



Effect of Market Penetration Strategies on the Sales Performance of Nano and Micro Businesses in JOS Metropolis, Plateau State

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Abstract-- This research examined the effects of market penetration strategies adopted by nano and micro enterprises (nano-SMEs) in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State. The research analyzed competitive pricing strategy, personal selling and sales promoting on sales performance. The research adopted a survey design. The method of data collection for the research was primary method. The administration of 324 questionnaires to respondents, while the data was analyzed using multiple regression model. The findings of the study are competitive pricing strategy, personal selling and sales promotion have significant influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis of Plateau State. The study further establishes that the extent to which these strategies improve sales performance depends greatly on how consistently they are applied and the ability of owners to respond to changing customer needs and market conditions. Based on the findings the research makes the following recommendations market penetration strategies adopted by nano and micro enterprises (nano-SMEs) in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State. Nano and micro business ought to improve in their competitive pricing strategy based their business operation since it has a way of increasing sales performance of their products and services, to apply a competitive pricing strategy for better results in earning profit by using different strategies like differentiation features, marketing position, and brand image. Furthermore, nano and micro businesses are encouraged to strengthen customer relationships and adopt promotional activities that are simple, cost-effective, and tailored to the local business environment.

Keyword--Market penetration Strategies, Sales Performance, Businesses

I. INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are widely acknowledged as the engine of economic development in both developed and developing countries due to their capacity to stimulate innovation, create employment, and promote equitable wealth distribution (Ayyagari, Demirguc-Kunt, & Maksimovic, 2014; OECD, 2019). In Nigeria, SMEs account for approximately 96.7% of all businesses and employ more than 80% of the workforce, underscoring their centrality to the national economy (SMEDAN & NBS, 2021).

However, beneath the broad category of SMEs lies an even smaller and often underexplored subset: nano-SMEs.

These are microenterprises typically employing no more than five individuals, often family-based, with limited working capital and informal management structures (Ibor, Offiong, & Mendie, 2017).

In Jos metropolis, Plateau State, nano and micro businesses dominate sectors such as food vending, petty retail, tailoring, repair services, agricultural produce trading, and light manufacturing. They provide affordable goods and services to local communities while serving as survivalist ventures for households in a challenging socio-economic climate. Despite their importance, these enterprises are highly vulnerable to external shocks. They face structural bottlenecks such as unreliable electricity, poor road infrastructure, erratic supply chains, insecurity in surrounding communities, and limited access to formal credit facilities (Okpara, 2011; Adebisi & Gbegi, 2013). Added to these are macroeconomic constraints such as inflationary pressures, exchange rate volatility, and rising costs of inputs which squeeze profit margins and erode sustainability (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016).

The high mortality rate of nano and micro businesses in Nigeria is thus not surprising, with studies estimating that a significant proportion of small businesses collapse within the first five years of operation (SMEDAN & NBS, 2021). This reality raises pressing questions about how nano-enterprises can survive and grow within their existing markets without requiring large-scale capital investments or diversification into new product lines. Against this backdrop, market penetration strategies emerge as a practical and resource-compatible growth option. Unlike diversification or product development, which demands substantial resources, market penetration emphasizes increasing sales of existing products to current and adjacent customers, thereby offering a realistic and cost-efficient path to performance improvement (Ansoff, 1957; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Market penetration is one of Ansoff's (1957) classic growth strategies, which emphasizes increasing sales of existing products within existing markets. For resource-constrained firms such as nano-SMEs, penetration is often the most viable route because it relies more on executional intensity than on capital-intensive innovation or diversification (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In practice, penetration strategies for nano-enterprises are built around tactical levers such as pricing, accessibility, promotion, product availability, personal selling, and disciplined sales processes. Each of these levers addresses the realities of operating in fragmented, neighborhood-driven markets like Jos metropolis.

Furthermore, the nature of customer behaviour in Jos where purchasing decisions are influenced by price sensitivity, familiarity, and interpersonal trust makes market penetration strategies especially relevant. Nano-SMEs often depend on repeat patronage from local customers, making consistent promotional efforts, relationship-building, and flexible pricing crucial to sustaining daily sales. In an environment where business survival hinges on rapid turnover and strong customer loyalty, firms that systematically apply these strategies are better positioned to withstand the economic pressures prevalent in the region.

