



## Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies and SMEs Business Survival in COVID 19 Pandemic Era in Rivers State

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**Abstract:** *The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of entrepreneurial responsive strategies on SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria. The population for this study is 377 registered SMEs in Rivers State of Nigeria. The simple random technique was used to select one respondent each from the 377 firms studied. Data for the study was collected by means of structured questionnaire. A total of 377 questionnaires were sent-out. Of the 377 respondents contacted, 261 participated in the study. After careful scrutiny, a total of 209 usable response sets was generated while, 52 were rejected, because they were despoiled and indecently filled. This guaranteed a response rate of 58 percent. The regression analysis technique was used to realize the effect of entrepreneurial responsive strategies on SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State. Findings showed that, the influence of entrepreneurial innovativeness, entrepreneurial proactiveness and entrepreneurial risk-taking on SMEs business survival were statistically positive and significant at 0.05 significant level. This implies that a well articulated entrepreneurial responsive strategy increased the chance of SMEs business survival during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The study therefore, concludes that, there is a significant effect of entrepreneurial responsive strategies on SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria, and recommends that SMEs should adopt proactiveness traits in their business dealings for survival during and after the COVID-19 era. SMEs should also, adopt innovations as means of unrelenting production by focusing progressively more on the implementation of e-commerce platforms.*

**Key words:** *COVID-19 pandemic era, Entrepreneurial responsive strategies, SMEs business survival*

### INTRODUCTION

The recent coronavirus (COVID-19) has forced immediate, far-reaching lifestyle shifts for consumers around the world, and these changes are likely to stay beyond the period of pandemic itself. The global retail industry is experiencing an unprecedented crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown and its economic recession (ER). France's economy, together with several other countries, is expected to experience an ER as it may shrink by 8 percent in 2020 due to COVID-19 (Statistica 2020). U.S. retail sales also dropped by a historic 8.7% in March, and are expected to drop by (at least) 20% moving forward, according to the National Retail Federation. Faced with uncertainty about the future, many firms are responding to recession by adapting their marketing strategy to changing consumer behavior (The Nielsen 2020). Google, among many other firms, has recently announced a cut in marketing budgets by as much as half, while

before the pandemic, they expected to increase marketing spending from the previous year (CNBC 2020), as they did after the ER of 2008.

Small and medium scale enterprise (SMEs) survival is one of the few topics in the marketing field that has been the subject of concentrated academic research for over three decades. This may be linked to economic opulence, lifestyle transformations and the quantity and intricacies of goods and services which have all stimulated intensification in product economies as engineered by the entrepreneur. The importance of entrepreneur in the Nigerian economy, as well as in the global economy, is increasing, with so many engaged in the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector. In SMEs, the idea of entrepreneurship is greatly additionally manifest given that habitually the same person embraces the roles of the owner-entrepreneur and the general manager (Bridge & O'Neill, 2013). According to Wally and Baum (1994), entrepreneurs' traits have effects on strategic decision-making, Halikias and Panayotopoulou (2003) highlighted its effects on the formulation of strategies and on marketing performance. Also, the role of entrepreneurs in the growth direction of small firms has investigated (Moran, 1998). Thus, entrepreneurs have a tough entrepreneurial strength of mind, and collectively with pulling their immense business knowledge, motivation and comprehensive set of connections, are well situated to alleviate the economic challenges faced by COVID-19 (Backman, Karlsson & Kekezi, 2020; Steffens & Omarun, 2018). It gives the impression possibly that post Covid-19 entrepreneurs will figure a new standard. From a sustainability standpoint, research of these durable responses may observe how entrepreneurs and their meticulous contexts re-establish their socioeconomic communities by holding fast to or shifting their behaviour, business models, and influence on sustainability route (Folke *et al.*, 2020). It is the businesses that are resilient, with the aptitude to respond, get a feel for and renovate, that will survive and blossom in these vague times (Ford, Steen & Verreynne, 2016).

Entrepreneurs are identified for managing trade-offs, that is, balancing opposed requirements in order to reach their goals, but COVID-19 inflicts a fresh bunch of constraints, as well as disruption of supply chains, work activities, products and service delivery methods. This has unfolded serious crises in global economies and crises itself are developments or trends that emanates from a company's internal or external environments and are professed to have the latent to affect a company's performance (Drennan, McConnell & Stark, 2015; King & McGrath, 2002). All company's roles are projected to prioritize and optimize expenses or delay responsibilities that will not fetch worth in the present situation. Companies, especially startups, have implemented an imprecise hire freeze. At the same time, online communication, online entertainment, and online shopping are seeing unparalleled growth (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Many markets, especially in SMEs, no longer exist, but industries that are doing well are those associated to healthcare and medication as well as herbs and vitamins. (Adim & Emumena, 2020).

