

## MARKETING STRATEGIES AND AGRIBUSINESSES PERFORMANCE IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA: A MEDIATING ROLE OF PERSUASIVENESS

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigates the mediating role of persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and agribusiness performance in North-Central Nigeria through Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis. Leveraging a sample size of 338 from a population of 2,216 registered agribusinesses across five selected states, a cross-sectional survey design was employed to analyze the relationships between the variables of the study. Aligned with empirical reviews, the research identifies persuasiveness as a significant direct factor influencing agribusiness performance, resonating with broader understandings of persuasion in decision-making contexts. Specifically examining marketing strategies such as product and promotion, the study aligns with existing literature illustrating the positive impact of tailored persuasive approaches in various contexts. On the challenges faced by agribusinesses in North-Central Nigeria, financial constraints emerge as the foremost challenge, impacting 28% of surveyed businesses, echoing findings emphasizing the need for financial support and capital access. Infrastructure issues affect 26% of businesses, highlighting the crucial requirement for reliable transportation and technology. Political instability poses a significant obstacle for over 21% of agribusinesses, underscoring the need for stable governance and supportive policies. Competition is a pervasive challenge for nearly a quarter of businesses, emphasizing the importance of effective strategies. The study calls for addressing financial, infrastructural, political, and competitive challenges to foster an environment conducive to sustainable growth, aligning with previous research on organizational constraints.*

**Keywords:** *Marketing Strategies, Persuasiveness, Agribusiness Performance, Structural Equation Model*

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing strategies can be defined as a technique used by any firm which includes agribusinesses to differentiate itself from rivals and better meet client demands in a specific environment (Adamu, 2020). Marketing strategies encompass a sequence of deliberate actions aimed at attaining a competitive advantage and achieving superior outcomes compared to the norm, through the astute and evidence-based selection of options that confer such an advantage (Adamu, 2020). Utilizing organizational resources, including those of the agricultural sector, is possible via the employment of marketing tactics. To establish, strengthen, protect, and retain a company's competitive edge is the goal of establishing marketing strategies (Abdulrahman, Guangming and Yanqind, 2019). In order to develop effective marketing strategies that target certain groups over an extended period, it is imperative for agribusiness enterprises to maintain a competitive edge. The ability of a company to develop and execute strategies has a significant role in determining its competitiveness in the contemporary business environment. Additionally, market competitiveness may also impact the type of strategy that an organization opts for (Eniola and Olorunleke, 2020).

The mediating role of agripreneur's persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and agribusiness performance in North-Central Nigeria is a crucial aspect to explore. Marketing strategies play a pivotal role in influencing the success of agribusinesses by shaping their market presence, customer engagement, and overall competitiveness. These strategies encompass a range of deliberate actions aimed at gaining a competitive advantage, and their effectiveness can significantly impact agribusiness performance. Understanding the mediating role of agripreneur's persuasiveness implies examining how the ability of agribusiness entrepreneurs to influence and convince stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and investors, contributes to translating marketing strategies into tangible business outcomes. In North-Central Nigeria, where agribusinesses are integral to the economy, the agripreneur's persuasiveness becomes a key link in the performance chain. This persuasiveness is likely to influence how well the marketing strategies are communicated, accepted, and implemented. For instance, a persuasive agripreneur may effectively convey the value proposition of the marketing strategies to potential customers, leading to increased sales and market share. Similarly, persuasiveness can play a role in negotiating favorable terms with suppliers or convincing investors to support and fund strategic initiatives. Exploring this mediating role sheds light on the interpersonal and communication dynamics within agribusinesses, providing insights into the mechanisms through which marketing strategies impact performance and the specific contributions of agripreneurs in the North-Central Nigerian context.

Agribusiness has a lot of promise for lowering high import values and improving the agriculture sector's poor results. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2011), agribusinesses are better able to create jobs in Nigeria. When analysing the role that agribusinesses play in the growth and development of different economies on a local and national scale, it is common to refer to agribusiness as the "engine of growth and catalyst" for socioeconomic transformation (Onwumere, 2008). Additionally, the presence of agriculture in a locality brings with it jobs and other essential facilities. As a result, its installation in rural regions promotes socioeconomic growth. Agribusinesses fulfill the demands of their target markets locally, and they also contribute significantly to improving the trade balance internationally. This is accomplished through exporting agricultural products to foreign countries.

### Statement of Research Problem

Agribusinesses' attempts to make a profit are seriously hampered by the operational environment in which they operate. This resulted in several agricultural firms winding up, which has serious economic repercussions for Nigeria (Ocholi et al., 2018). Hence, there is every cause to be concerned about this scenario in Nigeria, North-central Nigeria in particular. The country's allegedly serious and deteriorating national food security is even more worrisome (Ocholi et al., 2018). In spite of the apparent growth of Agribusinesses in north-central Nigeria today, there is no known research on the mediating role of agripreneur's persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and agribusinesses performance in North-Central Nigeria. Therefore, the researcher believed that, there is a knowledge gap on the area.

The dynamic and evolving nature of marketing strategies within the agribusiness sector poses a challenge to researchers on how to estimate these relationship. Marketing strategies are not static and can adapt to changing market conditions, consumer preferences, and technological advancements. The challenge here is capturing the dynamic nature of marketing strategies and ensuring that the study considers the temporal aspect of strategy implementation. Agripreneurs might modify their strategies over time, and this evolution could influence the mediating role of persuasiveness. The study needs to account for these dynamic nature of marketing strategies and to draw accurate conclusions about their impact on agribusiness performance through persuasiveness. This use of structural equation modelling provides a useful tool in capturing these dynamics as the method examines how persuasiveness mediates the marketing strategies to influence performance of agribusinesses in the study area. Thus, this study becomes significant in filling the observed gap and adding to knowledge, and to existing body of literature.

## Objective of the study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the mediating role of persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

## Research Hypotheses

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Persuasiveness as a mediating variable has no significant effect on the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North Central, Nigeria.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

#### Elaboration Likelihood Theory (ELT),

One influential theory of persuasiveness that has implications for marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses is the Elaboration Likelihood Theory (ELT), propounded by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in 1986. The ELT posits that individuals can process persuasive messages through two distinct routes: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves a deep, thoughtful analysis of the message content, where individuals carefully evaluate the arguments presented. In contrast, the peripheral route relies on superficial cues, such as the communicator's attractiveness or the message's visual appeal.

