



ENTREPRENEURIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL-SCALE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN EKET LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 1389 managers in registered small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The sample size for the study was 311 respondents drawn from the target population using Taro Yamane formula through simple random sampling technique. The instrument entitled “Entrepreneurial Management Skills and Performance of Small-scale Business Enterprises Questionnaire (EMSPSBEQ)” was used to generate data for this study. Face validation of the instrument was adopted in this study. The reliability of the instrument in this study was established using trial test reliability method. The data collected from the two instrument were subjected to analysis using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient statistics and the overall reliability coefficient of 0.88 and 0.83 was obtained which was deemed adequate for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in answering the research questions and in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result from the study indicated that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The study recommended that entrepreneurs should strive to acquire entrepreneurial management skills as this will help to improve performance of their businesses. Also, training on entrepreneurial management skills should be carry out periodically to enable them to develop the ability to their business enterprises effectively.

Introduction

The relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises has a topic of great concern. Small scale enterprises has been a topical issue in the entirety of the sphere of life due to its countless different responsibilities in the world in general. Small scale enterprises make up the majority of the businesses operating around the world. Small scale enterprises are those enterprises where business is done on a small scale (Brandy, 2020). According to Dilak (2022), a small enterprise is a business enterprises that is not large, in terms of its size, scope of operation, financial involvement and the workforce



involved in the enterprises. It is business enterprises that help in stimulating economic growth through the generation of employment, development of local technology and conservation of foreign exchange earnings, favours flexibility and innovations. Small scale enterprises also help to create a more competitive and healthier economy job opportunities.

The small scale business enterprises have the potentiality to reduce the rate of unemployment and also contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and economic growth of the nation (Oshagbemi, 2020). The small scale enterprises also helps to foster innovation, industrialization, poverty reduction, and local entrepreneurship. Despite the importance of small scale business enterprises, the performance of small scale business enterprises especially in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The management of the small scale enterprises especially in Eket Local Government Area has been a challenge. This is because it has been observed by the researchers that some Small Scale business enterprises are still failing in the area and some are forced to shut down within the few years of their existence. However, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) reported that, over 20% of small businesses fail within their first year, and nearly 50% fail within five years due to issues such as limited market access, competition, and poor management. This has negative effect on the internally generated revenue accruable to the State and also increased the rate of unemployment and poverty.

The performance of a small scale business enterprise is a measure of how a manager efficiently and effectively utilizes the resources of the firm to accomplish its goals as well as satisfying all the stakeholders. The performance of small-scale business enterprises relies on a mix of profitability, market share, and operational efficiency (Olowu and Aliyu, 2025). Performance of small scale business enterprises is the measure of how effectively a business utilizes its resources and operational processes to achieve its strategic and financial objectives. Performance of a small scale business enterprise evaluates overall commercial success by combining financial metrics like revenue and profitability with non-financial indicators such as customer satisfaction and operational efficiency (Okhonina, 2024). The performance of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) depends to a large extent on the management skills of the owner of the business who is also regarded in the business parlance as an entrepreneur. It is logically discernible and plausible that successful business enterprise depend on the managerial skills and ability of the entrepreneur that owns and manages the business.

The entrepreneur is also described as an individual who establishes a business concern for the principal purposes of profit and growth (Ukoima, Charles and Nworgu, 2022). According to Windapo (2018) the perceived lack of managerial skills among entrepreneurs in Eket Local Government Area arguably accounts for high mortality and business failures among SMEs in Eket. According to Atandi (2021), when managers of small scale business enterprise manages their enterprises with effective entrepreneurial management skills, it helps to improve the performance of the enterprise. Olawale and Garwe, (2020) reported that entrepreneurship is seen as a driver of sustainable economic growth as entrepreneurs create new businesses and employment. Because entrepreneurship contributes to economic growth, it is important to have the skills needed to be successful in business venturing.

Entrepreneurial management skills according to Agha, (2024) are the competencies required to identify opportunities, take calculated risks, and allocate resources efficiently in small businesses. Entrepreneurial management skills combine the visionary drive of a startup founder with the operational discipline of a manager (Abor and Quartey 2020). Key examples of entrepreneurial management skills include strategic planning to guide long-term growth, financial literacy for budgeting and cash flow management, and leadership to build and motivate teams. Asabi et al (2023) stressed that entrepreneurial management skills specifically marketing,



innovative planning, and ICT competencies have a direct and significant positive effect on the operational efficiency, market share, and profitability of small-scale enterprises. The entrepreneurial management skills needed by entrepreneurs to enhance the performance of small scale business enterprise are financial management, human resource management, start-up, social and interpersonal, leadership, personality, marketing, technical and business management skills.