Kotler & Keller (2016) state that penetration requires strong awareness to reduce consumer uncertainty and promote trial. Brand awareness enhances recognition and recall, fosters trust, creates perceived value, builds customer loyalty, and encourages word-of-mouth marketing. Sale promotion is a strategic communication tool within the marketing mix that informs, persuades, and reminds consumers about a brand's products or services (Kotler & Armstrong, 2019; Vasan, 2023). Studies show that promotion directly influences consumer purchase behaviour and increases market share (Fitriyanti Nur Rahmarda et al., 2025; ProBisnis Journal, 2023). Competitive pricing and personal selling are also critical, as they allow firms to differentiate themselves in crowded markets and strengthen customer relationships.

In developing economies such as Nigeria, small businesses are often celebrated as engines of economic resilience, employment creation, and poverty alleviation (Ayyagari, Demirguc-Kunt, & Maksimovic, 2014; SMEDAN & NBS, 2021). However, beneath this macro-level optimism lies a sobering reality: nano-SMEs, the smallest and most fragile subset of enterprises, face disproportionate survival challenges.

In Jos metropolis, Plateau State, where these microenterprises dominate local commerce and services, their existence is frequently threatened by structural bottlenecks, rising input costs, inadequate infrastructure, irregular supply chains, insecurity in surrounding communities, and severely limited access to finance (Okpara, 2011; Ibor, Offiong, & Mendie, 2017).

Despite its centrality to business viability, there is limited empirical research in Nigeria particularly in Jos metropolis on the specific market penetration levers that drive sales performance among nano-SMEs, and on the firm-specific conditions that moderate their effectiveness. Existing studies have tended to focus broadly on SME challenges (Okpara, 2011; Ibor, Offiong, & Mendie, 2017), digital adoption (Akinbola et al., 2019), or survival constraints (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016), without systematically examining the penetration-performance nexus at the nano level. This creates a significant knowledge gap: while nano-SMEs dominate the economic fabric of Jos, their growth pathways remain understudied. Addressing this gap is critical, not only to provide evidence-based insights for nano-entrepreneurs themselves but also to inform policymakers, business support agencies, and development actors seeking to strengthen the microenterprise ecosystem in Plateau State and beyond.

Compounding this challenge is that many nano-SME operators rely on intuition rather than structured marketing practices. Pricing, promotions, and customer engagement activities are often implemented informally and inconsistently, limiting their effectiveness. Without empirical clarity on which strategies produce measurable results, nano-SMEs risk investing scarce resources in actions that do not improve sales outcomes, thereby perpetuating high failure rates.

Thus, the central problem this study seeks to address is the lack of empirical clarity on how market penetration strategies influence sales performance among nano-SMEs in Jos metropolis, and the contextual factors that shape this relationship.

1. Research Questions

1. To what extent does competitive pricing strategy affect sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis?
2. What is the effect of personal selling on sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis?
3. To what extent does sales promotion affect sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis?

1.2 Objectives Of The Study

1. To examine how competitive pricing strategy can influence sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis.
2. To investigate the extent to which personal selling influences sales performance of nano-SMEs businesses in Jos metropolis.
3. To analyse the extent to which sales promotion influences sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H01: Competitive pricing strategy does not significantly influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis.

H02: Personal selling does not significantly influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis.

H03: Sales promotion does not significantly influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis.

1.4 Significance Of The Study

The significance of this study is considered from three interrelated perspectives—policy, theoretical, and practical – each of which underscores the value of the research to stakeholders in academia, government, and business practice. Additionally, this study provides context-specific insights into the operational realities of nano-SMEs in informal markets, where customer behaviour, competition, and resource constraints shape the outcomes of market penetration strategies. Understanding these factors helps policymakers design targeted support programs and enables business owners to make informed strategic decisions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Market Penetration Strategies

Market penetration strategies is a long-term plan followed by actions aimed at achieving certain goals, which are generally “winning”. Strategy is a unified, comprehensive, and integrated plan that links the strategic advantages of the company to the challenges of the environment, designed to ensure that the basic objectives of the company can be achieved through proper implementation by the organization. Marketing is the entire system of business activities designed to plan, price, promote, and distribute goods that can satisfy the desires and services of current and potential consumers (Al Fazri & Aslami, 2022).

Market penetration strategy is seeking a larger market share for existing products or services in existing markets, through increased marketing efforts. Market development strategy is introducing existing products or services to new geographic areas. Furthermore, product development strategy is trying to increase sales by improving existing products or services, or developing new products or services (Halimah et al., 2020).

