

# Entrepreneurial Marketing, Corporate Reputation, Corporate Creativity and Competitive Advantage: A Research Framework and Proposition

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## Abstract

This study explored the consequences of entrepreneurial marketing by creating empirical evidence grounded in dynamic capability and image theory. The study proposed a direct as well as an indirect relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage, recognizing corporate creativity as the boundary condition under which entrepreneurial marketing influences competitive advantage suggesting that corporate creativity is a moderator in the entrepreneurial marketing model. The study explained the theoretical and practical contributions of the model in our understanding of entrepreneurial marketing practices and the role of corporate reputation. Corporate creativity was also discussed especially from the perspective of entrepreneurial firms.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Marketing, Corporate Reputation, Corporate Creativity, Competitive Advantage.

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## 1. Introduction

There has been a convergence of opinion by both academics and practitioners on the disparity in the marketing strategy employed by small firms and larger firms. Expanding on this idea, it is safe to say that the kind of marketing behaviour observed in an individual entrepreneurial firm deviates from what is common in main stream marketing (Sole, 2013; Gilmore, 2010). Some authors have worked on these differences (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2008; Sole, 2013) and concluded that the process of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) differs from the regular approaches to marketing (Collinson & Shaw, 2001). Entrepreneurial marketing can be perceived as a novel model that incorporates important features of marketing and entrepreneurship into a comprehensive concept where marketing becomes a process used by enterprises as well as acting entrepreneurially (Ferreira, Ferguson & Pitt, 2019; Collinson, et

al 2001). Some entrepreneurial marketing strategies have been identified as; guerrilla marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing and viral marketing (Rollins & Anitsal, 2014; Sadiku- Dushi, Dana, Ramadani, 2019). These types are judged very helpful for entrepreneurial firms because they are low cost and innovative forms of practicing marketing (Sadiku- Dushi et al, 2019).

Entrepreneurial firms operate in an environment characterized by high risk, and decreased ability to forecast (Olannye & Eromafaru, 2016). The operational landscape of this environment is often controlled by rapid changes, complex decision, and customers' high expectations, leaving the entrepreneurs with limited options (Hills Hultman & Miles, 2008). In addition, the current happenings present firms and entrepreneurs with limited option following the devastating effect of the global economic melt-down and recently the COVID 19 pandemic which ravaged the global economy, with businesses losing trillions of dollars. These resulted in the creation of a new normal which is reshaping marketing activities globally with customers taking the lead (Miles, & Jones 2020). In the new normal, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was projected to decline by 2.1% and 2.5% in developed and developing countries respectively with income increasing by 1.9% (Malizewska, Muttoo & Mensubrugge, 2020). These events have brought- forth new ways of tackling marketing activities and other consequences within. In the contemporary business environment, with growing dynamics, instability and rivalry, entrepreneurs and managers have to unlearn traditional marketing principles and replace them with innovative opinions and procedures, such as entrepreneurial marketing (Hills, Hultman, Kraus, & Schulte, 2010)

The concept of entrepreneurial marketing has been adjudged by scholars and practitioners as a key source of superior firm performance (Njeru & Kibera, 2019; Abdullahi, Mohammed, Syed & Ghazali, 2017). Though EM has been found to enhance business success regardless of size, there appears to be a consensus on its higher impact on small businesses (Jones & Rowley, 2011; Morris, et al, 2002). Hill, Hultman and Miles (2008) and Eggers, Niemand, Kraus and Breier, (2020) underscored the importance of examining marketing efforts used in small firms as opposed to predominantly researched large firms with much resources. In view of this, researchers have examined the antecedents and consequences of EM among SMEs (Fiore, Niehm, Hurst, Son & Sadachar, 2013). A cursory survey of existing literature reveals that entrepreneurial marketing has a positive impact on firms' performance (Becherer, Helms, & McDonald, 2012; Hacıoglu, Eren, Eren, & Celikkan, 2012; Fiore et al, 2013; Morrish & Deacon, 2012; Mugambi & Karugu, 2017; Sadiku- Dushi, Dana & Radamani, 2019). Evidence also indicated that entrepreneurial marketing practices have consequences for product/service innovation, market research and service quality which enable firms to gain competitive advantage (Jayawarna, Jones, Lam & Phua 2014).

Flowing from the preceding findings, this study proposes a model of entrepreneurial marketing focusing on the consequences in ensuring competitive advantage. We found the dynamic capability view (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) underpinning the study while the image theory (Beach & Mitchell, 1998) played supporting role. This study departs from the current debate by exploring the consequences of entrepreneurial marketing, thus presenting a parsimonious model on its impact on competitive advantage. Peterson (2020) had expressed concern that EM researchers have devoted scant attention to the link with external environmental conditions. He was not surprised that important explanations for EM have

remained underdeveloped as debate on EM as a strategic response to environmental change and turbulence is lost (Peterson, 2020). Thus, we theorize that corporate reputation, corporate creativity and competitive advantage interplay as consequences of entrepreneurial marketing.

