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SOCIAL NETWORKS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS IN SMES IN UYO METROPOLIS, AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

Small Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria face several challenges that impact their ability to leverage these networks effectively. This study examined the effect of social networks on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Ties strength and network density were the dimension of social networks in this study. Survey research design was adopted and structured self-administered questionnaire were administered to the sample size of 308 SMEs duly registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in Akwa Ibom State and a stratified sampling technique was adopted by the researcher. Internal reliability of the instrument was achieved through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with items being above 0.82. Biodata were analysed and presented in simple percentage. Simple Linear Regression technique was used for hypotheses testing. The results showed that ties strength has significant effect on entrepreneurial success and network density has significant effect on entrepreneurial success in SMEs respectively. Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is a significant influence of ties strength and network density are relational dimensions that can influence entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. It was recommended that SMEs should ensure close relationships such as those with family, close friends, or trusted business partners often provide essential emotional support, trust, and reliable resources. These strong ties can be vital during critical decision-making periods and in overcoming immediate operational challenges.

Keyword: Social network, entrepreneurial success, Ties strength, network density and Small Medium Scale Enterprises

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INTRODUCTION

In a challenging business environment characterized by limited access to formal resources, strong and diverse social networks serve as critical assets for entrepreneurs. These networks, encompassing relationships with family, friends, business partners, and community members, provide essential support in the form of capital, information, and business opportunities. The ability of Nigerian entrepreneurs to leverage these networks effectively often determines the growth, resilience, and overall success of their SMEs (Gu, *et al.*, 2021).

Social network refers to the structure of relationships and connections between individuals, groups, or organizations (Yin and Shi, 2019). It represents how people or entities are linked through various forms of interaction, communication, and exchange. These networks can exist in different forms, such as personal friendships, professional relationships, or online communities and they can vary in size, scope, and complexity.

The relationship between social networks and entrepreneurial success is particularly significant in the context of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. SMEs play a crucial role in the Nigerian economy, contributing to job creation, poverty reduction, and economic diversification (Ludeke-Freund, 2020). However, they often face significant challenges, including limited access to financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a challenging regulatory environment. Through social networks, entrepreneurs can access financial capital, acquire market information, find business partners, and gain mentorship and support. Moreover, social networks facilitate trust and cooperation, which are vital for business growth in environments where formal institutions may be weak or underdeveloped (Ludeke-Freund, 2020).

In Nigeria, where formal business support systems may be less accessible, the reliance on social networks is even more pronounced. Entrepreneurs often leverage these networks to navigate the complexities of the business environment, overcome operational challenges, and exploit new opportunities. Consequently, the strength, diversity, and effectiveness of an entrepreneur’s social network can significantly influence the success and sustainability of their business. Nahapiet and Ghosal (2019) as cited in Tsal and Ghosal (2021) identified three dimensions or levels of social networks. These are structural, relational, and cognitive. They theoretically justified how attributes of each of these dimensions facilitate the combination and exchange of resources within firms.

This study would look at the structural dimension includes only. Key structural dimensions include ties strength and network density. Nodes are the individual elements or entities within a network, such as people, organizations, or groups. Nodes are the fundamental units or entities that make up the network. Strength of ties" refers to the intensity and closeness of relationships within a social network. It is a key factor in understanding how social networks function and how they influence various outcomes, including information flow, resource access, and support mechanisms (Ekanem *et al.* 2023).

Network density measures the proportion of actual ties in a network relative to the total possible ties. It reflects how interconnected the network is. Network density is a key structural dimension in social network analysis, representing the extent to which nodes in a network are interconnected (Rakshit *et al.* 2022). It quantifies how many connections (ties) exist in the network relative to the maximum possible number of connections. Essentially, network density provides a measure of how closely knit the network is.

1.1 Statement of the Problems

Despite the recognized importance of social networks, SMEs in Nigeria face several challenges that impact their ability to leverage these networks effectively. Many SMEs in Nigeria struggle to connect with influential networks and key stakeholders, which impede their ability to gain crucial resources, secure funding, and access market opportunities. Limited access to these networks restricts their growth potential and competitive edge. The social networks of SMEs can be fragmented or characterized by weak ties, reducing the flow of valuable information and resources.

