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Impact of Competitive Aggressiveness, Autonomy on Business Performance, and Proactiveness in selected MSMEs in Uttar Pradesh

Ms. Asmita Singh[1], Mr. Raveesh Kumar Maurya[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Faculty of Commerce, Banaras Hindu University
[2]Research Scholar, Faculty of Commerce, Banaras Hindu University
mathlysingh1996@gmail.com

Abstract
This study employs a 21-item Likert scale questionnaire (5 points) to examine how entrepreneurial-oriented factors i.e., Competitive Aggressiveness, Autonomy affect proactiveness and business performance. The sample comprised 376 MSMEs owners from the Uttar Pradesh Services MSMEs. For this study, proprietors of MSMEs were specifically selected. The objective of the present study is to study the impact of Competitive Aggressiveness and autonomy on Business Performance, and Proactiveness in selected MSMEs in Uttar Pradesh. The data are collected both online and offline. Smart PLS 4 software is used for analyzing the data and hypothesis testing. The study found that both Competitive Aggressiveness and Autonomy positively impact Business Performance and Proactiveness. Therefore, all the hypotheses formulated are accepted. In this study, two new relationships are shown. These results provide fresh insight into the variables influencing aspiring entrepreneurs, making them significant. Thereby adding a substantial theoretical contribution to the knowledge of entrepreneurial orientation. This study offers significant practical value to policymakers seeking to identify and develop potential entrepreneurs into successful ones, as nations recognize innovation and entrepreneurship's role in boosting their global competitiveness.

Keywords: MSMEs, Services units, Business performance**,** Competitive Aggressiveness, Proactiveness, Autonomy

Introduction
Over the last 50 years, the Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) sector in the Indian economy has become highly dynamic and lively. Second only to agriculture, it creates employment opportunities at relatively modest capital costs and encourages entrepreneurship, which majorly contributes to the nation's economic and social development. As per the provisions of the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006, MSME stands for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. They are categorized as follows:

(i)A micro business is one in which the total revenue is not more than five crore rupees and the investment in plant, machinery, or equipment is not more than one crore rupees,

(ii) a small business, where the capital expenditure for machinery and plant is less than ten crore,
(ii) a small business, where the investment in plant, machinery, or equipment is limited to ten crore rupees or less, and the turnover is not more than fifty crore rupees; and

(iii) a medium-sized business, where the investment in plant, machinery, or equipment is limited to fifty crore rupees or less, and the turnover is not more than two hundred and fifty crore rupees.

The economic development of all countries is greatly influenced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This is because they have a major impact on wealth growth, employment creation, and poverty alleviation. Furthermore, the GDP of the nation is significantly boosted by companies. Moreover, inventions and entrepreneurship are said to have originated in SMEs. (Ringo, Tegambwage , & Kazungu, 2022).

More study is required to examine the fundamental ideas, antecedents, and relationships between entrepreneurial performance and success since entrepreneurial competencies have the potential to influence company success and economic development. Entrepreneurial orientation is characterized by the procedures, practices, and choices that result in new company endeavors. It is a collection of actions that include risk-taking propensity, inventiveness, initiative, independence, and fierce competition. (Mamun & Fazal, 2018) Consequently, this study investigates how competitive aggressiveness, autonomy, and proactiveness affect business performance and proactivity in Uttar Pradesh MSMEs. There is no prior relationship between competitive aggressiveness and Autonomy on Proactiveness. Prior research has focused mostly on manufacturing issues without considering MSMEs' service sector. Consequently, this study investigation will close the gap in the literature. Four sections comprise the remainder of the paper: a review of the literature, a methodology, a presentation of the results, a discussion, a conclusion, and a recommendation.

Literature Review

Business performance

The result of entrepreneurial endeavors is business performance. (Yacob, Sulistiyo, Erida , & Siregar, 2021) . Goals for the long term and room for expansion are linked to nonfinancial business performance. Business performance that isn't financial is impacted by innovative proactiveness. So, business owners ought to seek methods to showcase their inventiveness and initiative. (Cho & Lee, 2018) **.** The only entrepreneurship orientation characteristics impacting a company's performance are risk-taking and innovation. The impact of innovation on a company's performance is greater. (Erista, Andadari, Usmanij, & Ratten, 2020).

