

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETITIVE AGGRESSIVENESS AND BRAND AWARENESS OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

RESEARCH ARTICLE

This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverage firms in Rivers State. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the extent to which entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness relates with brand awareness of food and beverage firms in Rivers State. The population of the study was 25 food and beverage firms in Rivers State. Five (5) administrative managers of the food and beverage firms – marketing manager, production manager, facility manager, sales manager, and purchasing manager – were respondents from each of 25 food and beverage firms, totalling 125 respondents. We used primary data from food and beverage firms in Rivers State to ascertain the relationship between the variables. The primary data were collected through a questionnaire that was designed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very high extent to low extent. Two research hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences to establish the relationships between the variables. The results of the test showed that entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness has significant and positive relationships with brand recall and brand recognition – measures of brand awareness. Therefore, the study concluded that entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness positively relates to the brand awareness of food and beverage firms in Rivers State. Therefore, the study recommended that the management of the food and beverage firms should operationalize entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverage firms to enhance brand recall and brand recognition and lead to organizational success of brand awareness of food and beverage firms in Rivers State.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness, brand awareness, food and beverages firms, Rivers State

INTRODUCTION

The Latin term "Competer," from which "competitiveness" is derived, suggests a vested interest in a battle for market share (Ambastha & Momaya, 2003). Ogueze, Edwinah, and Olori (2017) define competition as "the active pursuit by rival firms of the same product, market share, industry, and market position held by another firm." It's the money that one marketing company gives to another for having the same product, pricing, distribution,

promotion, market share, industry, and position. According to them, a company's competitiveness is based on how it interacts with its competitors and adapts to new conditions and established demands in the market or environment (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Ude, 2025). According to Barney (2001), an entrepreneur might be a person, a business, or a nation. The entity of a marketing organization or position embedded in entrepreneurial activities is competitiveness.

That behaviour is called "competitive aggressiveness," and it ensures a constant stream of innovative products and services that are designed to surpass rivals on the market (Tan, 2008). It's a marketing group's capacity to implement strategies with the goal of outmanoeuvring the competition. To be competitively aggressive is the behaviour of a business owner who is confident in his or her ability to outmanoeuvre competitors by developing and releasing cutting-edge goods and services to a hungry consumer base. Even more so, according to Kropp, Landsay, and Shoham (2006), fierce competition is a crucial part of market repositioning and the battle for market dominance. Aggressive competition is what drives businesses to foresee when a situation will change significantly, allowing them to be the first to market with solutions. As a result, the degree of competitive aggression depends on the efficiency with which resources are divided among various operations designed to fill in market gaps. Any given firm can exhibit aggressiveness in the face of competition.

The food and beverage business is a diverse sector recognised universally, facilitating the delivery of light meals and beverages to consumers. Gomes (2017) observes that food and beverage companies constitute a sector characterised by management, supply, reception, storage, distribution, manufacturing, and the provision of complete or light meals. Daly, Dias, and Patuleia (2021) assert that the food and beverage establishment offers more than just light meals; it encompasses the manufacture of the product or service, cuisine, ambiance, comfort, safety, and customer expectations. These companies provide both physical and intangible attributes that will be evaluated by the customer (Daly et al., 2021). The food supply chain starts with the manufacturer of products or services aimed at reaching the customer. Marketers use social networking platforms as tools for marketing and communication within the food and beverage business (Nadda, Dadwal, & Firdous, 2015). Donath (2004) previously said that marketers are using social media platforms to promote brands in the food and beverage business. Social media marketing enables firms in the food and beverage sector to collect feedback, comments, and ideas from consumers via many platforms, including blogs, images, and ratings (Hajir, 2012). This allows enterprises in the food and beverage sector to proactively improve their goods and services, hence more successfully meeting client requirements (Damian-Okoro & Akani, 2024).

