

## ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AND THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN UYO METROPOLIS, AKWA IBOM STATE

BY

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### ***Abstract***

*The study examined entrepreneurial marketing strategies and the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were to; determine the effect of product strategy on customers' patronage of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State, ascertain the effect of promotion strategy on profitability of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State, examine the effect of price strategy on market share of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted survey design, the population of the study comprised 2,970 employees of Table Water Company in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. Using Taro Yamane's determination technique, a sample size of 352 were selected. data for the analysis were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to the employees of Table Water Company in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that product strategy has positive and significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria. Promotion strategy has positive and significant effect on profitability of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria, price strategy has significant effect on market share of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria. The following recommendation were made since promotion strategy positively affects customer patronage, SME owners in Uyo metropolis should adopt promotional techniques that encourage continued patronage of their products in the marketplace, management of SMEs in Uyo metropolis should focus on producing products that can*

*compete in the international market, ensuring they remain in business. A strong product strategy can significantly boost company profits.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategies, product strategy, customers' patronage, promotion strategy, profitability, price strategy, market share*

## **Introduction**

Small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) have increasingly become significant drivers of economic growth and development in today's rapidly evolving and competitive global economy (Akhamiokhor & Adanikin, 2017). However, the role of SMEs in contributing to economic growth and development in Nigeria has been the subject of extensive academic examination. This scrutiny arises from the historically low performance and inefficiency within the SME sector, which has been marked by shifts in decision-making patterns within marketing organizations. This situation underscores the need for strategic approaches to address these challenges (Baffoe, 2016).

A strategy refers to the methods, techniques, or plans that individuals or organizations use to achieve success in the market or society. Gleuck (1984), as cited in Achumba (2000), defines strategy as a unified, comprehensive, and integrated plan that connects a firm's strategic advantage to environmental challenges. He added that organizations striving not only to survive but also to enhance their marketing effectiveness and efficiency must develop and refine sound marketing strategies.

Marketing strategy has evolved into a vital tool for businesses across the world to stay competitive and prosper in the marketplace. According to Adewale, Adesola, and Oyewale (2013), it is essential for an industry's capacity to increase its market share and lessen the consequences of competition. Marketing strategy, according to Owomoyela, Oyeniya, and Ola (2013), is a way to ensure that customers receive high-quality goods that are competitively priced, widely distributed, and supported by successful promotional tactics (Adewale et al., 2013). An organization's entire business strategy must serve as the foundation for a strong marketing plan. It consists of marketing strategies and plans intended to meet company

goals. According to Ebitu (2015), a marketing strategy delineates the tactical strategies and strategic direction that marketing teams must adhere to in order to bolster the overall objectives of the firm. According to Weitz & Weasley (2000) in Dibb, Simkin, Pride, & Ferrell, (2017), it outlines the best use of a company's resources and strategies to accomplish its marketing goals. It also identifies the opportunities to pursue, the target markets, and the kinds of competitive advantages to build and capitalise on. In order to improve their company performance, SMEs in Akwa Ibom State must employ efficient marketing techniques because they operate in a competitive environment both domestically and internationally.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In today's dynamic and quickly growing global economy, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) have become more important engines of economic growth and development (Akhamidkhor & Adanikin, 2017). Scholarly examination has long surrounded their efficacy and performance as a driver of Akwa Ibom State's economic development. This scrutiny stems from SMEs' historically poor performance and inefficiency, especially when it comes to evaluating how much of a contribution they make to economic development and progress. The absence of a strong and vibrant SME sector has been a major shortfall in Akwa Ibom State's industrial growth throughout the years, which has been made worse by the need for better marketing techniques.

