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THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION ON RURAL SMEs

PERFORMANCE IN BIKITA – NYIKA GROWTH POINT

BY

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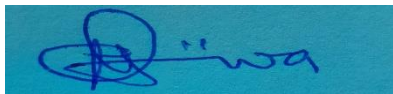
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DECLARATION

I Musiiwa Obert do hereby declare the contents of the research study to be true and not copied from anywhere or in any publication and previous degrees without acknowledgements.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving family, Anashe and Akatendeka who have supported me financially and emotionally throughout my extra ordinary journey, and also all those who have inspired and encouraged me since my first day at school and throughout the duration of this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The specific objectives of the study were to analyze the effect of innovativeness on SME performance, to assess the influence of proactiveness on SME performance, to investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance, to determine the effect of competitiveness on SME performance and to establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance. The study was guided by the resource-based view and the entrepreneurship orientation theory. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The researcher also used stratified sampling technique and the questionnaire was the research instrument which was used. The researcher used a sample size of 90 respondents which was drawn from the study's population being made up of employees at SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. In the study, the researcher used SPSS 20.0 software in carrying out the data analysis. The study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between innovativeness (.813), proactiveness (.865), risk taking (.833), competitiveness (.759) autonomy (.780) and SME performance. Proactiveness had the highest a very strong positive relationship with SME performance. The study recommends that in order to improve performance SMEs should embrace innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitiveness and autonomy.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

EO   Entrepreneurship orientation

GDP   Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

ICT   Information Communication Technologies

MSMEs   Micro, small and medium enterprises

SDGs   Sustainable Development Goals

SMEs   Small and medium enterprises

SME Act   Small and Medium Enterprises Act (Chapter 24:12)

RBVT   Resource-based view theory

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<center>**CHAPTER ONE**</center>

<center>**INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM SETTING**</center>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one discusses the nature and background of the problem associated with entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance in Zimbabwean rural SMEs, specifically Bikita District – Nyika Growth Point. Thus, the chapter presents the research gaps and how the study seeks to close them. The rationale and contribution of the study are also given while highlighting the theoretical and practical significance of the study. The chapter exposes the reader to the research delimitations and limitations and the migratory measures to make the study a success. The chapter concludes by presenting the structure of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are essential to the global economy; hence it is critical for a nation to encourage the growth of a thriving SME sector. One advantage of a thriving SME industry is on its enormous potential for generating jobs, ensuring food security and nutrition, providing livelihoods, reducing poverty, and fostering urban and rural development (GoZ, 2020). The importance of SMEs and entrepreneurship on a global scale, are that they are contributors to the prosperity of the economy and society. SMEs are essential for generating inclusive and sustainable economic growth. They play a crucial role in ensuring that societies and economy adjust to significant changes including globalization, digitalization, aging, and environmental concerns.

In both industrialized and developing nations, the SME sector is widely acknowledged as a key engine of economic growth, innovation, employment, and social integration (Neneh and Smit, 2020). The existence of a well-established small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) sector is a fundamental sign of a robust and flourishing economy. A thriving economy can be identified in large part by the health of the SME sector (Makiwa, 2018). According to Bomani, Ziska and Derera, (2019), SMEs support local economic growth, poverty reduction, and job creation. The amount, pattern, and rate of change in economic development vary from country to country, hence the contribution of SMEs is not consistent across the globe (Lavhelani et al., 2018). In developing nations, the majority of entrepreneurs run micro, small, and medium-sized businesses, which make important contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP),

<center>1</center>

employment creation, poverty reduction, and equitable distribution of income (Mashingaidze, 2020). In support of this Mageto, Prinsloo and Luke (2018), noted that SMEs account for more than 99 percent of businesses in the European Union and 85 percent of new jobs.

SMEs have made a significant contribution to national development, however SMEs in developing and emerging economies are still facing many obstacles, chief among which are the strict regulatory environment, limited access to financing, suitable workspace, and markets, limited use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) for production, inadequate skills, and inability of their products to meet international standards (GoZ, 2020, Finscope 2022). A possible solution for SMEs to deal with these challenges is entrepreneurial orientation. According to Covin and Wales (2020), the strategic posture that enables organizations to use entrepreneurial talents and capacities to take advantage of opportunities is what entrepreneurial orientation is concerned with.

Many nations acknowledge the value of entrepreneurship in the growth of their economies, and both developing and developed nations view it as their main economic driver (Bruwer, 2020). The importance of entrepreneurial activities to businesses is rising, but in the complex global economy of today, entrepreneurship is even more essential to gaining a sustained competitive edge (Wiklund and Shepherd 2020). Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are under more pressure from worldwide competition as a result of globalization. It becomes clear that SMEs face increasing difficulty in maintaining and enhancing their performance in time, unless they can actively handle these challenges, when combined with the shifting complexity of customers around the world. SMEs are urged to have an entrepreneurial attitude to identify challenges and opportunities in the business environment in order to ensure the firm's survival in the long run (Krueger 2020).

Globally, a number of studies have explored the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Fairoz et al. (2020), explored the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs in Pakistan. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The study established a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. In the same vein, a study by Zany and Elsina (2019) on SMEs in Ambon City, Indonesia, found that the performance of the aforementioned companies is positively impacted by entrepreneurial approach.

Similarly, other studies that have established a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance include studies carried by Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and

Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri Lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance.

Regionally, number of studies have been carried out to explored the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs in Africa. SMEs make up 91 percent of formal business enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in South Africa, where they contribute 57 percent and 61 percent of GDP and employment, respectively (Makiwa, 2018). This makes this study important in the region. Regionally, in Africa the studies that established a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance include studies by Johnson et al (2020) in Nigeria and Faiz and Faiz (2020) on SMEs in Libya.

On the other hand, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) identified a negative correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of SMEs in their Tanzanian study. Contrary to established economies, where entrepreneurial orientation is positively correlated with SMEs' performance, In the same vein, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in Uganda also established a negative relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs.

Locally, SMEs in Zimbabwe make up a significant portion of the local economy because they generate half of the nation's GDP and around half of all jobs (Makiwa and Steyn, 2019). In support of this view GoZ (2020) noted that the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector is significant to Zimbabwe's national economy, and more than 76% of all jobs are in this sector. According to Finscope (2022), 71% of micro, small and medium enterprises are in the rural areas and whereas 29% are located in urban areas and by gender, women own 60% and men 40% of these enterprises in Zimbabwe. The SME sector has maintained its status as a very valuable source of employment by taking on retrenched employees from shutting businesses, school dropouts, teenagers, women, and people with disabilities (GoZ, 2020). The SME sector, according to Finscope (2022), continues to be a crucial pillar for economic growth (GDP) and job creation, with an increase in the sector's expected employee count and profit (GDP) contribution up to USD $8.6 billion following the COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, the sector plays a very important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a very useful source of livelihoods (GoZ, 2020).

In order to encourage economic growth and development, the Zimbabwean government like many governments and policy makers worldwide are putting their attention on growing the SME sector (Mashingaidze, 2020). The government of Zimbabwe has always prioritized the SME sector, envisaged by Small and Medium Enterprises Act (Chapter 24:12) that was enacted in 2002. SMEs are seen as the driving force behind economic expansion and moreover the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hinges on them and they serve as a hub for innovation to address the socioeconomic problems affecting our country. Despite all of the government of Zimbabwe's attempts to support and develop the SME sector, the industry is still characterized by significant SME failure rates.

The review of the empirical literature on the status of SMEs in Zimbabwe indicates that many of them fail before or by the first year of their operation while the majority shut down before their second year (Mashingaidze, 2020). Van Praag (2020) supports this claim and succinctly adds that, "Of every 100 start-ups only 50 firms survive the first three years". Nyamwanza et al. (2015) highlight that the gross under-performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe has undermined their contributions to the nation's economic growth and development. Thus, most of the SMEs have remained survivalists (Mashingaidze, 2020). Some of the obstacles affecting the performance of the SME sector in both urban and rural areas include a lack of managerial and technical skills, machinery, and equipment (Matsongoni and Mutambara, 2021). The government, through its policy interventions, has failed effectively to provide solutions to the challenges bedevilling the SMEs sector in Zimbabwe (Mashingaidze, 2020). According to a study, in Zimbabwe, 40% of SMEs fail during the first two years of operation (Nyamwanza, 2020). There is a tendency among SMEs to believe that someone, especially the government, should support them; this creates a dependence syndrome (Nyamwanza, 2020). SMEs should take the initiative themselves. SMEs need to plan their future to survive and prosper in these unstable market conditions hence have to embrace entrepreneurship orientation, (Mashingaidze, 2020). SMEs fall short of their clients' requirements and expectations (Mashingaidze, Phiri, Bomani, 2021). Because they lack market knowledge, SMEs are unaware of the ongoing changes in consumer preferences (Mashingaidze et al., 2021). A solution to this problem is entrepreneurial orientation. Khan, Salamzadeh, Kawamorita, and Rethi (2021), alluded that 60% of entrepreneurial enterprises fail within 6 years of their launch, and some of the main causes of this failure are due to lack of financial resources or managerial skills on the side of the leaders or entrepreneurs. According to Rezaei and Ortt (2018) and (Galbreath, Lucianetti, Thomas and T, 2020), 40% of new enterprises fail before their third

anniversary due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of business-friendly policies, improved infrastructure, good economic conditions, and greater entrepreneurial orientation, as well as corruption and high operating costs. Hence forth, entrepreneurial approach is judged to have a favorable impact on an organization's success.

However, there have been questions raised in the whether entrepreneurial orientation would help improve the performance of the SMEs in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe there are number of studies which have explored the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs. Studies that established a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe include studies by Mashingaidze (2020), Nyamwanza, (2020) and Makiwa (2018). In the same vein, Majoni et al (2018) also established a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. However, there were also studies which found a negative relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. For instance, Tinarwo (2020) and Shumba et al (2018) established a negative relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of SMEs.

There are a number of research studies have been carried out on how entrepreneurial orientation affects the performance of SMEs as it is an evolving concept. However, research in the context of Zimbabwe is still scant. Some studies have not focused on Zimbabwe and Nyika Growth Point, Bikita District, but have focused on other countries. More so, most studies have not focused on rural SMEs. Additionally; some of the studies have provided contradictory results. For example, studies that Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Pakistan. On the other hand, studies by Pratono & Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri Lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. This leaves a gap in knowledge which needs to be filled. Therefore, there is a need to determine the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of rural SMEs in Zimbabwe. Thus, this study will evaluate the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the business performance of SMEs at Nyika Growth Point, Bikita District, Zimbabwe.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The rationale for this study lies in the identification of a research gap or a knowledge deficit in a specific area. By focusing on the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on rural SME

performance at Nyika Growth Point, the study aims to address the gaps or scarcity in the study specifically by examining relationships in this context. Thus, a research gap specifically focusing on the impact or relationship between entrepreneurship orientation and SME performance. More so, most studies have not focused on rural SMEs. Research on this area of study is still scant. This research gap highlights the need for in-depth investigation and empirical evidence in this particular geographical area.

The SME sector typically exhibits unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities compared to other sectors. By concentrating specifically on the SMEs, the study aims to provide contextual insights and shed light on the direct impact of entrepreneurship orientation on SME performance within this sector.

Bikita district has potential for experiencing economic development and growth by embracing rural industrialisation as envisaged by government of Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, (Towards a Prosperous and Empowered Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030) with the SME sector playing a significant role. Understanding how entrepreneurship orientation influences SME performance, can inform policymakers, local businesses, and entrepreneurs about strategies to enhance economic development and promote sustainable entrepreneurship in the district.

By narrowing the focus to Nyika Growth Point, this study aims to uncover the specific factors and dynamics that shape the relationship between entrepreneurship orientation and SME performance in this particular context. Understanding the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on SME performance can provide valuable insights to local entrepreneurs, business owners, and policymakers in Bikita district. The findings could serve as a guide for formulating effective strategies, improving business practices, and enhancing overall SME performance in the district.

By addressing this research gap, the study seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship and SME performance, while providing actionable insights that can benefit local businesses and promote economic growth and development. Overall, this study seeks to contribute to the academic body of knowledge and practical understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship orientation and SME performance in Bikita district - Nyika Growth Point. The findings could potentially facilitate evidence-based decision-making, policy formulation, and foster entrepreneurial activities in the district

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The failure rate of SMEs in Zimbabwe is very high. According to a study, in Zimbabwe, 40% of SMEs fail during the first two years of operation (Nyamwanza,2020). Khan et al. (2021) alluded that 60% of entrepreneurial enterprises fail within 6 years of their launch, and some of the main causes of this failure are due to lack of financial resources or managerial skills on the side of the leaders or entrepreneurs. There is a tendency among SMEs to believe that someone, especially the government, should support them; this creates a dependence syndrome (Nyamwanza, 2020). SMEs should take the initiative themselves. SMEs need to plan their future to survive and prosper in these unstable market conditions hence have to embrace entrepreneurship orientation. However, despite the potential of entrepreneurial orientation SMEs in Bikita have not yet reaped the full benefits of entrepreneurial orientation. There have been questions raised in whether entrepreneurial orientation would help improve the performance of the SMEs in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, proponents of entrepreneurial orientation have highlighted that it can be a key component of SME success. This provides a dilemma for the management of SMEs in Bikita to choose between focusing on entrepreneurship orientation or not. This can only be solved with the availability of empirical data.

Despite the potential importance of entrepreneurship orientation in driving SME performance in the SME sector, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific impact of entrepreneurship orientation on SME performance at Nyika Growth. Research is still scant. Results on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the success of small and medium enterprises are still ambiguous, with results ranging from a significant positive relationship to an inconsequential one, while other also show a negative relationship. There is no conclusive link between SME business performance and entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, some of the studies have focused on developed countries. More so, most studies have not focused on rural SMEs. Additionally, there is no empirical data when it comes to SMEs in Bikita-Nyika Growth Point. Results show that findings usually differ cross different environments. This shows a gap in literature. Thus, it is crucial to comprehend the entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs and how it affects SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The goal of this study is to fill this gap in the literature by evaluating the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the business performance of SMEs at Nyika Growth Point, Bikita District, Zimbabwe.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 MAIN OBJECTIVE

To examine the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on rural SMEs performance in Bikita – Nyika Growth Point.