People are more likely to remember the qualities of a brand when they are familiar with it (Shwastika & Keni, 2021). The goal of any good brand awareness campaign should be to attract potential customers, get them to sign up for the service, and then increase the company's bottom line (McKee 2010). Customers are more likely to remember a brand if they are already acquainted with it (Shwastika & Keni, 2021). According to Celi and Eagle (2008) as cited in Kilei, Iravo, and Omwenga (2016), one of the most important aspects of branding is the ability for consumers to recognise and recall a brand. Therefore, if consumers aren't familiar with a product's brand, sales won't happen (Shwastika & Keni, 2021). Raising consumers' familiarity with a brand is the first and most important step in building consumer loyalty to that brand in the eyes of consumers and potential buyers (Davis, Golicic, & Marquardt, 2008). Building recognition of a brand is, hence, crucial for a number of industrial endeavours. According to Kilei, Iravo, and Omwenga (2016), the main idea is that

when people are aware of a brand, it improves the brand's performance in the market. This is because, first, it reduces the expenses associated with buyers' knowledge and, second, it makes them feel less risky when buying the brand. The first mechanism suggests that when consumers have lower information costs, they are less likely to rely on extrinsic cues to help them make a purchasing decision, which in turn reduces the resource demands associated with gathering that information (Van Osselaer & Alba, 2011 as cited in Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016). Here, familiarity with the brand is a strong predictor of satisfaction with the service and the dedication of the provider (MacDonald & Sharp, 2011 as cited in Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016).

Previous efforts in this regard include: (Asika & Konya, 2020; Abidemi, Lawal, Yaro, Nanchan, & Shedun, 2020; Tamunosiki-Amadi, Coleman, & Izim, 2019; Odoyo, Wanza, & Mumbua, 2014). Industry watchers argue that companies that adopt an unconventional approach to trying to communicate with their consumers within the existing industry are caught up in the vagaries of the problem. Advancements in communication technology through social media are transforming business practices (Akani, Ogan, Osanebi, & David, 2024). The literature is abundant with studies that aim to link aspects of entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness to brand awareness. For instance, Asika and Konya (2020) looked at how competitive aggressiveness affected the success of an event management company in Port Harcourt. Abidemi, Lawal, Yaro, Nanchan, and Shedun (2020) also studied the influence of competitive aggressiveness on autonomy and performance. Tamunosiki-Amadi, Coleman, and Izim (2019) examined the connection between competitive aggressiveness and organizational resilience in mobile Telecommunication businesses in Rivers State. Information was gathered from MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile's regional offices and megacenters. Research conducted by Odoyo, Wanza, and Mumbua, (2014), looked at the difficulties faced by Kenya's rift valley bottlers while introducing new goods to consumers. The study's goal is to identify the obstacles that businesses face while promoting new goods. Uasin-Gishu County's Rift Valley Bottlers Limited served as the research's case study focus. Data was gathered primarily via the use of questionnaires and interview guides. A total of 12 upper-level managers, 48 regular workers, and 93 customers were included in the sample. Kozubikova, Sopkova, Krajcik, and Until (2017) analysed the correlation between entrepreneurial drive and individual variations in inventiveness, proactivity, and aggression in the face of competition. Hence, the focus of the current study is to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverages firms in Rivers State, using entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand recall and brand recognition as metrics of brand awareness. The following hypotheses and conceptual frameworks are posed to guide the study: determine the extent of the relationship between entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverage firms in Rivers State.

H₀₁: Entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness does not significantly relate with Brand Recall brand of food and beverages firms in Rivers State.

H₀₂: Entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness does not significantly relate with brand recognition of food and beverages firms in Rivers State.

