Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills that drive SMEs average annual sales performance within the context of Ghana

Andrews Ayiku[1]*, Lawrence Offei Asare[2], and Prince Kofi Mensah[3]
[1&2]*University of Professional Studies Accra, Faculty of Management Studies, Accra, Ghana*
[3]*University of Ghana, University of Ghana Business School, Accra Ghana*
** Corresponding Author Email: ayiku.andrews@upsa.edu.gh*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) skills that drive average annual sales. Anchored in the Resource-Based View and entrepreneurial marketing theory, it investigates how specific EM skill dimensions (surveying skills, marketing communication skills, technology savviness, marketing planning skills, and collaborative skills) contribute to average annual sales performance. The study adopts a cross-sectional explanatory quantitative research design. Using simple random sampling technique, data were collected from 370 SMEs operating in the Greater Accra Metropolis using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed to examine the data. The study examined five hypotheses on entrepreneurial marketing skills' impact on SME sales. The strongest positive predictor was Technology Savvy followed by Surveying Skills which had a small but significant effect, supporting H1 and H3 respectively. Marketing Planning Skills had significant negative correlation with the response variable, which was not in line with H4. Marketing Communication Skills and Collaborative Skills were non-significant, rejecting H2 and H5 respectively. The study partially confirms RBV as Technology Savvy and Surveying Skills have positive impacts on SME sales, and Marketing Planning Skills have a negative impact. Marketing Communication and Collaborative Skills are non-significant and challenge some of the universal assumptions and point to the fact that contextual factors may have an impact on competency-performance relationships in Ghanaian SMEs. SME owners and managers should prioritize digital capabilities, real-time market intelligence, and opportunity-driven decision-making to enhance average annual sales. Emphasis should be placed on flexible and adaptive marketing practices rather than rigid planning structures.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Technology Savvy, Marketing Planning Skills, Surveying Skills, Marketing Communication Skills, Collaborative Skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute a fundamental pillar of economic development in both developed and developing economies, including Ghana. Their importance is reflected in their contributions to gross domestic product (GDP), employment generation, income creation, and entrepreneurial dynamism (Donkor et al., 2018; Oduro, 2019; Parliament of Ghana, 2026). Available records indicate that there are about 1.9 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises operating within Ghana as of 2025. MSMEs contributes about 70% of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2024). SMEs dominate the private sector and play a critical role in poverty reduction and inclusive growth. With regards to employment, MSMEs have a share of about 80% of Ghana's labour force (Parliament of Ghana, 2026). Despite their economic significance, many SMEs face persistent challenges related to limited resources, intense competition, market uncertainty, and weak institutional support, all of which constrain their growth and long-term performance (Agyapong et al., 2024; Nketsiah & Van der Westhuizen, 2025).

A growing body of literature suggests that firm performance in such constrained environments depends less on tangible assets and more on intangible resources such as skills, knowledge, and capabilities (Agyapong et al., 2024; Mensah & Ayiku, 2024; Nketsiah & Van der Westhuizen, 2025). Intangible assets manifesting in skills and capabilities of both senior managers and employees become very important at driving firm overall output and performance. Extant literature has stressed the need for training and development of entrepreneurial skills for the attainment of increased performance (Ayiku & Grant, 2021; Dauda et al., 2023; Deku et al., 2023; Mort et al., 2012; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Wey & Wolugbom, 2018). Marketing skills, planning skills, communication skills, technological skills, personal skills, among others have been emphasized in extant empirical literature to drive performance (Andreas et al., 2025; Deku et al., 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2024). However, skills are lacking among many entrepreneurs especially within the global south (Al Mamun et al., 2019; Andreas et al., 2025). Prior discussion has centred on entrepreneurial skills, marketing skills, communication skills in isolation and not how these skills are harnessed together to drive entrepreneurial outcomes (Anderson et al., 2018; Chandra et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurial competencies defined as the knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable individuals to initiate, manage, and grow ventures have therefore attracted increasing scholarly attention (Quagrainie, 2020; Tehseen & Ramayah, 2015). These competencies enhance entrepreneurs' capacity to mobilize resources, respond proactively to environmental changes, and improve firm outcomes (Gerli et al., 2012). Entrepreneurial marketing skills (EMS) has been identified as one of the intangible skills required by entrepreneurs to thrive in the increasing complex markets (Dauda et al., 2023; Wey & Wolugbom, 2018). Entrepreneurial marketing skills are the knowledge, abilities and competencies that help entrepreneurs to recognise market opportunities, develop value for customers and expand their business operations in the face of limited resources (Ayiku & Grant, 2021; Dauda et al., 2023; Wey & Wolugbom, 2018). Entrepreneurial marketing adopts new ideas, creativity, customer relations and flexibility, unlike conventional marketing. Dauda et al. (2023) considered entrepreneurial marketing skills to consist of market identification skills, market positioning skills, and branding skills. In an earlier work of Ayiku and Grant (2021), the proxies for EMS were marketing communication skill, surveying skills, marketing planning skills, collaborative skills, and technological savviness. Wey and Wolugbom (2018) advanced that EMS is focused on entrepreneurs' ability to determine the needs of customers, ability to capture, maintain and retain the attention of customers, ability to determine demand and supply situation, and ability to develop good negotiation skills. Within the resource-based view (RBV), such competencies are conceptualized as strategic, firm-specific resources that can generate competitive advantage when effectively deployed (Barney, 2001). Among entrepreneurial competencies, marketing-related skills are particularly critical for SMEs. Effective marketing enables small firms to identify opportunities, engage customers, and compete despite limited financial and human capital (Brooksbank et al., 2012).

Firm performance as proxied by sales growth represents the increase in company revenue over a period (Cheratian et al., 2024; Ganotakis et al., 2023; Shubita, 2024). This growth could be measured over a month, quarter or year. It is one of the most important indicators of business performance because it shows whether a business is expanding its customer base, increasing market share, or generating more revenue from its products and services (Ganotakis et al., 2023; Shubita, 2024).

