on the relationship between autonomy and firm performance. Moderating Effect of Training and Development on Entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance.

It is common knowledge that investing in training and development of entrepreneurs will enhance his entrepreneurial orientation as it relates to innovativeness, aggressiveness, risk taking, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness thereby improve performance. Through training and development, entrepreneurs can be taught, or at least enhanced (Dawson and Henley 2012), all entrepreneurs might not be born as a risk taker, innovators, proactive and autonomous but it can be achieved with training. This position is corroborated by Ogundele (2012) who notes that entrepreneurial ability is neither mystical nor magical but rather something that could be learned.

Hoque, (2018) explores the role of organizational culture in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and Bangladeshi small and medium enterprises (SMEs) performance. A quantitative survey technique was exercised and the data were collected from the randomly selected 384 owners of SMEs in Dhaka–Bangladesh. The data were analyzed by using SEM-AMOS. Based on the statistical results, entrepreneurial orientation and organizational culture were significantly related to SME performance and organizational culture was found to mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance.

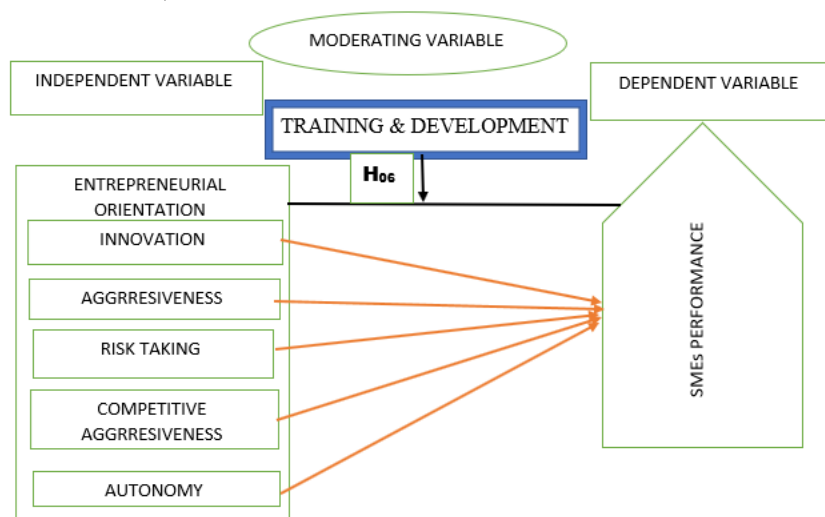
Jafar Rezaei 2018) explore how the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (the bases of

innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking), influence these functional performances and, in turn, overall firm performance. The data are collected from 279 high-tech small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) using a postal survey. The results indicated that the research and development, production and marketing and sales functions reinforce each other in a logic order and are complementary in their effect on overall firm performance.

Genty, (2019) examines the moderating effect of training transfer on the determinants of entrepreneurial performance among owners of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study concluded that there is presence of moderation effect of training transfer on the determinants of entrepreneurial performance in the overall model.

Salau, (2022a) examines the effect of succession planning (on the bases training and development and others) on SMEs performance. Multiple Regression analysis was used to evaluate the significant effect among training and development variables. The study concludes that all the variables of succession planning (training and development, talent management and reward management) have a positive significant effect on SMEs performance.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Source: Researcher Conceptual Model (2021)

