

Effects of Entrepreneurial Orientation on Export Performance of Manufacturing SMEs in Kano, Nigeria

¹Abiodun Tope Samson Ph.D

¹Faculty of Art, Social and Management Sciences, Department of Management, Nigerian Army University Bui, PMB 1500, Borno State, Nigeria samsontope@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The basic objective of this study was to assess the effects of innovativeness, risk-taking and pro-activeness on the performance of exporting manufacturing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Kano, Nigeria. Based on a theoretical consideration a model was proposed and three hypotheses were formulated. Survey questionnaires were used in the data collection and a total of 110 useable responses were received from the owner/managers of exporting manufacturing SMEs in Kano. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed in the data analysis. The results of the analysis depict that pro activeness; innovativeness and risk-taking have significant effect on export performance of manufacturing SMEs. The managerial implication of this study indicates that EO is a significant internal determinant of export performance. Exporting SMEs' managers could take complementary advantage of pro-activeness, innovativeness, and risk-taking resources to perform more than their competitors. The study recommends leverage renewal strategy on incentives giving to SMEs and reconfigure innovativeness; revamping all old Industrial Development Centres and establish new ones (IDCs); establishing SMEs clusters; upgrading rural urban road, introduce entrepreneurial studies; and emphasize science among others. .

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial Orientation, Pro-activeness, Innovativeness, Risk-taking, Export Performance

1 Introduction

Expanding non-oil export to get rid of monolithic economy has been suggested as a solution for economic development and increase in export can perform the roles of “engine of economic growth”, increase employment, create profit, trigger greater productivity and lead to rise in accumulation of reserves allowing a country to balance their finances (Imoughele & Ismaila, 2015). This drive for non-oil export diversification has been intensified, yet, the manufacturing exporting SMEs which should be the main driver of the economic growth's engine are

under capacitated due to the volatile business environment stressors and competitiveness issues hinged on strategic nexus of the SMEs into the non-oil export sector (Adesanya et al., 2018; Okpara & Koumbiadis, 2017). The strategies adopted by most SMEs' and their managerial judgment in the formation of their export business activities has remained ineffective without yielding the expected multiplying effects on the performance of SMEs' in the international market. Most SMEs' do not seek for or acquire adequate information and knowledge

about foreign markets and how to manage foreign activities while formulating their exporting strategies (Al-Mubarak, 2016; Mwebaze & Hisali, 2013). This has really hampered the export involvement, competitiveness, performance level and corporate growth of the SMEs'. The exportation portion of these companies against their production is low with overall poor export performance (Imran et al., 2018). This has resulted to the poor performance of small and medium sized firms in the international market (Imran et al., 2018). In the same vein, SMEs from developing nation often times directly interface with host market potential customers, but their products are often rejected and sent back to the home country as a result of not meeting the client product specification and standards in addition to the fact that SMEs have no representatives who can coordinate their export activities in the host market. The outbreak of covid-19 across the world has added a seismic impact on the global economy. In Nigeria, the negative economic impact is even more profound following the crash in international oil prices, reaching as low as \$22.58 a barrel. This has been extensively analyzed given that as of 2019, 87% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings came from crude oil exports. The price of Nigerian cocoa beans stood at US\$2880.63/tonne on 03 February 2020. It has now fallen to US\$2440.94/tonne as of 30 March 2020 (source: ITC market price information). This is a fall of US\$439.69 per tonne, or 15.3%. Similarly, the price change for Nigerian sesame seed has not proved as drastic as cocoa. In fact, since the start of

February 2020, the price has fallen by only US\$60 per tonne (i.e. 4.7%) from US\$1270/tonne to US\$1210/tonne (Sandrey, 2017).

Disappointedly, only few studies in international marketing have asked how innovative entrepreneurial firms from emerging economies, (most especially, Nigeria, Kano) compete in the global marketplace and improve export performance of SMEs. In this study, an attempt is made to argue that SMEs entry into the global marketplace and participating in export development are often a strategic choice that requires investment in several innovative capabilities (Abiodun & Mahmood, 2014). Innovative capabilities are organizational processes through which firms reconfigure their resources as their markets evolve (Abiodun & Mahmood 2015; Eisenhardt & Martin 2000). Innovativeness proactiveness, risk taking, competitive aggressiveness and autonomous capabilities underpin the recent advances in international entrepreneurship, which suggest that imaginative inertial nature of established routines and new ventures hold an advantage in developing capabilities during internationalization (Ren et al., 2015) In international marketing, innovative capabilities have been linked to export performance (Lages et al., 2009).

There has been a great deal of research on SMEs and entrepreneurial export orientation; however, these studies have been primarily conducted in Europe (i.e. Akyol, & Akehurst, 2003; Francis & Collins-Dodd, 2000; Fernández-Mesa, & Alegre, 2015). America

(i.e Yeoh, & Jeong, 1995; Kuivalainen, et al., 2007; Kropp et al., 2006). Specifically, research on this topic is disappointingly scarce in Africa, particularly Nigeria (i.e Abiodun & Mahmood, 2015; Ajayi, 2016; Okpara, 2009; Samson, 2015; Imran et al., 2017).

Since very little research has been conducted on this topic in Nigeria, undeniably there is a knowledge gap in the understanding of this issue with regard to the Nigerian environment. This study is an attempt to bridge that gap. For SMEs in Nigeria, an awareness of the characteristics of a proactive, innovative, competitive aggressive and autonomous export orientation that results in superior export performance might encourage entrepreneurs to enter into the export market.

