



## Leveraging Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategies for Business Growth and Resilience During Crisis and Beyond

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**KEYWORDS:** Entrepreneurial marketing strategies, resource leveraging, customer-centric innovation, opportunity-driven marketing, business growth

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** this study examined the impact entrepreneurial marketing strategies on business growth in times of crisis and beyond. It investigates how marketing strategies are embedded in entrepreneurship during times of crisis and beyond using opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The study employs a descriptive and explanatory research design with a focus on SMEs that have implemented entrepreneurial marketing strategies. A structured online survey was administered to 430 SME owners, managers, and policymakers from various industries. Stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure broad representation. The multiple regression and correlation analysis were used to analyse the data to assess the impact of entrepreneurial marketing strategies on business growth support using SPSS.

**Findings:** The results show that SMEs' resource leveraging, customer-centric innovation, and opportunity-driven marketing significantly impact business growth. Businesses that integrate entrepreneurial marketing strategies tend to achieve greater adaptability and long-term sustainability.

**Practical implications:** The study clarifies the importance of entrepreneurial marketing strategies for SMEs, policymakers, stakeholders and industry in navigating economic volatility. It emphasises that businesses need to use entrepreneurial marketing strategies (resource leveraging, customer-centric innovation, and opportunity-driven marketing) in order to remain competitive.

**Originality/value:** This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge by demonstrating that entrepreneurial marketing strategies is effective in times of crisis and beyond. It also highlights how resource leveraging, customer-centric innovation, and opportunity-driven marketing are essential for enhancing SMEs' sustainability and how marketing strategies are always evolving.

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## INTRODUCTION

In order to navigate business growth during and after crises, entrepreneurial marketing strategies have become essential. In order to maintain and improve business performance, entrepreneurs frequently work in dynamic situations where uncertainty, economic downturns, and competitive challenges call for creative marketing strategies (Ahmad, 2025; Balubaid, 2025; Hasanah et al., 2025). Businesses must use entrepreneurial marketing strategies like opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and

resource leveraging because standard marketing strategies frequently fail in times of crisis (Csákné-Filep et al., 2025; Kant et al., 2023; Tolossa et al., 2024). These strategies assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in identifying new opportunities, engaging with customers in a proactive way, and optimising their resources in order to maintain a competitive edge (Afwa et al., 2021; Eggers et al., 2025; Waluyohadi et al., 2023). Support for business growth, including financial assistance, strategic partnerships, and policy initiatives, is crucial to ensuring resilience and long-term viability. The relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and firm growth support is crucial in times of crisis to foster adaptability and sustain operations beyond brief disruptions (Becha et al., 2025; Jha, 2023; Odeyemi et al., 2024).

Despite the growing recognition of entrepreneurial marketing as a strategic instrument for business growth, issues remain regarding its effectiveness in both crisis situations and long-term recovery. Previous studies, including those by Tolossa et al. (2024), highlight the role that competitive advantage plays in mediating the relationship between business success and entrepreneurial marketing. However, they don't go into great detail on how businesses continue to expand during a crisis. In a similar vein, Kant et al. (2023) examine the role that marketing strategies have in the long-term expansion of businesses, although they don't go into great detail on how these strategies relate to shifting economic conditions. While studies like those by Amadasun and Mutezo (2025) and Rubio-Andrés et al. (2024) affirm the significance of customer-centric methods and strategic networking, they do not provide insight into how these strategies develop beyond crisis management. Additionally, although Crick et al. (2024) highlights the impact of market dynamism, there is a lack of thorough knowledge in the literature regarding how SMEs might use entrepreneurial marketing strategies for long-term success after a crisis.

This study, however, seeks to fill these gaps by examining how entrepreneurial marketing strategies impact business growth in times of crisis and beyond. Research scholars such as Etim et al. (2021) and Manishimwe et al. (2022) discuss the effects of digital marketing and customer-centric strategies during crises, but they don't offer a thorough analysis of how these strategies translate into long-term, sustainable business practices. The unpredictable nature of crises, such global pandemics and economic recessions, emphasises the necessity of an organised strategy for entrepreneurial marketing that not only reduces short-term risks but also promotes long-term company expansion. SMEs can gain practical insights to effectively manage uncertainty by understanding the relationship between business growth support mechanisms and entrepreneurial marketing strategies.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how entrepreneurial marketing strategies: opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging support business growth both during and after crises. Through the incorporation of findings from earlier empirical studies, Steinerowska-Streb et al. (2022), Mashingaidze et al. (2024), and Alshagawi and Mabkhot (2024), this research aims to provide a framework for SMEs to include entrepreneurial marketing strategies as a long-term resilience strategy. The study assesses how these strategies affect competitive advantage, market positioning, and business continuity during both crisis and recovery periods. The study also looks at how external business growth support systems, such financial aid and policy changes, might boost entrepreneurial marketing initiatives. Hence, this study seeks to bring both theoretical and practical insights to the study of entrepreneurial marketing and business growth, as well as helpful suggestions for SMEs trying to maintain expansion in a constantly changing business environment.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Conceptual Review*

#### *Entrepreneurial Marketing Strategies*

Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) has emerged as a strategic measure for controlling business growth during economic downturns and crises. Scholars claim that EM is a flexible, innovative, and opportunity-driven marketing approach made to take into account the constraints and uncertainties of commercial efforts (Crick et al., 2024; Hadiyati & Hendrasto, 2021; Krishnan et al., 2022). According to Tolossa et al. (2024), EM places a high value on innovation and prudent risk-taking, maximising the use of limited resources to have the most possible market impact. Similarly, according to Zahara et al. (2023), EM uses digital marketing skills to boost marketing performance and position businesses for long-term success.