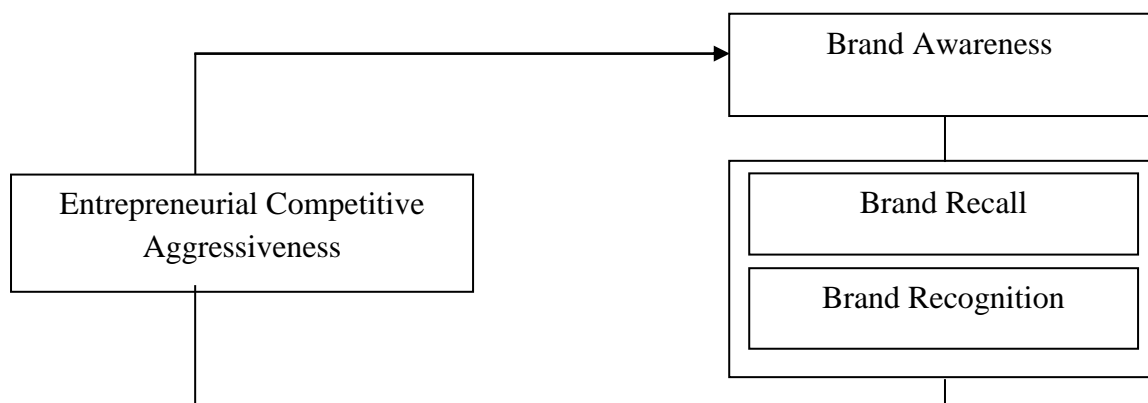


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverages firms in Rivers State.

Source: Olannye & Onobrakpeya (2017), Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, (2016).

Literature Review/Theoretical Foundation of the Study

Innovation diffusion theory Technology Acceptance Model

The idea of innovation dispersion guided the inquiry. According to the theory, there are several steps involved in the adoption of innovations. These include being aware of the innovation, being convinced to adopt it, deciding whether or not to adopt it, adopting and implementing it, and finally, being confirmed (Rogers, 2009). In addition, according to the theory's proponent, factors such as the innovation's perceived benefits, its level of compatibility with current systems and processes, the innovation's complexity, the ease of testing it, and the visibility of its results all play a role in the decision to adopt it (Rogers, 2009). This model is well-suited to the research at hand as it describes in detail how SMEs come to embrace digital marketing and what drives them to do so. Internet service providers may have influenced small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to choose digital marketing owing to the benefits it offers. In order to accomplish marketing goals and tasks, businesses are increasingly turning to social media as a means of electronic execution of technical operations. In the field of social media research, firm performance is a standard measure. Thus, it is concluded that the theory is appropriate for this study.

The Concept of Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness

The aggressiveness of an entrepreneur in the face of rival businesses is an example of entrepreneurial competitiveness. Continuous monitoring is essential, as is the development of tactics to counter those of rivals in order to gain an edge and improve performance (Porter, 1985). In order to stay ahead of the competition, businesses must continually assess the market, identify and respond to threats, and re-evaluate their strategies. According to the research of Lumpkin and Dess (1996:139), referenced by Akani et al. (2021), "competitive aggressiveness refers to an organization's inclination to directly and strongly battle its rivals to obtain entry or enhance position" (139). When it comes to taking on established businesses, "the kind of intensity and head-to-head posturing that new competitors usually demand" (Akani, Wami, & Ikeguru, 2020), competitive aggressiveness is a proxy for an entrepreneurial attitude.

A hostile attitude or caustic retort, they said, is what sets competitive aggressiveness apart. According to Covin and Covin (1990), a company's competitive aggressiveness can be seen in its efforts to outshine rivals through proactive and innovative measures, such as launching initiatives that prompt competitors to respond, launching new modes of operation or products first, and signalling a massive competitive bearing. In light of the above, it is clear that an entrepreneur's competitive aggressiveness may take two distinct forms: (i) an emphasis on challenging competitors, and (ii) an emphasis on seeking out and embracing new challenges.

From an entrepreneur's perspective; the threats presented by rival businesses, it is using logic to get one up on an adversary. The entrepreneur takes a proactive stance against threats presented by competitors, seeking to gain insight into them and then exploiting them via the development of novel goods, strategic positioning, and the customization of price, advertising, and distribution to maximise profit. An entrepreneur's orientation is their response to threats from other businesses. Because of the threats posed by other businesses, an organization's focus, either strengthen or weaken them. In addition, a marketing firm's ability to set itself apart from the competition depends on its familiarity with the goods and services offered by similar firms (Erasmus, 2015).

