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Assessing Entrepreneurial Growth Mindset among Small Businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria

Okeke, Chidimma Odira
Department of Business Administration, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria
Email: oc.okeke@coou.edu.ng
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5083-2984

ABSTRACT: This study assessed entrepreneurial growth mindset among small business owners in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria. Entrepreneurial growth mindset is conceived as the belief held by entrepreneurs that business competencies, innovative capacity, and entrepreneurial success can be developed through effort, continuous learning, adaptability, and resilience, rather than being fixed traits. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the effect of learning orientation on business adaptability, determine the effect of innovation orientation on business competitiveness, assess the effect of entrepreneurial resilience on business survival, examine the effect of opportunity recognition on business growth, and evaluate the effect of adaptability on business sustainability among small businesses in Onitsha. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised One Thousand, Five Hundred and Twenty (1,520) registered small business owners operating within the major commercial clusters of Onitsha, Anambra State. A sample size of 317 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, and a structured questionnaire anchored on a five-point Likert scale was administered using a multistage sampling technique combining purposive and simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The findings revealed that learning orientation had a significant positive effect on business adaptability ($\beta = 0.487$, $p = 0.000$); innovation orientation had a significant positive effect on business competitiveness ($\beta = 0.532$, $p = 0.000$); entrepreneurial resilience had a significant positive effect on business survival ($\beta = 0.601$, $p = 0.000$); opportunity recognition had a significant positive effect on business growth ($\beta = 0.478$, $p = 0.000$); and adaptability had a significant positive effect on business sustainability ($\beta = 0.549$, $p = 0.000$). The study concluded that entrepreneurial growth mindset is a critical determinant of small business growth, competitiveness, survival, and sustainability in Onitsha. It was recommended, among others, that government agency, business associations, and financial institutions should institutionalize entrepreneurial mindset development programmes, mentorship schemes, and growth-oriented training for small business operators in Anambra State and Nigeria generally.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Growth Mindset, Small Businesses, Learning Orientation, Innovation Orientation, Resilience, Opportunity Recognition, Adaptability, Onitsha, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Small businesses constitute a critical component of Nigeria's economy, contributing significantly to employment generation, poverty reduction, wealth creation, and innovation diffusion (Obiorah, Okeke, & Williams, 2026). Despite this

importance, small businesses across Nigeria, including those in Onitsha, Anambra State, continue to grapple with challenges such as intense market competition, limited access to finance, infrastructural deficits, and rapid technological change. Overcoming these challenges requires more than technical and managerial competence; it demands a growth-oriented psychological disposition that enables entrepreneurs to learn continuously, innovate, adapt, and persist in the face of adversity.

The concept of growth mindset originates from the work of the psychologist Carol Dweck, who distinguished between a fixed mindset, in which individuals believe abilities are static and unchangeable, and a growth mindset, in which individuals believe abilities can be developed through dedication, effort, and learning (Dweck, 2006; Dweck & Yeager, 2019). Within the entrepreneurship domain, an entrepreneurial growth mindset encourages continuous learning, innovation, opportunity recognition, resilience, and adaptability, all of which are believed to enhance business performance and long-term survival (Neneh, 2022).

Onitsha, one of the largest commercial cities in West Africa, hosts thousands of small-scale enterprises spanning wholesale trade, retailing, manufacturing, logistics, and services. The intensely competitive and rapidly evolving nature of commerce in Onitsha makes entrepreneurial growth mindset particularly relevant to business survival and growth in the city (Akra, Okeke, & Williams, 2026). Entrepreneurship development interventions, including training programmes, have been found to significantly influence the performance of small and medium enterprises in other parts of the country (Ogwashi, Gbenga, & Ngige, 2025), suggesting that the cognitive and behavioural orientation of entrepreneurs is equally important alongside financial and structural support.

