

ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY FOCUS AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF SUPERMARKETS IN PORT HARCOURT.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity focus (opportunity searching, opportunity recognition and opportunity exploitation) and marketing performance (sales growth and market share growth) of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. Six (6) research questions and hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. The study employed the positivist research philosophy and correlational research design. The population of this study consisted of all the 755 registered supermarkets in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 261 supermarkets was selected for the study. The Taro Yamene formula was used to determine the sample size for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 261 supermarkets that fall under the categories of micro, small and medium enterprises. The sampling unit was made up of owners of the selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) and the SPSS version 24.0 were used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that opportunity searching has a significant relationship with sales growth and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. The study also revealed that opportunity recognition has a significant relationship with sales growth and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. The study equally revealed that opportunity exploitation has a significant relationship with sales growth and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that entrepreneurial opportunity focus significantly relate to marketing performance of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. Hence, it is recommended that supermarket operators in Port Harcourt particularly those that are experiencing poor marketing performance should be more opportunity focus as it would improve their marketing performance.

INTRODUCTION

The retailing industry is one of the most competitive industries in Nigeria due to the large number of retail outlets in the country. Many individuals who could not find white collar jobs eventually start up a retail outlet such as supermarket either at the micro, small or medium scale to earn a living. As more and more individuals establish their own supermarket, the level of competition intensifies among supermarket operators as consumers now have more options of supermarkets to visit for their shopping activities. This intense competition requires supermarket operators to put in more effort to improve their marketing performance. Improving marketing performance comes with a lot of benefits. According to Liang and Gao (2020), improved marketing performance brings about business growth, increase the financial position of the business and ensure business survival. Considering the benefits associated with improved marketing performance, it becomes imperative for supermarket operators to intensify their efforts to improve their marketing performance. To improve their marketing performance, supermarket operators need to capitalize on market opportunities and the only way to do this is to become more opportunity focus in their entrepreneurial journey.

Entrepreneurial opportunity focus is the concentration on the advantages and possibilities arising from a given situation rather than the obstacles to business (Aggarwal & Niranjana, 2020). It is a business approach that prioritizes the identification and maximization of potential market

opportunities that are believed to be advantageous to the business. Being opportunity-focused requires a lot of thinking and hard work. According to Pham (2019), opportunity-focused entrepreneurs make opportunity their central point of interest in any given situation. These entrepreneurs see beyond the immediate challenges and recognize the potential benefits arising from a challenging situation which others could not see. Many businesses fail because owners focus too much on the problems rather than the opportunity (Nair et al, 2022). These categories of business owners spend too much time dissecting things that went wrong instead on spending more time and resources focusing on what they can create out of the situation. Successful entrepreneurs are opportunity-focused, not problem-focused. They spend much of their time thinking and evaluating the potential benefits of a given situation.

Entrepreneurial opportunity focus has the potentials of improving the marketing performance of supermarkets. According to Mathew et al (2022), opportunity focus can help supermarket operators to develop new product lines, expand their existing product lines and increase sales and market share. Cameron et al (2016) noted that successful supermarket operators are opportunity-focused not problem-focused. Although problems cannot be totally ignored but supermarket operators who are problem-focused are defensive in their approach to business while those that want to maintain high achievement focus on opportunity rather than problem (Aggarwal & Niranjana, 2020). If supermarket operators focused solely on solving problems, their opportunities to grow will die of neglect. Therefore, supermarket operators need to focus on opportunity so that they can identify potential markets where they could expand their product lines and maximize their growth potentials. Supermarket operators will put in an excellent marketing performance if they constantly focus and channel their resources towards opportunity rather than problems. It is against this backdrop that this study examines entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Statement of the Problem