The link between the Elaboration Likelihood Theory and marketing strategies in agribusinesses lies in understanding how consumers process information and make decisions. When consumers engage in central processing, they are more likely to critically evaluate the marketing messages and strategies employed by agribusinesses. This emphasizes the importance of crafting persuasive and evidence-based marketing content that can withstand rigorous scrutiny. On the other hand, when peripheral processing dominates, agribusinesses may benefit from strategies that enhance peripheral cues, such as appealing packaging or celebrity endorsements.

In terms of agribusiness performance, the ELT suggests that the effectiveness of marketing strategies depends on the level of elaboration likelihood exhibited by the target audience. Agribusinesses need to tailor their persuasive messages based on whether consumers are likely to engage in central or peripheral processing. This underscores the significance of a nuanced and adaptive marketing approach that aligns with consumers' information processing preferences, ultimately influencing the performance of agribusinesses in the market.

#### Contingency Theory

The Contingency Theory, formulated by Professor Fred Fiedler, introduces a perspective that aligns with the dynamic nature of marketing strategies and their impact on agribusiness performance. This theory contends that there is no universally optimal approach to leadership, management, or decision-making in organizations. Instead, the effectiveness of a managerial approach is contingent upon the specific external and internal circumstances at a given time. This implies that the success of marketing strategies in agribusinesses is context-dependent, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

The theory's emphasis on the alignment between a company's strategy and its internal and external aspects is particularly relevant to agribusinesses. It suggests that the correlation between marketing strategies and the specific circumstances of agribusiness operations is crucial for enhanced performance. When there is a lack of alignment, the theory posits a decrease in performance. This aligns with the notion that agribusinesses, operating in a complex and dynamic environment, need to carefully consider the fit between their marketing tactics and the unique characteristics of their industry, market, and organizational structure.

In the context of agribusiness performance, the Contingency Theory supports the idea that there is no universally ideal set of marketing strategies. Instead, the theory encourages agribusinesses to make well-informed choices about the mix of marketing tactics most appropriate for their specific situation. This dynamic approach to marketing strategy alignment with external and internal factors is crucial for optimizing performance in the diverse and evolving landscape of agribusiness.

### Conceptual Framework

#### Marketing Strategies

Eniola and Olorunleke (2020) define marketing strategy as a systematic approach employed by firms to navigate competitive market conditions and forces. The term "traditional marketing strategy" refers to a strategic plan outlining a corporation's approach to achieving marketing objectives within a specific market segment. Marketing strategy plays a pivotal role in a company's success, involving a set of actions to attain goals. Successful marketing requires addressing various factors, including production nature, pricing strategies, transportation methods, and communication approaches about products and services (Abdulrahman, Guangming, and Yanging, 2019).

Historically referred to as the "4Ps," marketing elements included product, price, place, and promotion. The addition of "people" and later "process" and "physical evidence" reflects the evolution of marketing. This strategic approach covers product development, marketing, pricing, distribution, and customer relationship management. Marketing objectives and strategies are detailed in a plan, leading to outcomes like the marketing mix, resource allocation, and target market selection. Effective marketing integration into a comprehensive business plan outlines specific actions to attract and retain consumers, converting potential customers and outperforming competitors in the market landscape (Cross, 2018). The success of marketing is intricately tied to understanding the internal and external environment, emphasizing the importance of better information in strategy creation.

### **Dimensions of Marketing Strategies**

Product Strategy is a crucial component of marketing strategies, emphasizing the significance of product design, technological integration, and differentiation. Quality and dependability play a pivotal role, with consumer satisfaction being a key metric. Strategies like being the first to introduce new features or brand extensions contribute to a competitive advantage. Thorpe and Morgan (2007) highlight various marketing approaches based on product novelty, such as innovative concepts, new product lines, and enhancements, emphasizing the need for alignment with customer preferences. The concept of a product extends beyond tangible goods to include intangible services, and its role is foundational in the marketing mix. The alignment of products with market demands is vital for businesses to effectively reach and retain customers, emphasizing the interconnected factors of product, pricing, location, and promotion.

Promotion Strategy, as asserted by Gupta (2007), underscores the role of effective brand strategy in enhancing consumer recognition, cultivating positive perceptions, and ultimately contributing to market success. Brand recognition is instrumental in outperforming competitors, making brand strategy a significant investment for businesses. Kimball (2002) emphasizes the competitive nature of brand strategy, influencing client loyalty and market dominance. In contrast, Price Strategy, as discussed by Rapert, Linch, and Suter (2008), focuses on the perceived worth of commodities and services and their monetary extent. The pricing component stands out as a crucial driver of profitability in the marketing mix, demanding a comprehensive examination of factors such as costs, demand, consumer effects, and competitor prices. Differential pricing, including price skimming, proves efficacious in situations where diverse customer groups exhibit disparate reactions to pricing, showcasing the intricate nature of pricing strategies in the service sector.

Place Strategy encompasses the geographical position, dispersion, and ecological context of a corporation's operations. Lui, Shah, and Schroeder (2011) emphasize the various components, including distribution methods, environmental elements, spatial form, and functionality. Ambience, a key attribute of the physical environment, involves temperature, color, scent, sound, music, and noise, all contributing to enhancing the consumer's service experience. The marketer must align the setting with the service being offered, considering factors such as layout, functionality, and the overall satisfaction of users. Kotler (2012) notes the diversity of ambiances and the importance of a systematic approach to delivering services. In summary, these marketing strategies collectively underscore the interconnected elements of product, promotion, price, and place to achieve a comprehensive and effective approach to agribusiness performance.

### **Performance**

Performance can be defined by three key factors, commonly referred to as the 3Es: efficacy, efficiency, and economies. According to Cross (2018), performance can be characterized by efficacy, economy, and efficiency. The manner of performance, as denoted by the professor, is commonly known as the "equation of the 3Es." It can be properly articulated as follows: The combination of efficiency, efficacy, and economies contributes to overall performance. The success of an organization is contingent upon its ability to exhibit effectiveness, efficiency, and economy. Hence, it is necessary to integrate these three components, whose amalgamation signifies the level of performance of an entity, in order to achieve success. Efficiency encompasses the utilization of a certain quantity of resources in order to attain optimal outcomes, or alternatively, the reduction of resource consumption to achieve a desired outcome. Economies are characterized by the provision of individuals with cost-effective tools and resources necessary for the efficient completion of tasks. The efficiency of an activity is determined by the extent to which the desired results are achieved or surpassed during its progression.

