Effect of Personal Networking on the Performance of Small-Scale Enterprises in South-West Nigeria

[1]Akintaro Abel Abiodun (Ph. D); [2]Alo Ebenezer Adebisi (Ph. D), [3]Ogunrinade, R*.

[1&2]Department of Business Administration, Adeleke University, Ede

[3]Department of Business Administration and Management, Osun State Polytechnic, P.M.B. 301, Iree, Osun State, Nigeria.

***Corresponding Author**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of personal networking on the performance of small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in South-West Nigeria, addressing the challenges faced by SSEs in accessing resources, market information, and funding due to inadequate institutional support. Given the importance of personal networking, spanning social, business/professional, and institutional ties, the assessed their effect on business performance in a region where informal networkings often substitute for formal systems. Specifically, the study examined the effect of social, business/professional, and institutional networkings on business performance. Using a descriptive survey research design, and with a population of 235,222 registered SSE owners, data were collected from 519 small enterprise owners across six South-West Nigerian states through structured questionnaires. The study applied simple linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses that personal networking significantly affected business performance. Findings showed that all three dimensions of networking, social (0.970), business/professional (0.951), and institutional (0.889), positively affect the performance of the SSEs from the study areas. The study concluded that personal networking played a vital role in enhancing the growth and sustainability of SSEs by providing access to critical resources and fostering innovation. Based on these results, the study recommended that SSE owners prioritise building strong personal networking, including using digital platforms for social networking, and engage in professional associations and institutional collaborations to strengthen market positioning and access to resources.

Keywords: Business/Professional Networking, Institutional Networking, Market Share, Personal Networking, Social Networking

INTRODUCTION

Personal networking plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of small-scale enterprises (SSEs), by facilitating access to vital resources such as market information, funding, mentorship, and partnerships. This connection-driven dynamic is evident globally, with studies demonstrating its importance across various economies. For instance, the Enterprise Research Centre (2023) emphasised the significance of business and professional networking, such as those formed through industry associations and local enterprise hubs, in attracting customers and fostering knowledge exchange. Rata et al. (2024) also highlighted how institutional networking like accelerator programmes and angel investor groups create opportunities for funding and business growth. Similarly, networking, both formal and informal, is essential for innovation and competitiveness. Rata et al. (2024) further pointed out that strong interpersonal and organisational networking enhance business resilience. Therefore, networking remains indispensable in improving SSE performance, enabling them to overcome challenges and seize new opportunities in a competitive environment.

Personal networkings are crucial, especially in places where formal systems are less developed. Mwangi and Njeru (2023) showed how small-business owners rely on professional and peer networking to gain valuable market insights and access microfinance. Similarly, Mensah and Baah (2024) emphasised the importance of social networking, like family ties and community groups, as key sources for financial support and business referrals. Zulu and Meyer (2025) showed that engaging in institutional networking, such as incubators and professional forums, can lead to better operational outcomes. This trend underscores how strong personal and professional connections are critical in helping businesses navigate challenges and access resources, ultimately improving their chances of success across the continent. As these networkings evolve, they play a vital role in bridging gaps that formal systems may not yet cover.

Where formal support for entrepreneurs is often limited, Adeola and Adebayo (2023) revealed the crucial role of social networking, such as family, religious circles, and professional associations, in helping entrepreneurs secure both funding and customers. These networkings act as lifelines, providing the necessary resources that entrepreneurs might struggle to obtain through traditional institutional channels. Similarly, Okeke and Ezenwa (2024), along with Olatunji and Ogunleye (2025), argued that these networkings not only foster social capital but also serve as essential substitutes for the weak formal support systems, enabling SSEs in Nigeria to innovate and thrive. By leveraging these networkings, entrepreneurs can overcome institutional barriers, driving sustainable growth and fostering innovation despite the challenges posed by Nigeria's economic environment. This combination of social and professional networkings proves to be a key factor in the resilience and success of Nigerian SSEs, as it empowers them to navigate the complexities of the business landscape and continue growing.

