








Entrepreneurial Marketing in Small and Medium Enterprises: A Conceptual Reappraisal of Theory, Practice, and the Boundaries of the 4Ps Framework

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial marketing has developed as a unique area that bridges entrepreneurship and marketing, but its foundational ideas are often unclear. Traditional marketing models rely on structured planning, stable market conditions, and formal research. In contrast, small and medium-sized businesses frequently face uncertainty, limited resources, and shifting customer expectations. This paper revisits the theoretical foundations of entrepreneurial marketing, clarifying its main aspects and examining its connection to traditional marketing ideas. Special attention is given to the classic 4Ps framework in the context of modern small businesses, where decision-making is usually informal, intuitive, and driven by opportunity. Drawing on recent studies from entrepreneurship, strategic marketing, and innovation, the paper suggests a model that views entrepreneurial marketing as a process influenced by recognizing opportunities, using resources effectively, building customer relationships, and experimenting adaptively. This model builds on existing research by highlighting the relationship between how entrepreneurs think, market changes, and the abilities of firms. The paper ends with suggestions for developing theory and future research paths.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurial marketing, Small and medium enterprises, 4Ps, Opportunity recognition, Innovation, Resource leverage.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in entrepreneurial marketing (EM) has intensified over the past two decades as scholars increasingly recognise that marketing practices in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) rarely conform to the structured approaches taught in classical marketing theory. Unlike large corporations, SMEs typically operate with constrained resources, compressed decision-making cycles and a reliance on the owner's intuition. These conditions foster an environment where opportunity recognition, experimentation and relationship building often matter more than formalised market analysis (Breit & Volkmann, 2024). The acceleration of shorter product life cycles, digital convergence and heightened market turbulence has further reinforced the relevance of EM approaches, particularly in contexts where agility and responsiveness are critical for survival (Worthington & Eggers, 2023).

Despite this growing scholarly attention, conceptual clarity remains limited. EM is frequently described in terms of innovativeness, proactivity and risk management, yet the mechanisms that connect these behaviours to marketing outcomes remain under-theorised. Recent studies highlight that EM is not merely a set of tactics but a strategic orientation that integrates entrepreneurial behaviour with marketing logic (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). This orientation emphasises value creation through opportunity-driven actions, often blurring the boundaries between marketing and entrepreneurship. However, the relationship between EM and the traditional 4Ps framework continues to generate debate. While some scholars argue that SMEs must

adapt the 4Ps to reflect their resource-constrained realities, others contend that EM represents a paradigm shift that transcends conventional marketing models (Damer et al., 2023).

The digital transformation of markets has added further complexity to these debates. SMEs increasingly rely on digital marketing capabilities to reach customers, build real-time interactions and sustain competitiveness in post-pandemic recovery contexts (Zahara et al., 2023). EM in this digital era is characterised by improvisation, experimentation and the leveraging of social media platforms to compensate for limited budgets. Yet, questions remain about how these practices align with or diverge from established marketing frameworks, and whether they can be systematically theorised to guide SME strategy. Recent empirical work suggests that EM orientation positively influences business performance, with competitive aggressiveness acting as a mediating factor (Kakeesh et al., 2024). This finding underscores the need to move beyond descriptive accounts and toward explanatory models that capture the causal pathways linking entrepreneurial behaviours to marketing outcomes.

At the same time, global economic shocks and heightened uncertainty have made EM more salient. The OECD (2023) notes that SMEs face disproportionate challenges in navigating volatility, yet their capacity for EM often enables resilience and adaptability. This resilience is not only operational but also strategic, as SMEs use EM to reposition

themselves in turbulent markets. Conceptual reviews emphasise that EM contributes to business sustainability by embedding opportunity-driven practices within broader strategic frameworks (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). Nevertheless, the field remains fragmented, with scholars calling for integrative models that reconcile entrepreneurial orientation with marketing theory (Breit & Volkmann, 2024).

