

**THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL
ATTITUDE ORIENTATION ON FIRM PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF
MICRO ENTERPRISES IN MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the multidimensional impact of entrepreneurial attitude orientation on firm performance of micro enterprises in Maiduguri. Purposive method of sampling was use in the selection of the micro enterprises for the study. The sample of the study consists of owners/managers of micro enterprises in Maiduguri metropolis. 220 questionnaire were personally administered to the sample. The data for the study were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire on 5 points Likert scale. The dimensions of EAO assessed in the study are Achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation. SPSS version 24 was used in the analysis of data collected from the respondents. This includes Descriptive and correlation analysis. The correlation results indicated that achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation were found to be positively correlated to MEs performance. The theoretical implications of this study is that it support some of the previous findings and argument that entrepreneurial attitude plays an essential role in achieving better performance. From the practical perspective, the findings from the study would help entrepreneurs, owner/managers of MEs, government agencies and other stakeholders to understand the essential role played by EAO in enhancing firm performance that could assist in providing employment to the teaming unemployed youth in the country and hence reducing the social, economic and political problem inherent in the economy.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial attitude, Achievement, self-esteem, personal control, innovation, Micro enterprises, performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial attitude orientation (EAO) has been recognised to play an essential role in enhancing firm performance (Jain, Ali, & Kamble, 2015; Ricard & Saiyed, 2015; Valliere, 2006). The importance attitude in entrepreneurship researches dated back to the works of Olson and Bosserman (1984), Gasse (1985), Greenberger and Sexton (1987) Low and MacMillan (1988). Allport (1935) defined attitude as a “mental or neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual’s responses to all objects and situations to which it is related”. Pickens (2005) see attitude as a belief and or predisposition of an individual (s) to behave or act in a specific manner affected individual’s temperament, experience and knowledge. Attitude is also defined as the predisposition of an individual to respond attitude object (firm performance) favourably or unfavourably (I. Ajzen & Fishbein, 1987). Similarly, attitude as a persistent establishment of a motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive process concerning some aspects of the environment (Hawkins, Best, & Corney, 1983). According to Simpson and Oliver (1990), attitude is the emotional tendencies in response to affairs, thought, ideas, locations, events and individuals.

Moreover, attitude plays a role of regulating individual’s behaviour in four different ways, firstly, it guides the behaviour of individuals towards valued goals (firm performance) and away from aversive events, such as reduced performance or anything that may hinder the firm performance. Secondly, it helps to understand, simplify and manage information inflow and outflow in the firms. Thirdly, it allows individuals to communicate vital information about their personality and values. Fourthly, it protects individuals from unwanted, unacceptable or threatening thoughts, urges, and desire for achievement (Krouscas, 1999). Vaughan and Hogg (1995) see attitude as “A relatively enduring organisation of beliefs, feelings and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols or general feeling/ evaluation of people, objects or issues”. Riketta (2008) explained that work attitude refers to the assessment and subsequent development of personal interests of work-related targets (performance).

Therefore, this made Banu (1984) and Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe (2015) to assert that “attitude may be positive or negative, optimistic or pessimistic, rational or irrational, desirable or undesirable. Particular attitude may, therefore, be a problem or solution to a problem depending on the environmental factors that influence the attitude of individuals”.

Furthermore, Bird (1988), Davidsson (1991), Cliff (1998) and Gray (2002) EAO can influence the firm size, growth and its performance. Pickens (2005), emphasised that

attitude is complex and encompasses a wide range of things such as personality, beliefs, values, behaviours, and motivations. Therefore, EAO owner/managers are the wide range of thought, feelings, emotions and behaviours about entrepreneurial success and firm performance. Hence, attitude support owner/manager to understand and define firm performance and how to behave toward achieving a better firm performance. According to Hawkins, Best and Corney (1983), attitude is made of three features. Firstly, it alerts and put an individual in a state of mental readiness to understand and distinguish individuals/employees in a certain way. Secondly, attitude is not innate, in other words, attitude is learnt, develop and retain through structured activities such as training, development and experience over a period. Thirdly, attitude is dynamic and can change at any point in time depending on the factors influencing it. These made attitude to be motivational capabilities that can lead to the achievement of firm performance by owner/manager.