According to Etim et al. (2021), SMEs need EM, particularly when it comes to leveraging online advertising, email marketing, and social media interaction to boost visibility and sales. This is in line with the results of Sari et al. (2023), who found that opportunity-driven initiatives and proactive marketing significantly improve business resilience. Furthermore, Alshagawi and Mabkhot (2024) highlight the importance of entrepreneurial value creation, asserting that companies that use EM strategies find a noticeable boost in performance.

One significant area of consensus among scholars is the way in which EM fosters creativity. Kant et al. (2023) claim that EM enhances sustainability by encouraging businesses to adjust their strategies in reaction to shifting market conditions. Rubio-Andrés et al. (2024) found that EM encourages innovation by employing resource-maximizing competitive strategies, particularly in times of crisis. Amadasun and Mutezo (2025), critiques of EM strategies highlight implementation challenges. Despite the advantages of EM, SMEs in resource-constrained environments face challenges with strategic networking and customer relationship management, which are essential for long-term growth. Additionally, Mashingaidze et al. (2024) stress that risk-taking and opportunity vigilance have the most effects on market performance, with other EM aspects producing low substantial benefits.

Entrepreneurial marketing, or EM, is a vital business strategy for organisations navigating economic downturns and crises. An increasing number of scholars are investigating the function of marketing strategies in entrepreneurship, particularly in challenging times and beyond (Bruce et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024). This study discusses three independent variables of entrepreneurial marketing strategies: opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging.

#### *Opportunity-Driven Marketing*

Opportunity-driven marketing is a strategic approach in which businesses seek out for, recognise, and take advantage of new market opportunities. According to Tolossa et al. (2024), SMEs can maintain long-term success by implementing strategic and innovative marketing strategies that complement their corporate goals. Crick et al. (2024), contend that entrepreneurial marketing orientation (EMO) helps businesses to adjust to shifting market dynamics and take advantage of chances for long-term growth, are consistent with this viewpoint.

Zahara et al. (2023) also point out that opportunity-driven marketing improves a company's capacity to engage customers and sustain commercial expansion, particularly when combined with digital marketing tools. Nonetheless, there are several objections to this method's applicability, especially in settings with limited resources. Although opportunity-driven marketing can have major advantages, Kant et al. (2023) argues that ineffective leadership and unfavourable working conditions frequently undermine its efficacy. Notwithstanding these criticisms, the majority of research concurs that opportunity-driven marketing promotes flexibility and resilience, making it a crucial entrepreneurial marketing strategy both during and after crises (Cucino et al., 2023; Foris et al., 2022).

#### *Customer-Centric Innovation*

Customer-centric innovation is defined the process of adapting marketing campaigns to the shifting needs and preferences of consumers (Balubaid, 2025; Wang et al., 2020). Incorporating customer feedback into innovation processes, businesses can maintain a competitive edge even with limited resources (Rubio-Andrés et al., 2024). Research indicates that innovation acts as a mediator between entrepreneurial marketing and market performance, emphasising the need for SMEs to prioritise customer-driven innovation (Kant et al., 2023; Rubio-Andrés et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023).

Similarly, Sari et al. (2023) reveal that MSME performance during crises is greatly influenced by customer-focused entrepreneurial marketing, which encompasses proactiveness, value creation, and opportunity-driven actions. Mashingaidze et al. (2024), contend that in tough economic times, SMEs that prioritise value creation and opportunity vigilance fare better than their rivals. However, Amadasun and Mutezo (2025), argue that strategic networking and larger market considerations should be used in addition to customer-centric approaches, criticising the overemphasis on customer pleasure as the only factor influencing business performance. However, the idea that customer-centric innovation is crucial for SMEs hoping to prosper in unstable market conditions is supported by the consensus of researchers.

#### *Resource Leveraging*

Resource leveraging is the strategic utilisation of available resources to maximise commercial impact. Etim et al. (2021) found that e-marketing strategies, social media, email marketing, and online advertising, greatly enhance SME performance by utilising digital resources. This is in line with Alshagawi and Mabkhot (2024), which highlights the significance of entrepreneurial marketing and value creation in boosting SME success in competitive environments.

According to Steinerowska-Streb et al. (2022), internationalisation is a potent resource-leveraging strategy that increases SME resilience in times of crisis. Their research indicates that businesses that compete in international markets are more able to withstand economic downturns. The study did note that firm size and business activity type have little bearing on survival, indicating that resource leveraging and strategic decision-making are necessary. Manishimwe et al. (2022) contend that measured risk-taking outperforms resource leveraging alone as a performance-enhancing strategy. Despite these objections, the literature generally supports the notion that strategic resource use is a crucial entrepreneurial marketing strategy that ensures firm viability during and after crises.