This paper revisits these debates by synthesising contemporary literature and proposing an updated conceptual understanding of EM suited to the realities of small enterprise environments. Critically engaging with recent empirical and conceptual contributions, it seeks to advance theoretical clarity and highlight the strategic implications of EM for SMEs operating in increasingly complex and uncertain markets.

ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING AS A DISTINCT CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN

Origins of the Field

EM emerged from the recognition that standard marketing models were insufficient for explaining how small firms develop markets, build customer relationships and create value with limited resources. Traditional frameworks, such as the 4Ps, were designed for large organisations with established structures, predictable environments and significant marketing budgets. In contrast, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often operate under conditions of uncertainty, resource scarcity and rapid change. Early scholarship positioned EM as a behavioural orientation rooted in innovativeness, customer intimacy, proactive opportunity seeking and flexibility (Hills & Hultman, 2018). This orientation reflected the entrepreneurial imperative to act quickly, seize opportunities and adapt to shifting market conditions.

More recent perspectives emphasise effectuation, learning through action and value co-creation under uncertainty. Effectuation theory, for instance, highlights how entrepreneurs make decisions based on available means rather than predictive planning, thereby aligning closely with EM practices (Read et al., 2017). Scholars have also underscored the importance of improvisation and experimentation, where marketing strategies evolve through iterative engagement with customers and stakeholders rather than through formalised planning (Morrish & Jones, 2020). Across these strands of scholarship, a consistent theme appears: EM is not simply “marketing for small firms”, but a qualitatively different way of approaching the market. It is shaped by decision-making logics, risk attitudes and opportunity-driven behaviour that distinguish entrepreneurial contexts from established corporations (Kraus et al., 2021).

Core Characteristics

Although definitions differ, four characteristics appear consistently across contemporary literature and provide a conceptual foundation for EM.

Opportunity orientation: Entrepreneurial firms identify and pursue emerging opportunities, often before formal market structures develop. This proactive stance enables them to exploit niches and create new markets, positioning opportunity recognition as a central driver of EM (Kraus et al., 2021).

Resource leverage: Small firms compensate for limited resources by using networks, partnerships and creative problem solving to stretch or recombine what they have. Resource leveraging reflects the entrepreneurial capacity to transform constraints into advantages, often through bricolage and strategic alliances (Mori & Terzani, 2022).

Customer engagement and intimacy: Close interaction with customers allows entrepreneurs to learn directly from the market and adapt offerings quickly. This intimacy fosters co-creation of value and strengthens relational capital, which is particularly vital in contexts where formal market research is infeasible (Jones et al., 2019).

Adaptive experimentation: Instead of long-term plans, entrepreneurs frequently test ideas through trial-and-error processes and make rapid adjustments based on feedback. Adaptive experimentation reflects a learning orientation that privileges speed, responsiveness and iterative development over rigid planning (Sarasvathy, 2020).

Together, these characteristics form a marketing approach that is fluid rather than procedural, and interactive rather than hierarchical. EM thus represents a distinct conceptual domain that integrates entrepreneurial logics with marketing practices, offering a framework for understanding how SMEs navigate uncertainty, create value and sustain competitiveness in dynamic environments.

REVISITING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING AND TRADITIONAL MARKETING

Conceptual Tensions

The traditional 4Ps framework emphasises product, price, place, and promotion as essential parts of marketing strategy. Although it is widely used and effective in teaching, this framework assumes a certain level of stability and predictability. It presumes that firms can conduct structured market analysis, segment customers, and develop strategies in a relatively orderly environment. However, small firms rarely operate under such conditions. Scholars increasingly argue that the 4Ps framework was originally

designed for mass-production markets and corporate planning contexts, making it less suitable for the fluid, opportunity-driven environments in which small firms function. Its foundational assumptions, such as predictable consumer behaviour and access to formal market research, contrast with the realities faced by small and medium-sized enterprises, where decision-making is often informal and driven by quick experimentation (Hills & Hultman, 2018). Entrepreneurial decisions often come before formal planning and rely more on intuitive judgements than structured analysis (Chaston & Sadler-Smith, 2016). This difference naturally creates tension between two viewpoints: traditional marketing (TM) is structured, analytical, and planning-focused, while EM is emergent, intuitive, and driven by opportunities.