Therefore, this study offers a significant contribution to both practitioners and researchers. Entrepreneurial orientation has been suggested as an important topic to be considered when developing an export market for SMEs, since globalization would really depends on the ability to internationalize operation and respond quickly to market condition (Asemokha et al., 2019).

Therefore, this study offers a significant contribution to both practitioners and researchers. The importance of EO for the survival of SMEs' export performance was acknowledged by many authors (e.g. Imran et al., 2018). Firms with stronger EO achieve higher export performance (Radulovich et al., 2018; Thanos et al., 2016).

Entrepreneurial orientations (Pro-activeness,

innovativeness and risk-taking) identified in management literature are selected as key variables for these aforementioned reasons to explain export performance of Manufacturing SMEs in Kano, Nigeria. Therefore, the major objective of this study is to examine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on export performance of SMEs in Kano. While the specific objectives are:

1. To examine the effect of Pro-activeness on Export Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kano.
2. To investigate the effect of Innovativeness on Export Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kano and
3. To assess the effect of Risk-taking on Export Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kano.

2. Literature Review

This study delineates relationships between entrepreneurial orientation's dimensions and export performance of SMEs to show the effect, the relative contribution and the extent of the influence of each of the features of entrepreneurial orientation on export performance of SMEs in Kano state. Thus, the independent variables of the study are the EO dimensions; pro-activeness, innovativeness and risk-taking, while the dependent variable is export performance.

2.1 Entrepreneurial Orientations (EO)

EO was first defined by Miller (1983) as follows; “an entrepreneurial firm is one that engages in product-market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with ‘proactive’ innovations, beating competitors to the punch”. Three dimensions were suggested to characterize and test entrepreneurship: “innovativeness”, “proactiveness”, and “risk-taking. Lumpkin and Dess (1996, p.136) define EO as ‘the processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to new entry’” Lumpkin and Dess (1996) put forth two additional dimensions to characterize the entrepreneurial process – namely, competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. The importance of EO for the survival of SME export performance was acknowledged by many authors (Imran et al., 2018). Several studies believed that firms with stronger EO achieve higher export performance (Radulovich et al., 2018; Thanos et al., 2016). However, a literature review indicates that the most commonly used dimensions in research are innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking (Kropp et al., 2008).

2.1.1 Innovativeness

Innovativeness reflects a firm’s tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative processes that may result in new products, services, or technological processes (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). The degree at which an organization is being characterized as being innovative is that innovation would be one of the primary contributing

factors to the success of such organization (Hult et al., 2004). In this study, innovativeness’ dimension of entrepreneurial orientation helps SMEs to gain competitive advantages in the competitive export markets through product, market, and technological newness (Ketchen & Shorter, 2012). Firm innovativeness is thus viewed as a strategic resource that may provide a firm with the ability to compete in target markets by offering customers products and services with added and/or different sources of value relative to competitors (Schilke, 2014).

2.1.2 Risk-Taking

Risk-taking is defined as “the degree to which managers are willing to make large and risky resource commitments i.e. those which have a reasonable chance of costly failures” (Miller and Friesen, 1978, p. 923). Risk is the fundamental aspect of the entrepreneurial process; entrepreneurship is an uncertain activity (McMullen, & Shepherd 2006). It is the extent at which managers is ready to commit a large and risky resource into a project, which may constitute a reasonable change or expensive failure Yet, the risks are calculated risk, and extreme risk that involve reckless decision making that management identified is usually avoided (Ketchen & Shorter, 2012). Risk taking in this study is the capacity of the firms’ to view the foreign market as opportunity to be pursued positively despite the volatility, engenders success in export ventures (Adesanya et al., 2018).

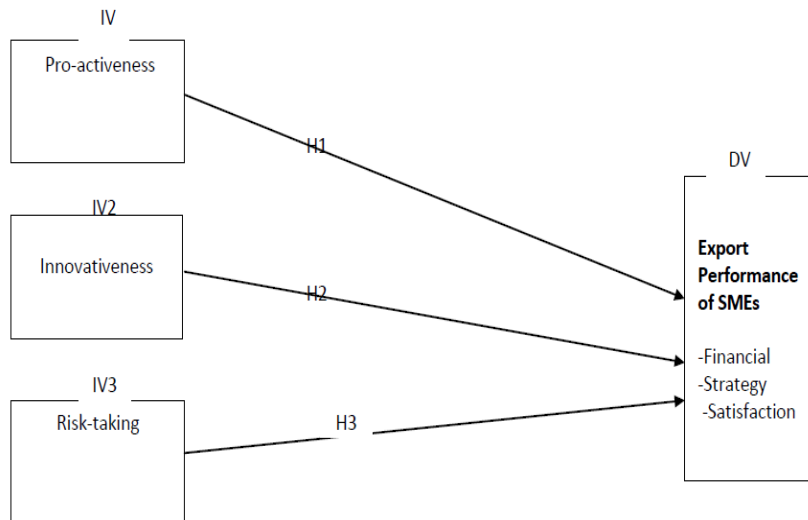
2.1.3 Pro-activeness

Proactiveness is defined as “seeking new opportunities which may or may not be related to the present line of operations, introduction of new products and brands ahead of competition, strategically eliminating operations which are in the mature or declining stages of the life cycle” (Venkatraman, 1989). Pro-activeness defines the capability of the firms’ entrance to the export market *via* inference from SWOT analysis conducted to identifying the opportunity trend in the market, and exploiting them with the use of human capital expertise to be on top of competition (Okpara, 2009; Rua & França, 2017). In this study, Pro activeness enables SMEs exporter to identify new opportunities and evaluate them, discover and monitor market trends and have new team formation. An entrepreneur is a visionary because of his pro activeness’ quality; opportunities can be perceived where others did not see, thereby, as entrepreneurial exporter of SMEs will be first to exploit opportunities in foreign market (Cadogan et al., 2016; Phokha & Nonsrimuang, 2013).