The major challenge facing supermarket operators in Nigeria is how to improve their marketing performance. Many supermarket operators are finding it difficult to improve their marketing performance in the midst of competition as they continue to experience low sales and market share. A good number of supermarkets have ceased from operations due to poor marketing performance. The poor marketing performance of supermarkets could be attributed to the inability of store owners (entrepreneurs) to focus on opportunities. It seems like most of the supermarket operators focus more on problems rather than opportunities and this could be responsible for their poor marketing performance. There is a strong belief that opportunity focus can help to improve the marketing performance of supermarkets. Although there are theoretical postulations that support opportunity focus as a tool for improving performance (e.g. Lewin, 2015; Davidsson et al, 2017; Boadu et al, 2023); however, empirical evidence that supports this claim is lacking within the Nigerian context. This has created a gap in literature that needs to be filled. It is in view to fill this gap in literature that prompted this study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of supermarkets is shown in figure 1 below:

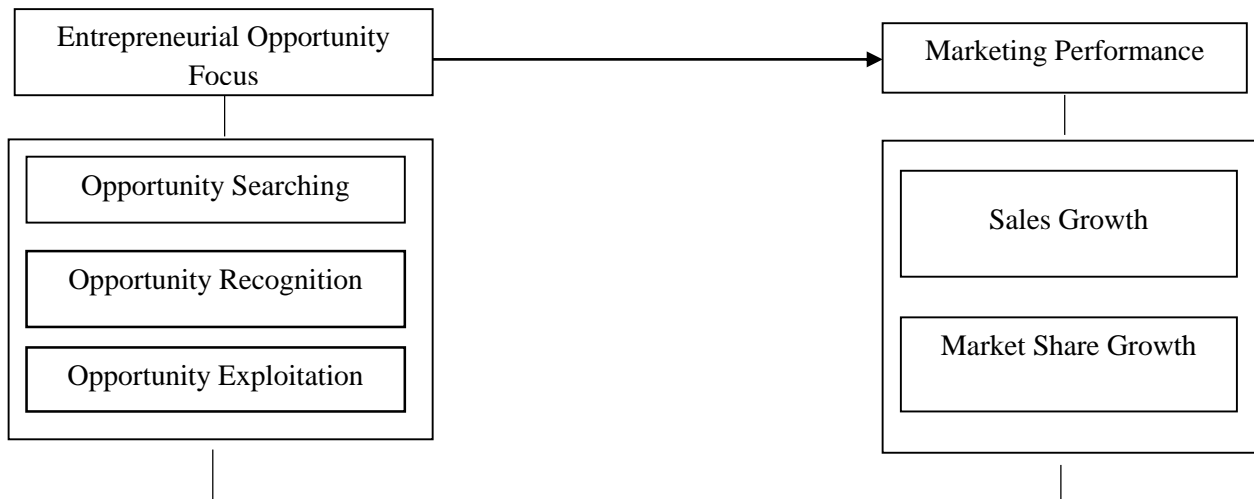


Fig 1: Conceptual framework of entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of supermarkets

Source: Author's Conceptualization

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the relationship between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt;
2. explore the relationship between opportunity searching and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt;
3. ascertain the relationship between opportunity recognition and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt;
4. determine the relationship between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
5. examine the relationship between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt;
6. ascertain the relationship between opportunity exploitation and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to address the objectives of the study:

1. What is the relationship between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt?
2. To what extent does opportunity searching relate to market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt?
3. How does opportunity recognition relate to sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt?
4. What is the relationship between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt?
5. To what extent does opportunity exploitation relate to sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt?

6. How does opportunity exploitation relate to market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between opportunity searching and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between opportunity recognition and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₅: There is no significant relationship between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₆: There is no significant relationship between opportunity exploitation and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Entrepreneurial Opportunity Focus

