Assessing The Effect of Self-Awareness and Self-Motivation on The Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in North Central, Nigeria

ONOJA MERCY[1], ELIJAH EBENEHI OGBADU (PH. D)[2], JOHN OLATUNJI ALABI (PH. D)[3]
[1,2,3] *Department of Business Administration, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State.*

Abstract- ***This study assessed the effect of self-awareness and self-motivation on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in North-Central, Nigeria. The study spanned the period from 2021 to 2024. The study made used of survey research design. The population of the study consist of 5,188,310 registered SMEs owners in North-Central, Nigeria, which was sourced from last updated SMEDAN, 2020 report. The sample size of the study is 400 and was determined with Krejcie and Morgan sampling technique. The study made used of multiple regression analysis as the main estimation technique to test the hypotheses of this study with the aid of SPSS 21.0 statistical software. The study found that self-awareness has positive (0.396) and significant (0.001) effect on performance of SMEs in North-Central, Nigeria. The study also found that self-motivation has positive (0.241) and significant (0.006) effect on performance of SMEs in North-Central, Nigeria. The study concluded that emotional intelligence significantly impacts performance of small and medium enterprises in North-Central, Nigeria. Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommended that SMEs should implement regular self-assessment tools and feedback mechanisms to help employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement and also, conduct training sessions on emotional intelligence and self-awareness. SMEs should cultivate an environment that inspires and sustains motivation by Offer opportunities for career development and advancement to keep employees motivated and engaged.***

Indexed Terms- ***Emotional Intelligence, Performance, SMEs, Self-Awareness and Self-Motivation.***

I. INTRODUCTION

In the bustling landscape of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in North Central Nigeria, success is not merely determined by financial acumen or technical prowess alone. Rather, it hinges significantly on a nuanced, yet vital aspect of human behaviour known as emotional intelligence (EI). EI is defined as the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. EI encompasses a spectrum of competencies, including self-awareness and self-motivation. Moreover, self-awareness, characterised by an individual's ability to recognise their own strengths, weaknesses, and emotional triggers, plays a fundamental role in shaping leadership effectiveness and organisational culture within SMEs. Dahiya and Singh, (2020), highlighted that self-awareness enables SME leaders to capitalize on their strengths, address areas for development, and cultivate an environment of openness and authenticity conducive to innovation and collaboration.

Furthermore, self-motivation emerges as a critical driver of entrepreneurial success within SMEs, as entrepreneurs navigate the myriad challenges and uncertainties inherent in the business landscape. Afolabi et al. (2022) accentuate the importance of intrinsic motivation in sustaining entrepreneurial endeavors, fueling resilience, and driving long-term business growth. By cultivating a sense of purpose, passion, and perseverance, SME owners can surmount obstacles, seize opportunities, and maintain momentum in the pursuit of their business objectives. SMEs play a pivotal role in driving economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation in North Central Nigeria. Studies such as those by (Ojo & Ogunmakin, 2019) underscore the substantial contribution of

SMEs to GDP, employment generation, and income distribution in the region. Their agility, innovation, and ability to adapt to local market dynamics make SMEs key drivers of economic diversification and resilience. Despite their economic significance, SMEs in North Central Nigeria face a myriad of challenges that impact their performance and sustainability. Adegbie et al. (2018) identify factors such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and policy inconsistencies as significant constraints hindering SME growth. However, amidst these challenges lie opportunities for innovation, market expansion, and entrepreneurship development, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

However, in North Central Nigeria, there is a clear gap in the awareness and integration of emotional intelligence into the management practices of SMEs. Many SME owners and managers in the region may have technical skills and business acumen, but they often lack the emotional intelligence needed to navigate the complex interpersonal and organisational dynamics that define their operations. This shortcoming can lead to poor decision-making, ineffective communication, and a lack of cohesion within the workforce, ultimately affecting the overall performance of the enterprise.

Furthermore, the socio-economic environment in North Central Nigeria presents distinct challenges that increase the importance of emotional intelligence. The region is characterised by ethnic diversity, political instability, and economic volatility, all of which can elevate emotional stress and conflict within organisations. In such an environment, the ability of SME owners to regulate emotions, both their own and those of their employees, becomes even more essential. However, the lack of focus on emotional intelligence in the leadership development of SME owners and managers means that many are poorly prepared to handle these challenges effectively.