Fragmented networks may also lack cohesion, affecting the SME's ability to form strategic partnerships and collaborate effectively. Many SMEs operate within networks that lack diversity in terms of industries, expertise, and perspectives. This lack of diversity restricts access to innovative ideas, new market opportunities, and diverse perspectives necessary for growth and adaptation. SMEs frequently lack sufficient support and guidance in developing and managing their social networks. The absence of mentorship and resources hinders their ability to navigate networking challenges and capitalize on opportunities for growth and strategic advice. These challenges not only hinder their entrepreneurial success but also affect their overall performance and sustainability. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of SMEs and supporting their contribution to the economy. These informed the study of social network and entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of social networks on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

i. Examine the effect of ties strength on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
ii. Ascertain the effect of network density on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

i. What is the effect of ties strength on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?
ii. What is the influence of network density on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

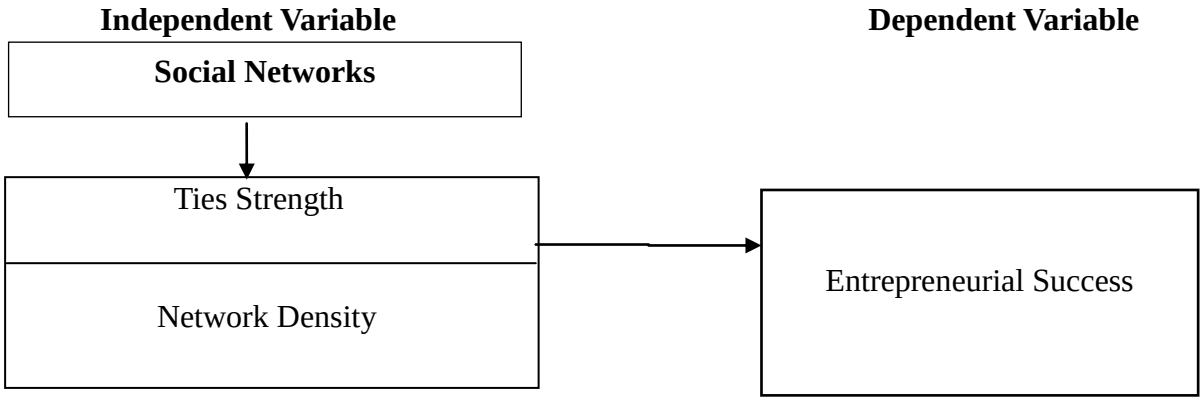
$H0_1$: There is no significant effect of ties strength on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

$H0_2$: There is no significant effect of network density on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure1. Model of Social Networks and Entrepreneurial Success by the researcher,2024.



Source: Researchers conceptualization, (2025)

2.1.1 Concept of Social Networks

A network could be stated as a specific set of linkages among a defined set of actors (Sirec and Bradac, 2019). This set of actors could be a set of people who have common interests that come together on a common basis to pursue those interests (Akpaetor, 2022). They also believe that actors in a social network can be persons, groups, and collectives of organizations. On the basis of this characterization therefore, a social network could be defined on the basis of the individual or organization. A personal network is defined as the management of relationships or alliances that the individual has with others in their society Sirec and bradac (2019). Whereas an organizational network according to Groen (2022), is a voluntary arrangement between two or more firms that involves durable exchange, and sharing or co-development of new products and technologies.

According to Ogunnaike and Kehinde (2023), social networks are nodes of individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems that tie on one or more types of interdependence: these include shared values, visions and ideas, social contacts, kinship, conflict, financial exchanges, trade, joint membership in organizations and group participation in events, among numerous other aspects of human relationship. This suffices that people of homophiles attributes come together to pursue a common agenda. In business, a social network could take different forms depending on what it is set up to achieve. Credence is lent to this assertion by Groen (2015) who said that “in business practice, networks may have different forms, including strategic alliances, joint ventures, licensing arrangements, subcontracting, joint R & D, and joint marketing services.

A social network helps in building trust among the members of the network. This in turn makes it possible for actors to cooperate and expect reciprocation (Doh and Zolnik, 2022). The trust that has been built will enable the actors to respect the assumed commitment amongst them in a particular network. Network interactions can initiate entrepreneurship orientation among the actors. Entrepreneurship social networks help to extend opportunities to one another, share information that could lead to creative and proactive thinking which could ultimately lead to the development of self-worth that engenders further creativity (Imagha *et al.* 2021). Entrepreneurship research shows that social networks among other

things affect opportunity recognition (Klyver and Schott, 2021). Network interactions help in building entrepreneurship intentions because as they interact and brainstorm, new idea recognition will begin to develop into new entrepreneurship opportunities.