Notably, a lot of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, have trouble surviving for more than five years. This problem is frequently brought on by ineffective product tactics that don't draw in and keep customers. Additionally, the region's SMEs have not completely implemented their marketing strategies due to obstacles including bad pricing tactics that cause many SMEs in Akwa Ibom State to fail prematurely and inefficient promotion techniques that impede continuous profitability. The success of SMEs in Uyo and their entrepreneurial marketing methods have been studied by researchers (Aniebiet & Emenyi, 2022; Agbionu, Audu, Okeke & Ogbuenyi, 2021; Akhaniokhor & Adanikin, 2017; Ebitu, 2015; Adewale et al., 2013). In spite of these findings, the number of SMEs in Uyo is continuously declining; this might be because Uyo metropolitan businesses are not adequately implementing the experts' advice. In order to close this

gap, the research looks at the performance of SMEs in Uyo metropolitan and their entrepreneurial marketing methods.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to investigate the entrepreneurial marketing strategies and the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Specific objectives are to;

- i. determine the effect of product strategy on customers patronage of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State;
- ii. ascertain the effect of promotion strategy on profitability of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State;
- iii. examine the effect of price strategy on market share of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. What is the effect of product strategy on customer's patronage of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. What extent does promotion strategy on profitability of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. What is the effect of price strategy on market share of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Product strategy has no significant effect on customer's patronage of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Promotion strategy has no significant effect on profitability of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Price strategy has no significant effect on market share of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategies**

Strategies form the core of an organization's competitive distinctiveness and development. Entrepreneurial strategy involves significant and often

simultaneous changes in decision-making patterns within an organization. These strategies help understand the integration of creating business opportunities and managing real-life business operations. The entrepreneurial strategies considered in this study include competitive strategy, product strategy, promotion strategy, and price strategy, highlighting how entrepreneurs can use them for SME development (Bourne, Kennerley & Franco-Santos, 2015).

### **Small Enterprise**

A privately held corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship that employs fewer people and generates less money annually than bigger organisations or enterprises is referred to as a small enterprise. The requirements for requesting government assistance and being eligible for favourable tax treatment differ depending on the nation and sector. Small businesses in Nigeria employ anything from 10 to 49 people. SMEs are independent businesses that employ a limited workforce, which varies by nation. Their capital basis, which does not include land and fixed assets, varies from 15,000 to \$50,000. (Harry, 2018).

### **Medium Enterprises**

Medium scale enterprises (MSEs) are defined as those operating with total capital (including working capital and rent) between 51 million Naira and 500 million Naira, and employing between 50 and 249 workers (Alaye-Ogah, 2022; CBN, 2005). Source: Central Bank of Nigeria, Abuja, 2005.

### **Product Strategy**

A product strategy is a high-level plan outlining what a business aims to achieve with its product and how it plans to accomplish these goals. It should address key questions such as the target audience, the benefits for that audience, and the company's goals for the product throughout its lifecycle (Mowery & Nelson, 2017). A product strategy feeds into the overall business strategy. A well-crafted product strategy ensures the business meets its revenue and profit objectives. It outlines a mini version of the business model. When the product strategy is well-defined, the cost strategy aligns accordingly, meaning all operations to produce and deliver the product are organized to ensure profitability. A successful product strategy reduces costs and boosts product sales revenue and profit by building the product roadmap on validated components (Kang & Aage, 2018).

### **Importance of Product Strategy**

1. **Provides Clarity for the firm:** A well-thought-out and concise product strategy aids in the team's understanding of how their contributions fit into the overall strategic goals of the firm. Understanding how their work fits into the larger picture is beneficial for developers, who may often become lost in the intricacies. Their finest work is aided by this lucidity.
2. **Assists in Setting Product Roadmap Priorities:** After stakeholders have given their approval, it is critical to convert the strategy into a high-level action plan and then develop an engaging product roadmap. Unfortunately, a lot of product teams move straight on to identifying themes and epics without first creating a plan. They risk misusing scarce time and resources and prioritising the incorrect things in the absence of a clear product strategy (Agrawal & Knoeber, 2018).
3. **Enhances Team Decision-Making:** No company is able to adhere precisely to the original product strategy. Product managers must modify plans and priorities in response to changing conditions. When resources are lost or schedules need to be adjusted, a well-defined product strategy provides the company with a point of reference from which to make more informed strategic decisions (Morck, Schleifer & Vishny, 2019).

