

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROACTIVENESS AND COMPETITIVENESS OF QUOTED FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS IN NIGERIA

Lebari Blessing Nwikinaka, Queeneth Namum. Ofori & Gabriel A. Okwandu
blessing.nwikinaka@ust.edu.ng¹, queeneth.ofori@ust.edu.ng²
gabriel.okwandu@ust.edu.ng³

**Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.**

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial proactiveness has been widely recognized as a driver of firm competitiveness, yet empirical evidence in the Nigerian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector remains limited. This study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness among quoted FMCG firms in Nigeria, with competitiveness assessed through differentiation, cost leadership, and market focus strategies. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, covering all sixteen (16) quoted FMCG firms. Using a census approach, four managerial respondents - general, marketing, production, and research and innovation managers - were selected from each firm, yielding sixty-four (64) participants. Primary data were collected via a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire, and hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation with SPSS Version 23.0. Results revealed a significant positive association between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness, indicating that proactive firms are better positioned to achieve strategic advantage. The study concludes that entrepreneurial proactiveness enhances competitiveness and recommends that Nigerian FMCG firms institutionalize dynamic marketing information systems to continuously monitor environmental changes and exploit emerging opportunities.

*Keywords: **Entrepreneurial proactiveness; Competitiveness; Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG); Differentiation; Cost leadership; Market focus.***

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian economy comprises diverse sectors including agriculture, financial services, healthcare, transportation, information and communication technologies, real estate, education, manufacturing, and oil and gas (George & Ibiok, 2015). Each sector contributes significantly to national growth and development. The manufacturing sector, in particular, plays a vital role by producing goods and services to meet both domestic and international demand (Oke & Ogunsanwo, 2018). For Nigeria to achieve sustainable economic growth, the manufacturing industry must receive strategic attention alongside other sectors.

Competition, a defining element of the economic environment, holds strategic importance for marketers. Classical economic theory situates competition on a continuum ranging from perfect competition to monopoly, with intermediate forms such as monopolistic competition, oligopoly, and duopoly. Practically, intense competition is evident in the proliferation of firms offering similar or substitute products, oversupply relative to demand, brand multiplicity, and aggressive promotional activities (Obeke & Abugu, 2021).

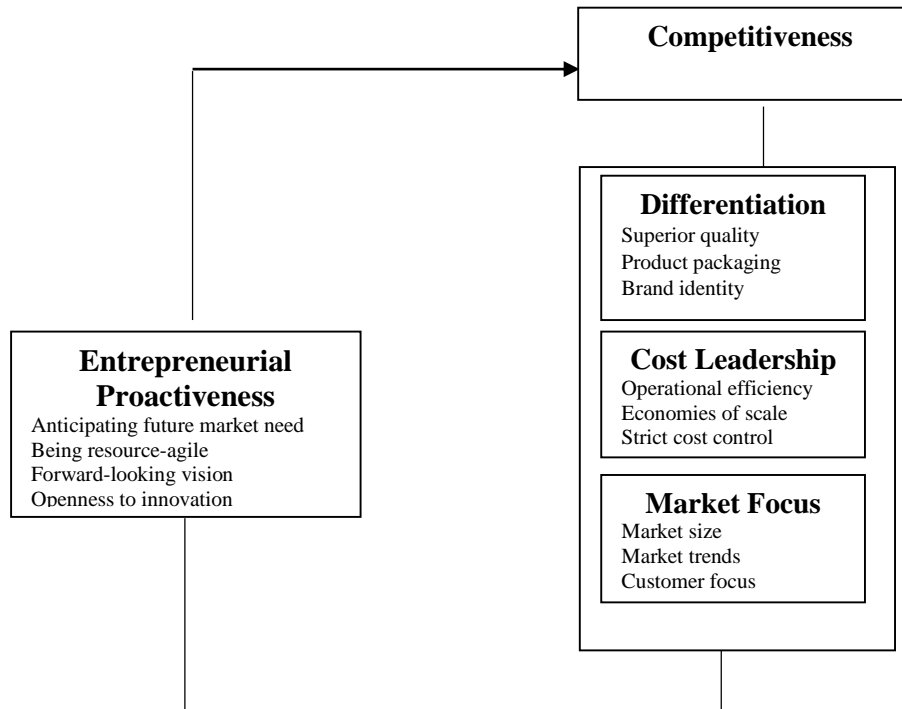
In Nigeria, as in other emerging and developed economies, industries face heightened competition from both domestic and multinational firms. To achieve market superiority, organizations adopt diverse strategies, with entrepreneurial proactiveness increasingly recognized as a critical driver of productivity and competitive advantage. Proactiveness—defined as the ability to anticipate and act on future opportunities—has been identified as a key determinant of firm survival and performance in turbulent environments (Kallmuenzer& Peters, 2018; Basco et al., 2020).

The fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector exemplifies this turbulence, shaped by shifting consumer preferences, inflationary pressures, exchange rate volatility, and regulatory constraints. Despite its substantial contribution to Nigeria’s manufacturing output, many quoted FMCG firms struggle to sustain competitiveness. Evidence suggests that while proactiveness is theoretically acknowledged, its practical application within Nigerian FMCG firms remains inconsistent and underexplored. Firms that fail to embed proactive strategies risk declining market share, reduced profitability, and vulnerability to technological disruptions (Nwabuatu, 2024; Ogundare & van de Merwe, 2024). Conversely, proactive innovation and competitor orientation are essential for sustaining competitive advantage.

Organizational competitiveness in FMCG firms extends beyond cost efficiency to encompass adaptability, innovation, and responsiveness to environmental dynamics (Embimo, 2025). Yet, many quoted firms continue to rely on traditional business models, limiting their ability to leverage proactiveness for long-term sustainability. This disconnect between theoretical recognition and practical implementation raises critical questions about how Nigerian FMCG firms can institutionalize proactive strategies to enhance competitiveness. Empirical evidence underscores this linkage: firms that anticipate industry changes and invest in innovation achieve sustainable growth even under adverse conditions (Embimo, 2025).

Several studies have examined the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness across different industries and contexts (Mburu, Githir& Kyalo, 2021; Onyenma& Hamilton, 2020; Coleman & Adim, 2019). Building on these insights, this study investigates the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational competitiveness in quoted FMCG firms in Nigeria.

The conceptual framework Figure 1, illustrates the connection between the research variables:



Source: Researchers' Conceptualization (2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

RESOURCE-ADVANTAGE THEORY OF THE FIRM

Resource-Advantage (R.A) Theory is an evolutionary, process theory of competition in which each firm in an industry is a unique entity in time and space as a result of its history (Almansour, (2012). The theory defines resources broadly to include such phenomena as organizational culture, knowledge, and competencies and argues that many of these non-economic resources are replicable rather than scarce (Aliyu, 2014). It is a theory that clearly allows both for conventional approaches to marketing and for entrepreneurial marketing. Consistent with the dynamics of competition under R-A theory, marketing can facilitate the ability of firms to create new resources and greatly enhance the productivity of current resources (a) through the various leveraging approaches and (b) by championing innovation in the form of new combinations of resources. Sustainable innovation lies at the heart of the R-A theory of competition, and this implies a role for marketing in providing both leadership and support for an innovation portfolio within the firm (Aliyu, 2014). Such a portfolio includes an array of product, service and process innovations reflecting different degrees of innovativeness and risk. Further, the ongoing seeking of new markets in which firms' resources provide comparative advantage would be a core role for marketing in the context of R-A theory. Moreover, under R-A theory, firms must learn and then adjust when their resource portfolios result in positions of competitive disadvantage. It would seem that, in such circumstances, a firm must be able to exhibit strategic flexibility, again, justifying marketing role as a conduit for enhancing such flexibility (Aliyu, 2014). Competition is also defined in R-A theory as a knowledge discovery process. The competitive interplay of firms results in marketplace positions that reflect the relative efficiency and effectiveness of each entrant, which in turn allows firms in disadvantaged positions to learn where they need to acquire additional resources or to use existing resources more

efficiently/effectively. The firms, therefore, are motivated to neutralize and/or leapfrog advantaged competitors by better managing existing resources and/or by acquisition, imitation, substitution, or major innovation. It is clear that all the performance variables in the study have a direct link to the theories as their success or failure is directly a function of availability and management of resources. Although entrepreneurial marketing fits with a number of theoretical foundations, it is especially consistent with Resource-Advantage (R-A) theory. In view of this, the theory provides a suitable framework for constructs formation to measure the effect of firm's resource characteristics on the firm's competitive advantage. This theory has been adopted by numerous researchers on entrepreneurial marketing strategies (Hatak *et al.*, 2013; Hisrich, 2012; Morris *et al.*, 2002; Aliyu, 2014; Yahya, 2014).

