

ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF BEAUTY CARE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

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Abstract

The business environment is volatile and dynamic; it takes a firm that is entrepreneurial orientated to survive. To this end, this study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. Three (3) objectives, three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses were tested. The study adopted correlational survey design; the population of this study consisted of 96 (managers and sales representatives) of 16 Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt gotten through www.finelib.com. The study adopted a census approach and studied the entire population. The instrument was administered in the frame of 6 copies per firm; the reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha test instrument with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and it stood at 0.78 higher than the benchmark of 0.7. The data collected for this study were analyzed through inferential statistics. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Technique was employed to test the various hypotheses formulated through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that entrepreneurial orientation showed a positive and significant relationship with competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. The results from the bivariate analysis confirmed this as a positive and significant relationship was found between entrepreneurial orientation (proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness and innovativeness) and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that entrepreneurial orientation via its dimensions is a panacea for gaining competitive advantage. In line with the findings and conclusions; the paper recommends that Beauty Care Firms should be proactive in all ramification; they should be quick and swift in responding to market needs; they should be competitive aggressive and challenge competitions in order to gain entry or strengthen its existing position in the marketplace, geared towards surpassing industry rivals and should be innovative and always come up with novel products and services that will catch the customer's attention.

Introduction

The 21st business environment is volatile and dynamic; it takes a firm that is entrepreneurial orientated to survive. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) refers to the processes of strategy development that give businesses with a foundation for entrepreneurial decisions and activities (Rauch et., al., 2009). It is an individual's attitude toward engaging in entrepreneurial activities, whether within an existing organization or starting a new enterprise (Jinpei, 2009) and it includes entrepreneurial components of a firm's decision-making styles, methods, and practices (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). In theory, entrepreneurship researchers have claimed that entrepreneurial orientation within existing business organizations is a source of revitalization that improves performance and provides firms with a competitive advantage over competitors (Akpan et., al., 2021). It is also believed that organizations with higher levels of entrepreneurial orientation will outperform those with lower levels of entrepreneurial orientation (Rauch et., al., 2009). Furthermore, existing literature admits that organizational-level entrepreneurial orientation is associated with profitability, growth, strategic renewal, market share, wealth generation, and overall success (Wang & Juan, 2016). EO is viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon with five subscales: innovation, risk taking, proactiveness, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness.

To respond to the dynamic nature of the business environment; Beauty Care firms will leverage on competitive advantage. The concept of competitive advantages analyzes the economics of company activity, mainly focusing on its ability to generate a much greater return on invested capital and to link the company's strategy with the main financial markets over an extended period of time. The competitive advantage exists when the enterprise owns and develops a combination of specific characteristics that allow it to overtake its competitors and be more competitive. An effective competitive strategy must be in order to carry out these activities and to ensure that the company has an advantage compared to competitors. A competitive strategy is a summary of the vision that a firm perceives against its competitors. It enables the firm to succeed amidst stiff competition.

Statement of the Problem

When a firm's resources is not valuable; rare among a firm's current and prospective competition; and can be substituted for another product, that firm lacks competitive advantage. A competitive advantage exists when a firm has a product or service that is perceived by its target market customers as better than that of its competitors. Most beauty firms in Port Harcourt are not competitive; this because they lacked the needed resources to compete favorably within the industry. Entrepreneurial orientation refers to strategy development that gives businesses (existing or start up) with a foundation for entrepreneurial decisions and activities in order to compete effectively. Entrepreneurial orientation with its demission of proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness and innovativeness will enable beauty care firms in Port Harcourt to have competitive advantage. It is against this backdrop that this study entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt was designed.