Competitive Aggressiveness

An entrepreneur's zeal and posture during head-to-head competition are called aggressiveness. It is often referred to as aggressive competition. (Ladd, Hind , & Lawrence, 2018) . Companies with lower centrality levels typically launch more activities inside fewer categories to compete aggressively. In contrast, companies with greater centrality typically launch fewer actions throughout a wider variety of categories. (Yang, Sun, Li, & Yan, 2024). Competitive aggression does not, by itself, significantly affect the effectiveness of religious organizations. (Oduro, 2022).

Proactiveness

An entrepreneur endeavors to capture the first-mover advantage to mould a new market. Aggression and proactivity are not the same because the latter presumes that there is already competition while the former considers open market space. (Ladd, Hind , & Lawrence, 2018). Being proactive is keeping an eye on how the business climate, consumer preferences, and technological advancements are changing. (Lumpkin, Brigham , & Moss, 2010) . Being proactive means having a strong forward-looking viewpoint and taking proactive steps by

businesses to take advantage of market opportunities that are based on anticipating and responding to future requirements. (Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2013) . Proactive businesses can use their scientists' internal expertise to generate technical innovation or the information that other businesses have achieved to drive advances. (Kiani, Yang, Ghani, & Hughes, 2021).

Autonomy

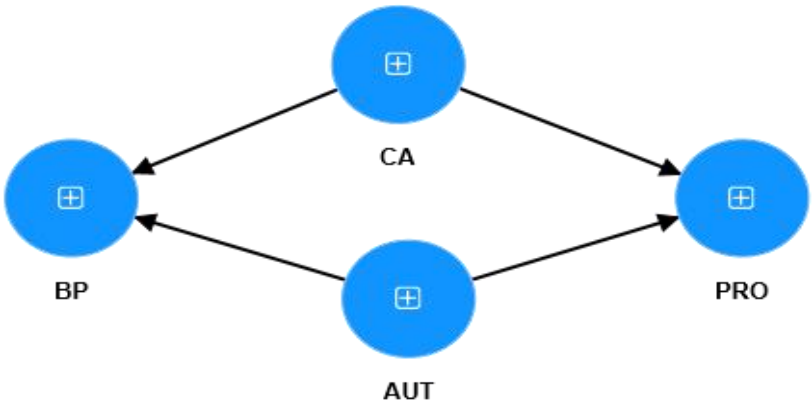
The ability to take strategic initiative and run a new business without interference from bureaucracy is referred to as autonomy. This independence could even be viewed as authoritarian, with the business owner forcing his will on the newly formed. (Ladd, Hind , & Lawrence, 2018). Any progress in "entrepreneurship" occurs, according to Basu et al. (2008), when people who are independent and open-minded take the lead on creative commercial endeavors. An organization with this level of autonomy and independence is better able to grow and generate new ideas. (Shah & Ahmad, 2019).

Table 1. Proposed Association Constructs

Associations	Prior literature
CA>BP	(Harthi, Bachkirov, Riyami, & Jahwari, 2023), (Lee, Chong, & T, 2019), (Rao, Abdul, Kadam, & Singh, 2023)
AUT>BP	(Saragih, 2011), (Oki, 2016) (Mamun & Fazal, 2018)

Source: Author's 2024

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework



Source: Author's 2024

CA= Competitive Aggressiveness
AUT=Autonomy
PRO= Proactiveness
BP=Business Performance

Materials and Methods

Survey Instrument Development

The present study aims to examine the CA (Competitive Aggressiveness) AUT (Autonomy), BP (Business performance), and PRO (Proactiveness) empirical determinants of MSME owner's performance estimated 376 businesses made up the sample. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree, was employed in this study. The validity and reliability of the questions were examined before

they were utilized. (Bongomin & Ntayi, 2019). Table 2 presents the source of each construct taken.