Empirical studies consistently report positive associations between marketing capabilities and performance outcomes such as sales growth, profitability, and market expansion (Homburg & Wielgos, 2022; Khan et al., 2025; Oduro & Mensah-Williams, 2023). As markets become

increasingly dynamic and technology-driven, marketing capability has emerged as one of the most influential functional capabilities shaping firm performance. However, technology savviness by most entrepreneurs has been a challenge and moreover the incorporation of such proxy within the EMS has been lacking (Ayiku & Grant, 2021; Dauda et al., 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2024). As advanced by Wey and Wolugbom (2018), the ability to determine the needs of customers and develop good negotiation skills requires the leveraging of digital technology to fully harness the benefits.

Entrepreneurial Marketing Skills (EMS) has emerged from the fusion of traditional marketing and entrepreneurial skills (Ayiku & Grant, 2021; Dauda et al., 2023; Deku et al., 2023; Mort et al., 2012; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Wey & Wolugbom, 2018). The intersection of marketing and entrepreneurship has given rise to the concept of entrepreneurial marketing (EM), which emphasizes opportunity recognition, innovation, proactiveness, customer value creation, and adaptive resource use (Morris et al., 2002). EM departs from traditional, formalized marketing by privileging flexibility, experimentation, and effectual decision-making, making it particularly suited to SMEs operating under uncertainty (Morris et al., 2002; Mort et al., 2012; Stokes, 2000). Sadiku-Dushi et al. (2019) in their study with focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kosovo, admitted that when traditional marketing is unsuitable, there is the need for SMEs to unlearn and adopt new innovative approaches which is rooted in entrepreneurial marketing (EM). Sadiku-Dushi et al. (2019) found that even though value creation was integral in EM dimensions, SMEs are often reserved when it comes to risk taking skills. Characteristically, SMEs were found to lack proactive skills, innovative skills, and customer-oriented skills. Mort et al. (2012) focused their study within the context of Australia. Their analysis identified opportunity creation, customer intimacy-based innovative products, resource enhancement and legitimacy as key strategies required by entrepreneurs in the quest to consolidate entrepreneurial marketing. Sulaiman et al. (2024) adopted proxies such as proactiveness, value creation, innovativeness, opportunity oriented, consumer intensity, resource leverage, and limited risk taking as proxies for EM. They found that aside resource leverage all the other proxies had significant impact on firm performance. While some prior studies across the globe generally find that EM positively influences firm performance (Becherer et al., 2012; Hacioglu et al., 2012) , much of the literature remains conceptual, exploratory, or concentrated in developed and limited-African contexts.

Critically, empirical evidence on how specific entrepreneurial marketing skills translate into concrete financial outcomes (such as sales growth) remains scarce in Ghana. Few studies that examine entrepreneurial marketing within the context of Ghana were by Deku et al. (2023) and Nkukpornu et al. (2024). Deku et al. (2023) found EM dimension had a significant positive effect on manufacturing SMEs performances of Halal food. This study was however a case study within the hospitality industry of Ghana. Thus, limiting the generalization of the finding within the context of SMEs. Another study that limits generalization is from Nkukpornu et al. (2024). Nkukpornu et al. (2024) focused their study on EM strategies adopted by artisans in Suame Magazine. The qualitative research design adopted in identifying proxies such as resource mobilization, collaborations and partnerships, product localization and adaptation, word-of-mouth and relationship marketing, and the use of offline marketing channels does hinder generalization and its practical adoption for the broader MSMEs within Ghana (Nkukpornu et al., 2024).

Existing studies often treat EM as a composite construct, offering limited insight into which skill dimensions matter most and under what conditions (Mort et al., 2012; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2024). Those that adopt proxies and or several components to measure EMS have raised concerns for the consensus on which proxies actually works for SMEs

especially within the global south where there is an increasing demand for consolidating several entrepreneurial skills (Ayiku & Grant, 2021; Dauda et al., 2023; Deku et al., 2023; Nkukpornu et al., 2024). This gap limits both theoretical refinement and practical guidance for SME owners and policymakers. In response, the present study examines the influence of entrepreneurial marketing skills dimensions on average annual sales performance among small-scale businesses in Ghana. By decomposing EM into actionable skill dimensions and grounding the analysis in RBV and entrepreneurial marketing theory, the study provides context-specific empirical evidence that advances understanding of how entrepreneurial marketing capabilities shape SME performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Resource-Based View (RBV) and Entrepreneurial Marketing Perspectives

The RBV was developed from Edith Penrose's (1959) influential article, The Theory of the Growth of the Firm, that a firm is a cluster of productive resources and that growth was primarily the result of the underutilization of managerial resources (Penrose, 1959). This concept was later developed by Birger Wernerfelt (1984) which he referred to as the "resource-based view." The idea being that competitive advantage comes from the firm-specific resources (Wernerfelt, 1984). The framework was enhanced by Jay B. Barney (1991) who argued that resources had to be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) to create sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) (Barney, 1991).

At the heart of RBV is the notion that firms are a collection of resources and capabilities, and it is the differences in the collection of resources and capabilities that are the sources of performance differences (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). Resources are intangible (e.g., brand reputation, knowledge), tangible (e.g., technology, capital) and human capital (e.g., managerial skills), whereas capabilities are the firm's ability to mobilize resources (Gerhart & Feng, 2021; Kozlenkova et al., 2014). When a firm has resources deployed in a strategic manner that is more difficult for other firms to duplicate, the firm has a competitive advantage (Parniangtong, 2017; Shah & Khan, 2020). The belief is that if firms can be differentiated or be cheaper, then they will make better profits, and that this will be achieved by unique combinations of resources, which will make it difficult for other firms to imitate (Barney et al., 2021; Enriquez de la O, 2015; Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM), a hybrid of entrepreneurship and marketing, questioned the effectiveness of traditional marketing tools and structures in the context of resource-poor businesses (Carson, 1998; Chandra et al., 2023; Morris et al., 2002; Stokes, 2000; Zahara et al., 2023). Both Carson (1998) and Stokes (2000) had early conceptualizations that entrepreneurs utilize traditional marketing concepts in non-linear, innovative, and proactive ways, especially because their situation differs from what is typically encountered by mainstream marketers. The best-known framework was that of Morris, Schindehutte, and LaForge (2002) who defined EM as "the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging, and value creation" (Morris et al., 2002, p. 5).