1.4.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- To analyse effect of innovativeness on SME performance.
- To assess the influence of proactiveness on of SME performance.
- To investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance.
- To determine the effect of competitiveness on SME performance.
- To establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Linked to research objectives, answering respective questions will collectively answer the research problem, should be researchable, precise, and answerable.

- What is the effect of innovativeness on SME performance?
- What is the influence of proactiveness on of SME performance?
- How does competitiveness affect SME performance?
- How does risk-taking affect SME performance?
- How does autonomy influence SME performance?

1. 6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The initial literature study reveals that entrepreneurial orientation has five dimensions, namely innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy. The conceptual framework shows the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. Five entrepreneurial dimensions were used in the study, namely innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy. In measuring performance, the research used profitability, effectiveness and efficiency. These will be examined to determine how entrepreneurially oriented a business is. And will be discussed further in Chapter 2. The following conceptual framework is proposed and depicted in Figure 1.1
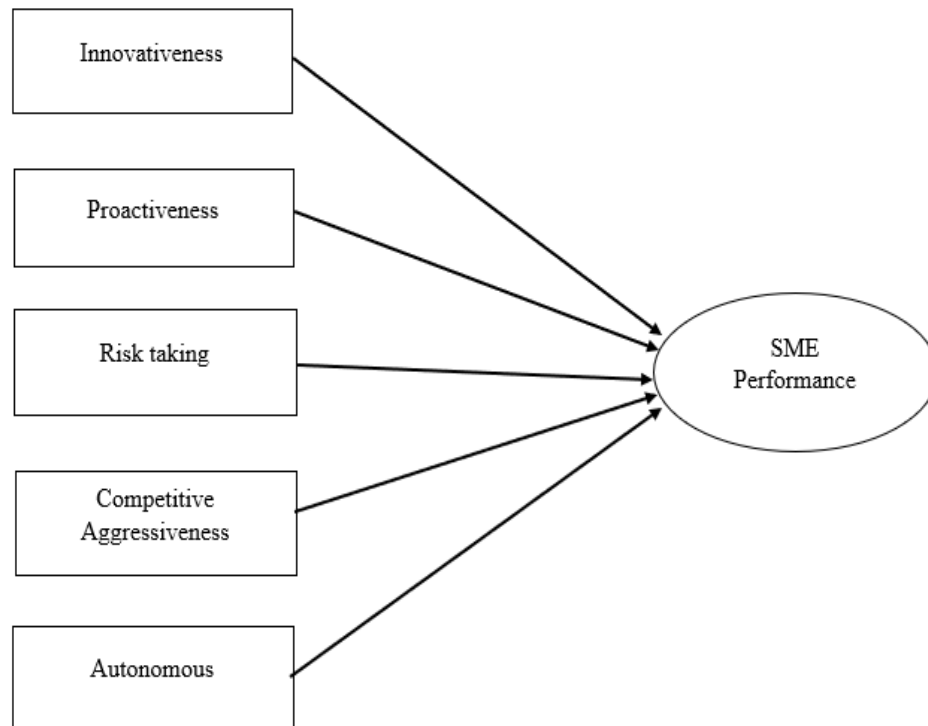
Fig: 1:1 Source: Author (2023)

1.7 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between the level of innovativeness and SME performance.

H_2: There is a significant positive relationship between the level of proactiveness and SME performance.

H_3: There is a significant positive relationship between the level of risk-taking and performance.

H_4: There is a significant positive relationship between the level of competitive aggressiveness and SME performance.

H_5: There is a significant positive relationship between the level of autonomy and SME performance.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study is of great importance to the following key stakeholders:

1.8.1 THE RESEARCHER

Through the research process, the researcher's writing skills and analytical skills will be improved. This is important in everyday decision making especially given the highly volatile business environment in Zimbabwe. More so, the research process in itself prepares the researcher for both academic and business consultancies in the field of entrepreneurship development in Zimbabwe. For the researcher conducting the study, it presents an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base on entrepreneurship and SME performance. By exploring the impact of entrepreneurship orientation, the researcher can advance scholarly understanding, uncover new insights, and potentially contribute to theory development in the field. Additionally, conducting empirical research adds to the researcher's academic credentials and expertise.

1.8.2 SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

This study emphasizes the need to develop entrepreneurial orientation strategies to enhance SMEs performance. Thus, the recommendations, informed by empirical results will help SMEs to formulate sustainable business strategies that will help improve their business performance. It is also expected that the SME sector will benefit in that the research study brings extensive knowledge on understanding the entrepreneurship orientation dynamics of SMEs and its effect on firm performance.

For SMEs in Zimbabwe, the study's findings can offer practical guidance and recommendations for leveraging entrepreneurship orientation to improve their performance. By understanding the specific dimensions of entrepreneurship orientation that drive success in the SME sector, SMEs can align their strategies, enhance their competitiveness, stimulate innovation, and make informed decisions to foster sustainable growth and profitability

1.8.3 GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY

The dissertation will be made available to the library for further reference by fellow students and researchers pursuing their studies, thus benefiting the University. The study helps extend the body of knowledge in the area of entrepreneurship orientation and its impact on the SMEs performance in Zimbabwe. The study holds significance for the university involved as it showcases its commitment to research, practical application, and community engagement. The findings can enhance the reputation of the university's research department and faculty, attract

potential collaborations, and demonstrate the institution's contribution to addressing real-world challenges and informing policy decisions. It also adds to the body of knowledge within the university and strengthens its academic standing

1.8.4 THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT

Highly entrepreneurial oriented SMEs have positive performance hence contribute immensely to the economy. Thus, the study helps encourage the adoption of entrepreneurial orientation by SME managers/owners to enhance their firm performance. This would help build SMEs that can immensely revitalise the Zimbabwean economy. The objective of national economic development will be fulfilled since the survival and performance of SMEs have an economic and transformational effect on the general populace.

The findings of the study can provide valuable insights to the government of Zimbabwe in devising effective policies and strategies to support and foster entrepreneurship among SMEs. Understanding the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on SME performance can help the government identify areas for improvement, allocate resources, and design targeted initiatives to enhance the overall performance and contribution of SMEs to economic growth and development.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The delimitations and scope of the study on the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on SME performance at Nyika Growth Point would define the boundaries and focus of the research. Here are the delimitations and scope considerations for the study:

1.9.1 Conceptual scope

- The study focuses on examining the impact of entrepreneurship orientation on rural SME performance.
- The researcher would define and measure relevant variables and factors related to entrepreneurial orientation (innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, autonomous and competitive aggressiveness) as well as performance indicators (for example sales, service delivery and effectiveness) to analyse their relationship within the SMEs context.
- The study was guided by two theories the resources-based view theory and the entrepreneurship orientation theory.

1.9.2 Geographical Scope

- The research was delimited to SMEs in Bikita – Nyika Growth Point, Zimbabwe.
- The study would specifically focus on SMEs operating at Nyika Growth Point, Bikita District of Zimbabwe. It would not encompass SMEs in other areas of the district or regions of the country.

1.9.3 Time scope

- The study had a specific time frame for data collection and analysis, to capture recent trends and developments in the entrepreneurship orientation and SME performance at Nyika Growth Point.
- The study focused on the period from December 2022 to December 2023

1.9.4 Participants scope

- The targeted SMEs had less than 75 permanent employees.
- The study focused on SMEs that had been in existence for 2 or more years.
- The study drew targeted SMEs' key personnel such as managers and employees as they are the office bearers involved in strategic issues.

1.9.5 Methodological Scope

- The study adopted a quantitative research approach.
- The research instrument which was used was a questionnaire

It's important for the researcher to clearly communicate the delimitations and scope of the study to ensure that the findings are relevant, accurate, and actionable within the defined boundaries.

1.10 Study assumptions

The following assumptions guided the study:

- Respondents would be willing to actively participate in the study.
- Although the study participants would present subjective responses, they will be honest in the content of these answers.
- The study assumed that entrepreneurial orientations elements are present in all SMEs organisations.
- It was also assumed that data collected would be sufficient to draw up comprehensive and conclusive results, generalizable to all SMEs in Zimbabwe.

1.11 Study limitations

The study aims at satisfying the research objectives outlined. The study is limited to the SMEs as per the definition provided, operating within Bikita – Nyika Growth Point. Given this delimitation, the study results may need to be generalised with care to other sizes of firms, sectors and other countries. The study adopted a case study research design, the larger sample size and higher response rate was considered to be representative of the SMEs. Despite being limited to Nyika Growth Point, the study will help improve the performance of the SMEs in Bikita.

- Some of the respondents were not available on the day of the study. However, the researcher had already come up with a larger sample size.
- The researcher was limited by time constraints, which could restrict the amount of data collected or the duration of the study. Additionally, there was pressure both at work, home and at school. To mitigate this the researcher had planned well in advance to manage his time well to balance the time.
- The researcher also had limited resources. To mitigate this challenge, the researcher got financial support from family and friends.

1.12 Organisation of the study

This dissertation contains five chapters, excluding a list of references and appendices. This chapter, Chapter One, provided the nature and scope of the study and sets out the tone of the research by highlighting the background of the research, key research problem and the research questions answered and research objectives. The remaining chapters of the dissertation are organized as follows:

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The chapter focuses on cconceptualisation of the entrepreneurial orientation and SMEs performancee. Theories on entrepreneurial orientation will be discussed and moreover findings from empirical evidence will be highlighted in relation to research study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The chapter focuses on research design. The chapter presented a detailed discussion of the research methodology and methods employed in the study. The chapter draws immensely from Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2007) research onion. Thus, the key methodological aspects are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

Chapter four presents the results of the research through the use of charts, tables, diagrams, and graphs. The results are analyzed to extract information that would be systematically linked to the research objectives and the research questions. Quantitative data will be analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data will be analyzed using content analysis. The chapter aimed at linking the literature review and the research findings. The discussion will be guided by the research objectives. The chapter discusses both the unknown and the known information.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter five focus on the conclusions and recommendations, based on the research findings. The chapter presents the extent to which the objectives had been achieved. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and the suggestions for further studies are highlighted. The chapter also discuss the scholarly contributions to theory and entrepreneurship orientation.

1.13 Definition of Key terms

The key terms in this study are defined below:

Entrepreneurship Orientation: According to Lumpkin and Dess (2018), entrepreneurial orientation is the strategic orientation of a company that adopts particular entrepreneurial features of decision-making styles, processes, and procedures.

Innovativeness: Lumpkin, et al (2010) define innovation as the ability or willingness to establish novelty and search for solutions through experimentation and creative problem solving. Innovation is the ability to identify new product or service opportunities in the market and creating enhancements to the existing process and system (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020).

Proactiveness: According to Lumpkin et al. (2020), a company is said to be proactive when it actively seeks out new opportunities, takes use of those that already exist, keeps tabs on changing business environments, and keeps itself informed about those changes.

Risk-Taking: In the context of an entrepreneurial approach, taking a risk refers to engaging in an uncertain undertaking without knowing the potential results (Brettel et al. 2020).

Competitive Aggressiveness: Competitive aggressiveness refers to a company's capacity to outperform its rivals (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020).

Autonomous: Hughes and Morgan (2007), define autonomy as the freedom and authority given to an individual or group to update a company strategy and goal and direct them toward realization.

SME performance: SMEs' performance refers to the outcomes of firms' business activities (Kotane and Kuzimina-Merlino, 2017).

SMEs: An SME is defined as a corporate or non-corporate business entity that, along with any of its subsidiaries, possesses the qualities or classification criteria, that as an organization must: a) be managed by one person or jointly by two or more people; b) operate in any sector of the economy; and c) meet all of the following requirements: autonomy, full-time employee count, capitalization, annual revenue, industry, and registration or licensing (Mashingaidze 2020; Finscope 2022, SME Act – Chapter 24:12).

1.13 Chapter summary

This chapter presents the orientation of the study. In this chapter, the background information on entrepreneurial orientation and its effect on the performance of SMEs is outlined, followed by the statement of the problem. The research objectives and questions that guided this study are also stipulated in this chapter. It further explains the significance of the study, delimitation of the study as well as the limitations and lastly the definition of concepts which will be more likely to be misunderstood or misinterpreted in this study context. Chapter two will present a theoretical framework based on a review of the literature that is found to be relevant for this research.

<center>**CHAPTER TWO**</center>

<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter focused on the introduction. The chapter provides information from publications on topics related to the research problem. It examines what various scholars and authors have said about entrepreneurial orientation and its effect on SME performance. The chapter covers the introduction, theoretical framework, the conceptual framework, and empirical studies guided by the research objectives, the research gap and finally the summary of the chapter.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are a number of theories which explain the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of SMEs. This study was guided by two theories the resource-based view theory and the entrepreneurship orientation theory. These theories are discussed below.

2.1.1 RESOURCE BASED VIEW THEORY

This study was guided by the resource-based view theory. A theory which can be used to explore the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs is the resource-based view theory. According to RBVT, entrepreneurial orientation as economic rent (Caridi et al, 2017) derives from strategic resources. Such entrepreneurial orientation is sustainable to the extent that the resources on which it is based are inimitable, rare, valuable, and non-substitutable (Bales and Fearon, 2016).

Unlike the other approaches, the resource-based view suggests that performance is mainly determined by internal rather than external variables (Barney, 2015). Firms' follow heterogeneous historical paths and as a result, create different qualifications that affect their capabilities in different ways (Wernerfelt, 2014). Successful firms in an industry are successful because they can access a range of resources and thus gain competitive advantages. In this context, resources refer to all tangible and intangible assets, such as cash, loans, capabilities and qualifications, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, and knowledge

(Wernerfelt, 2014). In conclusion, this theory leverages upon the fact that in order to improve service delivery, an SME needs to develop a distinct competency that will push their competitiveness through entrepreneurial orientation.

The resource-based view gives this study a basis for appreciating the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on performance of SMEs. It proceeds to argues that SMEs possess some resources that enable them to achieve superior long-term performance which can be achieved through entrepreneurial orientation (innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy). Valuable and rare resources can lead to the attainment of competitive advantage whose sustenance over a long time can protect an SME against resource imitation, transfer, or substitution. Therefore, this theory is relevant to this study in that it explains the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs.