It is in the light of the above that this study assessed the effect of self-awareness and self-motivation on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

This section discusses the various concepts that were used by this study. The concept includes emotional intelligence, performance of SMEs, self-awareness and self-motivation.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has emerged as a significant construct in understanding human behaviour, especially within organisational settings. It encapsulates the capacity of individuals to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in themselves and others, and to utilise such emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour.

Mayer et al. (2016) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions, access and generate emotions to support thought, understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and regulate emotions to foster emotional and intellectual development. This definition highlights the cognitive-processing aspects involved in managing emotions effectively. Goleman (2020), one of the most notable advocates of emotional intelligence, described it as the capacity to recognise our feelings and those of others, to motivate ourselves, and to manage emotions successfully in ourselves and our relationships. His approach, which is widely used in organisational behaviour studies, identifies five key components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Bar-On (2018) offered a nuanced view by defining emotional intelligence as a range of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence a person's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures. His definition widens the scope of emotional intelligence beyond just interpersonal interactions to include intrapersonal skills and adaptability.

In this study, the definition by Mayer et al. (2016) is adopted. Their conceptualisation aligns with the cognitive-behavioural framework within which emotional intelligence is situated in this research, offering a structured and scientifically grounded

perspective that integrates emotion with reasoning and decision-making.

Performance of SMEs

Performance, as a concept, refers to the degree to which an enterprise achieves its intended objectives, which may include profitability, growth, market share, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. However, in the context of SMEs, performance is often measured using both financial and non-financial indicators due to the diverse nature and strategic goals of these businesses.

Aremu and Adeyemi (2021) described SME performance as the extent to which small and medium-sized businesses can achieve their short- and long-term aims in areas such as profitability, innovation, customer retention, and employee satisfaction. They emphasise that performance should be viewed as a multidimensional construct that reflects not only financial gains but also the ability to adapt to changing environments. Similarly, Oladapo et al. (2022) defined SME performance as the overall outcome of strategic efforts and operational activities aimed at attaining competitiveness and sustainability within the business environment. This perspective highlights the importance of internal capabilities and external responsiveness in measuring performance.

In this study, the definition by Oladapo et al. (2022) is adopted. Their comprehensive view integrates both strategic and operational dimensions, making it suitable for understanding performance within the diverse and dynamic Nigerian SME environment. By focusing on competitiveness and sustainability, the definition provides a useful lens for examining how SMEs strive to thrive in challenging economic landscapes.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is commonly seen as the ability of a person to recognise and understand their own emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, and how these impact others. This skill is crucial for self-regulation, decision-making, and developing genuine and effective social interactions, especially in professional settings.

Goleman (2020) described self-awareness as the ability to monitor one's inner world, thoughts, emotions, and motives and to recognise how they influence behaviour and performance. According to him, this competence forms the core of emotional intelligence and facilitates growth in other dimensions such as empathy, self-regulation, and social skills. Similarly, Morin (2022) conceptualised self-awareness as the metacognitive capacity that enables individuals to reflect upon their mental and emotional states, which in turn enhances goal-setting and personal accountability. This definition underscores the introspective and evaluative functions of self-awareness, suggesting that self-aware individuals are better equipped to navigate complex personal and professional challenges.

For this study, Morin's (2022) definition is adopted. His conceptualisation of self-awareness as a metacognitive function that supports introspection and self-evaluation is especially appropriate for understanding the cognitive-emotional interplay that characterises effective behaviour in organisational settings. This definition aligns with the broader psychological framework used in the study and provides a solid basis for analysing the impact of self-awareness on professional performance and interpersonal dynamics.

Self-Motivation

Self-motivation is a key psychological concept that significantly influences individual productivity, entrepreneurial success, and the overall development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It pertains to the internal drive or personal initiative that motivates individuals to set goals, persist through challenges, and maintain effort without depending on external rewards.

Deci and Ryan (2020), in their self-determination theory, defined self-motivation as the inherent tendency to seek out challenges, to extend one's capacities, and to explore and learn. This intrinsic orientation toward growth and achievement is considered a foundational driver of entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, Goleman (2020) conceptualised self-motivation as a component of emotional intelligence that involves a passion for work that goes beyond status or financial reward, encompassing

achievement orientation, commitment, initiative, and optimism even in adverse conditions.