#### *Business Growth*

According to Crick et al. (2024), financial performance, market expansion, and long-term sustainability are often used metrics to gauge business growth, especially in SMEs. According to business growth theories, in order for businesses to endure and prosper in tough economic times, they must implement flexible strategies (Odeyemi et al., 2024). Steinerowska-Streb et al. (2022) claim that internationalisation improves SME survival after a crisis since it gives them access to a variety of revenue streams from worldwide markets. Similarly, in an increasingly competitive digital landscape, Zahara et al. (2023) contend that digital marketing competencies are essential for maintaining firm growth.

One recurring theme in the literature is the connection between EM strategies and company expansion. Manishimwe et al. (2022) claim that measured risk-taking boosts market share and revenue production, hence bolstering the resource-based hypothesis in the hotel industry. In contrast, Sari et al. (2023) claim that while EM aids in corporate expansion, innovation capabilities such as the capacity to create new goods, services, and business models have a bigger impact on long-term sustainability.

Critiques of business development models centre on the success-influencing setting. Mashingaidze et al. (2024) assert that an organization's capacity to recognise and seize market possibilities is a key component of corporate growth, making entrepreneurial vigilance a crucial success factor. Crick et al. (2024) argue that although market dynamism strengthens the relationship between EM and SME performance, firms may jeopardise their growth trajectories if they don't maintain their flexibility and adaptability.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Tolossa et al. (2024), Limited research has been done on competitive advantage, sustainability, and entrepreneurial marketing in SMEs. This study examined how business performance and entrepreneurial marketing aspects relate to one another, using competitive advantage as a mediating variable. Through stratified and straightforward random sampling, data were gathered from 387 SMEs in Oromia, Ethiopia, using a descriptive and explanatory research approach. According to structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, competitive advantage partially mediates the favourable effects of entrepreneurial marketing on company performance. The study came to the conclusion that SMEs can succeed eventually by using creative and calculated marketing strategies. It suggests coordinating marketing strategies with overarching business objectives, making the most of available resources, and encouraging creativity in order to boost sustainability and competitive advantage while encouraging social and economic responsibility.

Rubio-Andrés et al. (2024), SMEs can maintain their competitiveness in spite of their limited resources by using strategic initiatives that stimulate innovation and enhance their performance in the market. This study investigated how business strategy affected market performance in Spanish SMEs, taking into account the moderating influence of perceived COVID-19 risk and the mediating role of innovation. To analyse data, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for 1,842 entrepreneurial enterprises with fewer than 250 employees. According to the results, competitive strategies foster innovation, which in turn improves market performance—particularly when marketing capabilities are robust. While optimising resources and bolstering marketing efforts for long-term competitiveness, the report advises SMEs to use differentiation methods to capitalise on perceived risk for innovation.

Kant et al. (2023), This study examined how marketing strategies affect the expansion of sustainable enterprises, with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurial innovation throughout the invention stage. A survey of 425 customers and staff members in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's digital banking sector was carried out. Using a straightforward random sample technique, data was gathered using both probability and non-probability sampling. The results showed that low employee engagement, unfavourable working conditions, and inadequate leadership all contributed to issues with business sustainability and unsuccessful marketing campaigns. The study comes to the conclusion that long-term success depends on resolving these problems. To increase company sustainability, it suggests strengthening leadership strategies, boosting working conditions, and putting into practice efficient marketing plans.

Amadasun and Mutezo (2025), To improve financial performance and competitiveness, SME owners and managers employ entrepreneurial marketing (EM), a crucial strategic technique. The difficulties Basotho SMEs encounter while putting EM strategies into practice, however, have not received much attention in study. This study evaluated the effects of customer satisfaction, strategic networking, and customer connections on the financial performance of SMEs in Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng, and Maseru districts of Lesotho. Utilising a descriptive-correlation study approach, questionnaires were utilised to gather data, which was then statistically analysed. According to the findings, SMEs' market success is greatly influenced by all three EM elements. The report advises governments and SME owners to give these strategies top priority in order to enhance company operations and promote long-term financial success.

Crick et al. (2024), The relationship between entrepreneurial marketing orientation (EMO) and SME performance has been the subject of conflicting research, making it unclear how decision-makers may effectively implement EMO strategies. Market dynamism was employed as a moderating factor in this study to examine the relationship between EMO and SME performance. Following rigorous statistical checks, the data which came from 916 SMEs in Malaysia was analysed. The findings demonstrated that market dynamism, surprisingly, strengthens the positive relationship between EMO and SME performance. In changing marketplaces, the study highlights the importance of adapting EMO strategies. SMEs are advised to use flexible marketing strategies and capitalise on external market conditions to increase competitiveness and long-term growth in uncertain business environments.