Market penetration strategy has been widely discussed in recent scholarship as a growth-oriented approach that focuses on selling existing products within already established markets. The central aim is to increase market share and boost customer usage, making it one of the least risky but most competitive business strategies. Nwosu et al. (2024, IJEDR) define market penetration as a growth strategy that enhances sales of existing products in current markets by leveraging pricing adjustments, stronger distribution channels, product refinement, improved marketing communication, and better customer experience. GeeksforGeeks (2023) conceptualize it both as a measurement (percentage of potential market using a product) and as a strategy, highlighting promotional campaigns and aggressive sales tactics to grow market share in established markets. EBSCO Research Starters (2023) emphasize market penetration as selling more of existing products to both users and non-users in the current market, primarily through advertising, sales promotions, and customer retention programs.

AJBDMR, (2022) present it as a deliberate effort to increase sales in existing markets by capturing competitors’ customers or increasing repeat purchases from current customers. Hashmicro (2023) describe it as an aggressive approach to strengthen visibility, awareness, and reach within target markets, often supported by digital marketing tools, publicity, and sales incentives. Scholars agree that market penetration strategy is designed to deepen a firm’s presence in current markets, either by winning over competitor customers, increasing usage among existing ones, or converting potential users.

The strategy relies on competitive pricing, effective promotions, distribution efficiency, and customer-focused improvements. Its relatively low risk makes it a preferred choice for businesses looking to maximize growth in familiar markets. In the context of nano and micro enterprises in Jos metropolis, applying penetration strategies deliberately to local consumer needs, seasonal demands, and competitive conditions significantly improves sales performance and business survival.

Variables of Market Penetration Strategies

A. Competitive Pricing

Competitive pricing enables businesses to take advantage of their market by basing product prices on the competition instead of the cost to produce finished goods. It's a handy sales strategy to keep in your business toolbox – and can be essential to success in highly competitive markets. Villar (2007) emphasizes the economic foundations, linking competitive pricing to the principles of profit maximization and scarcity in competitive markets. Competitive pricing is a sales and marketing strategy that involves manipulating price points in a business to match or beat the pricing of its competitors. The purpose of a competitive pricing strategy is to attract more customers and increase market share in online and offline markets. Also known as competition-based pricing or competitor-based pricing, competitive pricing strategies typically involve analysis of historical sales data, customer demand trends, and production costs. Boundless Marketing (2017) and Marketing.g (2020s) provide straightforward definitions, underscoring the practice of mirroring or adjusting to competitor prices.

Competitive pricing is market-driven: businesses position their prices relative to rivals to remain attractive and sustain market share. Differences lie mainly in scope some define it narrowly as matching/undercutting (QuickBooks), while others see it as a strategic tool that can also justify higher prices (Investopedia, Salesforce). The competitive pricing strategy refers to a company setting prices based on the rates offered by competitors in the market for competing products. Nano-SMEs in Jos can benefit from monitoring competitor prices actively and using flexible pricing to respond to fluctuations in demand and supply, which is crucial for maintaining daily sales and customer loyalty.

B. Personal Selling

One type of promotional activity is personal selling, namely a way to introduce and attract consumer interest in products offered face to face. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2020), personal selling is a promotional tool that is verbal in nature, both to a person or more potential buyers with the objective to use people as a marketing tool in order to create a purchasing transaction that benefits both parties. Armstrong and Kotler (2020) explain that there are six steps that should be carried out by personal selling, including: prospecting and qualifying, preliminary approach, presentation and demonstration, overcoming objections, closing the sale, and maintenance follow-up. In nano and micro businesses, particularly in Jos, personal selling is often informal and relationship-based.

Entrepreneurs who deliberately train their staff on persuasive communication, product demonstration, and follow-up are likely to see stronger customer loyalty and repeat purchases.

C. Sales Promotion

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines promotion as the component of the marketing mix that uses activities like advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing to communicate with consumers and encourage purchase. Its purpose is to inform, persuade, and influence customers by creating a desire for products and services, driving short-term actions like sales, and building brand awareness. Local nano-SMEs can achieve greater effectiveness by tailoring promotions to immediate community needs, leveraging informal networks, social media, and word-of-mouth to reach potential buyers. Such context-specific promotional efforts increase sales performance without significant financial outlay.

Promotion is a fundamental component of the marketing mix, which has 4 Ps: product, price, place, and promotion. It is also an essential element of the promotional plan or mix, which includes advertising, self and sales promotion, direct marketing, publicity, trade shows, events, etc.