The entrepreneur uses the difficulties presented by the supplier, the host community, the employees, the new product, the pricing, the distribution channels, and the advertising to their advantage. Challenges come in many forms and are encountered by all types of organizations. What defines an entrepreneur is how they react to these difficulties. In contrast, if the entrepreneur has a low orientation towards the new problem, he may be less focused, less aggressive, less resilient, less agile, and less adaptable to the task. This is because he will be less concerned about the rival and will be more inclined to leverage resources. The business owner may arrange a meeting with the suppliers that serve his competitors, and question them about their other clients. It's a good place to begin, but it's possible that the vendors won't provide all relevant detail about their rivals that the entrepreneur could find interesting. The business owner uses his own best judgement in conjunction with the data provided by suppliers to classify client goals in terms of product, price, promotion, and location in order to outdo rivals' offers.

New competitive threats are a constant reality for all marketing organizations. It's possible that a new company may enter the market and render the marketing organization obsolete by providing a service or product that is functionally equivalent to theirs. But competition isn't simply another company that may syphon off marketing funds; it can also be a new product or service in development that you should be selling or licencing before your rivals do. Therefore, the marketing organization must also be on the lookout for any emerging threats or competitors at all times. Moreover, the marketing group may use this information about emerging threats and competitors to more accurately assess how unbeatable they really are. Knowledge about these new entities may also aid the marketing organization in developing plans to capitalise on the flaws and risks posed by its rivals. Thus, the measures of the entrepreneurial marketing paradigm (proactivity, risk management, customer intensity, resource leveraging, and inventive emphasis) strengthen the resilience of food and beverages firms.

Most marketing companies have a significant difficulty in the introduction of new products, since these products are one of the most crucial factors in ensuring the long-term viability of the company (Oduola & Yakubu, 2017). Products that are thought to be novel to the market are more difficult to successfully promote (Didia, 2000). There are many categories that can be applied to the launch of new products and services based on how innovative they are and

how much value they provide to consumers. According to Cooper and Kleinschmidt (2007), a marketing organization can improve the robustness of new product development by gathering market data, conducting an analyses of the internal and external environment and resources, and coming up with a product development strategy that is in line with the company's overall objectives. This implies that marketing departments should collect as much data as possible about consumers in order to better cater to their requirements and desires and provide useful feedback throughout the product creation process (Odoyo, Wanza, & Mumbua, 2014).

This new product may have difficulties in three areas: with consumers, with developers, or with the market. The difficulty presented by customers is known as the consumer-based difficulty. Developer-based difficulties are problems that are presented by the product's developers. whereas market-based difficulties are those that come from the market itself. In conclusion, it is crucial for marketing managers to grasp the significance of these difficulties and the comfort they may provide to their respective businesses. If marketing managers want to learn more about their competitors, they need go no farther than the local chamber of commerce, trade and professional associations, the directories and survey reports found in any business reference library, and our strategic information centres.

The Concept of Brand Awareness

When people are able to identify a brand, remember it, and have a positive impression of it, we say that they are brand conscious. The ability of a prospective buyer to recognise and associate a particular brand with a certain category of goods is known as brand awareness (Tritama & Tarigan, 2016). While often neglected, brand awareness is the first and most fundamental aspect of customer brand equity (Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016; Tong & Hawley, 2009). Consumers' familiarity with a brand is foundational to their product assessment process (Shwastika & Keni, 2021). The degree to which consumers comprehend a brand, the degree to which the brand is present in their minds, and the ease with which they can recall this understanding is all measured by brand awareness (O'Guinnet et al., 2009). As stated by Shwastika and Keni (2021), "brand awareness is the measurement of the accessibility of a brand in the memory of the customer, and it can be measured through brand recall." People remember brands because they are easily recognisable and because they are well-known. Once brands become deeply established in consumers' hearts and thoughts, they will be easy to remember (Shwastika & Keni, 2021).