Statement of the Problem

Small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Nigeria are grappling with numerous challenges that hinder their ability to thrive, particularly in volatile markets. These challenges, according to Oladeji, Olodo and Mustapha (2022), include limited access to formal credit, inadequate infrastructure, and weak institutional support, which together create an unfavorable business environment. However, an often-overlooked resource is personal networking, which include connections with family, friends, business contacts, and institutional ties. These networkings can offer vital support, providing access to markets, resources, and opportunities for innovation (Imo, 2024; Aladejebi, 2020). Despite their potential, many SSE owners in South-West Nigeria struggle to effectively leverage these networks. This underutilisation stems from factors such as limited awareness of networking opportunities, weak social ties, and the absence of structured support systems, which collectively hinder market penetration and overall business performance. Consequently, Oladeji, Olodo and Mustapha (2022) noted that these enterprises experience low profitability, limited innovation, and high failure rates, which prevent them from unlocking their full potential in the competitive market.

While extensive research has explored the relationship between social capital and small business performance, a crucial gap remains in understanding the specific effect of informal social networking, particularly personal relationships with family, friends, and local communities, on SSE performance. Most studies focus on professional or institutional networking, such as trade associations, or broadly examine digital social networking. However, there is insufficient research on how informal, personal networking affect performance indicator like market share in South-West Nigeria. This gap is especially significant given the region's unique socio-economic landscape. As noted by Akinlade (2023) and Omolekan and Omole (2020), there is a clear need for more context-specific research to explore how the quality and diversity of personal networking, distinct from formal business connections, affect business performance in this area. Therefore, this study aimed to fill this gap by examining how personal networking affects the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria.

Research Questions

In order to ensure that proper investigation is conducted on the topic, the following research questions were answered;

1. How does social networking affect the business performance of small-scale enterprises in South-West Nigeria?

2. What is the effect of business/professional networking on the performance of small-scale business enterprises in South-West, Nigeria?

3. To what extent does institutional networking affect the performance of small-scale business enterprises in South-West Nigeria?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of personal networking on the performance of small-scale enterprises in South-West Nigeria, why the specific objectives are to;

1. examine the effect of social networking on the business performance of small-scale enterprises in South-West Nigeria.

2. know the effect of business/professional networking on the performance scale business enterprises in South-West Nigeria.

3. assess the effect of institutional networking on the performance of small-scale enterprises in South-West Nigeria**.**

Research Hypotheses

In an attempt to ensure proper conduct of this study, the following hypotheses below were tested;

H_{01}: There is no significant effect of social networking on the business performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria.

H_{02}: Business/professional networking has no significant effect on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria.

H_{03}: Institutional networking has no significant effect on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Personal Networking

The importance of personal networking in driving the success of SSEs is well-documented, particularly in today's fast-paced business landscape. Studies by Dwumah et al. (2024) and John (2024) emphasised that personal networking, which include social, business, institutional, and support connections, has a significant and positive effect on SME performance. These networkings not only facilitate access to essential resources and market opportunities but also play a crucial role in non-financial aspects such as customer relations and internal operations. Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2024) noted that personal networking acts as a lifeline for SSEs with limited resources, providing access to vital knowledge, expertise, and market insights. While the financial benefits of networking are clear, its role in fostering innovation and enhancing competitive advantage is equally significant. This demonstrates that leveraging personal and professional relationship enables SSE owners to adapt to market shifts, identify emerging opportunities, and develop adaptive strategies for long-term success. The following sections explore how different types of networkings, including social, business/professional, and institutional, affect SSE performance.

Social Networking

The adoption of social networking platforms has been shown to positively affect the performance of SSEs, with studies by Amoah et al. (2024) and Ibrahim (2024) illustrating their effectiveness in helping businesses reach broader markets, enhance brand visibility, and engage customers in real-time. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp allow SSEs to visually display products, establishing a strong brand identity at a relatively low cost, as noted by Kumar and Mishra (2024) and Ahmad (2023). This facilitates customer loyalty,

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contributing to sales growth. However, challenges persist, particularly limited digital skills and the cost of maintaining an active online presence, as highlighted by Awotunde et al. (2024). While these obstacles remain, it is clear that, when strategically utilised, social media offers SSEs a powerful tool for navigating competition, fostering business growth, and securing long-term success. Thus, a critical evaluation of the literature reveals both the advantages and ongoing challenges in leveraging social media for business success.

