

Innovations

Entrepreneurial Marketing and Sustainability of Small and Medium Restaurants: an Analysis of South-East, Nigeria.

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Abstract: *Small and medium restaurants are experiencing similar challenges her sister's sectors in Nigeria faced. One of these challenges is the failure of many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to survive beyond their tenth birthday of existence. The objective of this paper is to examine the effect of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) on sustainability of small and medium restaurants in South-eastern, Nigeria. The study adopted the quantitative research approach. Data were collected from 384 owner-managers of small and medium restaurants in South-eastern Nigeria using a structured questionnaire. Hypotheses were tested using IBM SPSS version 27 that runs multiple regression analysis (MRA). The findings indicate that innovativeness, proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, value creation, market sensing, and teamwork significantly and positively influence the sustainability of small and medium restaurants in South-eastern Nigeria, whereas resource leveraging is insignificant to restaurant sustainability. The study therefore, concluded that EM has a significant effect on the sustainability of restaurant businesses in Nigeria. The study recommended that owner and managers of small and medium-sized restaurants should incorporate the entrepreneurial mindset to increase the chance of SME sustainability.*

Keywords: *entrepreneurial marketing (EM); sustainability; restaurant; SMEs; South-eastern; Nigeria.*

Introduction

Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) is an innovative framework that integrates key aspects of marketing and entrepreneurship into a cohesive concept, wherein marketing serves as a mechanism for firms to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The term EM integrates two distinct disciplines and refers to the marketing strategies employed by businesses to capitalise

on opportunities in uncertain market conditions, often with constrained resources. (Olawale, 2019). EM is an organisational function and a set of processes aimed at generating, sharing, and delivering value to customers, while also managing customer relationships to benefit the company and its stakeholders. It is characterised by innovation, risk-taking, and proactive behaviour, and can be executed without utilising resources currently under management (Otika, Nwaizugbo & Olise, 2019). To remain robust, competitive, and pertinent in highly volatile market conditions, enterprises must implement EM. Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) represents the convergence of entrepreneurship and marketing, serving as an umbrella term for various contemporary marketing perspectives. Entrepreneurs in developing nations must prioritise marketing to ensure sustainable business growth and effectively confront challenges posed by external forces such as the global financial crisis, economic factors, and environmental influences. Entrepreneurial enterprises are essential for fostering national growth in light of rapid economic development (Sadiku, Dana & Ramadani, 2019).

Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) was originally linked to small, resource-constrained firms perceived as lacking sophistication. Currently, the innovative characteristics of EM have heightened awareness (Mort, Weerawardena & Liesch, 2018). Nwankwo and Kanyangale (2022) observed an increasing recognition that EM is a distinct concept defined by several factors, including its inherent informality, limited scope of activity, opportunistic characteristics, involvement of founder-entrepreneurs, and significant reliance on networking. Innovative entrepreneurs who are calculative risk-takers, proactive, and opportunity-oriented exhibit EM behaviours stemming from entrepreneurial cognition. EM signifies a more unconventional and disorganised approach that depends on individuals' intuition and energy to facilitate outcomes.

The creation and viability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially in the restaurant sector, are essential for the economic advancement of any country. Nonetheless, the reality is that small and medium enterprises, including restaurant firms, experience an exceedingly high failure rate in Nigeria (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2022). Nnabugwu, Chinwe, and Azikiwe (2021) observed that the survival probability of SMEs, particularly restaurants, beyond forty-two months in Nigeria is the lowest. In the present competitive business landscape, fish farmers must, or are compelled to, ensure their products and services remain competitive both locally and globally, irrespective of their size and resources. The competitive global business landscape compels fish farmers to evaluate their internal structures. They must identify opportunities to enhance

capabilities and competencies that enable innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking to improve performance and secure or sustain a competitive advantage.

