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Thematic Analysis of Entreprenuerial Skills on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises' Performance in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Availability of capital and business resources are not suffice enough for business success and survival but, with crucial entrepreneurial skills. Inadequate entrepreneurial skills have been identified as a menace among business operators in Nigeria, and this has led to shutting down of most business organizations. Consequently, this study has examined the effect of entrepreneurial skills on small and medium scale enterprises' performance in Oyo State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was administered on some managers/SMEs operators. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Out of 33 local governments in Oyo State, Ibadan metropolis was chosen as the study area, occasioned by the highest number of local governments and most of these SMEs are concentrated in the area. There are Six thousand, one hundred and thirty seven (6,137) MSMEs in Oyo State (National Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017) which forms the total population of the study. The sample size of 376 was determined with the aid of Taro Yamane's (1967) formula while the simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the list of registered SMEs. The data collected were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics such as frequency, simple percentage and regression analysis. Three hypotheses were

formulated and tested. The result of the regression analysis discovers that innovativeness has a positive effect on performance of SMEs and the relationship is statistically significant (β=0.806; p=0.002). Customer relation skill shows a positive effect on customer patronage of performance of SMEs and the relationship is statistically significant (β=0.789; p=0.001 <0.05). Also, communication skill has a positive effect on service delivery of SMEs with β=0.770; p=0.001 < 0.05. In view of the findings above, the study therefore concluded that the three explanatory variables have significant and positive effect on performance of SMEs. The conclusion also offers a wide range of significant contributions and implications that are beneficial and useful to many stakeholders such as managers of SMEs, employees, customers etc. The study recommended that the management of the SMEs should embrace innovativeness especially in the area where it has not been explored. It is also recommended for SMEs operators to prioritize customer relations and effective communication in terms of meeting their needs and expectations, establish a trusting relationship with them and provide them with quality service delivery.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurial skill, performance, SMEs, innovativeness.

Introduction

The overwhelming evidences across the globe with respect to the performance and importance of Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, in achieving national growth and development, has continued to generate an unending debate on the subject matter (Emmanuel, Anger and Isa, 2019). Globally speaking, SMEs have been account for over 50 percent of Gross Domestic Product and 75% of new employment have been created (World Bank 2015). In most developing countries, the concepts have been declared to be responsible for about 50% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and over 60% of employment generation (World Bank, 2015).

The SMEs sector is worldly regarded as an important driving force for economic growth and development in both developed and developing nations. The sector forms the largest part in every world economy and governments around the world are embracing, increasingly

supporting and promoting the sector for their overall national growth and development strategy (Ariyo, 2018). Premised on the foregoing, government and non-governmental agencies in most developed and developing countries have keyed-in, in the development and promotion of Small and Medium Scale business. A country that wants to be economically developed, in the committee of countries, must take serious and embrace the promotion of SMEs, as it serves as a catalyst or driving force for overall economic development.

There is no universal definition of SMEs, as it is determined by changes in technological advancement, employment status and price level which affect its actual definition. Some proposed turnover, employment, capital outlay, gross output and employment as parameters for defining the concept (Safiriyu & Njogo, 2012). The United States of America, Canada and United Kingdom opine SMEs in terms of required number of workforces and annual turnover. Small enterprise is described in United Kingdom as any enterprise with an annual turnover of (2) two million pounds and with less than 200 paid employees (Epkeyong & Nyong, 2012).

In Indonesia, SMES contribute significantly to the national income and overall economic activities such as economic stability, employment creation and reduction of poverty (Nuryakin, 2018). It implies that existence and development of small and medium enterprises serves as a basis for significant contribution in reducing poverty and solving economic problem..

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), in its Monetary Policy Circular No. 22 of 1988, defined small-scale business as having an annual turnover not exceeding N500, 000.00. Small scale enterprise is an enterprise that has relatively little capital base of 25 million above but less than 100 million. It can employ 10-40 employees. Micro enterprises are business operators whose capital base is within 3 - 25 million and have capability to employ 3- 9 workers. Medium enterprises are enterprises that have relatively large capital base of 100 million above but less than 1 billion and can employ 50 – 100 employees (Revised National MSMES Policy, 2021-2025). SMEs performance is seen as a process or procedures by which SMEs operators or managers carry out their business functions in such a way to improving business performance (Garengo, Biazzo, & Bititci, 2015).

SMEs performance is seen as a promoter tool and index for the level of modernization, urbanization, industrialization, gainful and employment opportunity for young graduates and all those who are able, energetic and willing to work, per capital income,

equitable income distribution, welfare and peoples standard of living enjoyed by the citizenry. It also contributes at higher rate than larger business organizations in terms of economic growth and development (Farouk & Saleh, 2011).

Entrepreneurship is a mechanism for economic growth and development as it accelerates and promotes employment opportunity and per capita income (Elnadi & Gheith, 2021).

Entrepreneurship skill is necessary and vital for success, growth and survival of small and medium scale enterprises (Amatori, 2006). Skills are the knowledge demonstrated through actions or a unique performance in certain situations. Skills are attained and developed through training (Zehra, 2016). Entrepreneurship skill according to Moris, Kurako, and Covin, 2019), is an important talent and competencies required of an entrepreneur or business operator for business success. It includes the ability to identify business opportunities, harness the necessary resources, manage and develop the business. It also includes risk taking, innovation and aligns with stakeholders' objectives.