Opportunity represents unnoticed market which is a source for growing and sustaining profit potential (Otika et al, 2019). It is a chance for entrepreneurs to grow their profit either by reducing costs, improving efficiency or increasing revenue. However, opportunity focus entrepreneurs demonstrate high degree of curiosity and anxiety to search for opportunities to grow their businesses (Foss & Klein, 2020). These entrepreneurs spend their time looking out for opportunities to improve on different areas of their operations and grow their revenue base. Nafukho and El Mansour (2025) posited that opportunity focus is one of the most essential traits which entrepreneurs need to possess in order to grow their businesses. According to Alvarez and Barney (2020), entrepreneurs who are opportunity focused quickly recognize market opportunities and spot possibilities from a challenging situation. Renko et al (2012) noted opportunity-focused entrepreneurs are very proactive in their approach to business, adapt quickly to change and turn changing circumstances into opportunities. Opportunities sometimes arise from challenging situation which requires entrepreneurs to review their business strategies and embrace changes (Boadu et al, 2023). Opportunity-focused entrepreneurs cultivate the habits that make them to see potentials in every given situation. These entrepreneurs see beyond the immediate challenges and identify the potential benefits of a challenging situation which others do not see (Davidsson et al, 2017). Opportunity-focused entrepreneurs are always curious, ask questions regularly, turn every challenging situation into learning opportunity, always prepared to act, and take calculated risks (Lewin, 2015).

Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Opportunity Focus

Entrepreneurial opportunity focus is a multi-dimensional construct that cuts across three major areas namely; opportunity searching, opportunity recognition and opportunity exploitation.

Opportunity Searching

Opportunity searching is an ongoing process whereby an entrepreneur seeks, considers, evaluates and pursues market opportunities that are believed to be advantageous for their business (Starr-Glass, 2017). Hughes and Morgan in Hughes et al (2021) defined opportunity seeking as the ability of entrepreneurs to look out for novel opportunities and pursue these opportunities. Bizgurukul in Foss and Klein (2020) described opportunity searching within the context of entrepreneurship as the process of looking, identifying and pursuing business opportunities that have the potential to create value. An entrepreneur can be considered as an opportunity seeker if he or she can see a

chance and take advantage of it (Alvarez & Barney, 2020). Lewin (2015) noted that entrepreneurs with opportunity seeking behaviour always look out for new opportunity to grow their profit, and try to figure out the next move. Thus, entrepreneurs who are opportunity seekers easily identify market opportunities which others could not see and introduce new products and services that met the changing needs of customers. Djordjevic (2013) observed that opportunity seeking entrepreneurs always look out for new opportunities in the market, learn about new technologies and marketing practices and diffuse this knowledge throughout their business.

Opportunity Recognition

Opportunity recognition is the identification of potential market opportunities that will leads to the development of new products or services that will fulfill the unmet needs in the marketplace (Wang et al, 2013). Opportunity recognition is the most important stage in entrepreneurial journey because without recognizing a market opportunity, entrepreneurial activities cannot take place (Arzubiaga et al, 2018). However, entrepreneurs can recognize opportunity by observing the changing market trends, industry trends, changing consumer buying behaviour and technological advancement, and leverage on their unique resources and skills to create value (Nair et al, 2022). Thus, entrepreneurs who have the ability to recognize market opportunity can quickly identify unmet needs in the market, develop innovative solutions and create value that will give them a competitive edge in their market (Dencker & Gruber, 2015). Boadu et al (2023) opined that opportunity recognition ability gives entrepreneurs a chance to discover unmet needs and develop brilliant ideas, products or services to fulfill these needs. An entrepreneur can be said to have recognized market opportunity if the perceived opportunity has profit growth potential and a higher propensity that people will desire it and be willing to pay for the product (Auerswald & Lokesh, 2022). Nafukho and El Mansour (2025) posited that entrepreneurial alertness, prior knowledge, creativity, self-efficacy, entrepreneurial passion, external environment and social networks are critical factors influencing entrepreneurial opportunity recognition process.