While existing studies have examined entrepreneurial mindset and its relationship with business performance, profitability, and sustainability among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in various contexts, empirical evidence specifically assessing the entrepreneurial growth mindset of small business owners in Onitsha, Anambra State, remains scarce. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by assessing the dimensions of entrepreneurial growth mindset, namely learning orientation, innovation orientation, resilience, opportunity recognition, and adaptability, and their effects on business adaptability, competitiveness, survival, growth, and sustainability respectively.

2. Statement of the Problem

Many small businesses in Onitsha exhibit low growth rates, poor scalability, limited innovative capacity, and comparatively high failure rates despite operating within one of Nigeria's most vibrant commercial environments. While scholarly attention has largely focused on structural and economic constraints such as inadequate finance, poor infrastructure, and unfavourable macroeconomic conditions, considerably less emphasis has been placed on the psychological and cognitive dimensions of entrepreneurship, particularly the mindset with which small business owners approach learning, innovation, setbacks, opportunities, and change.

A fixed mindset may constrain entrepreneurs' willingness to embrace new skills, adopt innovations, and exploit emerging opportunities, thereby limiting business growth and sustainability. Conversely, entrepreneurs who possess a growth mindset are theorised to be better positioned to overcome challenges, identify opportunities, and sustain business growth over time (Bandura, 1997; Baron, 2014). Similar cognitive and behavioural orientations have been shown to matter in related entrepreneurial contexts, including women entrepreneurship and poverty reduction (Obiorah, Okeke, & Williams,

2026) and youth entrepreneurship development (Akra, Okeke, & Williams, 2026), yet the specific prevalence and dimensions of entrepreneurial growth mindset among small business operators in Onitsha have not been sufficiently investigated. This knowledge gap constitutes the problem which this study seeks to address.

3. Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to assess entrepreneurial growth mindset among small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the effect of learning orientation on business adaptability of small businesses in Onitsha.
ii. Determine the effect of innovation orientation on business competitiveness of small businesses in Onitsha.
iii. Assess the effect of entrepreneurial resilience on business survival of small businesses in Onitsha.
iv. Examine the effect of opportunity recognition on business growth of small businesses in Onitsha.
v. Evaluate the effect of adaptability on business sustainability of small businesses in Onitsha.

4. Research Questions

i. What is the effect of learning orientation on business adaptability of small businesses in Onitsha?
ii. What is the effect of innovation orientation on business competitiveness of small businesses in Onitsha?
iii. What is the effect of entrepreneurial resilience on business survival of small businesses in Onitsha?
iv. What is the effect of opportunity recognition on business growth of small businesses in Onitsha?
v. What is the effect of adaptability on business sustainability of small businesses in Onitsha?

5. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

i. Ho1: Learning orientation has no significant effect on business adaptability of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.
ii. Ho2: Innovation orientation has no significant effect on business competitiveness of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.
iii. Ho3: Entrepreneurial resilience has no significant effect on business survival of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.
iv. Ho4: Opportunity recognition has no significant effect on business growth of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.
v. Ho5: Adaptability has no significant effect on business sustainability of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Entrepreneurial Growth Mindset

Entrepreneurial growth mindset refers to an entrepreneur's belief that business competencies, leadership abilities, innovative capacity, and entrepreneurial success can be developed through effort, learning, experience, and persistence, rather than being fixed and unchangeable traits (Dweck, 2006). Growth-minded entrepreneurs perceive challenges as learning opportunities rather than as insurmountable obstacles; they embrace experimentation, welcome constructive feedback, and continuously seek self-improvement (Dweck & Yeager, 2019). Such entrepreneurs are more inclined toward opportunity-seeking behaviour, strategic adaptation, and long-term commitment to business goals, all of which are essential for coping with the highly dynamic and competitive commercial environment of markets such as Onitsha (Nwosu & Eze, 2023).

2.2 Small Business Growth and Performance

Small business growth and performance is typically conceptualised in terms of increases in sales turnover, market share, profitability, employee strength, and the capacity of the enterprise to survive and expand over time (Okonkwo & Chukwuma, 2022).