Entrepreneurial skill is therefore considered as propensity of individuals' ability to put together his potentials and other resources for business purpose. It is an innate characteristics embodied in entrepreneur's mind that enable him identify a business, arrange for necessary resources, generate employment, create new products and services, stimulate innovation and improve welfare of society. It is also an ability to recognize business opportunity, resource acquisition and allocation, and taking the associated risks. This points out the importance of business opportunity and how to make it successful one (Venkataramen, 2017).

skills acquisition and job opportunities have remained a focal point in the Nigeria government policy, to be precise, between 1986 and till date, various administrations have introduced several initiatives and strategies to promote self-reliance and self-dependence in the creation of gainful self-employment have been noticed (Oduma, 2012). Furthermore, Oduma (2012) noted that starting with the acquisition of career skills; it is believed that the education system operated since post-independence placed emphasis on academic excellence rather than skill acquisition which can prepare an individual for a more useful and fulfilling life within the society. Hence, a new National Policy on Education was promulgated in 1997 introducing vocational/career courses in educational curriculum.

Entrepreneurial skill is embedded in entrepreneurial competencies. Entrepreneurial competencies reveal those rudimentary attribute, self-efficacy, motivational/inspirational, distinctive knowledge to perform societal roles which bring about success, growth and sustenance (Bird, 2019). Entrepreneur's skills such as pro-activeness, innovativeness and risk-taking are pertinent to the performance of SMEs (Beck, 2015). It has been noted that, in spite of these facts, the rate of SMEs' failure in Nigeria remains alarming, pathetic and disturbing, considering the major roles played by SMEs' in developing and sustaining highly competitive economies (Abiodun and Ibidunni, 2014). All the businesses established in Nigeria accounted for about 60% small scale level (Okeke, Ezenwafor & Femiwole, 2013). Business operators tend to succeed with the application of sufficient entrepreneurial skills. It is important to note that, from introductory stage and throughout the life the lifecycle of an enterprise required entrepreneurial skills for its success. Hence, this study seeks to establish how these skills can influence SMEs performance.

Performance is closely related to quantity output, quality output, timeliness output, job presence and attendance, effectiveness and efficiency in completing a given job (Inuwa, 2016). It is also seen as an ability of a firm to achieve its set goals and objectives.

Entrepreneurial skill has to do with a combination of several skills and strategies that enable entrepreneurs to navigate business process so as to achieve profitably in a dynamic and turbulent business environment (Diandra and Azmy, 2020). The report of Global Entrepreneurial Monitor (2012) showed that, Nigeria is regarded as a world leader with the belief and understanding that it possesses the required entrepreneurial spirit and knowledge for effective and successful SMEs activities.

Operation of SMEs is to achieve long term investment with implementation of business practices, and this tend to prove unrealistic occasioned by some factors such as inadequate basic entrepreneurship skills and knowledge, marketing skills and target (Hanano, 2023). Acquisition of entrepreneurship required skills facilitate SMEs business operation which include creativity and innovation (Cares, 2023). There are some major resources that determine the success of SMEs of which entrepreneurial skills plays a prominent role in the success. The skill enables the business operator to utilize available business resources in order to achieve business objectives (Omar, 2016; Tehseen, and Ramayah, 2015. It is however, disheartening to note that, there is high rate of unemployment, crime rates and level of poverty as a result of dwindling

in performance of SMEs in Nigeria (Osotimehin, Jegede & Akinlabi, 2012). This is also confirmed by the (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010) which stressed further that the rate of unemployment is at 19.7%. This means that SMEs in Nigeria are still ineffective in the face of various factors responsible for it (Ediri, 2014). Consequent upon the foregoing, it can be seen that entrepreneurial skill is a sine qua non to business success. Hence, the need to examine the effect of entrepreneurial skill on SMEs performance in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

One of the fundamental problems bedeviling some governments, across the globe, at all levels, is how to effectively utilize entrepreneurial skills and embrace SMEs for national development architecture. Entrepreneurs have been seen as drivers of economic growth and development, job opportunities for both educated and less educated people, wealth creation, crime reduction and providers of qualify of life (Henry; Hill; and Leitch, 2003; Undiayaundeye, 2015).

It has also been observed that, availability of capital, and business resources are not suffice enough for success and survival of an enterprise but with crucial entrepreneurial skills. Inadequate entrepreneurial skills have been identified among business operators in Nigeria and this has led to shutting down of most business organizations (Undiayaundeye, 2015).

Despite various entrepreneurs' orientations which are the major parameters for SMEs productivity, it is worthy to note that, the rate of SMEs' failure in Nigeria is highly disheartening and alarming. The role of SMEs in development and survival of a nation is well documented (Abiodun and Ibidunni, 2014). In short, the bright hope of SMEs in Nigeria in terms of employment creation, crime rate reduction, poverty eradication are still not achievable occasioned by several hindrances including poor customers service relation, ineffective communication skills and innovative capacity.

Many previous researchers examined entrepreneurial skills and SMEs performance with mixed findings. Studies of Owodunni, Saka and Kadir , Adamu, 2018; 2014; Omolara , 2018; Adegbuyi, Oladele, Iyiola, Adegbuyi, Ogunnaike, Ibidunni and Fadeyi, 2018; ; Isah, 2017; Nnabugwu and Ibekwe, 2023; Sulayman and Phillo , 2020; Lesi, 2021; Oghuvwu and Okuwhere, 2018 revealed positive relationship between entrepreneurial skills and SMEs while the works of Undiayaundeye, 2015; Lechat and Torrès, 2016; De Mattos and Salciuviene, 2019 revealed negative relationship

between the two variables. It means, there is a cloudy atmosphere regarding the above. More so, extant literatures have demonstrated several studies on various components of entrepreneurial skills with few done on customers' services and communication skills in the study area. Studies by Felicia, Solomon and Lydia, 2016; Olalekan, 2010; Jinku & Gong Zhang, 2016; Ahmed &Umar, 2021; Sulyman, Phillo and Aminu, 2020; Rufina, Silas and Makrop (2022). Most of these studies were carried out outside the study area.