2.1.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP ORIENTATION THEORY

This study is also guided by the entrepreneurship orientation theory. The theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and analyzing entrepreneurial behavior within organizations. The entrepreneurship orientation theory provides a roadmap for organizations to embrace entrepreneurship as a strategic orientation and harness its potential for growth, innovation, and long-term success (Covin and Wales, 2020). It examines key dimensions such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking, which are essential for entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurship orientation theory emphasizes the importance of strategic orientation in fostering innovation and growth (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2020). It encourages organizations to adopt a proactive and opportunity-seeking approach, helping them adapt to dynamic market conditions and gain a competitive edge.

Entrepreneurship orientation theory recognizes the significance of flexibility and adaptability in entrepreneurial endeavors. By encouraging organizations to continually scan the environment, seize opportunities, and take calculated risks, the theory promotes agility and responsiveness to changes in the market (Wiklund and Shepherd, 2020). The theory suggests that a higher level of entrepreneurial orientation leads to superior organizational performance. Studies have shown positive correlations between entrepreneurial orientation and various performance indicators, including sales growth, profitability, and market share.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The initial literature study reveals that entrepreneurial orientation has five dimensions, namely innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy. The conceptual framework shows the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. Five entrepreneurial dimensions were used in the study, namely innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy. In measuring performance, the research used profitability, effectiveness and efficiency. These will be examined to determine how entrepreneurially oriented a business is. And will be discussed below. The following conceptual framework is proposed and depicted in Figure 2.1
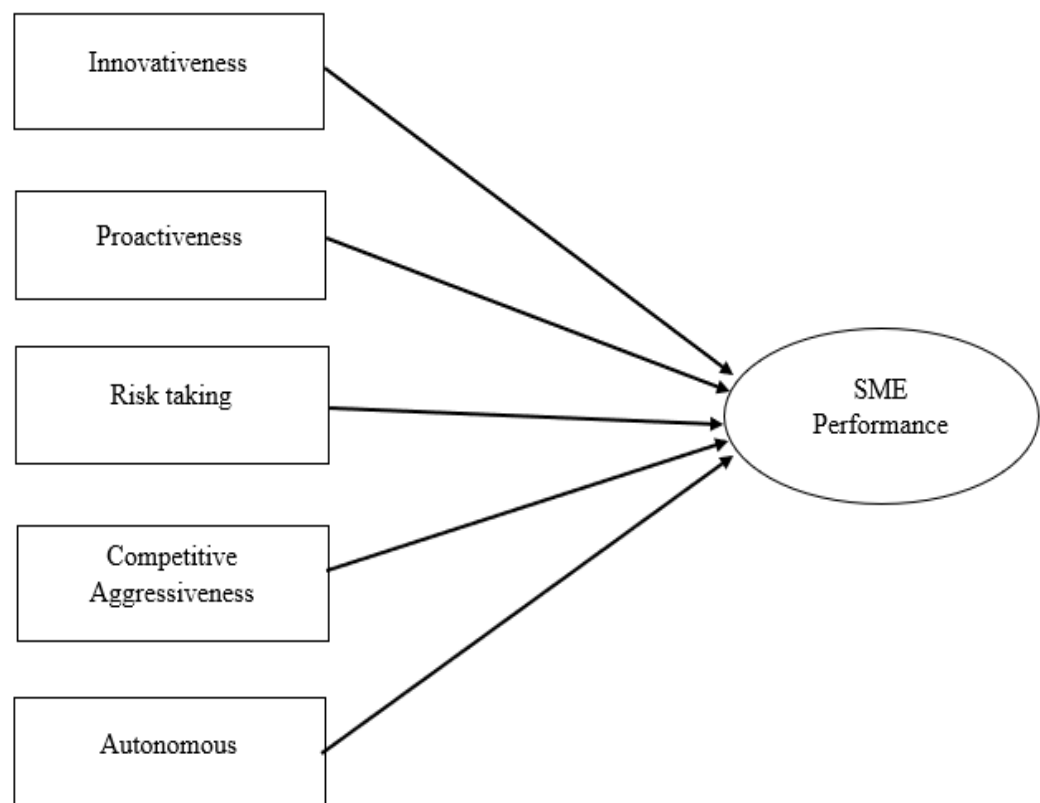
Fig: 2:1 Conceptual Framework (Source: Author (2023)

2.2.1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP ORIENTATION

According to Lumpkin and Dess (2018), entrepreneurial orientation is the strategic orientation of a company that adopts particular entrepreneurial features of decision-making styles, processes, and procedures. A company's entrepreneurial orientation reflects how it runs as opposed to what it does (Lumpkin and Dess, 2018). Entrepreneurial orientation entails a readiness to experiment, look for risks, take initiative, and be more aggressive and proactive than rivals when it comes to new market prospects (Lumpkin and Dess, 2018). Five identified aspects of entrepreneurial orientation, as proposed by Miller (2020) and Lumpkin and Dess (2018), includes innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy. Additionally, innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness are some of the traits that have been identified as indications of entrepreneurial orientation by Lumpkin, Cogliser, and Schenider (2020) and Pratono and Mahmood (2020). In this study the researcher will make use of innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy. These will be discussed below.

2.2.1.1 INNOVATIVENESS

Lumpkin, Brigham, and Moss (2010) define innovation as the ability or willingness to establish novelty and search for solutions through experimentation and creative problem solving. Innovation is the ability to identify new product or service opportunities in the market and creating enhancements to the existing process and system (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). According to Hosseini and Eskandari (2018) and Brettel et al (2020), a company's capacity to foster innovative and creative efforts might result in the development of new services, products, or technological processes. Solutions that are deemed innovative can also be applied to the administrative systems used to enhance the decision-making processes. Innovation should not only be limited to the philosophy of creating something new, or to the modification of existing products, services, and manufacturing processes (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). A number of studies have established a positive relationship between innovativeness and performance. These include studies by Kreiser, et al. (2020) in the United States, Zahra and Bogner (2018) in the United States and Zahra and Garvis (2020) in the United States.

This then led to our first hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between innovativeness and performance.

2.2.1.2 PROACTIVENESS

According to Lumpkin et al. (2020), a company is said to be proactive when it actively seeks out new opportunities, takes use of those that already exist, keeps tabs on changing business environments, and keeps itself informed about those changes. Additionally, it entails maintaining an edge over rivals in anticipation of chances or new issues. Proactiveness also understands the importance of taking the initiative in the entrepreneurial process (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). A company gains a competitive advantage by anticipating changes in future demand or by actively contributing to the creation of their own environment rather than acting as a passive observer or caving in to external pressures (Kraus,et al , 2020). These skills do open up new possibilities and views for the entrepreneurial venture (Serafimovska, 2020). A number of studies have established a positive relationship between proactiveness and performance. These include studies by Rumman et al. (2021) and Khan (2020) which were carried out in Pakistan.

Then this led to our second hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between proactiveness and performance.

2.2.1. 3 RISK-TAKING

In the context of an entrepreneurial approach, taking a risk refers to engaging in an uncertain undertaking without knowing the potential results (Brettel et al. 2020). In order to accomplish the firm's objectives, the company may heavily borrow money or assume a certain level of financial risk (Lumpkin et al., 2020). Another component of risk-taking is generally associated with investing a significant portion of the company's resources in questionable activities. However, moderate and measured risk-taking is the focus in the context of small business rather than severe and uncontrolled risk-taking (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). However, taking risks is still important because it directs the company toward controlling uncertainty rather than motivating it. Moreover, the risk can indicate multiple things. It is immediately influenced by the environment in which it is used (Burns, 2022). Heavy borrowing, investing a significant amount of money in assets, and taking risks are all viewed as risks in the context of an entrepreneurial orientation (Sharma and Dave, 2020). Additionally, the creation of new products and inputs must be governed by controllable risks (Chang, 2020). According to Wang et al. (2015), risk-taking potentials are used to categorize businesses with an entrepreneurial

focus. A number of studies have established a positive relationship between risk taking and performance. These include studies by Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Saudi Arabia.

Thus this led to our third hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between risk taking and performance.

2.2.1.4 COMPETITIVE AGGRESSIVENESS

Competitive aggressiveness refers to a company's capacity to outperform its rivals (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). The combative stance or aggressive response against rivals with the primary objective of eliminating the threat they provide in the marketplace is a typical feature of competitive aggression (Zellweger and Sieger 2020). It also includes passing policies and coming up with ideas on ways to strengthen the company so that it can survive (Lumpkin et al., 2010). Additionally, it is important to note that competitive aggression is a response to the competitive trend already present in the marketplace within the framework of entrepreneurial orientation (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). A number of studies have established a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and performance. These include studies by Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Saudi Arabia.

Thus this led to our fourth hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between risk taking and performance.

2.2.1.5 AUTONOMOUS

Hughes and Morgan (2020), define autonomy as the freedom and authority given to an individual or group to update a company strategy and goal and direct them toward realization. Simply put, it is the ability to act or speak up in support of one's own ideas or views (Burns, 2022). By enabling and inspiring people to sustain and contribute to company efforts and by fostering independent action and initiative growth, this links to the independent and self-directed search for alternative opportunities (Lumpkin et al., 2010). According to Zellweger, Nason, and Nordqvist (2011), autonomy can equally affect all stakeholders and not only those who work for the company. Furthermore, autonomy fosters a sense of trust in workers, which can be a source of drive within the company. Better performance is often the result of motivated

staff (Mazzarol and Reboud, 2020). According to Callaghan and Venter (2011), the desire for independent and autonomous behavior is a crucial element of entrepreneurial orientation. A number of studies have established a positive relationship between risk, autonomy and performance. These include studies by Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Saudi Arabia.

Thus this led to our fifth hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between autonomy and performance.

2.2.2 SME PERFORMANCE

SMEs' performance refers to the outcomes of firms' business activities (Kotane and Kuzimina-Merlino, 2017). It can be measured using various indicators. Firm growth indicators are among important SMEs' performance measures (Kiyabo and Isaga, 2020). Shepherd and Wiklund (2020). identified five common firm growth measures that have been used in past studies; these are growth in sales, employees, profit, assets, and equity. Performance in business has several facets. It has the capacity to convey the various facets of an organization. According to Mumtaz et al. (2013), some of these are firm-oriented elements that are internally focused, such as profitability, sales levels, and liquidity levels, while others externally focused, such as firm market values, firm stock market yields, earnings per share, and price levels. Business performance can be interpreted as effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability, and effectiveness refers to the success of business strategies against competitors in serving certain markets (Irawan, et al 2023). Operational efficiency places more emphasis on cost control through standardization of the operating procedures. The organization must be able to respond to changes in the external environment from time to time as a form of adaptability, so as to create opportunities (Irawan, et al 2023). In this study performance is going to be measured through financial and non-financial indicators (profitability, efficiency and effectiveness).

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This section focused on the empirical review. The section was guided by the objectives of the study which included to analyse effect of innovativeness on SME performance, to assess the influence of proactiveness on of SME performance, to investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance, to determine the effect of competitiveness on SME performance and to establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance

2.3.1 EFFECT OF INNOVATIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

Number of studies have explored the effect of innovativeness on SME performance. For instance, globally Khan et al. (2020) demonstrate that innovativeness considerably enhances both financial and non-financial performance in the case of other SMEs in Indonesia. The study on SMEs in Indonesia reaffirms that innovativeness has a direct impact on SMEs' performance. In Pakistan, Rumman et al. (2021) and Khan (2020) presented the exact same results. They both agree that innovativeness is an important strategic resource, but firms may use it more effectively with a learning orientation. Similarly, a positive association was found between innovativeness and business performance by Fairoz et al. (2020) in Pakistan. Other studies which also found a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs include studies by Kreiser, et al. (2020) in the United States, Zahra and Bogner (2018) in the United States and Zahra and Garvis (2020) in the United States.

However, at global level there are also studies which have established a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs. For instance, according to the Hoque study (2018) in Bangladesh, it was established that innovativeness strongly has a negative effect with SME performance. Similar, to the above findings on studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan and Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri Lanka, also established that there was a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs.

Regionally, there has been a number of studies which have explored the impact of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Steyn (2019) explored the impact of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs in South Africa. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The study established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In the same vein Omar (2020) in a similar study carried out in South Africa also established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In line with the above findings, Johnson (2018) also explored the impact of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs in Nigeria and established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs.

However, there have also been studies which established a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in Africa. For example, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) identified a negative correlation between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in their Tanzanian study. Contrary to established economies, where taking risks is positively

correlated with SMEs' performance, SMEs in emerging economies shy away from innovativeness due to unfriendly and underdeveloped business and regulatory environments. In the same vein, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in Uganda also established a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs.

Locally in Zimbabwe, there have also been a number of studies which have explored the effect of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Mashingidze (2020) explored the effect of innovativeness of the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. The study established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. In the same vein, Mutambara (2020) also established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs. However, there were also studies which found a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. For instance, Tinarwo (2020) and Shumba et al (2018) established a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs.

The above review of these studies shows contradicting results as some of the researchers support that there exists a positive relationship between innovativeness and performance of SMEs while some of them oppose it. After considering all the limitations and results, this study will focus on testing the influence of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. In this study the researcher proposes that innovativeness contributes to performance of SMEs, leading to the following hypotheses:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between innovativeness interchange and performance

2.3.2 THE INFLUENCE OF PROACTIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

A number of studies have assessed the influence of proactiveness on SME performance. For instance, a study by Zany and Elsina (2019) on SMEs in Ambon City, Indonesia, found that the performance of the companies is positively impacted by proactiveness. Similarly, a positive association was found between proactiveness and business performance by Fairoz et al. (2020) in Pakistan. In Pakistan, Rumman et al. (2021) and Khan (2020) presented the exact same results. They both agree that proactiveness has a positive relationship with the performance of SMEs.

On the other hand, there have also been studies globally which established a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs. For example, in a study carried out by Nasser et al (2020) in India a negative relationship was established between

proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in India. In the same vein, Similar, to the above findings studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan and Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri Lanka, also established that there was a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs.

Regionally, in Africa there have also been studies which have explored the effect of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs in Africa. For instance, Steyn (2019) explored the effect of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs in South Africa and established a positive relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In the same vein, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) explored the effect of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs in Tanzania. In Tanzania, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) discovered a positive correlation between proactiveness and SME performance. Other studies which also established a positive relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in Africa include studies by Nasser et al (2020) in South Africa and Johnson (2018) in Nigeria.