The increasing competition in the business environment has compelled fish farming proprietors, managers, and other stakeholders to seek survival strategies. It is widely contended that aquaculture encounters distinct commercial challenges that impact its growth, profitability, and overall performance, thereby undermining its sustainability in a volatile business environment. Restaurant enterprises in Nigeria are believed to encounter numerous challenges that contribute to their perceived inefficiency and occasional failures. Many restaurants face significant marketing challenges, including a limited customer base, financial constraints, high risk exposure, unpredictable weather, inadequate storage facilities, lack of innovation, and uncalculated risk-taking, among others. The volatile business environment characterised by heightened risk, reduced forecasting capability, and conventional marketing practices are significant factors undermining the sustainability of restaurants in Nigeria. This necessitates a paradigm shift in the workflow process to establish a conducive and enabling environment for business owners. Experts are presenting EM as a sustainable strategy that will allow restaurant firms to identify and effectively leverage marketing opportunities in both the marketplace and market space.

In the context of the restaurant industry, characterised by low survival rates, a detrimental stance towards marketing, and overall neglect, research conducted in Nigeria and elsewhere has begun to explore methods for sustaining SMEs, particularly restaurants, through EM Models. Most prior studies investigating this issue utilised the seven-dimensional model of EM proposed by Morris, Schendehutte, and Laforge (2002) because of its comprehensive operationalisation of essential constructs (Mugambi & Karugu, 2017; Nwaizugbo & Anukam, 2014; Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2022); O'Cass & Morrish, 2016. Nevertheless, research utilising Morris et al.'s (2002) model demonstrated a significant deficiency. The model proposed by Morris et al. (2002) was not formulated within the Nigerian business context, resulting in significant implications. These observations unequivocally raise significant concerns about the construct validity of EM in prior research.

A review of existing literature indicates that research in the EM domain has explored this concept concerning various issues, such as performance, innovation, and development, yet has not addressed the sustainability of small and medium-sized restaurants in South-eastern Nigeria. Prior

research in Nigeria has concentrated on the service sector (Nwaizugbo & Anukam, 2014), fast food establishments (Olannye & Edward, 2016), and the manufacturing sector (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2022). Consequently, no research has examined the role of EM in the sustainability of restaurant firms in South-eastern Nigeria, nor has any study subsequently tested the integrative EM model within these establishments. Therefore, it is imperative to address this research gap. This paper aims to analyse the impact of EM on the sustainability of small and medium-sized restaurants in South-eastern Nigeria.

This study results will offer critical insights for entrepreneurs, investors, and managers concerning the importance of EM in their engagements with stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and government entities. This is crucial for guaranteeing the sustained viability of the restaurant venture. This study results will offer theoretical and empirical support for researchers and students examining topics related to EM and the sustainability of SMEs.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM)

Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) has garnered attention for the last forty years (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2020). This concept was introduced in 1982 by the International Council for Small Business and the American Marketing Association (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2020). Initial studies in this domain focused on the intersection of conventional and marketing theories aligned with entrepreneurship literature (Kamarudin & Yusof, 2017). Marketing and entrepreneurship are conventionally perceived as distinct domains. EM integrates essential elements of marketing and entrepreneurship into a holistic framework, positioning marketing as a process through which firms engage in entrepreneurial activities. Morris et al. (2012) characterised entrepreneurial marketing (EM) as nonlinear, unstructured, and visionary marketing initiatives undertaken by the entrepreneur. To conceptualise EM, it is essential to comprehend entrepreneurship and marketing independently. Ogunode, Abereola, and Oloyede (2020) characterised entrepreneurship as “the process of generating value by assembling a distinctive combination of resources to capitalise on an opportunity.” The process encompasses the activities required to identify an opportunity, delineate a business concept, evaluate the necessary resources, procure those resources, and oversee and capitalise on the venture. Entrepreneurship encompasses the identification of an opportunity, the formulation of a business idea, the acquisition of necessary resources, the

implementation of these activities, and the attainment of outcomes (Mwangi & Henry, 2013). Bashir, Laminu, and Anafi (2012) assert that entrepreneurship involves the analysis of alternative production processes and their optimisation. Conversely, Chechota, Shcherbak, and Beal (2015) asserted that entrepreneurship constitutes the “creation of new enterprises,” and the objective of entrepreneurship research should be to “elucidate and promote the role of new enterprises in advancing economic progress.” Mueller and Thomas (2016) observed that certain cultures exhibit significantly greater creativity in entrepreneurship than others. In this context, information, a fundamental requirement of entrepreneurship, is influenced by innovation and creativity.