In addition to the foregoing, there is also a lacuna in the previous studies which employed inadequate relevant theories to substantiate their researches. Most of these studies concentrated on Resource Based Theory and Austrian economist Schumpeter Theory such as Anthonia and Chinelo, 2023; Adegbuyi,et al., 2018; Nayebare, 2024; Eunice, 2018; Usman , Muhammad, and Abdulkadir, 2021; Adeleke and Ojewale, 2023; Hanmaikyur, Kwahar and Utile, 2024. Against this backdrop, the current study investigates the effect of entrepreneurial skills on SMEs' performance in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the effect of Entrepreneurial skills on Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. examine the effect of innovativeness on sales volume of SMEs in in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State.
ii. to determine the effect of customers relation skill on customers patronage of SMEs in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State.
iii. to investigate the effect of communication skill on service delivery of SMEs in in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are to guide the study.

i. What is the effect of innovativeness on sales volume of SMEs in in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State?
ii. How does customer relation skill influence the customers' patronage of SMEs in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State?
iii. To what extent the communication skill affect the service delivery of SMEs in in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Entrepreneurial Skills

An entrepreneur is one who innovates, creates, foresees, identifies business opportunity bearing in mind risk involved. Those who scan environment and gather necessary business information tend to be successful (Coric, Katavic, and Kopecki, 2011). Various parameters responsible for success of business operators such as risk taking, innovation, creativity, acceptance of failure, ability to foresee business opportunity and all these are entrepreneurial skills. This is when an individual discovers or acquires a particular skill especially the required business skills which can be acquired through learning or training, ability to identify business opportunity and explored such a business opportunity with a view to venturing into a business. (Button, Seifert, Chow, Davids & Araujo, 2020). Productive skills require government support in terms of acquisition through training, seminar workshops and possibly with provision of required capital in order to promote business enterprises (Faizan & Haque, 2016).

Any nation around the world that is serious and responsible for providing conducive business environment, and the required business resources such as infrastructural facilities, labour and enough capital tend to make economic growth and development especially in a business turbulent environment (Badri & Badri, 2020) . The aforesaid development is as a result of acquisition of entrepreneurial skills that will enable entrepreneurs to judiciously make use of the available business resources profitably (Gamede & Uleanya, 2019; Mitra, 2011). Hence, it is an indispensable fact that, acquisition of entrepreneurial skill with the needed resources is sine qua non for country's development and source of employment opportunities. Entrepreneurial skills entail several strategies and techniques that enable business operators to navigate in the face of turbulent business situation taking into consideration risk involved and ability to adapt to ever changing business environment and explore business opportunities (Diandra and Azmy, 2020).

Most entrepreneurs employ the use of these skills to bridge the gap between commercialization and academic business research that will enable them to venture into a new business and products (Durowoju, 2014). The skills are acquired purposely for business functions in terms of identification of business opportunities, risk taking, business research and effective and efficient utilization of business ideas for higher

productivity (Umunadi, 2014). Entrepreneurial skill has to do with ability to identify and explore business opportunities and be self-independent. Also, the skill enables entrepreneurs to make decisions at both family and community levels, it will as well to be self-esteem and have confidence in their business endeavours. (Button, Seifert, Chow, Davids & Araujo, 2020). Some required attributes or qualities must be possessed by an entreprenuers for successful management of a business operator especially in a competitive business environment (Akande, 2011).

Entrepreneurial Skills possessed by Business Operators

Innovativeness

Innovativeness is one of the growth mechanisms to penetrate new and existing markets as it enables SMEs to complete favourably in a business environment in terms of large market share, increase in income realization and profit margin. Hence, it refers to identification of new business opportunities, availability of all the required resources and new methods of operations in order to outsmart the competitors in the market (Wambugu and Gichira, 2015). It can also be seen as a process exploring available business opportunities by reviving and reshaping the existing mode of operation far better than the previous methods (Kuratko, 2017). From organizational point of few, the concept of innovation is seen as the ability to identify and create something different from others or renewal form old state to new state of operation, leveraging existing resources and apply entrepreneurial skills in transforming new ideas into productive business.(Guo, 2019). Innovation is a parameter for determining business decision, performance; to what extent the business grow in terms of technological innovation and productivity (Adewale and Umoru, 2021). The performance, survival and success of business organization in a dynamic and turbulent environment depend largely on adaptability and flexibility to innovation (Sok & O'Cass, 2015). It has to do with the introduction of a new product, improvement on the existing ones and creation of dynamic business approach for higher productivity (Gault, 2018; Rena, 2023). Effective organizational innovation is a veritable tool for business growth and development which reflect organizational change management and in turn leads to higher productivity (Kesavan, 2021).

Innovation permeates organizational resources such as utilization of business new ideas that can be transformed, new process of operation resulting to new products and services which are considered important aspect of organizational culture (Civelek,

Červinka, Gajdka, & Nétek, 2021; Roach, Ryman, & White, 2014; Wahyuni, 2021). This will eventually benefit both the company and stakeholders (Silva, 2014).

In the word of Afuah (2020), the use of organizational information, modern technological and skills in providing new goods and services to customers is a function of innovation. Also, Wibawa, Widjanarko, Utomo, Suratna and Wahyurini (2020) opine that innovation is described as the development of an improved goods and services with the required process for business purpose.

Customer relations skill

Every business activities are geared toward customers' needs and satisfaction. It is tailored to such because the essence of entrepreneurial efforts is to ensure that customer' needs are met which in turn leads to profit maximization. Successful business operators identify needs and wants of their prospective customers. Therefore, customer relation skill is one of the skills that need to be possessed by entrepreneurs in running their business; it assists them in achieving referral patronage as a result of good customer relations (Msoka, 2013). Customers that are willing to buy more products must have been satisfied (Hague & Hague, 2016.). Any organization that creates satisfaction for a customer tends to receive more customers from such a customer. Making use of customer relations skill in a turbulent and dynamic business environment is a way to outsmart competitors and be productive (Peter & William, 2016). Profit margin and continuous existence of business organization depend on how much the organization is able to satisfy its customers in terms of needs, convenience, transaction methods, products and pricing, and delivery system (Kotler & Keller, 2016; KPMG, 2018). Enterprises exist because they have customers and potential buyers to serve (Valdani, 2019).