Business/ Professional Networking

Business/professional networking is fundamental in improving the performance of SSEs by helping them navigate common challenges such as limited resources and market visibility. Bianchi and Stoian (2024) as well as Murray et al. (2023) highlighted that participation in both formal and informal networkings, such as industry events, business associations, and client relationships, offers SSEs access to crucial resources, including capital, market insights, technologies, and complementary skills. These connections are instrumental in boosting efficiency and competitiveness. Again, Awotunde et al. (2024) and Dwumah et al. (2024) demonstrated that strong networking fosters trust, which is essential for referrals and collaborations that can expand customer bases and enhance reputations. Udom and Ekpouko (2024) emphasised that such relationships are key to long-term sustainability and increased sales. However, a deeper understanding of the existing literature shows a need to explore the limitations of networking in diverse market environments and the potential pitfalls in reliance on networkings alone.

Institutional Networking

Institutional networking is vital for enhancing the performance of SSEs, especially in overcoming challenges such as limited resources and access to information. Studies by Dwumah et al. (2024) and Galdino et al. (2023) affirmed the positive effect of these networkings, which include connections with financial institutions, government agencies, and business associations, on the growth and survival of SSEs. The World Bank (2023) revealed that such networkings provide crucial resources like formal credit and market support programmes, which small businesses typically cannot access independently. Furthermore, participation in these networkings can improve an SSE’s reputation and legitimacy, increasing trust with customers and stakeholders and boosting market performance. Critically, the literature on institutional networking, as noted by Ricciardi et al. (2024) and Hilmersson et al. (2023), suggested that while these networkings foster competitiveness and innovation, there is insufficient focus on their long-term sustainability effect, which remains underexplored in the previous research.

Small Scale Enterprises

In Nigeria, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are classified based on specific national standards. The National Policy on MSMEs outlines this classification, focusing mainly on assets and employment, while excluding land and buildings from the criteria.

Table 1: Classification of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

S/N	Size Category	Employment	Assets (Naira, million excluding land and building)
1	Micro Enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 5
2	Small Enterprises	10 to 49	5 to less than 50
3	Medium Enterprises	50 to 199	50 to less than 500

Source: National Policy on MSMEs Report, 2015.

In Nigeria, medium enterprises typically have 50 to 199 employees and assets between N50 million and N499.9 million, excluding land and buildings (Yahaya et al., 2016). The National MSMEs Survey (2015) identifies about 4,670 medium enterprises, mainly in manufacturing, transportation, ICT, agro-allied, and oil & gas sectors. Small enterprises, employing 10 to 49 workers with assets ranging from N5 million to N49.9 million, account for 68,168 businesses, mostly sole proprietorships, with a few incorporated. Micro enterprises, with fewer than 10 employees and assets below N5 million, number approximately 36.99 million, employing over 57.84 million people (Yahaya et al., 2016).