Marketing, in the framework of individual orientation, signifies various interpretations for distinct individuals. Experts do not concur on the definition of marketing, resulting in various interpretations that reflect a specific position, an observed management process at a given time, or an individual's focus at different organisational levels (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2023). Ogunode et al. (2020) characterised marketing as a creative management function that fosters trade and employment by evaluating consumer needs and initiating research and development to address them. Eze (2015) asserted that marketing orchestrates production resources and directs the overall efforts necessary to profitably sell the maximum products to the end user. The American Marketing Association (2013) defines marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that possess value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” In marketing, a product is any item that can be presented in the marketplace to fulfil a desire or requirement. Marketing can be delineated as an organisational philosophy centred on market orientation, directed by segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies, implemented via the marketing mix, and fundamentally supported by market intelligence (Stokes, 2010). The recognition of the significance of entrepreneurship and innovation in marketing, as well as marketing's role in successful entrepreneurship, prompted efforts to integrate the two fields as EM. The primary focus of EM is the adaptation of marketing strategies for SMEs, acknowledging the significant role entrepreneurs play in marketing activities (Sambudi, Yuyus, Nury & Yudi, 2016). Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) is recognised as a strategic marketing approach aimed at identifying entrepreneurial advantages and opportunities through the utilisation of opportunity recognition and innovation capabilities to generate economic rent (Hoque & Awang, 2019). Morris et al. (2002) defined EM as the process of acquiring and retaining profitable customers by proactively identifying and exploiting

opportunities, employing innovative risk management strategies, leveraging resources, and creating value. Kocak (2014) asserted that EM encompasses five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation and two dimensions of market orientation. Consequently, EM represents the amalgamation of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation.

EM is a conceptual framework that is more suitable for addressing the constraints and challenges frequently encountered by SMEs (Stokes, 2010). The concept of EM is suitable for SMEs due to the swift pace of technological evolution and shifting consumer preferences, resulting in uncertain conditions that render conventional marketing strategies and tactics ineffective (Sheth & Sisodia, 2015). EM originated from the practices of companies functioning under uncertain conditions and arose as an alternative to address the diminishing efficacy of traditional marketing (Whalen et al., 2016). This argument aligns with the findings of Hills, Hultman, and Miles (2018), which elucidate that firms are inclined to adopt EM strategies in response to a highly dynamic business environment. Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) involves the implementation of innovative strategies by entrepreneurs to transform conventional marketing practices aimed at enhancing performance. Although the term EM amalgamates marketing and entrepreneurship, these concepts appear not to be entirely inseparable, given that the essential functions of both entrepreneurship and marketing collectively aim to profitably satisfy customer needs. This indicates that the implementation of EM, including innovativeness, proactiveness, resource leveraging, calculative risk-taking, customer intensity, value creation, market sensing, and teamwork, aims to improve performance and sustainability. Whalen et al. (2016:7) define EM as “a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-taking activities that create, communicate, and deliver value to and by customers, entrepreneurs, marketers, their partners, and society at large.” EM encompasses the strategies employed by entrepreneurs to ensure that firms adequately fulfil customer needs (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017). Ishola, Zekeri, and Ibrahim (2020) characterised EM as a process involving responsiveness and the exploitation of opportunities, primarily executed by the owner of entrepreneurial ventures, which is typically straightforward in design and implementation. The objective is to win over and keep profitable customers by leveraging resources innovatively, managing risks, and creating value. This study characterises EM as an operational function and a series of procedures utilised to generate, convey, and provide value to customers, while simultaneously managing customer relationships to benefit the firm and its customers and shareholders. Thus, the dimensions of EM articulated in this paper encompass innovativeness, proactiveness, resource

leveraging, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, value creation, market sensing, and teamwork.