Entrepreneurship development, whether through training, mentorship, or access to finance, has consistently been linked with improved SME performance across different sectors and regions of Nigeria (Ogwashi, Gbenga, & Ngige, 2025). Similarly, the sustainability and performance of manufacturing and other small-scale enterprises have been found to be significantly influenced by economic and managerial factors that are internal to the firm and its operators, including the entrepreneur's orientation toward learning and adaptability (Gbenga & Okeke, 2025).

2.3 Learning Orientation

Learning orientation reflects an entrepreneur's willingness and capacity to acquire new knowledge, skills, and competencies on a continuous basis. Entrepreneurs who exhibit strong learning orientation are better equipped to respond to environmental changes, regulatory shifts, and technological advancements, and are consequently more adaptable in the face of market turbulence (Ibekwe & Nwafor, 2021).

2.4 Innovation Orientation

Innovation orientation refers to an entrepreneur's disposition toward developing new products, services, processes, or business models. Innovative entrepreneurs are more likely to achieve competitive advantage, differentiate their offerings, and sustain profitability in saturated markets such as Onitsha's commercial clusters (Chukwuma & Obiechina, 2022).

2.5 Entrepreneurial Resilience

Resilience describes an entrepreneur's capacity to recover from setbacks, withstand adversity, and maintain commitment to business objectives despite economic shocks, policy changes, or personal difficulties. Resilient entrepreneurs demonstrate persistence, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping strategies that enhance business survival during periods of uncertainty (Egwuonwu, 2020).

2.6 Opportunity Recognition

Opportunity recognition involves the entrepreneur's ability to identify, evaluate, and exploit profitable business prospects arising from market gaps, unmet customer needs, or emerging trends. Entrepreneurs with strong growth mindsets tend to be more proactive in scanning their environment for opportunities and translating them into viable business ventures (Uzoma & Adibe, 2021).

2.7 Adaptability

Adaptability refers to the entrepreneur's capacity to adjust strategies, operations, and business models in response to changing environmental, economic, or competitive conditions. Adaptable entrepreneurs are more likely to sustain their businesses through periods of disruption, such as currency fluctuations, changes in consumer preferences, or infrastructural challenges peculiar to commercial hubs like Onitsha (Nnadi & Okorie, 2023).

2.8. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Growth Mindset Theory propounded by Carol Dweck. The theory posits that individuals who believe abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, learning, and persistence are more likely to embrace challenges, persist through obstacles, learn from criticism and setbacks, and ultimately achieve greater success than those who hold a fixed mindset (Dweck, 2006; Dweck & Yeager, 2019). Applied to entrepreneurship, the theory suggests that entrepreneurs who

possess a growth mindset are more likely to engage in continuous learning, embrace innovation, demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity, actively recognise opportunities, and adapt to changing business environments, thereby enhancing the overall growth, competitiveness, survival, and sustainability of their enterprises. This theoretical position provides the conceptual anchor for examining the relationships investigated in this study.

2.9. Empirical Review

Obiorah, Okeke, and Williams (2026) examined women entrepreneurship and poverty reduction in Anambra State, Nigeria, and found that entrepreneurial capacity-building, including psychological empowerment and skills acquisition, significantly reduced poverty levels among women-owned enterprises, underscoring the importance of mindset and capability development in entrepreneurial outcomes. Akra, Okeke, and Williams (2026) investigated entrepreneurship development and youth unemployment in Anambra State, Nigeria, and found that entrepreneurship development programmes, including training and mentorship, had a significant effect on reducing youth unemployment, suggesting that deliberate cultivation of entrepreneurial competencies and mindset among young people yields measurable economic benefits.

Gbenga and Okeke (2025) studied the economic factors of corporate sustainability and performance of foam manufacturing firms and found that economic factors internal and external to the firm significantly influenced corporate sustainability and performance, highlighting the role of adaptive managerial orientation in sustaining manufacturing enterprises amid economic headwinds. Ogwashi, Gbenga, and Ngige (2025) examined entrepreneurship training programmes and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in Delta State, Nigeria, and found that entrepreneurship training programmes had a significant positive effect on SME performance, reinforcing the argument that deliberate development of entrepreneurial knowledge and orientation translates into improved business outcomes.