A study of this nature is important in expanding the literature on entrepreneurial marketing in business firm especially in the context of small firms. The theoretical expositions would set an agenda on entrepreneurial marketing in the context of entrepreneurial firms, providing propositional arguments that would give a lucid exploration of the consequences of entrepreneurial marketing. Another significance of the study is the understanding of the role of corporate reputation and corporate creativity in the link between entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage. While corporate reputation serves as the mechanism, corporate creativity forms the boundary condition under which the relationship between the predictor and the outcomes becomes plausible (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Lastly, the conceptualized model is applicable to small firms that adopt entrepreneurial marketing practices rather than large business corporations, providing a more slightly different approach of the consequences of entrepreneurial marketing with other outcomes.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Theoretical Foundation*

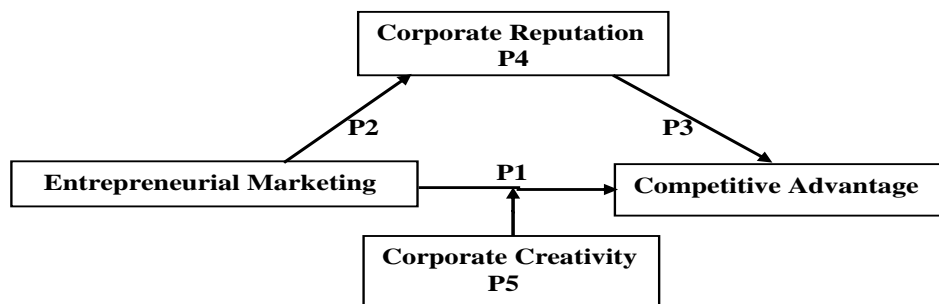
Underpinning this study is the dynamic capabilities view (Teece, Pisano & Shuen 1997). Dynamic capabilities is the organizational and strategic routines by which the firm achieves new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve and die in changing business environment (Teece, et al, 1997, p. 509). It is linked to firms' performance in that it changes the firm's bundle of resources, operations, routines and competencies (Kanyabi & Dew, 2012). In other words, dynamic capabilities reflect a path-breaking perspective for entrepreneurial marketing (Sole, 2014). In the context of this study entrepreneurial marketing, corporate reputation and corporate creativity are considered as intangible resources of a firm that enable it manage market information, company image and also deliver superior value for its customers (Rindova, Williams, & Petkova 2010; Kamasak, 2017).

In addition, image theory supports the underpinning theory in explaining the role of corporate reputation in the model. The theory was developed by Lee Roy Beach and Terence Mitchell in 1970. It has two complementary tracks which are for personnel and organizational decisions (Beach, & Mitchell, 1998). Images are representation of the decision maker's perception of some aspects of the organization such as organizational culture (belief, morals, ethics, values, norms) and organizational prestige. The primary goal of corporate firm is the maintenance of positive image (Massey, 2011) in relating with its key stakeholders. A firm's communication strategy with stakeholders is to encode a desirable message (Massey, 2015), to create a positive perception about the corporation (Van der, Marweis & Puth, 2016). When effective corporate image with the stakeholders is created, chances for success and competitiveness are enhanced (Mason, 2014; & Massey, 2011).

Within the framework of this theory, corporate image is one of the intangible assets that create an important strategic competitive advantage over its rivals because it is a resource that helps firms to differentiate it from others because it is rare, difficult to imitate, buy other organizations or firm without substitute (Barney, 1991). In addition, the theory places great emphasis on creating a positive image showing the level of organization, commitment to

quality, excellence and relationships with its various constituents ranging from employees, customers, government and other stakeholders. If this image of the firm is properly managed, it will protect the organization against competition from new competitors or current competitors offering new products and services (Okocha, Otika & Osuagwu, 2019).

In a sum, dynamic capabilities enable firms to reconfigure and recreate their responses to internal and external changes relating to their image, quality of goods and services offered and network. When these are done right through its EM strategies, it sparks positive corporate reputation due to favourable decisions made by customers and organizations towards the organization. In addition, dynamic capabilities are expressed in terms of creativity as such high corporate creativity which is an indicator of high dynamic capabilities strengthens EM activities while low creativity weakens the predictive strength of EM on CA.



**Figure 1** Research Framework

## 2.2. Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM)

Entrepreneurial marketing has come into view as an important field in both academic study and marketing practice over the past decades (Gilmore, McAuley, Gallagher & Carson, 2013; Ferreira, Ferguson & Pitt, 2019). The numerous similarities between entrepreneurship and marketing resulted in the emergence of this construct (Gilmore et al, 2013; Sole, 2013; Hill & Hultman, 2011; Morris, Scindehutte & La Forge, 2002). Earlier authors have argued that both entrepreneurship and marketing focus on the importance of identifying opportunities and operating in a constantly changing environment (Omura, Calantone & Schmidt, 1993; Ferreira et al, 2019). Omura et al, (1993) also identified further areas of clear overlap in marketing and entrepreneurial attributes (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002; Collinson & Shaw, 2001). The term has been used in various ways and often somewhat loosely used (Morris et al, 2002:4). Sole (2013) observed that its intriguing confusion arises because each item can be interpreted differently but are related.

Scholars have different conceptualizations for EM. For instance, Morris et al, (2002, p.5) define EM as the “proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resources leveraging and value creation.” Whalen, Uslay, Pascal and Gilmore (2016, p. 3) define it as a combination of innovative, proactive, and risk-taking activities that create, communicate, and

deliver value to and by customers, entrepreneurs, marketers, their partners, and society at large.

However, EM is a term that is difficult to grasp (Kurgun, Bagiran, Ozren, & Maral, 2011). We can see this in Bjerke and Hultman (2002), who think EM is the marketing of small firms growing through entrepreneurship. The idea of restricting EM to small firms was recently challenged in the study conducted by Eggers, Niemand, Kraus and Breier, (2020); Kraus, Harms, and Fink (2010) noting that EM is an approach that can be used by firms of all sizes, ages and industry affiliations. Though the practice has been common especially in small firms, most entrepreneurially market- oriented firms find it useful (Collinson & Shaw, 2001). According to Hills and Hultman (2011), EM is a product of three elements: entrepreneurial analysis of information, conclusion, and marketing behaviour. Eggers, Niemand, Kraus and Breier, (2020), on the other hand, departed from this conceptualization and proved that EM is the function of three factors namely; 1) change-driving, 2) boot-strapping, and 3) risk-taking.