Table 2. Formats of Survey Instruments

Variables	No. of Statements	Sources
CA	**2**	(Paulus & Hermanto, 2022), (Ladd, Hind , & Lawrence, 2018), (Yang, Sun, Li, & Yan, 2024), (Oduro, 2022).
AUT	**2**	(Ladd, Hind , & Lawrence, 2018), (Shah & Ahmad, 2019).
BP	**4**	(Yacob, Sulistiyo, Erida , & Siregar, 2021), (Cho & Lee, 2018), (Erista, Andadari, Usmanij, & Ratten, 2020),
PRO	**2**	(Mamary & Alshallaqi, 2022), (Ndubisi & Iftikhar, 2012),

Source: Authors' 2024

Hypothesis of the study

Hypothesis 1(H1): Competitive Aggressiveness has a significant positive influence on business performance.
Hypothesis 2(H2): Autonomy has a significant positive influence on business performance.
Hypothesis 3(H3): Competitive Aggressiveness has a significant positive influence on Proactiveness.
Hypothesis 4(H4): Autonomy has a significant positive influence on Proactiveness.

Data Collection and Descriptive Statistics

Before doing the final data collection, we conducted a pilot study with 40 respondents. In which 2 dimensions are deleted. The sample size is calculated by Multiplying the least number of indicators utilized in the study by five yielding the sample size when the population size is unknown. (Shunmugasundaram & Srivastava, 2023). In the present study, there are 10 indicators, therefore the sample size in this paper is 50. Responses are collected both online and offline mode through structured questionnaires. The sampling technique used in the study is convenience sampling. MS Excel and smart pls 4 were used for statistical analysis

Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the participants, indicating that 53.99 percent of the respondents were female and 46.01 percent were male. Of the respondents, 30.319 percent were over 51, 34.308 percent were between 41 and 55, and 12.23 percent were under 30. Most respondents 38.0319 percent had graduated/ diploma, 12.5 percent had a school-level degree and 18.351 percent had completed post-graduation. 30.851 percent have a professional degree. Only 0.265 percent have been uneducated. The services comprise 24.958 percent of Educational institutions, 4.297 percent of Hotels and Restaurants, 3.9669 percent of Tours and Travels, 2.644 percent of Repairing Motor Vehicles and Courier services, 6.7768 percent of Maintenance of Motor Vehicles and Courier services, 16.36 percent of Small businesses, 11.239 percent Clinical/Pathological laboratories and Scanning, MRI tests, 6.446 Hospitals, 1.98 percent Tailoring, 0.66 percent Colored, Black and White studios equipped with a processing laboratory, 4.13 percent Beauty Parlour, 2.14 percent Nursing Homes, 1.98 percent Architecture designers, 0.66 percent Event Management, 3.80 percent Catering, 2.31percent Real estate activities, and 5.61 percent others.

Table 3. Demographic profile of respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
GENDER		
Male	203	53.99
Female	173	46.01
Total	376	100
AGE		
Less than 30 years	46	12.23
31-40 years	87	23.138
41-50 years	129	34.308
More than 51years	114	30.319
Total	376	100
EDUCATION		
School level	47	12.5
U.G/diploma	143	38.0319
P. G	69	18.351
Professional	116	30.851
Uneducated	1	0.265
Total	376	100
Type of business		
Educational institutions	151	24.958
Hotels and Restaurants	26	4.297
Tours and Travels	24	3.9669
Repairing of Motor Vehicle and Courier services	16	2.644
Maintenance of Motor Vehicle and Courier services	41	6.7768
Small business	99	16.36
Clinical/Pathological laboratories and Scanning, MRI tests	68	11.239
Hospital	39	6.446
Tailoring	12	1.98
Colored, Black and White studios equipped with processing laboratory	4	0.66
Beauty Parlour	25	4.13
Nursing Homes	13	2.14
Architecture designers	12	1.98
Event Management	4	0.66
Catering	23	3.80
Real estate activities	14	2.31
other	34	5.61
Total	605	100