Business Sustainability

Sustainability is a business strategy that considers the ecological, social, and economic environments in which a particular organisation operates in order to generate long-term value (Rida, Sobhia, Mohd, Ali & Sakinah, 2021). The foundation of sustainability is the belief that the implementation of such strategies promotes the longevity of a company (Richardson, 2013). Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined sustainability as “linking the economic, social and environmental objectives of societies in a balanced way” and “about the consequences of today’s activities which meet the challenge of sustainable development and require that the process through which decisions are reached is informed by the full range of possible consequences and is accountable to the public”. Business activities encompass the utilisation of natural resources and the management of waste. From a sustainability standpoint, it is preferable for firms to act as more than just resource users; they should encourage efficient consumption and replacement of resources (Rex & Baumann, 2007). Firms can implement practices that enhance resource efficiency, including the replacement, reuse, and recycling of materials. They should manage residuals through reduction and treatment, as well as address water, soil, and air pollution via prevention and treatment strategies. Additionally, adopting energetically efficient policies, developing green processes and products with reduced environmental impact, and disseminating green practices both internally and externally are recommended. However, the factors that lead firms to do so vary.

The four pillars of sustainability are economic, environmental, human, and social. Economic sustainability seeks to preserve capital while enhancing the standard of living. It involves the effective utilisation of resources to sustain corporate profitability over time (Benn, Dunphy & Griffiths, 2014). Environmental sustainability seeks to enhance human well-being by safeguarding natural capital. Furthermore, environmental sustainability underscores the capacity of an entrepreneur to attain favourable economic results while ensuring no detriment to the environment (Boeske, 2023). Human sustainability seeks to preserve and enhance societal human capital (Nwankwo, Kanyangale, Anoke & Eze, 2023). A firm will perceive itself as a component of society and promote business principles that respect human capital. Human sustainability underscores the importance of individuals involved in the production of goods (Benn et al., 2014). It entails the

development of skills and human capacity to improve the firm's operations and sustainability while promoting societal welfare. Social sustainability aims to preserve social capital by investing in and establishing services that underpin our society. Social sustainability prioritises the maintenance and improvement of social quality through principles such as cohesion, reciprocity, and integrity, underscoring the importance of interpersonal relationships (Diesendorf, 2000).

Sustainability in an organisational context involves improving the societal, environmental, and economic systems that underpin a business's operations. Contemporary organisational management dedicates significant time to ostensibly overseeing the continued existence of their businesses through overseeing the health and efficiency of financial assets, intellectual property, production equipment, and computer systems (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2023). The authors argued that the core of sustainability within an institutional context is the principle of improving the societal, environmental, and economic systems in which a business functions. This presents the notion of a triadic focus for organisations pursuing sustainability. Colbert and Kurucz (2007) assert that sustainability necessitates a concurrent emphasis on economic, social, and environmental performance. A sustainable business model is characterised by the congruence of an organization's social, environmental, and financial goals, evaluated via a "triple-bottom-line" performance metric. Many organisations, especially restaurants, encounter difficulties in achieving this alignment, likely due to the requirement to concentrate on various non-financial outcomes, while they have become accustomed to evaluating everything in financial terms. A contingent of business professionals and economists has consistently maintained that the implementation of environmental and social policies will fundamentally diminish shareholder wealth (Friedman, 1970).

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach, utilising a positivistic ontology and a descriptive survey design. This study encountered difficulties in obtaining population sizes from the five-state ministry of commerce and industry due to insufficient data on registered small and medium restaurants. The research focused exclusively on owner-managers of restaurants in five southeastern states of Nigeria. The research utilised Cochran's sampling formula to ascertain a sample of 384 owner-managers in the south-eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed to select participants from each state examined. The study involved a random selection of 384 owner-managers

from restaurants located in the South-Eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The selection of these owner-managers of restaurants was based on two criteria: (1) the restaurants had been in operation for over five years, and (2) their proximity to the research site. Data were obtained from the owner-managers of these restaurants through a structured questionnaire. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to restaurant owner-managers through both electronic (email) and manual methods. Three hundred fifty-five copies were returned. Of the total returned, 351 copies were identified as useful, yielding a response rate of 91.41 percent. Content validity was utilised to assess the comprehensiveness of the research topic, while a pilot test was performed to measure the instrument's internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha demonstrated an internal consistency of 0.784. The hypothesis was assessed using multiple regression analysis to evaluate the influence of EM on the sustainability of small and medium-sized restaurants.

Data Analysis

To confirm adherence to multicollinearity assumptions, further analysis was conducted to assess the Tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each independent variable in the study. Table 1 presents the tolerance and VIF values for each independent variable, confirming that the multicollinearity assumptions remain within the recommended thresholds of 0.10 and 10, as outlined by Pallant (2015).