Profit, a critical metric in assessing a company's performance and future prospects, is analyzed through reports, with the income statement being a key document for external stakeholders. The profit margin, or gross margin, is an initial indicator calculated from the income statement, providing insights into how efficiently a company uses its resources for profit generation. Net income, the final figure on the income statement, offers a comprehensive view of total revenues exceeding expenses, serving as a reliable measure of profitability (Cross, 2018). Sales volume, the quantifiable measure of goods or services sold, is an often-overlooked but crucial metric. Investors perceive sales volume as a reliable indicator of a company's well-being, growth, or contraction trajectory. Monitoring sales volume on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis is essential for a comprehensive analysis of a company's financial progress (Konney, 2021). Market share, representing the proportion of total sales volume a

brand, product, or enterprise has attained, is a pivotal indicator of market competitiveness. It aids in evaluating overall and specific market demand, helping managers understand consumer preferences relative to competitors. Decreases in market share may signify challenges requiring strategic adjustments, while increases indicate potential opportunities (Areinu and Lawal, 2012; Farris et al., 2020). Customer loyalty, fostered through personal communication and quality service, plays a crucial role in traditional markets. Trust is developed through personal relationships, ensuring customers remain loyal to reputable suppliers. Loyalty, with attitudinal and behavioral dimensions, is categorized on a loyalty ladder, with loyal customers considered more desirable. Relationship-building methods are challenging in transactional marketplaces, but advancements in technology have facilitated relationship marketing in various sectors (Praveen and Tani, 2015; Francis and Mathenge, 2015).

### **Agribusiness**

Agribusiness is viewed as an extension of agriculture. Agribusiness is related to agriculture directly or indirectly. Agribusiness, according to Mehta (2012), is any sector of the economy that engages in operations that change agricultural products into various forms that increase the value of the products and make them suitable for use as food, feed, fiber, fuel, or other industrial raw materials. According to the FAO/UNIDO/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) 2008 study, agribusiness includes input industries, services, non-food sectors (leather, textile, furniture, and other wood products), and food sectors (processing of staple foodstuffs and export crops). Agribusiness is engaged in tasks like processing, preserving, and preparing agricultural products for consumption both in the intermediate and final stages. Its growth can aid in stabilizing agriculture, increase its profitability, and generate job possibilities at both the production and marketing stages (Mehta, 2012). Numerous factors, including rising incomes, population growth, the rate of urbanization, and the volume of sold agricultural goods, have long had an impact on agro-processing activities. On the other side, the gradual transition away from field crop production and toward related industries like animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry, etc. has led to the diversification of the agro-industrialization's economic foundation.

### **Agripreneur**

An agripreneur, like any other entrepreneur, seeks out new business opportunities, gathers the necessary resources, takes measured risks, and ultimately succeeds financially, but in the agricultural sector. They'll look for openings in the farming or allied industries, then jump in as farmers, wholesalers, or even B2C agents. In addition to these core talents, running an agribusiness successfully also calls for expertise in areas such as strategic planning, market research, equipment management, production, sales, marketing, finance, and customer service. Agribusiness primarily offers four distinct services, including crop advice, sales of agricultural products, introductions to new markets, and assistance in obtaining loans. As a direct outcome of agribusiness, sustainable agriculture has evolved. Sustainable agriculture is "a holistic, systems-oriented approach to farming that focuses on the interrelationships of social, economic, and environmental processes" (Mukhopadhyay & Mukhopadhyay, 2020). Agribusiness is already present in several sectors, such as dairy, sericulture, goat and rabbit farming, horticulture, fisheries, prawn farming, sheep farming, vegetable cultivation, nursery farming and farm forestry.

### **Agripreneur Persuasiveness**

Agripreneur persuasiveness is the capacity to persuade consumers to make purchases as well as to build a solid network of connections eager to support the expansion of ideas or organizations (Pullman, 2013). Being a successful agripreneur requires the ability to persuade partners that your strategy is sound and persuade potential clients that the solution is the best fit for them (Howard, 2011). Although it is a skill that can be mastered, persuasion's results cannot be entirely foreseen. Business settings, and especially those involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), place a premium on the ability to persuade. Effective task completion for entrepreneurs and SMBs depends critically on their ability to convince customers to buy their wares (Staniewski and Awnik, 2016).

## **Review of Related Empirical Studies**

### **Moderating role of Agripreneur's Persuasiveness in the relationship between Marketing Strategy and Performance.**

Tobia, Christoph, Andreas and Alexander (2019) evaluated the role of persuasion in corporate idea contests. The findings of the study indicate that the presence of limited content has an impact on the decision-making process of assessors, as it hinders their ability to intervene in their initial instinctive conclusion. The more limited the availability of the submitted concept, the greater the impact of non-relevant factors on idea selection, such as the characteristics of the person proposing the idea, the message itself, and the community involved.

John, Sela and Shregyas (2018) investigated the mediating role of persuasiveness on mood and personal relevance effects of Gain-framed and loss-framed health message. The findings of the study indicate that the influence of messages framing on two outcome variables is moderated by persuasion. The findings of the study indicate that those who were exposed to a loss-framed message demonstrated greater levels of message assessment and

intention scores. However, this effect was observed solely when the message was personally relevant to the participants and when they were experiencing a happy mood.

Woo, Jun and Robert (2016) investigated impact of social media reviews on restaurant performance: the moderating role of persuasion. The primary objective of this research was to examine the impact of social media evaluations and operating efficiency metrics on the financial success of restaurants. Additionally, this study aimed to assess the potential moderating effect of persuasion in this relationship. The study's findings indicate that there is a noteworthy positive correlation between the quantity of online reviews generated by customers and the performance of restaurants. The study's findings indicate that the overall rating provided by customers, the number of guests served each labour hour, and the quality of food delivered by the restaurant are significant factors that impact restaurant success. The significance of the moderating influence of restaurant performance has been established.

Colin and Jan (2014) examined the impact of persuasive messages on IAT performance. The findings of the research indicate that persuasive messages had a more pronounced effect on an implicit association test when the source possessed a high level of beauty. However, as hypothesized, the impact of a source with high likeability on the test results was not statistically significant. These findings align with the results of several research that have mostly focused on the persuasion of explicit evaluations. The study, though, verified that implicit judgments can be altered through direct persuasive appeals and offers novel insights into the circumstances in which persuasion of implicit evaluations might occur.