Small Scale Enterprises Performance

The performance of SSEs refers to how well they meet both their internal and external goals (Chang & Hughes, 2020). In essence, performance can also be seen as growth (Chen & Li, 2023). According to Jones, Smith, and Brown (2023), organisational performance can be broken down into three main areas: financial (such as profits, return on assets, and return on investment), product market (including sales and market share), and shareholder returns (like economic value added and total shareholder return). These metrics can be either financial or non-financial. Common financial indicators include return on assets, return on equity, and net profit margin, among others. For this study, market share is the chosen metric to assess performance, as it offers a clear view of an SSE's competitive standing in the market.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory, first proposed by Bourdieu (1986), posits that an individual's networking of relationships serves as a valuable resource that can enhance their ability to access information, capital, and opportunities, which directly affects organisational outcomes. Several scholars have expanded upon this theory, including Putnam (2000), who emphasised the role of trust and norms in community networking, and Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), who identified social capital as crucial for knowledge-sharing in organisations. The theory asserts that the structure of relationships, trust, and shared norms within a networking are key components shaping behaviour and performance (Coleman, 1988). Social Capital Theory also posits that individuals with stronger social networking have better access to resources and support, thus fostering business success. Despite critiques from Lin (2001) regarding its neglect of power dynamics and resource imbalances within networkings, proponents like Adams and Zohdy (2021) maintained its relevance in explaining business performance across various environments. This theory is particularly pertinent to studying personal networking and its effect on SSEs in South-West Nigeria, where trust and networking are crucial for accessing business resources and overcoming challenges. The theory's application helps illuminate the ways in which social connections affect business performance in this region.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Personal Networking

Looking at past research on entrepreneurial networking and its effect on the performance of SSEs is key to building a solid knowledge base for this study. Understanding how various networking dimensions, such as social, business, and institutional, affect performance, particularly market share, offers valuable insights for small-scale businesses. Adeoye and Adeniji (2018) conducted a study on entrepreneurial networking within Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria, focusing specifically on Small Scale Enterprises (SSEs). The research, which surveyed SSEs in the service sector, explored the impact of different types of networking: personal, operational, and strategic. The findings highlighted that personal networking, built on trust and shared interests, had a positive influence on SSE performance. This type of networking helped increase access to vital resources and market information, which were crucial for improving business outcomes. The study emphasises the importance of relationship-building for enhancing business success.

Omotayo and Adebayo (2021) carried out a study to explore how social media usage affects the performance of micro and SSEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study focused specifically on the smallest businesses to understand their unique challenges. Using a survey research design, the study gathered data from 300 SSE owners and managers and applied regression analysis to test their hypotheses. The results revealed a strong positive link

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between social media usage, measured through customer engagement, marketing, and relationship-building, and key performance indicators like sales volume and market share growth for these small businesses.

Idris and Saridakis (2018) conducted a study on the internationalisation of small scale enterprises (SSEs) in the UK. The study examined the role of local formal and informal networks in driving international growth. Using structural equation modeling, the research revealed that SSE owner-managers' involvement in formal business networkings, such as trade associations, had a significant and positive impact on their firms' internationalisation. The findings underscored the importance of formal interpersonal networkings in facilitating the international expansion and performance of SSEs.

Afthanorhan et al. (2019) explored how entrepreneurial business networks (EBNs), including links to business associations and firm clusters, impact the performance of small firms in competitive environments. Using structural equation modeling to analyse their data, they found that EBNs significantly boost small firms' performance by enhancing their dynamic capabilities, specifically, the ability to adapt and reconfigure resources to meet changing market demands. The study highlighted that these external institutional connections help small firms access valuable knowledge, improve resource acquisition, and build credibility, all of which are key to driving innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable growth.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the effect of personal networking on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria, specifically across six states: Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Ogun, and Ekiti. These states were selected for their significant representation of SSEs, with Lagos serving as a commercial hub, and the remaining states contributing diverse economic environments, enhancing the generalisability of the findings to the broader South-West region. The population of the study consisted of 235,222 registered SSE owners, as shown in Table 2. A sample size of 399 respondents was initially calculated using Taro Yamane’s formula to ensure sufficient statistical power. To mitigate non-responses, the sample size was increased by 30%, a strategy supported by Creswell (2014) and Israel (1992), resulting in a final sample of 519 respondents. The study adopted a multistage sampling technique, starting with the selection of states, followed by local governments within each state, and finally wards within each local government. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire, which underwent expert validation and a test-retest pilot study to ensure its clarity, relevance, and reliability. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha, yielding satisfactory coefficients for social networking (0.785), business/professional networking (0.734), institutional networking (0.782), and market share (0.754). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, and simple linear regression analysis for the three hypotheses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 to evaluate the effect of personal networking on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria.