Customer relation skill provides company the ability to align its method of operation with customer focus portfolio management solidifies the relationship with both the existing customers and potential customers. It will also increase business productivity (Gummesson, 2017; Wahyuni & Sara, 2020). Customers relations from business point of view, is the extent of assistance rendered and deserved respect given to both consumers and customers, who patronize an enterprise and the provision for complaints and feedback (Entrepreneur, 2017). The act of being considerate, kind, courteous and lenient to customers in providing with what they need and solution to

their problems effectively and efficiently (Doyle, 2017). This is done in order to fulfill and satisfy customers (Miller, 2016).

Customers satisfaction and loyalty are to be taken serious by business as they are parts of stakeholders of the business, they contribute significantly to the growth and development of an enterprise in the areas of productivity and repeat patronage (Hosseininia & Ramezani, 2016).

Communication Skill

Every business organization cannot survive without communication because it serves as an important tool for business growth. Business objectives are mapped out, activities are coordinated, employers and employees are interacted, employees are assigned to different works, good organizational reputation is built and organizational decisions making are made through communication (Obamiro, 2017). Extant literatures have successfully demonstrated that communication remains an effective mechanism to carry out daily activities of a business in line with set standard (Okwuagwu, Nnoje, Onoh & Ikpezie, 2017). It can therefore, be pointed out that communication is the exchange of ideas, knowledge, signs between two or more people which can be in form of verbal or non-verbal (Dixit, 2018).

Business organizations tend to experience conflict, employees turnover and dwindling profit occasioned by poor communication system. Anticipated objectives of business are likely to achieve through an effective communication system (Khan, 2021). Some organizations' activities are decentralized, undertaken by groups and carry out through an appropriate channel of communication and regulations (Oyetunde & Oladejo, 2012). It cannot be considered effective if the information disseminated was not received and understood by the recipient (Muszyńska, 2018). The process of gathering accurate information, to appropriate receiver with appropriate channel of communication and feedback receiving in any given situation can be referred to as effective and efficient communication (Khabiqheya, 2017).

Every business organization must take note of some essential components of an effective communication system such as clarity and feedback. Communication must not be ambiguous, to reduce level of misunderstanding, blunders, biases, disappointments and conflict. Feedback on the other hand, has to do with the extent to which a receiver comprehends or understands the information sent by the sender (Aligwe, Nwafor, & Alegu, 2018; Latham, 2024; Okoro, & Nwafor, 2015). From the

word of Liu and Li (2017), two perspectives are predominant in explaining communication in a business organization, i.e conventional and organizational perspectives which means communication within organizations and communication as organization. It can therefore be deduced that communication is very important in achieving predetermined business objectives.

Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises

In Nigeria, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector comprises four (4) main categories of enterprises, namely: nano/homestead, micro-enterprises, small, and medium enterprises (SMEDAN, 2021). Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance can be seen from various angles depending on different perspectives and interpretations of successful business operators' performance. These perspectives of SMEs performance can be explained in different ways (Robert, 2014). SMEs performance relates to the extent of success in a given period of time (Herath & Mahmood, 2013). In measuring SMEs performance, various factors such as sales volume, market share, level of customers' patronage, financial status, investment level, profit growth and margin (Hafeez, Shariff & Rogo, 2017). Business performance can be traced to positive impact of innovation on SMEs which distinguishes their products or services from their counterparts/competitors in a dynamic and turbulent business environment, it allows adaptability to dynamic market trends, high level of sales volume, improved customers' patronage, increases profit margin, attract prospective customers and large market share (Vladimirov, 2016; Farida & Nuryakin, 2021; Chatterjee & Bhattacharjee, 2021; Smith, 2022). In the word of Kompula (2014), SMEs performance indicators can be viewed from perspective of business startup, growth and development, continuity and survival, job and wealth creations. Eniola and Entebang (2015) assert that SMEs' performance is the ability of a business to achieve in line with set standard which can be in form of actual performance against the set standard, also the capacity with the required resources to achieve the set goals and objectives is known as performance (Gathungu & Oabana 2018). There is wisdom in int roduction of SMEs innovation and customers' service relation as well as good communication skill to bring about an effective marketing strategy, good creativity, improved customers' service and improved product to satisfy customers. This will in turn lead to higher productivity of the business (Gault, 2018; Rena, 2023). SMEs constitutes a basis for economic growth and development because it serves a

foundation for the development and growth of any nation (Ifekwem & Adedamola, 2016; Masama & Bruwer, 2018; Miranda & Miranda, 2018).

Theoretical Review

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) was propounded by Teece and Pisano in 1994. The theory was Dynamic Capabilities was an extension of the Resource Based View (Barney, 1986, 1991) which believes that similar firms tend to perform differently occasioned by different kind of organizational resources and capabilities possessed by them (Barney, 1986, 1991; Peretaf, 1993). The RBV is criticized of being not dynamic and static in nature. It fails to explain and understand the competitive advantage of firm in a dynamic business market environment (Priem & Butler, 2001). However, DCT tried to expand the view of RBV with the belief that an organization can quickly respond to ever changing and dynamic business environment, with its ability to develop and reconfigure both internal and external resources (Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997). They theory further explained that micro-foundations of dynamic capability model comprises of different distinctive skills, knowledge, rules and regulations, organizational mode of operations, structure, decision making rule, discipline etc. (Teece, 2007).