However, regionally in Africa there are also studies that have explored the impact of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs and established a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMES. For instance, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in on the impact of proactiveness on the performance among SMEs in Uganda it was established that there is a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in Uganda. In the same vein Morris et al (2020) also established a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in Uganda.

Locally in Zimbabwe a number of studies have explored the impact of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Mutambara (2020) explored the impact of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs. The study established that there is a positive relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs. In the same vein Mago et al (2020) also established a positive relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs. However, there were also studies which found a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. For instance, Tinarwo (2020) and Shumba et al (2018) established a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs.

The above review of these studies shows contradicting results as some of the researchers support that there exists a positive relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs while some of them oppose it. After considering all the limitations and results, this study

will focus on testing the influence of proactiveness on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. In this study the researcher proposes that proactiveness contributes to performance of SMEs, leading to the following hypotheses:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between proactiveness and performance

2.3.3 THE EFFECT OF RISK TAKING ON SME PERFORMANCE

A number of studies have examined the effect of risk taking on SME performance. For instance, globally, a positive association was found between risk taking and business performance by Fairoz et al. (2020) in Pakistan. In the same vein, studies by Kreiser, et al. (2020) in the United States, Zahra and Bogner (2018) in the United States and Zahra and Garvis (2020) in the United States among other studies have also found that the influence of risk taking on positive company performance occurs n dynamic and grandiose situations but not in hostile environments.

In the same vein other studies which also established a positive relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs included studies by Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Pakistan. On the other hand, studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between risk taking and performance.

Regionally, the effect of risk taking on SME performance has also been explored. For instance, a study by Faiz and Faiz (2020) on SMEs in Libya demonstrates that risk taking positively predicts business performance. In the same vein Steyn (2019) in a study carried out on the effect of risk taking on SMEs in South Africa also established significant positive relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. Other, studies which also found a positive relationship between risk taking and SME performance in Africa include studies by Omar (2020) in South Africa and Johnson (2018) in Nigeria.

On the other hand, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) identified a negative correlation between taking risks and the performance of SMEs in their Tanzanian study. Contrary to established economies, where taking risks is positively correlated with SMEs' performance, SMEs in emerging economies shy away from taking risks due to unfriendly and underdeveloped business and regulatory environments that treat taking risks as a threat rather than a way to

make money. In the same vein, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in Uganda also established a negative relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs.

Locally in Zimbabwe a number of studies have explored the impact of risk taking on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Mutambara (2020) explored the impact of risk taking on the performance of SMEs. The study established that there is a positive relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs. In the same vein Mago et al (2020) also established a positive relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs. However, there were also studies which found a negative relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. For instance, Tinarwo (2020) and Shumba et al (2018) established a negative relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs.

The above review of these studies shows contradicting results as some of the researchers support that there exists a positive relationship between risk taking and performance of SMEs while some of them oppose it. After considering all the limitations and results, this study will focus on testing the influence of risk taking on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. In this study the researcher proposes that risk taking contributes to performance of SMEs, leading to the following hypotheses:

H$_3$: There is a positive relationship between risk taking and performance

2.3.4 THE EFFECT OF COMPETITIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

A number of studies have explored the effect of competitiveness on SME performance. For instance, globally, Lee and Lim's (2020) findings in a study carried out in China, in the context of SMEs, draw the conclusion that competitiveness has a powerful association with the performance of SMEs. In the same vein, according to Choi et al.'s (2020) research which was carried out in China, competitiveness is more positively correlated with firm performance, particularly when environmental dynamics are high. In relation to the environment, a study by Onwe et al. (2020) which was carried in the United States finds that a hostile environment in fact motivates businesses to improve competitiveness to increase performance. Other studies which also corroborated with the findings above include studies by Kruja (2020) in Albania, Zhai et al. (2018) in China, Butkouskaya et al. (2020) in Indonesia and Kittikunchotiwut (2020) in Indonesia respectively.

In the same vein, according to certain studies Meutia, (2020) in Indonesia Amin, 2020 in Saudi Arabia; Vasconcelos et al., 2020 in the United States; Setayanti, et al., (2018) in Turkey,

competitive aggressiveness shows a favorable link with business performance, either directly or indirectly. This means that businesses with a stronger entrepreneurial focus outperform those without one. SMEs perform significantly better when they are competitively aggressive.

However, at global level there are also studies which have found negative relationship between competitiveness and the performance of SMEs. These include, studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh which established that there was a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs.

Regionally in Africa, a number of studies have explored the effect of competitive aggressiveness of the performance of SMEs. For instance, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) explored the effect of competitive aggressiveness of the performance of SMEs in Tanzania. In Tanzania, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) discovered a positive correlation between competitive aggressiveness and SME performance. In the same vein, Steyn (2019) also established that there is a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMES in South Africa. Other studies which also established a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs in Africa include studies by Nasser et al (2020) in South Africa and Johnson (2018) in Nigeria.

However, regionally in Africa there are also studies that have explored the impact of competitive aggressiveness on the performance of SMEs and established a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMES. For instance, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in on the impact of competitive aggressiveness on the performance among SMEs in Uganda it was established that there is a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs in Uganda. In the same vein Morris et al (2020) also established a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs in Uganda.

Locally in Zimbabwe a number of studies have explored the impact of competitive aggressiveness on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Mutambara (2020) explored the impact of competitive aggressiveness on the performance of SMEs. The study established that there is a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs. In the same vein Mago et al (2020) also established a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs. However, there were also studies which found a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance

of SMEs in Zimbabwe. For instance, Tinarwo (2020) and Shumba et al (2018) established a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs.

The above review of these studies shows contradicting results as some of the researchers support that there exists a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and performance of SMEs while some of them oppose it. After considering all the limitations and results, this study will focus on testing the influence of competitive aggressiveness on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. In this study the researcher proposes that competitive aggressiveness contributes to performance of SMEs, leading to the following hypotheses:

H$_4$: There is a positive relationship between competitive aggressiveness and performance

2.3.5. TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECT OF AUTONOMY ON SME PERFORMANCE

A number of studies have examined the effect of autonomy on SME performance. For instance, globally, the results of studies carried out by Hussain et al. (2020) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Pakistan show a positive relationship between organizational success and autonomy. In the same vein, Arshad et al. (2020), in a study carried out in Indonesia noted the autonomy variable is a highly important positive predictor of the performance of small and medium-sized businesses. In the same vein, Irawan et al. (2023) in a study carried out in Indonesia also established a positive relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs.

In the same vein, Sun et al. (2020) in a study carried out in China found that autonomy had a significant impact on SME competitive advantage, which in turn positively influenced firm performance. Overall, the literature suggests that autonomy plays a crucial role in driving SME performance. On the other hand, Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in a study carried out in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in a study which was carried out in Srilanka and Hoque (2018) in a study which was carried in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs.

Regionally in Africa there have also been studies that have examined the effect of autonomy on SME performance. For instance, Steyn (2019) explored the effect of autonomy on the performance of SMEs in South Africa and established a positive relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In the same vein, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) explored the effect of autonomy on the performance of SMEs in Tanzania. In Tanzania, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) discovered a positive correlation between autonomy

and SME performance. Other studies which also established a positive relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs in Africa include studies by Nasser et al (2020) in South Africa and Johnson (2018) in Nigeria.

However, regionally in Africa there are also studies that have explored the impact of autonomy on the performance of SMEs and established a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMES. For instance, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in on the impact of autonomy on the performance among SMEs in Uganda it was established that there is a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs in Uganda. In the same vein Morris et al (2020) also established a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs in Uganda.

Locally in Zimbabwe a number of studies have explored the impact of autonomy on the performance of SMEs. For instance, Mutambara (2020) explored the impact of autonomy on the performance of SMEs. The study established that there is a positive relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs. In the same vein Mago et al (2020), also established a positive relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs. However, there were also studies which found a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. For instance, Tinarwo (2020) and Shumba et al (2018) established a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs.

The above review of these studies shows contradicting results as some of the researchers support that there exists a positive relationship between autonomy and performance of SMEs while some of them oppose it. After considering all the limitations and results, this study will focus on testing the influence of autonomy on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. In this study the researcher proposes that autonomy contributes to performance of SMEs, leading to the following hypotheses:

H$_5$: There is a positive relationship between autonomy and performance

2.4 RESEARCH GAP

After reviewing literature, it is clear that there are a number of research studies that have been carried out on how entrepreneurial orientation affects the performance of SMEs as it is an evolving concept. However, research in the context of Zimbabwe is still scant. Some studies have not focused on Zimbabwe and Nyika Growth Point, Bikita District but have focused on

other countries. More so, most studies have not focused on rural SMEs. Additionally; some of the studies have provided contradictory results. For example, studies that Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Pakistan. On the other hand, studies by Pratono & Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. This leaves a gap in knowledge which needs to be filled. Therefore, there is a need to determine the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the performance of SMEs in Zimbabwe. Thus, this study will evaluate the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the business performance of SMEs in Nyika Growth Point, Bikita District, Zimbabwe.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the literature review which the researcher compiled in an effort to answer the research questions and in line with the conceptual framework. The chapter covered the introduction, the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework, the empirical review, the research gap and a chapter summary. The next section will focus on the methodology of the study.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous section focused on the literature reviews. The study analyzes the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point. This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. It included the research philosophy, the research approach, the research design, population and sampling, data collection instruments, validity and reliability and the data analysis techniques. This will help other readers to have the ability to evaluate the rationality of the research's claim. Finally, it highlights the ethical considerations and the summary

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

According to Mugenda (2016) a research philosophy is a pattern or a blueprint or a comprehensive strategy on how a study is to be finalized. The research philosophy is very critical for every research study. According to Kothari (2017) the two main paradigms include positivism and interpretivism. Researchers can either choose one of the methods or use them both. This study adopted a positivist philosophy in order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point.

3.1.1 POSITIVISM

In order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point, the current study made use of the positivist philosophy. According to Creswell (2013) positivism is the philosophical theory that states certain knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their relationship.

3.1.1.1 JUSTIFICATION OF A POSITIVISM PHILOSOPHY

According to Bryman and Bell (2016), a positivism research approach is utilized when there already are current theories and when the findings are generalizable in a bigger context. Therefore, this research philosophy was appropriate in this study since the study is expected to produce findings which are generalizable in a bigger context. There are also current theories with regards to the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs. Thus, the use of the positivism philosophy was appropriate in the study.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

According to Kothari (2017) a research approach elucidates the layout in which the study will be projected out and the conceptual arrangements within which research is directed. The research approach is very critical for every research study. This study adopted the quantitative research approach in order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point.

3.2.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

In order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point in the current study the researcher made use of a quantitative research approach. Creswell (2017) defines quantitative research as a formal, objective, systematic process to describe and test relationships and examines the cause and effect interactions among variables. Owing to the deductive approach, a quantitative approach will be used in order to test the hypothesis (Kothari, 2017). When it comes to quantitative studies, the purpose is to generalize the findings. This entails that the measurements are applied in order to quantify the data (Cooper and Schindler 2016), meaning the hypotheses will be measured through numbers and statistics.

3.2.1.1 JUSTIFICATION OF A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

The quantitative method was appropriate since the study is expected to generate substantial quantitative on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point. The researcher also chose quantitative research approach because it is quantifiable and easy to measure (Creswell, 2013). Thus, it was cheaper for the researcher to gather information on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point. This was appropriate given the limited time that the researcher had. In addition, quantitative research is cheap and less time consuming when gathering information on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point. This was appropriate given the limited time that the researcher had.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a critical part in any study. Burns and Grove (2016) indicated that research design is a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. It also describes about the methods, instruments to be used and intended means for analyzing data collected. The research design that the

researcher used in this study in order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point is a case study research design.

3.3.1 CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

Case study research designs are used in a number of studies. Kothari (2017) outline that a case study approach is thorough, holistic and encompasses an in-depth exploration of the areas under study. The assumption behind this approach is that the selected case can provide an insight on what takes place in the pool from which the case has been drawn from. The case of SMEs at Nyika Growth Point is expected to represent the characteristics of rural SMEs in Zimbabwe and to give an insight on how entrepreneurial orientation affects SMEs performance among rural SMEs.

3.3.1.1 JUSTIFICATION OF CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher chose case study research design because this approach saves time and resources (Creswell, 2017). Thus, in analyzing the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point the researcher was able to save time and money. This was appropriate given the limited time and budget that the researcher had. Additionally, this design was able to extend experience to what is known already about the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance due to it making use of previous research as noted by Kothari, (2017). The approach also narrows down the subject into one easily researchable area rather than researching on the whole country.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

This section focused on the population and sampling in the study

3.4.1 POPULATION

According to Kothari (2017) a target population is a certain group of individuals that are targeted for the reason of collecting data on our study. The study included five different types of SME sectors retail, manufacturing, construction, transport and services. In the current survey, the target population included the 132 employees and management from SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. Information regarding the number of employees was provided by the owners of the SMEs after the researcher had obtained the list of registered SMEs at Nyika Growth Point from the department of Small and Medium Enterprises. Table 3.1 below shows the population distribution of the participants.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

SME sector	Population
Retail	32
Manufacturing	30
Transport	20
Service	26
Construction	24
Total	**132**

Source: Primary Data (2023)

3.4.2 SAMPLING

Sampling is a critical part in research. This is important because the reliability of any researches depends on using the appropriate participants. According to Saunders et al. (2017) sampling is the choice of participants that are sufficient for taking part in the survey. Further Bryman and Bell (2016) highlight the significance of comprehending the sample and sample size because of the reality that the purpose is making the results generalizable. Green (2016) suggest that a sample size might be derived from this formula; 50 participants + 8*M (where M is the total number of independent variables). In our current research because the conceptual model includes five sub independent variables, the sample size is 90 participants which were employees and management from SMEs at Nyika Growth Point.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling techniques are classified into two types namely probability and non-probability sampling. In this study the researcher chose probability sampling technique. Creswell (2017) proposed that probability sampling is a technique where every essential of the population has an equal chance of being sampled. This quantitative research used stratified sampling technique which is probability sampling technique in identifying the respondents that provided useful data on the dynamics around the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point in Zimbabwe.