Small and medium scale businesses have been believed to be one of the building blocks of all flourishing economy. The requisite role of SMEs in all economies have been adequately acknowledged by several researchers (Oshi *et al.*, 2018:2019; John, 2015; Muhammad *et al.*, 2015), therefore the need to look at the strategies that fosters SMEs business survival, principally in COVID-19 pandemic era. Persons and companies currently have to stomach the burden of rise

in unemployment rate owing to job losses, supply chain disruptions, insolvency, etc., brought by the COVID-19 pandemic (KMPG, 2020; Ganaie *et al.*, 2020).

However, while a handful of studies have been carried out on covid-19 and SMEs (Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Kotey & Sharma, 2015; Maxwell *et al.*, 2007; Terziiovsk, 2010); there comes into sight to be no effort at investigating whether the adoption of entrepreneurial responsive strategies could have proved valuable for SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic eras. Entrepreneurs are therefore, needed to better manage the fresh constraints to value creation, and magnetize resources to nurture, by improving profitability simultaneously. An innovative drive from a vigorous entrepreneurial network is imperative to cultivate the start-ups, to make them, once more, the locomotive for trade and industry growth, and more outstandingly, the input to post pandemic recuperation (PWC, 2020; IBIS World, 2020; Spigel, 2017), because SMEs working under extremely unfavorable circumstances need to develop substitute approaches in order to appropriately meet head-on with the hard times. This study therefore investigates entrepreneurial responsive strategies and SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Ideally, SMEs are established for survival based on their performance, but in crisis period they are faced with broken down admittance to financial inducement which is sufficient as the central motivational parcel energizing the apparently immense policies and ideal management owned by SMEs managers (Akintemi, 2020). Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic forced SMEs to face high volatile business environment loaded with doubtful financial inducement, towering operating costs, and deficient stimulus package that strangles and impinges on the business survival of countless SMEs that are profoundly depended on increased performance of their services and products in a COVID-19 pandemic situation. The restricted and closed work directives during COVID-19 crisis saw family circles and micro, small and medium sized enterprises as the hardest hit by the effect of the covid-19 pandemic.

Previous scholarly inquiries on covid-19 and SMEs business survival report that Nkwor-Azariah & Nkwor, 2016) focused on the performance standing of small and medium scale enterprises in Rivers State, Omowunmi and Idowu (2020) investigated the marketing perspectives for reinventing businesses in a post COVID-19. Conversely, there exists paucity of studies channeled in the direction of amalgamating entrepreneurial responsive strategies for SMEs business survival. Undoubtedly, entrepreneurs require an appraisal of their practices in order to persist as business entity due to the crucial responsibility they execute in improving and sustaining growth of the economy. They are required to reprioritize and discern fascinating entrepreneurial responsive strategies such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking that can profitably and competitively position them in the market place during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic era. It is based on this premise that this study examined entrepreneurial responsive strategies and SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

### Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies

The expression entrepreneurial has been applied for decades and a lot of viewpoints can be found in literature regarding its meaning, but “the most themes includes creation of wealth, creation of enterprise, and creation of innovation” (Izagah & Ikegwuru, 2016:218-231). Stevenson and Jarillo-Mosh (1986) sees entrepreneurship as a practice of generating value by putting together an inimitable package or wherewithal to obtain benefit of opportunity. Grounded in its nucleus dimensions of innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking, entrepreneurial responsive strategies have been indicated to necessitate a positive influence on firm performance (Rauch & Frese, 2008). It brings to bear a physically powerful influence on marketing performance in crisis situation. In particular, entrepreneurial responsive strategies such as those of innovativeness and proactiveness help in making safe firm's profitability at the same time as assuaging the negative effect of the crisis on the firm's processes (Soininen, Puumalainen, Sjogren & Syrja, 2012). This study adopts innovativeness, proactiveness and risk taking as the dimensions of entrepreneurial responsive strategies.