The tension is not merely operational but epistemological. TM reflects a managerial logic rooted in control, forecasting, and optimisation. EM, by contrast, reflects a logic of effectuation, improvisation, and opportunity recognition under uncertainty (Saravathy, 2020). This distinction highlights why SMEs often find the 4Ps insufficient for capturing the dynamic processes through which they create and sustain value. Scholars have argued that the rigidity of traditional frameworks can constrain entrepreneurial firms, which thrive on flexibility and rapid adaptation (Morrish & Jones, 2020). Thus, the conceptual tension lies in the mismatch between prescriptive models and the lived realities of entrepreneurial practice.

Complementarity Rather Than Conflict

Recent indicates that these two perspectives do not need to be viewed as opposites. Instead, they can be seen as complementary layers of marketing practice. The 4Ps remain relevant because they offer a language for expressing decisions once an opportunity has been identified, but they do not explain how that opportunity recognition takes place or how small firms navigate uncertainty (Kraus et al., 2021). In this context, EM comes before and influences the interpretation of the 4Ps, rather than vice versa. This sequence links EM with strategic marketing theory by positioning it as a higher-level orientation directing how firms identify and interpret market opportunities. This perspective also aligns EM with the dynamic capabilities view, which emphasises the importance of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring opportunities in rapidly evolving environments (Teece, 2018).

Opportunity recognition guides product design, experimentation informs pricing, relationship networks shape distribution, and customer intimacy influences promotional style. This complementarity reflects a layered approach: EM provides the strategic orientation, while TM

offers the tactical vocabulary. For example, SMEs may use EM to identify a niche market through informal networks, then apply the 4Ps to structure their offering once the opportunity is validated (Breit & Volkmann, 2024). Similarly, digital transformation has shown that EM practices such as rapid experimentation and customer co-creation can be integrated with TM tools to enhance competitiveness. As customers increasingly participate in value creation through digital platforms, the meaning of the 4Ps begins to shift. Product becomes a shared experience, place becomes a digital access point, price becomes more flexible, and promotion becomes an interactive conversation with customers. EM is naturally suited to this shift because it encourages ongoing engagement with customers rather than one-way communication (Zahara et al., 2023).

Reframing the relationship as complementary rather than conflicting, scholars emphasise the potential for integrative models that capture both the emergent and structured dimensions of marketing. This perspective enhances theoretical clarity and offers practical guidance for SMEs aiming to balance agility with strategic coherence. EM thus enriches traditional frameworks by embedding them within a broader logic of opportunity-driven action, while the 4Ps continue to serve as a communicative and pedagogical tool for structuring decisions once opportunities are pursued.

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL INTEGRATING EM WITH THE 4PS

This paper proposes a conceptual model that positions EM as the initiating and shaping force behind marketing activity in small and medium enterprises. Rather than treating EM as a replacement for TM frameworks, the model conceptualises it as a dynamic system that governs how established tools such as the 4Ps are interpreted, configured, and enacted under conditions of uncertainty and resource constraint. In this sense, EM operates as an enabling logic that embeds opportunity seeking, flexibility, and experimentation within the tactical vocabulary of TM.

Drawing on prior scholarship, the model integrates key dimensions of EM, including opportunity recognition, resource leveraging, innovation, and calculated risk management, and situates them within the practical decision spaces of product, price, place, and promotion (Chooset & Sukhabot, 2025). Adapted conceptually from recent studies (Zahara et al., 2023; Hanaysha et al., 2024; Chooset & Sukhabot, 2025), the model depicts EM as an adaptive process through which SMEs actively navigate volatile markets rather than passively responding to them. Four interlinked processes structure this integration of entrepreneurial logics with the tactical vocabulary of the 4Ps (Figure 1).