Table 1: Tolerance and VIF values distribution for independent variables

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Innovativeness	.842	1.241
	Proactiveness	.752	1.142
	Calculated risk-taking	.742	1.189
	Customer intensity	.710	1.252
	Value creation	.814	1.328
	Resource leveraging	.861	1.286
	Market sensing	.711	1.371
	Teamwork	.796	1.198
a. Dependent Variable: restaurants sustainability			

Based on the tolerance values displayed, Table 1's values unequivocally demonstrate that the model fits the data perfectly. Once more, when taking into account the VIF rules as proposed by Pallant (2015), the values displayed in the VIF column fell below the 10.0 cut-off point. This

demonstrates that the multicollinearity assumptions of this study were not broken in any way. Thus, after the preliminary test was conducted, however, the study further conducted correlational analysis for examine the relationships between the variables as the results are shown in the next Table.

Table 2: Estimation Correlation Matrix

Correlations Matrix		Innov	Proact	Cust-i	Value-c	Cal-rt	Res-L	Mkt-s	Team-w	Sust
Innov	Pearson Correlation	1	.396*	.215	.522**	.339*	.642*	.511*	.472**	.446
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.0019	.000	.010	.000	.001	.021	.000
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Proact	Pearson Correlation	.396**	1	.553**	.442**	.231**	.668*	.453*	.357*	.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.005	.009	.000	.002	.002	.000	.001
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Cust-i	Pearson Correlation	.215	.553*	1	.462	.560**	.339*	.525*	.486**	.276
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.005		.005	.000	.010	.000	.003	.006
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Value-c	Pearson Correlation	.522**	.442*	.462	1	.343**	.571*	.501	.392**	.548
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.009	.005		.008	.002	.010	.004	.000
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Cal-rt	Pearson Correlation	.339*	.231*	.560**	.343**	1	.412*	.427**	.532**	.609*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.000	.000	.008		.000	.000	.002	.000
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Res-L	Pearson Correlation	.642**	.668*	.339*	.571**	.412**	1	.381**	.467*	.378
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.010	.002	.000		.000	.002	.000
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Mkt-s	Pearson Correlation	.511*	.453*	.525**	.501**	.427**	.381*	1	.479	.562*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.002	.000	.008	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351

Team-w	Pearson Correlation	.472**	.357*	.486**	.392**	.532**	.467*	.479	1	.534
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.010	.002	.000	.002	.000		.000
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
Sust	Pearson Correlation	.446	.127	.276	.548	.609*	.378	.562*	.534	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.006	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351	351
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).										

Table 2 presents the correlational matrix of the variables utilised in this study. A significant relationship exists between the variables. Consequently, an additional test was conducted to evaluate the extent of effect of EM on the sustainability of restaurants in Nigeria. This expands the research to include multiple regression analysis.

Table 3: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.553 ^a	.306	.292	.675
a. Predictors: (Constant), innov, proact, cal-rt, cus-i, value-c, res-l, mkt-s, team-w				

Table 3 presents the regression coefficient, with 'R' valued at 0.553, indicating a 55.3 percent correlation between the dependent and independent variables, as illustrated in the model. The R² value, which quantifies the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, is 0.306. This indicates that 30.6% of the variation in the sustainability of restaurants in Nigeria is accounted for by variations in innovativeness, proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, value creation, resource leveraging, market sensing, and teamwork. The adjusted R² value was 0.292.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance ^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.636	6	3.606	4.826	.002 ^b
	Residual	311.101	345	1.220		
	Total	332.737	351			

a. Dependent Variable: restaurants sustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), innov, proact, cal-rt, cus-i, value-c, res-L, mkt-s, team-w

The f-statistic value of 4.826 in Table 4, accompanied by an f-statistic probability of 0.002, indicates that the independent variables significantly influence the dependent variable. Innovativeness, proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, value creation, resource leveraging, market sensing, and teamwork collectively account for the variations in the sustainability of restaurants in Nigeria.