### **Constraints Affecting Performance of Agribusinesses**

Zaid, Roshaiza, Rosliza, and wan (2018) investigated the impact of financial accessibility constraints and government regulations on organizational performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). The research was conducted in the country of Jordan, with a sample size consisting of 291 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from Jordan. A total of 159 valid questionnaires were collected, indicating a response rate of 54.6%. The results indicate that limitations in financial accessibility have a detrimental impact on organizational performance, whereas the association between government laws and organizational performance is not statistically significant. The findings of the study suggest that it is imperative for the Government of Jordan to enact new legislation in order to enhance performance and further alleviate any needless constraints that could potentially impact small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Drzewiecka and Roczmevska (2018) examined the relationship between perceived leadership styles and organizational constraints. A total of 235 employees participated in an assessment of their immediate supervisors, evaluating their leadership styles based on Goleman's typology. The typology consists of six leadership styles: authoritative, democratic, affiliative, coaching, coercive, and pacesetter. The assessment took into consideration the organizational restrictions encountered by the employees in their workplace. The findings of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed a significant inverse association between authoritative and watching leadership styles and levels of organizational restrictions. The significance of these findings is particularly pronounced during periods of economic turmoil, as effective leadership practices have the potential to mitigate the resulting impacts.

Gene and Richard (2012) investigate personnel constraints in public organization. The researchers conducted an empirical study to examine the hypothesis that greater management flexibility is associated with enhanced organizational performance. The study utilized data obtained from English Local Government bodies. The findings derived from the multiple regression analysis reveal that the presence of challenges in dismissing underperforming managers has a detrimental impact on organizational performance. However, the difficulties in rewarding competent managers does not exhibit any significant influence. The findings also suggest that attitudes towards personnel constraints differ based on the organizational level and managerial positions. Frontline managers generally perceive more constraints overall, whereas senior managers' perceptions of constraints are more intricately connected to organizational performance, albeit in some unforeseen manners. The implications of these findings suggest that the restrictions faced by employees have different effects on organizational performance.

Mahmoud, Thomas, Adela, Muttawuth and ling (2022) examined the constraints of organizational culture and performance management process. This paper presents an empirical investigation of the constraints imposed by organizational culture on the design of performance management processes, including goal setting, performance rating and feedback, and performance development. The research elucidated the potential impact of cultural value disparities on the efficacy of performance ratings and feedback in the context of performance management, as well as on strategies for enhancing employee development. The presence of control systems, such as matrix management, might potentially impede staff performance. This is mostly due to challenges arising from the cultural differences between the management operating outside the country of operation and the off-shore subsidiary's company.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The research objectives were accomplished through a survey research design, aligning with the recommendation of Iheanacho & Iheanacho (2012) for studying the impact of marketing strategies on North-Central Nigerian agribusinesses. Utilizing systematic data collection methods such as well-structured questionnaires or interviews, this approach spans wide geographical areas, offering a comprehensive understanding of marketing practices and performance factors within the agribusiness sector. The study focuses on the North Central region, a geopolitical zone in Nigeria, comprising six states—Benue, Kwara, Niger, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Niger. With diverse religious practices and a strategic geographical location surrounded by the River Niger and the River Benue, the region has an estimated population of 29,715,722 people as of 2021, based on the National Population Commission's forecast. The population of the study consists of 2,216 registered agribusinesses from Benue, Nassarawa, Kogi, Kwara, and Niger States, particularly those involved in granulated cassava processing and registered members of their Local Unions/Associations, SMEDAN, and State Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Industry, and Investment.

For sampling, a multi-stage approach was employed. In the first stage, five states—Benue, Nassarawa, Kwara, Kogi, and Niger—were purposively selected based on the intensity of granulated cassava processing activities. In the second stage, stratified random sampling was applied, considering the number of granulated cassava processing agribusinesses after stratification of the population using registers of members kept by Unions/Association Leaders, SMEDAN, and the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Industry, and Investment. The questionnaire was administered to 338 respondents across the five selected states. Taro Yamane Formula was employed to arrive at the sample size of 332 (from the total population of 2,216 agribusinesses). Statistical formula devised by Taro Yamane is as follows:

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

Where;

n = Sample Size

N = Finite

e = Level of Significance(or limit of tolerance error)

1 = Unity (i.e constant)

The sample size for cassava granules processing agribusinesses is determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{2,216}{1+2,216 (0.05)^2} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$= 338$$

Thus, respondents were selected using Bohley’s Formula for allocating the samples to different states as follows: 80 respondents from Benue State, 70 from Nassarawa State, 75 from Kogi State, 65 from Kwara and 48 from Niger State. These respondents were randomly selected in the states under study.

**Instrument of Data Collection**

Primary data was used for the study. The primary data was obtained through the use of well-structured and self-administered questionnaire on the respondents based on the objectives of the study.

**Validity of the Instrument**

The data obtained from any research instrument, be it a questionnaire or a test, should address the research questions and hypotheses when conducting research. When repeated under similar conditions, the data obtained in such a situation should produce results that are comparable. Consequently, a valid instrument measures what it is designed to measure. Validity is the capacity of a measuring instrument to generate trustworthy results and measure what it purports to measure. The primary objective of the pilot study in this study is to collect data from a subset of the target population in order to assess the instrument's validity and reliability for use in a larger-scale investigation. [If there is no list of SMEs, pilot test role of establishing the population must be included here] This study took into account the two predominant forms of validity, namely content validity and construct validity. Content validity was assessed by obtaining input from supervisors and experts in the study field. Construct validity was evaluated using a factor analysis tool, which included statistical measures such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Barlett's Test of Sphericity among others. In order to ascertain the reliability and effectiveness of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using a subset of the overall sample which is one third of the total sample of 338. This involved administering 101 questionnaires to a specific group of respondents within the study area. The findings from this pilot study were then utilized to perform exploratory factor analysis, as presented in Tables 1-4.

**Table 1: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.957
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	31.848
	Df	28
	Sig.	.028

Source: Author's Computation Using SPSS 26.0

Following the completion of the pilot test, the input variables utilized in this study were submitted to explanatory factor analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to examine the alignment between the constructs as defined in the literature and the components generated from the factor analysis. In the realm of evaluating the soundness of a research instrument, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are frequently employed as means of appraising the appropriateness of data for factor analysis, a critical component of establishing construct validity. The dataset exhibits strong suitability for factor analysis as indicated by the high Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, with a value of .957, close to the optimal score of 1. This signifies a robust adequacy of sampling for factor analysis, implying substantial common variance among variables—critical for factor analysis and thereby construct validity assessment. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity validates the presence of relationships among variables, confirming that the correlation matrix significantly deviates from an identity matrix, substantiating the appropriateness of factor analysis on the dataset (Approx. Chi-Square = 31.848, df = 28, Sig. = .028). The result of validity test using principal component analysis indicates that the instrument is valid.