Conceptual Framework

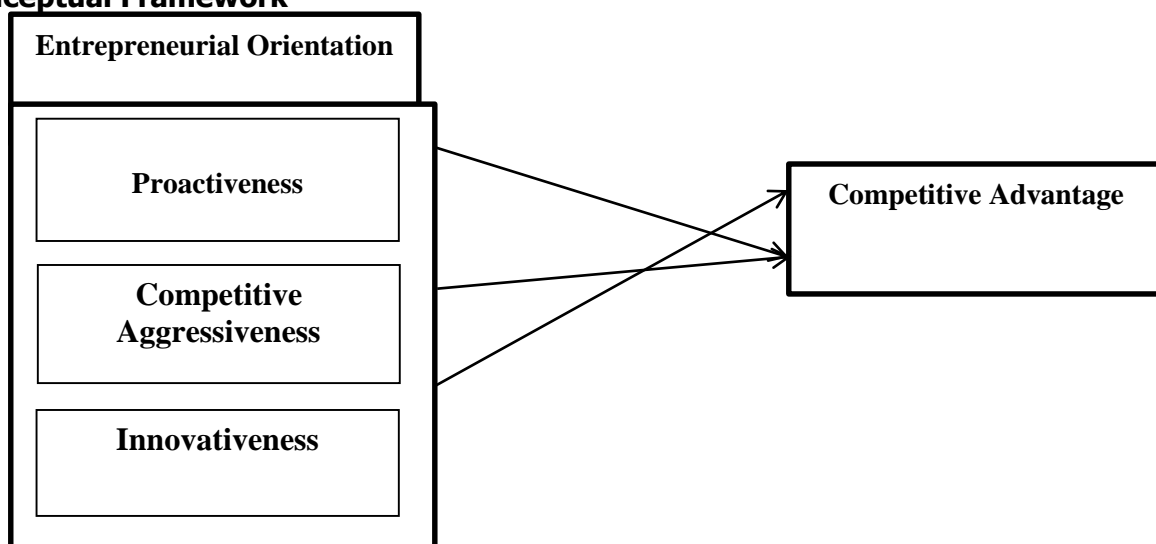


Fig.1.1 Conceptual framework showing the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Competitive Advantage.

Source: Anietie and Andrew (2022)

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main of this study was to investigate the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Competitive Advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt; specific objectives are as to:

- i. examine the relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.
- ii. investigate the relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

- iii. evaluate the relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in order to address the objectives of the study:

- i. What is the relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt?
- iii. What is the relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

- H0₁: There is no significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.
- H0₂: There is no significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.
- H0₃: There is no significant relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Review

The study is anchored on Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View which was first coined by Birger Wernerfelt in 1984. The theory describes a firm as a unique bundle of tangible and intangible resources (assets, capabilities, competencies, organizational processes, firm attributes, information and knowledge and so forth) that are controlled by the firm (Barney, 1991). The resource-based view (RBV) is founded on the idea that a firm's internal resources, rather than its external positioning, are the basis of its performance and competitive advantage.

These resources enable a firm to implement strategies designed to improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991). The resource-based view suggests that valuable firm resources are usually scarce, imperfectly imitable and lacking in direct substitutes. A firm's resource must have four attributes: it must be valuable; it must be rare among a firm's current and prospective competition; it must be imperfectly imitable, and it cannot be substituted for strategically equivalent resource (Barney, 1991).

This theory is relevant to the study because Resource-Based View theory is anchored on the notion that organizations can have the competitive advantage through the development of resources that are peculiar and diversely distributed (Aliyu & Mahmoud, 2014). It holds much promise as a framework for understanding strategic marketing issues; EO is unique to the firm, as such a source of enhanced performance and sustainable competitive advantage.

Concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is the extent to which company owners or managers are willing to take business risks, to support changes, to innovate and proactively pursue new opportunities (Covin & Slevin, 1989) while Lumpkin & Dess (1996) commented on the extent to which employees are involved in the use of entrepreneurial activities that are supported (or vice versa) by the culture and structure of the company. Lumpkin & Dess (1996) highlighted that entrepreneurial orientation is related to behaviour, managerial philosophy, the practice of entrepreneurial strategic decision making, and it directs companies to enter into new or established markets with new or existing

goods or services (as cited in Kraus et al., 2012). Slater and Narver (1995) stated that as a resource, entrepreneurial orientation has emerged as an important resource that can be widely exploited in the corporate entrepreneurship (as cited in Martins & Rialp, 2013).

Entrepreneurial oriented companies exploit and explore opportunities that exist or are created to build competitive advantage, which leads to company performance (Schindehutte et al., 2008). Proactive SMEs can be a pioneer by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities, participating in new markets, and can lead to innovations directed at marketing activities or producing new products that enable companies to keep pace with market changes and both react to and proactively address changes (Webb et al., 2011).

Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation

There are two opinions about the dimension of entrepreneurial orientation; the first is Miller and Friesen (1983), who suggested three dimensions namely, innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity. The second is, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) who added other two dimensions which made the five of dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation that consisted of innovation, risktaking, proactive, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness, yet Lumpkin and Dess also mentioned that the use of these five dimensions depends on the context and environment of the company. In line with this; this study adopted three dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation which includes:

Proactiveness

Proactiveness is defined as predicting and seeking new opportunities connected to future demand and participating in emerging markets (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). According to Zahra (2008), proactiveness is "an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective characterized by the introduction of new products and services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand". The ability to recognize and respond to market signals demonstrates a company's proactiveness (Jogaratham, 2002). Akpan et., al., (2021) stressed that proactiveness is critical to a company's success because it allows the company enjoy the first-mover advantage in terms of pursuing initial earnings and other investment opportunities. Proactivity aids the organization in anticipating and correctly predicting future offerings that will match client expectations, as well as making attempts to distribute them to the appropriate markets (Mahmood & Wahid, 2012).

Competitive aggressiveness

According to Jinpei (2009), competitive aggressiveness is defined as a firm's willingness to directly and vigorously challenge competitions in order to gain entry or strengthen its existing position in the marketplace, geared towards surpassing industry rivals. It is seen as the organisation's tendency to compete vigorously in order to outperform competitors with the industry (Jia, et., al., 2014). Organisations that exhibit competitive aggressive behavior are more likely to take a hostile stance toward competitors in an attempt to outperform competitors that challenge their existence or market position (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). In organisations, competitive aggressive behavior can either be responsive or reactive. Responsive behaviour can take the shape of head-to-head competition or an attack, directly, on competitors, such as when a company joins a market where a competitor already exists.

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is seen as a critical component for a business to succeed as an entrepreneur. It represents a firm's proclivity to participate in and encourage the production of new ideas and inventive processes that could lead to new goods, services, technological processes, and markets (Zahra, 2008). To enhance clarity, the definition of innovativeness can be divided into three segments: constant renewal and expansion or generation of new products, services, and related markets; finding, presenting, and establishing new distribution and supply channels; and introducing

new procedures in management and arranging work to improve worker skills and working conditions (Arief et., al., 2013). Edmond and Wiklund (2010) asserted that innovativeness plays an important part in resolving business challenges, and that it is viewed as a critical pillar for gaining competitive advantage over other businesses in the same industry. This is because innovation helps a company to capitalize on consumers' ever-changing tastes by satisfying unique market needs (Isichei et., al., 2020). When operating in a world of global competition, rapid technological advancements, and resource constraint, a firm's innovative ability to renew its market offers becomes critical to its ability to survive and develop (Mokaya, 2012).

Concept of Competitive Advantage

A competitive advantage exists when a firm has a product or service that is perceived by its target market customers as better than that of its competitors (Dess et al, 2005). The magnitude of a firm's competitive advantage is the difference between the perceived value created and the costs to produce the good or service compared to its direct competitors. If the economic value created is greater than that of its competitors, the firm has a competitive advantage; if it is equal to the competitors, the firms are said to have competitive parity; and if it lower than its rival firms, the firm has a competitive disadvantage (Rothaermel, 2008).

Empirical Review

The following works were reviewed:

Anietie and Andrew (2022) examined the influence of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) on performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs). The study was carried out in the South-South Geopolitical Region of Nigeria. The proxies for EO were innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. This study used a survey research approach and a sample size of 1308 SMEs was selected. Copies of an adopted questionnaire were administered to the respondents who were owners/managers of the selected SMEs using the stratified random sampling method. Pearson's correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data collected. The result of the research revealed that entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has significant influence on performance of SMEs in Nigeria. Consequently, it was recommended that SMEs' owners/managers should use the EO dimensions that best suit their firm's strategic emphasis, taking into account aspects such as the organization's age and/or size, industry influence, and the specific setting in which the firm works.

Panama and Adeola (2020) The study examined the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions and market performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Delta State. A sample of 245 respondents comprises of owners or managers of SME's in Warri/Effurun Metropolis were selected for study. Convenience sampling techniques was used to select the sample after the area has been subdivided into zone with quota sampling methods. A survey research design was used to collect data from respondents through the use of questionnaire. Hypothesized relationships between the variables of study were tested using multiple regressions. Findings reveal that all the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions of pro-activeness, opportunity-focused, innovation-oriented, customer intensity, resource leveraging and value creation have significant positive relationship with market performance while risk making have a negative relationship. It is therefore recommended that owners and managers of SME's should be pro-active, aggressive and innovative in design of strategies towards enhancing market performance in their organization.