2.1.4 Export Performance

Cavusgil and Zou (1994) portray export performance as "the extent to which a firm accomplishes its financial and key intention and subjective actions for exporting". Laitinen (2002, p. 66; Reijonen & Komppula, 2007) characterizes performance as "the capacity of an item to create results in a measurement decided earlier, in connection to an objective". Shamsuddoha and Ali (2006) describe the

export performance as "the degree to which a company's exports are accomplished. Although export performance has been addressed in a vast number of studies, it remains one of the least understood and most contentious areas of international marketing. Another critical issue in the mode of evaluating export performance is the subject of objective measure against subjective measure, where some scholars subscribed to objective measures, while some prefer subjective measures. For instance author like Katsikeas *et al.* (2000) argued that even though subjective examination of export performance might give rise to some problems it appears to be more valid in determining long term aspect and more importantly managerial decision making and action can be easily influenced by it. However, created a measure of export performance that discussed the problem of objectivity and subjectivity of export performance, and they came out with multidimensional scale named EXPERF, and the area of interest is export venture. The dimensions are financial, strategic and satisfaction with export venture’s performance.



Conceptual Frame Work

2.1.5 Innovativeness and Export Performance

Zhang et al. (2021) explored the potential impact of CEO EO on firm choice of CSR activities (corporate philanthropy vs. CSR innovation. This study found that CEO EO leads to more engagement in CSR innovation rather than corporate philanthropy. The focus of this study does not show EO as multidimensional construct. Proactiveness is not specified as important dimension of EO that is responsible for firm performance. Monteiro et al. (2017) analyzed the relationships among EO's dimension, and export performance, the results validate the fact that EO significantly impact on export performance. However, the study did not show innovativeness as the dimension of EO that is responsible for export performance. In Nigeria, Adesanya, et al. (2018) examine the impact of EO and business Performance of non-oil exporting SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria.. The result of the descriptive data implies that EO works better when all the features are put to use. However, their

innovativeness was low. Likewise, Bıçakcıoğlu-Peynirci et al. (2019) conducted a study to find the impact of firms' innovation activities on export performance. The results of the study revealed that significant relationship between innovation activities of companies and their export performance. However, this study was carried out in different context that is different from developing economy where there is dearth of such study. Besides, the study employed qualitative methodology which is different from the one used in this study. Similarly, Rua and Franca (2016) studied the effect of innovativeness on Portuguese footwear SMEs export performance. The findings of this study revealed that innovativeness and absorptive capability enhance export performance of Portuguese footwear companies in foreign markets . However, this study is conducted in different context from Nigeria, besides capturing only footwear as industrial sample could narrow the perspective of innovativeness as against where other industrial samples (food and beverages, plastic, leather, chemicals) are involved. More importantly, Hossain and Azmi (2020) examined the impact of innovativeness on the apparel industry's export performance.

The results of this study revealed that innovativeness positively and significantly impact export performance. Even though the study is recent and really shows the close similarity with this study, yet the study was carried out in different context. Different sample in the turbulent environment where there is scarcity of such study would definitely

contribute to entrepreneurial and strategic management literature.

Despite the fact that many prior studies found significant effects of innovativeness on export performance, Chin *et al.* (2016) found *innovativeness* is negatively related to export performance among the Chinese global start-up OEMs (Original equipment manufacturers). On the same contrary note like Chin *et al.* (2016) on lack of significant effect of innovativeness on export performance of SMEs, Silva *et al.* (2017) analyzed the extent to which breakthrough innovation (market-innovation) has a positive impact on both economic and strategic export performance. Having employed PLS-SEM on primary data collected from SMEs' exporters. The result of the study revealed that innovativeness was found to be negatively associated with export performance, as it requires major learning effort by importers. Even though the study was carried out in different context with different sample, there is a need to carry out similar study to authenticate this finding in Nigeria. Similarly, Love and Roper (2015) summarized and synthesize the evidence on SME innovation, exporting and growth, paying particular attention to internal and external (eco-system) enablers, and for the interplay between innovation and exporting in SME growth. This study found inconsistency (insignificant) between the associations of innovation and export performance. However, the study employed qualitative methodology while the current study employed quantitative method; Smart

PLS-Structural Equation Modeling is used for data analysis. This could provide more reliable findings on the relationship between innovativeness and export performance. In a summary, the literature reviewed in this study on the effect of innovativeness on export performance of SMEs has found inconsistencies and mixed findings. Even though many studies found significant relationship between the two constructs. Yet some found no significant effect or low effect. So relied on the above discrepancies necessitate null hypothesis

H01: Innovativeness has no significant effect on Export Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kano

2.1.6 Pro-activeness and Export Performance

Li *et al.* (2009) examined the relationships among proactiveness, knowledge creation process, and firm performance. The findings of the study suggested that there is significant direct effect of proactiveness on firm performance. Nonetheless, the focus of the study is not export performance. Moreover, Aziz *et al.* (2014) studied the relationship between proactiveness and firm performance. The findings of the study suggest that there is significant relationship between proactiveness and firm performance. Nevertheless, the sample of the study did not focus on the exporting SMEs. Moreover, the current study employs PLS-Structural Modelling. In addition, Kraus, *et al.* (2012) assessed the relationship between proactiveness and firm performance of SMEs, the findings of the study revealed that proactiveness is significantly related to firm perfor

mance. However, the study was carried out from different context and owners/managers participating in export were not sampled. Similarly, Shan et al. (2016) examined the relationship between proactiveness and firm performance, the relationship between proactiveness lead to a higher performance level. Nevertheless, like Kraus, et al. (2012) the sample of the study are not exporting SMEs. The context is also different from the current study.