According to Mowen and Minor (2011), brand awareness refers to the degree to which customers are able to recognise and easily get a product or service from a certain firm. According to Huang and Sarigollu (2011), as referenced in Kilei, Iravo, and Omwenga (2016), raising brand awareness is an implicit step in building brand equity in the minds of consumers. Consumers' familiarity with a brand, or their level of brand awareness, has a significant role in their purchasing decisions (Gustafson & Chabot, 2007). "Aided awareness" and "top of the mind awareness" are the two main types of brand awareness, according to Ferris et al. (2010) as stated in Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga (2016). A customer is said to have "aided awareness" when they are given a list of brand names and are asked to choose one out of the list (Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016). In contrast, "top of the mind awareness" refers to when a customer naturally thinks of a brand whenever they see that brand's associated product category (Keller, 2008).

Additional information can be found in consumers' abilities to confirm prior experiences with a particular brand and in their recall of that brand in response to similar cues, such as logos, when presented with the category of products or services in question or a need within that

category (Liu et al., 2010 as cited in Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016). To understand the brand's importance and standing in the eyes of their target audience, managers must know how well-known the brand is among customers (Khurram, Qadeer & Sheeraz, 2018). This is based on the premise that service suppliers usually need to put money into areas like advertising, retailing, and exhibits to build a strong brand. High levels of brand awareness suggest to the buyer that the firm has been in business for a long time, that its products/services are widely distributed, and that many other buyers purchase the services/products associated with the brand (Aaker, 2011 as cited in Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016). This suggests presence and substance.

The reduction of perceived danger is the subject of the second mechanism. Buying a well-known brand probably makes decision-makers feel safer as they won't be held responsible as much if the choice turns out to have been wrong. A large number of other buyers are likely to acquire the brands that the buyer is acquainted with (Aaker, 2011). Their expectation that acquiring a well-known brand would not put them at a disadvantage in the market is therefore well-founded. On the other hand, when people recognise the brand, it usually means the service or product is good. Therefore, high-awareness brands affect brand choice because they lower functional risk for the client (Kilei, Iravo, & Omwenga, 2016). So, it's safe to say that brand awareness is the ability for customers to recognise a product from any distance based on what they've heard or seen.

Measures of Brand Awareness

Kilei, Iravo, and Omwenga (2016) conducted a contextual analysis of Kenya's banking industry to examine the influence of brand awareness on the performance of service brands in the market. The investigation was divided into two categories: brand recall and brand recognition. This investigation employs brand recall and brand recognition as proxy variables.

Brand Recall

Brand recall refers to the degree to which a customer may remember a brand when prompted by a particular situation (Prashar et al., 2012). This information is stored in the consumer's memory and may be accessed when the stimulus is encountered. This is the foundation of brand recall. The probability of rescinding a recall is greater for a brand that successfully cultivates its image and identity in the consumer's awareness (Khurram, Qadeer & Sheeraz, 2018). Brand recall refers to the process of retrieving a particular product or brand with which the customer has previous familiarity or experience (Bagozzi & Sailk, 1983). Recall may occur in a facilitated or unfacilitated manner. Aided recall occurs when a customer is exposed to a brand name via an advertising. Conversely, when an unbranded commercial is shown to the customer to educate them of the brand name, it is termed unassisted recall.

It is the ability of a consumer to remember a brand when given certain cues about the brand. Khurram, Qadeer, and Sheeraz (2018) quote research by Baumann, Hamin, and Chong (2015) that states that for this process to work, customers must be able to correctly recall the brand. How well consumers can recall a brand depends on the category of the product, the amount of satisfaction with the brand, and the specifics of the purchase or use of the brand in question (Memon, Arif. & Farrukh, 2016). A consumer's ability to remember both the brand and its competitors is essential since it forms the basis of their decision-making process when buying a product (Nedungadi, 1990). Consumers need to focus in order to remember the brand when given a relevant reason (Memon, Arif. & Farrukh, 2016). Recall and top-of-mind awareness of a well-known brand may be more important and consequential, according to

Aaker (1996). When the responder successfully recovers the target object from memory in response to a cue, it is known as a brand recall (Khurram, Qadeer & Sheeraz, 2018).