Concept of Entrepreneurial Proactiveness

Proactiveness which is a company strategic orientation of planning or preparing for the future by relentlessly seeking business opportunities help to improve competitiveness. Proactiveness is one of the elements of entrepreneurial marketing. According to Baba and Nwuche (2021) proactiveness affords organizations a more substantial and competitive positioning within their environment and markets as it not only builds on feedback from the environment, it tends to also allows for the adoption of measures best suited in ensuring the organization remains abreast and aware of its environment, drives its capacity for change responsiveness and adaptability and also ensures organizations effectively address their vulnerabilities in a manner that assures them of operational continuity (AL-Omouh, Simon-Moya, & Sendra-Garcia, 2020). It also involves the definition of the firm's future goals, objectives and aspirations and arrive at the desired destination as planned by the firm's leaders (Olayiwola, 2012; Olannye & Eromafuru, 2016).

Entrepreneurial Proactiveness pertains to the inclination of enterprises to adopt a proactive marketing strategy as the foremost approach, aiming to introduce novelty in products, processes, technologies and services that surpass competitors' offerings (Yu-Ming *et al.* 2018). It is also the tendency of firms to take initiative to compete aggressively against its competitors. It is the tendency to seize new opportunities in the business world. This is ability of an entrepreneur or manager of a business organization to act in anticipation of future problems, needs or change in the business. To attain a competitive edge, organizations need to capitalize on the market ahead of their competitors by introducing innovations and products that confer a leadership edge, (Jia *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, businesses endowed with proactiveness tend to recognize new opportunities in the market more promptly, take swift actions on these opportunities, and consequently implement innovative enhancements to their operations. (Wiklund *et al.*, 2015, as cited in Yu-Ming, *et al.* 2018).

Entrepreneurial Proactiveness focuses on the manner in which businesses interact with market opportunities when entering new markets, with the objective of shaping trends and potentially stimulating the generation of demand (Al-Dhaafri *et al.*, 2016). It is viewed by Al-Dhaafri *et al.* (2016), encapsulates a company's willingness and ability to anticipate new developments. Intuitiveness, on the other hand, underscores an entrepreneur's capability to themselves, society, and the organization (Murad *et al.* 2025). Entrepreneurial Proactiveness is the propensity to get ahead and act on future prospect and needs rather than responding later when the incident must have been unfolded (Aigboje, 2018). A proactive organization is that organization that adopts an opportunity seeking vision (Miller & Frensen, 2014). Proactiveness remains an integral ingredient of entrepreneurship which highlights the anticipation by seeking

new opportunities in support of present and future demand which allows an organization to stay ahead of competition (Mahmood, 2014). Securing and protecting employee effectiveness demands a forward looking perspective and actions that reflect proactive behaviour in the organization (Covin&Slevin, 2013).

Entrepreneurial Proactiveness tendency gives a firm the ability to anticipate changes or needs in the market and be among the first to act on them and such a first mover advantage translates into superior performance. Therefore, proactive firms can create first-mover advantages, target premium and market segments and skim the market ahead of its competitors. Olannye (2016), argues that proactiveness consists first of practices by which the firm anticipates challenging situations and second actions taken to manage those events. Lumpkin & Dess (2016) emphasize that proactiveness is key to firm success because it enables the firm to benefit from the first-comer advantage of exploring the initial profits and other market opportunities. Proactiveness assists the organization to anticipate and rightly predict future products and services that will meet customer demands and make efforts in channeling them to the right markets (Kallmuenzer & Peters, 2018). Wang (2016) refers proactiveness to how firms relate to market opportunities in the process of new entry and grab such opportunities to shape the environment. Also, Coleman, & Adim (2019) argued that proactiveness as being opportunity-focused and forward thinking when introducing new products and services to the marketplace and ahead of the competition and acting with future demands in mind. Proactive firms quickly respond to new opportunities by going ahead of competitors. Thus, they are regarded as market leaders that regularly monitor market changes and exploring the opportunities to shape the business environment and meet customer demands. Proactiveness is distinct as seeking new opportunities which may or may not be related to the present line of operations, introduction of new products and brands ahead of the competition, strategically eliminating operations which are in the mature or declining stages of the life cycle (Perera, Nag & Venkateswarlu, 2019). Looking from the organization point of view, it implies that organizations being able to act in advance to deal with expected circumstances, rather than waiting for them to occur first.

Concept of Competitiveness

Competitiveness refers to a firm's ability to maintain and enhance its market position and profitability by offering unique value propositions, leveraging key competencies, and pursuing new market opportunities. Competitiveness is a multidimensional concept. It can be looked at from three different levels: country, industry, and organization level. Competitiveness originated from the Latin word, *compete*, which means involvement in a business rivalry for markets. It has become common to describe economic strength of an entity with respect to its competitors in the global market economy in which goods, services, people, skills, and ideas move freely across geographical borders (Murths, 2010). Organization level competitiveness can be defined as the ability of an organization to design, produce and or market products superior to those offered by competitors, considering the price and non-price qualities (D'Cruz, 2012). Organizational competitiveness is a multidimensional concept. It can be looked at from three different levels: country, industry, and organization level. Organizational competitiveness originated from the Latin word, *compete*, which means involvement in a business rivalry for markets (Nwokinaka, Nwokah & Adiele, 2025).