Furthermore, Flores et al. (2016) also studied EO and firm performance relationship. The findings of the study show positive and direct association of proactiveness on firm performance. However, the study was carried out from different context.. Focusing on export performance of SMEs in Nigeria, Okpara (2009) a studied the impact of proactiveness on the export performance of SMEs.. The findings of the study revealed that firms that adopted proactive orientation attain higher performance, profitability, and growth than those that adopted a conservative orientation. However, the study did not employ the latest statistical tool like PLS-SEM to analyze the data. Recently, Hossain and Azmi (2021) consider the impact of proactiveness on export performance. However, the context of this study is different from the current study. Similarly, Cannavale & Nadali (2019) conducted a study to examine the proactiveness impact on export performance in the 155 Iranian knowledge-based industries. However, the context of this study differed from the context of this current study. In addition, Rua & Franca (2016) examined the effect of proactiveness on

Portuguese footwear SMEs' export performance. The results of the study revealed that proactiveness positively influences export performance. However, besides the fact that the context differed from Nigeria, the study employed only footwear's owners/managers which the findings would be totally different from where different industrial samples are employed

On the contrary findings, Frishammar and Ake Horte (2007) examined the relationships proactiveness and firm performance. The result shows that proactiveness show no such relationship. Besides the fact that this study was carried out in a different context, PLS-SEM Could have provided better predictive relevance. Moreover, Okangi (2019) analyzes the impacts of proactiveness, on the profitability growth of local Tanzania's construction firms. The study found the negative impact of the proactiveness dimension on firms' profitability growth of 132 Tanzanian firms. Different context and different sample other than construction firms would have provided statistical significance. In support of lack of significant effect of proactiveness on firm performance, Andersén (2010) analyzed the assertion of significantly relationship between proactiveness and firm performance. In a specific context, there is no significant relationship between proactiveness and profitability or between proactiveness and growth. However, the sample of the study is not SMEs' owners or managers participating in export. Similarly, Soininen (2013) examined the effect of proactiveness on firm

performance. The study employed a quantitative approach on survey data and partial least squares path modeling was used in the analysis. This study found the contradictory role between proactive dimensions and performance relationship. Proactiveness depicts a negative role in SMEs' performance depending on the economic crisis level. However, the sample of the study is not SMEs' owners or managers participating in export. In conclusion, the literature reviewed on empirical studies on the effect of proactiveness on export performance of SMEs revealed that there is a mixed finding. Prior studies have shown positive significant effects between the two constructs while some studies have also shown lack of significant effect. This has created an important knowledge gap to contribute to entrepreneurial and strategic management literature. Therefore, this study proposes:

Ho2: Pro-activeness has no significant effect on Export Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kano

2.1.7 Risk-taking and Export Performance

Cannavale and Nadali (2019) conducted a study to examine risk-taking impact on firm performance in the Iranian knowledge based industry. The research has revealed the positive and significant effects of risk-taking on firm performance. However, the study was conducted in different context and moreover, the sample was not the owners/managers participating in export. Hence, thorough examination of effect of risk-taking on export performance could have

produced different result. Moreover, Okangi (2019) analyzes the impacts of risk-taking, on the profitability growth of local Tanzania's construction firms. The study found the positive impact of the risk-taking dimension on firms' profitability growth of 132 Tanzanian firms. Different context and different sample could have produced different findings. In addition, Ajayi (2016) conducted a study to find the impact risk-taking on export performance, the research revealed a positive and significant relationship between risk-taking and export performance. Even though this study was conducted in the same context with the current study and using export performance as dependent variable, the study focused on agricultural sector not the owners/managers of SMEs that are dealing with textiles/clothing, food and beverages, plastic and chemicals, leather and shoes (the product mentioned are within the groups of labour intensive and light manufacturing goods) However, there are studies on the contrary findings; some prior studies found negative and insignificant effect of risk-taking on firm performance. Nevertheless, the sample of the study focused on high-technology firm. Owners/managers of SMEs that are participating in export could have shown significant effect.

Similarly, Yang & Ju (2018) conducted their study on EO and firm performance. The study revealed that the risk-taking decreases product quality, which impacts on the firms' sales performance. Nonetheless, the study did not use the sample of SMEs participating in export. Besides, the study was

conducted in China and moreover, satisfaction or strategy as non economic could have been used as performance measure. Furthermore, Kraus *et al.* (2018) having employed a structured literature review to explain the relationship between risk-taking and firm performance, they found no direct influences of risk-taking on firms' financial performance. This is a qualitative study. Quantitative study could have collected much data from larger sample.

Moreover, financial measure as a performance measure might not be sufficient, subjective measure should have been included to capture the entire attributes of performance.

Also, Chin *et al.* (2016) examined the unique links and complicated interrelationships between the individual risk-taking and firm performance. However, the study was carried out from different context from the current study. Study from developing economy, in a turbulent/dynamic environment could have shown statistical significant effects.