Otika et al (2019). Entrepreneurial marketing practices and competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises in Enugu State was studied to examine the effect of entrepreneurial marketing dimensions on competitive advantage of small and medium size enterprises in Enugu state. The study applied descriptive research design with the aid of survey method in obtaining the data needed. The sample size of the study was 356 owners/managers of small and medium-sized

enterprise in Enugu state. Descriptive Statistics and multiple regressions analytical tool were used to analyze the data. Findings reveal that proactiveness has no significant relationship with competitive advantage. Opportunity focus has statistically significant relationship with competitive advantage. Risk-taking has no significant relationship with competitive advantage. Innovativeness has statistical significance relationship with competitive advantage. Customer intensity has no statistical significance relationship with competitive advantage; resource leveraging has no statistical significant relationship with competitive advantage. Value creation has significant relationship with competitive advantage. We conclude that SMEs operators should emphasis on innovativeness, opportunity focus, and value creation, this will enable them compete favorably.

Mohammed and Rusinah (2017) in their study, the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on competitive advantage moderated by financing support in SMEs in Iraq. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage (CMA) and to investigate the moderated role of financial support (FNC) between the influences of entrepreneurial orientations on CMA. The study adopted a quantitative approach using survey instruments. The used sample size of 680 from a total manager population in 3526 SMEs working in Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) in Iraq. The total number of usable questionnaires was 580. Structural equation modeling was employed to examine the relationship between the variables. The statistical result showed that entrepreneurial orientations significantly influenced on CMA. The results also highlight that FNC had a moderated role in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and CMA in SMEs in Iraqi KRG.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational survey design; the population of this study consisted of 96 (managers and sales representatives) of 16 Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt gotten through www.finelib.com. The study adopted a census approach and studied the entire population. The instrument was administered in the frame of 6 copies per firm; the reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha test instrument with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and it stood at 0.78 higher than the benchmark of 0.7. The data collected for this study were analyzed through inferential statistics. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Technique was employed to test the various hypotheses formulated through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0

Data Presentation

In this section, the data obtained in the questionnaire were presented in tables and interpreted. A total of 90 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents (managers and sales representatives) of 16 Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 1.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire Distribution	Questionnaire Retrieval	Useful Questionnaire	Not Useful
96	86	80	6

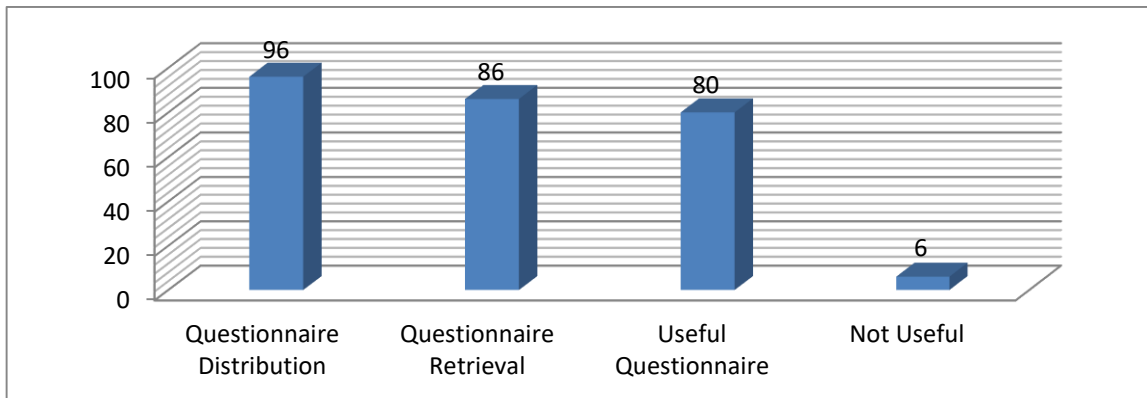


Table 1.1 and fig. 1.1 shows the order in which copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and their collection rate. From the table, it is observed that out of the 96 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents of food and beverages firms, 86 copies were collected, 80 copies were useful and 6 copies were not useful.