In this rapidly changing era, organizations are challenged to accomplish improved and sustained competitiveness in order to deliver superior goods and services to their customers and to improve their profitability and long-term survival (Bititci, Garengo, Dorfler & Nudurupati, 2012).

To achieve this level of excellence, entrepreneurial managers need to build an effective internal system and control within their organization. Indeed, improved, shaped and sustained competitive edge is the only way to guarantee organizations survival (Singh, Darwish&Potocnik, 2016). In this regard, literatures are replete with studies that deal with organizational configurations and to get a complete understanding of competitiveness and its measures. The conceptualization of competitiveness has been modified over time according to global socioeconomic context (Gonçalves,*et al.* 2019). Competitiveness indicates competition among the companies in an industry, leading to their competitive advantage" (Farhikhteh,*et al.* 2020). Khan,*et al.* (2019), competitiveness is conceptually defined as the ability of a certain firm to outstandingly perform against its competitors. Competitiveness leads to the creation of new approaches towards accomplishment of objectives through application of innovative practices. Competitiveness differentiates how companies that are focusing on broad industry segments and the one targeting on narrow segments (Arimie&Adiele, 2021). According to Hamilton-Ibama and Ogonu, (2021) competitiveness is defined as a combination of various factors that results in the so-called competitive advantage becomes crucial when it comes to defining excellence, which is the main differentiating factor between business entities.

Khaled and Shaker (2020) believe that competitiveness can be defined as the organization's ability to work out strategies and create mechanisms that enable it to reach better positions compared to organizations working in the same sector and to exercise the same actions and make them ahead. Competitiveness as a type of competence that the organization performs in order to distinguish from other organizations, which leads to providing a new addition to customers in a way that leads to a difference from others or competing organizations in the same sector and this leads to access to excellence in these markets (Shafiq, 2010). Hector and Olmos (2012) is of the view that organizational competitiveness makes for consciousness that is an organization required to be conscious of what is happening around them with other organization in the same industry though engaging into meaningful abilities to maintain and achieve competitive advantage which could fetch market repositioning. Ketel (2016) saw organizational competitiveness as the capability of a firm to compete in the market. This shows that a firm could only compete favourably when loaded with abilities, skill and quality resources weather human or material.

Organizational competitiveness is viewed as the comparative measure between organizations within the same market or its external environment that is closely linked to the availability of comparative advantage (Lewis, 2000, Wofuru, 2022). This goes a long way in saying that competitiveness and competitive advantage are both a multidimensional concept that could be defined both at the national, industry as well as organizational level (Anca, 2012). More so, organizational competitiveness entails a combination of unique assets and abilities that an organization possess that enables them to compete with rivals in the same industry successfully (Akpotu, Tamunosiki-Amadi&Asiegbu 2013). This unique resources and abilities enable an organization to sustain and enhance its position in the market. Organizational competitiveness leads to the creation of new approaches towards accomplishment of objectives through application of entrepreneurial marketing. Competitiveness differentiates how companies that are focusing on broad industry segments and the one targeting on narrow segments. Wofuru (2022) advanced that attainment of organizational competitiveness is the ability of a company to make alternative choice about the scope of its competitive strength within its industry. Therefore, competitiveness evolves due to the development of distinctive capabilities which

enables organization to create products that are perceived by its clients in the target market to be superior to those of its close rivals (Arimie & Adiele, 2021).

Differentiation

Differentiation refers to making a company's product different from the similar products of the competitors. This is associated with product differentiation (and service differentiation). As a marketing terminology, differentiation means making a product different from the similar products of the competitors (Rugraff, 2012). According to Philip Kotler, differentiation is the act of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the company's offerings (i.e., products) from competitors' offerings. A differentiated product is unique by itself. A product (or service) can be differentiated on the basis of its form, shape, quality, durability, style, design, or some other features of the product (Teerantasirikool, Siengthai, Yousre&Charoenngam, 2013).