**Innovativeness:** Innovativeness originates from a nexus of persons and openings (Shane 2003). Innovativeness is more prone to transpire with some source of openings than with others: openings that constitutes knowledge-based, technology, or research-determined is tough precursors of innovativeness (Acs *et al.* 2009). Innovativeness is more prone to transpire if entrepreneurs have power over some socio-economic and personality distinctiveness such as academic education and technical milieu (Shane 2000; Koellinger 2008).

**Proactiveness:** This is the route of foreseeing and acting on upcoming requirements by hunting for fresh prospects (Venkatraman, 1989). As a breadth of entrepreneurial responsive strategies it is looked upon as a futuristic perspective reproduced in actions taken by businesses in looking forward to upcoming demand (Covin & Slavin, 1988; Miller, 1983). The entrepreneur by being proactive attempted to keep his business going despite the raging COVID-19 pandemic. Thus SMEs survival can be enhanced though entrepreneurial proactiveness.

**Risk-Taking:** Risk-taking is an instinctive attribute of resourcefulness, stern or forethoughtfulness exhibited by entrepreneurs in the face of insecurity (Izagah & Ikegwuru, 2016). Risk-taking confined the height of risk mirrored in decision on resource allotment as well as on the market and product choices, revealing in a convinced mode, the standard and the decisive factor of decision taking at firms' level (Izagah & Ikegwuru, 2016). A well articulated risk-taking activities is capable of guaranteeing a well deserved survival instinct for SMEs

### Survival of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitutes businesses such as logistics, services, trading, processing etc) with controlled capital base, petite workforce, and minute or no share base apart from with the propensity to make available jobs, goods and services that contend with foreign products in the market (Rijkers, 2014). The Central Bank of Nigeria delineates SMEs based on standards as asset base (between 5 to 500 million naira) and staff strength (between 11

and 100 employees) (CBN, 2010). This positioned SMEs with trifling share and inclined capital base businesses frequently calling for Governments intercession programmes as financing, trainings, and internship for getting hold of the desirable facility and knowledge for expansion and survival (Petrakis & Kostis, 2012). SMEs are factually affianced in a capital and capacity survival tragedy, and as such the COVID-19 crisis distorted the operational schedules of SMEs throwing up more extreme confrontation that worsen their survival and ultimately led to their shutting out of businesses (Onyinyechukwu, 2020). Clearly noticed, funds constrained SMEs from meeting her objectives due to the high impulsive business setting loaded with doubtful financial inducement, high operating costs, and lack of motivational package that strangled and affects survival of countless SMEs that are heavily depending on improved marketing performance of their services and products in a COVID-19 pandemic era.

### Empirical Reviews

Ikegwuru and Harcourt (2020) investigated the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on logistics practices in clearing and forwarding companies in Rivers State of Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population was 55 clearing and forwarding companies in Port Harcourt and the study adopted simple random sampling technique to select 275 respondents. A pilot study was carried out to filter the instrument. The quality and consistency of the survey was additionally evaluated by means of Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis was executed using regression analysis and analysis of variance. Findings exposed that COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted on logistics practices (transportation, warehousing and inventory management) and conclude that, there is a negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on logistics practices of clearing and forwarding companies in Rivers State of Nigeria. The study recommends amongst others that governments and management of clearing and forwarding companies should take steps to sustain this crucial sector during the period of Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure they remain in a position to perform transportation, warehousing and inventory management activities in the future

Arikekpar (2020) examined the impact of Covid-19 on Businesses in Nigeria. The study used secondary data derived from the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) weekly reports from the period before the lockdown (Pre-Covid-19) ranging from 17th January, 2020 to 20th March 2020 and compared with the Period during the COVID-19 lockdowns from 3rd April, 2020 to 5th of June 2020 and analyzed using ordinary least squares regression technique. The results exposed that consumer goods index and industrial goods index had a significant impact on the stock market All-share Index during the COVID-19 period while banking sector index and Oil/Gas index did not significantly impact on the NSE all share Index during the lockdown in Nigeria. The study recommends that businesses should take advantage of the Federal Government intervention on loan moratoriums and other measures to assist financial position of companies to cushion the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses in Nigeria.