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.754	1.100		1.932	.001
	Innovativeness	.121	.134	.110	1.623	.000
	Proactiveness	.028	.146	.093	1.935	.001
	Calculated risk-taking	.211	.193	.196	.522	.000
	Customer intensity	.157	.102	.098	.413	.002
	Resource leveraging	-.032	-.064	.011	-.894	.216
	Value creation	.275	.164	.173	1.024	.000
	Market sensing	.142	.116	.098	1.044	.010
	Teamwork	.255	.182	.163	1.253	.000

a. Dependent Variable: restaurants sustainability

The regression model presented in Table 5 indicates a significant relationship between the independent variables representing various dimensions of EM and the dependent variable, which is the sustainability of the restaurant business. This indicates that EM significantly impacts the sustainability of the restaurant business. The standardised Beta coefficients

and their corresponding P-values for the variables are as follows: innovativeness ($\beta = 0.121$, $p < 0.000$), proactiveness ($\beta = 0.028$, $p < 0.001$), calculated risk taking ($\beta = 0.211$, $p < 0.000$), customer intensity ($\beta = 0.157$, $p < 0.002$), resource leveraging ($\beta = -0.032$, $p < 0.216$), market sensing ($\beta = 0.142$, $p < 0.010$), and teamwork ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.000$). The analysis indicates that value creation is the most significant contributor to the model, succeeded by teamwork, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, market sensing, innovativeness, and proactiveness. These results indicate that value creation, teamwork, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, market sensing, innovativeness, and proactiveness collectively predict the sustainability of the restaurant business. Additionally, resource leveraging is found to be insignificant to the sustainability of the restaurant business in this study.

Discussion of Result

EM as a marketing tool that has been developed to help solve the many challenges experienced by micro, small, medium and large enterprises has drawn mixed views on whether this marketing tool should be best applied to micro, small, medium enterprises or to large corporations. These and many more have raised the concern of examining EM in small and medium restaurants in South-eastern, Nigeria. The study examined the effect of EM on sustainability of small and medium restaurants , Nigeria. The study adopted the new integrative EM model which housed innovativeness, proactiveness, calculated risk taking, resources leveraging, customer intensity,teamwork, value creation and market sensing to operationalised EM. From the study, it was evident that majority of the staff of restaurants understood the customers and their respective needs whenever the managements are bringing in new innovative ideas in the business. They understood the importance of innovation in developing a standard restaurants in Nigeria. In addition, the staff asserted that their organisation is typically the one to initiate actions that are followed by response from competitors. According to the findings of the study, their organisation is frequently the pioneer in the introduction of emerging products and services. The members of the staff are aware of the numerous dangers that are associated with small and medium-sized businesses, particularly restaurants. They affirmed that all pertinent risk areas, including those originating from the services of external providers and contractors, are taken into consideration throughout the process. In a similar vein, the study discovered that the demands and needs of customers are of utmost significance to their organisation. As a result, the staff makes it a point to continuously monitor the level of commitment and orientation of their customers towards providing them with improved level of service. In

addition, they maintained that the satisfaction of their customers is measured in a methodical and consistent manner as part of their efforts to provide customers with positive value. Moreover, the research discovered that customer service is routinely and regularly evaluated in order to increase the level of confidence that customers have. As a result of this, a significant number of customers would purchase their products on multiple occasions due to the services that were provided by the fish farmers. The staff, on the other hand, confirmed that they source and outsource their products, and that they complement one another's resources in order to generate a higher combined value. It is also essential to keep in mind that having a proactive and responsive approach to the market will enable the proprietors of the restaurant to get a sense of the market for potential future developments. In addition, the study discovered that members of the staff provide support and assistance to one another in order to find solutions to problems and achieve success.

Exploring further through a more sophisticated statistical tool, The study revealed that EM significantly and positively influences the sustainability of small and medium-sized restaurants in Nigeria. The examined EM dimensions demonstrate that innovativeness, proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, customer intensity, value creation, market sensing, and teamwork significantly enhance the sustainability of restaurants in South-eastern Nigeria. These findings are to some extent in line with Anetoh, Okafor, Obiezekwem and Okeke (2022), Mojekeh, Nwokolie and Okwuraiwe (2018), Panama and Adeola (2020) which found that innovativeness has significant positive effect on sustainability of SMEs. However, some studies such as Aroyeun, Adefulu and Asikhia (2019), Olawale (2019) have a contrary view that innovativeness is insignificant to the sustainability of SMEs. Nwankwo and Kanyangale (2022) found that innovativeness is significant but has negative effect on survival of manufacturing SMEs in Nigeria. Gemechu, Csaba and Anna (2021) found that risk-taking orientation has a negative relationship on business performance.