The differences made in the product must be of value to customers. A product with differentiated features can command premium prices (i.e., prices above the industry-average). Customers are usually to pay premium prices because they value the differentiated features of the product. Thus, an organization that adopts a differentiation strategy can increase profits by charging higher prices and is able to outperform its competitors (Bukirwa, 2017). Differentiating the product or service, requires a firm to create something about its product or service that is perceived as unique throughout the industry. Whether the features are real or just in the mind of the customer, customers must perceive the product as having desirable features not commonly found in competing products (Rugraff, 2012). The customers also must be relatively price-insensitive. Adding product features means that the production or distribution costs of a differentiated product may be somewhat higher than the price of a generic, non-differentiated product. Customers must be willing to pay more than the marginal cost of adding the differentiating feature if a differentiation strategy is to succeed (Bukirwa, 2017).

Saint-Leger (2016) says one of the positive implications of a successful differentiation is that the company may charge a premium for its product or service. The company does so with confidence because of a highly developed and strong corporate identity. Higher suppliers cost can be passed along to its customers because of the lack of substitute or alternative products on the market (Bukirwa, 2017). Whereas, differentiation is believed not to have work best when there is too much differentiation and when a product is differentiated in such a way that it can be easily imitated (Dess, *et al.* 2007; Saint-Leger, 2016). Differentiation takes in the uniqueness in doing something that is significantly valued by customers to allow a price premium (Johnson, *et al.* 2011). Attention here maybe on brand image, proprietary technology, special features, superior service, a string distributor network, among others that might be specific to an industry (Kinyuira, 2014). Porter (1980) stated that creating a market position that is perceived as being unique industry-wide and that is sustainable over the long run is differentiation. Here, customer value is being created by producing high quality products at a premium price (Walker &Ruekerts, 2017). The success of this lies on the way a firm can balance product benefits and costs for the customer, relative to that of their competitors (Slater & Olson, 2014). As an alternative to price competition, a firm can differentiate its products and services from its competitors.

Cost Leadership

Cost leadership is a business strategy that aims to achieve the lowest possible production cost in a particular industry. Cost leadership can be used as a foundation for entrepreneurial marketing, by achieving low production costs, businesses can use the savings to fund marketing activities that promote their products or services as unique and innovative. For example, Amazon has achieved cost leadership in the online retail market by using economies of scale to keep its costs down, while using the savings to fund marketing campaigns that promote its offerings as unique and innovative (Laudon & Traver, 2017). This has enabled Amazon to become the dominant player in the market and to sustain its competitiveness through constant innovation.

Cost leadership is one of the critical components of organizational competitiveness, which helps organizations achieve a competitive edge. According to Porter (1985), cost leadership is a strategy that involves producing goods or services at the lowest possible cost while maintaining quality standards. This strategy aims to achieve a competitive advantage by reducing costs and consequently offering lower prices than competitors. Organizations that apply the cost leadership strategy seek to optimize their production processes, sourcing raw materials and labour at lower costs, and achieving economies of scale through high production volumes. For instance, Walmart, the world's largest retailer, employs the cost leadership strategy by offering products at low prices while maintaining quality standards through efficient storage and supply chain management.

Cost leadership are based on a firm's ability to provide a product or service at a lower cost than its rivals (Birjandi, Jahromi, Darasi & Birjandi, 2014). The basic operating assumption behind a low-cost leadership is to acquire a substantial cost advantage over other competitors that can be passed on to consumers to gain a large market share. According to Cavusgil, Ghauri and Akcal (2013) a low cost then produces competitive advantage when the firm can earn a higher profit margin than results from selling products at current market prices. In many cases, firms attempting to execute low-cost strategies aim to sell a product that appeal to an average customer in a broad target market.

Cost leadership involves making fairly standardized product at a relative low price compare to other competitors (Oyedijo, 2012). This lays emphasis on efficiency, where high volume of standardized products are produced. Here, products are produced at a relatively low cost and made available to a very large customer base. Baroto et al. (2012) averred that an attempt by firms to generate competitive advantage by achieving the lowest cost in the industry represents cost leadership. There is a need for a continuous search for cost reduction in all areas of business in order to maintain cost leadership (Tanwar, 2013). The gain of pursuing cost leadership can be seen from the view of price cut by firms as compared to that of competitors, to grab sales and market share. It is also useful to make it harder for new rivals to win customers and act as barrier for new entrants (Rugraff, 2012).

Overall cost leadership requires firms to develop policies aimed at becoming and remaining the lowest-cost producer and/or distributor in the industry. The low-cost leader gains competitive advantage by getting its costs of production or distribution lower than those of the other firms in its market. Cost leadership is an integrated set of actions taken to produce goods or services with unique features that are sold to customers at the lowest cost compared to competitors or, at reduced cost to achieve superior profitability (Teerantasirikool, Siengthai, Yousre &

Charoenngam, 2013). Kinyuira (2014) states that cost leadership has the highest average an organization's return on assets.