Source: Author 2024

CMV

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and SMART-Partial Least Square (PLS) techniques were used to analyze the study. (Appiah, Sam, Twum , & Godslove, 2023). Common method variance (CMV) bias is a serious problem in a survey sample. The current investigation used "Harman's single-factor test" to evaluate the CMV. A single-factor test was developed to assess the existence of CMV among hypotheses, following Harman's (1976) proposal. The results showed that all the sample items could be divided into 35 distinct factors, the first of which accounted for 25.465% of the variance, which is less than the 50% optional criterion. (Alam, Zhang , & Shehzad, 2023).

Results

To analyse the research model, partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used. The social sciences and marketing both make extensive use of (PLS-SEM). For models with numerous constructs, indicators, and relationships, (PLS-SEM) is thought to be an appropriate method. (Daragmeh , Sagi, & Zeman , 2021) . To verify the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, the first stage was using CFA to assess the quality and suitability of the measurement model. The strength and direction of links between theoretical constructs were next investigated by evaluating the structural model using SEM. (Patel & Patel, 2018).

Measurement Model

Scale Reliability

The authors all present the items for every construct, the average variance retrieved, the standardized factor loadings, and the composite reliability. Every factor loading has a statistically significant range. Usually, 0.5 is the minimum recommended for convergent validity. (Knockaert, Tienne, Coppens, & Lambrecht, 2024)**.**

The degree to which one measure positively correlates with another measure of the same constructs is known as convergent validity. Three parameters must be averaged to verify the convergent validity. Variance extracted (AVE) must be greater than 0.5, composite reliability (CR) greater than 0.7, and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) greater than 0.7. For exploratory research, an acceptable range is 0.60 to 0.70. (Gamil & Rahman, p. 102-148).

Table 4. Findings of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability(rho_a)	Composite reliability(rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AUT	0.715	0.731	0.874	0.777
BP	0.836	0.849	0.890	0.671
CA	0.764	0.802	0.893	0.807
PRO	0.703	0.774	0.867	0.765

Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

Scale Validity

Two-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out to examine our study's constructs' discriminant and convergent validity (Bentler, 1995). One method used was structural equation modelling, or SEM. (Alqahtani, Uslay, & Yeniyurt, 2023). The guarantee of discriminant validity guarantees that a constructed measure is distinct from other measures in a structural equation model and accurately captures phenomena of interest. This study offers three significant advancements in variance-based SEM. To begin, the Fornell-Larcker standard In variance-based SEM, the second new method for evaluating discriminant validity is the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarste, 2015).

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	AUT	BP	CA	PRO
AUT	0.881			
BP	0.668	0.819		
CA	0.525	0.590	0.898	
PRO	0.527	0.545	0.484	0.875

Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

Table 6. Heterotrait- monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	AUT	BP	CA	PRO
AUT				
BP	0.852			
CA	0.698	0.720		
PRO	0.724	0.700	0.620	

Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

Structural Model

There are no collinearity problems because Table 7 demonstrates that all VIF values are below the threshold limit. The determination coefficient R2 explains the percentage of endogenous variable variance that exogenous variables may account for. Higher values of R2, which go from 0 to 1, suggest more explanatory power. Values of 0.75 are often regarded as considerable, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as little. (Galarza, Carlosama, Pineda, & Gomez, 2023).