As well as Hossain and Azmi (2021) examined the impact of risk-taking on export performance, the findings of this study revealed that risk-taking dimension does not affect export performance. Sample from developing economy like Nigeria could have produced significant effect on export performance.

In a nut shell prior studies confirmed the effects of risk-taking on export performance of SMEs,

In a nut shell prior studies confirmed the effects of risk-taking on export performance of SMEs, but most of these studies were carried out in different context with peculiar internal/external environmental factors. Besides, the statistical tools employed were not appropriate, and sample selected differ from the owners/managers participating in export. Conducting a thorough quantitative research is also important based on the fact that most of the prior studies reviewed in this study found negative, insignificant and discrepancies in the effect of risk-taking on export performance. These mixed findings have created a knowledge gap. This study proposes:

H03: Risk-taking has no significant effect on Export Performance of manufacturing SMEs in Kano.

3 Research Methodology

This study employs survey instrument based on measures used in the past literatures on export performance. Proactiveness and innovativeness are adapted from the measures of Eggers *et al.* (2013), for its adequate description of innovativeness and proactiveness in SMEs.

All items are measured using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree. The nine items adapted from Zou and Stan (1998) are used to measure export performance in this study because they reflect economic and non-economic factor that could easily show the performance of SMEs.

The researcher visited Nigeria Export Promotion Council to ascertain the population of the SMEs participating in export. The numbers of registered SMEs are negligible. While the fast majority of SMEs carry out exporting activities unofficially. Hence, there is no population sampling frame to draw representative sample. The study employed statistic approach to calculate sample Size for unknown population. The formula for determining sample is used to determine a sample size for this study. Therefore, the sample size of the study is 384

3.2 Data Analysis

The study employed PLS-SEM to assess and test the hypotheses. The usage of PLS has been popular with information system more than any other discipline (Goodhue et al., 2007). The data analysis procedure using PLS in this present study follows these steps; these two -step processes are (1) the assessment of measurement model and (2) the assessment of a structural model (Henseler et al., 2009)

3.2.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

In this study the model estimation delivers the empirical Measures of the relationship between the indicators and the constructs (measurement model) The PLS –SEM algorithm in the first stage all the constructs scores are estimated to determine items reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Similarly, there was examination of the outer loading of each construct's measure in Figure 4.2 in order to have assessment of individual items reliability (Hair et al., 2013).

The indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 are retained, while some items below the threshold of 0.40 are deleted (Hair et al., 2013).

About 7 items are deleted out of 28 items. The remaining 21 items are retained as they have loadings that range between 0.519 and 0.938. The internal consistency reliability is the extent at which all items on particular scale are measuring the same concept (Sun et al., 2007). Composite reliability's threshold; Values between 0.70 and 0.90 are considered satisfactory, value above 0.95 is regarded unsuitable and value below 0.60 indicate lack of internal consistency validity. Hence, this study employed composite reliability to ascertain the internal consistency of the measures adapted.

Table 3.4 depicts the composite reliability (CR), items loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the measurement model.

Table 3.4: Items, Loading, CR and AVE of the Latent Variables

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Loadings</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>CR</i>
Pro-activeness	PRO01	.840	.587	.847
	PRO02	.814		
	PRO03	.837		
	PRO04	.528		
Innovativeness	INN01	.519	.625	.865
	INN02	.839		
	INN03	.863		
Risk-taking	RIS01	.677	.526	.846
	RIS02	.666		
	RIS04	.698		
	RIS05	.779		
	RIS07	.796		
Financial (performance)	FIN01	.863	.692	.870
	FIN02	.731		
	FIN03	.894		
Satisfaction (Performance)	SAT01	.938	.795	.921
	SAT02	.869		
	SAT03	.865		
Strategy (Performance)	STG01	.698	.688	.867
	STG02	.900		
	STG03	.876		

Table 3.4 depicts the composite reliability coefficient of the latent construct. The composite reliability of each construct ranged from .847 to .921. The composite reliability of all the constructs is above the threshold of .70. Similarly, convergent validity is the extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measure of the same construct (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The assessment of convergent validity is usually based on the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct and outer loadings the indicators (Fornell and Larker, 1981). All outer loading of the indicators above .40 are retained and AVE above .50 is threshold of

convergent validity (Fornell and Larker, 1981). The AVE for this study ranged between .526 and .795. While outer loading of all constructs ranged between .528 to .938, this indicates convergent validity. Moreover, discriminant validity threshold is that the square root of the average variance extracted is all greater than the correlation among latent constructs, signifying sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker).

In Table 3.5, the squared root of the AVE, (.77, .79, .73, .72, .81 and .75) are all greater than the correlation among the latent construct which shows discriminant validity.

Table 3.5: Square Root of AVE and Correlation of Latent Variable for the First Order

Latent Variables	1	2	3	6	7	8
Pro-activeness	.77					
Innovativeness	.19	.79				
Risk-taking	.24	.14	.73			
Finance	.43	.43	.49	.72		
Strategy	.06	.34	.30	.24	.81	
Satisfaction	.25	.14	.28	.37	-.01	.75

Note: Diagonal elements (figures in bold) are the square root of the variance shared between the constructs and their measures. Off diagonal elements are the correlations among constructs.. Discriminant validity was also ascertained by comparing the indicator loading with cross loading. Table 3.6 compares the indicator loading with other reflective indicators. All the available indicators Proactiveness; .840, .814, .837 and .525 are greater than other

reflective loading. Similarly, for innovativeness; .519, .839, and .863 are greater than other reflective indicators. Moreover, risk-taking indicator loading; .677, .666, .698, .779 are greater than reflective indicators. The indicator loading of finance, strategy and satisfaction are also greater than the entire reflective indicator. This means the requirement of discriminant validity has been achieved.