The theory also expanded its view that the organization's ability to explore internal and external resources in ever dynamic business environment tend to outsmart competitors, cope with market trends, achieve organizational predetermined objectives and remain in business for long (Ahenkora & Ajei, 2012). Organization that is deficient of dynamic capabilities to utilize both its internal and external resources may not achieve competitive advantage in the changing business environment (Gnizy, Baker, & Grinstein, 2014). They theory also pointed out that intangible resources such as ideas, skills and knowledge must be reconfigured towards these directions; knowledge management, market orientation and customer relationship management to achieve higher productivity and customers' satisfaction (Landroguez, Castro & Cepeda, 2011). The theory emphasizes the direct relationship between a business performance and dynamic capabilities stressing that absence of dynamic capability in a turbulent and dynamic business environment can mar the business. And as such, leads to discontinuity and low performance (Zollo and Winter, 2002). Other contributors to the theory include McCarthy & Gordon, 2010). Criticisms of the

Dynamic Capability Theory are diverse and outline below: they theory has been criticized of incomprehensive discussion on its learning mechanism as an integral part of the theory, only two researchers (Zollo & Winter, 2002; Mc Carthy & Gordon, 2010) briefly discussed it. Also, feedback mechanism has not been discussed in detail by the theory, as an important component of the system, which enables organizations to listen, adjust and provide an opportunity for the system to be considerate, and take corrective action to correct deviations/anomaly where necessary from the specified direction (Robbins, 1990).

Therefore, this study anchored on dynamic capability model because it guarantees firm's success and sustainability especially in a dynamic and turbulent business environment. Not only this, it is also useful for both local and international businesses. Evidence from the works of (El Akremi, Perrigot, & Piot-Lepetit, 2015; Oxtorp, 2014; Kumar & Yakhlef, 2014).

Empirical Review

Dinah and sarah (2024) investigated entrepreneurship skills and performance of women-owned enterprises in Benue State, Nigeria. The study employed survey research design with structured questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 650 women entrepreneurs engaged in trade, service, manufacturing, and agriculture and so on. The sample size was 220 women entrepreneurs using random sampling technique. The study found that entrepreneurship skills had a significant effect on the performance of women enterprises. Ti was also found that capacity building in relation to marketing and skills acquisition through training are parameters for performance of women enterprises. The study concluded that the acquisition and development of skills among women is a sine qua non to be self-reliant, and the ability to manage enterprises successfully. The study therefore recommended that training and retraining, seminars and workshops should be organized for the business operators in order to improve on their skills.

Goja, Hanmaikyur and Kwahar (2024) examined entrepreneurial skills on the Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey design. The sample size of 223 was drawn from a population of 502. Simple random probability sampling technique was used. 208 questionnaires out 223 copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned. The data collected were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics and multiple

linear regression analysis. The result of the study via regression analysis showed positive relationship between innovativeness and performance of SMEs. The study concluded that entrepreneurs can improve on their services through the introduction and implementation of innovation and creativity.

Stanley and Chukwudi (2024) conducted entrepreneurial skills, self-motivation, social Influence and self-employment: A Survey of the Literature. The study used qualitative research design. Over fifty relevant literatures in order of relevance were explored. The study revealed that entrepreneurial skills have a positive connection with self-employment in most of the reviewed articles while few of the articles discovered negative relationship. It was recommended that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills through training leads self-employment and as well tends to perform effectively.

Ngiri (2024) examined entrepreneurial skills and performance of small-scale enterprises (SSES) In Kyengera Town Wakiso District. The study specifically examined the relationship between management skills, planning, communication skills and entrepreneurial performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town. The study used both descriptive and cross-sectional survey research designs with both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. 152 as the sample size was drawn form the total population of 250 respondents which was determined by Kreijie and Morgan 1970. Random and purposively sampling techniques were employed. The study revealed a positive and significant relationship between planning skills and performance of small-scale enterprises in (r= 0. 688, p=0.000),a high positive relationship between communication skills and performance of SMEs (r= 0.650, p=0.000), and a weak significant relationship between explanatory variable (technical skills) and performance of small-scale enterprises in Kyengera Town Council (r= 0.453, p= 0.000). Therefore, the study concluded communication, planning and technical skills are influential factors towards the performance of small-and medium scale enterprises in Kyengera Town.

Olufemi (2019) conducted entrepreneurial orientation and market Innovativeness among small and medium enterprises in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey design. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the total population of 140. The result of the study demonstrated significant relationship between the two variables. The study recommended that entrepreneurs should make sure they take calculated risk in order to enhance their

performance through marketing innovation, also they need to be proactive in their operations with a view to improving on their services.

Eunice (2018) investigated entrepreneurial skills and growth of Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs): A comparative analysis of Nigerian entrepreneurs and Minority entrepreneurs in the UK. The data was collected through an online survey questionnaire. The population comprised of 38 SMEs owners both in UK and Nigeria. Judgmental sampling technique was employed to elicit their opinions, beliefs, experience, beliefs, and attitudes to entrepreneurial skills considering the limited time frame. The study observed that entrepreneurial skills have a significant influence on the growth of SMEs in Nigeria and the UK. The study concluded that majority of the in both countries agreed that communication skills, problem solving and creative thinking skills are important for high sales volume and competitive advantage.

Adegbuyi, Iyiola, Adegbuyi, Omotayo, Ogunnaike, Olalekan and Fadeyi (2018) explored entrepreneurial orientation on small and medium enterprises' performance in Nigeria. A descriptive research design was employed to gather information from registered SMEs in Nigeria. The data collected were sourced through a structured questionnaire to 436 SMEs operators. The study employed the use of structural equation modeling of AMOS 22 to test the hypothesis formulated. The results of the study indicated a significant effect from all the selected dimensions of entrepreneurial skills including dynamic operations, inclusive innovation, and innovative decisions, business opportunity, value adding activity, risk taking have significant influence on the performance of SMEs.