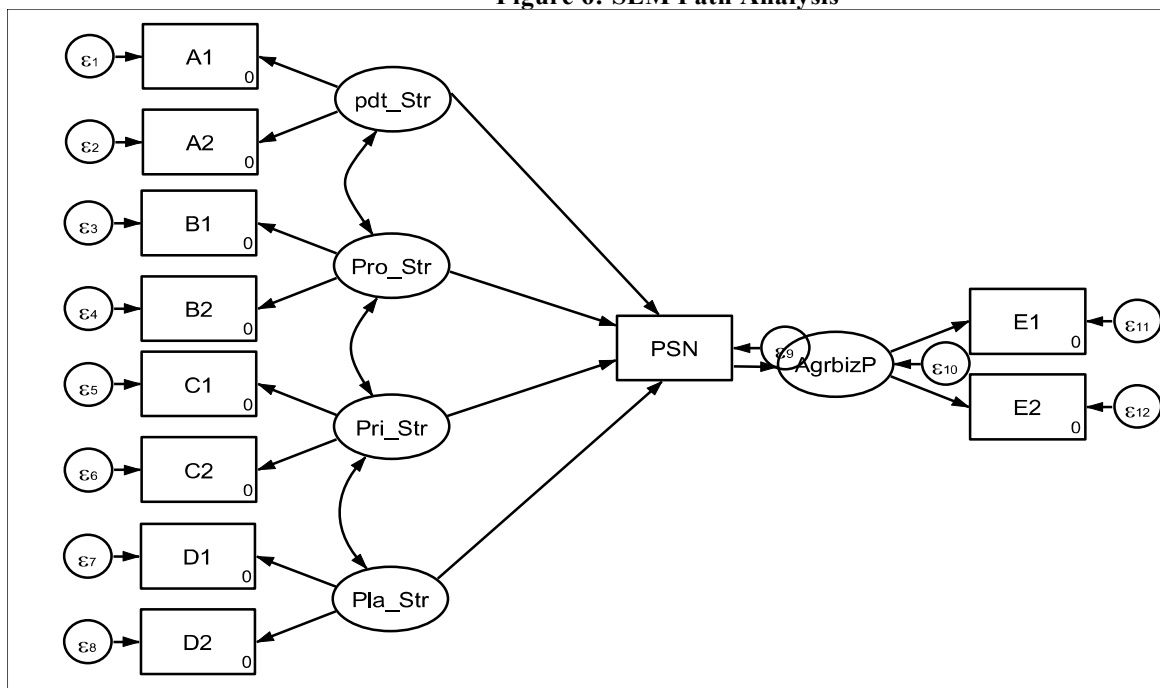
The study instrument's overall dependability, determined by averaging the Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables, is 0.833. This finding suggests a strong internal consistency or reliability of the research instrument as a whole. The Cronbach's Alpha statistics indicate that each variable in the study instrument exhibits a satisfactory level of internal consistency or reliability, ranging from good to high. The instrument demonstrates a high level of overall reliability, indicating that the variables collectively offer a dependable measure of their separate constructs within the study's context.

**Method of Data Collection**

The study utilized primary data. These data were collected using structured questionnaire. Enumerators were employed for data collection in each of the state. A well-structured and self-administered questionnaire containing closed questions was developed and used for gathering data from agribusinesses that are into cassava granules processing.

**Structural Equation Model Specification**

**Figure 6: SEM Path Analysis**



Source: Researchers' conceptualization using STATA Result, Version 13.0  
**Figure 6: Research Model**



The Structural Equation Model (SEM) is typically shown using a path diagram, as illustrated above, to depict the associations among the independent variable, the mediating variable, and the dependent variable in the research study. Figure 3 illustrates a route analysis, which is a methodology employed to assess the impact of several variables on a predetermined conclusion. A path diagram is a visual depiction that portrays the interconnections among variables inside a statistical model, commonly employed in the context of structural equation modeling. The model shows that four independent variable of product strategy (pdt\_str), promotion strategy (pro\_str), price strategy (pri\_str) and place strategy (pla\_str) were mediated by persuasiveness (PSN) to influence agribusiness performance (AgrbizP). The path diagram contains variables, paths, residuals and covariances. It depicts the nexus between the independent variables, mediating variables and the dependent variable of the study.

**Method of analytical technique**

The study adopted the use of structural equation model as basis for data analysis. structural equation model analysis was used to achieve objective one, while descriptive statistics was used to achieve objective two.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the result of the structural equation model which examines the mediating role of persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central, Nigeria. It also contain the result of the descriptive statistics on the constraints affecting the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central Nigeria.

**Objective One: The mediating role of persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central, Nigeria.**

**Table 17: Structural Equation Model Result**

	OIM		z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
	Coef.	Std. Err.				
Structural						
PSN <-						
pdt_str	.0916601	.001796	51.04	0.000	.0881401	.0951802
pro_str	1	(constrained)				
pri_str	.4485826	14.58252	0.03	0.975	-28.13263	29.0298
pla_str	.5960674	13.21191	0.05	0.964	-25.29879	26.49093
_cons	57.51323	4.571366	12.58	0.000	48.55352	66.47294
AgrbizP <-						
PSN	.2421727	.0047451	51.04	0.000	.2328725	.251473

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) results focus on understanding the relationships between distinct marketing strategies (product, promotion, price, and place strategies) and persuasiveness (PSN) as a mediating variable, and their impact on the performance of agribusinesses (AgrbizP) in the North-Central region of Nigeria. The following is the path. Here's an interpretation of the results and their implications:

**PSN <- pdt\_str (Persuasiveness <- Product Strategy)**

The estimated coefficient for the effect of product strategy (pdt\_str) on persuasiveness (PSN) is approximately 0.0916601. The standard error is very small (0.001796) and the effect is statistically significant (p<0.05). A positive and significant effect of the product strategy on persuasiveness (PSN) implies that enhancing the product strategy can positively influence the persuasiveness of marketing efforts in the context of agribusinesses. This suggests that improvements in product-related marketing strategies may lead to increased persuasiveness, potentially aiding in better performance.