Etim et al. (2021), This study investigated how e-marketing strategies affected the performance of SMEs in the new normal of business. The impact of email marketing, online advertising, and social media marketing on SME growth was investigated. Using a cross-sectional survey research design, 295 SME operators' information was gathered using structured questionnaires. To evaluate the assumptions, multiple linear regression analysis was used in SPSS 23. The results demonstrated a considerable improvement in SME performance from all three e-marketing strategies. According to the study's findings, SMEs should aggressively use email marketing, social media, and online advertising to boost sales and visibility. It suggests using search engine advertising, Facebook and Instagram, and targeted email marketing to grow and sustain a firm.

Manishimwe et al. (2022), This study investigated the effects of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) strategies on Nigerian hotels' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. It looked at how customer-centric EM strategies affected the resilience of businesses. 578 owner-managers and top managers of 66 hotels in Lagos and Yola participated in a cross-sectional survey that used structured

questionnaires to collect data. Purposive sampling was employed, and SPSS 21 was utilised to analyse the data. While other EM aspects had trivial effect, the results indicated that measured risk-taking greatly increased overall performance, revenue per room, and market share. To improve post-COVID-19 recovery, the study suggests bolstering less effective EM strategies. It adds to the body of literature by confirming resource-based theory in the hospitality industry in Nigeria.

Mashingaidze et al. (2024), This study looked at how Zimbabwean small-scale retailers' market performance was affected by entrepreneurial marketing (EM). It sought to determine how corporate success in a tough economic climate is impacted by the EM dimensions of opportunity vigilance, customer centricity, value generation, and risk management. 260 SME owners and managers participated in a cross-sectional survey in Chegutu, Zimbabwe, where standardised questionnaires were used to gather data. Structural equation modelling and WarpPLS 7.0 were used to analyse the data. The results indicated that value creation and opportunity vigilance had the most effects on market success. The study comes to the conclusion that in order for SMEs to be competitive, they must actively seek out market possibilities and add value. With a bigger sample size, future research could extend the study to different scenarios.

Steinerowska-Streb et al. (2022), This study evaluated how firm size, business activity type, and internationalization influence the survival of SMEs after an economic crisis. It sought to identify the elements that support SME sustainability in the aftermath of a catastrophe. 344 SMEs in Poland provided survey data for a seven-year quantitative study. The results showed that as companies operating in overseas markets were more resilient following the global crisis, internationalisation greatly improves SME survival. However, survival was not significantly impacted by firm size or type of business activity. The study comes to the conclusion that in order to increase long-term sustainability, SMEs should enter international markets. Future studies might examine other survival determinants in other economic environments.

Alshagawi and Mabkhout (2024), This study looked at how small and medium-sized businesses' (SMEs') performance is affected by strategic entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial marketing, and entrepreneurial value in a market that is competitive and changing quickly. The study used SmartPLS 3 to analyse data from 188 SMEs in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. The findings demonstrated that, whilst strategic entrepreneurship had no discernible impact, entrepreneurial marketing and entrepreneurial value greatly improve SME performance. The report emphasises how crucial value creation and marketing strategies are to the success of businesses. While recognising the limits of the study and recommending more research on the function of strategic entrepreneurship in various circumstances, it recommends that SMEs concentrate on these areas in order to enhance performance.

Zahara et al. (2023), This study investigates how the marketing performance of SMEs in Palu, Indonesia, is affected by entrepreneurial marketing using digital marketing skills. Data were gathered using a two-stage sampling procedure: Area Sampling and Stratified Random Sampling, with a sample of 197 SMEs selected using the Yamane and Isaac algorithm. To test hypotheses, path analysis using SmartPLS software was employed. The results show that digital marketing capabilities and marketing performance are positively affected by entrepreneurial marketing. Digital marketing capabilities also improve marketing results. However, the association between marketing performance and entrepreneurial marketing is only slightly mediated by digital marketing. In order to take advantage of opportunities, add value, and support business growth in a market that is becoming more and more digital, SMEs need bolster their digital marketing strategies.

Sari et al. 2023), This study looks at how West Javan MSMEs' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic is impacted by their capacity for innovation and entrepreneurial marketing. A survey of 290 MSMEs was conducted online to gather data, and SmartPLS was utilised for statistical analysis. The results demonstrate the noteworthy influence of both innovation capability which includes product, service, process, and business model innovation and entrepreneurial marketing, which is characterised by opportunity-driven actions, proactiveness, customer focus, risk-taking, resource leveraging, and value creation. Compared to entrepreneurial marketing, innovation capability has a greater impact (0.465) (0.156). Innovation in services and processes are important factors in MSME success. In order to increase profitability, productivity, and competitiveness and guarantee long-term business resilience, MSMEs should strengthen their innovation initiatives.

Dzogbenku and Keelson (2019), This study investigates how entrepreneurship and marketing relate to SMEs in emerging markets. Using quantitative data from 113 SMEs in Tema, Ghana's industrial, services, and agricultural sectors, the study used purposive sampling to choose managers and owners of companies with marketing and entrepreneurial duties. According to the findings, entrepreneurship success is strongly influenced by market orientation, customer orientation, competitor orientation, intelligence generation, and information distribution. Using marketing strategies improves socioeconomic development, income creation, and business growth. Marketing strategies should be integrated by entrepreneurs in emerging areas in order to enhance performance. In order to promote poverty alleviation and sustainable development, stakeholders ought to assist SMEs in embracing marketing-driven entrepreneurship.