### **Promotion Strategy**

Promotion strategy is a marketing tool used to communicate between sellers and buyers, aiming to influence and persuade buyers to purchase their products or services (Pinar & Girard, 2018). It helps spread the word about the product, service, or company, thereby improving its public image. This technique generates customer interest and can also foster loyalty. Promotion is a fundamental component of the marketing mix, which includes product, price, place, and promotion. It is also a key element of the promotional mix, which encompasses advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, publicity, trade shows, and events. Methods include offering coupon discounts, distributing free samples, trial offers, buy-one-get-one deals, contests, and festival discounts. Promotion is essential for boosting sales because customers often respond impulsively to discounts and offers. In

essence, promotion is a marketing tool that educates customers about the goods and services provided by an organization (Olise & Ojiaku, 2018).

### **Pricing Strategy**

The processes businesses employ to determine the costs of their goods and services are referred to as pricing strategies. To find the ideal pricing point, models or other techniques are used. By considering the relationship between margin, pricing, and sales levels, these tactics assist businesses in setting the prices for their goods and services (Burke & Litwin, 2016). This is a difficult and important procedure since a successful pricing strategy is necessary to guarantee business success. Almost all companies, regardless of size, set their prices based on labour, manufacturing, and advertising costs and then mark them up to turn a profit. Price skimming, penetration pricing, product life cycle pricing, discount pricing, and competitive pricing are a few examples of different pricing techniques (Harry, 2018). Price affects income, profitability, and long-term investments, and it has a major influence on a company's revenue. Price is also a crucial element in financial modelling. Pricing reveals how a company views its rivals and the value it provides to clients (Burke & Litwin, 2016).

### **Factors Affecting Pricing Strategy**

Pricing strategy is influenced by several factors, such as:

1. **Market conditions:** This idea describes the condition of an economy or industry, which is frequently characterised as either stable or dynamic. Market circumstances impact the terms that a seller is prepared to provide and a buyer is willing to accept without the influence of other parties. They also show how desirable the market is overall in which a firm operates.
2. **Customer Willingness to Pay:** This refers to the highest price a client is willing to accept for a good or service. The greatest price at or below which a customer will unquestionably buy a good or service is known as willingness to pay, or WTP, in behavioural economics (DeJong, 2017).
3. **Competition's Trade Margin:** Vertically integrated businesses that dominate the upstream market employ margin squeezing as a pricing tactic. It happens when a business like that reduces the difference between the price of the product in the downstream market and the

wholesale price of the input it controls, which has an impact on competition (Jan & ZeWski, 2015).

### **Customer Patronage**

Patronage is the practice of customers buying a company's goods or services on a regular basis. It includes situations in which customers decide to purchase products from a company on different occasions. According to Jensen and Meckling (2016), consumer patronage is the situation in which customers plan to think about, suggest, or make more purchases from shops. It's a marketing term that expresses what consumers believe about a company, brand, or product. A phrase used in marketing and retailing, patronage concentration, describes how much of a consumer's expenditure in a certain industry or retail sector goes to one particular business. It is computed by dividing the total amount spent at all businesses in that industry by the amount spent at one business (Schwartz, 2019).

The relation is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{amount spent at one company}}{\text{amount spent at all companies in the industry}}$$

This and market share are quite close. The patronage concentration ratio indicates the proportion of a single customer's spending that is directed to a firm as opposed to that customer's overall expenditure in the industry, whereas market share refers to the percentage of all consumers that patronise a business relative to the industry total. In essence, market share is the patronage concentration ratio's aggregate, or macro-version (DeJong, 2017).

### **Profitability**

Although, customer satisfaction is a key element of business strategy, profitability should not be overlooked for long-term growth, competitive advantage, and strategic survival (Inyanga & Anyanwu, 2016). Efficient resource allocation and cost control techniques are necessary to ensure the company's offerings are supplied at minimum cost, at the right time, place, price, and to the right target group (Okpo & Simeon, 2023). This is particularly crucial in Nigeria's competitive business environment, especially in Uyo metropolis, where many enterprises are located. SME marketers set prices with profitability in mind. Even non-profit organizations recognize the importance of pricing to cover expenses and provide a financial cushion for unforeseen needs (Markova & Ford, 2017).