However, the study further uncovered that resource leveraging is insignificant and pose negative effect on the sustainability of restaurant businesses in South-eastern, Nigeria. This outcome disagreed with the findings of Aroyeun et al. (2019), Mojekeh et al. (2018), Nwankwo and Kanyangale (2022), Panama and Adeola (2020) as well as Ishola et al. (2020) which maintained that resources leveraging has a significant and positive effect on SMEs sustainability. Nevertheless, as SMEs generally possess constrained resources to address the diverse and multifaceted requirements of both internal stakeholders (e.g., employees) and external

entities (e.g., customers and regulators), resource leveraging constitutes a critical aspect of EM. The finding of this study has shown that restaurants in South-eastern, Nigeria have either not adopted a good leveraging strategy or that they applied the right strategy in a wrong form thus causing a negative effect on the sustainability of restaurant businesses in Nigeria. Since, EM adopters employ various strategies to optimise resources, thereby not limited by their available assets. These strategies include recycling, merging resources from two firms to enhance value, extending resources beyond competitors' capabilities, capitalising on resources that others cannot utilise, and leveraging external resources to fulfil their objectives. All these are applicable in the restaurant businesses, but the manner in which they are applied formed the outcome in the present study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As a tactic for gaining a competitive edge, entrepreneurial marketing has grown in importance as a field of study (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2020). Academic fields such as marketing and entrepreneurship are interrelated and should be viewed as complementing each other rather than separately. Better performance is achieved when behaviour and strategy are combined with concepts from marketing and entrepreneurship, as many academics have conceptually and empirically shown. Researchers have employed the seven recognised EM dimensions (Morris et al., 2002) in numerous investigations, with varying degrees of success; nonetheless, the present study employed eight dimensions that were selected from the new integrative EM model (Nwankwo & Kanyangale, 2022). Thus, the core aim of this study was to investigate how EM affects the sustainability of small and medium-sized restaurants in South-eastern, Nigeria. A new integrative model of EM served as the foundation for the study's theoretical development. As a result, theories and a conceptual model were created to look into the relationship between the constructs. The study employed a quantitative research methodology and survey design to gather data from small and medium-sized restaurants in South-eastern, Nigeria. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 27 was employed to analyse the data. The primary conclusions of the study show that, in South-eastern, Nigeria, small and medium-sized restaurant's sustainability is significantly impacted by EM. Taking into consideration the results of the study, the following recommendations were considered:

1. Entrepreneurial small and medium-sized restaurants can attain long-term sustainability as long as they possess traits like ownership, proactive, innovative business acumen, teamwork, commercial orientation, results focus, and leadership-oriented capabilities. They can also achieve this by implementing business practices like

performance management, marketing, teamwork, and strategic planning.

2. The study recommended that owners and managers of small and medium-sized restaurants should adopt an entrepreneurial mindset to enhance the likelihood of sustainability for SMEs. The study indicates that EM has a substantial and beneficial impact on the sustainability of small and medium-sized restaurants. It is recommended that owners and managers prioritise this aspect to ensure the effective use of modern technology.
3. Even though taking calculated risks is essential to achieving entrepreneurial objectives, it is recommended that entrepreneurs integrate and evaluate this technique when investing in business opportunities. Undoubtedly, on an immediate and strategic basis, this measure would be able to ensure entrepreneurial profitability, growth, and survival.
4. Furthermore, entrepreneurs should be encouraged to receive periodic training so they can learn how to leverage resources and expand their managerial and technical skills for managing their finances wisely while assiduously pursuing their goals.
5. Owners and managers of small and medium-sized restaurants in Nigeria, should regularly implement and evaluate customer, keeping in mind that customers are the reason businesses exist in the first place. Customers are therefore kings, and their needs must come first.

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