Change-driving refers to firm's behaviour that challenges and goes beyond the status-quo through pro-activeness, innovativeness and market driving. Bootstrapping, on the other hand, involves resource leverage and customer orientation, it is an aspect of EM that establishes the firm with cost efficient, customer-focused marketing programs. The interplay of change-driving and bootstrapping, what Eggers et al. (2020:7) describe as "radical, proactive, market-driving behaviours and a more conservative, resource-leveraging customer focus" makes EM a sought-after approach in all firms and at all stages. Risk-taking as a factor shows its inherency within the two factors. Though going beyond customer needs and wants as stipulated in EM may involve some level of risk, imagine the opposite which involves focusing on customers and cost-conscious behaviour which might involve firms missing out on growth opportunities or even be led into unprofitable directions (Eggers et al., 2020). How riskier would that be in a competitive business environment?

Basically, entrepreneurial marketing practices in the firm have been discussed under different concepts such as entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation (Al- Mamum, Mohiuddin, Fazal, & Ahmad, 2017), entrepreneurial marketing orientation (Jones & Rowley, 2011), entrepreneurial marketing process (Miles, Lewis, Hall Morrish, Gilmore & Kasouf, 2016). In the context of our study, entrepreneurial marketing is seen as an opportunity driven way of thoughts and actions concerning marketing behaviours (Morris et al, 2002) as a result understanding and responding to market styles, market positioning and customers' needs (Fiore, Niehm, Hurst, Son & Sadauchar, 2013).

### *2.3. Competitive Advantage*

In recent years, the concept of competitive advantage has been a hot issue among management guilds, with many controversies raised. This perhaps is owed to the subjective interpretation of what it means for a firm to have advantage over another in absolute terms. Therefore, providing a precise definition of competitive advantage is a difficult task, seeing that it is defined in many different ways. For example, Porter (1985, p.2) defined it "as the comparative positional superiority in the market place that leads a firm to outperform its rivals." Sigalas – Pekka, Economou, and Georgopolous, (2013, p.322) described it as the degree to which a firm exploits its opportunities, neutralizes threats and reduces cost. In addition, Rothaermel (2013, p. 45) defined it as 'the way a firm formulates and implements a

strategy that leads to superior performance relative to other competitors in the same industry. In the context of this study, we adopt the definition of Rothaermel (2013), because it involves the firms adopting effective strategies that would help perform better than other firms. To achieve competitive advantage, a firm must pay attention to its external position as well as internal capabilities. Different scholars have identified different perspectives to competitive advantage which have been used by researchers to measure this concept. Table one summarises the different perspectives presented by some scholars.

Table 1: Perspectives to Competitive Advantage

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Conceptualization</b>
<b>Porter (1985)</b> <b>Miles &amp; Darroch (2006)</b>	Cost advantage and differentiation Organizational resources, ability, Market superiority, pursue of opportunity.
<b>Li, Nathan, Nathan &amp; Rao (2006)</b>	Cost, quality delivery, dependability, product innovation, and time to market
<b>Li &amp; Zhou (2010)</b>	Institution advantage, cost advantage and differentiation
<b>Bratic (2011)</b>	Price, quality delivery, product innovation and time to market
<b>Peng, Shoeder, &amp; Shah (2011)</b>	Cost priority, delivery priority, flexibility priority and Innovation
<b>Mihalic &amp; Buhalic (2013)</b>	Image quality, Differentiation, contact, and price
<b>Diab (2014)</b> <b>Al-Najjar (2016)</b>	Cost, flexibility, delivery and quality Flexibility, creativity, cost and differentiation

#### *2.4. Entrepreneurial Marketing and Competitive Advantage*

Research has explored the consequences of EM which triggered interest among academics and practitioners (Fiore, et al, 2013). This is in view of its drive to create access and successfully exploit attractive economic opportunities by leveraging on the resources of the organization (Morrish, Miles & Deacon, 2010) resulting in driving the desire, needs and motives of the entrepreneurs. In other words, innovation and creativity in EM can trigger the creation of new products to satisfy the needs of customers and owners of businesses.

Empirical evidences (Altinay, Madanoglu, Vita, Arasil, & Ekinici, 2016) have identified entrepreneurial, marketing has been studied with different outcomes such as sales and market growth (performance (Sadiku- Dushi, Dana & Ramadani, 2019), corporate reputation (Orlando & Alexander, 2018), firm success (Becherer, et al, 2012), electronic customer relationship management (Harrigan, Ramsey, & Ibbotson, 2012), hybrid entrepreneurship (Ferreira, Ferguson & Pitt, 2019), coo petition (Crick 2017), commitment (Jansson, Nilsson, Modig & Hed- Hall, 2015), consumer engagement (Al- Mamum, Mohiuddin, Fazal & Ahmed, 2017) as consequences of EM. Buccieri, Javalgi, and Gross (2021). Mahrous,

Genedy, and Kalling (2020), Zeebaree, and Siron (2017) established that entrepreneurial marketing dimensions are positively related to competitive advantage and differentiation and low-cost strategy

Consistent with dynamic capabilities theory which focuses on how firms integrate, build and reconfigure their specific internal and external competence into a form that matches the turbulence in their business environment (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), it is expected that firms with greater dynamic capabilities will perform better than those with less capability. Juxtaposing this with EM, which involves the interplay of change-driving, bootstrapping, and risk-taking, which Eggers et al. (2020:7) describe as “radical, proactive, market-driving behaviours and a more conservative, resource-leveraging customer focus”, a firm that possesses EM capabilities is expected to function effectively in a turbulent business environment, hence out-performing those with less EM capabilities. We therefore propose that:

**Proposition 1:** *The experience of entrepreneurial marketing by a firm to greater extent will lead to competitive advantage of the firm*

## *2.5. Entrepreneurial Marketing and Corporate Reputation*

Corporate reputation refers to “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describe the organization’s overall appeal to all its key constituents when compared to other leading rivals” (Fombrun, 1996, p. 72). It is understood from different perspectives such as economic, strategic, marketing, organizational studies and marketing. Economic view refers to what the firm is, what it does, what it represents, its capability to exist and influence on economic agents (Fombrun et al, 2000; Carreras Alloza & Carreras, 2013). Strategic view is the source of differentiation which is difficult to imitate, because of its intangible nature and its potential for value creations, it is complex and cannot be easily replicated by competitors (Fombrun, 1996, and Waeraas, 2015). Marketing view focuses on brand equity such that positive relationship between client and the company is a function of the firm’s brand name (Carreras et al, 2013), where reputation is seen as perceptual asset with the power to attract loyal customers. Organizational view is the firm’s identity and culture that shapes business practices. It provides the basis for internal stakeholders, for the achievement of organizational objectives (Carreras, et al, 2013). In the context of this study, corporate reputation is seen from the marketing perspective, where EM is expected to create new brands and focus on ensuring equity and customer loyalty.

Empirical evidences confirm that EM associates with different behavioural outcomes, though dearth of empirical evidences exists in the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and corporate reputation as intended in this study. In any case, Orlando and Alexandra (2018) and Sadiku- Dushi et al, (2019) inferred that entrepreneurial marketing has a direct link with performance outcomes such as reputation. Similarly, Grisseemann, Plank, and Brunner-Sperdin (2013) concluded that customer orientation and innovativeness are some of the dimensions of EM that are positively associated with corporate reputation. In addition, environmental marketing has been found to be a significant predictor of corporate reputation (Mulyganegara, 2011; Williams, Buttle & Biggerman, 2012, Di Souza, Taghian, & Sullivan-Mort, 2013). Likewise, Ozkan, Suer, Keser and Kocakoc, (2019) found that that corporate

image and corporate reputation can be used as a common marketing benchmark to measure a firm's performance.

We argue using the Image theory, that images are representation of the decision maker's perception of some aspects of the organization such as organizational capabilities and organizational prestige. An organization's dynamic capability perceived or communicated through EM activities is expected to influence the internal and external stakeholders' worldview regarding reputation which could be positive or negative. Therefore, firms that are entrepreneurial and dynamic in their capabilities are expected to create good reputation for their companies and will respond favourably by producing products and services that will meet the needs of their customers positively in the environment it operates. In line with the forgone, we therefore propose that;

**Proposition 2:** *The experience of entrepreneurship marketing to greater extent will influence corporate reputation of entrepreneurial firms.*

### *2.6. Role of Corporate Reputation*

The literature on the consequences of corporate reputation is rich and diverse. Its richness is founded on the claim that corporate reputation is linked to positive organizational outcomes such as word of mouth (Manohari, Mittal, & Maroush, 2020; Williams, Buttle, & Biggerman, 2012), customer loyalty (Bartikouski, Walsh, & Bealty, 2011; Akpi, Vem & Eshue, 2020) corporate social responsibility (Park, 2019) branding (Weng & Chen, 2017), commitment (Jansson, Nilsson, Modig & Hed, 2015), firm success (Bercherer et al 2012) as consequences of entrepreneurial marketing. Empirically, numbers of studies have established positive relationship between corporate reputation and competitive advantage. For instance, Miotto, Del- Castillo-Fato and Blanco-Gonzalez, (2020) advanced that legitimacy and firm reputation are critical intangible assets in order to ensure or sustain competitive advantage and therefore guarantee firm survival and growth. In addition,. Bruna and Nicolò, (2020) and Sheehan, and Stabell (2010) found that firm reputation impacts the firm's competitive position and concludes that reputation is a key driver of competitive advantage.

On the flipped-side, organizational factors have been found to influence corporate reputation. For instance, Aksak, Ferguson, & Duman, (2016) in a review discovered corporate social responsibility as a strong predictor of corporate reputation. Others which include, corporate branding, (Abralt & Kleyn, 2012), environmentally motivated actions (D'Souza, Taghian, & Sullivan-Mort, 2013), stakeholders' reputation (Ji, Li, North, & Liu, 2017), green supply chain (Quintana-García, Benavides-Chicón, & Marchante-Lara, 2020) are all found to influence organization's reputation. Similarly, Ozkan, Suer, Kaiser and Kocako (2019) revealed that corporate reputation and image mediate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. In addition, Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi, and Saeidi, (2015) and Pham, and Tran (2020) established that reputation mediate the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and firm performance, likewise in, Arikan, Kantur, Maiden, and Telci (2016) advanced that corporate reputation fully mediates the relationship between CSR and multiple stakeholders outcomes such as organizational commitment, purchase intention and intention to seek employment. From the empirical evidence, the choice of corporate reputation as a mediator of this study is appropriate.



Consistent with the empirical evidences and the theoretical lenses of dynamic capability and image theory we contend that corporate reputation being an image created as a result of a firm's dynamic capability in EM influences firm's competitive advantage. Therefore, we make the following propositions:

**Proposition 3:** *The experience of corporate reputation of entrepreneurial firms to a greater extent will influence competitive advantage amongst firms*

**Proposition 4:** *The experience of corporate reputation by entrepreneurial firm mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage*

### *2.7. Role of Corporate Creativity (CC)*

In addition to corporate reputation which serves as mechanism that explains the relationship between EM and CA, we found corporate creativity useful in determining the boundary condition under which the relationship is plausible in the proposed framework (Baron & Kenny 1986). Creativity is considered an important factor for building a successful enterprise in a turbulent and competitive business environment as characterise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It enables organizations to exploit and respond to market opportunities, leading to competitive advantage (Gontur, Makrop & Gadi, 2016).