At the heart of EM is the idea that marketing is not about just using transactional marketing tools, but creating a process of redefining the product, service and market in order to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Morris et al., 2002; Stokes, 2000; Zahara et al., 2023). In the view of Morris et al. (2002) EM has seven dimensions: proactiveness, opportunity-focus, risk-taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leveraging and value creation. EM is

distinct from traditional marketing, which is focused on optimizing effective strategies, by emphasizing discovery, experimentation, and iterative adaptation so that companies can achieve the maximal impact from their limited resources (Morris et al., 2002; Mort et al., 2012; Stokes, 2000). Compared with large companies, it is much more applicable to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) because the resources and capabilities of SMEs are usually not unique or difficult to imitate, requiring innovative strategies in competition (Luo & Child, 2015).

RBV and EM have already been widely used in SME contexts; contexts where resources are limited and markets are volatile (Kaur & Kumar, 2026; Mmadubuko et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial marketing skills are essential for the survival and growth of SMEs in Ghana, as they are confronted by several challenges, such as limited access to finance, poor infrastructure, and the high level of competition in the country (Ayiku et al., 2026). RBV is a theoretical approach which identifies and utilizes the unique internal resources a business possesses which allow it to replace the need for financial resources, including entrepreneurial alertness, customer intelligence and social network capital (Kaur & Kumar, 2026; Morris et al., 2002; Mort et al., 2012; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019). Embracing EM, however, provides a strategic way to deploy such resources proactively, innovatively and customer-centrically to allow the SMEs to compete in spite of limited resources (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2024; Zahara et al., 2023).

The use of RBV and EM is applied to study SME performance in a few studies (Khan et al., 2025; Manigandan & Naga Venkata Raghuram, 2024; Sipos et al., 2025). Based on the multi-country data, research on SMEs revealed that product uniqueness, marketing and communication tools, product innovation and distribution sophistication all had significant positive effects on marketing innovation (Khan et al., 2025; Manigandan & Naga Venkata Raghuram, 2024). Overall, these studies show the power of RBV and EM in a variety of regional and industry settings.

Even with their impact, there are criticisms of both RBV and EM. There are conceptual ambiguities with RBV, such as the definition of ‘resource’ and ‘value’, and its practical use is limited (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010; Vrontis et al., 2026; Wójcik, 2015). The VRIN framework has been criticized for being static, because it does not consider the dynamic changes of the market (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010; Wójcik, 2015). Also, RBV is suspected of tautology, that is, if the firm has more resources, it will perform better because it has more resources (Brahma & Chakraborty, 2011; Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023). The same conceptual disintegration and methodological incoherence are observed in EM, where researchers employ different kinds of operationalisations that make it difficult to build up knowledge (Menzies et al., 2024).

The theory of RBV and EM are relevant to this study because they provide unique understanding of what SMEs and entrepreneurs must do to harness increased performance. For instance, focusing on intangible resources such as dimensions of EM promotes the firm’s competitiveness even within resource constrained environments (Morris et al., 2002). The volatility of Ghana’s economy demands agile skills that is captured by EM dimensions for survival and growth of SMEs (Ayiku et al., 2026). Finally, Ghana is a developing economy and thus provides an important test bed for the applicability of RBV and EM theories beyond that of a developed economy, adding to the growing evidence that these theories are universal.

2.2 Hypotheses Development

2.2.1 Impact of Surveying Skills on Average Annual Sales

The vast nature of the market requires that a firm or an entrepreneur carefully scan the environment before product design and market offerings (Kandemir & Acur, 2012). Surveying skills covers the abilities used to design, collect, and analyze data about target consumers and industry competitors (van Scheers, 2011). Knowledge on customers are best anchored through surveying, and it is imperative to consolidate such surveying skills within the entrepreneurial environment (Crane, 2010). Key skills include survey design, data analysis, and critical thinking of all variables within the market of interest. Both the internal and external survey are required for firms to adequately harness the benefit of increased sales (Reijonen & Komppula, 2010; van Scheers, 2011). This means that a comprehensive, in-depth knowledge of the business environment, akin to surveying the operational landscape, improves sales results (Ganotakis et al., 2023; Shubita, 2024). The underlying principle is that this subtle knowledge will help for better customer engagement and eventual identification of customers unmet needs (Uzsoy et al., 2018; Wongnaah et al., 2025). Against this background, this study advances that:

H1: Surveying Skills has a significant positive impact on average annual sales

2.2.2 Impact of Marketing Communication Skills on Average Annual Sales

Other empirical studies showed that marketing communication skills and sales growth have a direct and positive relationship (Al-Qeeda, 2019; Anabila, 2020; Barker, 2013; Sellahvarzi et al., 2014). The customer on everyday engagement requires information about the product so as to make informed decision. The onus thus lies on the entrepreneur to communicate such product and service information to the customer. More often than not, in the informal sector and among small businesses, there are no laid down procedures to how marketing communication should be done. Since segments possess their own unique characteristics, entrepreneurs that possess marketing communication skills stands to benefit significantly (Kotler & Keller, 2016). A study Punwatkar and Varghese (2014) with focus on the impact of competencies on sales performance for salesmen at a furniture mart in central India revealed that communication proxies such as product knowledge, listening ability, convincing skill, objection handling and interpersonal ability significantly influence salesman's performance (Punwatkar & Varghese, 2014). Therefore, this study postulates that:

H2: Marketing Communication Skills has a significant positive impact on average annual sales

2.2.3 Impact of Technology Savvy on Average Annual Sales

Given the upsurge in information technology, the business environment and for that matter the entrepreneur cannot be left out (Ding, 2022; Sarwar & Shafiq, 2025; Sterrett & Richardson, 2019). The complex market environment is better understood when business and entrepreneurial efforts are leveraged on existing becomes very integral in boosting small as well as large firms in many industries and economies (Ding, 2022; Sarwar & Shafiq, 2025). Ones the entrepreneur is able to use telemarketing strategies and digitization, he or she is able to reach out to potential and existing customers in the market. Research has shown that technology skills have a positive effect on sales performance, but this can vary depending on the company size and context (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Sterrett & Richardson, 2019). Increasingly, cloud and AI are becoming performance differentiators (Payraudeau et al., 2021).

Firms that are adopting such technologies are outperforming those will no or inadequate technology skills (Igwe & Sunny R, 2020; Qian & Wang, 2020; Westerman et al., 2012). marketing planning—often supplemented by digital—has a significant and positive correlation with sales of the printing firms. According to experts in Africa, the use of AI and CRM systems cannot be an advantage anymore, but a necessity to survive business (Boateng et al., 2025). Igwe and Sunny (2020) revealed that technology adoption significantly influences sales performance of manufacturing small and Medium Enterprises in Port Harcourt. It is posited that:

H3: Technology Savvy Skills has a significant positive impact on average annual sales

2.2.4 Impact of Marketing Planning Skills on Average Annual Sales

Marketing planning skills are the skills that are required to convert market analysis into a clear and actionable marketing plan (Hill et al., 1998; O'Cass et al., 2012; Theoharakis et al., 2024). In the literature, they are linked to analysing customers, competitors and the wider environment, setting objectives, selecting target markets and positioning, developing tactics, resource allocation and measuring outcomes (O'Cass et al., 2012; Theoharakis et al., 2024). Evidence from empirical studies indicate that Marketing Planning has a significant positive effect on financial performance (Agyapong et al., 2021). O'Cass *et al*. (2012) survey of senior executives from firms in Australia show that marketing planning capability improve customer-centric performance (customer attraction and customer retention). A study conducted on the SMEs in Ghana revealed that selling capability and marketing planning capability significantly positively influences all the competitive performance indicators such as financial performance (Oduro & Mensah-Williams, 2023). It is therefore asserted that:

H4: Marketing Planning Skills has a significant positive impact on average annual sales

2.2.5 Impact of Collaborative Skills on Average Annual Sales

Collaborative abilities are an important contributor to sales success, especially when cross-functional teams are involved. A sales leader who had incorporated sales, tech, and customer service insights into a new system kept business-to-business revenue afloat (Ama & Okurut, 2018; Huang & Rust, 2022; Kapucu & Garayev, 2013). Inter-cultural and external working groups are other collaborative skills (Pandey & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Leaders allocate clients to sales reps based on ethnicities as a form of cultural intelligence that helps in building trust with the client and helps close the deals faster (Ofori et al., 2026; Pandey & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). This demonstrates the application of internal collaboration and culturally aware thinking. A study by Ofori et al. (2026) revealed that partner complementarity (PC) and transaction-specific investment (TSI) which were proxies for market collaborative practices significantly enhance market access, both directly and indirectly through network intensity (NI). Additionally, the study noted that collaboration thresholds vary across firm sizes. Particularly, small firms achieve market access gains with moderate levels of collaboration, while medium-sized firms require substantially higher levels of TSI and PC to reach equivalent performance (Ofori et al., 2026). The results show that collaborative working can result in increased sales growth. Therefore, this current study advances that:

H5: Collaborative Skills has a significant positive impact on average annual sales

3. METHODS

This study employed a cross-sectional explanatory quantitative research design to empirically examine the influence of entrepreneurial marketing skills on the sales growth of small-scale businesses in Ghana. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate given the study's objective of statistically testing the hypothesized relationship between proxies for entrepreneurial marketing skills and firm-level performance outcomes as proxied by average annual sales, as well as the need to generate generalizable evidence within a context where empirical research on entrepreneurial marketing remains limited. The design enabled the measurement of key entrepreneurial marketing skill dimensions and their effect on sales growth using standardized instruments and inferential statistical techniques.

Even though there are over 1.9 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises operating within Ghana, not all these firm are registered under the GEA. To ensure a careful selection of registered firms, efforts were made to the office of the Ghana Enterprise Agency. The Ghana Enterprises Agency officially came into force in 2020, following the passage and presidential assent of the Ghana Enterprises Agency Act, 2020 (Act 1043) on December 29, 2020 (Ghana Enterprises Agency, 2024). The study focused on registered small-scale enterprises operating within the Greater Accra Metropolis. This metropolitan focus was justified by the concentration of entrepreneurial activity and the diversity of small-scale businesses within the area (Fält, 2020; Owusu-Ansah, 2024). According to records from the GEA, for Greater-Accra alone, there are 9500 registered small enterprises constituted the accessible population at the time of the study (Ghana Enterprises Agency, 2024). Therefore, MSMEs that were not registered under GEA were omitted from this study. MSMEs that are registered under the GEA enjoy several benefits among which include training and capacity building sessions. These MSMEs better appreciate the issue of training and development compared to their counterparts that are not registered and operate outside of this agency.