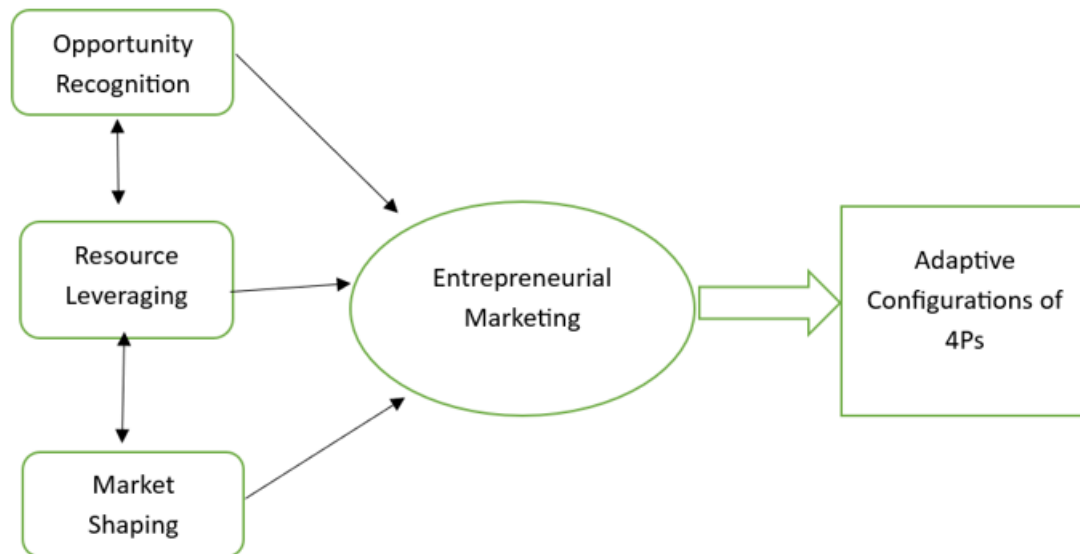


Figure 1: Conceptual model integrating EM with the 4Ps
Opportunity Recognition

Opportunity recognition serves as the primary driver of EM activity within the model. Entrepreneurs continually scan their environments to identify emerging gaps, unmet needs, and shifting patterns of demand. This process reflects the ability to perceive possibilities under uncertainty and to conceptualise potential value before it becomes visible to competitors (Baron & Tang, 2022). From a marketing perspective, opportunity recognition precedes formal product design, segmentation, or positioning decisions, providing the strategic impulse that directs how the 4Ps are subsequently configured.

Importantly, opportunity recognition is not a purely analytical task. It is shaped by the entrepreneur's cognitive frameworks, prior experience, and embeddedness within social and professional networks. Entrepreneurs frequently identify opportunities overlooked by others because they rely on intuitive pattern recognition and informal market sensing rather than structured market research alone (Mitchell et al., 2022). In SME contexts, where access to formal data may be limited, this cognitive and relational dimension of opportunity recognition becomes especially significant. As a result, opportunity recognition functions as the entrepreneurial lens through which TM tools are interpreted and mobilised.

Resource Leverage

Once opportunities are identified, resource leverage enables SMEs to act upon them despite structural constraints. Resource leverage refers to the creative mobilisation, recombination, and extension of both tangible and intangible assets through practices such as bricolage, partnerships, and network-based collaboration (Mori & Terzani, 2022). Rather than relying solely on owned

resources, SMEs exploit social capital, shared platforms, and external relationships to maximise outcomes from limited inputs.

Within the conceptual model, resource leverage directly shapes how the 4Ps are enacted. Pricing strategies may be influenced by supplier relationships or collaborative agreements, distribution may be extended through digital platforms and informal channels, and promotional activity may rely on low-cost social media, co-branding, or community engagement. In this way, EM reframes the 4Ps not as fixed strategic categories but as flexible resources that can be leveraged adaptively in response to constraints and opportunities.