Entrepreneurial management skills are set of competencies and abilities that enable individuals to identify, evaluate, and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities (Mensah *et al*, 2024). It helps entrepreneurs to make informed business decisions and choose who to do the business with. For efficient performance of small-scale business enterprises, entrepreneurial skills such as marketing, creativity, decision-making, organising, recognising and utilising opportunities, communication, networking, team-building, goal-setting and problem-solving skills are needed to survive. Acquisition of effective entrepreneurial skills in small-scale businesses promotes profitability and ensures their operational sustainability. Entrepreneurial skills, according to Mohammed and Obeleagu-Nzelibe (2024), help small-scale business enterprise to maintain optimal and effective operations. It is therefore crucial for owners of small-scale businesses to adopt suitable entrepreneurial skills in their daily business operations.

The entrepreneurial management skills that has the potential to enhance the performance of small scale business enterprises. According to Ayiku and Grant (2021) entrepreneurial management skills includes marketing skills, financial management, strategic planning and financial management skills. As observed by Fatoki, (2021), entrepreneurial management skills includes communication skills, time management skills, innovative skills, customer retention skills, marketing skills, teamwork, problem solving, leadership skills, planning and organising, self-management, learning skills and technology skills, among others. Logose (2022) noted that in this competitive business environment, whether entrepreneurs are starting a new venture or driving growth in an existing business, having a strong entrepreneurial management skill set is a key determinant of long-term success and financial stability. Financial management skills are required to manage capital in an efficient and effective way so as to accomplish the financial obligations of the business. Although there exist several entrepreneurial management skills that can promote performance small-scale business enterprises, this study focuses financial management skills and marketing skills

Financial management skills entail the ability to manage cash flow, budgeting, and financial projections to enhance the performance of small business enterprises. Financial management skills refer to the ability to plan, organize, direct, and control the financial resources of an organization or individual (Abdul, 2018). These competencies are essential for effective performance of small business enterprises, minimizing risks, ensuring regulatory compliance, and maximizing profitability and sustainable long-term growth. According to Ng'ora et al (2022) financial management skills are the cornerstone of small business survival and profitability. Owners who master budgeting, cash flow tracking, and bookkeeping avoid critical pitfalls like fund mismanagement and illiquidity, ultimately boosting overall return on investment and business sustainability

Financial management skills are critical for small-scale business enterprises. They enable optimal resource allocation, optimize cash flow, and guide informed decision-making. These skills directly enhances profitability, ensures daily liquidity, mitigates financial risks, and provides the structured financial reports required to secure external funding Orji *et al* (2023). Effective financial management directly drives business performance and long-term sustainability through several key advantages such as cash flow optimization, enhanced



profitability, data-driven decision making, easier access to credit and risk mitigation (Orji *et al* 2023). Sound financial management skills empower owners to identify financial pitfalls early, navigate market volatility, and build financial reserves to buffer against unexpected economic shocks. Effective financial management and marketing skills limit the vulnerabilities of small scale business enterprises to adverse economic conditions.

Marketing skills are the abilities used to promote business performance, advertise, and sell products or services. They blend creativity with analytical thinking to understand customer behaviour, build brand awareness, and drive sales effectively. These are broadly categorized into technical (hard) and interpersonal (soft) competencies. Marketing skills are about communicating the value of the tangible and service products to the customers, for the purpose of selling. Marketing skills are abilities and competencies that enable small-scale business enterprise owners to effectively identify, reach and satisfy their target customers (Kotler and Keller, 2020). These skills encompass a range of activities, including market research, product development, pricing strategies, promotional techniques and customer relationship management. For small-scale businesses, marketing skills are crucial for their effective performance and overall competitiveness (Reijonen, 2020). Marketing skills are certain invaluable skill sets that have incredible potential to persuade, sell and build lasting customer relationships. Effective marketing strategies can help small-scale businesses to better understand their target market, differentiate their products or services, and create customer loyalty, all of which contribute to their performance.