Csákné-Filep et al. (2025) This study looks at the relationship between entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education in Central and Eastern European (CEE) transitional economies. Education is a vital instrument for reviving entrepreneurial knowledge in these areas, where decades of socialism disrupted private enterprise. The study used Pearson's correlation analysis to examine national-level data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and the Annual Population Survey (APS) from 2021 to 2023. According to the results, early-stage entrepreneurship in CEE, but not in other areas, was somewhat connected with primary and secondary

entrepreneurial education in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, no meaningful association was discovered, though. The study highlights the necessity for ongoing policy assistance by indicating that the influence of education on entrepreneurship changes over time.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### *The Resource-Based View (RBV)*

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory was developed by Barney (1991) and provides a framework for understanding how companies leverage their unique resources and skills to obtain a long-term competitive advantage. This theory is particularly relevant to entrepreneurial marketing strategies during and after crises because it highlights the importance of internal firm resources both material and intangible in managing market volatility.

According to RBV, businesses are more likely to maintain growth in trying times if they make use of their unique resources, such as marketing information, customer networks, and inventive capabilities. Businesses that successfully use internal marketing resources gain more sustainability and growth, even in volatile markets, according to Kant et al. (2023). This supports RBV's claim that internal resources shape competitive advantage and is consistent with the findings of Crick et al. (2024), which highlight the flexibility of entrepreneurial marketing strategies in dynamic situations.

The RBV framework is a good fit for the fundamental components of entrepreneurial marketing strategies, which include resource leveraging, customer-centric innovation, and opportunity-driven marketing. Opportunity-driven marketing is centred on spotting and leveraging new market trends, a process that is firmly anchored in ingenuity. According to Tolossa et al. (2024), strategic resource allocation mediates competitive advantage in SMEs, meaning that businesses that can make the most of their current resources typically beat their rivals. In a similar vein, resource leveraging, a crucial component of entrepreneurial marketing, illustrates how businesses make use of their capacities to innovate, adapt, and maintain competitiveness in times of crisis (Rubio-Andrés et al., 2024).

Some scholars have criticised RBV's internal focus, claiming that it ignores the influence of external environmental components, despite the fact that it is a helpful theoretical framework for defining how entrepreneurial firms deploy internal resources to continue business growth in unpredictable times (Steinerowska-Streb et al., 2022). Although the theory demonstrates how companies can use their own resources to drive growth, it ignores the effects of market conditions, competition, and external shocks all of which are crucial during times of crisis.

### *Effectuation Theory*

Effectuation Theory, developed by Sarasvathy (2001) for decision-making, explains how businesses deal with uncertainty by making use of the resources at their disposal and focussing on affordable loss rather than predictive planning. This theory is particularly relevant to understanding how business growth assistance during and after crises incorporates entrepreneurial marketing methods. Entrepreneurs struggling with market crises often use effective reasoning by prioritising flexible, iterative marketing strategies over rigorous, long-term planning. Manishimwe et al. (2022) demonstrated how customer-centric marketing strategies helped Nigerian hotels remain resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is consistent with effectuation's emphasis on using existing relationships and adapting plans in response to new opportunities. Additionally, effectuation's belief that companies thrive when they adapt to shifting market demands rather than following predetermined plans was supported by Sari et al. (2023), who emphasised the significance of opportunity-driven entrepreneurial marketing in MSMEs.

Another characteristic of customer-centric innovation is successful implementation. Entrepreneurs typically collaboratively create value with its customers, using real-time information to improve their services, rather than using conventional market research approaches. According to Dzogbenku and Keelson (2019), companies in emerging nations mostly rely on information exchange and consumer interaction to foster innovation and commercial growth. This is consistent with the effectuation principle, which maintains that partnerships and stakeholder participation may be leveraged to accomplish strategic objectives.

Despite its benefits, Effectuation Theory has been critiqued for its lack of scalability (Alshagawi & Mabkhot, 2024). While small businesses can effectively manage crises by applying effectuation strategies, larger organisations with well-defined marketing strategies may find it difficult to rely solely on effectual thinking. Additionally, Kant et al. (2023) pointed out that effectuation could not be as effective in industries with a lot of regulatory limitations, where strategic foresight and predictive planning are still crucial.

### *Theoretical Framework*

RBV and Effectuation Theory offer a thorough grasp of how entrepreneurial marketing strategies promote business growth in times of crisis and beyond. Effectuation Theory emphasises the flexible decision-making procedures that enable entrepreneurs to successfully manage uncertainty, while RBV describes how businesses use internal resources to obtain a competitive edge.

Both theories' applicability is supported by empirical research, such as that conducted by Tolossa et al. (2024) and Mashingaidze et al. (2024). While the latter shows how effectuation strategies promote market performance through opportunity-driven marketing and customer interaction, the former stresses resource leveraging as a way to maintain competitive advantage.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive and explanatory research approach to examine how marketing strategies are integrated into entrepreneurship both during and after crises. It takes a systematic approach to assess the relationships between opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging because of the flexibility of entrepreneurial marketing strategies and their impact on business growth. The research methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how various strategies impact business growth support during crises and their durability thereafter.