Table 2: Study Population

S/N	State	Number of SSEs
1	Lagos	146,382
2	Oyo	30,617
3	Ondo	14,731
4	Osun	13,875
5	Ogun	21,154
6	Ekiti	8,463
	Total	**235,222**

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2022)

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Model Specification

Mathematically, the model is expressed as follows:

Model: P= F(X_{1i}; X_{2i}; X_{3i})

Where: P= performance, X_{1i}= social networking, X_{2i}= business/professional networking, X_{3i}= institutional networking, β_0 = Intercept, β_1 - β_3= Regression Coefficient, μ= Stochastic error term.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics Analysis

All 519 questionnaires distributed to small-scale enterprise owners in South-West Nigeria were duly completed and returned, yielding a 100% response rate. This impressive outcome was achieved through the assistance of trained research facilitators. The socio-demographic distribution of respondents revealed a near gender balance, with males constituting 280 (53.9%) and females 239 (46.1%), indicating increasing female participation in small-scale enterprise ownership across South-West Nigeria. In terms of age, respondents aged 36–45 years formed the largest group with 182 (35.1%), followed by those aged 26–35 years at 180 (34.7%), while 18–25 years accounted for 80 (15.4%), 46–55 years for 57 (11.0%), and above 55 years for 20 (3.9%). This suggests that entrepreneurship is largely driven by economically active middle-aged individuals with significant experience and risk-taking capacity. Regarding educational attainment, 280 (53.9%) possessed B.Sc./B.A./B.Ed./HND or equivalent qualifications, 130 (25.1%) held ND/NCE, 90 (17.3%) had SSCE, and only 19 (3.7%) had postgraduate qualifications, showing that higher education correlates positively with business ownership. Most respondents operated sole proprietorships, 362 (69.7%), followed by partnerships at 156 (30.1%) and limited liability companies at just 1 (0.2%). The majority had operated their businesses for 16–20 years (53.9%), primarily in retail/trade (48.2%), with 69.7% employing between 10 and 15 workers, reflecting the dominance of stable, moderately scaled enterprises in the region.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypotheses One

Table 3: Summary of the simple linear regression analysis showing the social networking on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Durbin-Watson	Std error of the estimate	F-value
1	0.722	0.521	0.520	2.117	7.194	5.853
Explanatory variables		B	Std error	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Constant		32.180	2.667	12.065	0.000	
social networking		0.970	0.683	1.257	0.000	

a. Dependent Variable: performance

Source: Field survey, 2026

The hypothesis testing examined the effect of social networking on the business performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria. As indicated, the model produced an R value of 0.722, showing a strong positive relationship between social networking and business performance. The R-Square value of 0.521 suggested that 52.1% of the variation in business performance can be attributed to social networking. The adjusted R-Square value of 0.520

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further supported the reliability of the model. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.117 indicated no autocorrelation in the residuals, ensuring the statistical integrity of the model. The regression model was significant with an F-value of 5.853 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. The coefficient for social networking (β = 0.970, t = 1.257, p = 0.000) showed a significant positive effect, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypotheses Two

Table 4: Results of the simple linear regression analysis showing the effect of business/professional networking on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Durbin-Watson	Std error of the estimate	F-value
1	0.782	0.612	0.587	2.062	6.797	8.695
Explanatory variables		B	Std error	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Constant		30.952	1.158	26.727	0.000	
business/professional networking		0. 951	0. 581	0.587	0.000	

a. Dependent Variable: performance

Source: Field survey, 2026

The hypothesis testing examined the effect of business/professional networking on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria. The model presented an R value of 0.782, indicating a strong positive correlation between business networking and enterprise performance. The R-Square value of 0.612 suggested that 61.2% of the variation in performance is explained by business/professional networking. The adjusted R-Square value of 0.587 indicated the model's reliability and good fit. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.062 confirmed that there is no autocorrelation in the residuals, ensuring the validity of the model. The F-value of 8.695 and a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 significance level, demonstrated that the regression model is statistically significant. In addition, the regression coefficient for business/professional networking (β = 0.951, t = 0.587, p = 0.000) indicated a significant positive effect, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypotheses Three