Table 3.6: Cross Loading Factor Analysis

Vars.	PRO	INN	RIS	FIN	STG	SAT
PRO01	.840	.096	.137	.554	.092	.130
PRO02	.814	.237	.181	.504	.088	.100
PRO03	.837	.050	.148	.368	.024	.271
PRO04	.528	.218	.164	.328	-.051	.322
INN01	.328	.519	.192	.279	.143	.139
INN02	.111	.839	.062	-.046	.255	.103
INN03	.071	.863	.024	.116	.307	.074
RIS01	.230	.311	.677	.263	.219	.342
RIS02	-.008	-.131	.666	-.013	.122	.154
RIS04	.194	.198	.698	.275	.212	.104
RIS05	.126	.105	.779	.083	.278	.175
FIN01	.223	-.144	.056	.666	-.092	-.216
FIN02	.462	.357	.441	.627	.056	.231
FIN03	.528	.065	.046	.799	.066	.147
STG01	-.043	.302	.110	-.015	.592	.063
STG02	.128	.160	.272	.055	.846	-.010
STG03	-.020	.294	.199	-.019	.882	-.137
SAT01	.112	.080	.241	.020	-.014	.808
SAT02	.208	.183	.299	.037	-.013	.789
SAT03	.241	.025	.057	.122	.013	.653

Source: Field Work (2021)

Assessment of the Structural Model

Standard bootstrapping procedure was used with a number of 5000 bootstrap samples and 356 cases to assess the significance of the paths (Henseler *et al.*, 2009; Hair *et al.*, 2013). Table 4.12 summarizes the results of reflective measured constructs, pro-activeness, innovative ness, risk- taking and export

performance by showing the original outer weights estimates, the t-values and the corresponding significance levels marked in asterisks as well as the p values.

Table 4.3: Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Beta	T Statistics	P Values	Decision	(f ²)
Ho1: Proa ctiveness -> Export Performance	0.244	4.652***	0.000	Rejected	0.094
Ho2: Innova tiveness -> Export Performance	0.371	5.968***	0.000	Rejected	0.159
Ho3: Risk-taking -> Export Performance	0.248	3.725***	0.000	Rejected	0.071

Notes: Note: *** (P<0.01), ** (P<0.05), *(P<0.1)

Ho1: Pro-activeness has no significant effect on the export performance of SMEs in Kano The result from the Table 4.3 shows that proactiveness has positive and significant effect on export performance of SMEs in Kano, with $\beta=0.244$ and $p=0.000$. Thus Ho1 is not supported and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance, since there is enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, the study conclude that proactiveness has positive and significant effect on export performance of SMEs in Kano. Similarly, **Ho2:** Innovativeness has no significant effect on the Export Performance of SMEs in Kano.

The result of the study as shown in Table 4.3 revealed that innovativeness positively and significantly affects export performance of SMEs in Kano, with $\beta=0.371$ and $p=0.000$.

Thus, **Ho2** is not supported and therefore rejected at

5% level of significance. There is adequate statistical

evidence to reject the null hypothesis and the study therefore concludes that innovativeness has positive and significant effect on export performance of SMEs in Kano. Moreover, **Ho3:** Risk-taking has no significant Effect on the Export Performance of SMEs in Kano. The result from Table 3.4 shows that risk-taking positively and significantly affects export performance of SMEs in Kano, with $\beta=0.248$ and $p=0.000$. This result does not support Ho3 and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance. Since there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis, the study therefore concludes that risk-taking has positive and significant effect on export performance of SMEs in Kano. This study also employed coefficient of determination value) as one of the criteria to assess the structural model in PLS-SEM (Hensler *et al.*, 2009). R- Squared is a measure

of the proportion of an endogenous construct's variance that is explained by its predictor construct (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The acceptable level of are 0.25, 0.50, 0.75 for endogenous variable and could be described as weak, moderate, or substantial (Hair *et al.*, 2011). While minimum, an acceptable level of R squared is 0.10. The research model explained 50% of the variance in export performance. This implies that proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking collectively explained 50% of the variance in endogenous variable (export performance). Thus, using the criteria of Falk and Miller (1992) and Chin (1998), export performance (endogenous variable) could be considered moderate. In addition to the assessment of values of all endogenous variables, this study also evaluates effect size. This shows the effect of particular exogenous latent variable on endogenous latent variables through the means of changes in the R- squared (Chin, 1998). Cohen (1998) suggests that F^2 value of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 as weak, moderate and strong effect respectively. Table 4.3 shows the result of the effect size of each of the latent variables. The exogenous constructs (proactiveness, innovativeness and risk- taking) explained export performance (the endogenous variable) have effect sizes of 0.094, 0.159, and 0.071 respectively. Thus, the effect size of each of the constructs on endogenous construct, applying the Cohen's (1998) recommendation, for risk taking; weak, innovativeness; moderate, and pro-activeness; weak.