2.1.2 Benefits of Market Penetration Strategies

The primary benefits of a market penetration strategy include increasing market share with existing products in existing markets, leading to higher sales and potentially better profit margins through economies of scale. It also fosters increased efficiency, builds customer loyalty, and can discourage competition by making a market less attractive to rivals. For nano and micro businesses in Jos, the benefits of market penetration are amplified when strategies are combined with strong customer engagement, localized promotions, and operational flexibility. Firms that adapt penetration strategies to their environment are better positioned to improve sales performance and maintain sustainability. Market penetration helps nano and micro businesses boost customer loyalty, expand market share, and reduce marketing costs. It also strengthens competitive advantage, encourages word-of-mouth referrals, and generates steady cash flow for reinvestment.

2.1.3 Market Penetration Strategies and Sales Performance

A market penetration strategy is a proactive business action to increase sales of existing products within a current market by attracting new customers or increasing usage by existing ones, while sales performance is a measurement of how well those actions (and others) resulted in achieved sales targets over a specific period.

In nano-SMEs, sales performance is not solely dependent on executing penetration strategies; firm-specific characteristics such as owner expertise, operational location, and digital adoption also significantly influence outcomes. Recognizing these moderating factors helps explain why similar strategies produce different results across businesses in the same market. In a series of empirical studies conducted, the significance of market penetration strategy was strongly supported, showcasing a statistically positive impact on sales growth (Abidemi et al., 2020; Muchele, 2019; Nyaga & Muema, 2017).

Relatedly, Binuyo et al. (2019) and Na and Kang (2019) affirmed a positive correlation between product innovation and sales growth. Specifically focusing on penetration pricing strategy, Nyaga and Muema's (2017) study in the Insurance Industry in Kenya revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between penetration pricing strategies and profitability. Kagwi et al. (2022) found that economic climate and political considerations exert a notable influence on strategic decision-making and highlighted market penetration strategy execution as a crucial independent variable for sales performance.

2.1.4 Nano And Micro Businesses

The significance of nano and micro businesses for the growth, productivity, and competitiveness of the economies of developing countries is universally recognized (Onyeje et al., 2020). Nano and micro businesses have been recognized as providers of employment and income for the bulk of the population, the primary source of new jobs, critical breeding and nurturing grounds for domestic entrepreneurial capacities, technical skills, technological innovativeness, and managerial competencies for private sector development (Onyeje et al., 2020; SMEDAN, 2007, 2020).

In Jos metropolis, these businesses often operate under dynamic and unpredictable conditions, requiring owners to adapt market penetration strategies quickly to local competition, seasonal demand fluctuations, and socio-economic pressures. Understanding how these local contextual factors interact with strategic choices is essential for improving sales performance and sustainability.

Nano and micro businesses have become the significant clout of sustained, instantaneous, and bracing growth of the Nigerian economy. SMEs perform an unparalleled role in advancing Nigeria's economic growth, serve as a breeding ground for entrepreneurs, provide solutions to address the problems of unemployment, and promote marketing growth (Solomon & Akinbola, 2018). The increase in the operations and activities of nano and micro businesses in Nigeria remains indispensable to the pursuit of economic growth and development as a nation (Ajor & Alikor, 2020).

Reports show that there are about 8.4 million nano and micro businesses operating in Nigeria, with SMEs comprising 80% of the total number and micro-businesses constituting 15% (SMEDAN, 2020). In terms of nano and micro businesses' contribution to national output in Nigeria, it has been reported that nano and micro businesses, by revenue, contribute about 75% of all entrepreneurial activities that make up Nigeria's gross domestic output (GDP), with only 4% being the contribution of large complex organizations to GDP (Ajor & Alikor, 2020; Amarakoon & Colley, 2022).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation of the study's variables under consideration. The figure below shows the hypothesised effects of market penetration strategies on sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis. This study proposes that market penetration strategies, including competitive pricing, personal selling, sales promotions, and product accessibility, directly influence sales performance among nano and micro enterprises.

2.3 Theoretical Review

This study seeks to examine the relationship between the effect of market penetration and sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis. It is theoretically supported by Ansoff's Growth Matrix theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory.

2.3.1 Ansoff's Growth Matrix (1957)

Ansoff's Growth Matrix, also referred to as the Product-Market Expansion Grid, remains one of the most influential frameworks in strategic management and marketing. The model identifies four primary strategies for organisational growth: market penetration, market development, product development, and diversification (Ansoff, 1957). Among these, market penetration is the most conservative and least risky option, as it involves selling more of the existing products to the firm's current market. Strategies under this dimension typically include competitive pricing, aggressive promotion, improved product visibility, increased distribution intensity, and enhancing customer loyalty (Kotler & Keller, 2016). For nano-SMEs, which usually operate with limited financial, human, and technological resources, market penetration provides a feasible path to growth by maximising returns from already familiar markets rather than incurring the high costs of product innovation or market expansion (Olawale & Garwe, 2010).