Market Shaping Through Experimentation

Market shaping represents the process through which entrepreneurial firms actively influence market structures rather than merely adapting to them. Through experimentation, SMEs test assumptions, refine offerings, and learn from direct engagement with customers and stakeholders. Feedback loops play a central role in this process, enabling rapid iteration and continuous adjustment of marketing decisions (Breit & Volkmann, 2024).

This experimental orientation reflects the resilience, agility, and proactiveness that characterise EM in dynamic environments. By experimenting with different configurations of the 4Ps, SMEs challenge conventional marketing practices and actively co-create value with their markets. Within the model, market shaping amplifies the effects of opportunity recognition and resource leverage, transforming them into sustained marketing actions that evolve over time.

Adaptive Configuration of the 4Ps

The adaptive configuration of the 4Ps represents the outcome of the preceding processes and captures how EM is operationalised in practice. Rather than treating product, price, place, and promotion as static decision variables, SMEs configure them iteratively in response to opportunity recognition, resource constraints, and market feedback (Kraus et al., 2021). Product offerings may evolve through customer co-creation, pricing may be adjusted through experimentation, distribution may rely on network-based channels, and promotion may emphasise relational and personalised engagement.

In this model, the 4Ps retain their relevance as a structured marketing vocabulary, but their application is fundamentally reshaped by entrepreneurial logic. EM therefore enhances, rather than replaces, traditional frameworks by embedding them within a broader process of opportunity-driven action, innovation, and adaptive learning.

Integrative Implications of the Model

This integrated model recognises that EM is not a replacement for TM frameworks, but a dynamic system that shapes how those frameworks are applied within small enterprise contexts. Entrepreneurial behaviour initiates marketing action through opportunity recognition, while resource leverage enables firms to act despite structural constraints. The adaptive configuration of the 4Ps provides organisational structure, and market shaping through experimentation refines marketing decisions through continuous learning and feedback. These processes demonstrate how EM enhances conventional frameworks through a broader logic of opportunity-driven action. The model positions EM as a distinct yet complementary domain that clarifies how small and medium enterprises navigate turbulent, resource-limited environments while retaining the practical utility and organising value of the 4Ps.

Implications for Theory and Future Research

EM scholarship continues to develop, yet several conceptual and empirical gaps persist. While the field has made notable progress in defining the uniqueness of EM practices, more research is required to enhance theoretical clarity and improve empirical generalisability across various contexts. A key area involves understanding how entrepreneurs balance intuition with structured analysis. Entrepreneurial decision-making is often seen as intuitive and emergent, but many entrepreneurs also engage in strategic reflection and data-informed judgement. The relationship between intuitive heuristics and analytical reasoning remains under-theorised, especially in marketing contexts where quick responsiveness must coexist with

strategic coherence (Hills & Hultman, 2018; Baron & Tang, 2022).

Another significant aspect relates to how resource constraints influence marketing decisions across various industries. While resource leveraging is a fundamental principle of EM, its expressions differ greatly depending on sectoral dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and customer expectations. Comparative studies across industries such as manufacturing, creative services, and health technology could shed light on how resource limitations shape the configuration of the 4Ps and the implementation of opportunity-driven strategies (Mori & Terzani, 2022). Such research would also clarify whether EM practices are universally applicable or contextually dependent.

The impact of technological change on EM behaviours presents another fertile domain for inquiry. Digital transformation has altered how SMEs engage with customers, gather feedback and experiment with offerings. Comparative studies between digital-native and traditional SMEs could reveal how technological capabilities mediate EM orientation, particularly in relation to adaptive experimentation and customer intimacy (Zahara et al., 2023). Moreover, the rise of AI-enabled tools, platform economies and data analytics invites new questions about how entrepreneurial firms navigate digital ecosystems while maintaining agility and relational depth.

There is also scope to develop more precise theoretical models that examine how entrepreneurial cognition influences market shaping activities. Entrepreneurial cognition, defined as the mental models, scripts and heuristics that guide opportunity recognition and decision-making, plays a central role in shaping marketing behaviour under uncertainty (Mitchell et al., 2022). Yet its integration into marketing theory remains limited. Future research could explore how cognitive frames influence the interpretation of market signals, the configuration of marketing tactics and the co-creation of value with customers. Such models would enrich the conceptual foundations of EM and offer explanatory power beyond descriptive accounts.