The concept of creativity has majorly been studied at individual level. Recently, creativity debate has been extended to the organizational level (Ghosh 2015; Park, Cho, Park, & Shin, 2019; Darvishmotevali, Altinay, & Köseoglu, 2020). According to their argument, Creative organizations design, create structures, which coordinate creative activities and create conducive environment for internal and external collaborations among members. Creativity according to Woodman, Sawyer, and Griffin, (1993:293) is “the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure, or process by individuals working together in a complex social system.” Organizational creativity is seen as the development of special features of the products, individuals, and through processes, or an enabling environment which stimulates the flourishing of creative activities (Koch, Wenzel, Senf, & Maibier, 2018). It has widely been reckoned with as antecedent to competitive advantage (Anderson, Potočnik, & Zhou, 2014; De Vasconcellos, Garrido, & Parente, 2019).

In corporate world, creativity has been associated with positive firm's outcomes such as increased general effectiveness, increased market share, which drives new product development and harnessed competitive advantage of a firm (Dixit, Singh, Dhir & Dhir, 2021; Annan, & Adeola, 2017; Csikszentmihelyi & Sawyer, 2014). In addition, Zameer, Wang & Yasmeen, (2019), identified that green creativity directly has a positive role in reinforcing green competitive advantage. In addition, corporate creativity predicts level of organizational survival (Tripathi & Ghosh, 2020, return on investment and customer base (Ogbari, Isiavwe, Ajagbe & Oke, 2015), knowledge management (Dixt et al, 2021). Kathiravan, Bhagavathan, Palanisamy and Rajaseker, (2019) that knowledge spill-over and entrepreneurial creativity has a greater impact on firm's competitiveness in the market place.

Buttressing this argument using dynamic capability view emphasizes how firm's ability to integrate, build and configure internal and external capabilities to address rapidly changing environment that is characterized by new technologies, ideas, and innovation would influence

the competitiveness of the firm. Building on this premise, it is expected that corporate creativity may unlock the potentials of firm and will further strengthen entrepreneurial marketing link with competitive advantage. In accordance with the existing literature on organizational creativity and theoretical evidences, we propose that, corporate creativity interacts with EM in determining firm's level of competitive advantage.

**Proposition 5:** *CC moderates the relationship between EM and CA such that; high CC Strengthens the impact of EM, while low CC weakens the impact on competitive advantage.*

### **3. Research Method**

A comprehensive check of literature allows the researchers to review the works of other researchers in the field of study and to stay away from repeating what other scholars had done. To re-examine the literature, we searched for studies on entrepreneurial marketing on competitive advantage of SMEs, mediating role of corporate reputation and moderating role of corporate creativity in Nigeria and other countries. The review of the literature involved researching articles to gain in depth knowledge of entrepreneurial marketing practices in SMEs, and the dynamic capability theory and image theory that we used as the conceptual framework of the study.

The studies chosen are the work of researchers in Nigeria and other parts of the world. The literature review includes 97 peer-reviewed journals, nine books, one conference paper, and one working paper. We reviewed a total number of 108 papers with 90% of the articles published in or after 2015. The databases that we used include the Emerald Management Journal, ABI-INFORM Complete Pro Quest, Science Direct, Directory of Open Access Journal, World Bank Publication, Institutional Based Research, and Google Scholar. A total of thirty five (35) empirical articles were identified consisting of thirty three (33) studies published in journals targeting those who explored the consequences of entrepreneurial marketing in SMEs. The database search included different combination of words such as entrepreneurial marketing, corporate reputation, corporate creativity, competitive advantage, firm performance, market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), dynamic capability theory, and image theory. This was based on availability and accessibility of articles.

This section captures the study methodology and in line with the study objectives, a detailed literature review was adopted which was achieved in phases. A search was carried out using phrases such as marketing and entrepreneurial interface, entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial firms, market orientation, entrepreneurial marketing orientation, entrepreneurial marketing, corporate reputation, corporate creativity, competitive advantage, entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage, entrepreneurial marketing and corporate reputation, corporate reputation and competitive advantage. This was based on availability and accessibility of articles.

Table 2: Studies Related to Entrepreneurial Marketing, Firm Reputation and Corporate Creativity

S\N O	Paper Titles & Authors	Source	Variable and their role	Sample size and Tools	Results
1	Innovation and differential of Emerging market international new ventures: the role of entrepreneurial marketing. Buccieri et al, (2021).	Journal of Strategic Marketing (Taylor and Francis)	Innovation and differentiation ( independent and dependent variable) Entrepreneurial Marketing (mediator)	A sample of – innovative firms from India and data were empirical tested	The result indicates that entrepreneurial marketing shapes differentiation strategy (cost) that is competitive advantage
2	Antecedents of strategic thinking and its impact on competitive advantage by Dixit, Singh, Dhir& Dhir (2021)	Emerald	Strategic thinking and competitive advantage	220 professionals from various industries in India. Quantitative using Partial least square structural equation modelling methodology using Smart PLS software.	Creativity is established with strategic thinking, as well as a competitive advantage. Also, The study finds a significant relationship between strategic thinking and competitive advantage
3	Effects of entrepreneurial marketing on new ventures' exploitative and exploratory innovation: The moderating role of competitive intensity and firm size by Bachmann, Ohlies and Flatten (2021)	Elsevier	Entrepreneurial marketing, new venture exploitative and exploratory innovation. Competitive intensity and firm size.	146 German new ventures. Questionnaire was use to collect data	Under conditions of high competitive intensity, the effects of EM on exploratory innovation strengthen, while low levels of competitive intensity do not affect the relationship between EM and exploratory innovation. Our results also show that for larger firms, the positive effects of EM on exploitative innovation are weaker, while for smaller firms, those effects are stronger.