Despite several researches that were conducted on EAO and firm performance, majority these studies focus on linking entrepreneurial attitude to intention or prediction of entrepreneurship, such studies include Kim and Hunter (1993), Ajzen (1991), Davisson (1992) and Katz (1992), Kristiansan and Indiaty (2004) Krueger et al. (2000), Kolvereid (1996), Wang and Wong (2004). Ajzen, Joyce, Sheikh and Cote (2011), Mokry (1988) and Stone, Jawahar and Kisamore (2010), Baker, Al-Gahtani and Hubona (2007), Noor and Shariff (2009), Crant (1996) and Crisp Turner (2007).

Equally, other studies dwell on attitude toward entrepreneurship education such as McStay (2008), Lorz (2011), Bruce (2015), Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentshe (2015) and Pulka, Rikwentshe, Mani and Jossiah (2015). Ramasobana and Fatoki (2014) examined the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and business social responsibility of microenterprises. Abdul-Mohsin, Abdul-Halim and Ahmad (2012) in a conceptual paper proposed a conceptual framework on the influence of entrepreneurial attitude orientation on market orientation. Similarly, studies such as Gil (1999), Bayot, Mondéjar, Mondéjar, Monsalve and Vargas (2005), Mondéjar-Jiménez and Vargas-Vargas (2010) and Vargas-Vargas, Jiménez, Meseguer-Santamaría, Montero-Lorenzo and Fernández-Avilés (2010) studied the relationship between students' attitude and academic performance. Additionally, other studies such as Susanty and Miradipta (2013), Ahmad, Ahmad and Ali Shah (2010) dwelled on the studies of EAO and individual performance in the firms.

Given the above, firstly, it is clear that there is lack of studies that have established the effects of EAO on firm performance, especially that of SMEs. Secondly, the study area has been grossly underrepresented in the literature on this issue, and there

is lack of scientific studies on EAO and firm performance in the study area (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, this study will fill in the gaps by studying the impact of EAO on SMEs performance in Nigeria.

The primary objectives of the study are to examine the impact of EAO on SMEs performance, while the specific goals are to explore the impact of achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation on SMEs performance. Similarly, the study is set to expand understanding of the EAO, linking it to firm performance to further examine the validity of the EAO.

The structure of the paper is as follows immediately after this section. An overview of the relevant literature EAO, impact of EAO firm performance, the conceptual framework for the study, research hypotheses methodology, analysis and results, discussion on findings, conclusion and finally, limitation of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship between Entrepreneurial Attitude and MEs performance

Phan and Butler (2003), stressed that entrepreneurial attitude influence choice of strategies and is capable of making a significant positive difference on firm performance. Venkatapathy (1992) conducted a study among engineering and manufacturing businesses. He classified the sample into two groups, first generation and second generation entrepreneurs. The study found that there are significant differences between the two groups regarding their achievement. Tamizharasi and Panchanatham (2010) surveyed the differences in attitude among male and female entrepreneurs in India. He used achievement, personal control, innovation and self-esteem as a dimension of entrepreneurial attitude. The study revealed the existence of differences in attitude between male and female entrepreneurs.

Jain, Ali and Kamble (2015) investigated the attitude of entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs in India firms. Six dimensions were used in the research work namely; risk-taking propensity, internal locus of control, achievement orientation, proactiveness, innovativeness, and market orientation, The study discovered a positive link between entrepreneurial attitude and firm performance of both entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs. Valliere (2006) surveyed the relationship between entrepreneurial attitudes of SMEs/entrepreneurs and growth and expansion of firms.

Jain and Ali (2013) examined the entrepreneurial attitude orientation, self-efficacy and marketing orientation of entrepreneurs in India. The study found entrepreneurial attitude orientation to be significantly related to firm performance. John and Ntayi (2010) investigated the influence of performance management practice, employees'

attitude and managed the performance of public universities in Uganda. The results show that entrepreneurial attitude of the employees has a positive relationship with performance.