3.5.1 STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLING

In the current survey in order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point the researcher made use of stratified random sampling to select the participants who gave information. The stratas were the five different types of SMEs which participated in the study and are registered at Nyika Growth Point. These included the retail, manufacturing, construction, transport and services. The five stratas were chosen based on the different types of SMEs which made up the study population and have different characteristics, circumstances and views regarding entrepreneurial orientation. For the stratas the research selected 18 respondents from each type of SMEs. SMEs were equally represented in the study.

3.5.1.1 JUSTIFICATION OF STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLING

The main reason why the researcher chose stratified random sampling since making use of the stratified random sampling technique since it made certain that there was decreased unfairness in choosing the participant since each and every employee had an equal chance of being chosen (Kothari, 2017). Thus in analyzing the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point through the use of stratified sampling bias was reduced. In support of this Creswell (2013) also highlights that stratified random sampling technique allows for the removal of bias and the estimation of sampling error (Cresswell, 2013). In the same vein, Mugenda (2017) notes that stratified random sampling diminishes the probability of bias as it comprises simple random sampling also seen known as possibility sampling where each and every participant in the population has an equal choice of being selected. Thus, the was at least some participants who were selected from all the five different types of SMEs which participated in the study.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection instruments are important for any research study. Kothari (2017) highlighted that data collection instruments are means through which data is collected in social research. Quantitative techniques were used to collect primary data. The self-administered questionnaires were used to collect primary data on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point, while journals, newspapers; institutional records will be used for secondary data.

3.6.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

In this study a quantitative research instrument a questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument in order to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs at Nyika growth point. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (Mcleod, 2018). The questionnaire will be structured based on the five-point Likert type scale which solicits for the degree of agreement of the respondent to each statement. The Likert scale ranges from Strongly Agree (5 points), Agree (4 points), Undecided (3 Point), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree with (1 point). The instrument used in this study is composed of 3 parts. The part 1 includes a number of demographic questions such as age, level of education, duration of stay at organization and departments of respondents. The second part deals with entrepreneurial orientation variables. This is measured by five dimensions; innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitiveness and autonomy. Part 3 includes SME performance. All items were measured by responses on a five-point Likert scale of agreement with statements, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The questionnaire was in English. Closed-ended questions will be included because they are easier to administer and to analyze (Potter, 2014). They are also more efficient in the sense that a respondent is able to complete more closed-ended items than open-ended items in a given period of time (Cooper and Schindler 2016). The researcher distributed questionnaires physically. The questionnaires were given to respondents and the researcher collected the questionnaires after a week. This allowed the respondents to have ample time to respond to the questionnaires without any disturbances, therefore reliable information was provided. This ensured a high response rate and the questionnaires reach the intended respondents. Furthermore, this also led to the reduction of travelling costs. In addition, this also ensured privacy and avoids loss of some of the questionnaires. Additionally, the questionnaires were given to respondents during lunch time when the respondents were not busy.   The questionnaires were given not during working hours so that they were able to attend to the questionnaires when they were not busy.

3.6.1.1 JUSTIFICATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires were chosen to be used for quantitative data collection because they can be distributed to a large sample simultaneously, which means that the researcher can quickly gather generalizable data (Bryman and Bell, 2016). Thus, the researcher was able to gather information on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs

at Nyika growth point quickly. This was appropriate given the limited time that the researcher had.

Questionnaires are also cost effective, compared to other methods of gathering data (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the researcher was able to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SMEs performance among SMEs cheaply. This was also appropriate because of the limited budget that the researcher had. Questionnaires also put less pressure on the respondents for immediate response; he or she can answer the questionnaire at his own free time (Kothari, 2017). Thus, through the use of questionnaires the researcher did not pressure on the respondents. This was critical in allowing the respondents to provide accurate responses.

3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Mugenda (2016) defined validity as the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. Reliability of data on the other hand deals with the consistency, dependability, and replicability of the data collected by the researcher (Bryman and Bell, 2016). In the study the researcher tested the research instruments for validity and reliability.

3.7.1 VALIDITY

Mugenda (2016) defined validity as the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. In order to test for validity a pilot test was carried out and it consisted of 7 questionnaires were distributed, to employees from the SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These employees would not participate in the main research study.

3.7.1.1 PILOT TEST

In order to test for validity a pilot test was carried out and it consisted of 7 questionnaires which were distributed to employees from the SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. The purpose of doing pilot test is to make sure every respondent can understand the questionnaire given and to make sure there is no difficult question to be given out to prevent miscommunication between designed questions with pilot test respondents. Furthermore, we can identify the errors in the questions during the pilot test before we distribute the questionnaire to our target respondents. Thus, the researcher was able to make adjustments on the questionnaire after noticing some errors.

3.7.2 RELIABILITY

Reliability is the degree of consistency with which the instrument measures an attribute (Leez and Cronz, 2015). It further refers to the extent to which independent administration of the same instrument yields the same results under comparable conditions (Trevos 2014). In this research project, reliability test was carried out by using Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

3.7.2.1 CRONBACH'S COEFFICIENT ALPHA

Cronbach's coefficient alpha is a tool that helps to determine the reliability and internal consistency of variables. Higher value of alpha indicates that there is a stronger relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Trevos, 2014). In addition, the variable is meeting the requirement of reliability if the alpha value is equal or more than 0.6. Any alpha value that falls below 0.6 is not a reliable result while for alpha value that achieves 0.9 and above is considered excellent and best result in their internal consistency.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Burns and Bush (2016) highlighted that data analysis is a procedure of collecting information and data into a computer, then scanning the error on the information and data, and then running the tabulation and lastly carrying out statistical tests. In the current study, the SPSS 20.0 software was used in carrying out the data analysis. The researcher chose to use the SPSS 20.0 software because it is recommended by Field (2019) who indicates that through the use of SPSS 20.0 software, it makes the task of analyzing the data easier. Then on testing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables the researcher used the Pearson product - moment correlation coefficient. According to Creswell (2017) through the use of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient a correlation is considered strong when the negative result is from -1.0 to -0.5 and when the positive result is from 0.5 to 1.0.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics are important for any research project. Cooper and Schindler (2016) define ethics as a discipline that looks at the difference between good and bad, right and wrong. Cooper and Schindler (2016) also highlighted that research ethics are critical during the whole research process. In the current study the author made use of the following ethical considerations:

3.9.1 PERMISSION

Firstly, the researcher obtained a formal document from Great Zimbabwe State University authorizing the study. The researcher then used the document in negotiating for permission The researcher then asked for permission to carry out the research to the authorities at the SMEs at

Nyika Growth point which were part of the study. In tandem with this Kothari (2017) states that before starting the research, the researcher should first ask for permission in order to avoid the disruption of the research process.

3.9.2 INFORMED CONSENT

The researcher visited the respondents at SMEs at Nyika Growth so as to get informed consent. In the research, participants were well informed about what it means to participate in providing information for the research. Creswell (2013) also supports this and highlights that that before starting the research, the researcher should first ask for informed consent from the respondents so that the respondents participate willingly. The participants therefore willingly participated in the study after they were approached by the researcher. To comply with ethical considerations in conducting research all participants provided verbal consent to participate in the research. While it is common practice to request written consent, Silverman (2014) states that highly formalized ways of securing consent should be avoided in favour of fostering relationships in which ongoing ethical regard for participants is sustained.   In this study verbal consent was deemed appropriate.

3.9.3 PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND ANONYMITY

The researcher told the participants that the information they would provide would be confidential and would not be shared. Kothari (2017) supports this and highlights that respondents are more willing to participate in a study if it is confidential and private. The researcher also ensured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics before widespread dissemination of information. Removal of identifying characteristics is vital in maintaining privacy and confidentiality in the study. The researcher made it clear that the participants' names would not be used for any other purposes, nor will information be shared that reveals their identity in any way.

3.9.4 HARM AND RISK

In this research study the researcher also guaranteed that no participants were put in a situation where they might be harmed as a result of their participation, physical or psychological. This is supported by Creswell (2013) who highlighted that it is important that research participants are protected from any harm when they are participating in a study,

3.9.5 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Despite all the above-mentioned precautions, it was also made clear to the participants that the research was only for academic purpose and their participation in it was absolutely voluntary. No one will be forced to participate. Similarly, Kothari (2017) argues that those participants in a research study should always participate voluntarily and not be forced to participate.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter covered the research methodology which was used in the study, covering mainly the research approach and design. The research employs a quantitative research approach and a case study as a research design. The research used a closed ended five Likert questionnaire as a source of primary data to collect data and used employees from SMEs at Nyika Growth Point as the study population. The chapter also covered the sample and sampling technique which is stratified sampling technique. Reliability and validity issues are matters of concern in research and this chapter went in depth to address them. The chapter also covered research ethical considerations to ensure that the research revolves within the legal fraternity of the organisation. All these procedures were meant to gather data and such data is raw data and therefore needs to be analyzed and presented so that meanings can be obtained and this shall be covered in the next chapter namely data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous section focused on the methodology that was used in the study and it provided an insight into the various data collection and analysis methods that were employed in the conducting the study. This chapter comprises the data presentation, data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings in relation to the research objectives. The data presented, interpreted and analyzed was obtained from a Five Likert questionnaire; while discussion will be done with reference to findings of previous empirical studies on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The chapter also includes the introduction and summary. The findings in the study were presented through tables and charts. Included in this section is the introduction, response rate, diagnostics test which includes the reliability test, statistical data on demographic data, descriptive data on organizational culture and employee performance, results for correlation, discussion of findings and the summary.

4.1 RESULTS FOR RESPONSE RATE

This section presented and analysed the findings on the response rate of the questionnaires. The findings are presented in table 4.1 below. In the study a total of 90 questionnaires were distributed and 80 questionnaires were returned. These results show a response rate of 88.89%. The response rate of slightly above 85% is considered reliable and excellent as is supported by Mugenda (2013) who highlighted a response rate which is above 60% is considered good and a response rate which is above 70% is considered perfect. Therefore, the representation in this study was considered excellent.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire response rate

Sample	Distributed Questionnaires	Responded Questionnaires	Response Rate
Employees	90	80	88.89%

Source: Primary data (2023)

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section focused on the various demographic characteristics of the respondents. The section included demographic information on gender, age, the highest educational level, the level of employment, work experience at their current organization and the departments of the respondents. The findings are presented in figure 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6.

4.2.1 GENDER

The respondents were asked to provide responses concerning their gender. The results are presented in figure 4.1 below.
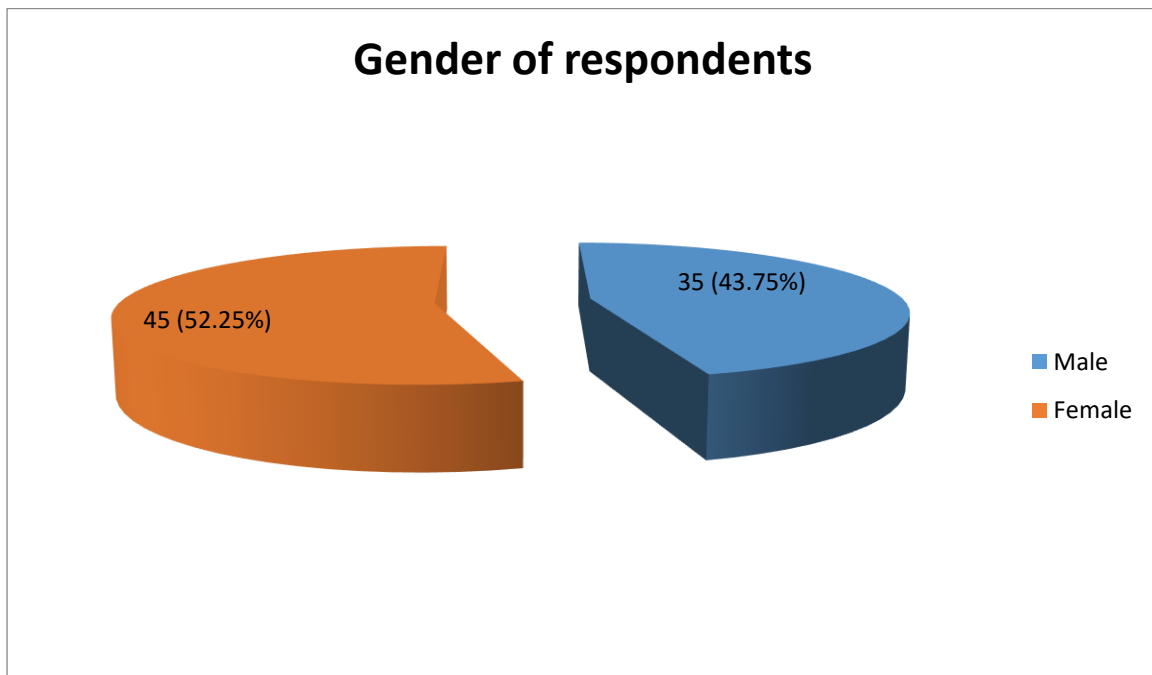
Fig 4.1: Gender of respondents

Source: Primary data

As highlighted in figure 4.1 above the majority of respondents were female with 45 (52.75%), while males were 35 (43.25%). These results show that despite there being more females than males, the males were fully represented. This shows that all their views were put forward. This makes the information reliable and credible. Additionally, the results are in line with the Zimbabwean population where there are more females than males, so the sample was a true representation of the Zimbabwean demographics.