Data Analysis and Results

In this section, the data collected in the questionnaire were analyzed statistically. The analysis covered the demographic variables of the respondents as well as the univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses. The results of the analysis were interpreted and used to draw the logical conclusion for the study.

Demographic Analysis

The demographic variables of the respondents were analyzed in this section. The demographic variables include the sex and marital status. The percentage and frequency tables were used to analyze the demographic variables of the respondents as shown below:

Table 1.2: Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	46	57%
Male	34	43%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1.2 contains the sex of the respondents who participated in this study. The table shows that out of the 80 respondents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 46 (57%) of them were female while 34 (43%) were male.

Table 1.3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	43	53%
Married	32	40%
Divorced	5	7%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1.3 presents the marital status of the respondents who participated in this study. From the table, it was observed that out of the 80 respondents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 43 (53%) of them were single; 32 (40%) of them were married; 5 (7%) were divorcees.

Bivariate Analysis

In this section, the bivariate analysis was conducted. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) was used to determine the strength of relationship between the two variables in each of the hypotheses. This was done with the aid of the SPSS software package version 23.0. The result of SPSS bivariate analysis for each hypothesis is presented below:

Hypothesis one

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Result of bivariate analysis between proactiveness and competitive advantage.

			Proactiveness	competitive advantage
Spearman (rho)	Proactiveness	Correlation	1.000	.588**
		Coefficient	.	.001
		Sig. (2 tailed)	80	80
	competitive advantage	Correlation	.588**	1.000
		Coefficient	.001	.
		Sig. (2 tailed)	80	80
		N		

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

The result of the bivariate analysis carried out between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. The result indicates that proactiveness is significantly and positively correlated to competitive advantage (rho = .588**) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol **. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is moderate positive and significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis two

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Result of bivariate analysis between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage.

			competitive aggressiveness	competitive advantage
Spearman (rho)	competitive aggressiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.644**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	223
	competitive advantage	Correlation Coefficient	.644**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	223

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

The result of bivariate analysis carried out between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. The result indicates that competitive aggressiveness has a very strong positive correlation with sales growth (rho = .644**) and the symbol ** signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis (Ho₂) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is strong

positive and significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 4.10: Result of bivariate analysis between innovativeness and competitive advantage

			innovativeness	competitive advantage
Spearman (rho)	innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.721**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	80	80
	competitive advantage	Correlation Coefficient	.721**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	80	80

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

The result of bivariate analysis carried out between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. The result reveals a strong positive correlation between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt ($\rho = .721^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol **. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H₀₃) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is strong positive and significant relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Summary of Findings

- There is significant relationship between proactiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.
- There is significant relationship between competitive aggressiveness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.
- There is significant relationship between innovativeness and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

Proactiveness showed a strong, positive, and significant relationship with competitive advantage. This finding is in line with the study of Akpan et., al., (2021) who stressed that proactiveness is critical to a company's success because it allows the company enjoy the first-mover advantage in terms of pursuing initial earnings and other investment opportunities.

Competitive aggressiveness showed a strong, positive, and significant relationship with competitive advantage. This finding is in line with the study of Anietie and Andrew (2022) who examined the influence of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) on performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs). The proxies for EO were innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. The result of the research revealed that entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has significant influence on performance of SMEs in Nigeria.

Innovativeness showed a strong, positive, and significant relationship with competitive advantage. This finding is in line with the study of Edmond and Wiklund (2010) asserted that innovativeness

plays an important part in resolving business challenges, and that it is viewed as a critical pillar for gaining competitive advantage over other businesses in the same industry.

Conclusions

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive and significant relationship with competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. The results from the bivariate analysis confirmed this as a positive and significant relationship was found between entrepreneurial orientation (proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness and innovativeness) and competitive advantage of Beauty Care Firms in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that entrepreneurial orientation via its dimensions is a panacea for gaining competitive advantage.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusions; the paper recommends as follows:

1. Beauty Care Firms should be proactive in all ramification; they should be quick and swift in responding to market needs.
2. Beauty Care Firms should be competitive aggressive and challenge competitions in order to gain entry or strengthen its existing position in the marketplace, geared towards surpassing industry rivals.
3. Beauty Care Firms should be innovative and always come up with novel products and services that will catch the customer's attention.

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