Opportunity Exploitation

One thing is to recognize opportunity and the other is to exploit it. Opportunity exploitation is the ability of entrepreneurs to take advantage of the opportunities identified in the marketplace to grow their businesses (Barach & Rider, 2023). The ability to exploit market opportunities is a key factor that distinguishes successful entrepreneurs from unsuccessful ones. Gruber et al (2015) stated that firms that have the ability to quickly exploit market opportunities have a brighter chance of being successful in business than those who do not have the ability to exploit market opportunities. Schlichte and Junge (2024) argued that the ability of entrepreneurs to exploit market opportunities would make them to be successful in business and expand their business operations. However, differences in personality traits, cognitive styles and social networks largely influence the ability of entrepreneurs to exploit market opportunity. Dencker and Gruber (2015) stated that entrepreneurs who are determined to compete with their larger counterpart quickly exploit market opportunities. According to them, successful entrepreneurs are always at alert, trying to spot market opportunities and take advantage of them to grow their business.

Concept of Marketing Performance

The term "marketing performance" refers to the outcome or result of the marketing activities of a firm (Jayapal & Omar, 2017). Frosen et al (2013) defined marketing performance as the actual result obtained by a firm from engaging in marketing activities for a given period of time. Homburg et al (2012) posited that a firm can use its marketing performance to know how consumers react to its products offerings. A good market performance is an indicator that consumers are satisfied with the products/service offered by the firm while a poor marketing performance indicates that consumers are dissatisfied with the products or services offered (Ayogyam et al, 2013). Hence, every company wants to improve their marketing performance since it is the only way to achieve financial stability

and expand their business operations. When a company's marketing performance is improved, it will manifest in its profit margin and stimulate business growth. Liang and Gao (2020) stated that a good marketing performance is an indication that the company is competing favourably in the marketplace.

Measures of Marketing Performance

Marketing performance is measured using various criteria such as customer patronage, sales growth, customer loyalty, customer retention, market share growth and competitive advantage (Homburg et al, 2012; Frosen et al, 2013; Jayapal & Omar, 2017; Liang & Gao, 2020). However, in this study, marketing performance is measured using sales growth and market share growth.

Sales Growth

According to Samwel (2018), sales growth is the increase in the quantity of goods sold by a firm for a specific period of time. Businesses need to monitor their sales periodically in order to determine sales growth. Monitoring sales level periodically helps to gain a clear indication of growth trends and normalize company value (Homburg et al, 2012). Sales growth metric is used to provide executives and sales directors with an assessment of the marketing performance of the company. When the sales of a firm increase consistently from year to year, it implies that the company is doing well in the marketplace. A firm that grows its sales consistently would have a good marketing performance (Liang & Gao, 2020). Katsikeas et al (2016) noted that top executives attach much importance to sales when evaluating their marketing performance of their company. Frosen et al (2013) stated that companies need to have a consistent sales growth rate because it helps to improve their marketing performance. According to him, a company wouldn't exist for long if its sales drop consistently. It will require a lot of money to revive the business when sales drop consistently; hence there is need for companies to increase their sales.

Market Share Growth

Market share is the percentage or proportion of the total available market or market segment that is being served by a company (Jayapal & Omar, 2017). A company's market share can be ascertained by calculating the sales made by the company at a given period and divide the figure by the total sales of the industry over the same period (Liang & Gao, 2020). The result which is expressed in percentage enables the company to know how customers value its products in relation to competitors' offerings. Thus an increase in the market share of a company over a period of time is known as market share growth (Ayogyam et al, 2013). Market share growth is a crucial indicator of marketing performance (Homburg et al, 2012). In many instances, market share growth helps to increase revenue and stimulate business growth. However, a company that experiences a decline in market share will have a serious problem on the long-run. Companies need to pay close attention to their market share in order to determine how well they are doing in the market. If the market share of the company is growing steadily, it indicates that the business revenue is growing at the same rate as its market share. Homburg et al (2012) stated that a company whose market share is growing from year to year grows its revenue faster than its rivals in the same industry.

Theoretical Review

This study applied the discovery theory which states that opportunities exist objectively independent of firms. The theory requires firms to exploit opportunities that exist objectively without creating them (Shane et al, 2003). The discovery theory believes that competitive imperfection will arise exogenously as a result of changes in consumer tastes and preference, and technology within the industry. This theory is based on the assumption that opportunities exist in a real and objective form without any action by the firm. Here, the opportunities are just there to be discovered and exploited. Discovery theory is all about searching for opportunities systematically by scanning the business environment to discover opportunities and exploit them (Shane, 2000). This implies that firms need

to search for opportunities and in doing so; they should consider both her duration and direction in order to avoid confusion of local search with global search.