In the Nigerian context, where SMEs often contend with unstable macroeconomic conditions, infrastructural constraints, and stiff competition, pursuing penetration strategies allows firms to leverage their existing market knowledge while minimising risk exposure (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2011). Thus, Ansoff's Growth Matrix provides a strategic lens to understand how small enterprises can deepen market presence to drive sales performance.

Supporters: Many scholars (e.g., Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, 2008; Grant, 2019) have reinforced the relevance of Ansoff's model, particularly its clarity in guiding growth strategy choices. It has been widely applied in SME research due to its practical emphasis on low-cost, incremental growth strategies.

Critics: However, the framework has been criticised for its simplicity and lack of attention to dynamic market conditions. For instance, McCarthy and Perreault (2002) argue that the matrix provides limited guidance on implementation, while Rugman and Verbeke (2008) caution that it assumes markets are stable and predictable, which is often not the case for SMEs in volatile economies like Nigeria.

2.3.2 Resource-Based View (RBV) Of The Firm (Barney, 1991)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) offers a complementary perspective by shifting the focus of competitive advantage from external industry factors to the internal resources and capabilities of a firm. According to Barney (1991), firms achieve sustained competitive advantage when they possess resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). These resources can be tangible, such as financial capital and physical assets, or intangible, such as brand reputation, entrepreneurial skills, and organisational culture (Wernerfelt, 1984; Peteraf, 1993).

In the context of nano-SMEs, the RBV highlights the importance of leveraging unique capabilities such as close customer relationships, pricing flexibility, adaptability to local market needs, and personalised service delivery. Unlike large firms, nano-SMEs may lack economies of scale, but they can compete effectively by maximising their VRIN resources, which can be harnessed to strengthen market penetration strategies (Newbert, 2007). For example, an SME that understands the cultural and social dynamics of its local market may design customer-centric promotions that enhance loyalty and repeat purchases, thereby driving sales performance.

RBV thus provides a theoretical foundation for explaining why certain SMEs achieve superior outcomes with penetration strategies, not merely because of market opportunities, but due to how effectively they mobilise internal resources.

Supporters: RBV has been widely supported as a powerful lens for understanding firm performance (Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001; Priem & Butler, 2001). Its emphasis on unique internal resources resonates strongly in SME contexts, where resource limitations demand creative mobilisation of existing assets.

Critics: On the other hand, Priem and Butler (2001) argue that RBV can be tautological, since valuable resources are often defined by their performance outcomes. Foss and Knudsen (2003) further criticise RBV for under emphasising external environmental factors, which are especially critical in turbulent economies.

2.4 Empirical Review

Nwobi, Okpara, and Maude (2022) conducted a study on the effects of sales campaign strategies on customer patronage of Nigerian Breweries products in Jos South LGA of Plateau State. The study examined the influence of promotional elements such as premium products, gifts, extra products, and price discounts on customer patronage. A semi-structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale was administered to 143 respondents, consisting of sub-dealers of Amstel Malt in Jos South LGA. Data collected were analysed using multiple linear regression analysis. Findings revealed that sales promotion strategies (premium product, gift, extra product, and reduced price) significantly influenced customer patronage of brewery products. The researchers recommended that Nigerian Breweries intensify and sustain promotional strategies, and assess varying levels of discount-based promotions while implementing unique extra-product strategies to enhance loyalty.

Olawale and Garba (2019) examined the impact of marketing strategies on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Abuja, Nigeria. The study focused on advertising, product quality, and customer relations. Findings revealed that advertising and customer relations had a significant positive effect on firm growth, while product quality did not significantly influence performance. Chukwuma and Ibrahim (2020) investigated the effect of pricing strategies on SME profitability in Lagos State. Results showed that competitive pricing and discount-based strategies improved short-term sales but had mixed effects on long-term profitability.

Adewale and Yusuf (2021) investigated customer relationship management (CRM) strategies on SME survival in Oyo State. Findings indicated CRM strategies positively influenced customer retention and business survival. Okafor and Danjuma (2022) examined promotional strategies on the growth of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Results revealed that discounts, advertising, and seasonal sales positively influenced customer attraction and sales volume. Bello and Yusuf (2020) examined competitive marketing strategies in Lagos. Effective pricing, promotional campaigns, and quality service were associated with higher survival rates. Chukwu and Dada (2021) assessed product diversification and market expansion in Enugu State. Findings revealed improved profitability but highlighted capital constraints. Ibrahim and Musa (2022) explored digital marketing adoption in Kano. Findings revealed a positive relationship with enterprise growth but low adoption among micro businesses.