Finally, longitudinal and process-oriented studies are needed to capture the evolution of EM practices over time. Most existing research relies on cross-sectional designs, which obscure the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial learning, adaptation and market shaping. By tracing how EM unfolds across different phases of venture development, scholars can better understand its strategic role in sustaining competitiveness and navigating turbulence.

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Another important avenue concerns the role of resource constraints in shaping marketing decisions across industries. While resource leveraging is a core tenet of EM, its manifestations vary significantly depending on sectoral dynamics, regulatory environments and customer expectations. Comparative studies across industries, such as manufacturing, creative services and health technology, could illuminate how resource constraints influence the configuration of the 4Ps and the enactment of opportunity-driven strategies (Mori & Terzani, 2022). Such research would also help clarify whether EM practices are universally applicable or contextually contingent.

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PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SME LEADERS AND POLICY-MAKERS

The conceptual integration of EM with the 4Ps carries significant implications for both SME leaders and policy-makers seeking to foster innovation, resilience and sustainable growth in small enterprise contexts.

Implications for SME Leaders

For SME leaders, the model underscores the strategic value of EM as a dynamic capability rather than a reactive tactic. Foregrounding opportunity recognition, resource leverage, and adaptive experimentation, leaders can move beyond ad hoc marketing efforts and cultivate a coherent strategic orientation aligned with their firm's growth trajectory. This requires a shift in mindset, from viewing marketing as a cost centre to recognising it as a driver of opportunity creation and market shaping (Breit & Volkmann, 2024).

Practically, SME leaders should invest in cultivating customer intimacy and feedback mechanisms that enable real-time learning. This includes leveraging digital platforms not only for promotion but also for iterative engagement and co-creation. The adaptive configuration of the 4Ps allows leaders to tailor offerings, pricing, and communication strategies in response to evolving market signals, thereby enhancing agility and responsiveness (Zahara et al., 2023). Moreover, resource leveraging through networks, partnerships, and informal alliances can compensate for financial constraints, enabling SMEs to scale their marketing impact without proportional increases in expenditure (Mori & Terzani, 2022).

Leadership development programmes should incorporate EM principles, equipping SME owners and managers with tools to navigate uncertainty, experiment strategically, and interpret market feedback. This is particularly relevant in post-pandemic recovery contexts, where resilience and adaptability are critical for long-term viability.

Recent research highlights EM as a proactive, dynamic skill that influences how SMEs deploy the 4Ps. Intentional capability building, such as networking, digital literacy, and customer co-creation, has been shown to be more important for SME marketing success than sporadic advertising campaigns (Sipos et al., 2025). Digital platforms allow SMEs to incorporate customers into product and service design, effectively transforming product and advertising decisions into ongoing co-creation processes that influence pricing and distribution. Findings also show that marketing capability development is often accomplished through external partnerships and connections, which amplify reach

and adjust for resource constraints (Gliga & Evers, 2023, 2025).

Additionally, digital transformation activities, particularly the use of social media and other digital tools, have been linked to improved marketing outcomes and increased organisational responsiveness in volatile markets (Mladenova, 2024; Gliga & Evers, 2025). Because they enable SME owners and managers to navigate uncertainty, experiment strategically, and interpret market feedback in real time, leadership development programmes that integrate entrepreneurial strategies with digital marketing skills are crucial (Afolabi et al., 2024; Mladenova, 2024).

Implications for Policy-Makers

For policy-makers, the model highlights the need to support marketing innovation in SMEs as a strategic priority. Traditional support mechanisms often emphasise finance, operations, or export readiness, while marketing capabilities remain under-addressed. Yet EM plays a pivotal role in enabling SMEs to identify opportunities, engage customers, and compete effectively in dynamic environments (OECD, 2023).