4	The link between environmental uncertainty, organizational agility, and organizational creativity in the hotel industry by Darvishmotevali Altinay&Köseoglu (2020)	Elsevier	Environmental uncertainty, organisational agility and organisational creativity	The sample size is 174 managers of hostels. Hypotheses were analyzed using AMOS	The findings show that organizational agility moderates the negative impacts of competitive and technological uncertainty on organizational creativity
5	The impact of characteristics of intra-organizational environment on entrepreneurial marketing intensity and performance in Egypt Mahrous et al (2020)	Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies (Emerald)	Entrepreneurial Marketing (Independent Variable), performance and Competitive advantage (Dependent variables)	A conceptual paper	It was found that entrepreneurial marketing is positively related to organizational performance and competitive advantage
	Corporate reputation and social sustainability In the early stages of start-ups: A theoretical model to match stakeholders 'expectations through corporate social commitment by Bruna, and Nicolò. (2020)	Financial Letter Elsevier	Corporate reputation, social sustainability and corporate social commitment	Theoretical paper with mathematic modelling	Corporate Reputation, helps in the mitigation of the young-companies' vulnerability
6	Developing a scale for entrepreneurial marketing. Revealing its inner frame and prediction of performance of Firms in Australia. Eggers et al, (2020)	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier)	Entrepreneurial Marketing (Independent Variable) and Firm Performance (Dependent Variable)	A sample of 1155 Australian firms, online questionnaire. Random sampling technique was used. The tool for analysis was Partial Least Square (PLS)	Results show that EM consists of three correlating dimensions: 1) change-driving, 2) bootstrapping, and 3) risk-taking that have a positive effect on firm performance
7	Corporate Social	Journal	Corporate Social	Data collected from	It revealed that

	Responsibility Disclosure and Firm Performance. The mediating role of corporate reputation and moderating role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Pham & Tran, (2020)	of Business Research (Science Direct)	Responsibility Disclosure (Independent Variable), Firm performance (Dependent variable), corporate reputation (Mediating variable), and CEO (moderator)	833 fortune world most admired firms in 31 Countries from 2005 TO 2011	corporate reputation mediates the relationship between CSR and firm performance.
8	Effect of Entrepreneurial marketing and performance of SMEs. Sadiku-Dushi. (2019)	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier )	Entrepreneurial Marketing (Independent Variable) and SMEs Performance (Dependent Variable)	Questionnaire was used to collect data through drop and pick from 250 respondents.	The study revealed that EM dimensions of opportunity recognition, resource leveraging, value creation, customer intensity, and innovation focus are positively related to performance outcomes of reputation, efficiency profit and growth
9	Effect of Service quality and customer satisfaction and loyalty The mediating role of corporate reputation. Ozkan, Suer, Keser, & Kocak. (2019)	Journal of Bank Marketing (Emerald )	Service Quality, (Independent), Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty and Corporate reputation (Mediator)	Survey design was used and SEM was used for data analysis with 300 respondent measured on 5 point Likert scale	Discovered that corporate reputation mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty
10	Corporate social responsibility as a determinant in the air line industry. Park (2019)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (Elsevier )	Corporate Reputation (Independent variable) and customer loyalty	The study used convenient sampling technique which has a sample size of 2100 respondents.	Found out that corporate reputation has a significant impact on consumer attitude and customer loyalty
11	Reinforcing green competitive	Elsevier	Green competitive advantage, green	320 managers and 320 customers.	Green creativity directly have a

	advantage through green production, creativity and green brand image. Implication for cleaner production in China by Zameer, Wang & Yasmeen (2019)		production, creativity and green brand image	Convenience based structural equation modelling (CBSEM) and AMO	positive role in reinforcing green competitive advantage
12	Application of Whiteheadian Creativity to Corporate Creativity: A Five Cs Creativity Model by Park et al (2019)	Research gate	Creativity and corporate creativity	Conceptual Review	A five Cs creativity model, deriving 3Cs from creative imagination and 2Cs from the creative structure.
13	Influence of Entrepreneurial Creativity on Competitive Advantage in Automobile Engineering and Technologies Industries by Kathiravan et al (2019)	Research gate	Entrepreneurial creativity and competitive advantage	160 firms, the data was analysed using PLS	There is the influence of entrepreneurial creativity on competitive advantage in automobile industries
14	The effect of service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty The mediation of perceived value of services, corporate image, and corporate reputation by Ozkan, Suer, Keser & Kocakoc (2019)	Emerald	service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty: The mediation of perceived value of services, corporate image, and corporate reputation	163 males 121 females. Quantitative using SEM analysis	The findings of the survey indicate that corporate image and corporate reputation can be used as a common marketing benchmark to measure a bank's performance
15	Innovation and Creativity in Organizations: A	Research gate	Innovation and creativity in organisations	A Conceptual paper	Creativity and innovation in any organization are