Brand Recognition

Brand recognition is the capacity of consumers to verify previous revelations regarding the brand when the brand is used as an indication (Latif, Islam, & Noor, 2014). It is the capacity to identify the brand from any place. Brand recognition is the ability of customers to identify a particular brand among others, sometimes termed "aided recall." A scenario in which a person is prompted to recognise a familiar brand name from a compilation of names within the same product category is referred to as assisted recall. Brand recognition refers to the degree to which customers identify a brand based on its recognised qualities or messaging, according to Hamid, Rasool, Kiyani, and Ali (2012). Brand recognition and brand recall efficacy are inherently connected to brand awareness. It relates to the consumer's ability to confirm previous exposure to the brand when given a prompt (Memon, Arif. & Farrukh, 2016). Savins et al. (1995) noted that brand awareness is a vital asset for a firm; yet, it has sometimes been used in a harmful way. The management must endeavour to achieve brand awareness to enhance the purchase experiences of customers.

Keller (1993) defines brand recognition as the rapidity with which a customer recognises and distinguishes a brand upon the presentation of any of its elements, such as its logo or slogan. Recognition transpires when the customer is provided with a thorough comprehension of the advertising to ascertain if it has been encountered before. The bulk of people choose products with which they are acquainted. The objective of brand recognition is to confirm that the brand has been previously encountered when presented with a stimulus.

Another benefit of brand familiarity is that it helps managers think about the details that potential customers need to know (Rossiter, 2014). The brand name could be being mentioned. There may be a visual representation of the brand logo. Rossiter (2014) states that for brand recognition to occur, the brand stimulus has to be iconically represented, meaning it needs to be exactly how the customer would see it. Also, only "Yes" answers should be taken into account when evaluating the brand awareness metric; "No" and "Not sure" are not acceptable options. The research on psychological decision-making has also shown that recognition may significantly impact people's assessments. Traditionally, brand recognition has been determined by looking at the present market share, the amount of consumer awareness, or the penetration level during sales growth. Kim et al. (1997), and businesses used their well-known brands to attract customers from various walks of life.

The Recognition Heuristic (RH) was put forward by Gigerenzer, Todd, and the ABC Research Group (1999; Goldstein & Gigerenzer, 2002). It states that when we see an object and think it has a higher criterion value for the particular judgement at hand, we tend to favour it over the unrecognised one. Both techniques are used to gauge the extent to which consumers are familiar with the brand or product via memory testing. According to Plessis (2005), recognition is a direct method, while recall is an indirect one. In this assignment, the validity of recognition is strong in proportion to the city's size (Todd & Gigerenzer, 2000). If consumers have a low degree of brand recognition, it doesn't matter much when making a purchase choice, but if they have a high level of brand recognition, it shows how important the brand's origin is. Because of this, according to Freeling, Leiter, and Person (1997), "the recognition (brand or product name) that hangs over the company door, the name of the product, or the name that describes a service." According to Kim and Chung (1997), brand awareness is also linked to how consumers perceive the product's quality. Consumers will

choose our product over an unknown one based on their familiarity with the brand, according to Hamid, Rasool, Kiyani, and Ali (2012). Brand awareness is one of the main ways our product stands out from the competition. In real time, customers' evaluations of alternatives may be impacted by brand recognition, which is an external signal of product quality that can be freely offered to them (Kim and Chung, 1997).

According to Prashad et al. (2012), brand recall is the quantity by which consumers can recollect a brand in reaction to a certain event. The customer remembers this and may use it the next time the stimulus is available. Remembering a brand starts with this. Khurram, Qadeer, and Sheeraz (2018) found that brands with strong identities in consumers' minds were less likely to have their recalls revoked. When a customer develops an association with a certain brand, they are more likely to be able to recreate that experience (Bagozzi & Salk, 1983). Both aided and unaided recall are possible. A customer experiences improved recall when exposed to a brand name via advertising. On the other hand, "unaided recall" describes the situation in which the customer is informed of the brand name via the presentation of an unbranded commercial.