Adebayo and Eniola (2022) defined self-motivation as the personal commitment and inner resilience that inspire small business operators to pursue long-term goals, innovate under pressure, and maintain business operations in volatile environments. Their research among SMEs in Lagos State highlighted that self-motivated entrepreneur demonstrated superior adaptability, creativity, and financial discipline. Similarly, Udu and Eze (2021) observed that self-motivation among SME owners in South-Eastern Nigeria significantly enhanced business sustainability, customer service quality, and employee morale. These findings emphasise the influence of self-motivation on both strategic direction and operational efficiency in SME management.

For this study, the definition by Adebayo and Eniola (2022) is adopted. Their conceptualisation of self-motivation as personal commitment and resilience within the Nigerian SME landscape aligns well with the socio-economic realities of the study area. This definition offers a contextual and operational relevance that integrates psychological factors with entrepreneurial performance, making it suitable for examining the influence of self-motivation on business outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory

Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory was developed by psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in 1990. They introduced the idea of emotional intelligence as the ability to observe one's own and others' emotions, distinguish between them, and use this information to effectively guide one's thoughts and actions. Daniel Goleman also played a key role in popularising the concept of emotional intelligence through his book "Emotional Intelligence," published in 1995.

EI Theory suggests that people differ in their ability to perceive, recognise, and understand emotions, both in themselves and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This idea implies that emotional intelligence involves the skill to accurately identify and interpret emotions, including subtle cues and nonverbal expressions. EI Theory stresses the importance of effectively regulating and managing emotions in various situations (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It suggests that emotionally intelligent individuals are capable of adjusting their emotional responses and those of others, helping them to cope adaptively with stress, navigate social interactions, and make sound decisions. EI Theory also proposes that emotions play a vital role in supporting cognitive processes and guiding behaviour (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The theory emphasises that emotions offer valuable information and motivation that can influence thinking, problem-solving, and goal-oriented actions. Emotionally intelligent individuals are skilled at utilising emotions to improve their decision-making and performance.

EI Theory suggests that emotionally intelligent behaviour contributes to successful interpersonal relationships and social functioning (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This assumption implies that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate social interactions, resolve conflicts, and build positive relationships based on empathy, understanding, and effective communication. EI Theory proposes that emotional intelligence is not fixed but can be developed and enhanced through learning and practice (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This assumption highlights the potential for individuals to improve their emotional intelligence skills through targeted interventions, such as emotional intelligence training programmes and coaching.

One weakness of EI Theory is the lack of consensus and clarity regarding its conceptualisation and measurement. Critics argue that the construct of emotional intelligence is vague and encompasses a wide range of abilities and traits, making it difficult to define and measure effectively (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2002). The lack of a unified theoretical framework has led to multiple competing models and measures of emotional intelligence, raising questions about its scientific validity. Another weakness of EI Theory stems from methodological issues related to its measurement and assessment.

Adopted Theory (Emotional Intelligence theory)

Adopting Emotional Intelligence (EI) theory in the management and operation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can greatly influence their performance. Leaders with high EI are better prepared to manage the emotional complexities of the workplace. They can control their own emotions and understand the feelings of their employees, leading to clearer communication and more effective conflict resolution. This can create a more positive work environment, increase job satisfaction, and reduce employee turnover, which is vital for SMEs where each team member's contribution matters (Goleman, 1998). Teams led by emotionally intelligent leaders tend to perform more effectively. Leaders skilled in EI can foster a collaborative atmosphere where team members feel appreciated and understood. This improves team cohesion, boosts morale, and enhances overall productivity. Research indicates that emotionally intelligent teams are more innovative and adaptable to change, which is critical for the growth and sustainability of SMEs (Druskat & Wolff, 2001).

Empirical Review

Ebieme et al. (2024) conducted a study examining the impact of self-awareness on job performance among business educators at federal universities in South-South Nigeria. Self-awareness was operationalised through dimensions of self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and a self-deprecating sense of humour. The study employed a survey research design, using the entire population of 92 Business Educators from the five Federal Universities in the region due to its manageable size. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilised, with data collected via a structured questionnaire through purposive sampling. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyse the data. The findings showed that self-confidence had a moderate correlation coefficient ($R = 0.489$) with a standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.538$). Realistic self-assessment displayed a higher standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.737$), while self-deprecating sense of humour demonstrated the highest standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.961$). These results suggest that self-awareness significantly influences the job performance of business educators in South-South Nigeria. The study concluded that improving self-awareness among business educators can positively impact their job performance. The researchers recommended that management of higher institutions should prioritise promoting self-confidence among business educators. They also suggested encouraging business educators to engage in realistic self-assessment practices. Furthermore, the study proposed that universities in South-South Nigeria should consider incorporating sense of humour into their annual appraisal processes through employee appraisal forms.