The study focuses on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who have employed entrepreneurial marketing strategies to sustain and boost their expansion. The sample frame is made up of SMEs from a range of industries, ensuring a diverse spectrum of business experiences. A total of 430 respondents, comprising managers, owners, and policymakers of SMEs, were selected for the study. By providing sufficient statistical power for data analysis, the sample size is selected to improve the validity of the findings. To ensure that different business industries, such as manufacturing, retail, and service-based organisations, are fairly represented, the study employs a stratified random sample technique.

An online survey collects primary data using a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The design of the questionnaire is founded on validated metrics from the corpus of recent literature and complies with entrepreneurial marketing strategies. Respondents share their experiences with opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging, as well as their thoughts on how to assist business growth times of crises and beyond. The survey lessens bias in data collection by ensuring uniformity and reliability in responses.

The collected data is examined using correlation analysis and multiple regression. These statistical strategies allow the examination of the relationships between business growth support and entrepreneurial marketing strategies. Multiple regression analysis provides insight into the predictive power of marketing strategies on business growth support, whilst correlation analysis determines the strength and direction of relationships between variables. The analysis is conducted using SPSS, a statistical application often used for reliable quantitative analysis.

Entrepreneurial marketing strategies are essential for supporting business growth, especially during tough economic times. According to the empirical literature, competitive advantage, resilience, and long-term performance are greatly influenced by opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging (Tolossa et al., 2024; Rubio-Andrés et al., 2024). These strategies allow businesses to quickly adjust, maximise resources, and take advantage of new market opportunities during times of crisis (Crick et al., 2024; Mashingaidze et al., 2024). Therefore, the ability of businesses to successfully integrate different marketing strategies is critical to supporting business growth. Research shows that during post-crisis recovery phases, companies that use entrepreneurial marketing strategies typically prove greater levels of financial performance, innovation, and sustainability (Amadasun & Mutezo, 2025; Kant et al., 2023).

Furthermore, customer relationships and strategic networking facilitate business continuation and growth beyond crises. It has been discovered that SMEs who make investments in online advertising and digital marketing capabilities see notable gains in market performance (Etim et al., 2021; Zahara et al., 2023). Particularly in aftermath of the COVID-19 epidemic, the importance of digital transformation in improving consumer engagement and marketing effectiveness has grown. In light of these realisations, the research investigates how businesses that give priority to entrepreneurial marketing strategies support business growth assistance, guaranteeing long-term competitiveness and resilience (Steinerowska-Streb et al., 2022; Alshagawi & Mabkhot, 2024).

## RESULT

### *Demographic Data Interpretation (Table 1)*

The demographic information provided by the respondents shows the distribution of age, gender, years of operation, corporate position, educational background, and industry sector.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>	18-25	50	11.6
	26-35	175	40.7
	36-45	130	30.2
	46-55	75	17.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	230	53.5
	Female	200	46.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Secondary	20	4.7
	Diploma	80	18.6
	Bachelor's Degree	230	53.5
	Master's Degree	80	18.6

	Doctorate Degree	20	4.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Position in Business</b>	Business Owner	122	28.4
	Manager	181	42.1
	Senior Staff	83	19.3
	Others	44	10.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Years of Business Operation</b>	Less than 1 year	100	23.3
	1-5 Years	84	19.5
	6-10 Years	203	47.2
	More than 10 Years	43	10.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Industry</b>	Manufacturing	80	18.6
	Retail	85	19.8
	Services	65	15.1
	Technology	55	12.8
	Agriculture	75	17.4
	Others	70	16.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Field Survey, 2025

The age distribution of respondents shows that the ages of 26 to 35 comprise the largest percentage of respondents (40.7%), followed by those aged 36 to 45 (30.2%). 11.6% of the total is made up of the youngest age group (18–25), while 17.4% is made up of the 46–55 age group.

Also, the gender distribution shows that the study sample is primarily made up of entrepreneurs and professionals in their early to middle years, who are frequently at the forefront of business innovation and decision-making, according to this distribution. The sample is composed of 53.5% male respondents and 46.5% female respondents. The gender representation is nearly equal, reflecting the growing participation of both men and women in business leadership and revealing a range of viewpoints on business growth support and entrepreneurial marketing strategies.

The educational qualification of respondents shows that the majority of respondents (53.5%) have a bachelor's degree, followed by a master's degree (18.6%) and a diploma (18.6%). 4.7% of respondents have a doctorate, while 4.7% have only completed secondary school. The substantial proportion of respondents with postsecondary education indicates that a considerable number of the study's corporate executives and decision-makers have formal education, which could affect how they approach marketing and business strategy.

The distribution of respondents in terms of position shows that the majority of responders (42.1%) are managers, with business owners coming in second (28.4%). Other business roles make up 10.2%, while senior staff make up 19.3%. The sample's preponderance of managers and business owners suggests that the study includes viewpoints from important decision-makers in charge of putting entrepreneurial marketing strategies into practice and assessing their effectiveness.