4.2.2 AGE

The respondents were asked to provide responses concerning their age group. The results are presented in figure 4.2 below.
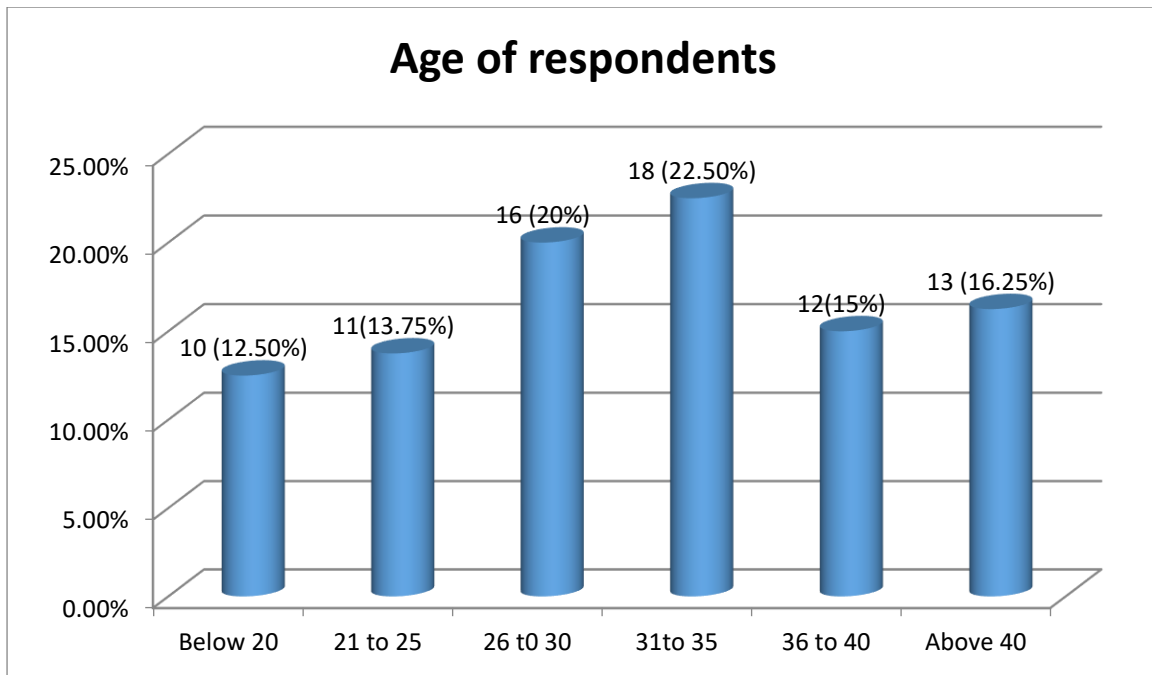
Figure 4.2: Age of respondents

Source: Primary data

As highlighted in figure 4.2 the majority of the respondents 18 (22.50%) are between the ages of 31 to 35. The results from the study also showed that other age groups were also adequately represented in the study with between 26 to 30 years with 16 (20%), above 40 years with 13 (16.25%), between 36 and 40 years with 12(15%), between 20 to 25 with 11 (13.75%) and below 20 years with 10 (12.50%). This means that the views of people with different age groups with different perspectives were considered in the study, which improved the quality of the study.

4.2.3 HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The respondents were asked to provide responses concerning their highest level of education.

The results are presented in figure 4.3 below.
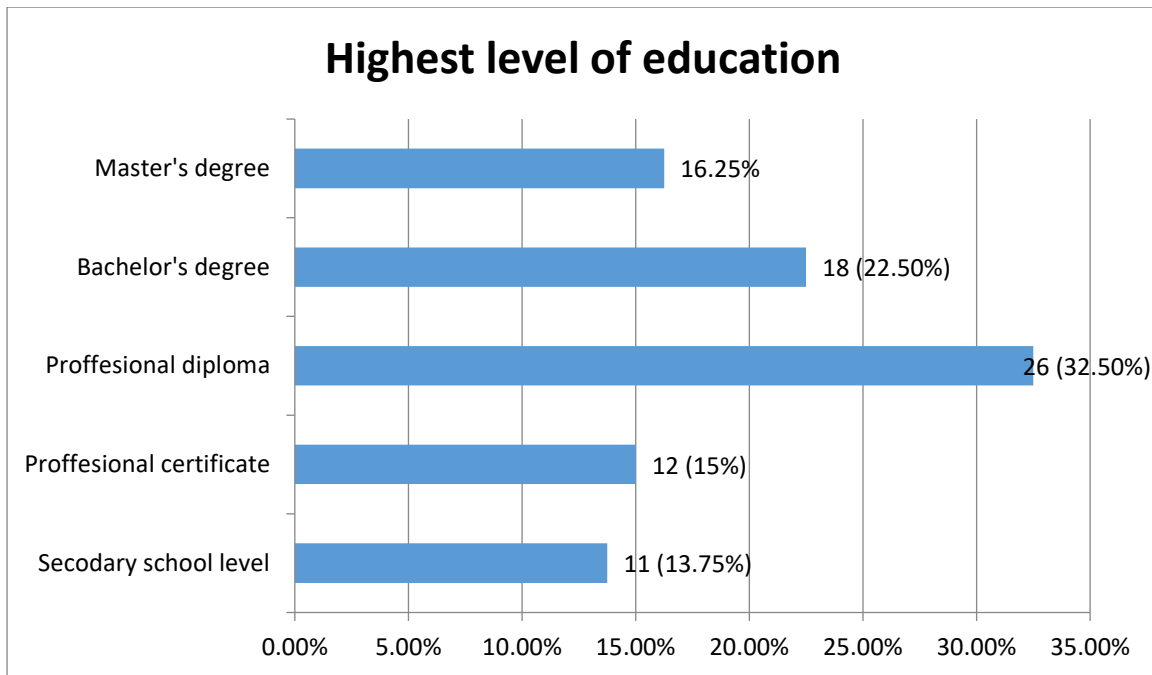
Figure 4.3: Highest level of education

Source: Primary data

As highlighted in figure 4.3 the majority of the respondents 26 (32.50%) have a professional diploma. The results from the study also showed that other qualification also adequately represented in the study with those with a bachelor's degree 18 (22.50%), master's degree with 13 (16.25%), professional certificate 12(15%), and secondary school level 11 (13.75%). These findings show that the respondents are adequately educated to people to provide reliable information concerning how entrepreneurial orientation influences SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. Additionally, the views of people with different educational levels with difference perspectives were considered in the study, which improved the quality of the study.

4.2.4 LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT

The respondents were asked to provide responses concerning their level of employment. The results are presented in figure 4.4 below.
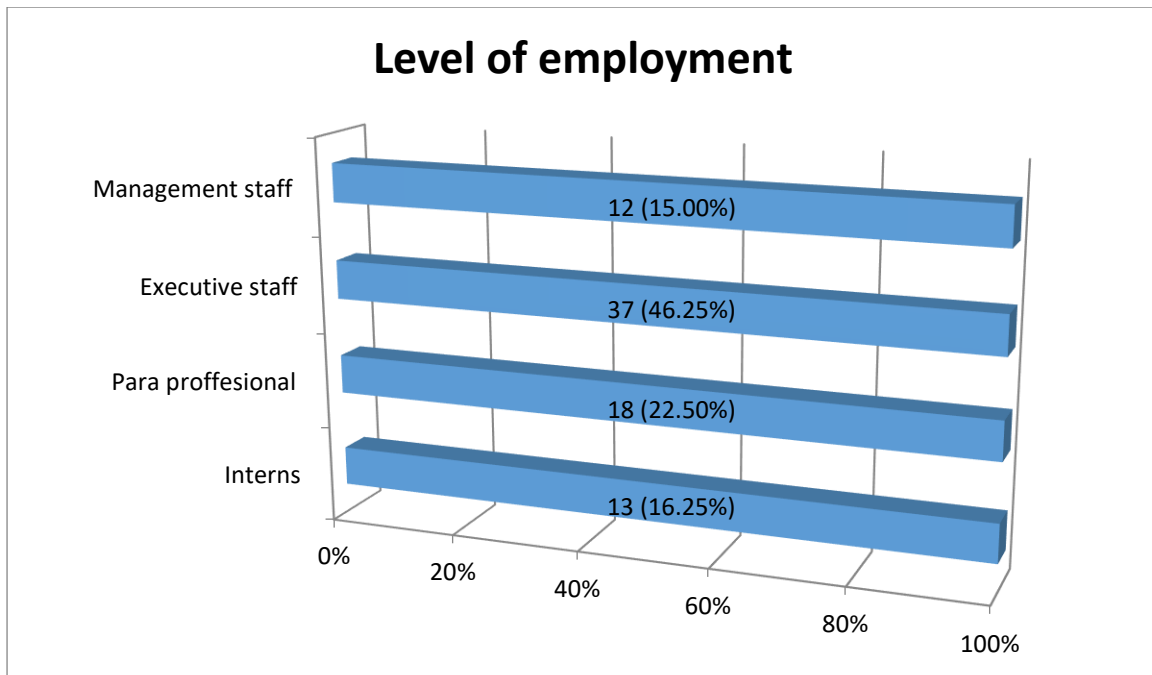
Figure 4.4: Level of employment

Source: Primary data

As highlighted in figure 4.4 the majority of the respondents 37(46.25%) were executive staff. The results from the study also showed that other levels of employment were also adequately represented in the study with para professional with 18 (22.50%), management staff with 13 (16.25%) and interns with 11 (13.75%). These findings show that the views of people with different levels of employment with difference perspectives were considered in the study, which improved the quality of the study.

4.2.5 Work Experience

The respondents were asked to provide responses concerning their work experience at their current organisation. The results are presented in figure 4.5 below.
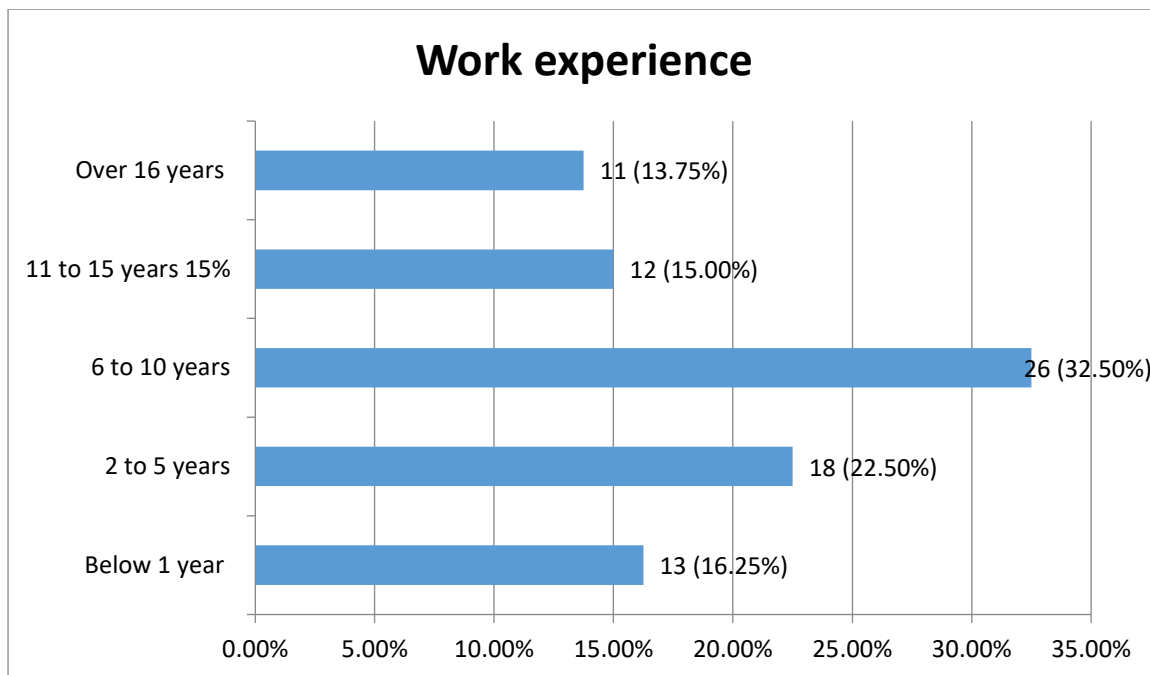
Figure 4.5: Work experience

Source: Primary data

As highlighted in figure 4.5 the majority of the respondents 26 (32.50%) are between 6 to 10 years. The results from the study also showed that other levels of experience also adequately represented in the study with those with those between 2 to 5 years with 18 (22.50%), less than 1 year with 13 (16.25%), between11 to 15years with 12(15%), and over 16 years with 11 (13.75%). These findings show that the respondents are adequately experienced to people to provide reliable information concerning how organizational culture influences employee performance. Additionally, the views of people with different levels of experience with difference perspectives were considered in the study, which improved the quality of the study.

4.3 RESULTS OF DIAGNOSTIC TEST

This section focuses on the various diagnostic tests that were carried out in the research. The diagnostic test that was carried out, the research was Cronbach and Alpha.

4.3.1 TEST FOR RELIABILITY

In testing the reliability of the research instrument the study used Cronbach and Alpha which was a questionnaire. The results from the test are clearly shown in Table 4.2 and 4.3 below.

Table 4.2 : Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha[a]	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of Items
.75645	.771	32

Table 4.2 shows the SPSS results on reliability tests performed on the primary data from 80 respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha for the study = 0.75645 hence we can conclude that the questionnaire used to collect data had high internal consistency as required for any study of this nature. That means the data gathered is highly reliable for further analysis and interpretation.

Table 4.3 Reliability coefficients for each construct

Construct	No.	Alpha
Innovativeness	5	0.7451
Proactiveness	5	0.8234
Risk taking	5	0.7313
Competitiveness	5	0.7222
Autonomy	5	0.7.312
SME performance	5	0.7895
Overall	**25**	**0.75645**

Source: SPSS output

From the Cronbach and Alpha test that was carried all the values were above the rule of thumb value of 0.7 which is recommended by Cronbach, (1951) with the lowest being competitiveness with 0.7222 and the highest being proactiveness with 0.8234. The findings show that Cronbach and Alpha values of all of the constructs are above from the general acceptable threshold of (.700). Innovativeness was measured by a 5 item scale of which the alpha value was .7451. Proactiveness was measured by a 5 item scale of which Cronbach Alpha was .8234. Risk taking was measured by a 5 item scale which held an alpha value of .7313. Competitiveness was measured by a 5 item scale of which the alpha value was .7222. Autonomy was measured by a 5 item scale of which the alpha value was .7132. SME performance was measured with a 5

item construct of which alpha value was .7895. Therefore, on the basis of this outcome; it is clear that the scales are reliable to measure the variables of the research and to proceed to conduct further analyses for testing the hypotheses of the study.

4.4 ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION

The study's respondents were asked to respond to statements related to entrepreneurial orientation (Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitiveness and autonomy) at Nyika Growth Point in Masvingo Province.

4.4.1 INNOVATIVENESS

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed /disagree with the statements concerning innovativeness at Nyika Growth Point in Masvingo. The table 4.4 presents the results.