Ricard and Saiyed (2015) investigated the attitude toward internationalisation of Indian and French SMEs. The results revealed that SMEs with a high favourable attitude towards internationalisation are more prone to go internationalisation than those who have a low favourable attitude towards internationalisation. Susanty and Miradipta (2013) conducted a study on the effects of attitude toward work, firm commitment and job satisfaction on a performance of employees. The study discovered that insignificant influence on the performance of the employees. Godwin and Okoronka (2015), in a study, examined the impact of students' attitude on academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. The results of the survey revealed the positive influence of attitude on the academic performance of the students.

Depaolo and McLaren (2006) studied the effects of students' attitude on the academic performance of undergraduate students in Indiana. The study shows that attitude is positively related to academic performance. They further added that the more positive the attitude is, higher the academic performance of the students' and vice versa.

Luu (2011) surveyed relationship between employee attitudes and firm performance. It was found that attitude is not related to firm performance. Khan, Dongping and Ghauri (2014) carried out a study and investigated the effects of attitude on employee performance of the textile industry in Punjab, Pakistan. The results show that attitude influences the employee's performance positively. Pulka, Rikwentshe and Ibrahim (2014), investigated university students attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The results indicated that the students possess high positive attitude toward entrepreneurship education with the overall attitude of 82.12%.

Pulka, Rikwentshe, Mani and Jossiah (2015) examined differences in attitude among university students in Nigeria. It was found that there is no significant differences in attitude between male and female students on one side, and also no significant differences between science and humanities students. Choe, Loo and Lau (2013), assessed the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and firm performance among SMEs in Malaysia. The study used the owner/manager as the respondents. The study discovered that entrepreneurial attitude is positively related to firm performance. Li (2012), in research, investigated the relationship between the attitude of students and academic performance in Hong Kong. 153 students constituted the sample for the study. The results of the survey indicated that attitude

is positively related to academic performance. Mensah, Okyere and Kuranchie (2013), studied the attitude of students towards Mathematics and its effects on academic performance. The sample was stratified into two groups, students' and teachers. The results revealed that both teachers and students attitude have a substantial influence on the academic performance of the students.

Awang et al. (2013), examined the effects of students' attitudes on academic performance in Malaysia. The study discovered that attitude predicts academic performance of students. Ulug, Ozden and Eryilmaz (2011), surveyed the relationship between teachers' attitudes, students' personality and academic performance in Istanbul, turkey. The results found a positive relationship between teachers' attitude and academic performance. Fatok and Chiliya (2012), examined the attitudes toward business ethics and corporate social responsibility of SMEs in South Africa. The sample was stratified in local and immigrant SEs owners. The results revealed that the overall attitude is high, while there are no significant differences in attitude between the local and immigrants SMEs owners.

Alpacion, Camañan, Gregorio, Panlaan and Tudy (2014), carried a study on the influence of attitude, self-efficacy on the academic performance of students in Mathematics. The results show that attitude significantly influences academic performance of students. In other words, Students that display a high level of favourable attitude towards the mathematics have a higher chance of achieving academic performance. Game (2013), studied the effects of entrepreneurial attitude on decision making and internationalisation of firms. The study found that attitude is positively related to decision making and internationalisation of firms. Manoah, Indoshi and Othuon (2011), studied the influence of attitude on the academic performance of students in mathematics in Kenya. It was found that attitude level of the students is neutral, while attitude has a significant influence on academic performance.

Lai, Saridakis and Johnstone (2016), studied human resource practices, employee attitudes and Small firm performance in the UK. The found positive relationship between human resource practices and performance, on the other side, the study found the relationship between attitude and firm performance to be positive. Chiao, Yeh and Chuang (2009), studied the effects of government attitudes towards internationalisation and performance of SMEs. The results indicated favourable government attitude is an essential predictor of internationalisation of SMEs, while internationalisation is negatively related to the operational and innovative performance of the SMEs.

Susanty and Miradipta (2013), studied the effect of attitude toward works, organisational commitment and job satisfaction on employee performance. The sample is 200 managers and non-managers. PLS-SEM was used in the analysis of the data. The results of the study revealed that attitude has an insignificant positive relationship with employee performance. Ahmad, Ahmad, Ahmad and Ali Shah (2010) studied the relationship between job satisfaction, job performance attitude towards work and organisational commitment in Pakistan. The sample of the study 310 employees from advertising firms. The study found an insignificant relationship between attitude and employee performance.