Okey-Colbert and Chinakwe, P.C. (2020) determined the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria and classified the up-and-coming opportunities occurring as an outcome of the pandemic. Findings demonstrate that amidst the catastrophe originated by Covid-19, several opportunities have also materialized for innovative entrepreneurs to discover. The study recommended that SMEs should appraise the damages their firms may

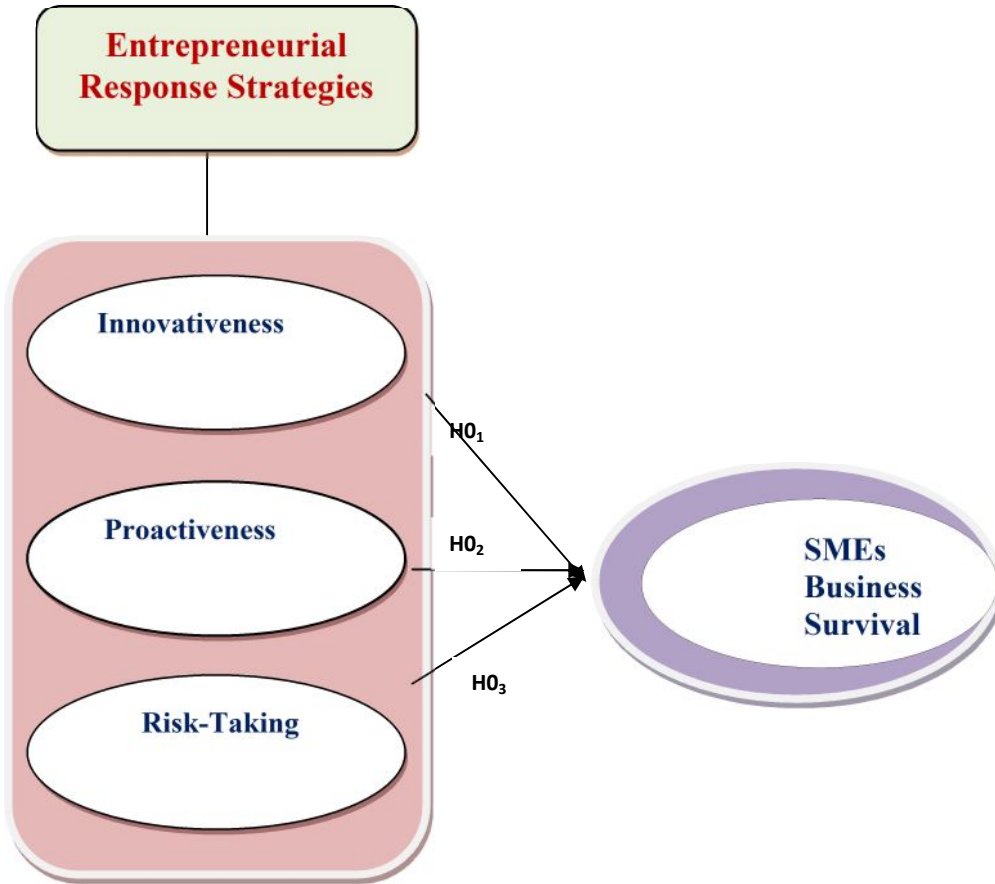
face and endeavor to tone down the negative effect of the pandemic while taking full advantage of the new opportunities.

Nwuche and Oshi (2020) investigated flexible work patterns: An empirical inquiry into survival of SMEs in Nigeria amidst COVID-19 Pandemic by means of an online survey method. Nine hundred and fifty-two (952) business owners participated in the online survey and two null hypotheses were raised and analyzed through spearman rank order correlation coefficient at a 0.05 level of significance. The study found a significant positive relationship between flexible work patterns and the survival of SMEs in Nigeria and concludes that it is practical for small businesses in Nigeria to hold close flexible work patterns as a genuine strategy to endure and prevail over the confrontation posed by the COVID19 pandemic.

Bako and Olapade (2020) examined the effect of global pandemic virus (COVID19) on small businesses in Abeokuta South L.G.A. in Ogun State by means of a survey design. Data were analyzed through regression technique and results showed that the lockdown policy by the government has considerably condensed the sales volume of the MSMEs due to weak purchasing power of their customers, reduced buying behavior has also affected the supply chain of businesses. The study recommends that government should assess the lockdown policy and return the economy to normal following health safety policies.