Table 4.4: Innovativeness

Descriptive Statistic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Our organization is always willing to identify new products or service opportunities in the market	80	4.75	0.90
Our organization always searches for solutions through experimentation and creative problem solving	80	4.33	0.99
Our organization has an environment which promotes innovation	80	4.12	0.99
Our organization always provides support to employees who want to be innovative	80	4.44	1.01
Our organization always fosters innovative and creative efforts	80	4.44	0.99
Innovativeness average	**80**	**4.44**	**0.99**

Source: SPSS output

The table 4.4 above shows that respondents strongly agreed (Mean values between 4.12 and 4.75) with statements regarding innovativeness at Nyika Growth Point. The respondents strongly agreed that their organization is always willing to identify new products or service

opportunities in the market (M= 4.75; Standard deviation = 0.90). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always searches for solutions through experimentation and creative problem solving (M=4.33; Standard deviation=0.99). Furthermore, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization has an environment which promotes innovation (M=4.12; Standard deviation=0.99). More so the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always provides support to employees who want to be innovative (M=4.44; Standard deviation =1.01). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always fosters innovative and creative efforts (M=4.43; Standard deviation=0.99).

4.4.2 PROACTIVENESS

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed /disagree with the statements concerning proactiveness at Nyika Growth Point. The results are given in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Proactiveness

Descriptive Statistic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Proactiveness is part of our organizational strategy	80	4.92	0.99
Our organization always keeps tabs on the changing business environments	80	4.12	1.01
Our organization always maintains an edge over rivals in anticipation of chances or new issues	80	4.32	1.01
Our organization always keeps itself informed about those changes in the business environment	80	4.43	1.01
Our organization always actively seeks out new opportunities	80	4.22	0.99
Proactiveness average	**80**	**4.35**	**0.99**

Source: SPSS output

The table 4.5 above indicates that respondents strongly agreed (mean values between 4.12 and 4.92) to statements regarding proactiveness at Nyika Growth Point. The respondents strongly agreed that proactiveness is part of our organizational strategy (M= 4.92; Standard deviation

=0.99). Furthermore, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always keeps tabs on the changing business environments (M= 4.12; Standard deviation=1.01). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always maintains an edge over rivals in anticipation of chances or new issues (M=4.32; Standard deviation= 1.01). More so the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always keeps itself informed about those changes in the business environment (M=4.43; Standard deviation= 1.01). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always actively seeks out new opportunities (M=4.22; Standard deviation= 0.99).

4.4.3 RISK TAKING

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed /disagree with the statements concerning risk taking at Nyika Growth Point. The table 4.6 below presents the results.

Table 4.6 Risk taking

Descriptive Statistic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Sometimes our organization may heavily borrow money to invest in the business	80	4.61	0.99
Our organization sometimes invests a significant portion of the company's resources in questionable activities	80	4.32	0.99
Our organization always creates new products without not knowing the potential results of those products	80	4.43	1.01
Our organization is not afraid of taking financial risk	80	4.16	0.99
Our organization frequently takes risks in engaging in uncertain activities	80	4.20	0.99
Risk taking average	**80**	**4.40**	**0.99**

Source: SPSS output

The table 4.6 above shows that respondents strongly agreed (Mean values between 4.12 and 4.75) with statements regarding risk taking at Nyika Growth Point. The respondents who participated in the current study strongly agreed that sometimes their organization may heavily borrow money to invest in the business (M= 4.61; Standard deviation =0.99). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization sometimes invests a significant portion

of the company's resources in questionable activities (M=4.32; Standard deviation=0.99). Furthermore, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always creates new products without not knowing the potential results of those products (M= 4.43; Standard deviation=1.01). Moreover, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization is not afraid of taking financial risk (M=4.16; Standard deviation =0.99). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization frequently takes risks in engaging in uncertain activities (M=4.20; Standard deviation=0.99).

4.4.4 COMPETITIVENESS

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed /disagree with the statements concerning competitiveness at Nyika Growth Point. The table 4.7 presents the results.

Table 4.7 Competitiveness

Descriptive Statistic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Our organization is competitive in the market	80	4.72	1.01
Our organization is always aggressive to its rivals	80	4.21	0.99
Our organization always comes up with ideas on ways to strengthen the company so that it can survive	80	4.33	0.99
The policies at our organization make our organization competitive	80	4.32	1.01
Our organization is always looking to outsmart its rivals	80	4.54	0.99
Competitiveness average	**80**	**4.35**	**0.99**

Source: SPSS output

The table 4.7 above shows that respondents strongly agreed (mean values between 4.01 and 4.37) with statements regarding competitiveness at Nyika Growth Point. The respondents strongly agreed that their organization is competitive in the market (M=4.72; Standard deviation=1.01). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization is always aggressive to its rivals (M=4.21; Standard deviation = 0.99). Furthermore, the respondents strongly agreed that their organization always comes up with ideas on ways to

strengthen the company so that it can survive (M=4.33; Standard deviation =0.99). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that the policies at our organization make our organization competitive (M=4.32; Standard deviation=1.01). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization is always looking to outsmart its rivals (M=4.54; Standard deviation = 0.99).

4.4.5 AUTONOMY

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed /disagree with the statements concerning autonomy at Nyika Growth Point. The results are given in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Autonomy

Descriptive Statistic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Our organization gives employees the freedom and authority to update the company strategy	80	4.92	0.99
Our organization enables and inspires employees to sustain and contribute to company efforts	80	4.12	1.01
Our organization allows employees to speak up in support of their own ideas or views	80	4.32	1.01
Our organization always fosters independent actions of its employees	80	4.43	1.01
Our organization gives employees freedom to search for alternative opportunities	80	4.22	0.99
Autonomy average	**80**	**4.35**	**0.99**

Source: SPSS output

The table 4.8 above indicates that respondents strongly agreed (mean values between 4.12 and 4.92) to statements regarding autonomy at Nyika Growth Point. The respondents strongly agreed that their organization gives employees the freedom and authority to update to update the company strategy (M= 4.92; Standard deviation =0.99). Furthermore, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization enables and inspires employees to sustain and contribute to company efforts (M= 4.12; Standard deviation=1.01). In addition, the respondents also

strongly agreed that their organization allows employees to speak up in support of their own ideas or views (M=4.32; Standard deviation= 1.01). More so the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization always fosters independent actions of its employees (M=4.43; Standard deviation= 1.01). In addition, the respondents also strongly agreed that their organization gives employees freedom to search for alternative opportunities (M=4.22; Standard deviation= 0.99).

4.5 SME PERFORMANCE

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed /disagree with the statements concerning SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The table 4.9 presents the results.

Table 4.9 SME performance

Descriptive Statistic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Revenue collection has greatly increased in the last five years	80	4.22	1.01
Organizational performance has greatly increased in the last five years due to reduction in costs	80	4.21	0.99
The quality of services has remained all-time high in the last five years.	80	4.33	0.99
We have embraced entrepreneurial orientation which has enabled us to improve service delivery.	80	4.32	1.01
Our organization has prioritized entrepreneurial orientation and this has improved our organizational effectiveness in the last five years.	80	4.54	0.99
SME performance average	**80**	**4.35**	**0.99**

Source: SPSS output

The table 4.9 above shows that respondents strongly agreed (mean values between 4.01 and 4.34) on statements regarding SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The respondents strongly agreed that revenue collection has greatly increased in the last five years (M= 4.32; Standard deviation = 1.01), that organizational performance has greatly increased in the last five years due to reduction in costs (M=4.34; Standard deviation =0.99), that the quality of

services has remained all-time high in the last five years (M=4.44; Standard deviation of 0.99), that they have embraced entrepreneurial orientation which has enabled us to improve service delivery (M=4.01; Standard deviation =0.99) and that their organization has prioritized entrepreneurial orientation and this has improved our organizational effectiveness in the last five years (M=4.21; Standard deviation =0.99).

4.6 RESULTS FOR TEST FOR CORRELATION

This section focused on the results of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable using Pearson correlation coefficient. The results are presented in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.10: Results for test for correlation

Pearson Correlation		SME performance	Innovativeness	Proactiveness	Risk taking	Competitiveness	Autonomy
SME performance	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 80	.813** .000 80	.865** .000 80	.833** .000 80	.759** .000 80	.780** .000 80
Innovativeness	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.813** .000 80	1 80	.722** .000 80	.830** .000 80	.747** .000 80	.747** .000 80
Proactiveness	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.865** .000 80	.722** .000 80	1 80	.733** .000 80	723** .000 80	723** .000 80
Risk taking	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.833** .000 80	.830** .000 80	.733** .000 80	1 80	.897** .000 80	.897** .000 80
Competitiveness	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.759** .000 80	.747** .000 80	.723** .000 80	.897** .000 80	1 80	827** .000 80
Autonomy	Pearson correlation	.780** .000	.747** .000	.723** .000	.897** .000	827** .000	1

	Sig. (2-tailed) N	80	80	80	80	80	80

Source: Primary data (2023)

From the findings of the study, it was established that the correlation coefficient. The results between entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance ranged between 0.759 and 0.865 there by signifying a strong positive relationship between the variables. Proactiveness had the highest relationship with SME performance with (.865), followed by risk taking with (.833), and followed by innovativeness with (.813), and then followed by autonomy with (.780) and them lastly competitiveness with (.759).

4.6.1 TO ANALYZE THE EFFECT OF INNOVATIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

In the study the first objective was to investigate the effect of innovativeness on SME performance. The results of the study revealed that innovativeness had a positive relationship with SME performance (.813) among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. Based on the results it is clear that an increase in innovativeness results in improved SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point, while a decrease in innovativeness results in a reduction in SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that innovativeness has an influence on SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. This is attributed to the fact that innovativeness can help to enhance the decision-making processes.

These results are not new in the context of Zimbabwe. Similarly, Steyn (2019) explored the impact of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs in South Africa and established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In the same vein Omar (2020) in a similar study carried out in South Africa also established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In line with the above findings, Johnson (2018) also explored the impact of innovativeness on the performance of SMEs in Nigeria and established a positive relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs. The findings also reinforce the assumptions of the resource-based theory and the entrepreneurship orientation theory which acknowledge that innovativeness as a measure of entrepreneurship orientation can help improve the performance of SMEs.

However, there have also been studies which established a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in the context of Africa. For example, LeRoux and Bengesi (2020) identified a negative correlation between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs in their Tanzanian study. Contrary to established economies, where taking risks is positively correlated with SMEs' performance, SMEs in emerging economies shy away from innovativeness due to unfriendly and underdeveloped business and regulatory environments. In the same vein, Onyimba (2020) in a study carried out in Uganda also established a negative relationship between innovativeness and the performance of SMEs.

4.6.2 To assess the influence of proactiveness on SME performance

In the study the second objective was to assess the influence of proactiveness on SME performance. The results of the study revealed that proactiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.865) among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. Based on the results it is clear that an increase in proactiveness results in improved SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point, while a reduction in proactiveness results in a reduction in SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that proactiveness has an influence on SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. This is attributed to the fact that through proactiveness an SME gains a competitive advantage by anticipating changes in future demand.

In tandem with the findings above, a study by Zany and Elsina (2019) on SMEs in Ambon City, Indonesia, found that the performance of the aforementioned companies is positively impacted by proactiveness. Similarly, a positive association was found between proactiveness and business performance by Fairoz et al. (2020) in Pakistan. In Pakistan, Rumman et al. (2021) and Khan (2020) presented the exact same results. They both agree that proactiveness has a positive relationship with the performance of SMEs. The findings are also in line with the resource-based view theory and the entrepreneurship theory which also agree that proactiveness as a measure of entrepreneurship orientation can be an important resource in improving the performance of SMEs.

On the other hand, there have also been studies which established a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs. For example, in a study carried out by Nasser et al (2020) in India a negative relationship was established between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs in India. In the same vein, similar to the above findings, studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan and Wijesejara et al (2019) in Srilanka it was also

established that there was a negative relationship between proactiveness and the performance of SMEs.

4.6.3 TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF RISK TAKING ON SME PERFORMANCE

In the study the third objective was to investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance. The results of the study revealed that risk taking had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.833) among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. Based on the results it is clear that an increase in risk taking results in improved SME performance among SMES at Nyika Growth Point, while a decrease in risk taking results in a reduction in SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that risk taking has an influence on SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. This is attributed to the fact that risk taking can help a SME gain competitive advantage over its competitors.

In the same vein other studies which also established a positive relationship between risk taking and the performance of SMEs included studies by Amin (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Lee and Lim (2020) in China, Hussain et al. (2019) in Pakistan, Alalawi et al. (2021) in Indonesia, and Albasri and Mohammed (2020) in Pakistan. Similarly, the findings from the study are also in support of the resource-based view theory and the entrepreneurial orientation theory which both see risk taking as an important construct of entrepreneurial orientation which can help SMEs achieve organizational success. However, there are also studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri Lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between risk taking and performance.

4.6.4 TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT OF COMPETITIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

In the study the fourth objective was to determine the effect of competitiveness on SME performance. The results of the study revealed that competitiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point (.759). Based on the results it is clear that an increase in competitiveness results in improved SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point, while a decrease in competitiveness results in a reduction in SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that competitiveness has an influence on SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point.

These findings are attributed to the fact that competitiveness can assist an SME to compete with competitors and to remove any threats.

Similarly, other studies which also corroborated with the findings above include studies by Kruja (2020) in Albania, Zhai et al. (2018) in China, Butkouskaya et al. (2020) in Indonesia and Kittikunchotiwut (2020) in Indonesia respectively. In the same vein, according to certain studies by Meutia, (2020) in Indonesia; Amin, (2020) in Saudi Arabia; Vasconcelos et al., (2020) in the United States; Setayanti, et al., (2018) in Turkey, competitive aggressiveness shows a favorable link with business performance, either directly or indirectly. This means that businesses with a stronger entrepreneurial focus outperform those without one. SMEs perform significantly better when they are competitively aggressive. The findings are also in line with the resource-based view theory and entrepreneurial orientation theory which also acknowledge the importance of competitiveness in improving the performance of SMEs as a variable of entrepreneurial orientation.

However, there are also studies which have found negative relationship between competitiveness and the performance of SMEs. These include, studies by Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in Sri Lanka, Hoque (2018) in Bangladesh which established that there was a negative relationship between competitive aggressiveness and the performance of SMEs.