Shahab and Nisa (2014), investigated the influence of leadership and attitude toward job satisfaction and employee performance with 79 respondent from civil service. The results show that attitude is positively related to employee performance. Ali and Ali (2013) investigated the effect of management attitude export and marketing on the firm performance Iran export firms. Findings revealed that attitude influences the export performance of the firms.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypothesis is aimed at examining the effects of achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation on SMEs performance that serve as dimensions of AEO. The EAO has influence and improves the SMEs performance. EAO allows for a faster and more effective and efficient use of SMEs resources both internally and externally. EAO expedites collaboration and better coordination among the employees of the SMEs. Furthermore, the EAO is expected to enhance the operational performance of the SMEs. It would also help to improve the movement of information capable of improving the decision-making process in the SMEs, allows for efficient allocation of resources which may result in higher SMEs productivity and efficiency. Therefore, it is hypotheses of this study that:

H1: there is a significant relationship between achievement and SMEs performance.

H2: there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and SMEs performance.

H3: there is a significant relationship between personal control and SMEs performance.

H4: there is a significant relationship between innovation and SMEs performance.

H5: there is a significant relationship between EAO and SMEs performance.

Conceptual Framework

The variables in the conceptual framework for this study consist of achievement, self-esteem, personal control, innovation and SMEs performance. The four predictors represent the four dimensions of EAO (Robinson, Stimpson, Huefner, & Hunt, 1991). Based on the hypotheses of the study, the impact of achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation on SMEs performance is tested. The framework suggested that separately the dimensions would have an impact on SMEs performance as well as jointly would have an impact on the SMEs performance. According to Robinson, Stimpson, Huefner, and Hunt (1991), firstly, Achievement in business, refers to the results associated with the start-up and growth of the businesses. Secondly, Innovation in business, relates to the identifying, perceiving and taking decisive entrepreneurial actions on the business activities in a new and with unique methods. Thirdly, the perceived personal control of the business outcomes deals the entrepreneurs' perception of controlling, influencing and managing their businesses. Fourthly, perceived self-esteem in the business refers to the self-confidence and perceived competency of the entrepreneurs in running the affairs of their various businesses. This is depicted in figure 1.