	State-of-the-Science Review, Prospective Commentary, and Guiding Framework by Anderson, Potočnik and Zhou (2019)				vital to its successful performance
16	Organizational Creativity as an Attributional Process: The Case of Haute Cuisine by Kock, et al (2018)	Sage	Organisational creativity and attribution process	Interviews with Chefs, critics/experts Haute-cuisine restaurant Rutz in Berlin	The study demonstrates how the sequential performance of these entre-relating activities is consequential for the gradual transition of external evaluations of an organization's outcomes, from being considered 'different' to 'one of a kind', and thus the increasing attribution of organizational creativity over time.
17	Organizational creativity as a crucial resource for building international business competence by Vasconcellos, Garrido&Parente (2018)	Elsevier	Organisational	creativity and international business competence. The data was analysed using OLS regression method	The results partially support the hypothesis that organizational creativity is a building block for IBC
18	The impact of entrepreneurial marketing on innovative marketing performance in small- and medium-sized companies by	Taylor and Francis	Entrepreneurial marketing, innovative marketing performance	The sample size of this study is 195 small firms in - . Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analysed the data	The results show that value creation that includes creating value for customers through the products and services, and marketing activities and technology has

	Rezvani and Fathollahzadeh (2018)				the greatest impact on innovative performance
19	The impact of entrepreneurial orientation on competitive advantage moderated by Financing support in SMEs in Iraq. Zeebaree and Siron et al. (2017)	International Review of Management and Marketing (DOAJ)	Entrepreneurial Orientation (Independent Variable), Competitive Advantage (dependent variable), Financing Support (moderator)	The study adopted a quantitative approach using survey instrument. A sample size of 680 small firms in Iraq. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used to examine the relationship among the variables.	It shows that entrepreneurial orientation dimensions of innovation and proactiveness significantly influence competitive advantage.
20	The role of market orientation, creativity and innovation in creating competitive advantages and creative industry performance by Sutapa, Mulyana and Wasitowati (2017)	Institutional based	Market orientation, creativity, innovation, competitive advantage and creative industry performance	130 owners of creative industries quantitative using PLS	Creativity has no significant effect on innovation
21	Corporate Social Responsibility and CSR fit as predictors of corporate reputation. A global perspective. Ozdora, Akak, Ferguson, & Atakan,(2016)	Public Relations Review (Elsevier)	Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR fit (Independent variable) and Corporate Reputation (mediating variable)	A conceptual analysis was carried out	The result of the conceptual analysis revealed most studies on CSR and reputation functions on practical implications without contributing to the theoretical framework
22	Assessing the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, reputational resources and absorptive capacity: a	Institutional based	Entrepreneurial orientation, reputational resources and absorptive capacity	Survey data from 42 firms. Quantitative method using PLS	Process for exploitation of reputational resources and knowledge becomes an essential element for firms to adapt to changes in the competitive



	resource based approach by Orlando and Alexandra (2016)				environment
23	How does corporate social responsibility contribute to firm performance?; the mediating role of corporate reputation competitive advantage, reputation and customer satisfaction. Saeidi et al, (2015 )	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier )	Corporate Social Responsibility (Independent) firm performance, customer satisfaction (Dependent), Competitive Advantage, and reputation. (mediators)	Data was analyzed using AMOS	The study revealed that reputation mediate the relationship between corporate social responsibility and firm performance.
24	Forecasting effect of creativity on entrepreneurial sustainability by Ogori, Isiakwe, Ajagbe and Oke (2015)	Institutional based	Creativity and entrepreneurial sustainability	288 Qualitative using SPSS 22	Creativity adaptation has a positive impact on return on investment and customer base.
	Developing Organizational Creativity and Innovation: Toward a model of self-leadership, employee creativity, creativity climate and Workplace Innovative Orientation By Ghosh (2015)	Emerald	Organisational Creativity and innovation: self-leadership. Employee creativity and workplace innovative orientation	36 organizational respondents comprising of managers, deputy managers, and assistant managers working in the research and development Self-leadership, creativity, and innovation. The tool use for the study is structural equation modelling analysis	Results revealed the significant relationships among self-leadership; employee creativity, creativity climate; and workplace innovative orientation
25	Reputation and legitimacy. A key factor for higher Education. Institutions sustained competitive advantage.	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier )	Reputation(Independent) and Competitive advantage (Dependent)	Data were collected using questionnaire with 509 respondents from different public universities in Spain	Found that reputation a critical intangible asset in order to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage and therefore guarantee

	Miotto (2020)				their firm survival and growth
26	Investigating the mediating role of corporate reputation on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and multiple stakeholders outcomes Arikan, Kantur, Maiden & Telci (2016)	Quality and Quantity (Springer )	Corporate Social Responsibility (Independent Variable )	9 companies were selected from manufacturing industries	The result showed that corporate mediates the relationship between CSR and organizational and performance outcomes.
27	Innovation and Corporate reputation and word of mouth in the banking sector in India. Manohar, Mittal and Marwash, (2020)	Benchmarking. An international Journal (Emerald )	Innovation (Independent Variable), Word of mouth (Dependent) and Corporate reputation (mediator)	The study adopted an integrated approach using qualitative and quantitative. With 23 participant and 300 respondents. PLS was used for data analysis	The study indicates that corporate reputation mediates the relationship between innovation and word of mouth
28	Deep level diversity and workgroup creativity: the role of creativity climate by Tripathi and Ghosh, (2020)		Effect of perceived “self-to-team” deep-level diversity on team’s creative output from a social Identity lens view	40 employees were males and 50 were females. ANOVA was used tool for data analysis	Results indicated that the deep-level homogeneous group perceived higher team creative output as compared to the deep-level heterogeneous group. Perceived team creativity climate was found to mediate the effect of team diversity on the team’s creative output. Further, it was observed that the quality of perceived creativity climate (positive and negative) moderated the relationship between diversity and the team’s creative