4.6.5 TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECT OF AUTONOMY ON SME PERFORMANCE

In the study the fifth objective was to establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance. The results of the study revealed that autonomy had a significant positive relationship with SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point (.780). Based on the results it is clear that an increase in autonomy results in improved SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point, while a decrease in autonomy results in a reduction in SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that autonomy has an influence on SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These findings are attributed to the fact that autonomy can motivate employees and they can work harder and be more creative.

In the same vein, Sun et al. (2020) in a study carried out in China found that autonomy had a significant impact on SME competitive advantage, which in turn positively influenced firm performance. Overall, the literature suggests that autonomy plays a crucial role in driving SME

performance. The findings from the study are also in tandem with the resource-based view theory and the entrepreneurial orientation theory which all advocate for SMEs to provide autonomy as a strategy of entrepreneurial orientation in order to improve performance. On the other hand, Pratono and Mahmood, (2020) in a study carried out in Pakistan, Wijesejara et al (2019) in a study which was carried out in Sri lanka and Hoque (2018) in a study which was carried in Bangladesh established that there was a negative relationship between autonomy and the performance of SMEs.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the research findings of the research study. Data was presented in this chapter in the form of tables, pie charts and text. The presentation of the data focused on the problems and sub-problems of the research study. The results of the study were also discussed. The results of the study clearly showed between there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation variables and SME performance which ranged between 0.759 and 0.865 there by signifying a strong positive relationship between the variables. Proactiveness had the highest relationship with SME performance with (.865), followed by risk taking with (.833), and followed by innovativeness with (.813), and then followed by autonomy with (.780) and them lastly competitiveness with (.759). The next chapter will focus on the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored data collection and analysis of different types of data gathered. This section provides the summary of the findings of the study. The summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations will be guided by the objectives of the study, which include examining the interplay between entrepreneurial orientation variables (Innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitiveness and autonomy) and SME performance. The section includes the introduction, summary of the study, summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further study**.**

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The specific objectives of the study were to analyze the effect of innovativeness on SME performance, to assess the influence of proactiveness on SME performance, to investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance, to determine the effect of competitiveness on SME performance and to establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance. The study was guided by the resource-based view and the entrepreneurship orientation theory. The study adopted a quantitative research approach. The researcher also used stratified sampling technique and the questionnaire was the research instrument which was used. The researcher used a sample size of 90 respondents which was drawn from the study's population being made up of employees at SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. The study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between innovativeness (.813), proactiveness (.865), risk taking (.833), competitiveness (.759) competitiveness (.780) and SME performance. Proactiveness had the highest a very strong positive relationship with SME performance.

5.2 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The specific objectives of the study were to analyze the effect of innovativeness on SME performance, to assess the influence of proactiveness on SME performance, to investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance, to determine the

effect of competitiveness on SME performance and to establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance. After the collection and analysis of data the researcher obtained the major findings of the study which are presented below in relation to the objectives of the study:

5.2.1 TO ANALYZE THE EFFECT OF INNOVATIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

The first objective of the study was to analyze the effect of innovativeness on SME performance. The findings of the study showed that innovativeness had a positive relationship with SME performance (.813).

5.2.2 TO ASSESS THE INFLUENCE OF PROACTIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

The second objective of the study was to assess the influence of proactiveness on SME performance. The findings of the study showed that proactiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.865).

5.2.3 TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF RISK TAKING ON SME PERFORMANCE

 The first third objective of the study was to investigate the effect of risk taking on SME performance. The findings of the study showed that risk taking had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.833).

5.2.4 TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECT OF COMPETITIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the effect of competitiveness on SME performance. The findings of the study showed that competitiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.759).

5.2.5 TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT OF AUTONOMY ON SME PERFORMANCE

The fifth objective of the study was to determine the effect of autonomy on SME performance. The findings of the study showed that competitiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.780).

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This part of the research focuses the conclusions of the study based on the major findings the research. The conclusions of the study were guided by the specific objectives of the study which

included determining the interplay between (innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking and competitiveness and autonomy) and SME performance as shown below:

5.3.1 TO ANALYZE THE EFFECT OF INNOVATIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

Based on the findings of the study the researcher concluded that innovativeness had a positive relationship with SME performance (.813) among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that an increase in innovativeness results in improved SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point in Masvingo Province, while a reduction in innovativeness results in a reduction in SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that innovativeness affects SME performance among SMEs at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that this is attributed to the fact that innovativeness can help to enhance the decision-making processes.

Thus, the researcher accepted the hypothesis:

H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between innovativeness and SME performance.

5.3.2 TO DETERMINE THE INFLUENCE OF PROACTIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

Based on the findings of the study the researcher concluded that proactiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.865) at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that an increase in proactiveness results in improved SME performance at Nyika Growth Point, while a reduction in proactiveness results in a decrease in SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that proactiveness affects SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher concluded that this is attributed to the fact through proactiveness an SME gains a competitive advantage by anticipating changes in future demand.

Thus, the researcher accepted the hypothesis:

H_2: There is a significant positive relationship between proactiveness and SME performance.

5.3.3 TO ASCERTAIN THE IMPACT OF RISK TAKING ON SME PERFORMANCE

Based on the findings of the study the researcher concluded that risk taking had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.823) at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also

concluded that increased participation in the risk-taking results in improved SME performance, while a reduced participation in the risk-taking results in a reduction in SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that risk taking affects SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher concluded that this is attributed to the fact that risk taking can help a SME gain competitive advantage over its competitors.

Thus, the researcher accepted the hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between risk taking and SME performance.

5.3.4 TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECT OF COMPETITIVENESS ON SME PERFORMANCE

Based on the findings of the study the researcher concluded that competitiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.759) at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that an increase in competitiveness results in improved SME performance at Nyika Growth Point, while a reduction in competitiveness results in reduced SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that competitiveness affects SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that this is attributed to the fact that competitiveness can assist an SME to compete with competitors and to remove any threats.

Thus, the researcher accepted the hypothesis:

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between competitiveness and SME performance.

5.3.5 TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECT OF AUTONOMY ON SME PERFORMANCE

Based on the findings of the study the researcher concluded that autonomy had a significant positive relationship with SME performance (.780) at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that an increase in autonomy results in improved SME performance at Nyika Growth Point, while a reduction in autonomy results in reduced SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. These results imply that autonomy affects SME performance at Nyika Growth Point. The researcher also concluded that this is attributed to the fact that autonomy can motivate employees and they can work harder and be more creative.

Thus, the researcher accepted the hypothesis:

H_5: There is a significant positive relationship between autonomy and SME performance.

5.4 Recommendations

This section focused on the recommendations of the study. The recommendations of the study were guided by the specific objectives of the study, which included determining the interplay between (innovativeness, proactiveness, risk taking, competitiveness and autonomy) and SME performance. Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

5.4.1 To investigate the effect of innovativeness on SME performance

- The findings of the study showed that innovativeness had a positive relationship with SME performance therefore rural SMEs should be innovative so as to improve their performance.
- Rural SMEs always willing to identify new products or service opportunities in the market. This can be critical in them gaining competitive advantage over their competitors and in improving their performance.
- To improve their performance rural SMEs should always search for solutions through experimentation and creative problem solving.
- To improve their performance rural SMEs should also have an environment which promotes innovation.
- As a way of improving performance rural SMEs should always provide support to employees who want to be innovative.

To improve competitive advantage and performance rural SMEs should always foster innovative and creative efforts.

5.4.2 To determine the influence of proactiveness on SME performance

- The findings for the study showed that proactiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance; therefore, rural SMEs should be proactive as a way of improving their overall performance.
- To improve their performance proactiveness is part of rural SMEs 's organisational strategy.

- In order to be sustainable and improve their performance rural SMEs should always keep tabs on the changing business environments.

- Rural SMEs should always maintain an edge over rivals in anticipation of chances or new issues. This can be critical in them gaining competitive advantage and in improving their performance.

- As a way of improving their performance rural SMEs should always keep themselves informed about those changes in the business environment.

- In order to improve their performance rural SMEs should always actively seek out new opportunities.

5.4.3 To ascertain the impact of risk taking on SME performance

- The findings of the study established that risk taking has a significant positive relationship with SME performance so it is recommended that rural SMEs should embrace risk taking.

- Rural SMEs should sometimes not be afraid to heavily borrow money to invest in their business. This can helps improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their business.

- Rural SMEs should also not be afraid to invest a significant portion of the company's resources in questionable activities. These events can sometimes bring high returns which can result in improved organisational performance.

- Sometimes rural SMEs should create new products without not knowing the potential results of those products. If these new products are successful, this could mean high returns and increased performance for the rural SMEs

- Rural SMES should not be afraid of taking financial risk where necessary. The finance can be used to invest in the business which can help improve the performance of the rural SMEs.

- Rural SMEs should not be afraid to take risks in engaging in uncertain activities where necessary. These risks usually bring higher profits and higher returns meaning improved organisational performance.

5.4.4 To establish the effect of competitiveness on SME performance

- The findings for the study showed that competitiveness had a significant positive relationship with SME performance, therefore rural SMEs should consider being very competitive in various markets.

- To improve their performance, rural SMEs should always invest in competitiveness and be competitive in their market.
- As a way of improving their performance rural SMEs should always aggressive to its rivals.
- Rural SMEs should always come up with ideas on ways to strengthen the company so that it can survive. This can help improve the performance of the SMEs.
- So as to improve their performance rural SMEs should have policies that make their organisation competitive.
- To have superior performance should always look to outsmart its rivals.

5.4.5 To establish the effect of autonomy on SME performance

- The findings for the study showed that autonomy had a significant positive relationship with SME performance, therefore rural SMEs should consider adopting and utilising autonomy.
- To improve their performance rural SMEs should give their employees the freedom and authority to update to update the company strategy
- If rural SMEs are to improve their performance should enable and inspire their employees to sustain and contribute to company efforts.
- Additionally, rural SMEs should allow employees to speak up in support of their own ideas or views. This can also motivate the employees and is critical in improving the performance of the SMEs.
- To improve their performance SMEs should always foster independent actions of its employees. This can motivate employees and the employees can come up with superior products which are competitive in the market.
- For them to improve their performance rural SMEs should also give employees freedom to search for alternative opportunities. Employees can come up with competitive products which are competitive in the market.

5.5 Areas of further studies

This study sought to establish the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on SME performance, in SMEs at Nyika Growth Point Masvingo Province. It would also be interesting to expand this study to other regions and in other industries other than the SME sector and other areas other than Nyika Growth Point and Masvingo Province.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTANNAIRE

This questionnaire was prepared by Musiiwa Obert a final year student studying a Master's Degree in Strategic Management at Great Zimbabwe State University in partial fulfilment of the program. It is a requirement for every student to carry out an academic research dissertation on a topic of his or her own choice. The research topic is: *The impact of entrepreneurial orientation on rural SME performance. A case of SMEs in Nyika Growth Point.* I request your participation in the research. Please note that this study is voluntary and you will not be forced to participate.

Instructions

Indicate by ticking in a box corresponding to your desired response

Please do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire

Kindly aid by completing this questionnaire below

All information shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick in the appropriate box.

Item No.	Item	Coding Category	
01	Gender	1. Male	☐
		2. Female	☐

02	Age(in Years)	1. Below 20 ☐
		2. 21- 25 ☐
		3. 26-30 ☐
		4. 31-35 ☐
		5. 36-40 ☐
		6. Above 40 ☐
03	Highest Level of Education	1. Secondary School Level ☐
		2. Professional Certificate ☐
		3. Professional Diploma ☐
		4. Bachelor's Degree ☐
		5. Master's Degree ☐
04	Level of employment	1. Intern ☐
		2. Para-professional ☐
		3. Executive staff ☐
		4. Management Staff ☐
05	Work Experience	1. ≤ 1 year ☐
		2. 2-5 years ☐
		3. 6- 10 years ☐
		4. 11-15 years ☐
		5.>16 years ☐

SECTION B: ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION

Use the scale 1- 5 where:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree   3 =Undecided

4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

To what extent do you agree with the statements below?

B	Statements regarding innovativeness	1	2	3	4	5

1	Our organization is always willing to identify new products or service opportunities in the market					
2	Our organization always searches for solutions through experimentation and creative problem solving					
3	Our organisation has an environment which promotes innovation					
4	Our organisation always provides support to employees who want to be innovative					
5	Our organisation always fosters innovative and creative efforts					
C	**Statements regarding proactiveness**					
1	Proactiveness is part of our organisational strategy					
2	Our organization always keeps tabs on the changing business environments					
3	Our organization always maintains an edge over rivals in anticipation of chances or new issues					
4	Our organisation always keeps itself informed about those changes in the business environment					
5	Our organization always actively seeks out new opportunities					
D	**Statements regarding risk taking**					
1	Sometimes our organization may heavily borrow money to invest in the business					
2	Our organization sometimes invests a significant portion of the company's resources in questionable activities					
3	Our organisation always creates new products without not knowing the potential results of those products					

4	Our organisation is not afraid of taking financial risk					
5	Our organisation frequently takes risks in engaging in uncertain activities					
E	**Statements regarding competitiveness**					
1	Our organisation is competitive in the market					
2	Our organisation is always aggressive to its rivals					
3	Our organization always comes up with ideas on ways to strengthen the company so that it can survive					
4	The policies at our organisation make our organisation competitive					
5	Our organisation is always looking to outsmart its rivals					
F	**Statements regarding autonomy**					
1	Our organization gives employees the freedom and authority to update to update the company strategy					
2	Our organization enables and inspires employees to sustain and contribute to company efforts					
3	Our organization allows employees to speak up in support of their own ideas or views					
4	Our organization always fosters independent actions of its employees					
5	Our organization gives employees freedom to search for alternative opportunities					

SECTION C: SME PERFORMANCE

To what extent are you satisfied with organisational performance at your Organisation based on the statements below?

F	SME performance	1	2	3	4	5
1	Revenue collection has greatly increased in the last five years.					
2	Organizational performance has greatly increased in the last five years due to reduction in costs.					
3	The quality of services has remained all-time high in the last five years.					
4	We have embraced entrepreneurial orientation which has enabled us to improve service delivery.					
5	Our organization has prioritized entrepreneurial orientation and this has improved our organisational effectiveness in the last five years.					