

INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS GROWTH OF MICRO ENTERPRISES IN OBIO-AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between indigenous entrepreneurship (indigenous value creation and indigenous innovation) and business growth (market share growth and profitability growth) of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study was guided by six (6) research questions and hypotheses. The positivist research philosophy and correlational research design were adopted. The population of this study consisted of all the indigenous micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The exact population of indigenous micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area is unknown; hence the sample size for the study was determined using the Cochran's formula. A sample size of 384 respondents (indigenous micro entrepreneurs) was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) and the SPSS version 27.0. The findings revealed that indigenous value creation has a significant relationship with market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. The study also found a significant relationship between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. The study equally discovered that a significant relationship between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. The study also found a significant relationship between indigenous innovation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. Based on these findings, it was concluded that indigenous entrepreneurship significantly relate to business growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Therefore, it is recommended that micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area should practice indigenous entrepreneurship as it would enhance business growth.

Keywords: *Indigenous entrepreneurship, indigenous value creation, indigenous innovation, business growth, market share growth and profitability growth.*

INTRODUCTION

In a community where there is high level of unemployment and poverty, indigenous people need to rise to the occasion to create job opportunities, alleviate poverty and create wealth for the whole community in a culturally friendly manner. Many communities in Nigeria have huge economic opportunities which are yet to be tapped by the indigenes to create wealth for their community. The inability of indigenes to unlock their potentials and exploit the economic opportunities within their community has led to increased level of poverty and unemployment. Mrabure et al (2021) confirmed this position when they revealed that many communities are poor and suffering from high level of unemployment and poverty due to the inability of indigenes to unlock their full potentials and exploit the economic opportunities within their community. To create job opportunities and wealth for the whole community, the responsibility should not be left

for the government and community leaders alone rather individuals (indigenes) should support the course by practicing indigenous entrepreneurship.

Indigenous entrepreneurship is the establishment of a new business enterprise by indigenes of a community for the benefit of the indigenous people and the community as a whole (Collins & Norman, 2018). Hinde and Moroz in Dana (2015) defined indigenous entrepreneurship as an activity that focuses on creating a new business or pursuing economic opportunities for the purpose of community wealth creation. It involves a number of activities such as indigenous proactiveness, indigenous value creation and indigenous innovation. These activities are essential in creating socio-cultural value and wealth for the whole community. They support the cultural foundation of indigenous communities by creating social networks and values which are embedded in family and the community. Indigenous entrepreneurship incorporates sustainable practices including the setting up of organic farming business, agro-ecology venture, and eco-friendly tourism, which are essential for preserving natural resources, and reducing ecological impact of business activities (Bodle et al, 2018). This type of entrepreneurship helps to create jobs, alleviate poverty, increase access to healthcare and education, and strengthen the social fabric of the community.

Indigenous entrepreneurship is considered as a strategic tool for facilitating business growth. According to Colbourne et al (2023), indigenous entrepreneurs unlock the incredible potentials that exist within their communities to trigger business growth. These potentials are not only a demonstration of their indigenous strengths and resilient capability but also a manifestation of hope for the future. By demonstrating commitment to preserve their rich cultural heritage, share values and contribute to community prosperity; indigenous entrepreneurs enjoy huge favour from community dwellers which give them a competitive edge over their non-indigenous rivals in terms of attracting more customers and increasing their market share and profitability. Dana (2015) argued that indigenous entrepreneurs need to embrace innovation and create superior social value to achieve business growth. When indigenous businesses grow and succeed, they will create more jobs and economic opportunities within their communities, and become role models for the next generations (Tanasco, 2024). It is against this backdrop that this study examines indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Obio-Akpor Local Government Area is the richest local government area in Rivers State but majority of the indigenous populations are experiencing higher level of poverty and unemployment than their non-indigenous populations. Even the micro enterprises in the Local Government Area are finding it difficult to increase their market share and profit margin due to intense competition from their larger rivals. The inability of these enterprises to increase their market share and profit margin has hindered their business growth. Some micro enterprises have ceased from operations due to their inability to nurture their businesses towards the path of growth. This has increased the level of unemployment and poverty in the affected communities. To achieve business growth, micro enterprises need to modify their entrepreneurship practices by switching to indigenous entrepreneurship. There are substantial empirical evidences that support the practice of indigenous entrepreneurship in communities (e.g. Bodle et al, 2018; April & Itenge, 2020; Collins & Norman, 2018; Vazquez et al, 2018; Mrabure, 2019). While most of these studies relate indigenous entrepreneurship to indigenous employment and sustainable development of communities, empirical studies that link indigenous entrepreneurship to business growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State are lacking. This gap in literature is what this study intended to bridge.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth is shown in figure 1 below:

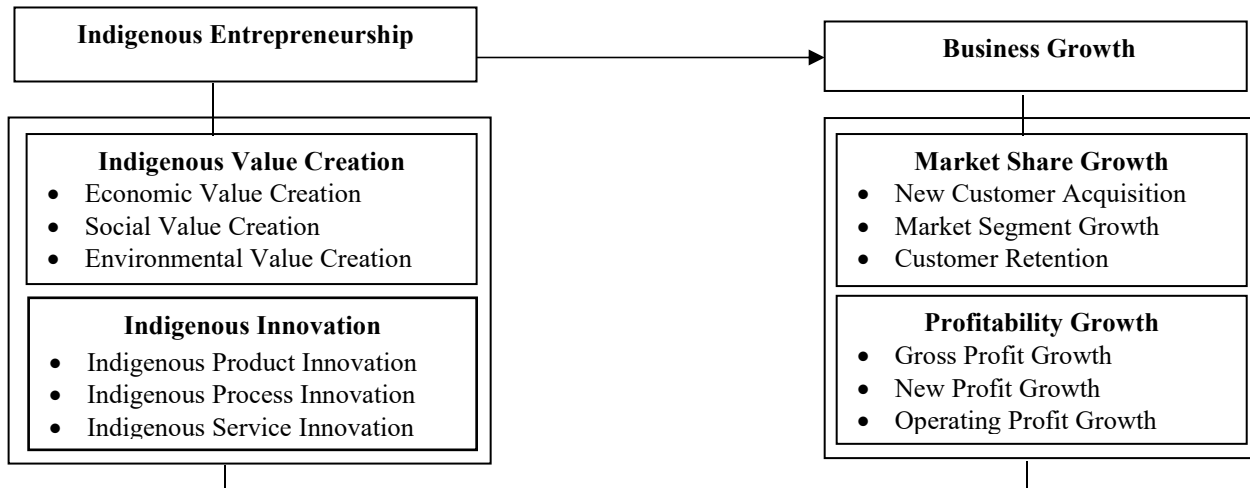


Fig 1: Conceptual framework of indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth of micro enterprises

Source: Author's Conceptualization

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the relationship between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State;
2. ascertain the relationship between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State;
3. explore the relationship between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State;
4. determine the relationship between indigenous innovation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does indigenous value creation relate to profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?
3. How does indigenous innovation relate to market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?
4. To what extent does indigenous innovation relate to profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between indigenous innovation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Indigenous Entrepreneurship

Indigenous entrepreneurship is a concept that has been defined in different ways. According to Colbourne et al (2023), indigenous entrepreneurship is the process of drawing value from community-based resources (people, land, capabilities, culture, etc.) and contributing value that will improve the socio-economic conditions of the community. Hindle et al in Croce (2017) defined indigenous entrepreneurship as the creation, management and development of new ventures by indigenous peoples for the benefit of indigenous people. Indigenous entrepreneurship is not just a business venture but also a demonstration of the indigenous people's commitment to preserve their rich cultural heritage, create value and contribute to the prosperity of their community (Dana, 2015). Parhankangas and Colbourne (2023) posited that indigenous entrepreneurs integrate cultural values and practices into their business models which differentiate them from other mainstream business practices. Indigenous ownership and benefit are the key features of indigenous entrepreneurship (Tanasco, 2024). Padilla-Melendez et al (2022) considered indigenous entrepreneurship as a powerful tool for addressing social and economic needs of the indigenous people. Mika et al (2017) posited that indigenous entrepreneurs rely on their indigenous position as a source of inspiration to make positive contribution to the socio-economic well-being of their people.