A probability-based sampling strategy was adopted to enhance representativeness and reduce selection bias. Specifically, simple random sampling was used to select respondents from enterprises registered under the GEA of Greater-Accra**,** ensuring that each firm within the population had an equal chance of inclusion. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations at a 5 percent margin of error, which is widely applied in social science research (Yamane, 1967). Applying the formula to the accessible population yielded a target sample size of 370 small-scale business owners, who constituted the final quantitative sample for the study.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture both entrepreneurial marketing skills dimensions and sales growth outcomes. Entrepreneurial marketing skills were operationalized as a multidimensional construct reflecting core skill-based practices relevant to small-scale business operations in emerging economies. These dimensions included surveying skills, marketing communication skills, marketing planning skills, collaborative skills, and technology savviness. Sales growth was measured as a key performance indicator, reflecting changes in sales levels and market expansion over time. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Very Low (1) to Very High (5), allowing for consistent quantification of respondents' perceptions and experiences.

Table 1: Sources of Measurement Scale

Variable	Measurement items	Sources
Surveying skills	6	(Hair et al., 2018)
Marketing Communication skills	3	(Barker, 2013; Percy, 2023)

Technology Savvy	4	(Apergis, 2019)
Marketing Planning Skill	5	(Hill et al., 1998)
Collaborative Skills	4	(Bhalkikar & Akarte, 2015; Vătămănescu et al., 2020)
Average Annual Sales	2	(Murphy & Anderson, 2020; Punwatkar & Varghese, 2014)

The data collection started March 2020 and ended in June 2020. Data collection took place over a four-month period, allowing sufficient time for engagement with respondents and completion of the survey instrument. To ensure a wide coverage of respondents, 10 enumerators were employed and given training on how to administer the questionnaire. It took between 30 to 40 minutes for an enumerator to complete the questionnaire. Respondents who did not understand any part of the questionnaire asked enumerators for further clarification and were adequately guided to complete the questionnaire. Questionnaires were administered directly to business owners at their respective business locations to improve response accuracy and minimize non-response bias.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. In addition to primary data, secondary sources such as academic journals, policy reports, and SME-related publications were consulted to support construct operationalization and contextual grounding of the study. To ensure the reliability and validity of the quantitative instrument, several procedural and statistical checks were undertaken. Content and face validity were established through expert review by academic supervisors and senior members of recognized SME associations in Ghana, who assessed the clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness of the questionnaire items. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all entrepreneurial marketing skill dimensions. The reliability estimates ranged from 0.800 to 0.929, exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 for social science research and indicating strong internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Items	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Surveying skills (SS)	0.818	6	0.809	0.629
Marketing Communication skills (MCS)	0.800	3	0.804	0.599
Technology Savvy (TS)	0.856	4	0.871	0.614
Marketing Planning Skill (MPS)	0.886	5	0.883	0.614
Collaborative Skills (CS)	0.929	4	0.939	0.777
Average Annual Sales (AAS)	0.750	2	0.784	0.650

The validated data were subsequently analysed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to test the study's hypothesis that entrepreneurial marketing skills dimensions exert a positive influence on the sales growth of small-scale businesses in Ghana. Convergent validity was assessed using the AVE. as a rule the AVE should be greater than 0.5. thus, the study found that all the variables had higher index for AVEs ranging from 0.599 to 0.777 for MCS and CS respectively. Through this quantitative methodological approach, the study provides empirical evidence on the performance implications of entrepreneurial

marketing skills within the Ghanaian SME context, addressing a key gap in the entrepreneurial marketing literature.

For discriminant validity, Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was estimated for the variables. The rule affirms that discriminant validity is established when the HTMT value between two reflective constructs is below 0.90 (liberal threshold) or 0.85 (strict threshold) (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Yusoff et al., 2020).

Table 3. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations

	SS	MCS	TS	MPS	CS	AAS
SS	1					
MCS	0.812	1				
TS	0.686	0.809	1			
MPS	0.739	0.807	0.751	1		
CS	0.647	0.749	0.672	0.912	1	
AAS	0.048	0.031	0.049	0.114	0.051	1

The measurement items estimated were all below 0.85, further confirming that there is evidence of discriminant validity.

4. ANALYSIS

Data analysis was done after undertaking some data screening. Thus, the screening of the data helped to eliminate all inconsistencies in the responses identified on the questionnaire received from the respondents. This bolstered the analysis of the study since errors were eliminated by undertaking data screening on the questionnaire received. The statistical tools deployed for this study were Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 26.

A composite for the various proxies was generated using SPSS. This helped to run the linear regression model.

$$\text{Average Annual Sale} = a + \text{SSx}_1 + \text{MCSx}_2 + \text{TSx}_3 + \text{MPSx}_4 + \text{CSx}_5 + \varepsilon$$

Where α is the constant of the function, x is the coefficient of the independent variable, SS for Surveying Skills, MCS for Marketing Communication Skills, MPS for Marketing Planning Skills, TS for Technology Savvy, CS for Collaborative Skills and ε is the disturbance term of the model.

5. FINDINGS/RESULTS

5.1 Background Information

Summary of the background information on respondents is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Respondents Background Information

Category	Description	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender of Respondents	Male	285	77	77
	Female	85	23	100
Industry	Service	238	64.4	64.4

Category	Description	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Commerce	52	14.1	78.5
	Manufacturing	19	5.2	83.7
	Agriculture	60	16.3	100
Position	Chief Executive Officer	186	50.4	50.4
	Owner	33	8.9	59.3
	Managing Director	33	8.9	68.1
	Founder	22	5.9	74.1
	Managing Partner	14	3.7	77.8
	Manager	82	22.2	100
Type of business	Sole Proprietorship	132	35.6	35.6
	Partnership	30	8.1	43.7
	Private Limited Company	140	37.8	81.5
	Limited Liability Company	16	4.4	85.9
	Joint Family Business	52	14.1	100
	Total	370	100	

Source: Field Data (2020)

The profile of the respondents (N=370) shows that the sample was more male (77%) and less female (23%) with a significant difference between males and females. Industrially, there was a dominance of service sector (64.4%, n=238), followed by agriculture (16.3%, n=60), commerce (14.1%, n=52) and manufacturing (5.2%, n=19) indicating the focus of service-oriented economy.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position is over-represented, with more than half (50.4%, 186) filling that role, followed by managers (22.2%, 82), owners/managing director/founder/managing partner (27%, 65), and the remaining 10.3% (41) in the other categories. In terms of structure of the business, Private Limited Companies (37.8%, n=140) and Sole Proprietorships (35.6%, n=132) are almost equally common with the two types accounting for 73.4% of respondents. Less common are Partnerships (8.1%, n=30), Joint Family Businesses (14.1%, n=52) and Limited Liability Companies (4.4%, n=16). The variety of business types reflects a wide organizational view. The overall result of the background data is that there is a clear framework for the interpretation of the results to come.