The discovery theory is relevant in explaining the need for entrepreneurial opportunity focus and its relationship with marketing performance. The theory argues that entrepreneurs need to discover opportunities that exist objectively and exploit them to improve their marketing performance. The theory requires entrepreneurs to develop scan the business environment to discover new opportunities that exist and exploit them to improve their marketing performance. The discovery theory believes that changes in technology and consumer tastes and preference will bring about competitive imperfection within the industry where firms operate. It explains that market opportunities are available for entrepreneurs to discover and exploit. All entrepreneurs need to do is to develop scan the environment systematically to discover new opportunities to grow their businesses. When entrepreneurs discover and exploit new market opportunities, their marketing performance will improve significantly.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have been conducted on entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of firms. For instance, Wang et al (2013) examined entrepreneurial opportunity recognition among R&D personnel in high technology firms in Taiwan. Their study adopted the survey research design and the quantitative research approach where questionnaire was used to collect data from R&D managers and senior R&D project team members in high technology firms in one Science Park in Taiwan. The data collected were analysed statistically using exploratory factor analysis while the hypotheses were tested using t-test and hierarchical regression analysis. The findings revealed that individual's self-efficacy, prior knowledge, social networks and perception about the industrial environment on opportunities had positive effects on entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. The study also revealed that entrepreneurial opportunity recognition significantly contributed to individual-level innovation performance.

Kamuri and Ngugi (2019) explored opportunity recognition and performance of value-system actors in the leather industry. The researcher adopted the cross sectional survey research design where quantitative data were collected from entrepreneurs of micro and small enterprises using a structured questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using percentage and frequency tables, mean, standard deviation, factor analysis and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) while the hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. The findings showed that opportunity recognition (alertness to opportunities, opportunity discovery and knowledge of opportunities) is a significant predictor of performance of value-system actors in the leader industry.

Nwekeala and Ugwuonah (2022) examined entrepreneurial marketing opportunity focus and corporate competitiveness of eateries in Port Harcourt. The researchers employed the correlation survey research and the quantitative research approach where a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 155 respondents in 39 eateries in Port Harcourt. The data collected were analysed statistically while the hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ). The findings revealed that searching for opportunity has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction of eateries in Port Harcourt. The study also found a significant relationship between opportunity recognition and customer satisfaction of eateries in Port Harcourt.

Zhang et al (2023) carried out a study to determine how iteration of entrepreneurial opportunities in user enterprises affects entrepreneurial performance in China. Their study employed the dual case study design and qualitative research approach where semi-structured interview was used to collect data from top executives in Beijing Smartmi Technology Company Ltd. and Zepp Information Technology Company. The data collected were analysed using coding, content and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that entrepreneurial opportunity iterations of users enterprises such as efficiency-based and innovation entrepreneurial opportunity iterations affect the performance of

Beijing Smartmi Technology Company Ltd. and Zepp Information Technology Company. The study also revealed that dual strategic orientations of stakeholders' long-termism and professionalism play a significant moderating role in promoting user and growth performance improvement.

Arechavala-Vargas et al (2020) examined technology-based entrepreneurial opportunity discovery and development in three Latin American countries. The researchers employed the cross-sectional survey research design and used in-depth interviews to collect data from successful technology-based entrepreneurs in three Latin American countries for the period 2014 to 2016. After analysing the qualitative data obtained from successful technology-based entrepreneurs in Argentina, Colombia and Mexico using coding and content analysis, the researchers discovered significant differences in technological availability, market knowledge and entrepreneur's background in these three countries. The researchers also found similarities in economic development, R&D infrastructure and institutional environments among the three countries which shape similar patterns in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Tuomisalo (2019) explored the emergence of an entrepreneurial opportunity in a Finnish telecommunication international new venture. Their study adopted the interpretivism research philosophy, cross-sectional survey research design and the qualitative research approach where an in-depth interview was used to collect data from the respondents. The qualitative data collected were analysed using QSE INVIVO software program and the findings revealed that the phase before organizational emergence is a significant period for entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. This finding implies that initial opportunity recognition and development throughout this phase rely on the entrepreneurial orientation of the individuals.