Dimensions of Indigenous Entrepreneurship

The dimensions of indigenous entrepreneurship considered in this study are indigenous value creation and indigenous innovation.

Indigenous Value Creation

Indigenous value creation is the offering of something of value (product, service, program, etc.) to meet the social and economic needs of the indigenous people and community at large (Barr et al, 2018). Macpherson et al (2021) defined indigenous value creation as the offering of valuable products or services that will better the lives of the indigenous people. Parhankangas and Colbourne (2023) described indigenous value creation as the process of using community-based resources (raw materials) to create products and services that are valuable to the indigenous people and communities. Indigenous entrepreneurs differ from other types of entrepreneurs in terms of the value that they intend to create. While other types of entrepreneurs (excluding social entrepreneurs) focus on creating commercial value to all customers, indigenous entrepreneurs use community-based resources to create value beyond profit which include both social and economic value that will better the lives of the indigenous people (AlMehrzzi et al, 2024). Indigenous entrepreneurs need to create community-based value that is superior to what their non-indigenous rivals offer. Buhr (2011) opined that indigenous entrepreneurs need to create social and economic value by engaging in business activities that will yield both economic and social dividends to their communities. By engaging in activities that are based on community value creation, indigenous entrepreneurs can balance personal ambitions and value creation orientation with community's socio-economic needs and priorities (Colbourne, 2017). Through community-based value creation, indigenous entrepreneurs can improve the socio-cultural, environmental and economic-well-being of the indigenous people without compromising on profit (Manganda et al, 2023).

Indigenous Innovation

Indigenous innovation is a new idea, program, product or service, or the clever modification of a current program, product or service, that is either designed, developed or invented, in whole or part, by or for indigenous people and their communities (Indigenous Innovation Initiative, 2023). Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (2023) defines indigenous innovation as the application of indigenous knowledge to promote the resurgence of indigenous knowledge and practices, as guided by the wisdom of the ancestors. This type of innovation blends traditional knowledge with modern values to make a brighter future for the indigenous people (Howell, 2018). Huang et al (2018) noted that indigenous innovation is a reflection of the ancestral practices that have been in existence over the years and are still prevalent and relevant today. A typical example of indigenous innovation is the application of raw bitumen to waterproof of Cree and Dene canoes, and the use of willow as an anti-inflammatory (Mika et al, 2017). Indigenous people have over the years contributed to the world's body of knowledge through their practical inventions (Zhao et al, 2015). For example, the indigenous people in Ontario community in Canada discovered corn when breeding wild grasses selectively and this has resulted to the development of maize, a crop that has today become a source of staple food (Appelbaum et al, 2016). Also, goggles were invented by the Inuit peoples in Arctic regions to protect their eyes from snow blindness, while the indigenous people in Canada invented willow bark which is used as a natural pain reliever when steeped in water (Capel, 2014). These indigenous innovations demonstrate how indigenous wisdom and creativity have helped to better the lives of the indigenous people and their communities in general.

Concept of Business Growth

Business growth is the expansion in the scale of business operations over a period of time (Allinson, et al, 2013). Beck et al (2015) defined business growth as the state when a business is getting bigger and more successful in key areas over time. It is stage where the business gets to a point of expansion and requires additional options to generate more profit. Business growth manifests itself in several ways such as revenue growth, profit growth, market share growth, sales growth and assets growth (Anderson & Eshima, 2013). Ademako and Mole (2017) stated that market share, profit, revenue demand and new customer acquisition are all indicators of business growth. When an entrepreneur sees that all these indices are increasing, he can confidently say that the business is growing. A business grows when it expands its size, customer base, revenue and asset base over time (Muhos, 2015). For example, if a small bakery business owner decides to open a second shop in another location, and this new location generates new customers for the business, it means that the small bakery business is experiencing growth because the new location has brought in more customers and this will consequently increase sales, market share, revenue and profit of the business.