Shwarka, Gichira & Shwarka (2014) conducted the effects of entrepreneurial skills on performance of SMES in Building Construction Sector in Kaduna. The empirical data analyzed was obtained from 23 construction companies in the study area. The findings revealed three most important entrepreneurial skills that affect the firms' performance including commitment, innovativeness and vision and that there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial skills and the performance of construction SMEs in the study area. The findings also observed that entrepreneurial skills can be enhanced by learning through formal or informal education. The study concluded that enhancement of entrepreneurial skills leads to high performance of construction SMEs.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. The rationale behind the employment of this method is that, it enables the researcher to elicit information from the target population (SMEs managers/owners) through primary source of data collection. Out of 33 local governments in Oyo State, Ibadan metropolis was chosen as the study area,

occasioned by the highest number of local governments and most of these SMEs are concentrated in the area. There are Six thousand one hundred and thirty seven (6,137) in Oyo State (MSME) National Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017) which forms the total population of the study. The sample size of 376 was determined with the aid of Taro Yamane's (1967) formula while the simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the lists of registered SMEs. This afforded the respondents in the population equal chance of being selected for the exercise. A total of 376 questionnaires were distributed to the business owners/managers with the help of research assistants. Only 296 were accurately filled and returned, which was considered adequate for the study.

To ensure reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire has section A and B which contains personal data of the respondents and variables questions respectively. Five 5-point likert scale (Likert, 1932) i.e strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The questionnaire underwent content and construct validity in terms of expert assessment of the questionnaire and pilot test; pretest; test-retest method. This is necessary to ensure reliability of the instrument and to test both the dependent variables and explanatory variables. In this study, explanatory variable has three major constructs which include innovativeness, customer relation and communication skill while dependent variable - performance has constructs which measured in terms of sales volume, customer patronage and service delivery. In line with the variables of the study, it can be deduced that functional relationship exists between them. Therefore, a model was formulated as demonstrated below:

SMES performance = f(Entrepreneurial skills) …….. (eq. 1)

SMES performance = f(innovativeness, Customer relation, communication skills)

SMESP = f(INVTS, CRS, COMMS) …….. …..(eq. 2)

Where:

SMESP = Small and Medium Scale Enterprises performance

ENTPS = Entrepreneurial skills

INVTS = Innovativeness skill

CRS = Customer relation skill

COMMS = Communication skill

f = Functional relationship

Thus, the explicit form of the model is stated as indicated below:

PRFM = $b_0 + b_1INVT + b_2CRS + b_3COMMS + Ut$ ……(eq. 3)

b_0 = Regression intercept

b_1,b_1, b_3, = Regression coefficients

Ut = error terms

A priori expectation

(X_1) = Innovativeness; a priori expectation is positive

(X_2) = customer relation; a priori expectation is positive

(X_3) = communication; a priori expectation is positive

Each (b_1, b_2, b_3) is a measure of the effect of a given change in the associated independent variables on the dependent variable. The sign (+ or -) of a coefficient indicates the nature of relationship that exists between the SMES performance and the associated entrepreneurial skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents Data Presentation and Analysis, Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of findings. For the purpose of data collection two hundred and ninety six questionnaires were successfully retrieved out of three hundred and seventy six which considered accurate. The demographic practices of the targeted respondents using percentages and frequencies are presented below:

SECTION A

Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics

Table 4.1

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	207	69.9
Female	89	30.1
Total	296	100
Age Distribution	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
Below 20 years	5	1.69
20-29 years	13	4.39
30-39 years	42	14.18
40-49 years	163	55.14
Above 50 years	73	24.6

Total	296	100
Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
SSCE	9	3.04
ND/NCE	61	20.6
HND/B.Sc.	169	57.09
Postgraduate Degrees	57	19.27
Total	296	100
Year of Operation	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
1-5 years	15	5.06
6-10 years	37	12.5
11-15 years	151	51.01
15 years and above	93	31.43
Total	296	100
Sector of SMEs	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
Services	124	41.89
Education	88	29.73
Manufacturing	59	19.93
Financial	25	8.45
Total	296	100

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

The Table 4.1 overleaf reveals the demographic practices of the respondents, majority of the respondents (207) 69.9% were male while (8998) 30.1% constitutes females. By implication, this depicts the predominance of male respondents in the small and medium enterprises in the study areas occasioned by the fact that, men are agile and they have the required ability/competency to create initiative and take business risk compared to female counterparts who are by nature restricted to taking care of family responsibilities. The age bracket of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents i.e 163 were between the age brackets of 40-49 years, 73 were above years, 42 respondents were between the age brackets of 30-39 years, 13 were between 20-29 years while 5 were between the age brackets of below 20 years. By implication, those within the age brackets of 40-49 years can be said that they have the required business experience and matured enough to run business successfully.

As regard educational qualification of the respondents, a good number of the respondents were holders of HND/B.Sc. which constitutes (169) 57.09% as the highest qualification, 61(20.6) were holders of NCE/ND, 57(19.27%) were holders of postgraduates degrees while 9(3.04) were holders of O' level. This implies that majority of the business operators in the study area are literate and have received the necessary entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to operate their businesses.

Also years of business operation of the respondents showed that majority of the respondents (72)34.62%have done their business operations for below 1-5 years, (48) 28.08% of the respondents specified that they have done their business operations for 6-10 years, the respondents that constituted (51) 24.52% have done their business operations for 12-16 years, while those that have done their business operations for 16 years and above constituted (37) 17.79 %. This result implies that most of the respondents have sufficient banking experience that is needed to provide valid information to the study. This is because those with work experience from 6-10 years, (48) 11-15 years and 16 years and above are more in percentages than those with less experience such as 1-5 years. The result of the sectoral distribution of the Small and Medium Enterprises in the study area indicates that majority of the sector (67) 32.21% operates in the service industry. (59) 28.37% are from the manufacturing sector, (41) 19.71% are from the education section while (23) 11.06% are from the agro allied sector. The financial services industry is the least with the frequency of 18 and percentage of 8.65%. This result shows the prevalence of the service industry among the type of small and medium enterprises operated in the study area.