As the Russian proverb goes, “There are two fools in every market; one asks too little, one asks too much” (Bourne, Kennerley & Franco-Santos, 2015). Thus, the quality of goods and services offered by SMEs in Uyo should align with the set prices to ensure repeat purchases and customer loyalty (Bourne, Kennerley & Franco-Santos, 2015).

### **Market Shares**

Market share is the proportion of an organization’s transaction income to the total transaction earnings of the entire industry, including the firm itself (Roger, Steven & Williams, 2019). An organization may choose to maintain or expand its market share, sometimes at the cost of increased earnings for industry status or prestige (Katherine, 2012). The key question is what businesses can do to protect their leading market share in the industry. First, it is crucial to address deficiencies that offer opportunities to competitors (Ticker, 2015). Maintaining a strong market presence requires ensuring costs align with the perceived value of the product. It is also vital to maintain strong, enduring relationships with valued customers (Uford, Charles & Etuk, 2022). To prevent competitors from accessing the market, the market leader should close gaps that allow entry (Ticker, 2015).

The best defense is a strong offense, and continuous innovation is the best response to competitors. SMEs in Uyo metropolis should understand that ongoing innovation is essential for maintaining market share (Pinar & Girard, 2018). To stay ahead, SMEs must avoid complacency and lead the sub-sector in new products, distribution efficiency, customer service, and cost reduction (Claessens, Djankov, Fan & Lang, 2012). They should continue to enhance their competitive edge and value to customers and respond decisively to competitor challenges. SMEs in Uyo can grow by increasing their market share, as even a small market share can lead to substantial sales growth.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Application of the Theory**

A management paradigm called Resource-Based Theory (RBT) is used to pinpoint strategic resources that might provide a company a competitive edge during succession planning. These human resources may be used by businesses to gain long-term competitive advantages. The resource-based paradigm has its roots in Barney's study, "Firm Resources and Sustained

Competitive Advantage," which is generally acknowledged. On the other hand, researchers such as Osborne (2011) and Nikagova (2016) contend that the theory's origins date to the 1930s. According to the RBT, enterprises are diverse because they have varying combinations of resources, which allows for a variety of planning procedures and tactics. RBT focuses managerial attention on the company's internal resources with the goal of locating resources, skills, and talents that can offer greater competitive advantages. Barney states that resources need to meet the VRIN criteria (valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable) in order to be sources of sustained competitive advantage. According to the principle, businesses should create distinctive, firm-specific core competences that allow them to differentiate their operations and surpass rivals.

The fundamental idea of the resource-advantage approach is still true, albeit divergent interpretations: a firm's resources are diverse and not entirely movable, including its organisational, financial, legal, human, and relational resources. The primary responsibility of management is to comprehend and allocate these resources for long-term competitive advantage by turning inward. As a result, Uyo SMEs should consider their people resources to be their most valuable asset, needing guidance and instruction to reach their full potential.

### **Empirical Review**

**Adesoga (2015)** conducted a study on the impact of promotional strategies on market share and profitability, focusing on Coca-Cola and 7up companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The survey research method was employed, targeting marketing staff from the selected companies. Questionnaires were administered to a sample from Coca-Cola and 7up. The univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the statistical significance and the extent to which promotional strategies influenced market share and profitability. The study highlighted the importance of understanding organizational factors that drive the allocation of resources to achieve marketing goals. The findings showed that promotional strategies, such as advertising, publicity, and sales promotion, affected market share and profitability at varying rates, while personal selling did not. The study concluded that adopting suitable promotional strategies led to variations in market share and profitability. Managers aiming to maintain a competitive edge should consider examining their

promotional strategy adoption. The study also suggested further research and acknowledged its limitations, noting that the scope could have included other states in southwestern Nigeria.