In addition to evaluating effect sizes and magnitude

of R^2 values as a criterion for predictive accuracy, Hair *et al.*, (2013) suggested that researcher should also examine Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value (Geisser, 1974). This is usually used as supplementary assessment of goodness of-fit in Partial Least Squared Structural Modeling (Duarte & Raposo, 2010). The major criterion stipulated before blindfolding could be used; endogenous latent variables needed to have a reflective measurement model (Sattler, 2010). The present study has a reflective measurement model and blindfolding procedure was applied to endogenous latent variables. The predictive relevance of the research model was assessed through the cross-validated redundancy measure Q^2 (Ringle *et al.*, 2012). Blindfolding is a sample reuse technique that omits every data point in the endogenous construct indicators and estimate the parameter with the remaining data point set (Hair *et al.*, 2013; Henseler *et al.*, 2009). A research model with Q^2 statistics (s) greater than Zero is considered to have predictive relevance (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). Table 4.4 depicts the cross validated redundancy for export performance (endogenous variables).

4.Results and Discussion

The present study examines the effect of proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking (EO) on export performance of SMEs in Kano. The study reveals that proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking positively and significantly have effect on export performance. Therefore, this finding of EO

and export performance supports the previous studies that have posited EO and performance is contextual (Hansen et al., 2011; Wales et al., 2013). Hypothesis testing reveals that proactiveness is positively and significantly ($\beta=0.244$ and $p=0.000$) influence export performance. Therefore, this finding of EO and export performance supports the previous studies that have posited EO and performance is contextual (Hansen et al., 2011; Wales et al., 2013). Hypothesis testing reveals that proactiveness is positively and significantly ($\beta=0.244$ and $p=0.000$) influence export performance. The current finding is consistent with the previous studies of Ara et al. (2019), Rua & Franca (2016), and Flores Novelo *et al.* (2016) regarding the positive effect of proactiveness on export performance but inconsistent with the study of On the contrary, the finding is inconsistent with the study of Silva et al. (2017). However, the finding of innovativeness and export performance emerged a new theory by investigating different aspects measured in both variables. The owners/managers of SMEs in Kano suggest practicing the innovation strategies on their products, marketing activities, and production process to meet the customer demand in the international market. Moreover, the current study's finding is consistent with the prior studies; Ajayi (2016), Cannavale and Nadali (2019), Flores Novelo et al. (2016). The quantitative data analysis reveals that SMEs' innovativeness positively and significantly ($\beta=0.248$ and $p=0.000$). Thus, firms with an entrepreneurial risk-taking behavior, such as incurring heavy debt or making large resource

Frishammar & Ake Horte (2007) and Okangi, (2019). The study explored SMEs' business executives applied to different proactive activities, which positively influenced export performance of SMEs in Kano. Similarly, the quantitative data analysis reveals that SMEs' innovativeness positively and significantly ($\beta=0.371$ and $p=0.000$) impact export performance of SMEs. The current study finds innovativeness of SMEs in Kano influences firms' export performance. The consequence of this study provides another research conclusion about appropriateness of EO effect on export performance as realized in prior studies of Rua & Franca (2017), Habib et al. (2020), and Bıçakcıoglu-Peynirci et al. (2019), who have found the positive impact of innovativeness on export performance commitments, in the interest of obtaining high returns by seizing opportunities in foreign market would achieve and sustain export-performance's competitive advantage. The results of the study are in consonant with the fact that entrepreneurial orientation and performance are key factors for economic growth which should be given due attention by all the stakeholders. From the study, it has been established that entrepreneurial innovativeness should be encouraged and enhanced by improving the domestic and foreign technological networking for competitive innovations in the foreign markets. The present study examines the effect of Proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking (EO) on export performance of SMEs in Kano. The study reveals that proactiveness, innovativeness and risk-taking positively and

significantly have effect on export performance. Therefore, this finding of EO and export performance supports the previous studies. Moreover, this study's findings also support the previous studies that have posited EO and performance is contextual (Hansen et al., 2011; Wales et al., 2013). Hypothesis testing reveals that proactiveness is positively and significantly ($\beta=.083$, $t=.041$, $p<2.013^{**}$) influence export performance. The current finding is consistent with the previous studies of Ara et al. (2019), Rua & Franca(2016), and Flores Novelo *et al.* (2016) regarding the positive effect of proactiveness on export performance but inconsistent with the study of Frishammar & Ake Horte (2007) and Okangi, (2019). The study explored SMEs' business executives applied to different proactive activities, which positively influenced export performance of SMEs in Kano. Similarly, the quantitative data analysis reveals that SMEs' innovativeness positively and significantly ($\beta=.114$, $t=.034$, $p<3.353^{**}$) impact export performance of SMEs. The current study finds innovativeness of SMEs in Kano influences firms' export performance. The consequence of this study provides another research findings about appropriateness of EO effect on export performance as realized in prior studies of Rua & Franca (2017), Habib et al. (2020), and Bıçakcıoglu-Peynirci et al. (2019), who have found the positive impact of innovativeness on export performance. On the contrary, the finding is inconsistent with the study of Silva et al. (2017).

However, the finding of innovativeness and export performance emerged a new theory by investigating different aspects measured in both variables. The owners/managers of SMEs in Kano suggest practicing the innovation strategies on their products, marketing activities, and production process to meet the customer demand in the International market. Moreover, the current study's finding is consistent with the prior studies; Ajayi (2016), Cannavale and Nadali (2019), Flores Novelo et al. (2016). The quantitative data analysis reveals that SMEs' innovativeness positively and significantly($\beta=.209$, $t=.089$, $p<2.337^{**}$) .Thus, firms with an entrepreneurial risk-taking behavior, such as incurring heavy debt or making large resource commitments, in the interest of obtaining high returns by seizing opportunities in foreign market would achieve and sustain export-performance's competitive advantage. The results of the study are in consonant with the fact that entrepreneurial orientation and performance are key factors for economic growth which should be given due attention by all the stakeholders. From the study, it has been established that entrepreneurial innovativeness should be encouraged and enhanced by improving the domestic and foreign technological networking for competitive innovations in the foreign markets.