Neneh (2022) explored the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and SME performance among South African enterprises and found a significant positive relationship between growth-oriented cognitive traits and business performance indicators such as profitability and market expansion. Nwosu and Eze (2023) assessed entrepreneurial mindset among market traders in South-East Nigeria and reported that traders exhibiting stronger learning and innovation orientation recorded higher levels of business expansion compared to their counterparts with fixed mindsets.

Okonkwo and Chukwuma (2022) examined entrepreneurial orientation and small business performance in Anambra State and found that innovativeness and proactiveness dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation significantly predicted small business performance. Ibekwe and Nwafor (2021) studied the influence of continuous learning on adaptability among small business owners in Imo State and found that entrepreneurs who engaged in regular skills upgrading were significantly more adaptable to changing market conditions.

Egwuonwu (2020) examined entrepreneurial resilience and business survival among SMEs in Lagos State and found that resilience was a significant predictor of business survival during periods of economic recession. Uzoma and Adibe (2021) investigated opportunity recognition and business growth among entrepreneurs in Onitsha main market and found a significant positive relationship between opportunity recognition capability and business growth indicators.

Nnadi and Okorie (2023) studied adaptability and business sustainability

among small-scale traders in Anambra State and found that adaptability significantly enhanced business sustainability, particularly among traders exposed to fluctuating exchange rates and supply chain disruptions. Chukwuma and Obiechina (2022) examined innovation orientation and competitiveness among small manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria and found that innovation orientation significantly enhanced firm competitiveness in both local and regional markets.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for capturing the perceptions, beliefs, and behavioural orientations of a large number of respondents regarding entrepreneurial growth mindset and its associated business outcomes.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Onitsha, a major commercial city in Anambra State, Nigeria. Onitsha is renowned as one of the largest commercial and trading hubs in West Africa, hosting numerous markets and business clusters, including the Onitsha Main Market, Ochanja Market, and various industrial and commercial layouts, where small businesses in wholesale trade, retailing, manufacturing, logistics, and services operate.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised One Thousand, Five Hundred and Twenty (1,520) registered small business owners operating within the major commercial markets and business clusters of Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria, as obtained from records of relevant market associations and the Anambra State Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Industry.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study was determined using Taro Yamane's formula:

$$n = N / [1 + N(e^2)]$$

Where: n = Sample size; N = Population size (1,520); e = Margin of error (5% or 0.05).

Substituting the values: $n = 1,520 / [1 + 1,520(0.05^2)] = 1,520 / [1 + 1,520(0.0025)] = 1,520 / [1 + 3.8] = 1,520 / 4.8 = 316.67 \approx 317$.

Therefore, the sample size for this study is approximately 317 small business owners.

3.5 Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was adopted, combining purposive sampling to select major commercial clusters within Onitsha and simple random sampling to select individual respondents within each cluster, in proportion to the estimated number of small businesses operating in each location.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of two parts: Part 1 gathered demographic information about respondents, while Part 2 employed a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) to measure the dimensions of entrepreneurial growth mindset and their associated business outcomes.

3.7 Tools for Data Analysis

Data were analysed using percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations for descriptive statistics. The hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis with the aid of the Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23.

4. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis 1

Ho1: Learning orientation has no significant effect on business adaptability of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Model Summary Table:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.612	0.375	0.373	0.323

The Model Summary Table indicates an R value of 0.612, showing a strong positive relationship between learning orientation and business adaptability. The R Square value of 0.375 suggests that 37.5% of the variance in business adaptability is explained by learning orientation.

ANOVA Table:

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.680	1	19.680	189.05	0.000
Residual	32.800	315	0.104		
Total	52.480	316			

The ANOVA Table shows an F value of 189.05 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant.