**PSN <- pro\_str (Persuasiveness <- Promotion Strategy)**

The coefficient for the effect of promotion strategy (pro\_str) on persuasiveness (PSN) is constrained to 1, indicating a specific relationship has been pre-specified. However, specific statistical details such as the standard error, z-score, p-value, and confidence intervals are not available as a result of the constraint. The pre-specified relationship of a coefficient being constrained to 1 suggests a predefined or theoretical belief that the promotion strategy has a direct, significant, and positive effect on persuasiveness (PSN). It implies a strong theoretical basis for assuming this direct relationship. There is indeed a strong theoretical and conceptual belief in marketing and

communication studies that the promotion strategy significantly affects persuasiveness. This belief is rooted in marketing theory and practice, particularly in the context of the marketing mix, which includes product, price, place, and promotion strategies (often referred to as the "4Ps"). In the context of the 4Ps, promotion is a crucial component that encompasses various activities aimed at promoting and communicating the value of a product or service to potential customers. These activities often include advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing, and personal selling. Promotion is often integrated with other marketing strategies (e.g., product features, pricing) to create a cohesive and persuasive marketing approach. The synergy among various strategies, including promotion, is believed to enhance overall persuasiveness.

**PSN <- pri\_str (Persuasiveness <- Price Strategy)**

The estimated coefficient for the effect of price strategy (pri\_str) on persuasiveness (PSN) is approximately 0.4485826. The standard error is relatively high (14.58252), and the effect is not statistically significant as indicated by the high p-value (0.975) and a wide confidence interval ranging from approximately -28.13263 to 29.0298. The lack of statistical significance and the wide confidence interval suggest that the effect of price strategy on persuasiveness (PSN) is inconclusive in this analysis. Further research and analysis may be necessary to determine whether and how price strategy affects persuasiveness in the context of agribusinesses.

**PSN <- pla\_str (Persuasiveness <- Place Strategy)**

The estimated coefficient for the effect of place strategy (pla\_str) on persuasiveness (PSN) is approximately 0.5960674. The standard error is relatively high (13.21191), and the effect is not statistically significant as indicated by the high p-value (0.964) and a wide confidence interval ranging from approximately -25.29879 to 26.49093. Similar to the price strategy, the lack of statistical significance and the wide confidence interval suggest that the effect of place strategy on persuasiveness (PSN) is inconclusive in this analysis. Further research and analysis are needed to understand the relationship between place strategy and persuasiveness in the context of agribusinesses.

**AgribizP<- PSN (Agribusiness Performance <- Persuasiveness)**

The estimated coefficient for the effect of persuasiveness (PSN) on agribusiness performance (AgribizP) is approximately 0.2421727. The effect is highly statistically significant, with a low p-value (0.000) and a narrow confidence interval ranging from approximately 0.2328725 to 0.251473. The strong and statistically significant positive effect of persuasiveness (PSN) on agribusiness performance (AgribizP) implies that higher persuasiveness in marketing efforts positively contributes to better performance of agribusinesses in the North-Central region of Nigeria. This SEM analysis highlights the significant impact of persuasiveness (PSN) on agribusiness performance (AgribizP) and provides insights into the influence of specific marketing strategies (product, promotion, price, and place) on persuasiveness. However, further investigation is needed to understand the direct and indirect relationships between price and place strategies and persuasiveness. The findings underscore the importance of enhancing product strategies and leveraging persuasiveness to improve agribusiness performance in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

Direct effects

	OIM		z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
	Coef.	Std. Err.				
Structural						
AgribizP <-						
PSN	.2421727	.0047451	51.04	0.000	.2328725	.251473
pdt_str	0	(no path)				
pro_str	0	(no path)				
pri_str	0	(no path)				
pla_str	0	(no path)				

The direct effect looks at the effects of all the independent variables on the dependent variable of Agricultural business performance (AgribizP).

**AgribizP<- PSN**

The estimated coefficient for the direct effect of "PSN" (persuasiveness) on "AgribizP" is approximately 0.2421727. The standard error associated with this estimate is approximately 0.0047451. The z-score is 51.04, indicating a highly statistically significant relationship (p-value < 0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this

coefficient ranges from approximately 0.2328725 to 0.251473. This suggests a strong positive direct effect of persuasiveness on the performance of agribusinesses in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

**No Direct Effects from Marketing Strategies**

The estimated coefficients for the marketing strategies, namely product, promotion, pricing, and site, are found to be zero. Additionally, the standard errors associated with these coefficients are denoted as "no path." This finding suggests that the marketing methods employed do not have a significant impact on the performance of agribusinesses (referred to as AgrbizP) within the framework of the structural equation model (SEM). The results obtained from the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis reveal a statistically significant and favorable direct impact of persuasiveness (PSN) on the performance of agribusinesses operating in the North-Central region of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the analysis conducted in this study did not identify any direct impacts of the individual marketing techniques, including product, promotion, price, and site, on the success of agribusiness within the framework of this particular model. The provided information possesses significant value in comprehending the specific aspects that exert a direct influence on the performance of agribusiness. Moreover, it can serve as a basis for devising effective strategies aimed at enhancing performance within the North-Central region of Nigeria. Nevertheless, in order to further explore the interplay between the factors under investigation, it is crucial to analyze the indirect effect as it offers valuable insights into the topic at hand.

Indirect effects

	OIM				
	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
Structural					
AgrbizP <-					
PSN	.396969	.000777851	.040	0.000	.0381724 .0412214
pdt_str	.1048822	.0020551	51.04	0.000	.1008543 .10891
pro_str	.2421727	.0047451	51.04	0.000	.2328725 .251473
pri_str	.1086345	3.53149	0.03	0.975	-6.812958 7.030227
pla_str	.1443513	3.199565	0.05	0.964	-6.12668 6.415383

**Indirect Effects via Marketing Strategies:**

**a. AgrbizP<- pdt\_str:** The estimated coefficient for the indirect effect of "pdt\_str" (product strategy) on "AgrbizP" via PSN is approximately 0.1048822. The standard error associated with this estimate is approximately 0.0020551. The z-score is 51.04, indicating a highly statistically significant relationship (p-value < 0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this coefficient ranges from approximately 0.1008543 to 0.10891.

**b. AgrbizP<- pro\_str:** The estimated coefficient for the indirect effect of "pro\_str" (promotion strategy) on "AgrbizP" via PSN is approximately 0.2421727. The standard error associated with this estimate is approximately 0.0047451. The z-score is 51.04, indicating a highly statistically significant relationship (p-value < 0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this coefficient ranges from approximately 0.2328725 to 0.251473.

**c. AgrbizP<- pri\_str:** The estimated coefficient for the indirect effect of "pri\_str" (price strategy) on "AgrbizP" via PSN is approximately 0.1086345. The standard error associated with this estimate is relatively high (3.53149), and the z-score is close to zero, indicating no statistical significance. The 95% confidence interval is wide, ranging from approximately -6.812958 to 7.030227.