2.1.2 Dimensions of Social Networks

2.1.2.1 Tie Strength

Many scholars believe that tie strength is necessary for the acquisition and growth of early resources in the primary period of establishing an enterprise. Strong ties make enterprises expand the market or purchase fixed assets (Ge *et al.*, 2019). They come from the closest circle of friends and family members, bring higher emotional intensity and closer ties and promote the identification, development, and utilization of information (Yang and Zhang, 2019). Repeated collaboration gives entrepreneurs closer trust (Yang and Zhang, 2019) and enhances potential cooperation (Demirkan *et al.*, 2022), which reduces the cost of information assessment and validation. While weak ties weaken connections between members, there is no trust among companions. How to complete production transaction and profit distribution have become a controversial problem. Conflicts between interest subjects will affect the growth of entrepreneurial enterprises. Closer trust has many additional functions (Uwa, 2024).

2.1.2.2 Network Density

Network density measured whether the link of entrepreneurial enterprises is dense or sparse. When the possible contacts are fixed, density depends on the number of current ties. The network density becomes great, and the number of members at a certain time could contact other people is huge (Yang and Dess, 2021). Numerous contacts may offer the necessary resources that enterprises need. An intensive network generates redundant information (Granovetter, 2019), and overlapping information is useless to foresee trends in products and markets for entrepreneurial enterprises (Yang and Dess, 2021). Rather than helping entrepreneurial enterprises grow, it consumes resources and hinders enterprises' growth, bringing fewer consumers. Sparse network provides access to new, valuable information (Jenssen and Greve, 2022). Although few ties exist, people or organizations could not create a close or monopolistic network, and entrepreneurial enterprises could seek resources without market threat. Diverse resources from sparse network make entrepreneurial enterprises more likely to enter the dominant market (Ndofor and Priem, 2021). However, dense network tends to give rise to exclusive rights among leaders, and it is easy to lead to arbitrary decision-making. Although dense network helps form a normative network and enhances trust and cooperation among network members, the consistency of dense network often hinders enterprise creativity that is harmful to the development of enterprises (Yang and Dess, 2021), reduces the probability of effective information appearing, and restrains the growth of entrepreneurial enterprises (Yang and Dess, 2021).

2.1.3 Entrepreneurial Success

Entrepreneurial success is a multifaceted concept that has garnered significant attention in both academic research and business practice. It encompasses a range of outcomes, from financial profitability and business growth to innovation and social impact (Gali *et al.*, 2020). Entrepreneurs, who are the driving force behind new business ventures, face various challenges in their pursuit of success. These challenges include securing funding, managing resources, navigating market competition, and sustaining growth in a dynamic and often uncertain business environment.

In many economies, particularly in developing countries, the role of entrepreneurs is crucial for economic development, job creation, and poverty alleviation (Gali *et al.*, 2020). Successful entrepreneurs not only contribute to the economy by generating wealth and employment but also drive innovation and create new markets. However, the journey to entrepreneurial success is fraught with obstacles, and not all ventures achieve their desired outcomes (Uforo *et al.* 2022). Factors such as access to capital, the entrepreneur's skills and experience, market conditions, and the ability to innovate and adapt are critical determinants of success. Moreover, entrepreneurial success is not solely defined by financial metrics. For many entrepreneurs, success also involves achieving personal satisfaction, making a positive social impact, and maintaining a work-life balance (Uwa *et al.*, 2018). The definition of success can vary widely depending on the entrepreneur's goals, industry, and cultural context.

2.1.4 Social Network and Entrepreneurial Success

The relationship between social networks and entrepreneurial success has been extensively studied in the field of entrepreneurship. Social networks refer to the connections and relationships that entrepreneurs have with other individuals, organizations, and entities (Hoang and Antoncic, 2022). These networks can include family, friends, mentors, business partners, industry peers, and other stakeholders. The strength, diversity, and quality of an entrepreneur's social network can significantly impact their chances of success.