Table 5: Results of the simple linear regression analysis showing the effect of institutional networking on the performance of SSE in South-West Nigeria

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Durbin-Watson	Std error of the estimate	F-value
1	0.812	0.659	0.592	1.975	12.483	16.231
Explanatory variables		B	Std error	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Constant		34.853	2.054	25.625	0.000	
institutional networking		0. 889	0. 479	0.826	0.000	

a. Dependent Variable: performance

Source: Field survey, 2026

The hypothesis testing examined the effect of institutional networking on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria. The regression model showed a strong positive relationship between institutional networking and market share performance, with an R value of 0.812, indicating a high correlation. The R-Square value of 0.659 suggested that 65.9% of the variation in performance is explained by institutional networking. The Adjusted R-Square value of 0.592 confirmed the model's robustness. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.975 suggested that there is no issue of autocorrelation. The F-value of 16.231, with a p-value of 0.000, confirmed the statistical significance of the model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for institutional networking ($\beta = 0.889$, $t = 0.826$, $p = 0.000$) showed a significant positive effect on SSE performance. Therefore, institutional networking has a significant effect on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study revealed the significant effect of personal networking dimensions, including social, business/professional, and institutional, on the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria. The general analysis indicated that personal networking is a critical determinant of SSE performance, particularly in terms of market share. The effect of social networking on business performance was found to be highly significant ($B = .970$, $p = .000$), supporting Adeoye and Adeniji (2018), who emphasised the role of personal networking in facilitating access to essential resources and market information. These networkings, based on trust and shared interests, enhance SSEs' ability to thrive in competitive environments. Omotayo and Adebayo (2021) also aligned with these findings, noting that social media usage significantly improved customer engagement, sales volume, and market share growth, reinforcing the role of digital platforms in modern business strategies.

Business/professional networking also demonstrated a strong and significant effect ($B = .951$, $p = .001$), which aligned with the work of Idris and Saridakis (2018), who highlighted the importance of formal business networking such as industry associations. These networkings provided valuable opportunities for accessing capital, market insights, and establishing business credibility, which is crucial for SSE growth and internationalisation. Institutional networking ($B = .889$, $p = .000$) had a positive and significant effect on business performance, supporting Afthanorhan et al. (2019), who suggested that entrepreneurial business networkings (EBNs) enhance small firms' dynamic capabilities, fostering innovation and improving competitiveness. Institutional networking, such as connections with government bodies and business associations, empowered SSEs to access resources and navigate environmental challenges, thereby promoting long-term sustainability. All these findings underscored the relevance of social capital theory, which posits that networking, trust, and shared norms are essential for enhancing business performance. The results of this study indicate that leveraging personal networking is a key strategy for boosting the performance and growth of small-scale enterprises in South-West Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that personal networking significantly affects the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, social networking, business/professional networking, and institutional networking all positively affect market share, demonstrating that these networking dimensions are crucial in improving business performance. Entrepreneurs who actively engage in social, professional, and institutional networkings are more likely to gain access to vital resources, market information, and strategic partnerships that foster market share. Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that SSE owners in South-West Nigeria should prioritise building strong personal networking, especially through digital platforms for social networking, to enhance customer engagement and brand visibility. They should also actively participate in business associations and professional networking to improve their market positioning and access to capital. Furthermore, engaging in institutional networking by collaborating with government bodies and business associations will enable SSEs to secure essential support and strengthen their competitive advantage. These strategies will promote long-term business success and sustainability.

Policy Implication and Limitations

The findings of this study have important implications for SSE affairs, emphasising the need to promote personal networking as a tool for improving the performance of SSEs in South-West Nigeria. Efforts should be directed toward enabling SSE owners to establish strong social, professional, and institutional networkings, facilitating collaboration and resource access. This can be supported through targeted training programmes, networking events, and partnerships with industry associations. However, the study's limitations include its focus on a single geographical region and specific types of enterprises, suggesting that future research should explore other regions and business categories to gain a broader understanding of the effects of networking.

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