SECTION B

Descriptive Statistics

Presentation of the Result based on the specific objective of the study

Table 4.2 Innovativeness

	Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	UN (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
6	Innovation plays a vital role in improving business performance	101(34.1)	97 (32.8)	21(7.1)	42(14.2)	35 (11.8)

7	Innovation tends to assist organization to expand new business formation and make more profit.	122 (41.2)	85(28.7)	27(9.1)	44(14.9)	18(6.1)
8.	Innovation brings about large market share and high productivity	137(46.3)	85(28.71)	15(5.07)	37(12.5)	22(7.42)
9.	Organization is able to develop and introduce new strategies through innovativeness	150(50.6)	66(22.3)	31(10.6)	32(10.8)	17(5.7)
10.	Innovation helps to introduces new ideas, product, process, and knowledge within the organization	161(54.3)	72(24.3)	18(6.3)	25(8.4)	20(6.7)

Source: Authors fieldwork, 2024

Table 4.1 above shows that majority of the respondents 101(34.1%) strongly agreed that innovation plays a vital role in improving business performance, 97 (32.8%) agreed, 21(7.1%) undecided, 42(14.2%) disagreed while 35 (11.8%) strongly disagreed that innovation plays a vital role in improving business performance. Innovation tends to assist organization to expand new business formation and make more profit with 122 (41.2%) strongly respondents agreed, 85(28.7%) agreed, 27(9.1%) undecided, 44(14.9) disagreed while 18(6.1%) strongly disagreed that innovation tends to assist organization to expand new business formation and make more profit. Majority of the respondents 137 (46.3%) strongly agreed that innovation brings about large market share and high productivity, 85(28.71%) disagreed, while

22(7.42%) strongly disagreed. A highest percentage of 150(50.6%) subscribed to the fact that organization is able to develop and introduce new strategies through innovativeness, 66(22.3%) agreed, 31(10.6%) undeceived, 32(10.8%) disagreed while 17(5.7%) strongly disagree with the statement. Majority of the respondent 161(54.3%) strongly agreed that innovation helps to introduces new ideas, product, process, and knowledge within the organization, 72(24.3%) agreed, 18(6.3%) undecided, 25(8.4%) disagreed while 20(6.7) strongly decline with the statement.

Table 4.3 Communication skill

	Variables	SA (%)	A(%)	U(%)	D(%)	SD(%)
11.	Steady flow of information/interaction between business and other business stakeholders improve business productivity.	147(49.6)	96 (32.4)	11(3.7)	31(10.6)	11(3.7)
12.	Frequent communication among organization's members improves productivity.	129 (43.5)	86 (29.0)	23(7.7)	21(7.0)	37(12.8)
13.	Giving members the chances to express their opinions boost their morale.	121(40.8)	68 (22.9)	37(12.5)	39(13.4)	31(10.4)
14.	Feedback performance on every member of the business and outsider improves business performance.	157(53.0)	63(21.2)	25(8.4)	13(4.6)	38(12.8)
15.	Creation of business platform through which customers express their opinions improves business performance.	131(44.2)	77(26.0)	27(9.1)	19(6.4)	42(14.3)

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

The table 4.3 above shows that majority of the respondents 147(49.6%) strongly agreed that steady flow of information/interaction between business and other business stakeholders improve business productivity, 96 (32.4%) agreed, 11(3.7%) undecided, 31(10.6) disagreed while 11(3.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Majority of our respondents 129 (43.5%) strongly agree that frequent communication among every workers in organization improves productivity, 81(27.3%) agreed, 33(11.1%) undecided, 19(6.4%) disagreed while 42(14.4%) strong disagreed with the position. Majority of the respondents 121(40.8%) strongly agreed that giving members the chances to express their opinions boost their morale, 68 (22.9%) agreed, 37(12.5%) undecided, 39(13.4%) disagreed while 31(10.4%) strongly disagreed with the assertion. Majority of the respondents 157(53.0%) strongly agreed that feedback performance on every member of the business and outsider improves business performance, 63(21.2%) agreed, 25(8.4%) undecided, 13(4.6%) disagreed while 38(12.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Majority of the respondents 131(44.2%) strongly agreed that creation of business platform through which customers express their opinions improves business performance, 77(26.0%) agreed, 27(9.1%) undecided, 19(6.4%) disagreed while 42(14.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.4 Customers relation skill

S/NO	Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	UN(%)	D (%)	SD (%)
17.	Meeting customer's need and expectation boost the image and performance of the business.	161(54.3)	72(24.3)	13(4.3)	28(9.4)	22(7.7)
18.	Trusting relationship motivates the existing and potential customers in the organization.	171(57.77)	60(20.27)	19(6.4)	22(7.4)	24(8.7)
19.	Quality service delivery influences referral purchases, customer's satisfaction and increase businesses productivity.	182(61.4)	81(27.6)	12(4.0)	9(3.0)	12(4.0)
20.	Giving regular feedback, addressing customer's complaints and rewarding	191(64.5)	64(21.6)	10(3.3)	19(6.6)	12(4.0)

	customers create large market share and sales volume.					
21.	True customer's orientation and loyalty, business can achieve competitive advantage and financial performance	131 (44.2)	81(27.3)	17(5.7)	39(13.4)	28(9.4)