The impact of social networks on entrepreneurial success has been a well-documented area of research, highlighting how the quality and extent of an entrepreneur's connections can significantly impact their business outcomes. Social networks provide entrepreneurs with access to critical resources, including information, financial capital, and human resources, which are essential for the successful launch and growth of new ventures (Hoang and Antoncic, 2022). These networks facilitate knowledge transfer, allowing entrepreneurs to gain insights from others' experiences, which can enhance decision-making and innovation capabilities.

2.1.5 Ties strength and Entrepreneurial Success

The strength of social ties, referring to the closeness and frequency of interaction between individuals, plays a significant role in influencing entrepreneurial success. Strong ties, which typically consist of close friends, family, and trusted colleagues, provide entrepreneurs with emotional support, reliable information, and access to essential resources (Granovetter, 2023). These ties offer a high level of trust and facilitate the sharing of sensitive information, which can be crucial for gaining insights and making strategic decisions.

Conversely, weak ties relationships characterized by less frequent interaction and lower emotional closeness are also valuable to entrepreneurs. Mark Granovetter's seminal work on the "strength of weak ties" theory suggests that weak ties serve as bridges to diverse networks and new information, providing entrepreneurs with access to non-redundant resources and opportunities that are not available within their immediate circle (Granovetter, 2023). These connections can introduce entrepreneurs to new markets, potential investors, and innovative ideas that are critical for business expansion and innovation.

A balanced mix of both strong and weak ties can be particularly advantageous. Strong ties offer the support and reliability needed to build a solid foundation for a business, while weak ties provide the breadth and diversity necessary for discovering new opportunities and

scaling the venture. Thus, the interplay between tie strength and the ability to leverage these relationships effectively can significantly influence entrepreneurial success.

2.1.6 Network density and Entrepreneurial Success

Network density, which refers to the extent to which members of a network are interconnected, plays a critical role in entrepreneurial success (Arroteia, 2020). High network density implies that an entrepreneur's contacts are closely connected with one another, fostering a cohesive and supportive environment. Such dense networks facilitate trust and cooperation, enabling the efficient flow of information and resources. Entrepreneurs embedded in high-density networks can benefit from strong social cohesion and support, which can be crucial for problem-solving, resource mobilization, and building legitimacy (Arroteia, 2020).

However, while high-density networks provide a reliable and supportive base, they can sometimes limit access to novel information and diverse perspectives. This is because dense networks often consist of overlapping contacts, leading to redundancy in the information and resources available. As a result, entrepreneurs in highly dense networks might face challenges in finding new opportunities or innovative ideas (Granovetter, 2023). In contrast, lower-density networks, which consist of more loosely connected ties, can provide access to a broader range of information, opportunities, and weak ties that can bridge different social circles, offering unique insights and fostering innovation.

Therefore, balancing network density is essential for entrepreneurial success. While a dense network can provide the social capital necessary for trust and reliability, entrepreneurs also need access to less dense networks to tap into diverse resources and information critical for innovation and growth.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social Capital Theory by Pierre Bourdieu, 1986.

Social Capital and the “strength of weak Ties” The term social capital was coined as an analogy to economic and cultural capital by Hanifan (1916), but popularized by Bourdieu (1986). It can be defined as resources that are available in social networks, such as emotional support or information. Social capital is associated with positive outcomes, as people high in social capital have been found to have higher education levels, more access to jobs, and better health (Stanton Salazar and Dornbusch, 1995). Tie strength has traditionally been closely connected to the discussion of social capital since social capital is associated not only with quantity of relationships, but also with quality. For instance, distinguishes between bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is characterized by weak ties which are more likely to represent different network clusters and thus serve as “bridges” across different groups or as brokers, spanning structural holes.

However, in Putnam’s framing, as these weak tie relationships lack depth, the bridging social capital they represent is not associated with emotional support unlike bonding social capital provided by strong ties. Granovetter (2022) defines the strength of a relationship as “a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie. He differentiates between “strong ties” (close relationships such as family, partners, and close friends) and “weak ties” (relationships with acquaintances, colleagues, and former class mates). Strong ties are associated with bonding social capital, especially because strong ties

are more likely to provide social support and can provide more different forms of support (Uttong *et al.* 2024).