Gap in Literature Review

Two gaps were noted from the empirical literature. First, it was observed that a good number of studies have been conducted on entrepreneurial opportunity focus but none of these studies relate the concept to marketing performance of firms. Secondly, it was observed that most of the studies conducted on entrepreneurial opportunity focus focused on technology firms, eateries and leather industry while studies that examined entrepreneurial opportunity focus and marketing performance of supermarkets are absent. These gaps need to be filled to increase literature on the subject matter. The desire to fill this gap in literature is the motivation behind this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the correlational research design and the positivist research philosophy. The study population consisted of all 755 registered supermarkets in Port Harcourt (Rivers State Yellow Pages Directory, 2023/2024 Edition). A sample size of 261 supermarkets was selected for the study. The sample size was determined mathematically using the Taro Yamene's formula while the purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size from the population of the study. The 261 supermarkets were selected purposively based on the criteria that they fall under the categories of micro, small and medium sized supermarkets. The sampling units consisted of owners of the selected supermarkets in Rivers State. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents (supermarket operators). The questionnaire was structured using the modified four (4) point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated through content analysis while its reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha method. Two hundred and sixty-one (261) questionnaires were administered to the respondents and 228 copies were collected from them. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ). The bivariate analysis was done with the aid of the SPSS version 24.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected on entrepreneurial opportunity focus (opportunity searching, opportunity recognition and opportunity exploitation) were correlated with the data obtained on marketing performance (sales growth and market share growth) of supermarkets and the results are presented in the tables below:

Table 1: Result of bivariate analysis between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets

			Opportunity Searching	Sales Growth
Spearman (rho)	Opportunity Searching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.751**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	228	228
	Sales Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.751**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	228	228

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 1 shows a strong and positive correlation between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .751^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that we then accept that there is significant relationship between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Result of bivariate analysis between opportunity searching and market share growth of supermarkets

			Opportunity Searching	Market Share Growth
Spearman (rho)	Opportunity Searching	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.806**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	228	228
	Market Share Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.806**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	228	228

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 2 indicates that opportunity searching has a very strong and positive correlation with market share growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .806^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This mean that we then accept that there is significant relationship between opportunity searching and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Table 3: Result of bivariate analysis between opportunity recognition and sales growth of supermarkets

			Opportunity Recognition	Sales Growth
Spearman (rho)	Opportunity Recognition	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.613**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	228	228
	Sales Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.613**	1.000

Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
N	228	228

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 3 shows that opportunity recognition is strongly and positively correlated to sales growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .613^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between opportunity recognition and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Result of bivariate analysis between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets

		Opportunity Recognition	Market Share Growth
Spearman (rho)	Opportunity Recognition	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.742**
		N	.001
	Market Share Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.742**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	1.000
		N	.001

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 4 indicates a strong and positive correlation between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .742^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Table 5: Result of bivariate analysis between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets

		Opportunity Exploitation	Sales Growth
Spearman (rho)	Opportunity Exploitation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.817**
		N	.001
	Sales Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.817**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	1.000
		N	.001

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 5 shows that a very strong and positive correlation between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .817^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Table 6: Result of bivariate analysis between opportunity exploitation and market share growth of supermarkets

		Opportunity Exploitation	Market Share Growth
Spearman (rho)	Opportunity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Exploitation	Sig. (2 tailed)	.833**
		N	.
Market Share	Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.833**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	1.000
	N	.001	.
		N	228

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

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 6 indicates that opportunity exploitation has a very strong and positive correlation with market share growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .833^{**}$) 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 opportunity exploitation and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

This study found a significant relationship between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding was obtained from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables. The result shows a strong and positive correlation between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .751^{**}$) 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 implies that we then accepted that there is significant relationship between opportunity searching and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding is supported by Dencker & Gruber (2015) and Davidsson (2017) as their studies revealed that opportunity searching enables entrepreneurs to identify new market opportunities that have the potentials of driving sales growth.