**Adeyemi & Regina (2019)** explored the factors influencing entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, particularly the role of learning. Entrepreneurship has been promoted as a solution to Nigeria's economic challenges, with the government investing in entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level. While this investment has increased entrepreneurial participation, it has had limited impact on business growth. This study aimed to understand the factors influencing entrepreneurial business growth and how successful Nigerian entrepreneurs learn to grow their businesses, providing insights for national human resource development (NHRD) policy. Using grounded theory, interviews were conducted with twenty successful Nigerian entrepreneurs. The data revealed that these entrepreneurs are self-directed learners engaged in various learning activities, where micro-learning processes occur incidentally. Participants identified eight essential knowledge, skills, and abilities they utilized for business growth and five factors they believed influenced this growth. The study suggested that an entrepreneur's human capital mediates the influence of the business environment on enterprise growth, emphasizing that task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities are crucial for business success. The findings highlight the need for holistic NHRD policies to develop both the human capital of entrepreneurs and the institutional environment, promoting economic development in Nigeria. The study offers recommendations for policymakers, educators, entrepreneurs, and suggests further research, noting that a larger sample size would improve the generalizability of the findings.

**Aniefiok, Abasiama, and Nkanikpo (2022)** investigated how disruptive innovations affected online marketers' performance in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The purpose of the study was to find out how these improvements affect marketing effectiveness. Data were gathered from 384 internet marketers using structured questionnaires and a survey study approach. The researchers used basic regression analysis to test their assumptions and frequency counts and percentages to analyse personal data. The findings showed that social networking, mobile internet, and mobile payment technologies all had a substantial impact on marketing success. The study

came to the conclusion that implementing disruptive innovations improves online marketing operations' competitiveness and success. It was advised that in order to engage with their clients, internet marketers should use the newest developments. The investigators observed that augmenting the sample size beyond 384 participants may enhance the resilience of the results.

Aniebiet & Emmanuel (2022) used data from particular SMEs in Uyo to investigate the effect of advertising on profitability. The survey made clear that barriers to SMEs' growth include limited funding, insufficient management expertise, outdated technology and equipment, regulatory worries, restricted access to foreign markets, and unfair competition. In a cutthroat commercial world, advertising tactics are critical to SMEs' long-term survival and expansion. The study concentrated on how using advertising as a promotional strategy raises revenue. From Uyo, a significant urban centre with a high level of SME economic activity, fifty SMEs were chosen. Primary data were gathered by questionnaires, and the validity, consistency, and reliability of the data were assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Good internal consistency was shown by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all constructs ranging from 0.5 to 0.9. The results demonstrated that advertising had a favourable and noteworthy impact on the profitability of the chosen SMEs. According to the study's findings, advertising greatly raises SME profitability in Akwa Ibom State. Enhancing the sample size from fifty to one hundred small and medium-sized enterprises will enhance the applicability of the results.

Ekpo, Udoidem, and Acha (2017) looked at the connection between SMEs in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, and their growth performance and firm size. The majority of research on the factors influencing company growth is based on experiences from developed nations, thus less developed nations like Nigeria would not be able to benefit from it. Using total assets and staff count as metrics of size, this study looked at the size-growth link in 56 small and 15 medium-sized businesses in Akwa Ibom State. Correlation models and Fisher's Z were employed in the analysis. The findings showed that, in both categories of businesses, there was a negative correlation between total assets and growth and a minor but positive correlation between the number of workers. There was no discernible difference between the two groups, according to the Fisher Z values. Considering

these contradictory results, the study concluded that although size is a significant factor, developing development strategies for SMEs requires more than just scale. For improved analysis, the research recommended employing larger sample sizes and more straightforward statistical models, such as simple regression or the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