Table 7: Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Constructs	VIF
AUT1	1.447
AUT2	1.447
BP1	1.795
BP2	1.608
BP3	2.723
BP4	2.510
CA1	1.620
CA2	1.620
PRO1	1.415
PRO2	1.415

Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

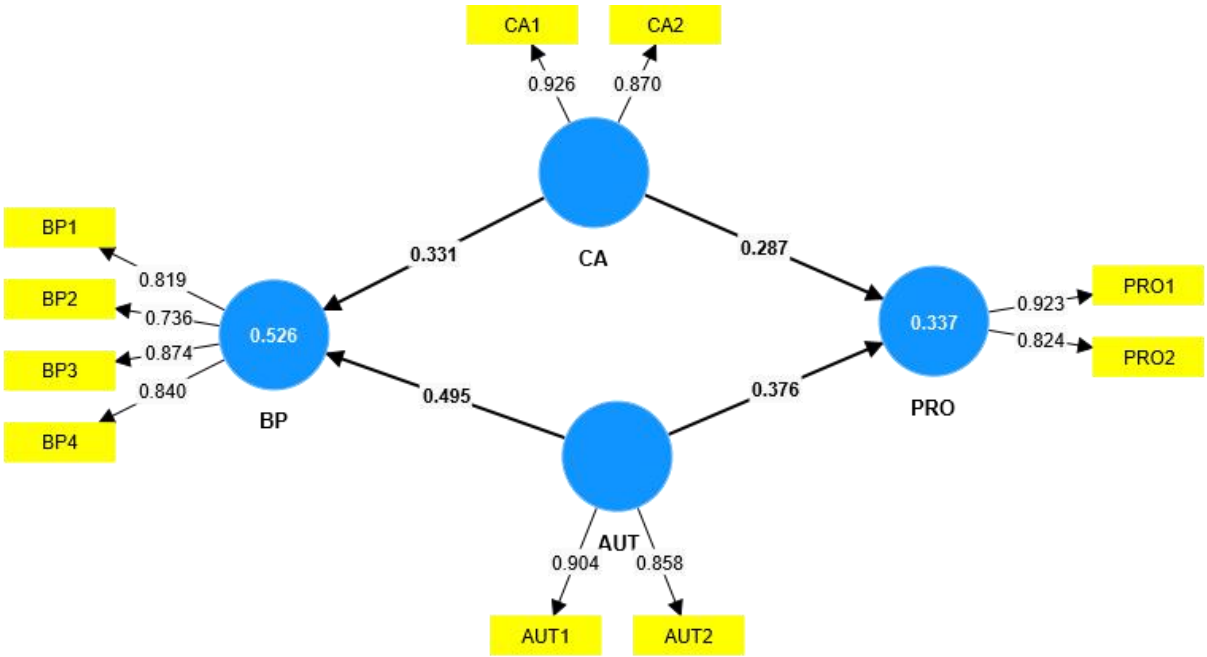
Table 8: R- square

Constructs	R- square	R-square adjusted
BP	0.526	0.523
PRO	0.337	0.334

Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

The study employed a bootstrapping technique with 5,000 samples to test the hypotheses and determine the statistical significance of the path coefficients. Figure 2 displays the structural model analysis. Table 10 illustrates the acceptance of all three of the study's hypotheses. The results of this study showed that competitive aggressiveness significantly improves business performance because the p-value is less than 0.05 and the β value is 0.495 (Table 9). H1 is therefore approved. Table 9 indicates that H2 is likewise supported, as Autonomy has a considerable beneficial impact on business success ($\beta = 0.376$, $p < 0.05$). Similar to Proactiveness, Competitive Aggressiveness has a substantial positive influence because the p-value is less than 0.05 and the β value is 0.331 (Table 9). Thus, H3 is likewise compatible. The favorable impact of autonomy on proactiveness is substantial. According to Table 9, the p-value is less than 0.05 and the β value is 0.287. All of the hypotheses are thus accepted because Competitive Aggressiveness, Autonomy, and Proactiveness all have a significant beneficial impact on BP.

Figure 2: Findings of Structural Model Analysis



Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

Table 9: Result of Hypothesis Testing

Association	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
AUT -> BP	0.495	0.494	0.058	8.484	0.000
AUT-> PRO	0.376	0.375	0.068	5.519	0.000
CA -> BP	0.331	0.334	0.057	5.790	0.000
CA -> PRO	0.287	0.289	0.070	4.123	0.000

Source: SmartPLS 4 (v.4.0.8.6).