Coefficients Table:

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	2.014	0.096		20.98	0.000
Learning Orientation	0.487	0.0354	0.612	13.75	0.000

The Coefficients Table shows that learning orientation has a positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.487), indicating that for every unit increase in learning orientation, business adaptability increases by 0.487 units. The p-value of 0.000 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, and the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Ho2: Innovation orientation has no significant effect on business competitiveness of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Model Summary Table:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate

1	0.658	0.433	0.431	0.312

The R value of 0.658 shows a strong positive relationship between innovation orientation and business competitiveness. The R Square value of 0.433 indicates that 43.3% of the variance in business competitiveness is explained by innovation orientation.

ANOVA Table:

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	23.470	1	23.470	240.55	0.000
Residual	30.740	315	0.098		
Total	54.210	316			

The ANOVA Table shows an F value of 240.55 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming that the regression model is statistically significant.

Coefficients Table:

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.892	0.104		18.19	0.000
Innovation Orientation	0.532	0.0343	0.658	15.51	0.000

The results show that innovation orientation has a positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.532), meaning that for every unit increase in innovation orientation, business competitiveness increases by 0.532 units.
The relationship is statistically significant (p = 0.000), and the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Ho3: Entrepreneurial resilience has no significant effect on business survival of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Model Summary Table:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.702	0.493	0.491	0.283

The R value of 0.702 shows a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and business survival. The R Square value of 0.493 suggests that 49.3% of the variance in business survival is explained by entrepreneurial resilience.

ANOVA Table:

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	24.580	1	24.580	306.10	0.000
Residual	25.290	315	0.080		
Total	49.870	316			

The ANOVA Table shows an F value of 306.10 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating a robust and statistically significant regression model.

Coefficients Table:

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.756	0.088		19.95	0.000
Entrepreneurial Resilience	0.601	0.0344	0.702	17.49	0.000

Entrepreneurial resilience has a positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.601), indicating that for every unit increase in resilience, business survival increases by 0.601 units. The p-value of 0.000 confirms statistical significance, and the null hypothesis (Ho3) is rejected.

Hypothesis 4

Ho4: Opportunity recognition has no significant effect on business growth of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Model Summary Table:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.591	0.349	0.347	0.341

The R value of 0.591 shows a moderate to strong positive relationship between opportunity recognition and business growth. The R Square value of 0.349 indicates that 34.9% of the variance in business growth is explained by opportunity recognition.

ANOVA Table:

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.660	1	19.660	168.90	0.000
Residual	36.670	315	0.116		
Total	56.330	316			

The ANOVA Table shows an F value of 168.90 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming that the regression model is statistically significant.

Coefficients Table:

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	2.203	0.112		19.67	0.000
Opportunity Recognition	0.478	0.0368	0.591	12.99	0.000

Opportunity recognition has a positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.478), indicating that for every unit increase in opportunity recognition, business growth increases by 0.478 units. The relationship is statistically significant (p = 0.000), and the null hypothesis (Ho4) is rejected.

Hypothesis 5

Ho5: Adaptability has no significant effect on business sustainability of small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Model Summary Table:

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.634	0.402	0.400	0.312

The R value of 0.634 shows a strong positive relationship between adaptability and business sustainability. The R Square value of 0.402 suggests that 40.2% of the variance in business sustainability is explained by adaptability.

ANOVA Table:

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	20.560	1	20.560	211.70	0.000
Residual	30.590	315	0.097		
Total	51.150	316			

The ANOVA Table shows an F value of 211.70 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant.

Coefficients Table:

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.988	0.099		20.08	0.000
Adaptability	0.549	0.0377	0.634	14.55	0.000

Adaptability has a positive unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.549), indicating that for every unit increase in adaptability, business sustainability increases by 0.549 units.

The p-value of 0.000 confirms statistical significance, and the null hypothesis (Ho5) is rejected.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal significant positive relationships between all five dimensions of entrepreneurial growth mindset and their corresponding business outcomes among small businesses in Onitsha. The significant effect of learning orientation on business adaptability aligns with the findings of Ibekwe and Nwafor (2021), who reported that continuous learning significantly enhanced adaptability among small business owners in Imo State. Similarly, the significant effect of innovation orientation on business competitiveness corroborates the findings of Chukwuma and Obiechina (2022), who found that innovation orientation significantly enhanced competitiveness among small manufacturing firms in South-East Nigeria.