In their study, Samer and Mahmoud (2023) investigated the use of self-awareness in predicting emotional regulation difficulties among faculty members using a survey approach. They involved 172 faculty members from Philadelphia University in Jordan, the Arab Open University in Jordan, and Al Falah University in the U.A.E. The researchers employed the Self-Awareness Scale (SAS) and Emotional Regulation Difficulties Scale (ERDS) to collect data. The study's findings revealed several associations between self-awareness subscales and emotional regulation difficulties. Specifically, an increase in the self-awareness subscale related to self-criticism was correlated with decreased non-acceptance of emotional responses. Similarly, higher scores on the self-awareness subscale concerning a desire for realistic awareness were associated with lower levels of non-acceptance of emotional responses and difficulties in goal-directed behaviour. Additionally, greater self-awareness in terms of self-reflection was linked to reduced non-acceptance of emotional responses, fewer difficulties in goal-directed behaviour, and impulse control challenges. The researchers concluded that enhancing self-awareness and emotional regulation among university faculty members is crucial. They emphasised the importance of achieving a balanced awareness of realistic tasks and emotional responses to facilitate effective engagement and control. Moreover, the study highlights the need for further scientific exploration into emotional regulation difficulties and their interactions with other variables.

Wanjira et al. (2023) conducted an ex-post facto research study to examine the relationship between self-esteem and student academic performance. The study focused on students from public secondary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya. The sample size of 409 respondents, including students and teacher

counsellors, was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula and purposive sampling. Data collection involved questionnaires, interview schedules, and document analysis. The researchers used the Pearson correlation coefficient to analyse the relationship between self-esteem (independent variable) and student academic performance (dependent variable). Additionally, regression analysis was employed to further explore these relationships. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and student academic performance ($r = .800$; $p = .000$), highlighting a strong association between the two variables. Based on these results, the study recommended increased attention from teachers and education stakeholders to students' self-concept, as it significantly impacts academic performance. It also advocated for the promotion of self-advocacy skills, emphasising their role in enhancing students' self-confidence. Furthermore, it was suggested that schools should implement effective feedback mechanisms to encourage students to monitor their performance relative to goals and past achievements.

Oladele (2023) examined the predictors of academic achievement among undergraduates in a Nigerian university, focusing on self-motivation and study ethics. The study used a correlational research design within a quantitative approach. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 320 students, of whom 228 consented and participated in the study. Questionnaires were distributed online via Google Forms, with data collection completed over two weeks. A WhatsApp research group facilitated the dissemination of the Google Form link for efficient data collection. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to present the demographic information of the respondents. The findings showed that self-motivation significantly predicted students' academic performance, providing conclusive insights from the study.

Kreibich et al. (2022) conducted a series of four studies to investigate how individual differences in self-awareness predict means instrumentality in Malaysia, with a focus on the mediating role of problem-solving orientation in goal pursuit. The studies included a total of 763 participants across different phases: Study 1a ($N = 123$), Study 1b ($N = 169$), Study 2 ($N = 353$), and Study 3 ($N = 118$). The research aimed to establish a positive relationship between self-awareness and means instrumentality, mediated by a heightened tendency among self-aware individuals to approach goal pursuit in a problem-solving-oriented manner. Study 1a and Study 1b provided cross-sectional evidence supporting the link between dispositional self-awareness and problem-solving orientation. Study 2, which was preregistered, replicated these findings and additionally provided experimental support for the hypothesised mediation model. Furthermore, Study 3 offered longitudinal evidence indicating that dispositional self-awareness and problem-solving orientation predict self-reported means instrumentality, with further implications for participants' objective exam grades. These findings emphasise the crucial role of individual differences in self-awareness in shaping effective self-regulatory processes, particularly in selecting instrumental means for personal goal achievement.

Da Fonseca et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative, exploratory study examining the impact of self-awareness on effective leadership outcomes in South Africa. The research aimed to clarify how self-awareness influences leadership effectiveness and the consequences of low self-awareness on employee engagement and behaviour. The study employed semi-structured interviews with executives who had direct experience working under managers lacking in self-awareness. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes from the interview data. The findings showed that leaders lacking self-awareness often displayed behaviours characteristic of toxic and destructive leadership. These behaviours negatively affected subordinates, leading to reduced employee engagement and increased resistance towards the leader. Consequently, subordinates were more likely to engage in retaliatory and deviant work behaviours. The study proposed a conceptual model illustrating how self-awareness, or its absence, contributes to destructive leadership and influences followers' behaviours and attitudes. This model enhances understanding of this organisational behavioural phenomenon.