Cost leadership is a pricing strategy in which a company sells the same product at different prices in different markets. It can also refer to the charging of different prices for the same product to different social or geographic sectors of the market (Teerantasirikool, Siengthai, Yousre&Charoenngam, 2013). It describes a way to establish the competitive advantage. Cost leadership, in basic words, means the lowest cost of operation in the industry. Organizations use low cost of production as compared to other organizations in the same industry. It makes an organization to have a competitive advantage over the competitors in the industry (Bukirwa, 2017). Amali (2015) looks at cost leadership as a way in which an organization produces products and services at a lower cost and at the same time distributes those products at a lower cost.

Market Focus

The final generic market focusing (also called niche or segmentation), involves concentrating on a particular customer, product line, geographical area, channel of distribution, stage in the production process, or market niche (Bukirwa, 2017). The underlying premise of the market focus is that a firm is better able to serve a limited segment more efficiently than competitors can serve a broader range of customers. Firms using a market focus simply apply a cost leader or differentiation to a segment of the larger market (Rugraff, 2012). Firms may thus be able to differentiate themselves based on meeting customer needs, or they may be able to achieve lower costs within limited markets. Market focus is most effective when customers have distinctive preferences or specialized needs. A market focus is often appropriate for small, aggressive businesses that do not have the ability or resources to engage in a nationwide marketing effort (Teerantasirikool, et al 2013).

According to Kinyuira (2014), market focus is an integrated set of actions designed to produce or deliver goods and services that serve the needs of a particular competitive segment. A company usually follows market focus when it is able to serve a narrow piece of the market better than competitors. This is successful when the company has the core competencies required to produce value to a narrow competitive segment that exceeds the value available from companies serving customers on an industry wide basis. A company can achieve a least-cost position or differentiator or both in the particular market segment (niche or focus). The focuser's basis for competitive advantage is either lower costs than competitors serving that market segment or an ability to offer niche members something different from competitors.

Focusing is based on selecting a market niche where buyers have distinctive preferences. The niche is defined by geographical uniqueness, specialized requirements in using the product or by special attributes that appeal to members, (Wang, Ma, Yang & Wang, 2017). Market focus is based on low cost depends on there being a buyer segment whose needs are less costly to satisfy than the rest of the market. On the other hand, a focus based on differentiation depends on there being a buyer segment that demands unique product attributes. In the focus strategy, a firm targets a specific segment of the market (Khalid, Mohamed &Kassim 2014). The firm can choose to focus on a select customer group, product range, geographical area, or service line (Ogboso& Amah, 2016). Market focus aims at growing market share through operating in a niche market or in markets either not attractive to, or overlooked by, larger competitors. These

niches arise from a number of factors including geography, buyer characteristics, and product specifications or requirements.

A successful market focus strategy (Odunayo, 2018) depends upon an industry segment large enough to have good growth potential but not of key importance to other major competitors. Market penetration or market development can be an important market focus. Midsize and large firms use market focus-based strategies but only in conjunction with differentiation or cost leadership generic strategies. Market focus refers to the concentration of a company's resources and attention on specific target markets and customer segments. This approach is aimed at gaining a competitive advantage through differentiation or cost leadership strategies that meet the specific needs and preferences of the targeted customers. Companies that successfully implement a market-focused strategy can gain a significant edge over their competition. Bharadwaj, *et al.* (2019) found that market-focused companies outperform product-focused companies in terms of financial performance. In particular, market-focused companies had higher return on assets, sales growth, and market share than product-focused companies. This study suggests that the adoption of a market-focused strategy can lead to a significant competitive advantage.

Entrepreneurial proactiveness and Organizational Competitiveness

In a study to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational competitiveness of quoted fast moving consumers goods in Nigeria. Mburu, Githir and Kyalo (2021) examined proactiveness and performance of family-owned enterprises in Nairobi Country. The study sought to examine the effect of proactiveness on performance of family-owned enterprises in Nairobi County. Descriptive research design was adopted. Data was collected through use of structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. Results of the study revealed positive and significant relationship between proactiveness and performance of family-owned enterprises in Nairobi County.