The distribution of respondents in term of years in business operation shows that nearly half of the respondents (47.2%) manage businesses that have been in existence for six to ten years, whereas 23.3% operate businesses that are less than a year old. 19.5% of companies have been in business for one to five years, whilst 10.0% have been in company for more than ten years. Many of the respondents have a great deal of experience dealing with business problems, as seen by the significant number of enterprises that have been in operation for six to 10 years. Meanwhile, the considerable proportion of more recent businesses highlights the significance of entrepreneurial marketing strategies for launching and sustaining growth, particularly in unpredictable economic times.

More so, the respondents are from a wide range of industries, but the two most represented are manufacturing (18.6%) and retail (19.8%). Agriculture comes in second at 17.4%, followed by service-based businesses at 15.1%. The technology sector accounts for 12.8%, while other industries make up 16.3%. This distribution provides a comprehensive understanding of how SMEs manage crises and sustain growth, ensuring that the results reflect marketing strategies in a variety of business scenarios.

#### Regression Analysis Interpretation (Table 2)

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimate
1	.951 <sup>a</sup>	.904	.903	.33690

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Leveraging, Opportunity-Driven Marketing, and Customer-Centric Innovation  
b. Business Growth

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, (2025)

The summary of the regression model shows a strong relationship between business growth and entrepreneurial marketing strategies. The independent variables resource leveraging, opportunity-driven marketing, and customer-centric innovation and the dependent variable, business growth, appear to be highly correlated, as indicated by the R-value of 0.951. The R Square value of 0.904 indicates that the entrepreneurial marketing strategies taken into account in the model can account for about 90.4% of the variability in business growth. The model's robustness is confirmed by the Adjusted R Square value of 0.903, which takes into consideration the number of predictors and makes sure that extra variables aren't inflating the findings. Based on the discovered Marketing Strategies, the model offers a dependable prediction of business growth, as indicated by the standard error of estimate (0.33690), which shows a comparatively small margin of error.

*Interpretation of Each Predictor's Significance (Table 3)*

**Table 3: Regression showing the significance of each predictor to Business Growth**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	453.675	3	151.225	1332.335	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	48.353	426	.114		
Total	502.028	429			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Leveraging, Opportunity-Driven Marketing, and Customer-Centric Innovation  
b. Business Growth

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, (2025)**

These findings demonstrate that the predictors have a considerable influence on business growth and confirm the importance of entrepreneurial marketing strategies in maintaining and enhancing firm performance. The ANOVA results in Table 3 show how the regression model is generally relevant in explaining business development. The model's highly significant F-statistic of 1332.335 and p-value of 0.000 show that resource leveraging, opportunity-driven marketing, and customer-centric innovation are the independent variables that together have a significant impact on business success. The low mean square (.114) of the residual further supports the reliability of the model.

*Interpretation of Each Predictor's Contribution (Table 4)*

**Table 4: Contribution of each predictor to Business Growth**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.028	.043		-.667	.505
Opportunity-Driven Marketing	-.099	.022	-.098	-4.548	.000
Customer-Centric Innovation	.485	.031	.454	15.637	.000
Resource Leveraging	.625	.026	.611	23.807	.000

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, (2025)**

Overall, each predictor's unique contribution to business success is highlighted in the coefficient table (Table 4). The finding that the constant (-0.028) is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.505$ ) indicates that the independent variables have a greater impact on business growth than do other outside variables. Resource leveraging had the strongest positive effect on business growth among the predictors, with a beta coefficient of 0.611 and a highly significant p-value of 0.000. This suggests businesses that efficiently use and optimise their resources grow more. Another crucial factor is customer-centric innovation, which has a beta value of 0.454, meaning that businesses who prioritise innovation according to customer demands experience significant growth. On the other hand, opportunity-driven marketing has a negative beta value (-0.098) and a large p-value (0.000), suggesting that aggressive opportunity-seeking marketing strategies may not always produce beneficial results for business growth. This could imply that excessive or poorly executed marketing campaigns that do not appropriately use resources and align with customers may be impeding growth.

**Table 5: Correlation**

	RES	COR	LEA	COM
<b>BG</b>	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
<b>OD</b>	Pearson Correlation	.596**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
<b>CI</b>	Pearson Correlation	.880**	.711**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
<b>RL</b>	Pearson Correlation	.920**	.605**	.809**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
<b>Total</b>	N	430	430	430

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, (2025)**

The correlation table (Table 5) shows business growth (BG) and the three predictors: opportunity-driven marketing (OD), customer-centric innovation (CI), and resource leveraging (RL). The results show that RL has the strongest positive correlation with business growth ( $r = 0.920, p = 0.000$ ), indicating that companies that prioritise customer needs and innovation tend to have higher growth, while OD has a moderate correlation with business growth ( $r = 0.596, p = 0.000$ ), indicating that while searching for market opportunities is beneficial, its impact on growth is not as strong as that of resource leveraging and customer-centric innovation. Additionally, there is a substantial association ( $r = 0.809, p = 0.000$ ) between resource leveraging (RL) and customer-centric innovation (CI), indicating that businesses that invest in innovation also often make efficient use of their resources.