It is the ability of a consumer to remember a brand when given certain cues about the brand. Khurram, Qadeer, and Sheeraz (2018) quote research by Baumann, Hamin, and Chong (2015) that states that for this process to work, customers must be able to correctly recall the brand. How well consumers can recall a brand depends on the category of the product, the amount of satisfaction with the brand, and the specifics of the purchase or use of the brand in question (Memon, Arif. & Farrukh, 2016). A consumer's ability to remember both the brand and its competitors is essential since it forms the basis of their decision-making process when buying a product (Nedungadi, 1990). Consumers need to focus in order to remember the brand when given a relevant reason (Memon, Arif. & Farrukh, 2016). Recall and top-of-mind awareness of a well-known brand may be more important and consequential, according to Aaker (1996). When the responder successfully recovers the target object from memory in response to a cue, it is known as a brand recall (Khurram, Qadeer & Sheeraz, 2018).

Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness and Brand Awareness

A Port Harcourt event management company's performance was examined by Asika and Konya (2020) in relation to the impact of hostile competition. Each participant was asked to complete a survey consisting of sixty-six items. Because it was a cross-sectional study, we could compare the outcomes across different categories. We used Croibach's alpha to check how consistent the questionnaire instructions were. The findings show that aggressive competition significantly affects the performance and profitability of events. Furthermore, Abidemi, Lawal, Yaro, Nanchan, and Shedun investigated how hostile competition affected autonomy and performance (2020). The relationship between competitive aggression and organizational resilience was investigated in mobile telecommunications companies in Rivers State by Tamunosiki -Amadi, Coleman, and Izim (2019). The challenges encountered by rift valley bottlers in Kenya while offering new products to customers were examined by Odoyo, Wanza, and Mumbua (2014). Researchers Abidemi, Lawal, Yaro, Nanchan, and Shedun examined how intense competition affected autonomy and performance in the year 2020. We used a questionnaire to collect data about SMEs in Kaduna State. Entrepreneurs and managers who took the time to fill out the surveys themselves were the subjects of the study. The hypothesis testing was conducted using PLS-SEM. The results show that small and medium-sized businesses do better when their owners are more independent and active in the marketplace. The relationship between competitive aggression and organizational resilience was investigated in mobile telecommunications companies in Rivers State by Tamunosiki -

Amadi, Coleman, and Izim (2019). The regional offices and megacentres of MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile were the sources of information. Odoyo, Wanza, and Mumbua (2014) assessed the challenges encountered by rift valley bottlers in Kenya while launching new products to the market. Finding out what companies encounter while trying to promote new products is the main objective of the research. Rift Valley Bottlers Limited of Uasin-Gishu County was the subject of the case study. The main tools for data collection were interview guides and questionnaires. Twelve senior managers, forty-eight ordinary employees, and ninety-three consumers made up the sample. Researchers Kozubikova, Sopkova, Krajcik, and Till (2017) looked at how entrepreneurial spirit relates to differences in initiative, aggressiveness, and creativity.

Methodology

The study utilised an explanatory research design. Explanatory research examines several issues, including the relationship between two variables and the theoretical model that may be constructed and evaluated to elucidate the link. Five administrative managers from each of 25 food and beverage firms—marketing manager, production manager, facility manager, sales manager, and buying manager—comprised a total of 125 responses. Food and beverage companies in Rivers State supplied primary data used to determine the link between the variables. The researcher would physically administer the study instrument to the target respondents at their offices and branches in Rivers State. The study's instrument reliability was assessed by the Cronbach's alpha test, calculated using SPSS software. This research used a test-retest methodology. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

Results

Table 1 Correlation between Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness and Brand Recall

	Correlation	Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness	Brand Recall
Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness	Pearson Corr. Sig (2 tailed) N	1 17	0.73 0.022 17
Brand recall	Pearson Corr. Sig (2 tailed) N	0.73 0.022 17	1 17

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, version 25.0

The correlation between entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand recall of food and beverage firms in Rivers State was elucidated in Table 1. The correlation coefficient of 0.73 suggests a highly significant correlation between brand recall and entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness. 0.022 was a probability value that was less than the critical value of 0.05. Consequently, we deny the null hypothesis and adopt the alternate hypothesis, which posits a substantial correlation between brand recall and entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness among food and beverage firms in Rivers State.