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

The table 4.4 above depicts that majority of the respondents 161(54.3%) strongly agreed that meeting customer's need and expectation boost the image and performance of the business, 72(24.3%) agreed, 13(4.3%) undecided, 28(9.4%) disagreed while 22(7.7%) strongly disagree with the statement. There is highest percentage of 171(57.77%) from the respondents that who agreed that trusting relationship motivates the existing and potential customers in the organization, 60(20.27%) agreed, 19(6.4%) undecided, 22(7.7%) disagreed while 24(8.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Majority of the respondents 182(61.4%) strongly agreed that quality service delivery influences referral purchases, customer's satisfaction and increase businesses productivity, 81(27.6%) agreed, 12(4.0%) undecided, 9(3.0%) disagree while 12(4.0%) strongly disagree with the assertion. Giving regular feedback, addressing customer's complaints and rewarding customers create large market share and sales volume was strongly agreed by the majority of the respondents 191(64.5%), 64(21.6%) agreed, 10(3.3%) undecided, 19(6.6) agreed while 12(4.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. A highest percentage of the respondents 131 (44.2%) strongly agreed that true customer's orientation and loyalty, business can achieve competitive advantage and financial performance, 81(27.3%) agreed, 17(5.7%) undecided, 39(13.4%) disagreed while 28(9.4%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

H_{o1}: Innovativeness has no impact on sales volume of SMEs.

Table 4.5 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.806	0.650	0.615	1.200

Table 4.5 above depicts that 0.806 for R which means that 80.6% of relationship exists between innovativeness and sales volume of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. **R^2**: Indicates that 65% of the variance in sales volume is explained by innovativeness.

Table 4.6 ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	22.05	1	22.05	12.25	0.002
Residual	11.95	13	0.92		
Total	34.00	14			

Table 4.6 above shows the effect of innovativeness on sales volume of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table further shows that innovativeness has significant effect (F-value (12.25; p-value (Sig.) is 0.002, indicating that the model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is therefore, concluded that there is significant effect of innovativeness on sales volume of SMEs in the study area.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.00	0.80		6.25	0.000
Innovativeness	1.75	0.50	0.806	3.50	0.002

The above table shows the coefficient of innovativeness on sales volume of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table demonstrates that there is positive relationship between innovativeness and sales volume of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. The standardized beta coefficient for innovativeness is 0.806, indicating a strong positive relationship with sales volume. Also, t-value and Sig.: The t-value for innovativeness is 3.50, with a p-value of 0.002, indicating that innovativeness significantly affects sales volume.
H_{o3}: Customer relation skill has no significant relationship with customers' patronage of SMEs.

Hypothetical Regression Model

Customer Patronage = $\beta 0+\beta 1$ (Customer Relation Skills) $+\epsilon$

Table 4.7 Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.789	0.623	0.585	1.150

Table 4.7 above reveals 0.789 for R which indicates that about 79% of correlation between customer relation skill and customers' patronage of SMEs in Oyo State,

Nigeria. R^2 indicates 62% of the variance in customers' patronage is explained by customer relation skill.

Table 4.8 ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.20	1	18.20	13.75	0.001
Residual	11.00	13	0.85		
Total	29.20	14			

Table 4.8 above reveals the effect of customer relation skill on the level of customer patronage of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table further depicts that customer relation skill has significant effect (F-value 13.75; p-value (Sig.) is 0.001, pointing that the model is statistically significant ($p < 005$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is significant effect of customer relation skill on customers' patronage of SMEs.

Table 4.9 Coefficients

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients (B)**	**Std. Error**	**Standardized Coefficients (Beta)**	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	4.50	0.85		5.29	0.000
Customer Relation Skills	1.90	0.51	0.789	3.71	0.001

The above table shows the coefficient of customer relation skill on customers' patronage of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table demonstrates that there is positive relationship between customer relation skill and customers' patronage of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. The standardized beta coefficient for innovativeness is 0.806, indicating a strong positive relationship with sales volume. Also, t-value and Sig.: The t-value for innovativeness is 3.50, with a p-value of 0.002, indicating that innovativeness significantly affects sales volume.

H_{03}: Communication skill has no significant relationship with service delivery of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Service Delivery = $\beta 0 + \beta 1$ (Communication Skills)$+\epsilon$

Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.770	0.593	0.552	1.300

It is deduced from the above, R shows 0.770 which is 77% of relationship exists between communication skill and service delivery of SMEs in Oyo State, Nigeria. **R^2**: Indicates that 59.3% of the variance in service delivery is a function of communication skill.

Table 4.11: ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	24.50	1	24.50	14.50	0.001
Residual	16.50	13	1.27		
Total	41.00	14			

Table 4.11 above reveals the effect of communication skill on SMEs service delivery in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table further depicts that communication skill has significant effect (F-value 14.50; p-value (Sig.) is 0.001, pointing that the model is statistically significant ($p < 005$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is significant effect of communication skill on service delivery of SMEs in the study are.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper examines the effect of entrepreneurial skills on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria using regression analysis. Based on the findings of the study, innovativeness, customer relations and communication skills were found to have significant and positive effect on the performance of SMEs. Therefore, the study concluded that the three variables (innovativeness, customer relation and communication skills) have beneficial impacts on the performance of SMEs in the study area. It is also concluded that communication skill was found to influence the performance of SMEs, but at a relatively low level. The conclusions offer a wide range of significant contributions and implications that are beneficial and useful to many stakeholders such as managers of SMEs, employees, customers etc.

The study recommends that the management of the SMEs in the study area should embrace innovativeness as it is seen as a strategy to expand business and achieve high market share and productivity. They should create innovation in the area where it has not been explored. It is also recommended for SMEs operators to prioritize customer relations in terms of meeting their needs and expectations, establish a trusting relationship with them and provide them with quality service delivery. It is also recommended that there should be frequent communication between the business and other business stakeholders. Business platform needs to be created by which customers express their opinion and feedback performance on every member of the business and outsiders as it will improve business performance.

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