**d. AgrbizP<- pla\_str:** The estimated coefficient for the indirect effect of "pla\_str" (place strategy) on "AgrbizP" via PSN is approximately 0.1443513. The standard error associated with this estimate is relatively high (3.199565), and the z-score is close to zero, indicating no statistical significance. The 95% confidence interval is wide, ranging from approximately -6.12668 to 6.415383.

**Implications of Findings**

**Positive Indirect Effects via Marketing Strategies:** The indirect effects of the marketing strategies (product and promotion) via PSN on agribusiness performance are statistically significant and positive. This suggests that utilizing effective product and promotion strategies that enhance persuasiveness (PSN) can have a beneficial impact on agribusiness performance in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

**Insignificant Indirect Effects via Price and Place Strategies:** The indirect effects of price and place strategies via PSN on agribusiness performance are not statistically significant, as indicated by wide confidence intervals and z-scores close to zero. This suggests that the influence of price and place strategies on agribusiness performance may not be primarily mediated through persuasiveness (PSN) in this specific context. From the result

of the study, the mechanism through which price and place strategies may impact agribusiness performance might be beyond the scope of variables of this study. Additionally, considering the unique context of the North-Central region of Nigeria is crucial for tailoring marketing strategies to maximize agribusiness performance.

Total effects

	OIM		z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
	Coef.	Std. Err.				
Structural						
AgrbizP <-						
PSN	.2421727	.0047451	51.04	0.000	.2328725	.251473
pdt_str	.1048822	.0020551	51.04	0.000	.1008543	.10891
pro_str	.2421727	.0047451	51.04	0.000	.2328725	.251473
pri_str	.1086345	3.53149	0.03	0.975	-6.812958	7.030227
pla_str	.1443513	3.199565	0.05	0.964	-6.12668	6.415383

The SEM Total Effects reports the paths between AgrbizP<- PSN, AgrbizP<- pdt\_str, AgrbizP<- pro\_str, AgrbizP<- pri\_str and AgrbizP<- pla\_str

**AgrbizP<- PSN**

The estimated coefficient for the total effect of "PSN" (persuasiveness) on "AgrbizP" is approximately 0.2421727. The standard error associated with this estimate is approximately 0.0047451. The z-score is 51.04, indicating a highly statistically significant relationship (p-value < 0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this coefficient ranges from approximately 0.2328725 to 0.251473.

**AgrbizP<- pdt\_str**

The estimated coefficient for the total effect of "pdt\_str" (product strategy) on "AgrbizP" is approximately 0.1048822. The standard error associated with this estimate is approximately 0.0020551. The z-score is 51.04, indicating a highly statistically significant relationship (p-value < 0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this coefficient ranges from approximately 0.1008543 to 0.10891.

**AgrbizP<- pro\_str**

The estimated coefficient for the total effect of "pro\_str" (promotion strategy) on "AgrbizP" is approximately 0.2421727. The standard error associated with this estimate is approximately 0.0047451. The z-score is 51.04, indicating a highly statistically significant relationship (p-value < 0.001). The 95% confidence interval for this coefficient ranges from approximately 0.2328725 to 0.251473.

**AgrbizP<- pri\_str**

The estimated coefficient for the total effect of "pri\_str" (price strategy) on "AgrbizP" is approximately 0.1086345. The standard error associated with this estimate is relatively high (3.53149), and the z-score is close to zero, indicating no statistical significance. The 95% confidence interval is wide, ranging from approximately -6.812958 to 7.030227.

**AgrbizP<- pla\_str**

The estimated coefficient for the total effect of "pla\_str" (place strategy) on "AgrbizP" is approximately 0.1443513. The standard error associated with this estimate is relatively high (3.199565), and the z-score is close to zero, indicating no statistical significance. The 95% confidence interval is wide, ranging from approximately -6.12668 to 6.415383.

**Implications of Findings**

**Significant Total Effects via PSN, pdt\_str, and pro\_str**

The total effects of persuasiveness (PSN), product strategy (pdt\_str), and promotion strategy (pro\_str) on agribusiness performance are statistically significant and positive. Enhancing persuasiveness, optimizing product strategies, and implementing effective promotion strategies can significantly improve agribusiness performance in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

**Insignificant Total Effects via Price and Place Strategies**

The total effects of price and place strategies on agribusiness performance are insignificant as indicated by wide confidence intervals and z-scores close to zero. Further investigation is needed to determine the relationship and influence of price and place strategies on agribusiness performance in this specific context. The aforementioned findings underscore the significance of taking into account the factors of persuasiveness, product strategies, and promotion techniques in order to improve the performance of agriculture in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

However, a comprehensive understanding of the effects of pricing and place strategies necessitates additional investigation and may entail consideration of contextual intricacies that are unique to the study area.

**Hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Persuasiveness as a mediating variable has no significant effect on the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North Central, Nigeria. Using the probability value of the estimate, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, we accept that at 5% level of significance, persuasiveness, the mediating variable has a significant effect on the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central, Nigeria. This is because the estimated coefficient for the effect of persuasiveness (PSN) on agribusiness performance (AgrbizP) is approximately 0.2421727, with a low p-value (0.000) and a narrow confidence interval ranging from approximately 0.2328725 to 0.251473.

**Table 18: Model Fitness**

. estat gof, stats(all)

Fit statistic	Value	Description
Likelihood ratio		
chi2_ms(18)	1163.187	model vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
chi2_bs(21)	59.592	baseline vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
Population error		
RMSEA	0.032	Root mean squared error of approximation
90% CI, lower bound	0.014	
upper bound	.	
pclose	0.000	Probability RMSEA <= 0.05
Information criteria		
AIC	3181.184	Akaike's information criterion
BIC	3228.572	Bayesian information criterion
Baseline comparison		
CFI	0.853	Comparative fit index
TLI	0.794	Tucker-Lewis index
Size of residuals		
SRMR	0.632	Standardized root mean squared residual
CD	1.000	Coefficient of determination

Source: STATA Result, Version 13.0

**Model Fitness**

The model fitness criteria are presented in Table 18. There are four metrics that can be employed to assess the adequacy of a model: the LR test of model fitness, the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). According to Browne and Cudeck (1993), it is recommended that the likelihood ratio (LR) should exceed a threshold of 0.05. A root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.05 is indicative of a favorable fit, while a value between 0.05 and 0.08 suggests a moderate fit. Conversely, values beyond 0.10 indicate an inadequate fit between the postulated model and the observed data. However, Hu and Bentler (1999: 26, 96–100) argue that an RMSEA value of 0.06 could potentially indicate a satisfactory level of fit. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is a statistical measure used to assess the goodness of fit of a model. It is a dimensionless index that ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values suggesting a more favorable fit between the observed data and the hypothesized model. The criterion most frequently utilized to determine a satisfactory fit is CFI 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; West et al., 2012). The Tucker-Lewis Index, as proposed by Tucker and Lewis in 1973, serves as a measure for quantifying the degree to which relative misfit is reduced per degree of freedom. The analysis findings suggest that the hypothesis regarding the fitness of the model is not supported, as evidenced by the rejection of the model fitness hypothesis (RMSEA = 0.032). This suggests that the model meets this criterion for viability. West et al., (2012) stipulate that the CFI & TLI value should be near to 1 as an additional criterion for model fitness. The research indicates that CFI = 0.853 and TLI = 0.794. These statistics indicate that the study's model is accurate and that policy recommendations based on the study's estimates can be relied upon.