Table 2 Correlation between Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness and brand recognition

	Correlation	Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness	Brand Recognition
Entrepreneurial Competitive Aggressiveness	Pearson Corr. Sig (2 tailed) N	1 17	0.75 0.034 17
Brand recognition	Pearson Corr. Sig (2 tailed) N	0.75 0.034 17	1 17

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, version 25.0

The correlation coefficient of 0.75 in table 2 suggests a robust correlation between entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand recognition. The null hypothesis was rejected due to the probability value of 0.034, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This hypothesis posits that there is a substantial correlation between the brand recognition of food and beverage firms in Rivers State and entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness.

Discussion of Findings

This research investigated the relationship between brand awareness and entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness among food and beverage companies in Rivers State. The study's results demonstrated a significant and favourable association between brand awareness and entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness. The positive and substantial outcomes of the two hypotheses corroborated this. The preliminary finding indicated a substantial positive association between entrepreneurial competitive aggression and brand recall among food and beverage companies in Rivers State. The findings are robustly supported by the study done by Asika and Konya (2020), which investigated the influence of competitive aggression on the success of an event management firm in Port Harcourt. The participants received a survey including 66 questions to complete. The findings were comparable across categories due to the survey's cross-sectional design. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire instructions. The data reveal that competitive hostility greatly impacts event revenue and success. Abidemi, Lawal, Yaro, Nanchan, and Shedun (2020) examined the influence of competitive aggressiveness on autonomy and performance. Tamunosiki-Amadi, Coleman, and Izim (2019) examined the correlation between competitive aggressiveness and organizational resilience across mobile telecommunications enterprises in Rivers State. Odoyo, Wanza, and Mumbua (2014) investigated the obstacles faced by Kenya's Rift Valley bottlers in launching new goods to customers. Abidemi, Lawal, Yaro, Nanchan, and Shedun (2020) examined the influence of competitive aggressiveness on autonomy and performance. A questionnaire was used to gather data about small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Kaduna State. The research participants were self-administered company owners and managers. The hypotheses were evaluated with PLS-SEM. The research reveals a significant association between the success of small and medium-sized firms and their competitive aggressiveness and autonomy. Tamunosiki-Amadi, Coleman, and Izim (2019) examined the correlation between competitive aggressiveness and organizational resilience across mobile telecommunications enterprises in Rivers State. Data was gathered from the regional offices and megacentres of

MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile. Odoyo, Wanza, and Mumbua (2014) investigated the obstacles faced by bottlers in Kenya's Rift Valley when launching new goods to customers. The aim of the study is to identify the obstacles that companies face while launching new goods. The inquiry focused on a case study of Rift Valley Bottlers Limited, situated in Uasin-Gishu County. Questionnaires and interview protocols were the main means of data gathering. Kozubikova, Sopkova, Krajcik, and Till (2017) investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial motivation and individual differences in creativity, proactivity, and competitiveness.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverages firms in Rivers State. From the empirical results we concluded that, entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness positively relate with brand awareness of food and beverages firms in Rivers State.

Recommendations

- i. The management of the food beverage firms should operationalize entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness and brand awareness of food and beverages firms. This will enhance brand recall, brand recognition and lead to organizational success of brand awareness of food and beverages firms in Rivers State.
- ii. The managers of food and beverages firms in Rivers State in Rivers State should adopt entrepreneurial competitive aggressiveness to enhance their brand awareness.

Contribution to Knowledge

This research filled a gap in the literature on entrepreneurial competitive aggression and brand awareness by addressing methodological, empirical, content, and domain shortcomings. Previous research in the food and beverage industry in Rivers State did not investigate the connection between entrepreneurial competitive aggression and brand recognition. Only a small handful of research have used the Pearson product moment correlation as an analytical tool, as far as I am aware. As a result, the existing body of knowledge has been significantly enhanced by this investigation.

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