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study is an exploratory one based on both primary and secondary sources of information. In order to collect relevant data to achieve this, the quantitative method and descriptive survey design was adopted and used in this research work in order to describe how training and development moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. In this regard, a well-structured questionnaire was administered on a targeted sample of 270 owners or managers of SMEs in Lagos state out of which 218 was duly completed and returned. Owners were used in line with the ownership theory that suggests proprietors or owners of SMES being the principal strategist and decision makers, building up the vision, mission and strategies and furthermore executing these plans (Abosede et al., 2016). However, the study adopted purposive and simple random sampling techniques to draw the sample from the population. The descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage and graphs are used for the analysis of the research questions while multiple Linear regression was used to analyse the hypotheses.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 depicted the demographic characteristics of 218 respondents. About the age of the respondents that served as participants in the study: about 19 (8.72%) of the respondents were between 20-29years of age; 48(22.02%) of the respondents were between 30-39years of age, 62 (28.44%) were between 40-49years of age and 89 (40.82%) between 50years and above. Therefore, majority of the respondents to the questionnaire was between the ages of 50years and above. The study further shows the gender classification of the participated. respondents in the study as follows: 163(74.77%) of the respondents are male while 55(25.23%) of the respondents are female. Therefore, simple majority of the participated respondents were male.

The demographic further analyses the respondents based on marital status, the result shows that 32(14.68%) of the respondents are single, 123(56.42%) of the respondents are married and 43(19.73%) of the respondents are widowed while 20(9.17%) are separated. Most of the participants

were married. The study equally classified the respondents in terms of their level of formal education. Results 4 show that a 48(22.02%) of the respondents had WASCE certificate, 83(38.07%) are Diploma/NCE graduate, while 43(12.84%) are B.Sc./HND graduate while 44(20.18%) are Masters/Ph.D. holders. Most of the respondents are Diploma/NCE graduate. To determine if the respondents attend special training on entrepreneurial orientation: 75(34.40%) of the respondent firm owners attend special training on entrepreneurial orientation, 143(65.59%) of the respondent firm owners who did not attend special training on entrepreneurial orientation. Most of the participants firm owners did not attend special training on entrepreneurial orientation.

Hypothesis 1-5: Entrepreneurial Orientation Variables (Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy) significantly effect SMEs performance.

Table 4.1 below depict the result of the multiple regression that were calculated to predict the influence of entrepreneurial orientation (on the dimension of Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy) on SMEs performance. A significant regression coefficient is found ($F= 5.059$, $p = .000$), with R^2 of .544. This presupposes that 54.4% of SMEs performance is explained by entrepreneurial orientation (on the dimension of Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy), implying that 45.6% of the variance is explained by other variables outside the entrepreneurial orientation indices. Similarly, four of the indices of entrepreneurial orientation show these result; Innovativeness ($\beta = .300$, p value $< .000$, $t = 6.044$), proactiveness ($\beta = .325$, p value $> .000$, $t = 5.360$), however, risk taking ($\beta = .118$, p value $p=.021$, $t = 2.038$), competitive aggressiveness ($\beta = .257$, p value $> .000$, $t = 4.857$). Similarly, autonomy depict insignificant influence on SMEs performance ($\beta = .092$, p value $> .069$, $t = 1.941$).

From the multiple regression for entrepreneurial orientation predictors as presented in the tables above, it is observed that all the entrepreneurial orientation predictors to a crown zero, SME performance would

be at .385, at 1% change in Innovativeness would lead to increase in SME performance by a variation of 14.3%. While at 1% change in proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy would lead to decrease in SME performance by a variation of 15.5%, 6.5%, 17% and 5.8% respectively. Therefore, the column Beta under Standardized Coefficients shows that the highest number in the beta is 0.325 for Proactiveness, innovativeness was ranked second with beta 0.300 followed by competitive aggressiveness with beta 0.257 and risk-taking with beta 0.118. All the four predictors significantly affect SMEs performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 1, 2, 3 and 4 are accepted, while, autonomy performance ($\beta = .092, p > .069$). showed no significance with SMEs performance. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was rejected.