**Okon, Horsfall & Ekpo (2022)** examined the relationship between product positioning and customer targeting strategies among small-scale food, beverage, and fabric manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The study utilized a descriptive survey design, collecting data via questionnaires from 211 marketing professionals and clients of these manufacturing entrepreneurs. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used for data analysis. The findings underscored the importance of product positioning strategies in predicting sales outcomes and enhancing competitive advantage. Product positioning tactics significantly impacted the sales of the SMEs studied. Consequently, the study recommends adopting a product price positioning strategy to increase marketability. Expanding the sample size beyond 211 respondents would enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Etuk (2019) investigated the impact of strategic management on small-scale business development, focusing on Assurance Electronics in Uyo. The study aimed to assess how managerial strategies influence small business development. A survey research design was used, with structured questionnaires administered to 50 staff members, of which 45 were completed and returned. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, using stratified random sampling and chi-square tests. Findings indicated that strategic management positively influences employee attitudes towards organizational growth and productivity. The study recommends appropriate strategy implementation and employee motivation for efficiency. Including more businesses in Uyo in the study would improve the validity of the findings.

**Ekot (2020)** investigated the opportunities and problems associated with managing and owning small businesses in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires and in-person interviews with 100 randomly chosen small company owners using a survey approach. The investigation showed that three major difficulties

exist: insufficient government backing, poor interest among educated and young people, and lack of finance. The report suggests raising public awareness and providing more government assistance for small company endeavours. Robuster insights might be obtained by substituting basic percentages with inferential statistical models.

Olise & Ojiaku (2018) focused on manufacturing firms in Anambra State while researching the relationship between client patronage and product quality. 207 industrial organisations received structured questionnaires as part of a survey design. 100 questionnaires were chosen at random using stratified sampling, and 81 of them were returned. With SPSS version 20.0, paired t-tests were used to assess the hypotheses. The results showed that customer happiness is directly impacted by product quality, which raises performance efficiency. To further improve satisfaction, the report suggests taking other aspects like pricing and customer service into account. Expanding the sample size may result in findings that are more thorough.

**Akpabio & Oladele (2020)** investigated the effect of product quality positioning on customer satisfaction in international fast food companies. A total of 351 questionnaires were distributed, with 326 returned and 315 properly completed. The study employed a descriptive analysis method, and the hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression. Results showed all variables were significant. The study recommends that indigenous fast food companies focus on positioning strategies during the marketing strategy development process.

**Akpan & Peter (2018)** examined the effect of product strategy on customer patronage in ICT companies. The study aimed to determine how product quality adaptation affects customer patronage. With a population of 400, the sample size was 150, and 148 properly filled questionnaires were returned. Descriptive analysis and simple linear regression were used for hypothesis testing, showing all variables were significant. The study recommends that indigenous companies should adapt to the new ICT platforms available in the country.

Ibojo (2015) examined the impact of customer patronage on customer retention in a reputable bank in Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study aimed to determine the relationship between customer patronage and customer

retention and to assess how customer patronage affects customer retention. A survey research design was utilized, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. The hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and t-statistics, while regression analysis was employed to analyze the data. The findings indicated an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.719, suggesting that customer patronage independently accounts for 71.9% of the variation in customer retention. The f-statistic of 41.173 demonstrated that the model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The study concluded that effective customer patronage promotes customer retention and highlighted a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and retention. Increasing the R<sup>2</sup> value beyond 0.719% could provide even more robust findings.

### **Methodology**

The study utilized a survey design and collected information through questionnaires from employees of Table Water Company in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. The study population comprised 2,970 employees, and Taro Yamane's formula was applied to determine a sample size of 352. Data were primarily gathered via questionnaires to capture respondents' opinions. The Cronbach Alpha technique was employed to assess the reliability of the study instrument. The dependability of the material was evaluated using the test-retest reliability approach at a significance level of 0.5 percent.

The study's hypotheses were analyzed using simple regression, with SPSS version 2.22 employed for data analysis. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the simple regression model.

### **Data Presentation and Analyses**

In this section, the data collected through questionnaires were presented and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The results were then interpreted and discussed. This section includes information on questionnaire administration, demographic characteristics of the respondents, data presentation (descriptive statistics based on the objective questions and questionnaire items), hypothesis testing, and a summary of findings and discussion of results.