**Objective two: The constraints affecting the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central Nigeria**

**Table 16: Constraint affecting Performance of Agribusinesses**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
What are the constraints affecting your business performance?		
Financial Constraint	94	27.81%
Infrastructural Constraint	87	25.73%
Political Instability	73	21.60%
Competition	84	24.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 16 presents a comprehensive overview of the key constraints affecting the performance of agribusinesses, offering valuable insights into the challenges faced by this sector. Financial constraint emerges as the most prevalent challenge, impacting nearly 28% of the surveyed agribusinesses. This highlights the acute need for financial support and resources within the agribusiness sector, underscoring the importance of access to capital, credit, and funding opportunities to sustain and grow agricultural ventures. Infrastructural constraints closely follow, affecting around 26% of the businesses. This speaks to the vital necessity for reliable and efficient infrastructure, encompassing transportation, utilities, and technology, to bolster operational capabilities and enhance productivity within the agribusiness domain.

Political instability is another significant obstacle, impacting over 21% of agribusinesses. This sheds light on the need for political stability and favorable government policies to create an enabling environment for agribusiness growth and investment. Furthermore, competition is a pervasive challenge affecting nearly a quarter of the surveyed businesses, emphasizing the need for effective strategies to navigate a competitive landscape and carve out a niche in the market. Overall, this table succinctly portrays the multifaceted constraints faced by agribusinesses, urging stakeholders to address financial, infrastructural, political, and competitive challenges to foster a more conducive environment for sustainable growth in the agribusiness sector.

**Discussion of Results**

**Mediating role of persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central, Nigeria**

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis focusing on the mediating role of persuasiveness (PSN) in the relationship between marketing strategies and agribusiness performance in North-Central Nigeria aligns with the insights from the empirical review on the subject matter. The empirical studies highlighted the pervasive impact of persuasion in various contexts, emphasizing how it shapes decision-making and outcomes (Woo, Jun and Robert, 2016). The study's identification of persuasiveness as a significant direct factor impacting agribusiness performance is in harmony with the broader understanding of persuasion discussed in the empirical review (Woo, Tobia, Christoph, Andreas and Alexander (2019). The emphasis on the influence of specific marketing strategies like product and promotion strategies resonates with the reviewed studies, which illustrated how tailored persuasive approaches in different contexts can impact outcomes positively.

Within the realm of empirical research, there exists a body of studies that have explored the moderating influence of persuasiveness in diverse contexts, including health communication, product placements, and online reviews. These investigations have laid the groundwork for the present study, which aims to examine the role of persuasiveness specifically within the agribusiness domain. In general, the results of the study support the existing body of literature on persuasion by highlighting its significant role in influencing outcomes in various fields. This further emphasizes the relevance of persuasion in the specific context of agribusiness performance in North-Central Nigeria.

**The constraints affecting the performance of agribusinesses in North-Central Nigeria**

The foremost challenge identified is financial constraint, impacting nearly 28% of the surveyed agribusinesses. This aligns with the findings of Gene and Richard (2012) and Zaid et al. (2018), emphasizing the critical need for financial support, capital access, and funding opportunities to sustain and expand agricultural ventures. Infrastructure emerges as the second most prevalent constraint, affecting approximately 26% of the businesses. This underscores the essential requirement for reliable transportation, utilities, and technology to bolster operational capabilities and enhance productivity in the agribusiness domain. Political instability is a significant obstacle for over 21% of agribusinesses, highlighting the necessity for political stability and supportive government policies to create an enabling environment for growth and investment. Additionally, competition poses a pervasive challenge for nearly a quarter of the surveyed businesses, emphasizing the importance of

effective strategies to navigate a competitive landscape. The study presents an understanding of the multifaceted constraints faced by agribusinesses, urging stakeholders to address financial, infrastructural, political, and competitive challenges to foster a conducive environment for sustainable growth. This is consistent with the findings of Drzewiecka and Roczewska (2018), who observed similar constraints in their study of organizational constraints.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's exploration of the mediating role of persuasiveness in the relationship between marketing strategies and agribusiness performance in North-Central Nigeria aligns seamlessly with insights derived from the empirical review. The pervasive impact of persuasion, as highlighted in various contexts, underscores its significance in shaping decision-making and outcomes. Identifying persuasiveness as a substantial direct factor influencing agribusiness performance is consistent with the broader understanding of persuasion, emphasizing its relevance in the specific context of North-Central Nigeria's agribusiness landscape. The study resonates with existing literature, particularly in its emphasis on the influence of specific marketing strategies, such as product and promotion, showcasing how tailored persuasive approaches can positively impact outcomes. Turning to the constraints faced by agribusinesses in North-Central Nigeria, financial limitations emerge as the foremost challenge, echoing previous research and emphasizing the critical need for financial support and capital access. Infrastructure issues and political instability follow, highlighting the essential requirements for reliable transportation, utilities, political stability, and supportive government policies to create an enabling environment. Additionally, competition poses a significant challenge, underscoring the importance of effective strategies to navigate the competitive landscape. The study offers a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted constraints faced by agribusinesses, urging stakeholders to address financial, infrastructural, political, and competitive challenges to foster a conducive environment for sustainable growth.

### Recommendations

Based on the specific results of the study on the effect of marketing strategies on agribusiness performance in North-Central Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

- i. It is recommended that management of agribusiness in the study area should focus on enhancing persuasiveness (PSN) as it has a significant direct effect on agribusiness performance. Developing strategies to boost persuasive communication in marketing efforts is essential in bringing about higher performance.
- ii. The government should place a great emphasis on provision of financial support emphasizing the critical need for financial support and capital access to entrepreneurs in agribusiness. Supportive government policies to create an enabling environment for growth and investment will help in improving the performance of Agribusinesses in the study area.

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