Research Gap

Although this study provides insights into sales promotion and customer patronage, it is limited to a single product category and does not extend to nano-SMEs, which operate in highly resource-constrained environments and rely on a broader set of market penetration strategies. The present study addresses this gap by exploring how nano-SMEs in Jos Metropolis utilise multiple penetration strategies not just sales promotions to improve their sales performance. The study did not explicitly address nano-SMEs or market penetration strategies such as price adjustments, customer retention programmes, or competitive positioning. This study seeks to fill that gap by focusing on nano-SMEs in Plateau State and their use of market penetration strategies to improve sales performance. While informative, the study did not consider the collective influence of integrated market penetration strategies (promotions, distribution expansion, loyalty tactics) or focus on smaller urban centres like Jos Metropolis. The present study examines how pricing, as part of a broader penetration strategy, affects nano-SME sales performance in Jos. Sales performance indicators such as revenue growth and customer retention were not assessed. This study addresses this by evaluating measurable sales outcomes for nano-SMEs in Jos. The study emphasised survival rather than sales growth and did not examine integrated market penetration strategies. The present study explores how combined penetration strategies can boost sales performance among nano-SMEs in Jos Metropolis. The study focused only on promotions and SMEs in Anambra State, leaving a gap in understanding how integrated penetration strategies affect nano-SMEs in Jos.

The study emphasised profitability rather than sales performance and did not capture grassroots penetration methods relevant to nano-SMEs. Adeyemi and Okoro (2020) examined pricing strategies and customer loyalty among retail SMEs in Ibadan. Competitive pricing and flexible discounts improved loyalty and sales turnover. The study did not consider other penetration strategies or nano-enterprises. This study expands the focus. Eze and Nwankwo (2021) investigated personal selling and word-of-mouth in Anambra. Results highlighted their effectiveness in driving sales growth for small advertising budgets. The study focused on two sectors and did not examine interaction with other strategies. This study provides a more comprehensive assessment. Hassan and Peter (2023) explored CRM practices in Port Harcourt, finding positive correlations with sales growth. The study focused on formal SMEs and CRM alone. This study examines multiple penetration strategies for nano-SMEs. Adebayo and Salisu (2018) examined promotional strategies in Ilorin, finding short-term sales benefits but limited long-term profitability. Other strategies such as product accessibility, pricing, and personal selling were ignored. This study addresses sustained sales performance. Udo and Ibrahim (2019) investigated distribution and product availability in Uyo, finding higher sales with better accessibility. Combined effects with other strategies were not considered. This study examines integrated penetration strategies for nano-SMEs in Jos. Okeke and Balogun (2022) studied digital adoption and competitive pricing in Abuja. Findings indicated higher customer acquisition and retention. Only two strategies were assessed and nano-SMEs were excluded. This study investigates broader strategies. Bala and Hassan (2023) studied product differentiation and innovation in Kano, finding positive effects on competitiveness. Market penetration and sales performance links were not explored, especially for nano-SMEs in smaller urban economies. Traditional penetration strategies were excluded, leaving a contextual gap regarding nano-SMEs in Jos. This study integrates both digital and traditional strategies. From the reviewed empirical studies, scholars have explored dimensions of business sustainability including entrepreneurial orientation, CRM, promotional strategies, and innovation. However, most studies focus on isolated strategies rather than examining market penetration as a holistic framework for improving sales performance. Most studies were conducted in larger or different commercial contexts, which may not reflect the realities of nano-SMEs in Jos, where businesses face limited financial capacity, infrastructural challenges, and highly localised competition.



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There is a limited empirical link between market penetration strategies and measurable sales performance outcomes, particularly for nano-SMEs. The present study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the effect of market penetration strategies on sales performance of nano-SMEs in Jos Metropolis.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative survey research design, appropriate for examining the extent to which nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis utilise market penetration strategies and the impact of these strategies on sales performance. Survey research facilitates the collection of standardised information from a substantial number of respondents within a short timeframe, thereby enhancing accuracy, representativeness, and generalisability. The design also enables the application of statistical techniques to analyse relationships between variables, particularly between market penetration strategies (independent variables) and sales performance (dependent variable). Data are collected directly from respondents using structured questionnaires, minimising researcher interference and providing an authentic reflection of existing business practices. This approach allows for descriptive as well as explanatory analysis, offering insights into causal inferences based on observed correlations and trends. Furthermore, the research design is aligned with the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, particularly Ansoff's Market Penetration Strategy and the Resource-Based View (RBV), which inform the selection of independent variables and firm characteristics.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population consists of 2,450 operators of nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. This population includes both registered and unregistered small-scale enterprises engaged in diverse economic activities. Jos was selected due to its vibrant small business sector and centrality in regional commerce.