2.3 Empirical Review

Eyo and Okop (2024) examined business clusterisation and emergence of new businesses in Akwa Ibom State: a case study of mechanic village, Uyo. This study focuses on the case of Mechanic Village in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, investigating how business clusterization influences the formation and growth of new enterprises. Through a comprehensive case study approach, this research explores the dynamics within Mechanic Village, analysing the factors contributing to the concentration of automotive repair and related businesses in this cluster. The study delves into the mechanisms by which knowledge transfer, resource sharing, and collaboration occur among businesses in the cluster. Methodologically, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is employed. In-depth interviews with key stakeholders and business owners provide insights into the motivations for cauterization and its effects. Additionally, a survey-based approach gathers data from 399 respondents. The findings of this study have implications for policymakers, business development agencies, and entrepreneurs. Understanding the dynamics of clusterization and its impact on new business emergence can guide strategies to promote economic growth and innovation at the regional level. The Mechanic Village in Uyo serves as a pertinent case study, shedding light on the mechanisms that underlie successful business clusterization and its role in fostering a conducive environment for new business ventures.

Patiat, *et al.* (2024) studied networks in entrepreneurship: The case of high-technology. The objective was to assess the effect of networks in entrepreneurship. The theoretical framework for this study was based on the Equity Theory of Motivation. The study utilised a case study approach, and the target population was one hundred and forty-six (146) top and mid-level management at the KCB headquarters. Because the population was small, the study relied on a census. The study made use of primary data. Data was gathered via a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics for frequency and percentage were used to analyse the data. Pearson correlation analysis, simple, and multiple linear regression were also used to summarise and classify data, establish the link between the variables, and assess the effect of the independent variable on dependent variable. The study found that social network was a key element in increasing entrepreneurial success ($r = 0.838$, p-value = 0.000). The null hypothesis was evaluated using simple linear regression analysis, and it was rejected since the t-values (15.805) exceeded the crucial t-values.

Oluwaseyi, *et al.*, (2024) explored network support and the success of newly founded businesses. The objective of the study was to highlights the challenges faced in attracting and retaining network support and the success of newly founded businesses. Key findings emphasize the need for comprehensive network support and the success of newly founded businesses. Implications for social network policy and practice are discussed, with recommendations for future research to enhance social network effectiveness in SMEs settings. This study contributes valuable insights into improving SMEs practices to ensure high-quality social network and organizational effectiveness in the SMEs.

Makwaro and Abok (2024) investigated factors affecting the strength of weak ties in state corporations. The study used stratified random sampling to select 224 staff doctors and nurses in SMEs in Kentya. The regression coefficients of the study indicated that the strength of weak ties have positive and statistically significant effect in social network at Kenya power

and lighting company in Kenya. The study found out that factors such as promotional mix element, reward, career development and workforce environment significantly affect implementation of social network in SMEs.

Adepoju, *et al*, (2024) examined the impact of networks in entrepreneurship: The case of high-technology firms. The study examined three key dimensions of social network – absorption, vigor, and dedication – and their effects on service quality, specifically focusing on the responsiveness dimension of the SERVQUAL model. This study was important because there is a lack of representation of AMCON and similar institutions in the existing literature, particularly within the context of Nigeria's unique financial landscape. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach that included quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with AMCON employees. The analysis employed the SERVQUAL model to evaluate service quality and multiple regression analysis to explore the influence of each engagement dimension. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a theoretical understanding of the impact of social network on service quality within the asset management sector. The result showed that social network significantly affects networks in entrepreneurship.

3. METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was employed in this study by the researcher to create a better understanding of individual or group viewpoints concerning a specific concept or issue of interest. The population of the study comprised of one thousand five hundred and fifty-two (1552) SMEs duly registered. A total of 1552 SMEs duly registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in Uyo metropolis was adopted as the target population for the study. For calculating sample sizes, this study adopted Krejcies and Morgan Formula, which is stated as follows: s=[x2 np (1-p)] / [d2 (n-1) + x2 p (1-p)]. Stratified sampling techniques was used in this study to choose its respondents, guaranteeing that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. The primary source of data was used in this study. The data for this study were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to supervisors, managers and branch managers of the selected SMEs in Uyo metropolis.

The model used was premised on the main objectives and anchored on the sub-objective. The following mathematical model was developed to analyse the influence of social networks on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis using ties strength and network density as the explanatory variables to see how it influences entrepreneurial success in SMEs which is the dependent variable.