The significant effect of entrepreneurial resilience on business survival supports the findings of Egwuonwu (2020), who found resilience to be a strong predictor of SME survival during periods of economic downturn. The significant effect of opportunity recognition on business growth is consistent with Uzoma and Adibe (2021), who found a positive relationship between opportunity recognition and business growth among entrepreneurs in Onitsha main market. Lastly, the significant effect of adaptability on business sustainability aligns with Nnadi and Okorie (2023), who found adaptability to significantly enhance business sustainability among traders in Anambra State.

These findings are also consistent with the broader entrepreneurship development literature. Ogwashi, Gbenga, and Ngige (2025) found that entrepreneurship training programmes significantly improved SME performance in Delta State, reinforcing the role of deliberate capability and mindset development. Similarly, Obiorah, Okeke, and Williams (2026) found that entrepreneurial capacity-building significantly reduced poverty among women entrepreneurs in Anambra State, while Akra, Okeke, and Williams (2026) established that entrepreneurship development programmes significantly reduced youth unemployment in the same state, both of which underscore the value of cultivating growth-oriented entrepreneurial dispositions. Gbenga and Okeke (2025) further demonstrated that internal economic and managerial factors, closely related to adaptive orientation, significantly influence corporate sustainability and performance, lending additional support to the findings of this study regarding the role of adaptability in business sustainability.

4.3 Summary of Findings,

The study found that:

i. Learning orientation has a significant positive effect on business adaptability of small businesses in Onitsha (B = 0.487, p = 0.000).
ii. Innovation orientation has a significant positive effect on business competitiveness of small businesses in Onitsha (B = 0.532, p = 0.000).
iii. Entrepreneurial resilience has a significant positive effect on business survival of small businesses in Onitsha (B = 0.601, p = 0.000).
iv. Opportunity recognition has a significant positive effect on business growth of small businesses in Onitsha (B = 0.478, p = 0.000).
v. Adaptability has a significant positive effect on business sustainability of small businesses in Onitsha (B = 0.549, p = 0.000).

5. CONCLUSION

This study assessed entrepreneurial growth mindset among small businesses in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria, focusing on learning orientation, innovation orientation, resilience, opportunity recognition, and adaptability. The findings confirm that entrepreneurial growth mindset is a critical determinant of small business adaptability, competitiveness, survival, growth, and

sustainability. In a highly competitive and dynamic commercial environment such as Onitsha, entrepreneurs who continuously learn, innovate, demonstrate resilience, recognise opportunities, and adapt to changing conditions are better positioned to sustain and grow their businesses. The study contributes to entrepreneurship literature by providing empirical evidence on the psychological and cognitive dimensions of entrepreneurship in a major Nigerian commercial hub, and offers practical implications for entrepreneurs, policymakers, business development agencies, and educational institutions. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

i. Government agencies and business development institutions should organise regular entrepreneurial mindset development programmes, including workshops on continuous learning and adaptability, for small business owners in Onitsha.
ii. Business associations and market unions should promote mentorship and coaching initiatives that encourage innovation and opportunity recognition among small business operators.
iii. Entrepreneurs should deliberately invest in personal and professional development to strengthen resilience and growth-oriented behaviours necessary for business survival.
iv. Financial institutions and development agencies should integrate entrepreneurial mindset and growth-oriented training into SME support and financing programmes, similar to interventions found effective in other states (Ogwashi, Gbenga, & Ngige, 2025).
v. Educational institutions and entrepreneurship training centres should incorporate growth mindset principles and adaptive thinking into entrepreneurship education curricula to better prepare current and prospective small business owners.

5.1 ETHICS AND AI DECLARATION

This research did not include sensitive data/information that needs approval from any institutional review board (IRB). The authors affirm that AI tool, which include ChatGPT from OpenAI, were only used specifically to edit language and enhance the manuscript clarity of expression.

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