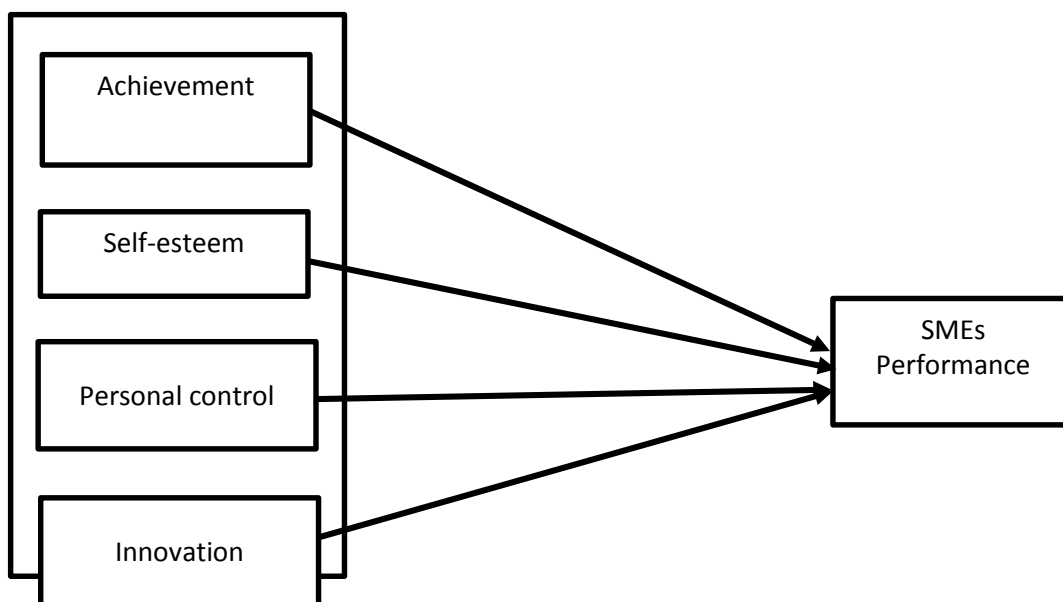


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework for the Study*

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample of the study consists of owners/managers of micro enterprises (MEs) in Maiduguri metropolis, Nigeria. 220 questionnaire were personally administered to the sample. Purposive method of sampling was adopted in the selection of the MEs. This is in accordance with Bakar, Ramli, Ibrahim and Muhammad (2017) and Samuel, Ernest and Awuah (2013) who suggested that a purposive method of sampling can be used when the population of the study is not well known. Similarly, the study used the definition given by SMEDAN (2012) to compose the sample for the study. Where a micro enterprise is defined as businesses that employ less than ten employees and have less than 50 million naira worth of assets excluding lands and buildings. Table 1 depicts the definition of MEs in Nigeria.

Table 1 Definition of SMEs in Nigeria

S/No.	Size Category	Employment	Assets (N, million) excluding building and land
1.	Micro enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 5
2.	Small enterprises	10 to 49	5 to less than 50

Sources: SMEDAN (2012)

Data Collection Procedure, Variable Measurement and Method of Data Analysis

To collect data from the respondents, a structured self-administered questionnaire was used. The questionnaire is based on 5 points Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Equally, to measure entrepreneurial attitude orientation (EAO), the measurement is adapted from entrepreneurial attitude orientation scale developed by Robinson, Stimpson, Huefner and Hunt (1991). Precisely, there are two approaches to the study of EAO. The first consider EAO as one-dimension (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1987; Dömötör & Hader, 2007). On the other side, Breckler (1984), Chaiken and Stangor (1987) and Shaver (1987) maintain that EAO is multidimensional that has Achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation. Therefore, achievement was measured using 24 items, self-esteem 13, personal control 12 and innovation 26 items. While MEs performance was measured using instrument adopted from the work of Suliyanto and Rahab (2012) containing six items. Moreover, SPSS version 24 was used in the analysis of data collected from the respondents. This includes Descriptive and correlation analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Table 2 is the descriptive results of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. 136 (76%) of the respondents are male, while 43 (24%) are female owners/managers. The age of the respondents ranges from 18 to 48 years. 55.9% of the respondents are between the ages of 18 to 28 years. 38.5% are between the ages of 29 to 38 years, while 5.6% are between the ages of 39 to 48 years. Similarly, the results indicated that 84.4% of the respondents respective MEs and 15.6% are managers. Regarding the respondents level of education, the results showed that 30.2% attended informal education, 27.4% attended primary schools, 22.9% attended secondary schools, and 19.6 are diploma holders.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	136	76.0
Female	43	24.0
Total	179	100.0
Age		
18 – 28	100	55.9
29 – 38	69	38.5
39 – 48	10	5.6
Total	179	100.0
Position		
Owner	151	84.4
Manager	28	15.6
Total	179	100.0
Education		
Informal Education	54	30.2
Primary School	49	27.4
Secondary School	41	22.9
Diploma	35	19.6
Total	179	100.0

4. Descriptive Results of the Variables

The descriptive results of the study variables in table 2 revealed that mean scores of MEs performance is 4.30, achievement 2.56, self-esteem 2.29, personal control 2.45 and innovation 2.45. On the other side, the standard deviation of the variables is; MEs performance is 0.58, achievement 0.80, self-esteem 0.78, personal control 0.89 and for innovation is 0.70

Table 3: Descriptive Results of the Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
MEs Performance	4.30	0.58
Achievement	2.56	0.80
Self-Esteem	2.29	0.78
Personal Control	2.45	0.89
Innovation	2.45	0.70

4.1 Reliability

In testing the reliability of constructs or variables in research, (Fidell & Tabachnick, 2003; Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010) suggested that reliability value of 0.6 is regarded as average, while 0.7 and above is regarded as high-reliability values. Therefore, the results indicate that the Cronbach's' alpha of MEs performance is 0.778, for achievement is 0.905, for self-esteem is 0.824, for persona; control is 0.851 and for innovation is 0.886. Consequently, the reliabilities for all the variables in this study are between 0.771 and 0.905, which is considered adequate. Table 4 present the results of the reliability test.