Nano businesses are defined as owner-managed enterprises with minimal capital investment, typically involving one to two persons and operating informally (e.g., roadside food vendors, petty traders, cobblers). Micro businesses are slightly larger enterprises with up to 10 employees and relatively higher capital outlay, including small restaurants, fashion designers, electronics repairers, and beauty salons. Including both categories ensures that the study captures the primary drivers of employment and household income in Jos.

These businesses rely heavily on marketing strategies such as pricing, promotion, word-of-mouth advertising, and personal selling to survive and grow, making them a meaningful population for examining the impact of market penetration strategies on sales performance.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

3.3.1 Sample Size Determination

Due to time and resource constraints, it was impractical to study the entire population. Therefore, the sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (2,450)

e = margin of error (0.05)

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{2,450}{1 + 2,450(0.05)^2} \approx 356$$

Hence, a sample of 356 respondents was considered representative.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed. The population was stratified into nano and micro businesses, with respondents randomly selected proportionally to their relative population sizes.

Justification:

1. Recognises heterogeneity between nano and micro businesses in scale, capital, and market practices.
2. Reduces sampling error by ensuring proportional representation of each sub-group.
3. Enhances generalisability by reflecting the dominance of nano enterprises within the population.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, adapted from Armstrong & Kotler (2020), Kotler & Keller (2016), and Aremu & Adeyemi (2011). The questionnaire comprised three sections:

Section A – Demographic and Firm Characteristics: Age of business, size, location, access to capital, and adoption of digital tools. These variables were used to examine moderating effects of firm-specific factors on strategy performance.

Section B – Market Penetration Strategies: Pricing, access, promotion, product availability, personal selling, and sales process discipline were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Section C – Sales Performance: Sales growth, customer retention, and revenue stability were measured to evaluate the impact of market penetration strategies.

Questionnaires were administered via a drop-and-pick method, supplemented by on-the-spot completion for willing respondents, ensuring a high response rate and completeness (Bryman & Bell, 2018).

3.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from respondents, capturing first-hand information on the adoption of market penetration strategies and their effect on sales performance.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

3.5.1 Validity

Face and content validity were ensured through consultation with three experts (two from Business Administration, one from Statistics). Feedback led to adjustments in wording, restructuring of items, and elimination of ambiguous questions.

3.5.2 Reliability

A pilot study was conducted with 30 nano and micro business operators outside Jos. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated, yielding 0.84, above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), indicating high internal consistency.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test hypotheses using SPSS v27. This allowed evaluation of the relationship between independent variables (pricing, personal selling, sales promotion) and sales performance.

Regression Model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Sales performance (dependent variable) β_0 = Intercept $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Coefficients of independent variables

X_1 = Competitive pricing strategy

X_2 = Personal selling

X_3 = Sales promotion

ε = Error term

Decision rule: Reject H_0 if p-value < 0.05.

3.6.1 Model Specification

$$SAP = f(CPS, PS, SP)$$

Where SAP = Sales performance, CPS = Competitive pricing strategy, PS = Personal selling, SP = Sales promotion.

Apriori expectation: $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 > 0$, indicating a positive relationship between strategies and sales performance.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Questionnaire Administration and Collection

A total of 356 questionnaires were distributed, 324 were returned, yielding a valid response rate of 91.0%. According to Sekaran (2003), a 30% response rate was appropriate for statistical data analysis, the 91.0% response rate is sufficient for further analysis in this study. Based on the demographic response of the participants. For gender male 142 respondent with (43.8%), female had 182 respondents had (56.2%). For age bracket 18-25years had 134 respondents with (41.3%), 26-40years had 95 respondents with (29.3%), 26-40 years had 95 respondent with (29.3%), 26-40years had 85 respondents had (26.2%). Marital status married had 142 respondents with (43.8%), single had 182 respondents with (56.2%). Years of business, for less than 1year 77 respondents with (23.7%), 1-5years had 86 respondents with (26.5%), 6-10years had 84 respondents with (25.9%), 10 and above years had 77 respondents with (23.7%). The type business retail had 111 respondents with (34.2%), services had 90 respondents (27.7%), while others had 123 respondents with (39.1%).