This study also found a significant relationship between opportunity searching and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding emerged from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables. The result shows that opportunity searching has a very strong and positive correlation with market share growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .806^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This mean that we then accepted that there is significant relationship between opportunity searching and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding is supported by Auerswald & Lokesh (2022) and Lewin (2015) as both studies revealed that entrepreneurs who constantly search for new market opportunities are likely to identify new markets that are yet to be noticed by their competitors and increase their market share.

This study discovered a significant relationship between opportunity recognition and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding was deduced from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables. The result indicates that opportunity recognition is strongly and positively correlated to sales growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .613^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between opportunity recognition and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding is

supported by Foss & Klein (2020) and Boadu et al (2023) as both studies revealed that opportunity recognition gives entrepreneurs the chance to grow their sales and revenue stream.

This study also found a significant relationship between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding was obtained from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables. The result shows a strong and positive correlation between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .742^{**}$) 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 accepted that there is significant relationship between opportunity recognition and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding is supported by Barach & Rider (2023) and Alvarez & Barney (2020) as their studies revealed that opportunity recognition significantly increase the market share of SMEs in the retailing sector.

This study discovered a significant relationship between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding emanated from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables. The result shows a very strong and positive correlation between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .817^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that we then accepted that there is significant relationship between opportunity exploitation and sales growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding is supported by Davidsson (2017) and Auerswald & Lokesh (2022) as both studies revealed that entrepreneurs who exploit new market opportunities are likely to achieve sales growth.

Finally, it was revealed that opportunity exploitation is significantly related to market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding was derived from the result of the bivariate analysis carried out on the two variables. The result revealed that opportunity exploitation has a very strong and positive correlation with market share growth of supermarkets ($\rho = .833^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this we then rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between opportunity exploitation and market share growth of supermarkets in Port Harcourt. This finding is consistent with the position of Nair et al (2022), Barach & Rider (2023) and Boadu et al (2023) as they posited that opportunity exploitation enables a firm to increase its market share in a highly competitive market.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion of findings, it was established that supermarket operators need to embrace entrepreneurial opportunity focus in order to improve their marketing performance. The empirical results of this study have proved that opportunity focus such as opportunity searching, opportunity recognition and opportunity exploitation have the potentials of driving sales and market share growth. The implication of this finding is that if supermarket operators search for new market opportunities, recognize these opportunities and exploit them before their competitors do, it would increase their sales and market share. Therefore, it was concluded that opportunity focus has the potentials of improving the marketing performance of supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided based on the findings:

1. That, supermarket operators in Port Harcourt particularly those that are experiencing poor marketing performance should focus on new market opportunities as it would improve their marketing performance.

2. That, supermarket operators in Port Harcourt should continuously search for and pursue new market opportunities that are believed to be advantageous for their retailing business as it would increase their sales and market share.
3. That, supermarket operators in Port Harcourt should develop the capability to recognize new market opportunities particularly those that have the potential to create value as it would attract new customers and increase their sales and market share.
4. That, supermarket operators in Port Harcourt should quickly exploit the new market opportunities identified before their competitors do as this would give them a competitive edge over their rivals and improve their marketing performance.
5. That, supermarket operators in Port Harcourt should be more proactive, observant and alert as this would enable them discover new market opportunities and improve their marketing performance.
6. Finally, it is recommended that supermarket operators in Port Harcourt should closely observe changing consumer buying behaviour and technological advancement as this would enable them recognize new market opportunities that will help to improve their marketing performance.

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