5.2 Diagnostics Test

To ensure that regression analysis and hypothesis are within acceptable rules, some key assumptions were estimated and presented under this section.

5.2.1 Normality Test

The normality test determines whether the data is normally distributed (bell-shaped) or not, and it employs various tests such as the Skewness, Kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk Test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and Q-Q plots. The check decides whether the standard parametric statistical tests (such as the t-test, ANOVA) can be used.

Table 5. Normality Test Result

Construct	Description	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Survey Skills	Data analysis skills	370	1	5	2.09	1.239	0.652	-0.63
	Data preparation skills	370	1	5	2.61	0.959	0.784	0.327
	Questionnaire skills	370	1	5	2.71	1.018	0.813	0.224
	Observing Market trend	370	1	5	2.32	0.9	1.224	1.736
	forecasting market trend	370	1	5	2.44	0.831	1.054	0.874
	monitoring and evaluating projects	370	1	5	2.72	1.153	0.826	-0.191
Marketing Communication Skills	leading and maintaining discussions	370	1	5	2.21	0.856	0.64	0.592
	Initiating customer interactions	370	1	5	2.09	1	1.113	1.046
	creating marketing content	370	1	5	2.64	1.066	0.542	-0.052
Technology Savvy	telemarketing	370	1	5	2.91	1.239	0.263	-1.089
	e-marketing	370	1	5	3.04	1.291	0.076	-1.034
	digitisation	370	1	5	3.16	1.182	-0.021	-0.865
	data analytics	370	1	5	2.81	1.139	0.382	-0.424
Marketing Planning Skills	SWOT Analysis technique	370	1	5	2.21	1.092	1.176	1.049
	critical thinking	370	1	5	2.09	0.978	1.538	2.728
	setting benchmarks	370	1	5	2.36	0.985	1.198	1.51
	compiling and preparing marketing budget	370	1	5	2.57	1.1	0.81	-0.072
	simulating market events	370	1	5	2.84	0.991	0.652	0.074
Collaborative Skills	information sharing	370	1	5	2.01	0.963	1.534	2.717
	align team members efforts	370	1	5	2.15	1.058	1.281	1.349
	joint decision making	370	1	5	2.16	1.039	1.313	1.54

Construct	Description	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	connecting service providers	370	1	5	2.5	1.032	0.8	0.439
Annual Average Sales	Our sales have grown overtime	370	1	5	3.2	0.875	1.234	1.214
	We are increasing in sales	370	1	5	2.61	0.941	1.213	1.341
	Valid N (listwise)	370						

Source: Field Data (2020)

All constructs are normally distributed with all the skewness values within the range of ±2 and all the kurtosis values within the ±7 range as can be seen in the data provided. Skewness shows slight to moderate positive skewness for most items ranging from -0.021 (digitisation) to 1.538 (critical thinking), with positive skewness showing that the distribution leans toward lower scores. Of note, digitization has a near perfect symmetry (-0.021) and critical thinking (1.538) and information sharing (1.534) are the highest positive skews.

The Kurtosis values that range from -1.089 (telemarketing) to 2.728 (critical thinking) are all within the range of ±7. Most items have platykurtic (flatter) or leptokurtic (peaked) characteristics but with no extreme values. The technology savvy items (telemarketing, e-marketing, digitisation) have a negative kurtosis signifying relatively flat distributions, whereas the marketing planning and collaborative skills items have a positive kurtosis signifying heavier tails.

Overall, the data meets the univariate normality assumptions for parametric analysis. The slight skewness towards lower ratings (means are primarily 2–3) may be attributable to the tendency of the respondents, but the deviation is slight. Therefore, there is no need to be concerned about transforming these constructs for further statistical modelling.

5.2.2 Multicollinearity Test

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a multicollinearity test that quantifies the effect of linear correlation among independent variables in your model on the variance of the estimated regression coefficient for each independent variable.

Table 6. Correlation Coefficients and Variance Inflation Factor

Variables	SC	MCS	TS	MPS	CS	AAS	Tolerance	VIF
Surveying Skills	1						0.518	1.931
Marketing Com. Skills	.644**	1					0.344	2.904
Technology Savvy	.563**	.692**	1				0.464	2.155
Marketing Planning Skills	.642**	.749**	.658**	1			0.228	4.391
Collaborative Skills	.554**	.653**	.598**	.824**	1		0.315	3.177
Average Annual Sales	.001**	.044**	.055**	.115**	.063**	1		

From multicollinearity test results, all the independent variables have a reasonable correlation as can be seen by the Value of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), the smallest value is 1.931 and the largest value is 4.391 which is less than the value of 10 which is generally used. Likewise, the tolerance values vary from 0.228 to 0.518 with a conservative value of 0.10, which suggests that there are no serious multicollinearity problems.