The regression model is expressed below:

$y = X_i + X_{ii} + \varepsilon$

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies and percentages. Also, inferential statistical tool such as simple linear models will be used for testing the hypotheses. Quantitative data would also be employed to analyze the entrepreneurial success of SMEs in Uyo metropolis. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used as the statistical software package.

4. Data Analysis

The analyses in this section are done as per the research questions and hypotheses formulated for this study. They analysis is to ascertain the highest positive response rate to the questions on the questionnaire.

Tables 4.2.1: Responses on ties strength and entrepreneurial success

Ties Strength	SA	A	N	SD	D
I regularly communicate with the individuals in my network	51 (19.8)	115 (44.6)	19 (7.3)	58 (22.5)	15 (5.8)
I feel a strong emotional connection with my network contacts.	14 (5.4)	173 (67.1)	14 (5.4)	42 (16.2)	15 (5.8)
I believe my network contacts are willing to help me when I face challenges.	63 (24.4)	151 (58.5)	10 (3.8)	19 (7.3)	15 (5.8)
My network contacts consistently provide the support I need to succeed in my business	152 (58.9)	73 (28.3)	6 (2.3)	21 (8.1)	6 (2.3)

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

For the question on talent management and Organizational sustainability in selected manufacturing firms, Table 4.2.1 showed that 166 respondents, representing 19.8% agreed on decreases downtime. While 7.3% of respondents were undecided, 73 respondents representing 28.3% disagreed respectively.

Question two, 187 respondents representing 72.5% agreed that the company had extend asset lifetime. While 5.4% were undecided on whether this practically took place at the company, 57 respondents representing 22% disagreed.

Question three, 214 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that this applied to the company. While 3.8% were undecided, 34 respondents representing 13.1% disagreed.

Question four, 225 respondents representing 87.2% of respondents agreed that reduce service interruption to them were well defined. While 2.3% respondents were undecided, 27 respondents representing 10.4% of respondents disagreed.

Tables 4.2.2: Responses on network density and entrepreneurial success

Network Density	SA	A	N	SD	D
The market network provides valuable business opportunities that positively impact my operations.	63 (24.4)	151 (58.5)	10 (3.8)	19 (7.3)	15 (5.8)
Using the market network enhances my ability to connect with potential partners, customers, or suppliers.	152 (58.9)	73 (28.3)	6 (2.3)	21 (8.1)	6 (2.3)
The platform offers effective tools and features that facilitate collaboration and communication with other users.	51 (19.8)	115 (44.6)	19 (7.3)	58 (22.5)	15 (5.8)
Participation in the market network has significantly contributed to the growth and success of my business	14 (5.4)	173 (67.1)	14 (5.4)	42 (16.2)	15 (5.8)

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

For the question on Geographic segmentation Table 4.2.2 showed that, 214 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that this applied to the company. While 3.8% were undecided, 34 respondents representing 13.1% disagreed.

Second question, 225 respondents representing 87.2% of respondents agreed that detail inspection checklist to them were well defined. While 2.3% respondents were undecided, 27 respondents representing 10.4% of respondents disagreed.

Third, shows that 166 respondents, representing 19.8% agreed on decreases downtime. While 7.3% of respondents were undecided, 73 respondents representing 28.3% disagreed respectively.

Fourth, 187 respondents representing 72.5% agreed that the company had predictive maintenance diagnostics such as vibration analysis, oil sample analysis and infrared heat monitor. While 5.4% were undecided on whether this practically took place at the company, 57 respondents representing 22% disagreed.

4.3 Test of Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant effect of ties strength on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.3.1a Regression analysis showing result for ties strength and entrepreneurial success

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.652[a]	.575	.571	.43420

Predictors: (Constant), ties strength

From Table 4.3.1a the coefficient of determination is such that 0<r2< 1, and denotes the strength of the linear association between x and y. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.575. This implied that 57.5% of the total variations in ties strength are explained by entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State; Specifically, ties strength is a significant strategy for entrepreneurial success.

Table 4.3.1b

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000[b]
	Residual	50.576	226	.790		
	Total	100.021	227			

a. Dependent Variable: entrepreneurial success

Predictors: (Constant), ties strength

Results from table 4.3.1b indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results implied that ties strength are good predictors of entrepreneurial success. This was supported by an F statistic of 62.587 and the reported p (0.000).