Measures of Business Growth

In literature, business growth is measured using various indicators such as revenue growth, profit growth, market share growth, sales growth and assets growth. However, this study measures business growth using market share growth and profitability growth.

Market Share Growth

Market share is the percentage of the market served by a company in relation to the industry's total sales for a specific period of time (Edeling & Himme, 2018). Market share is determined by dividing the sales of a company for a certain period by the industry's total sales for the same period under review and multiply 100% (Eeckhout & Veldkamp, 2022). If the market share for the present year is greater than the market share of the previous year, it means that the company has experienced a market share growth. Hence, market share growth is the increase in the market share of a company over a period of time (Eeckhout & Veldkamp, 2022). When the market share

of a company is greater than those of its competitors, it means that the company is dominating its industry (Konczal, & Lusiani, 2022). As the company increases its dominance over the industry, it begins to exercise certain market power like higher bargaining power and negotiate with suppliers and distributors to its advantage (Konczal, & Lusiani, 2022). Thus, a market share growth correspondingly leads to revenue and profitability growth and this implies that the business can expand its operations (De Loecker et al, 2020).

Profitability Growth

Profitability growth is the increase in the profit generated by a company for a specific period of time (Seissian et al, 2018). Profitability can be calculated by dividing profit by the revenue generated by a company for a given period and multiply by 100 to get a percentage. This implies that companies need to figure out whether their profit is for a given period before determining their profitability. Profitability growth rate can be determined by subtracting the previous year value from the current year value, divide this difference by the previous year value and then multiply by 100 to generate the percentage growth rate (Keramidou et al, 2013). Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) stated that profitability growth can be achieved by reducing operating costs, increasing sales turnover, productivity and operational efficiency. Profitability growth indicates the financial strength of a company and measures the return on investment (Yazdanfar, 2013).

Theoretical Review

This study utilized the bricolage theory to explain the practice of indigenous entrepreneurship and its relationship with business growth. The bricolage theory was developed by Levi-Strauss in 1962. The theory tends to explain that the indigenous peoples have entrepreneurial spirit just like the civilized peoples. The theory explains how bricoleur (indigenous peoples) make use of the resources at hand to implement process needed to accomplish a particular project. The bricoleur contrasts with the rational views as Levi-Strauss argued that indigenous peoples accomplished projects and solve problems as they arise with whatever resources at hands unlike the civilized engineer who plans ahead and gain access to all the necessary resources to complete a project before they start with the project. The bricolage theory explains how entrepreneurship emerges in resource-poor areas or economically depressed communities. The theory demonstrates how indigenous people make out something out of nothing (under-utilized resources). The bricolage theory is very useful in explaining how indigenous peoples make use of resources at hand to establish indigenous business and nurture the business towards the path of growth. The resources at hand are the raw materials that are readily available within their community which they use to create value for their people and achieve business growth.

Empirical Review

Some empirical studies have been conducted on indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth. For instance, Bodle et al (2018) examined the critical success factors in managing sustainable indigenous businesses in Australia. Their data were collected from sustainable indigenous entrepreneurs in selected communities in Australia using semi-structured interview. After analysing the data collected using content and thematic analyses, the researchers found out that business experience, education, positive mindset, risk taking ability, and resilient capability are the most critical factors in managing sustainable indigenous businesses in Australia.