### **Questionnaire Administration**

Questionnaire administration and retrieval proportion are presented in Table 1 below;

**Table 1:** Questionnaire Administration

Locations	No. of copies administered	%	No. of copies returned	%	No. not returned	%
Small scale business	338	96.0	332	94.3	6	1.7
Medium scale business	14	4.0	13	3.7	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.0</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

Questionnaire administration as explained in Table 1 revealed that, three hundred and fifty-two (352) copies of questionnaire were administered to managers and operators of SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State to comment on how entrepreneurial marketing strategies affect their performance. From 352 administered copies, 345 copies were properly filled and returned to the respondents, signifying that 7 copies of the questionnaire were not retrieved. Hence, 345 respondents became the valid sample size of the study, since it is disreputable and highly outlawed for researchers to manipulate data for a particular research in order to avoid uncertain and unreliable results. Thus, 98.0% (345) copies of the administered questionnaire was retrieved and confirmed.

**Test of Hypotheses****Test of Hypothesis 1**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** product strategy has no significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo

**Table 6: Simple regression analysis of effect of product strategy on customer patronage among SMEs**

Variables	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal value	–
Constant	$\beta_0$	68.957	22.946	3.005***	
<b>Product strategy</b> (X <sub>1</sub> )	$\beta_3$	0.599	0.021	28.369***	
<b>R-Square</b> (R <sup>2</sup> )		0.491			
<b>Adjusted R – Square</b> (R <sup>2</sup> )		0.490			
<b>F – Statistics</b>		804.788			
<b>F – Probability</b>		0.000			
<b>Durbin-Watson stat</b>		1.960			



Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

(\*\*\* = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively. t-tab value = 1.968

df = 343      Dependent Variable:      SMEsP,      Predictors: (Constant),  
PRODUCTSTRA

**Source: Field Survey, 2023 (SPSS Version 22)**

The estimate value of product strategy ( $X_1$ ) was statistically significant and positively related to customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo at 1 percent level. Thus, a unit increase in modifying product strategy leads to 0.599 unit increase in customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo sector. The result revealed that at  $p=0.000 \leq 0.05$  level of significance and a degree of freedom (df) 343, the T-cal value was 28.369 and T-tab value was 1.968. As shown in the result, the calculated T-calculated is greater than the tabulated t-table distribution, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. This means that, product strategy has positive and significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria.

The ( $R^2$ ) coefficient of multiple determinations was high with the value of 0.491, implying that, 49.1% disparity in dependent variable was elucidated by changes in the independent variable while 50.9% were unexplained by the stochastic variable. This implies that, the independent variable (product strategy) were able to explain 49.1 percent disparities in dependent variable (customer patronage of SMEs) while 50.9 percent was explained by the stochastic variable. The  $R^2$  adjusted value of 49.0% was observed indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. The Durbin-Watson stat value was 1.960 which is close to 2.5, implying that there is no evidence of autocorrelation. F-stat value of 804.788 with F-prob. value of 0.00 against 1.968 t-table value and 0.05 was observed from the regression result, indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. Thus, the researcher accepted that product strategy has positive and significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria.

## Test of Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>02</sub>:** promotion strategy has no significant effect on customer patronage SMEs in Uyo

**Table 7: Simple linear regression result of effect of promotion strategy on customer patronage**

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – Value
Constant	$\beta_0$	588.651	88.627	6.642***
Promotion strategy ( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	1.413	0.511	2.767***
<b>R-Square</b>	<b>(R<sup>2</sup>)</b>	0.167		
<b>Adjusted R – Square (R<sup>-2</sup>)</b>		0.161		
<b>F – Statistics Value</b>		7.657		
<b>F – Probability value</b>		0.006		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