Wogboroma (2022) conducted a descriptive survey to assess the acquisition of entrepreneurial self-motivation skills among postgraduate business

education students in Rivers State, aiming for self-sustainability. The study involved a population of 298 postgraduate students in business education from two universities in Rivers State. Mean ratings and standard deviations were used to address the research question, while a t-test for large group means tested the hypothesis at a significance level of 0.05. The findings revealed that postgraduate students in business education had acquired a moderate level of entrepreneurial self-motivation skills conducive to self-sustainability. The study concluded that these skills significantly influence students' ability to achieve self-sustainability. Consequently, the author recommended, among other measures, that entrepreneurship centres within Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions should be adequately equipped and utilised. This would help bridge the gap caused by the theoretical nature of entrepreneurial programmes offered in these institutions. Furthermore, the author suggested that graduate students in business education should develop and maintain entrepreneurial traits, including problem-solving abilities essential for managing business ventures. The persistence and courage to overcome challenges were emphasised as crucial factors for business success and sustained self-sustainability.

Ncube and Zondo (2018) conducted a study investigating the impact of intrinsic motivational factors on the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the eThekwini District Municipality, South Africa (SA). The research employed descriptive, chi-square, and correlational analyses to achieve two objectives: first, to assess the influence of business owners' self-motivation on SME growth, and second, to identify intrinsic motivational factors that foster creativity and contribute to SME growth. The findings indicate that intrinsic motivational factors significantly influence SME growth in SA. These factors include business owners' commitment to business growth, innovative problem-solving, pursuit of recognition through business success, belief in achieving desired outcomes, assuming responsibility for business expansion, desire for advancement, and willingness to take risks for business growth. The study concludes that self-motivated business owners possess the capacity to foster business growth.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study made used of survey research design. According to Ali (2006) survey research design is concerned with describing events as they are without any form of manipulation of what is being observed.
The population for the study includes all small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) operating in north central Nigeria that are also registered with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). The total number of registered SMEs in North-Central Nigeria was five million, one hundred and eighty-eight thousand three hundred and ten, 5,188,310 (SMEDAN, 2020). The SMEDAN report was last updated in 2020.

The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. The sample size of this population was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling technique. The sample size is 400.

The study utilised a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire for responses, with values assigned as 1 for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 for undecided, 4 for disagree, and5forstronglydisagree.

SPSS version 22.0 was used for data analysis, applying multiple regression to estimate the model and test the study's null hypotheses. Data related to the study's objectives were coded into SPSS version 22.0.

Model Specification
The model specification was adapted from the studies of (Ogbadu et al. 2022). The dependent variable is Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (PSME), while the independent variable is Emotional intelligence, proxies by Self-Awareness (SA) and Self-Motivation (SM). To achieve all the hypotheses, Multiple regression was used to estimate the model. The model is presented thus:

$PSME = f(SA, SM)$

$PSME_i = \beta_o + \beta_1 SA_i + \beta_2 SM_i + \mu_i$ --------- (1)

Where: PSME = Performance of SMEs (Dependent Variable);

β_o = a constant and β_{1-2} = coefficients of independent variables;

SA = Self-Awareness (Independent Variable)

SM= Self-Motivation (Independent Variable)
μ = Stochastic error term;
i = Cross sectional; and
f = Functional relationship

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the SMEs in North Central Nigeria for this study, but three hundred and seventy-nine (379) were correctly completed and returned, while twenty-one (21) copies were invalid. However, the conclusion was drawn on the hypotheses based on the three hundred and seventy-nine (379) copies of the questionnaire that were correctly completed and returned.

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test
The Cronbach's Alpha test showed a satisfactory result on each of the study variables as presented below.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.873	30

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Kaiser Meyer Olkim (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and bartlett's test of sphericity.

KMO and Bartlett's Test Result		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.873
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	46157.398
	Df	276
	Sig.	.000

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Sufficiency and suitability test of data KMO for the execution of factor analysis for Perceived usefulness shows that data set were suitable to execute factor analysis, because the acquired number is greater than 0.5(0.873). The Bartlett's sphericity test gave a chi-square value of 46157.398 with 276 degrees of freedom that represent a p-value. Similarly, the number of significant Bartlett's test equals to 0.00 and is smaller than significant level 0.05 that indicates the Bartlett's sphericity test possesses significant information.

Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.836[a]	.698	.694	2.12187
a. Predictors: (Constant), SM, SA				

The regression model summary provides key statistics indicating the model's performance in predicting the outcome variable for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) based on the predictors: SM (self-motivation) and SA (self-awareness). The correlation coefficient (R) is .836, suggesting a strong positive relationship between the predictors and the outcome variable. The R Square value is .698, indicating that approximately 69.8% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the model. The Adjusted R Square, which accounts for the number of predictors and the sample size, is slightly lower at .694, confirming the model's robustness and indicating that the predictors collectively provide a good fit to the data. The standard error of the estimate (2.12187) provides a measure of the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. Overall, the high R and R Square values demonstrate that the chosen predictors are effective in explaining a significant portion of the performance variability among SMEs.

ANOVA Result

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3885.541	2	777.108	172.601	.000[b]
	Residual	1679.372	373	4.502		
	Total	5564.913	378			
a. Dependent Variable: PSME						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SM, SA						

The F-value of 172.601, with a corresponding significance level (p-value) of .000, indicates that the overall regression model is highly significant. This means that the combined effect of the predictors (SM, SA) on PSME is statistically significant, and the model is a good fit for the data. The high F-value suggests that the predictors collectively explain a significant portion of the variance in SME performance, far exceeding what would be expected by chance. Summary, the ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant in predicting the performance of SMEs, reinforcing the importance of emotional intelligence components, particularly self-motivation and self-awareness as key factors influencing SME success.

Test of Hypotheses

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-7.059	1.162		-6.076	.000
	SM	.241	.087	.191	2.776	.006
	SA	.396	.086	.341	4.633	.000
a. Dependent Variable: PSME						

The coefficients table in table above was used as the main estimation technique to analyze the hypotheses of this study.

Test of Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Self-motivation does not have a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria

The coefficient table above shows the result of the t-statistic value of (2.776) and the corresponding sig. level of (.006), which is significant at 5% level of significance, revealing that self-motivation has a positive and significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria. Based on this, the null hypothesis one which states that self-motivation does not have a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria, was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis, which states that self-motivation has a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria, was accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Self-awareness does not have a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria

The coefficient table above shows the result of the t-statistic value of (4.633) and the corresponding sig. level of (.000), which is significant at 5% level of significance, revealing that self-awareness has a positive and significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria. Based on this, the null hypothesis two which states that self-awareness does not have a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria, was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis, which states that self-awareness has a significant effect on the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria, was accepted.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Objective One: To assess whether self-motivation affects the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria

Self-motivation has a significant positive relationship with PSMEs ($B = 0.241$, $p = 0.006$). Goal-Setting Theory posits that self-motivation drives individuals to set and achieve personal goals. Wogboroma (2022) and Ncube & Zondo (2018) found that self-motivation is linked to higher productivity and goal attainment. This theory aligns with the study's findings, indicating that individuals with higher self-motivation are more likely to exhibit higher levels of PSMEs, as they are driven to achieve personal and social goals.

Objective Two: To ascertain whether self-awareness affects the performance of SMEs in North Central, Nigeria

Self-awareness has a significant positive relationship with PSMEs ($B = 0.396$, $p < 0.001$). Symbolic Interactionism Theory suggests that self-awareness is understanding oneself concerning others, which influences social interactions and personal development. Ebieme et al. (2024) and Pebrianti &

Dwi (2024) found that self-awareness enhances interpersonal communication and personal growth. Samer & Mahmoud (2023) and Kreibich et al. (2022) further corroborate that self-awareness helps in recognising and regulating emotions, leading to better decision-making and social interactions. The positive relationship in the current study confirms that self-awareness is a vital predictor of PSMEs, as it aids individuals in navigating social complexities effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings align with several theories and empirical studies, emphasising the critical role of self-awareness and self-motivation in enhancing PSMEs. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological factors influencing PSMEs and provide a basis for further research and practical applications in personal development and social interactions.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion, this study recommends that;

1. SMEs should implement regular self-assessment tools and feedback mechanisms to help employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement and also, conduct training sessions on emotional intelligence and self-awareness.
2. SMEs should cultivate an environment that inspires and sustains motivation by Offer opportunities for career development and advancement to keep employees motivated and engaged.

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