Onyenma and Hamilton (2020) investigated on the relationship between proactiveness and performance of small and medium enterprises in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. The unit of data generation was the organization and the corresponding level of analysis was the macro-level. A total of three hundred and sixty (360) small and medium enterprises studied constituted the study population, and a sample size of one hundred and eighty-six (186) was drawn using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to the respondents. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 22, and inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients, regression and p-values were calculated in order to ascertain the nature and direction of the proposed relations and for testing the stated hypotheses. Results revealed positive and significant relationship between proactiveness and measures of small and medium enterprises performance. Therefore, the study specifically found that proactiveness led to improved customer satisfaction, growth and social performance of small and medium enterprises in Rivers and Bayelsa states. The study recommended that small and medium enterprises should apply and adopt proactiveness in the operation of their businesses to improve performance.

Similarly, Coleman and Adim (2019) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational resilience in mobile telecommunication firms in Rivers State using quantitative and the research design of cross-sectional survey with the population of four major communication firms namely: MTN Nigeria, GLOBACOM Nigeria, AIRTEL Nigeria, and

9Mobile Nigeria, and sample size of 123, the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the SPSS version 23 package for the bivariate were used to determine the relationship between the entrepreneurial proactiveness and the measures of organizational resilience. The results from the analysis revealed that entrepreneurial proactiveness influence significantly the measures of organizational resilience. Then, the study recommended that learning and knowledge development are key to the proactiveness of the organization and as such should focus on the market changes and the satisfaction issues that prevail in the market.

Bature et al (2018), the scholars examined the concepts of proactiveness, innovativeness and their relationships with company performance through the mediating influence of workplace capability. The study employed the structural equation modeling technique to measure the significance levels of the study variables. The findings of the study is that proactiveness and innovativeness positive impact on firm performance is through the help of workplace capabilities. Hence, organizational capability is a strong mediating factor deriving the relationship between proactiveness, innovativeness and performance of small and medium size firms in the North central geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Aigboje (2018), examined the entrepreneurial proactiveness and employee satisfaction of SMEs operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria. The study employed qualitative research methods and the result shows that organizational proactiveness improves employee satisfaction in the context of small and medium firms operating in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. Wamburgu et al (2015), the authors investigated the relationship between proactiveness and company performance in the contest of SMEs in the agro processing industry in Kenyan region. The study made use of structural equation modeling and the result of the study is that, proactiveness of agro processing small and medium scale firms enhance organizational performance of same institutions in Kenya. Hence, proactivity of companies is a laudable predictor of corporate performance among small and medium size firms in Kenya. Based on the above discussions, we, therefore, propose the following hypotheses:

Ho₁: Entrepreneurial proactiveness has no significant connection with differentiation.

Ho₂: Entrepreneurial proactiveness has no significant connection with cost leadership

Ho₃: Entrepreneurial proactiveness has no significant connection with market focus

Research Methodology

This study focuses on examining the nexus between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey and correlation investigation to establish connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness in quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The researchers had no control over the research element because the study environment was non-contrived. The face validity of the research instrument which was designed in the 5-point Likert scale was confirmed by experts consisting of scholars and practitioners with adequate knowledge of the subject of the study. Its content validity derives from the fact that it follows from instruments used by other researchers, with minimal modification. The reliability of the instrument of the study was determined via the Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability, with a threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). The summary of the result of the test as shown on Table 1 presents a summary of the internal consistency of the instrument and the minimum threshold scored by each variable.

Table 3.1: Reliability Analysis of Items on All Variables

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Entrepreneurial Proactiveness	4	0.786
Market Focus	4	0.874
Differentiation	4	0.876
Cost Leadership	4	0.874

Source: Survey Data, 2023

The target population for this study was sixteen (16) quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria, and the sample size was the same as the population, since the population is not too large. This study adopted a Census Method in administering four (4) copies of the questionnaire to managers from each of the firms as respondents for the study. This means that a total of sixty-four (64) respondents were used for the study. The managers that were considered in this study include: the general manager, marketing manager, production manager and the research innovation and development manager. However, the final analysis was based on data from fifty nine (59) respondents. The testing of hypotheses was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistical Tool and via the SPSS version 23.0.

Data Analysis/ Hypotheses Testing

This part is focused on presenting the result from the test on the hypotheses. Pearson’s Product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to analyze the study hypotheses to show the degree of connection between the variables. The analysis was carried out to establish the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational competitiveness.