Table 4: Reliability Results

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
MEs Performance	06	0.771
Achievement	24	0.905
Self-Esteem	13	0.824
Personal Control	12	0.851
Innovation	26	0.886

4.2 Correlation Analysis Result

The correlation results in table 4 indicated that achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation were found to be positively correlated to MEs performance. Firstly, the relationship between achievement and MEs performance is positive, where the r value is 0.039 at 5%. Secondly, the r value for self-esteem and MEs Performance is 0.188 at 5%; this indicates that self-esteem predicts MEs performance. Thirdly, the impact of the personal control on MEs performance also significant at 5% where the r value is 0.127. Similarly, the innovation also has a significant impact on MEs performance; the r value is 0.252 at 1%. Though all the dimensions of the EAO have a significant impact on MEs performance, the impact of achievement is considered moderate, while that of self-esteem, personal control and innovation are considered low. Furthermore, Table 6 shows the correlation results on the overall impact of EAO on MEs performance. The r value is 0.152 which is significant at 5%.

Table 5: Correlation Results of the Study variables (N179)

Variables	Firm Performance	Achievement	Self-Esteem	Personal Control	Innovation
MEs Performance	1				
Achievement	.039*	1			
Self-Esteem	.188*	.582**	1		
Personal Control	.127*	.377**	.433**	1	
Innovation	.252**	.527**	.371**	.550**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 6: Correlation Results of overall Attitude and Firm Performance (N179)

Variables	Firm Performance	Attitude
MEs Performance	1	
Attitude	.152*	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion on the Findings

The study examines the impact of achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation as dimensions of EAO on MEs performance in Maiduguri metropolis. The study used Pearson correlation in the analysis of the data. The results indicated that all the dimensions of the EAO are significantly related to MEs performance. Hence, H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 are supported.

Therefore, the findings from this study support some previous researches such as the findings of Phan and Butler (2005), Jain, Ali and Kamble (2015) Valliere (2006) Jain and Ali (2013) Kagaari, Munene and Ntayi (2010) Ricard and Saiyed (2015) Godwin and Okoronka (2015) Khan, Dongping and Ghauri (2014) Luu (2011) Lai, Saridakis and Johnstone (2016) Shahab and Nisa (2014). On the other side, the study fails to corroborate with the study findings of some previous researches that

established an insignificant impact of EAO on MEs; these studies include Susanty, Miradipta and Jie (2013) insignificant influence on the performance of the employees. Choe, Loo and Lau (2013), Susanty and Miradipta (2013) Ahmad, Ahmad and Shah (2010).

5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study examined the multidimensional impact EAO on micro enterprises performance. The results of the study showed that there is a significant impact EAO on MEs performance. From the theoretical perspective, the implications the outcomes of this study support the previous findings and argument that entrepreneurial attitude plays an essential role in achieving better performance. This is because, the high the entrepreneurial attitude (achievement, self-esteem, personal control and innovation), the higher the propensity to a better firm performance Jain, Ali and Kamble (2015) Valliere (2006) Jain and Ali (2013) Kagaari, Munene and Ntayi (2010) Ricard and Saiyed (2015) Godwin and Okoronka (2015) Khan, Dongping and Ghauri (2014) Luu (2011) Lai, Saridakis and Johnstone (2016) Shahab and Nisa (2014).

From a practical perspective, the findings from the study would help entrepreneurs, owner/managers of MEs, government agencies and other stakeholders to understand the crucial role played by EAO in enhancing firm performance that could assist in the creation of employment to the teaming unemployed youth in the country. Thus, the study suggested that the development and possession of EAO may lead to the higher generation of comparative advantage and enhancement of firm performance. Finally, the study has some limitations, first of all, the study was conducted among MEs. Future studies should consider other types of businesses. Similarly, the sample is concentrated in Maiduguri metropolis. Future studies should explore and study samples from different parts of the country. Future studies should take a large sample, and more researches are replicated to validate the results of this study.

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