While the potential effects of entrepreneur's traits on strategic decision-making (Wally & Baum, 1994), strategy formulation including marketing performance (Poon *et al.*, 2006; Lee & Tsang, 2001) can show the way to the establishment of competitive advantage, it is also possible that, when the external environment is tumultuous, uncontrollable, and intimidating, it is projected that entrepreneurial response strategies play a decisive role for survival of SMEs. Based on the preceding discussion, the study originated the following research model:

Based on the review of literature, the following research model was developed:



**Figure 1:** Research Model of Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies and SMEs Survival

**Source:** Adopted from Rauch and Frese (2008).

From the research model the following hypotheses were formulated:

**H<sub>01</sub>.** Entrepreneurial innovativeness does not significantly influence SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Pandemic Era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>.** Entrepreneurial proactiveness does not significantly influence SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Pandemic Era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**H<sub>03</sub>.** Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking does not significantly influence SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Pandemic Era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

## Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional study of all the SMEs registered with the Rivers State Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Port Harcourt. There are just about 2000 SMEs that are registered with the Rivers State Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Port Harcourt as at

November, 2020. The sample size for this study was acquired from the guideline developed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) on the determination of size from a given population, and this resulted to a minimum sample size of 377. The study adopted the purposive sampling technique, and the *key informants* approach was used to assess Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) or branch managers of the firms studied.

Of the 377 respondents contacted, 261 participated in the study, ensuing a response rate of 69 percent, which has been long-established in literature that, a response rate greater than 30 percent is a fine and tolerable point when the study adopts survey questionnaire (Moser & Kalton, 1971). The 261 respondents generated a total of 209 usable response sets and of these 120(57 percent) were male while 89 (43 percent) were female. Data were subjected to regression analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS Version 22.0).

**RESULTS**

This section reports the results of the individual and combined effects of entrepreneurial responsive strategies on SMEs for survival in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**Individual Effects of Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies Components on SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Pandemic Era**

**Table 1: Individual Effects of Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies Components on SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Era (n=261)**

<b>Model Summary</b>				
Model	R	R square	Adjusted Square	R std error of the Estimate
1. Innovaiveness.	.774 <sup>a</sup>	.601	.551	.08877
2. Proactiveness	.983 <sup>a</sup>	.969	.963	2.6751
3. Risk Taking	.809 <sup>a</sup>	.655	.651	.50668

**a. Predictors (constant), Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk-taking**

**Dependent Variable: SMEs Business Survival**

**Source: SPSS Window Output, Version 22.0 (based on 2021 field survey data).**

Three models were tested indicating three predictors besides constant to determine the dependent variable that assemble opening necessity in the ultimate equation (IN, PA, RT, SBS).

Multiple correlation coefficient R=0.774, 0.983 and 0.809 measures the degree of relationship between the actual values and predicted values. Predicted values are obtained as a linear combination of X1 (Innovativeness), X2 (Proactiveness) and X3(Risk-taking). R<sup>2</sup> represents percentage of the variance in the dependent variable. Table 1. shows that 60.1% of the variation (model 1) in SMEs business survival is explained by innovativeness single-handedly, 96.9% of



the variation (model 2) is explained by Proactiveness and 65.5% of the variation (model 3) is explained by Risk-taking. Table 1 indicates that entrepreneurial responsive strategies are statistically significant and account for SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**Combined Effects of Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies Components on SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Pandemic Era**

**Table 2: Combined Effects of Entrepreneurial Responsive Strategies Components on SMEs Business Survival in COVID-19 Pandemic Era (n=261)  
Model Summary**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistic			
				R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Chang	Durbin Watson
0.861	0.741	0.692	0.60080	0.741	4.375	0.002	1.609

**a. Predictors (constant), Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk-taking**

**Source: SPSS Window Output, Version 22.0 (based on 2021 field survey data).**

The Coefficient of correlation (R) can be considered as a measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable. The value of 0.861 indicates a good level prediction. The Coefficient of determination (R-square) is the proportion of variation in the dependent variable (SMEs Business Survival) that is explained by the independent variables. Hence, 74.1 percent of the variation in performance can be explained by independent variables in the model. The adjusted R-square is used to test the overestimation of R square. The estimates show an error of 0.60080, which cannot be considered as very large. The Durbin Watson statistic  $d = 1.609$  lies between the two critical values of  $1.5 < d < 2.5$ , and therefore it can be assumed that there is no first order linear autocorrelation data of multiple linear regression model. Hence, it can be concluded that the overall model is statistically significant, or that the variables have a significant combined effect on the dependent variable. The innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking variables exact significant influence on SMEs business survival, since the significant value (or p-value) is .002 which is below the 0.05 level of significance.