Table 4.3.1c

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.570	.089		6.430	.000
	a. ties strength.	.766	. 021	.652	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: entrepreneurial success

The results in table 4.3.1c showed that there was a significant effect ties strength (β=0.766, p=0.048) and entrepreneurial success. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternated accepted.

Hypothesis Two:

$H0_2$: There is no significant effect of network density on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.3.2a Regression analysis showing result for network density on entrepreneurial success

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.652[a]	.775	.571	.43420

Predictors: (Constant), network density

From Table 4.3.2a the coefficient of determination is such that 0<r2< 1, and denotes the strength of the linear association between x and y. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.775. This implied that 77.5% of the total variations in network density are explained by entrepreneurial success; Specifically, network density has a significant effect on entrepreneurial success.

Table 4.3.2b

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	51.577	.000[b]
	Residual	50.576	226	.790		
	Total	100.021	227			

a. Dependent Variable: entrepreneurial success
Predictors: (Constant), network density

Results from table 4.3.2b indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results implied that network density is good predictors of entrepreneurial success. This was supported by an F statistic of 51.577 and the reported p (0.000).

Table 4.3.2c

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.570	.089		6.430	.000
	network density	.656	. 021	.772	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: entrepreneurial success

The results in table 4.3.2c showed that there was a significant effect network density (β=0.656, p=0.000) and entrepreneurial success. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternated accepted.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study is to examine the effect of ties strength on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, From Table 4.2.1 the coefficient of determination is such that $0 < r^2 < 1$, and denotes the strength of the linear association between x and y. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.575. This implied that 57.5% of the total variations in ties strength are explained by entrepreneurial success among entrepreneurs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State are explained; Specifically, ties strength is a significant strategy for entrepreneurial success. Results from table 4.2.2 indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results implied that ties strength are good predictors of entrepreneurial success. This was supported by an F statistic of 62.587 and the reported p (0.000). The results in table 4.2.3 showed that there was a significant effect ties strength (β=0.652, p=0.048) and entrepreneurial success. As supported by Oluwaseyi, *et al.*, (2024) explored network support and the success of newly founded businesses. The objective of the study was to highlights the challenges faced in attracting and retaining network support and the success of newly founded businesses. Key findings emphasize the need for comprehensive network support and the success of newly founded businesses. Implications for social network policy and practice are discussed, with recommendations for future research to enhance social network effectiveness in SMEs settings. This study contributes valuable insights into improving SMEs practices to ensure high-quality social network and organizational effectiveness in the SMEs.

The second objective of the study was to ascertain the effect of network density on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. From Table 4.3.1 the coefficient of determination is such that 0<r2< 1, and denotes the strength of the linear association between x and y. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.775. This implied that 77.5% of the total variations in network density are explained by entrepreneurial success; specifically, network density has a significant effect on entrepreneurial success. Results from table 4.3.2 indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results implied that network density is good predictors of entrepreneurial success. This was supported by an F statistic of 51.577 and the reported p (0.000). The results in table 4.3.3 showed that there was a significant effect network density (β=0.772, p=0.000) and entrepreneurial success. As supported by Oluwaseyi, et al., (2024) explored network support and the success of newly founded businesses. The objective of the study was to highlights the challenges faced in attracting and retaining network support and the success of newly founded businesses. Key findings emphasize the need for comprehensive network support and the success of newly founded businesses. Implications

for social network policy and practice are discussed, with recommendations for future research to enhance social network effectiveness in SMEs settings. This study contributes valuable insights into improving SMEs practices to ensure high-quality social network and organizational effectiveness in the SMEs.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study conducted, it was concluded that ties strength and network density are relational dimensions that can influence entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Finally, it is concluded that, the social network has a profound impact on entrepreneurial success in SMEs in Uyo metropolis. Entrepreneur that invests in creating a positive, supportive, and engaging business environment tend to experience higher productivity, lower turnover, and greater customer commitment. Understanding the dynamics of this relationship and implementing strategies to strengthen it can lead to significant improvements in overall performance and success.

It was recommended that SMEs should ensure close relationships such as those with family, close friends, or trusted business partners often provide essential emotional support, trust, and reliable resources. These strong ties can be vital during critical decision-making periods and in overcoming immediate operational challenges. Also, it was recommended that SMEs should adopt dense networks as it allow information to travel quickly through multiple channels. Entrepreneurs benefit from timely updates on market trends, innovative ideas, and opportunities that can be critical for staying competitive.

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