(\*\*\* = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively t-tab value = 1.968

df = 343, Dependent Variable: SMEsP, Predictors: (Constant), Promotionstra

### Source: Field Survey, 2022 (SPSS Version 22)

The result shows that, promotion strategy ( $X_1$ ) was statistically significant and positively related to customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo at 1 percent significant level. The coefficient of promotion strategy ( $X_1$ ) of 0.697, shows that a unit increase in promotion, holding other variables constant, will increase customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo by 1.413 units. From the result, the t-cal value of promotion strategy was 2.767\*\*\* while the T-table value was 1.968, since the t-table value is less than t-calculated value in absolute terms, the researcher accept the null hypothesis that, promotion strategy has significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was quite low with a value of 0.167 which indicates that 16.7% changes in dependent variable can be explained by the changes in the independent variable, while 83.3% can be explained by the stochastic terms in the model. This implies that the independent variable (promotion strategy) can only explain 16.7 percent of changes in customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria, leaving 46.5% percent unexplained. The F-stat value of 7.657 and F-stat value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05, indicating that the estimated regression model adopted in this study is statistically significant at 5% significant level. With this, the researcher affirmed the alternative

hypothesis thus, promotion strategy has positive and significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria.

### Test of Hypothesis 3

**H<sub>03</sub>:** price strategy has no significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo

**Table 8: Simple linear regression result on effect of Automated Teller Machine on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo**

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	$\beta_0$	-279.087	134.760	-2.071**
Price strategy ( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	-1.120	0.033	-33.451***
<b>R-Square (<math>R^2</math>)</b>		0.772		
<b>Adjusted R – Square (<math>R^2</math>)</b>		0.772		
<b>F – Statistics</b>		1118.972		
<b>F – Probability</b>		0.000		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

(\*\*\* = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively. t-tab value = 1.968

df = 343      Dependent Variable: SMEsP,      Predictors: (Constant), pricestra

### Source: Field Survey, 2022 (SPSS Version 22)

The estimate value of price strategy ( $X_1$ ) was statistically significant and negatively related to customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo at 1 percent significant level (33.451\*\*\*). This implies that a unit decrease in price leads to increase on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo by 1.120 units. From the result, the t-cal value of price strategy was 33.451\*\*\* while the T-table value was 1.968, since the t-table value is less than t-calculated value in absolute terms, the researcher accept the null hypothesis that, price strategy has significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.772 which indicates that 77.2% changes in dependent variable can be explained by the changes in the independent variable, while 22.8% can explained by the stochastic terms in model. This implies that the independent variable (price strategy) can only explain 77.2 percent of changes in customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo,

leaving 22.8 percent unexplained. The F-stat value of 1118.972 and F-stat value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05, indicating that the estimated regression model adopted in this study is statistically significant at 5% significant level. With this, the researcher affirmed the alternative hypothesis thus, price strategy has significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria.

### **Summary of Findings**

The result revealed that, product strategy has positive and significant effect on customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria. Promotion strategy has positive and significant effect on profitability of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria. Price strategy has significant effect on market share of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are crucial to the economic growth of both developed and developing countries. Worldwide, SMEs account for approximately 90% of businesses and contribute around 40% to 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (Price Waterhouse Cooper's (PWC) MSME survey, 2020). In Nigeria, SMEs significantly impact the economy, representing 96% of all businesses according to the same PWC survey. This study investigated the impact of entrepreneurial marketing strategies on the performance of SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The findings indicated that promotion strategy positively and significantly affects customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo, Nigeria. Additionally, price strategy significantly influences customer patronage of SMEs in Uyo. Overall, entrepreneurial marketing strategies have a substantial effect on the performance of SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Since promotion strategy positively affects customer patronage, SME owners in Uyo metropolis should adopt promotional techniques that encourage continued patronage of their products in the marketplace.
2. Management of SMEs in Uyo metropolis should focus on producing products that can compete in the international market, ensuring they remain in business. A strong product strategy can significantly boost company profits.

3. As price strategy positively impacts market share, SME managers in Uyo metropolis should set prices that attract new customers and retain existing ones. This should be done in a way that ensures the company remains profitable without overpricing.

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