Policy interventions should therefore include targeted support for marketing experimentation, digital capability development, and network-building. This could involve subsidised access to digital tools, training in customer engagement strategies, and platforms for peer learning. Funding schemes should also recognise the iterative nature of EM, allowing for flexible resource use and staged development of marketing initiatives.

Regulatory frameworks must accommodate the informal and emergent character of EM. Policies that encourage data sharing, reduce barriers to collaboration, and support micro-innovation can enhance SMEs' ability to shape markets and respond to customer needs. In addition, policy-makers should invest in longitudinal research and sector-specific studies to better understand how EM contributes to SME competitiveness and regional economic development.

Recent policy evaluations confirm that supporting marketing innovation in SMEs should be a strategic goal alongside conventional financial, operational, and export-oriented initiatives. Evidence shows that SMEs' competitiveness, resilience, and adaptability are enhanced by targeted support for digital capability development, marketing experimentation, and network-building efforts (OECD, 2023; Yuwono et al., 2024). Because EM strategies are iterative and emergent, flexible funding programmes and regulatory frameworks that promote data sharing, lower collaboration barriers, and foster micro-innovation are especially crucial (Al Barwari et al., 2025). Empirical findings further indicate that contextual factors, such as regional innovation ecosystems and resource availability,

shape SMEs' capacity to use digital platforms, develop marketing strategies, and co-create value with customers. These challenges can be addressed through well-designed governmental interventions.

Aligning strategic support with the realities of EM enables both SME leaders and policy-makers to foster a more resilient, innovative, and opportunity-driven enterprise ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurial marketing (EM) represents a meaningful departure from the assumptions of traditional marketing (TM) theory. Rather than emphasising planning, control, and predictive analysis, it foregrounds opportunity seeking, resource leverage, adaptive experimentation, and close customer relationships. These practices reflect the lived realities of small firms operating in uncertain, resource-constrained environments, contexts where agility, intuition, and relational depth often matter more than formalised strategy. Revisiting the conceptual foundations of EM and exploring its intersections with the 4Ps framework, this paper contributes to the ongoing refinement of EM as a distinct academic domain.

Theoretically, the paper advances a layered understanding of marketing practice in SMEs. It positions entrepreneurial behaviour as the initiating force behind marketing activities, shaping how traditional tools such as the 4Ps are interpreted and enacted. The proposed conceptual model integrates entrepreneurial logics with tactical decision-making, offering a framework that captures both the emergent and structured dimensions of marketing. This synthesis addresses longstanding tensions in the literature and provides a foundation for future research into the cognitive, contextual, and strategic dynamics of EM.

Practically, the paper offers actionable insights for SME leaders and policy-makers. For SME leaders, it highlights the strategic value of EM as a dynamic capability that enhances responsiveness, customer intimacy, and opportunity-driven growth. For policy-makers, it underscores the need to support marketing innovation in small firms through targeted interventions, flexible funding mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives. Aligning support structures with the realities of EM enables stakeholders to foster a more resilient and innovative enterprise ecosystem.

Small firms continue to shape markets in ways that challenge established theory. Their practices demand conceptual frameworks that reflect the fluidity, creativity, and relational orientation of EM. This paper responds to that need by offering a theoretically rich and practically relevant synthesis, one that recognises EM not as a deviation from tradition, but as a vital and evolving domain within the broader landscape of marketing scholarship. Looking

ahead, SMEs must view marketing as a dynamic, opportunity-driven capacity rather than a cost centre. Firm-level resilience, competitiveness, and sustainable growth will increasingly depend on EM operationalised through adaptive configurations of the 4Ps, networking, and digital engagement, supported by policy frameworks that acknowledge the adaptability, interpersonal relationships, and iterative nature of these practices.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The conception and design of the study were undertaken by H.F. The development of the theoretical framework was carried out by H.F., O.A., and K.O.O., who also contributed to the primary drafting of the manuscript. All authors collaborated in drafting, revising, and approving the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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