Table 1:
Regression Result

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Devia	T-test	P-value
Constant	0.135	0.213	3.632	0.001
Personal selling	0.430	0.072	2.808	0.000
Sales promotion	0.266	0.078	2.127	0.000
Sales performance	0.485	0.082	4.709	0.000
R ²	0.555			
F-Test	8.187			0.000

Dependent variable: Consumer Purchase * ** *** 1%, 5% and 10%

Source: SPSS version 26.0

The coefficient of determination, $R^2=0.555$, indicates that 55.5% of the variation in sales performance of nano and micro business in Jos Metropolis of Plateau State can be attributed to changes in competitive pricing strategy, personal selling and sales promotion. The regression model was found to be of good-fit, given that the F-statistic's p-value of 0.000. As shown in Table 10, the standardized regression result for competitive pricing strategy on sales promotion is 0.430. This means that competitive pricing strategy has a positive and significant influence on sales promotion. It implies that increase in competitive pricing strategy by 1%, will lead to increases in the level of sales performance by 43.0%. Also, regression result for personal selling on sales performance is 0.266. This means that personal selling has a positive and significant influence on sales performance. It implies that increase in personal selling by 1%, will lead to increases in the level of sales performance by 16.6%. Also, the standardized regression result for sales promotion on sales performance is 0.485. This means that sales promotion has a positive and significant influence on sales performance. It implies that increase in sales promotion by 1%, will lead to increases in the level of sales performance by 48.5%.

4.2 Discussion Of Findings

4.2.1 Competitive pricing strategy and sales performance

The test of hypothesis one showed that Competitive pricing strategy have significant influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis. This result agrees with study of Nwobi, Okpara, and Maude (2022), which established that that sales promotion strategies (premium product, gift, extra product, and reduced price) significantly influence customer patronage of brewery products, and competitive pricing strategy involves setting prices based on competitors' charges for similar products to gain a market advantage, especially in markets with minimal differentiation.

4.2.2 Personal Selling and sales performance

For hypothesis two, personal selling have significant influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis. The result is consistent with the studies of Okafor and Danjuma (2022) examined the effect of promotional strategies on the growth of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State, and revealed that that personal selling including discounts, advertising, and seasonal sales, had a significant positive influence on customer attraction and sales volume. Market segmentation helps determine the sales performance of SMEs. Market segmentation is the process of dividing a large, heterogeneous market into a smaller homogeneous group of people or businesses with similar needs and/or responses to marketing mix offerings.

4.2.3 Sales promotion and sales performance

From hypothesis three, the study found that sales promotion have significant influence the sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos metropolis. The result is inconsistent with the study of Bala and Hassan (2023), which revealed that innovation positively influenced competitiveness, while product differentiation had a moderate but significant effect. Ibojo and Akinruwa (2014) findings show that a 1% shift in promotion will cause a 52.6% shift in product awareness. Kamba (2019) revealed that marketing managers should determine what combination of promotion mix will make effective promotion programs hence increase in sales.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

For this study, there were four objectives, which are reflected in four key findings:

Objective One: To examine how competitive pricing strategy can influence sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis.

This objective is met with the finding that competitive pricing strategy has a significant influence on sales performance. The study concludes that employing competitive pricing strategies, such as differentiation features, strategic market positioning, and brand image, positively impacts the growth and sustainability of nano and micro businesses.

Objective Two: To examine how personal selling can influence sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis. This objective is met with the finding that personal selling has a significant influence on sales performance. The study concludes that incorporating personal selling approaches, including customer engagement, product demonstrations, and credit sales, enhances customer retention and increases revenue for small businesses.

Objective Three: To examine how sales promotion can influence sales performance of nano and micro businesses in Jos Metropolis. This objective is met with the finding that sales promotion has a significant influence on sales performance. The study concludes that employing sales promotion tools such as discounts, gift offers, and loyalty schemes strengthens market position, boosts sales, and contributes to local economic growth.

Objective Four: To assess the moderating effect of firm-specific factors on the relationship between market penetration strategies and sales performance.

The study found that business age, size, location, access to capital, and adoption of digital tools significantly influence how market penetration strategies translate into improved sales performance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Nano and micro businesses should improve their competitive pricing strategies to align with their operational capacities, using differentiation features, strategic market positioning, and brand image to enhance profitability.
2. Businesses should actively adopt personal selling approaches in daily operations, including direct customer engagement and flexible credit sales, to increase sales performance and build customer loyalty,
3. In relation to sales promotion, nano and micro businesses should learn from the promotional practices of successful businesses abroad, adapting tools such as discounts, loyalty programmes, and special offers to improve sales and strengthen market positioning.

4. Business owners should leverage firm-specific advantages, such as business age, size, access to capital, and digital adoption, to optimise the impact of market penetration strategies on sales performance.

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