5. Conclusions

The major objective pursued and achieved in the course of this study was to examine the effect of EO on Export Performance of manufacturing Small

and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Kano Nigeria. The results of the analysis depict that proactiveness; innovativeness and risk-taking have significant effect on export performance of manufacturing SMEs.

The potentials of SMEs and opportunities to carry out the roles of engine of growth, poverty reduction, generation of an employment, development and industrialization are not mirage but possible if there is a pattern shift of focus instead from primordial tendency of noisy pronouncements to a realistic thorough approach to recognize problems. Strategic entrepreneurial orientation significantly impacts on export performance of SMEs, which denotes that entrepreneur who identify new combination of productive resources within the firm and extend the frontiers of capability, and connecting several ventures with different resources and enhance the ongoing adaptation of SMEs would improves overall innovation management that would enable the firm to reconfigure its resources and provide way to experiment new idea and subsequently achieve and sustain competitive advantage in export venture. Thus, taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities and by participating in export in international arena has become associated with entrepreneurship. The study found that the owners/ managers apply different proactive activities, which positively influence export performance. Similarly, response, by entrepre-neurial approach to dynamic

customers' demands necessitates innovation; incessant improved and enhanced products which consequently strengthen the firms competitive acuity in the domestic and foreign markets. Moreover, the owners/managers of SMEs in Kano show that risk-taking propensity has effect on export performance of SMEs. Thus, internationalization, especially exporting, requires all-inclusive strategic planning which determines various levels of involvement among SMEs due to risk and advantageous perception of the managers. Entrepreneurs, who diagnose export environment as favourable, are usually pro-active and tend to hunt for necessary information to make strategic decisions for market entry and foreign operations. Firms with an entrepreneurial risk-taking behavior, such as incurring heavy debt or making large resource commitments, in the interest of obtaining high returns by seizing opportunities in foreign market would achieve and sustain export performance competitive advantage. The significant effect of entrepreneurial orientations (proactiveness, innovate veness and risk-taking) on export performance is in line with prior studies. The possible explanation for these findings of EO and export performance emerged a new theory by investigating different aspects measured in both variables. The owners/managers of SMEs in Kano suggest practicing the innovation strategies on their products, marketing activities, and production process to meet the customer demand in the international market. The results of the study are in

consonant with the fact that entrepreneurial orientation and performance are key factors for economic growth which should be given due attention by all the stakeholders. From the study, it has been established that entrepreneurial proactiveness, calculated risk-taking and innovativeness should be encouraged and enhanced by improving the domestic and foreign technological networking for competitive advantage in the foreign markets. This study makes contribution to the literature of strategic management, particularly, SMEs in Nigeria which is believed to be under researched. Hence, SMEs should be innovative, aggressive, proactive and should take calculated risk to survive in Nigeria turbulent environment; the promoter/manager should think less on funding in the successful development of his enterprise but rather ready to learn and develop learning capabilities so that they can improve their capacity to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. Owners/ managers of SMEs should embrace science and technical education; they should practice partnership and equity participation SMEs should maintain quality in production; they should honor payment obligations, management staff of SMEs should be developed.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study makes the following recommendations:

i. Innovativeness has been found to have positive and significant impact on export performance of SMEs in this study. The owners/managers of SMEs

should encourage and practice innovation strategies on their products, administration, marketing activities, and production process to meet the customer demand in the international market. Hence, owners/managers of SMEs should develop novel product innovations targeted at export markets as greater innovativeness means that firms are more likely to develop multiple types of innovative new product portfolios for successful international expansion, diversification, and differentiation. As such firms should export a range of innovative new products that can serve diversified export markets and benefit from a wider range of export prices, especially for products with greater scope for quality differentiation.

Moreover, government should encourage privatization of scientific commons along with stronger intellectual property laws to make innovation more important than ever in enabling SMEs to achieve positional advantages and better international economic outcomes.

To enhance comparative advantage for Nigerian SMEs, innovative industrial clusters that have common sharing facilities should be developed in suitable locations i.e. new processing machines, refining plants and beneficial sharing facilities can be positioned in strategic location where many SMEs can benefit from and complement the work of Nigerian export promotion council (NEPC) and export processing zones.

iii. Risk taking in this study has significant effect on export performance, hence; owners/managers of

SMEs should view the foreign market as opportunity to be pursued positively despite the volatility, engenders success in export ventures. The management of SMEs should take calculated risk by always investigating the result of various prospective investments and predicts scenario of likely outcome and thus recognize key risk factors and their causal sources and then tries to manage or reduce these factors in international arena. Extreme risk that involves reckless decision making that management identified should be avoided.

Proactiveness has significant effect on export performance of SMEs in this study; Owners/managers of SMEs should have a forward looking perspective and also enthusiastic to change the

scenery of competition in international market.

They should continuously scanning and searching the international environment for new opportunities. Thus, Nigerian SMEs should introduce new product ahead of competitors, anticipating and seizing future opportunities in the marketplace and gives rise to pioneering new changes

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