The result of present study is in agreement with the empirical studies such as those Wiklund, *et al* (2005), Lumpkin, *et al* (2001) and Kosa1, *et al* (2018) which showed that entrepreneurial orientation significantly

improve business performance. Rauch *et al.* (2009), Chiang et al, (2011) and Justine, *et all* 2005) found a positive relationship between innovation and firm performance. Hughes, *et all* (2007), Rauch, *et all.*, (2009), Oni, (2012) and Sascha, *et all.*, (2012) found positive relationship between proactiveness and performance. Wambugu, et all., (2015) revealed that risk taking has a positive impact on firm performance of Agro processing SMEs in Kenya. Asika, *et all.*, (2020) and Abdullahi et al. (2019) concluded that competitive aggressiveness significantly influenced profitability of firms. While Hughes, et all., (2007) find no relationship between autonomy and performance of firms in its embryonic stage of growth. Table 1: Multiple Linear regression table Showing the significant effect of entrepreneurial orientation variables (Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy) and SMEs Performance

Std. Error of the estimate=.34237	R ² =.544		R ² Adj=.533	R=.738	F=5.059
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(constant)	.386	.212		2.950	.000
Innovativeness	.143	.024	.300	6.044	.000
Proactiveness	.155	.029	.325	5.360	.000
Risk Taking	.065	.032	.118	2.038	.012
Competitive Aggressiveness.	.170	.033	.257	4.857	.000
Autonomy	.058	.018	.092	1.941	.069

Source: researcher Analysis, 2022. Dependent Variable: SME Performance.

Hypothesis 6: Training and Development do not have significant moderating effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation variables and SMEs performance.

The entries in tables 2 indicates the results of the regression analysis which test whether training and development moderates the effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (on the dimension of Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy) and SMEs performance, the following analysis below was considered. The result showed that R² (regression value) of the succession planning is 0.569 which implies that the variation in training and development

by 56.9% will lead to a variation in SME performance by the same proportion. The R value is .754 that is, 75.4%.

With the significant value of at .000. Based on the result of the analysis, it could be concluded that training and development significantly moderate the effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho₂) which states that “Training and Development do not have significant moderating effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation variables and SMEs performance, is hereby rejected.

Table 2: Multiple Linear regression table Showing the moderating effect of training and development on the relationship among entrepreneurial orientation variables (Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking,

competitive aggressiveness and autonomy) and SMEs Performance.

Std. Error of the Estimate= .23704		R ² = .569		Adj. R ² = .556	R=.754 ^a	F=4.567
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)			-----			
Innovativeness			.207			
Proactiveness			.317			
Risk taking			.118			
Competitive Aggressiveness	.559	.293	.227	1.906	.000	
Autonomy	.098	.026	.167	3.740	.000	
Training and Development	.150	.028	.193	5.336	.000	
	.065	.031		2.092	.005	
	.155	.035		4.343	.016	
	.235	.068		3.473	.001	
	.104	.030		3.443	.000	

a. Dependent Variable: SMEPERFOR

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Entrepreneurial orientation is widely acknowledged as a strong measurement of firm's performance, but little consensus exist on what constitutes suitable entrepreneurial orientation moderators. According to

Wiklund, *et all.*, (2003) there are both external and internal variables that can moderate entrepreneurial orientation while, Tan and Tan (2005) concludes that various environmental variables can moderate the relationship. However, based on the suggestions of Koe, (2013) and Fatoki, (2012) that future study should consider the moderating role of different

variables on the entrepreneurial orientation, the researcher provided insight to this study by examining the moderating effect of training and development on entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performance. The study therefore concludes that, all the variables of entrepreneurial orientation (i.e. Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking and competitive aggressiveness) significantly influenced the performance of SMEs except autonomy which does not improve SMEs performance. The study further concludes that training and development do have significant moderating effect on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation variables and SMEs performance.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- Entrepreneurs should improve their training and practices of entrepreneurial orientation in order to further enhances the introduction of new lines of products, cutting-edge technologies, expansion of market share, increase in standard of living and others.
- Engaged or nurture entrepreneurial orientation qualities on innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking and competitive aggressiveness to improve their business performance.
- Attend special training on innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking and competitive aggressiveness to improve their performances.
- All SMEs association and government SME agencies should inculcate entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs training for better understanding of the entrepreneurial orientation variables.

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