April and Itege (2020) carried out a study to determine how to foster indigenous entrepreneurship among San people in Tsumkwe. The researchers adopted the exploratory research design and qualitative research approach to determine the strategies for fostering indigenous entrepreneurs among San people. After collecting data from community leaders and stakeholders in Tsumkwe community using interview session and analysing the data using thematic analysis, the researchers found out that financial support (loans and government grants),

training, mentoring and entrepreneurial orientation are critical factors that foster indigenous entrepreneurship among San people in Tsumkwe community.

Collins and Norman (2018) explored the relationship between indigenous entrepreneurship and indigenous employment in Australia. Their study was conducted in twelve communities in Australia where data were collected from indigenous entrepreneurs and other community stakeholders using structured questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics and the findings showed that indigenous entrepreneurship has significantly increased the level of indigenous employment in Australian communities.

Manganda et al (2023) carried out a study to determine how indigenous entrepreneurs negotiate cultural and commercial imperatives. Their data were collected from indigenous entrepreneurs in Aotearoa community in New Zealand using a semi-structured questionnaire. After analysing the data using percentage and frequency analysis, the researchers found out that indigenous entrepreneurs blend cultural and commercial value to gain competitive advantage over their non-indigenous (immigrant) rivals in Aoteraroa community.

Vazquez et al (2018) empirically examined indigenous social enterprises as drivers of sustainable development in Mexico and Peru. Their study adopted a survey research design and qualitative research approach. Data were obtained from indigenous social entrepreneurs and community leaders using a semi-structured interview. The qualitative data collected were analysed using coding, content and QSR Invivo analysis and the findings revealed that indigenous social enterprises are key drivers of sustainable development in Mexico and Peru.

Mrabure (2019) carried out a study to determine the factors influence indigenous business success in Canada. The researcher employed the descriptive survey research and used a semi-structured interview to collect data from indigenous entrepreneurs in selected communities in Canada. After analysing the data collected using coding and content analysis, the researcher discovered that innovative capability, resilient capability, risk taking ability, proactiveness, superior value creation and opportunity focus are the most critical factors influencing indigenous business success.

Gap in Literature Review

Two major gaps were noted in the empirical literature reviewed. First, it was observed that most of the studies conducted on indigenous entrepreneurship were carried out in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Mexico and Peru while studies that examined indigenous entrepreneurship in Nigeria particularly in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State are remarkably absent. Secondly, it was observed that none of the previous studies relate indigenous entrepreneurship to business growth as they focused on the critical success factors in managing indigenous entrepreneurship and indigenous business success, while others relate indigenous entrepreneurship to indigenous employment and sustainable development of communities. This has created a gap in empirical literature which this study is intended to fill from the Nigerian perspective.

METHODOLOGY

The positivist research philosophy was utilized in this study alongside with the correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of all the indigenous micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The exact number of indigenous micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area is unknown as there are no available records from a reputable organization that show the number of indigenous micro enterprises in the area. Hence the Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size for the study which happens to be 384 enterprises. The sampling units were made up of entrepreneurs (indigenous business owners) in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. The simple random sampling technique was used

to select the sample (respondents) for the study. Data were collected from the respondents using a structured questionnaire which was designed using the modified four (4) point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was validated and its reliability was tested using the Cronbach Alpha method. After validation and reliability test, 384 copies of the questionnaire were prepared and administered to the respondents (indigenous micro entrepreneurs) in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Out of the 384 questionnaires administered to the respondents, 352 copies were retrieved. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the respondents while inferential statistic (Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient) was used to test the hypotheses. The statistical analysis was aided with the application of the SPSS software program version 27.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The SPSS was used to correlate the data collected on indigenous entrepreneurship (indigenous value creation and indigenous innovation) with those obtained on business growth (market share growth and profitability growth). The results of the correlation analysis are presented in the tables below:

Table 1: Result of the correlation analysis between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor L.G.A.

			Indigenous Value Creation	Market Share Growth
Spearman (rho)	Indigenous Value Creation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.623**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	352	352
	Market Share Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.623**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	352	352

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 1 indicates that indigenous value creation has a strong and positive correlation with market share growth of micro enterprises ($\rho = .623^{**}$) and that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 2: Result of the correlation analysis between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor L.G.A.