The correlation coefficient indicates that there are moderate to strong positive relationships between the predictor variables, specifically between Marketing Planning Skills and Collaborative Skill ($r = 0.824$), and Marketing Communication Skills with Marketing Planning Skills ($r = 0.749$). Such strong correlations are predicted due to the conceptual linkage among the marketing-related competencies. But the VIF of Marketing Planning Skills (4.391) is still moderate, meaning that there is some shared variance, but it does not affect the regression estimates. Overall, data meets the assumptions of multicollinearity, and thus the regression coefficients are not only stable, but also easy to interpret. None of the variables must be eliminated and the model can proceed with all six predictors without an increase in standard errors.

5.2.3 Model Fit

Table 7. Consolidated Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression Coefficients

Panel A. Model Summary							
R	.219a	**R Square**	0.48	**Adjusted R Square**	0.474	**Std. Error**	19000.5
F Change	10.803	**df1**	5	**df2**	1074	**Sig. F Change**	0
Durbin-Watson	0.214						
Panel B. ANOVA							
Source	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**		
Regression	19500336795	5	3900067359	10.803	.000b		
Residual	387734514665.607	1074	361019101.2				
Total	407234851460.740	1079					
Panel C. Regression Coefficients							
Predictor	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95% CI Lower**	**95% CI Upper**
Constant	38874.13	2160.448		17.994	0.000	34634.95	43113.304
Surveying Skills	356.767	180.5	0.082	1.977	0.048	2.595	710.939
Marketing Communication Skills	-304.61	397.475	-0.039	-0.766	0.444	-1084.53	475.306
Technology Savvy	1044.718	209.314	0.218	4.991	0.000	634.007	1455.428
Marketing Planning Skills	-1497.46	284.03	-0.329	-5.272	0.000	-2054.77	-940.14
Collaborative Skills	301.73	277.283	0.058	1.088	0.277	-242.348	845.808

Note. Dependent variable: Average Annual Sales. Predictors: Collaborative Skills, Surveying Skills, Technology Savvy, Marketing Communication Skills, and Marketing Planning Skills.

The R Square of 0.48 indicates that these predictors account for a good amount of variance in the outcome, which is fairly large. The R Square (0.474), which is very similar to the Adjusted R Square, indicates that the model is stable and that there is no overfitting even with five predictors. Notably, the standard error of the estimate is high at 19,000.5, suggesting a lot of errors in the predictions and possibly high variability of data or an inappropriate scale for the dependent variable. The F Change (10.803, $p < 0.001$) shows that the model is statistically significant, thus the predictors are meaningful in the model.

5.3 Regression Results

The regression sum of squares is 19,500,336,795 with 5 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 3,900,067,359. The residual sum of squares is substantially larger at 387,734,514,665.607 with 1,074 degrees of freedom, producing a mean square of 361,019,101.2. This suggests that the model accounts for some of the variation, but not all. The overall regression model is significant statistically ($p < 0.001$) with an F statistic of 10.803. That is, the combination of the five skills explains Average Annual Sales more than a model without any predictors. The large value of the F-test warrants interpreting the individual coefficients. The large residual variance compared to the regression variance, however, indicates that although the predictors are significant, they do not explain all important factors of sales performance. This model accounts for only a small percentage of the variance in the data (about 4.8% of the total variance in the ratio of regression to the total sum of squares). However, the big ANOVA finding is that at least one predictor is a meaningful factor in accounting for the differences in Average Annual Sales.

From Table 7, the regression analysis shows that there was mixed effect of the skill constructs on Average Annual Sales. The strongest positive and significant influence is for technology savvy (B = 1044.718, Beta = 0.218, $p < 0.001$) showing that digital competencies increase sales by around 1045 units for every unit increase of that variable. This highlights the importance of e-marketing, digitisation and data analytics for business performance. In addition, surveying skills had a significant positive effect (B = 356.767, Beta = 0.082, $p = 0.048$), indicating that data analysis and monitoring the market had a small positive influence on sales.

On the other hand, Marketing Planning Skills has a strong negative and very significant relationship (B = -1497.46, Beta = -0.329, $p < 0.001$) with the sales, meaning that the better at planning marketing they are, the lower their sales will be. This could indicate over planning and implementation or the fact that firms with planning skills are in tough markets. Marketing Communication Skills (B = -304.61, $p = 0.444$) and Collaborative Skills (B = 301.73, $p = 0.277$) are not statistically significant, which means that these two skills have a limited direct impact. The overall trend is that Technology Savvy is the major driver, and planning skills have unexpected negative effects, which should be explored further in terms of contextual moderators.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings show that entrepreneurial marketing skills do not contribute uniformly to the average annual sales performance of SMEs. Technology savviness and surveying skills positively support sales performance, marketing planning skills show an unexpected negative relationship, while marketing communication and collaborative skills do not demonstrate a direct relationship with sales. This distinction is important because entrepreneurial marketing is often treated as a composite capability, masking differences in the performance value of its individual dimensions (Mort et al., 2012; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2024).

The results therefore reinforce the need to examine entrepreneurial marketing as a configuration of capabilities rather than assuming that every skill contributes equally to performance.

Technology savviness emerged as the most important positive capability. This is consistent with research showing that digital technologies can strengthen market reach, customer engagement and business performance (Igwe & Sunny, 2020; Rodriguez et al., 2016; Sterrett & Richardson, 2019). For Ghanaian SMEs, e-marketing, social media, digital transactions, digitisation and data analytics can help resource-constrained firms reach customers and respond quickly to changing demand. The finding also aligns with entrepreneurial marketing theory, which emphasises innovation, opportunity exploitation and resource leveraging (Morris et al., 2002), and with evidence of growing digital adoption among Ghanaian SMEs (Quaye et al., 2024).

Surveying skills also support sales performance by enabling entrepreneurs to observe market trends, collect and interpret customer information, monitor competitors and identify changes in the business environment. This agrees with earlier work linking market scanning and customer intelligence to stronger market responsiveness (van Scheers, 2011; Ganotakis et al., 2023). From the Resource-Based View, the value of such information lies in its conversion into timely action. Surveying skills therefore complement technology savviness by helping SMEs interpret market information and translate it into opportunity recognition and customer-focused decisions.