Table 10: Decision of Hypothesis

No. of Hypothesis	Statement	Decision
H1	Competitive Aggressiveness has a significant positive influence on business performance.	Accepted
H2	Autonomy has a significant positive influence on business performance.	Accepted
H3	Competitive Aggressiveness has a significant positive influence on Proactiveness.	Accepted
H4	Autonomy has a significant positive influence on Proactiveness.	Accepted

Discussions and Findings

MSMEs played a significant role in the economy by creating jobs and encouraging entrepreneurship, which served as a tool for social change. Providing tailored products through ongoing innovation using the finest available technology and procedures is the main issue MSMEs confront today. (Maheshkar & Soni, 2021) . The results of our study are consistent with the findings of (Dwumah, Amaniampong, Kissiedu, & Boahen, 2024) and (Adams, Quagrainie, & Klobodu, 2017), which support the first hypothesis, which states that competitive aggressiveness significantly improves business success. The second hypothesis Autonomy has a significant positive influence on business performance was in contrast to the findings of Uddin, Bose, and Yousuf (2015). There is no relation found for the third and fourth hypotheses in prior research. The third hypothesis found that Competitive Aggressiveness significantly positively influences Proactiveness. The fourth hypothesis found that Autonomy has a significant positive influence on Proactiveness.

To get insight into numerous concerns surrounding competitive agility, proactiveness, and taxonomy, academicians and policymakers working in MSME service units might benefit from our study.

The integration of major elements identified in the study into government policies and top management strategies for attracting new entrepreneurs can potentially grow the base of MSMEs. Institutions and organizations under government control can create executive training sessions and academic programs to educate entrepreneurs.

It must adapt more quickly to the changes in technology, consumer preferences, and corporate procedures. In this way, MSMEs can enhance their performance by reviewing and implementing best practices. (Maheshkar & Soni, 2021). It is essential to owners of small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs), as most of them strive to gain a competitive edge to increase profitability and company interest Competitive Aggressiveness, Autonomy, and Proactiveness are necessary for both official and unofficial businesses to survive.
Encouraging MSMEs and making rapid progress towards wider economic goals such as employment generation, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development will benefit from the immediate implementation of these policy measures.

Policymakers must establish a supportive atmosphere that encourages initiative and self-governance. By implementing these policy ideas, governments may enhance the agility, innovation, and competitiveness of MSMEs, bolstering their business performance and promoting more sustainable economic development. If these fronts are addressed immediately, MSMEs will be well-equipped to handle the opportunities and challenges of a dynamic market environment. These awards could go towards new product development, market expansion, or research and development (R&D). Start promoting initiatives that highlight the advantages of self-governance and initiative in the MSME industry. Create regional or national awards to honor MSMEs who have excelled in independence and initiative. These accolades could be used as a guide and encourage other companies to implement comparable strategies.

Conclusion, future research direction

The Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprise (MSME) sector has become a vital part of the Indian economy, generating jobs, and exports, and encouraging inclusive growth. The law created a favorable policy environment for the sector's growth and development. Among other things, it defined MSMEs, established a framework for businesses to grow and become more competitive, made sure that credit was available to the industry, cleared the path for the government to give preference to MSMEs goods and services when procuring goods, addressed the problem of late payments, etc. In this study, a subset of MSMEs in Uttar Pradesh was chosen, and in light of this, the current research looks into the impact of competitive aggressiveness and autonomy on business Performance, and proactiveness in selected MSMEs in Uttar Pradesh. Four hypotheses were made, one of which is consistent with the prior research. The second hypothesis is contradicted by prior research. The third and fourth hypotheses were accepted. Since there is no prior research, this relationship is new. However, this study suggests that competitive agreements' autonomy and proactiveness can improve corporate performance. Future research on the elements influencing proactiveness and company performance in other states can utilize the research methodology developed for this study. To further examine, additional variables such as innovation and collaboration might be incorporated into the current model. Furthermore, larger sample sizes can be studied in further study.

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