**Multi-collinearity Test**

More sophisticated correlations in data than just the pairwise correlations allow the use of tolerance and variance inflation factors (VIF) associated with  $X_h$ . The tolerance explains the statistics used to disclose the degree to which the independent variables have linear (straight line)

relationships with one another. Tolerance values heading towards zero and values of VIF exceeding 10 are cardinal signs of multi-collinearity. This decision rule enables the study to conclude that there is no threat of multi-collinearity amongst the dimensions of the independent variables.

**Table 3: Multi-collinearity Test (n=261)**

Model Dimension	Eigen value	Condition Index	B	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		Collinearity statistics	
				Std error	Beta	T	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	.065	29.294	2.643	0.17	-	2.197	0.000	-	-
Innovativeness	.015	11.444	.900	.022	.452	.945	0.000	1.000	1.000
Proactiveness	.022	9.439	1.103	.059	.946	18.840	0.000	1.000	1.000
Risk-taking	.028	8.411	0.640	.089	.800	7.171	0.000	1.000	1.000

**Source: SPSS Window Output, Version 22.0 (based on 2021 field survey data).**

Table 3 presents values, t values and significance values of independent variables. All the independent variables viz. Innovativeness (t=.945, p=0.000), Proactiveness (t=18.840, p=0.000), and Risk-taking (t=7.171, p=0.000) are statistically significant at 5% significance level and therefore the alternate hypotheses are accepted. It implies that independent variables have significant effect on SMEs business survival. Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk-taking have positive effect on SMEs survival. The coefficients give a measure of the contribution of each variable to the model. The higher the value, the greater is the effect of independent variable on dependent variable. Proactiveness has the highest coefficient ( = 0.945) and therefore it has greater effect on SMEs business survival, followed by Risk-taking (0.800) and Innovativeness (0.452).

**Discussion**

SMEs followed a strategy of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking for their business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era. This discovery is fascinating because the profound and long-drawn-out pandemic led to significant turn down in purchasing power of customers. The transcribed study put forward that SMEs, even though confronted with an exceptionally inauspicious and ominous economic atmosphere adopted innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking rather than sightlessly allow the ruthless external environment emanating from COVID-19 pandemic scourge and disengage them from business. This shows that entrepreneurs, who had

high levels of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking aptitude, had a preference for surviving in their business during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

A closer look at the findings of the study reveal that the reasons of SMEs business survival in the COVID-19 era was as a result of their regarding proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness as the *ways* of survival. The results show that entrepreneurial proactiveness traits have positive effects on SMEs survival. This confirms Covin and Slevin (1988) assertion that the entrepreneur should be in the spotlight of all business behavior models. Our findings substantiate previous research indicating that entrepreneurial proactiveness traits influence tactical decision-making that borders on well being of a business entity. For instance Carson and Gilmore (2000) found that SMEs has habits that start off from the entrepreneur-owner-manager which is an observable fact that is supported by the current findings. However, the study's findings is not consistent with Doyle and Armenakyan (2014) who found that in period of crisis, entrepreneurs might not be enthusiastic to place prominence on proactiveness or innovativeness.

Moreover, the study's results confirm that risk-taking as an entrepreneurial responsive strategy has a positive and significant influence on SMEs business survival, substantiating the alternative hypothesis. Thus, the greater the heights of risk taking, the more the focus on SMEs business survival. This finding corroborates Doole and Lowe (2008) who found that SMEs are so subjugated by the charisma of their owners that they end up becoming their embodiment, as the entrepreneurs' views and mind-set verifies the assumed tactics. Thus, nurturing innovativeness, engaging in proactiveness and taking premeditated risks are solutions to SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study explains the extent of the influence of entrepreneurial responsive strategies on SMEs business survival in COVID-19 pandemic era, and it is unmistakable that entrepreneurs with an appropriate set of traits as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking can significantly improve the chances of SMEs business survival. Statistically, the study revealed a positive and significant influence of entrepreneurial innovativeness, entrepreneurial proactiveness and entrepreneurial risk-taking on SMEs business survival at 0.05 significant levels. The study therefore, concludes that, there is a significant effect of entrepreneurial responsive strategies on SMEs business survival in the COVID-19 pandemic era in Rivers State of Nigeria, and recommends that, SMEs should adopt proactiveness traits in their business dealings for business survival during and after the COVID-19 era. SMEs should also, adopt innovations as means of unrelenting production by focusing progressively more on the implementation of e-commerce platforms.

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