The negative relationship between marketing planning skills and sales contrasts with studies that associate marketing planning with stronger financial and customer outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2021; O'Cass et al., 2012; Oduro & Mensah-Williams, 2023). The result should not be interpreted to mean that planning is inherently harmful. It may instead reflect the realities of SMEs operating in volatile environments, where rigid or highly formalised plans can become disconnected from rapid market changes. Planning may also fail to create value when implementation is weak. This interpretation is consistent with entrepreneurial marketing, which stresses flexibility, experimentation and adaptive decision-making rather than excessive formalisation (Morris et al., 2002; Stokes, 2000).

Marketing communication and collaborative skills, although not direct sales drivers in this study, should not be regarded as unimportant. Their effects may be indirect or take longer to appear through customer relationships, brand awareness, knowledge sharing, innovation, network access and resource mobilisation (Punwatkar & Varghese, 2014; Vătămănescu et al., 2020; Nkukpornu et al., 2024). Overall, the findings refine the assumption that all entrepreneurial marketing skills automatically improve SME performance. Within the Ghanaian context, capabilities that strengthen digital responsiveness and market intelligence appear particularly important, while the contribution of planning, communication and collaboration may depend on how effectively they are combined, implemented and adapted to changing market conditions.

7. CONCLUSION

This study partially supports the comprehension of the use of the Resource-Based View in the study of the performance of the sale of SMEs, by using entrepreneurial marketing competencies. Of the five hypothesized skills, only Technology Savvy and Surveying Skills had significant positive influence on average annual sales with Technology Savvy being the strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of digital skills in the changing dynamics of

business in Ghana. Surveying Skills had a small but statistically significant effect, which confirmed the value of that skill.

The Marketing Planning Skills was found to have a significant negative association with sales growth, which implies that there may be an aspect of overplanning or context restrictions that affect sales growth. The effects of both Marketing Communication Skills and Collaborative Skills were found to be non-significant, which suggests that the effects could be indirect, mediated or take time to be realized in the sales figures.

The study makes a contribution to theory as it challenges the universal presumption of the marketing planning and collaboration practice and provides suggested implications for SME owners to consider when planning the purchase of technology and market intelligence.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Theoretical Implications

The study extends the Resource-Based View (RBV) by demonstrating that entrepreneurial marketing skills are heterogeneous resources whose performance value differs across dimensions. The positive roles of technology savviness and surveying skills support the RBV proposition that knowledge-based and capability-based resources can create performance advantages when they enable firms to act on opportunities and deploy scarce resources more effectively (Barney, 1991; Barney et al., 2021). At the same time, the negative relationship associated with marketing planning and the absence of direct effects for marketing communication and collaboration challenge a simple assumption that the possession of any marketing-related capability necessarily produces superior sales performance. The findings therefore refine RBV by emphasising the importance of resource deployment, complementarity and context rather than resource possession alone.

The findings also contribute to entrepreneurial marketing theory by showing that adaptive, opportunity-oriented capabilities may be more consequential for SMEs than formalised routines in uncertain environments. Technology savviness strengthens the capacity to experiment, communicate with markets and leverage resources, while surveying skills support opportunity recognition and customer intelligence. In contrast, the unexpected result for marketing planning suggests that formal planning may require flexibility and implementation capability before it can generate performance benefits. The non-direct effects of communication and collaboration further indicate that some entrepreneurial marketing skills may operate as enabling or complementary capabilities rather than as independent drivers of sales. By providing evidence from Ghana, the study adds an emerging-economy perspective to RBV and entrepreneurial marketing theory and supports more context-sensitive explanations of how entrepreneurial competencies translate into firm performance.

8.2 Practical Implications

For SME owners and managers, the findings indicate that capability development should prioritise digital competence and market intelligence. Investments in e-marketing, social media, digital payment systems, customer databases and basic data analytics can help firms broaden market access, understand customer behaviour and respond quickly to changing demand. These investments should be accompanied by deliberate development of surveying skills, including environmental scanning, customer feedback collection, competitor monitoring and the interpretation of market information. The managerial objective should be to convert information into timely decisions rather than accumulate data without action.

The findings also suggest the need to rethink how marketing planning is practised in SMEs. Planning should remain part of business management, but it should be flexible, short-cycle and

closely connected to implementation and market feedback. SME managers should avoid excessively rigid planning processes that delay action or become detached from rapidly changing customer and competitive conditions. Marketing communication and collaboration should likewise not be abandoned because they did not show a direct sales effect. Instead, managers should treat them as supporting capabilities that strengthen relationships, knowledge sharing, customer retention and access to external resources, while ensuring that they are linked to measurable market objectives.

For the Ghana Enterprises Agency, business development organisations and policymakers, the results point to the value of practical capacity-building programmes that combine digital skills, market research and adaptive execution. SME training should move beyond preparing formal marketing plans to include hands-on use of e-commerce platforms, social media analytics, customer data, market experimentation and rapid feedback mechanisms. Public support can further strengthen these capabilities through affordable digital infrastructure, technology adoption incentives, access to suitable financing and partnerships with telecommunications and technology providers. Such interventions would help SMEs convert entrepreneurial marketing skills into market-responsive actions while recognising that different skills may require complementary resources and supportive institutional conditions before their performance benefits are realised.

9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was only conducted for GEA registered SMEs in Greater Accra, and thus not generalizable to other parts of the country and the unregistered SMEs. This low level of explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.48$) implies that omitted variables are present. Collection of data in the COVID-19 period (Mar-Jun 2020) could have affected the sales performance and skill usage. Lastly, there is the unexpected negative relationship for Marketing Planning Skills that warrants further investigation. Moderating factors and alternative performance measures to encompass all aspects of competency impact should be investigated in future research.

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