			Indigenous Value Creation	Profitability Growth
Spearman (rho)	Indigenous Value Creation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.659**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	352	352
	Profitability Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.659**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	352	352

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 2 shows a strong and positive correlation between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises ($\rho = .659^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 3: Result of the correlation analysis between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor L.G.A.

			Indigenous Innovation	Market Share Growth
Spearman (rho)	Indigenous Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.722**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	352	352
	Market Share Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.722**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	352	352

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 3 indicates that indigenous innovation is strongly and positively correlated to market share growth of micro enterprises ($\rho = .722^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that we then accept that there is significant relationship between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 4: Result of the correlation analysis between indigenous innovation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor L.G.A.

			Indigenous Innovation	Profitability Growth
Spearman (rho)	Indigenous Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.784**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	352	352
	Profitability Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.784**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	352	352

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 4 shows that indigenous innovation has a strong and positive correlation with profitability growth of micro enterprises ($\rho = .784^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between indigenous innovation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

This study discovered that a significant relationship exists between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding emerged from the result of the statistical analysis carried out on the two variables. The result revealed that indigenous value creation has a strong and positive correlation with

market share growth of micro enterprises and that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level (see table 1). As a result of this, we then rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding is supported by Dana (2015) and Macpherson et al (2021) as both studies revealed that indigenous entrepreneurs can increase their market share if they create superior value for the indigenous people.

This study also discovered a significant relationship between indigenous value creation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding emanated from the result of the statistical analysis carried out on the two variables. The result showed a strong and positive correlation between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level (see table 2). Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accepted that there is significant relationship between indigenous value creation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Barr et al (2018) and AlMehrzzi et al (2024) agreed with this finding as their studies revealed that value creation in indigenous entrepreneurship facilitate profitability growth of firms.

This study found a significant relationship between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding was deduced from the result of the analysis carried out on the two variables. The result showed that indigenous innovation is strongly and positively correlated to market share growth of micro enterprises and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level (see table 3). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that we then accepted that there is significant relationship between indigenous innovation and market share growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding is supported by Kusumastuti et al (2022), Howell (2018) and Mika et al (2017).

Finally, it was reported that indigenous innovation has a significant relationship with profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding was obtained from the result of the analysis carried out on the two variables. The result revealed that that indigenous innovation has a strong and positive correlation with profitability growth of micro enterprises and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level (see table 4). As a result of this, we then rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between indigenous innovation and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding is in line with the findings of Capel (2014), Appelbaum et al (2016), and Huang et al (2018).

CONCLUSION

This study examined indigenous entrepreneurship and business growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. It focused on indigenous value creation and indigenous innovation as dimensions of indigenous entrepreneurship and related them to market share growth and profitability growth as measures of business growth. The result of the analysis revealed that indigenous value creation is significantly related to market share growth and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. The study also revealed that indigenous innovation is significantly related to market share growth and profitability growth of micro enterprises in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. Based on these findings, it was concluded that indigenous entrepreneurship (indigenous value creation and indigenous innovation) significantly enhance business growth in the area of market share and profitability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. That, indigenous peoples in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State should practice indigenous entrepreneurship as it would create jobs for the indigenous people and alleviate poverty in their communities.
2. That, micro enterprises in Rivers State especially those that are struggling to grow their businesses should adopt indigenous entrepreneurship philosophy as it would enhance their business growth.
3. That, micro enterprises in Rivers State particularly those that are owned by indigenous people should create superior value for the indigenous people as it would give them a competitive edge over their non-indigenous rivals and achieve business growth.
4. That, micro enterprises in Rivers State should adopt indigenous innovation as it would attract more indigenous people to their products, increase their market share and profitability.
5. Finally, it is recommended that indigenous micro entrepreneurs in Rivers State should develop products that have both commercial and social value as it would inspire business growth.

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