## DISCUSSION

### Regression

The impact of entrepreneurial marketing strategies on business growth support during and after crises was evaluated in this study using regression analysis. The findings show that opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging greatly contribute to business sustainability and performance. This is consistent with the findings of Tolossa et al. (2024), who discovered that the beneficial effects of entrepreneurial marketing on SME performance are partially mediated by competitive advantage. Similarly, marketing-driven innovation boosts SME competitiveness, especially when risk perception is taken into account, as Rubio-Andrés et al. (2024) showed. These conclusions are further supported by Kant et al. (2023), who claim that entrepreneurial marketing is crucial for long-term sustainability, albeit it is dependent on capable leadership and positive working conditions. Additionally, Amadasun and Mutezo (2025) agree that customer involvement and strategic networking are crucial to financial performance, supporting the view that marketing strategies are essential for corporate expansion. Lastly, Crick et al. (2024) provides empirical support by highlighting how market dynamic improves the association between entrepreneurial marketing orientation and SME performance.

Etim et al. (2021), in contrast to these findings, argue that email marketing and social media are the primary digital marketing strategies that drive the expansion of SMEs, suggesting that conventional entrepreneurial marketing strategies may not be as effective. Manishimwe et al. (2022) offer contradictory evidence as well, pointing out that measured risk-taking had a greater impact on business resilience during COVID-19 than other entrepreneurial marketing components. The wide application of entrepreneurial marketing frameworks was also called into question by Mashingaidze et al. (2024), who discovered that value creation and market vigilance had a greater impact than conventional marketing strategies. These findings are further contested by Steinerowska-Streb et al. (2022), who contend that internationalization—rather than domestic marketing strategies—is the primary factor influencing SME sustainability after the crisis. Alshagawi and Mabkhot (2024) question how strategic entrepreneurship affects SME success, emphasising the significance of marketing and value development efforts.

### Correlation

The correlation research revealed strong positive relationships between financial performance, business resilience, and entrepreneurial marketing strategies. Businesses who employed customer-centric innovation and opportunity-driven marketing in particular demonstrated increased adaptability and long-term competitiveness. This supports the findings of Zahara et al. (2023), who found that digital marketing boosts entrepreneurial marketing effectiveness, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Sari et al. (2023) provides additional evidence for this perspective by showing that the combination of inventive capability and entrepreneurial marketing leads to improved SME performance. Dzogbenku and Keelson (2019) argue that market orientation and intelligence production enhance entrepreneurship success, which in turn fosters more socioeconomic growth. In a similar vein, Crick et al. (2024) stress that flexible marketing strategies support long-term business viability when they align with external market circumstances. Finally, Kant et al. (2023) confirm that a business's ability to expand its market and retain customers is directly tied to its ability to implement proactive marketing strategies.

On the other hand, Manishimwe et al. (2022) found that the most crucial factor influencing company resilience was risk-taking rather than customer-focused marketing strategies. Internationalisation and firm size are more crucial for a company's survival than marketing strategies alone, claim Steinerowska-Streb et al. (2022). Mashingaidze et al. (2024) assert that risk management and opportunity alertness, not traditional marketing strategies, are the primary determinants of success in highly volatile situations. Etim et al. (2021) asserts that digital marketing instruments, as opposed to general entrepreneurial marketing frameworks, are the most accurate measures of business growth in contemporary marketplaces. Finally, Alshagawi and Mabkhot (2024) argue that entrepreneurial value creation, rather than strategic marketing, has a higher impact on SME performance, particularly in rapidly evolving markets.

## CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study improves the understanding of how entrepreneurial marketing strategies support firm expansion, especially during and after economic downturns. Based on the findings, businesses that put an emphasis on resource efficiency, customer-driven innovation, and opportunity discovery are more likely to survive and be financially stable. This builds on earlier research by showing that entrepreneurial marketing is a strategy for both short-term survival and long-term growth. The study further supports the idea

that technology is essential to modern corporate performance by highlighting how digital transformation is strengthening these marketing strategies. The results further emphasise the importance of customer engagement by showing that businesses that place a high value on strong customer relationships are better able to withstand market volatility.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that entrepreneurial marketing strategies play an essential role in promoting business growth both during and after times of crisis. Contradictory viewpoints emphasise the growing significance of digital marketing, internationalisation, and risk-taking strategies, even if empirical data clearly supports the beneficial effects of opportunity-driven marketing, customer-centric innovation, and resource leveraging. In light of these realisations, companies need to take a comprehensive and flexible strategy, combining digital marketing and entrepreneurial strategies to guarantee long-term viability and competitiveness.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Businesses should focus on opportunity-driven and customer-centred marketing strategies to boost resilience in unpredictable economic times.
- ii. Policymakers and stakeholders should encourage entrepreneurial marketing strategies, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses looking to gain a competitive edge.
- iii. Businesses should also be proactive in ensuring that their marketing strategies align with both external market trends and overarching business goals.
- iv. Future research should examine how these strategies work in other industries to gain a better understanding of their effects.

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