Ho₁: There is no significant connection between proactiveness and differentiation of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 1: Correlation Result of connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and differentiation

Correlations		Entrepreneurial Proactiveness	Differentiation
Entrepreneurial Proactiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.716**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Differentiation	Pearson Correlation	.716**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

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

Source: Survey Data, 2026

From the results of the analysis shown on Table 1 there is a strong, positive and significant connection between proactiveness and differentiation evident in the correlation coefficient is 0.716 and the probability value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicating that the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and differentiation is significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that proactiveness does not significantly relate with differentiation and accept the alternate

hypothesis. Based on the evidence generated, entrepreneurial proactiveness significantly contributes toward differentiation of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant connection between proactiveness and cost leadership of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 2: Correlation Result of connection between proactiveness and cost leadership

		Correlations	
		Proactiveness	Cost Leadership
Proactiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.831**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Cost Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.831**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

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

Source: Survey Data, 2026

From results of the analysis shown on Table 2 there is a very strong, positive and significant connection between proactiveness and cost leadership evident in the correlation coefficient is 0.831 and the probability value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicating that the relationship between proactiveness and cost leadership is significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that proactiveness does not significantly relate with cost leadership and accept the alternate hypothesis. Based on the evidence generated, proactiveness significantly contributes toward cost leadership of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between proactiveness and market focus of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation Result of relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and market focus

		Correlations	
		Entrepreneurial Proactiveness	Market Focus
Entrepreneurial Proactiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	59	59
Market Focus	Pearson Correlation	.703**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	59	59

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

Source: Survey Data, 2026

From the results of the analysis shown on Table 3 there is a moderate, positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and market focus evident in the correlation

coefficient is 0.703 and the probability value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicating that the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and market focus is significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that entrepreneurial proactiveness does not significantly relate with market focus and accept the alternate hypothesis. Based on the evidence generated, entrepreneurial proactiveness significantly contributes toward market focus of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

This study aimed to determine the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods in Nigeria. Based on the data analysis, the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and differentiation of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria, evidence shows that entrepreneurial proactiveness has a strong relationship with differentiation of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient shows 0.716 and the probability value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicating that the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and differentiation is significant.

Again, the Pearson Correlation analysis conducted to investigate the connection between proactiveness and cost leadership of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Evidence shows that proactiveness has a very strong relationship with cost leadership of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient shows 0.831 and the probability value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicating that the relationship between proactiveness and cost leadership is significant. Furthermore, the Pearson Correlation analysis conducted to investigate the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and market focus of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Evidence shows that entrepreneurial proactiveness has a strong relationship with market focus of quoted fast moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient shows 0.703 and the probability value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (i.e. $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicating that the connection between entrepreneurial proactiveness and market focus is significant.

Three correlation analyses were conducted with entrepreneurial proactiveness as the predictor variable and differentiation, cost leadership and market focus as the criterion variables. The evidence suggests that entrepreneurial proactiveness contributes significantly toward the competitiveness of the quoted fast moving consumer goods firms; thus improves on related outcomes of differentiation and market focus. From the analysis conducted, entrepreneurial proactiveness has a positive and significant connection with competitiveness. It has been widely acknowledged that proactiveness is a key source for achieving and maintaining a competitive edge for all firms. This is because proactiveness remains an integral ingredient of entrepreneurship which highlights the anticipation by seeking new opportunities in support of present and future demand which allows an organization to stay ahead of competition. The basic argument, which the study supports, is that proactive firms are better able to identify attractive opportunities and exploit them by deliver superior value for the customer.

The findings of this study are also supported by past empirical studies. Mburu, Githir and Kyalo (2021) examined proactiveness and performance of family-owned enterprises in Nairobi Country. The study found a positive and significant relationship between proactiveness and

performance of family-owned enterprises in Nairobi County. Onyenma and Hamilton (2020) investigated on the relationship between proactiveness and performance of small and medium enterprises in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. The study found a positive and significant relationship between proactiveness and measures of small and medium enterprises performance. Again, Coleman and Adim (2019) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational resilience in mobile telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study found that entrepreneurial proactiveness significantly influences the measures of organizational resilience. Samson and Saad (2018) studied on proactiveness, innovativeness and firm performance: the mediating role of organizational capability. The study found that proactiveness and innovativeness indirectly influence SME performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study set out to empirically examine the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and competitiveness among quoted fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms in Nigeria. The findings confirm a significant positive association, indicating that proactive entrepreneurial behavior enhances firms' ability to achieve strategic advantage through differentiation, cost leadership, and market focus. Entrepreneurial proactiveness thus emerges as a critical determinant of organizational competitiveness in dynamic and turbulent business environments.

Based on these results, the study recommends that quoted FMCG firms in Nigeria institutionalize robust marketing information systems capable of rapidly scanning and interpreting environmental changes. Such systems will enable firms to anticipate opportunities, respond swiftly to market disruptions, and strengthen their competitive positioning. By embedding proactiveness into organizational culture and decision-making processes, FMCG firms can sustain long-term growth, profitability, and resilience in both domestic and international markets.

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