					output.
29	The facet antecedents and consequences of coo petition. An entrepreneurial Marketing perspective. Crick (2018)	Qualitative Market Research : An International Journal. (Emerald )	Entrepreneurial marketing, Coopetition, and Organizational performance.	The study used a semi structured interview of firms sampled 15 from New Zealand Wineries	Coopetition comprised of resources and capability sharing activities. These activities are driven by an industries wide cooperative mind set, and entrepreneurial marketing
30	Relating word-of-mouth to corporate reputation by Williams, Buttle and Biggemann (2012)	Institutional based	Word-of-mouth and corporate reputation	Three organisations Literature review	Customers dissatisfaction and negative word of mouth are thought to have strong downside consequence for corporate reputation
31	The Effect of Entrepreneurial Marketing on Outcome Goals in SMEs BY Becherer, Helms and McDonald	Institutional	Entrepreneurial Marketing on Outcome Goals in SMEs	1,800 owners/operators of small to medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Stepwise regression was used to analyzed the data	Results revealed entrepreneurial marketing impacts outcome variables, particularly value creation.
32	Culture and age as moderators in the corporate reputation and loyalty relationship Bartikouski et al, (2011)	Journal of Business Research (Elsevier )	Corporate Reputation( Independent variable), loyalty (Dependent variable)	Convenient sampling technique, questionnaires were adopted from previous study and were measured on 5 point- Likert scale.	Results suggest that consumer corporate reputation have a positive effect on affective and intentional loyalty
33	Relationship between market orientation, brand orientation and perceived benefits in the non-profit sector: a customer perceived paradigm by Mulyanegara (2011)	Taylor and Francis	Market orientation, brand orientation and perceived benefits	13 church organizations. Quantitative using PLS	Findings reveal that market orientation is significantly associated with both perceived brand orientation and perceived benefit

### *3.1. Proposed Measures*

**Entrepreneurial Marketing:** Though different versions of entrepreneurial marketing measures have evolved over time (Becherer et al 2012; Fiore, et al, 2013; Jones & Rowley 2011). We found the scale development by Fiore et al, (2013) robust with Cronbach Alpha 0.8. It is a 12 items measurement for entrepreneurial marketing which has been used extensively in studies relating to small scale enterprises. It was measured on a 5 point Likert typed scale.

**Corporate Reputation:** A number of scales have been developed to measure corporate reputation (Fombrum, Gardberg & Saver, 2000, Helm, 2015; Feldman, Behamonde & Bellido, 2013). However, our study found that the scale development by Fombrum et al, (2000), reputation quotient, remains the most popular measure (Shamma, 2012) because it was one of the first measures for reputation, other measurement scales were developed from the corporate reputation quotient. Similarly, Wartick (2012) claims that the reputation quotient is a good measure, that makes it applicable to most stakeholder groups and many cultural contexts.

**Corporate Creativity:** In measuring corporate creativity a number of scales have been developed and validated (Tierney, Farmer & Graen, 1999). However, we adapt the scale developed by Tierney et al, (1999) using a sample of 5 items with a Cronbach, Alpha 0.88 for 5 items.

**Competitive Advantage:** A number of measures have been developed to measure competitive advantage (Chen, Lin & Chang 2009; Gilley, Greer & Rasheed, 2004; Argote & Ingram, 2000). We found Chen et al's, (2009) scale robust with Cronbach Alpha of 0.85. It is measured on 5 point Likert typed scale.

## **4. Result and Discussion**

In an attempt to understand the usage of entrepreneurial marketing practices in business environment, this study proposed a parsimonious model of the entrepreneurial marketing, taking into cognizance of business environment in which firms operate. This study leverages on dynamic capability theory (Teece, et al, 1997), image theory (Beach et al, 1998) as the theoretical foundation, while CR, CC, and CA are proposed as the mechanism boundary condition and consequence of EM respectively. The proposed model provides an all summarizing approach that centers on the entirety of stakeholders' interactions in the business environment. This would be beneficial to future research regarding the consequences of entrepreneurial marketing in the future business environment which recent global trend seems to be uncertain about.

Theoretically, incorporating corporate reputation and corporate creativity into the model, entrepreneurial marketing model has underscored the importance of firm reputation and resources capability in the entrepreneurial marketing competitive advantage link. Understanding the entrepreneur's capabilities and firm's reputation and good marketing practices would increase likely corporate creativity in such manner that firms marketing behavior would enhance and clarify the multifaceted characteristic of entrepreneurial marketing as it relates to firm's outcomes.

The study also made contributions to the field of strategic marketing, especially in the context of entrepreneurial marketing. Poor performance of small firms poses serious challenge for entrepreneurs; this places firms at the disadvantaged side (Sadiku-Dushi et al, 2019). Thus, understanding the consequences of the phenomenon especially in this difficult period where most businesses are facing the scourge of Covid-19 pandemic coupled with already existing challenges is critical. Worse incidences of performance and collapse of these small firms would increasingly be reported if survival factors critical to firms' success are ignored. A model to comprehend this occurrence particularly from the viewpoint of small firms is germane.

## **5. Conclusion**

The main limitation of this study is that the model of entrepreneurial marketing developed in this study is conclusion based on the fact obtained from the current debates in literature. Therefore, there is need to empirically test the model using collected data with the help of the suggested measures. We recommend that researchers validate this model across a number different contexts and industries. Secondly, inclusion of articles in the review is not scientifically determined but based on the authors' discretion and limitation to most data bases. It is possible some high impact journals are unavoidably inaccessible and would have influenced the perspectives of the authors on the consequences of EM as proposed in this study. We recognize that inclusion of more findings from different context in the future reviews, will result in capturing and highlighting critical constructs that explain the consequences of EM as it relates to diverse cultures and industries. Fourthly, Organizational climate (Shanker, Bhanugopan, Van der Heijden, & Farrell, 2017) has been found to impact on organizational outcome positively. We expect that where solidarity and shared vision is common among members of the organization, creativity will further be enhanced, thus the role of organizational climate that supports this attitude is worth exploring.

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