Small-scale business owners who possess strong marketing skills are better equipped to make informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and respond to changes in the market. According to Olawale and Garwe (2020), marketing skills are skills that allow marketers to build a brand, explain that brand, identify a target market and sell products within the market. It is the strategy that drives a business to growth and operational sustainability. Instead of focusing on short-term results, marketing skills help win customers for the long haul by ensuring long-term brand affinity and loyalty (Popescu, *et al* 2019). With the right tactics, marketing skills boost product sales, increase profit and performance (Popescu, *et al* 2019). Effective marketing skills help to build a company's reputation. Proper marketing skills help to bring consumers and products together. Wale-Awe (2024) reported that the importance of marketing skills in a business is that it makes the customers aware of products or services, engages them and helps them make the buying decision. Based on this background, the present study intend to investigate relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Statement of the problem

Small-scale business enterprises are expected to operate profitably, retain market share, and remain solvent long enough to contribute meaningfully to employment and internally generated revenue. In Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, however, the performance of these enterprises falls short of this expectation. Preliminary visits by the researchers to registered small-scale enterprises in the area revealed declining sales turnover, difficulty meeting recurrent financial obligations, shrinking customer bases, and a pattern of premature closure, with several enterprises ceasing operations within the first few years of establishment. This pattern is consistent with wider evidence on early-stage business mortality: Fatoki (2021) reports that a substantial proportion of small enterprises in developing economies fail within their first five years, largely as a result of weak management rather than adverse market conditions alone.



The consequences of this poor performance extend beyond the individual enterprise. Business closures reduce the internally generated revenue accruable to the state, displace workers into an already saturated labour market, and erode the local entrepreneurial base that new ventures would otherwise draw upon. Where enterprises survive but underperform, they operate below capacity, absorb resources without generating commensurate returns, and remain unable to access the credit that would allow expansion. What remains unclear is why performance is so uneven among enterprises operating within the same market, under the same regulatory conditions, and facing the same infrastructural constraints. This suggests that the determinants of performance may lie less in the external environment than in the managerial competence of the owner-managers themselves. Windapo (2018) attributes high SME mortality to a perceived deficiency in managerial skills among entrepreneurs, while Atandi (2021) maintains that enterprises managed with sound entrepreneurial management skills record measurably better performance outcomes. Yet these claims have not been empirically tested among small-scale enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, and the specific skill areas most closely associated with performance in this setting remain unidentified. It is against this background that the problem of this study is posed as a question: to what extent do entrepreneurial management skills (specifically financial management skills and marketing skills) relate to the performance of small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State
2. To determine the relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Research questions

The following research questions was raised for the purpose of the study.

1. What is the relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State
2. There is no significant relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Research method

This study adopted a correlational research design. This design is appropriate for this study because it helped to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study comprise 1389 managers in registered Small-scale business enterprises, Nigeria. This population is considered appropriate for the study because it is expected that the managers and employees of Small-scale business enterprises have



experience about the impact of entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises and would be able to supply responses for the questionnaire used in the study. The sample size for the study was 311 respondents drawn from the target population using Taro Yamane formula through simple random sampling technique. A cluster and simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study from the list of the registered small scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

The instrument entitled “Entrepreneurial Management Skills and Performance of Small-scale Business Enterprises Questionnaire (EMSPSBEQ)” was used to generate data for this study. It was structured to cover all variables under the study. The instruments was divided into three parts A, B and C. Part A sought information on respondents’ demographic variables while Part B contained items on the independent variables (Entrepreneurial Management Skills) and part C contained information on the dependent variable (Performance of Small-scale Business Enterprises). Respondents were expected to indicate by ticking (✓) the information provided as they relate with the items.

Face validation of the instrument adopted in this study. This would involve giving out the instrument to three experts from the Department of psychological foundations of Education, Faculty of Education and two in the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, University of Uyo to scrutinize, assess the items and make corrections on the items. The suggestions of these experts would be incorporated into the final copy of the instruments before administration to the target respondents. The reliability of the instrument in this study established using trial test reliability method. The researcher administered the questionnaire on 30 manager in small scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, who were not take part in the main study. At the end of test administration, data collected from the two instrument were subjected to analysis using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient statistics and the overall reliability coefficient of the two instruments stood for 0.88 and 0.83 respectively which was deemed adequate for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in answering the research questions and in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

Results

The result of this study is presented based on research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: Relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	r-cal	Decision
Financial management skills	22455	649150	547941	0.89	Strong positive relationship
Performance of Small-scale business	421025	751715			

n=311

The result in Table 1 above reveals that the correlation coefficient (r) between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State is 0.89. This indicated that strong positive relationship



between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2: Relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	r-cal	Decision
Marketing skills	52485	748038			Strong positive relationship
Performance of Small-scale business	421025	751715	446477	0.77	

n=311

The result in Table 2 above reveals that the correlation coefficient (r) between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State is 0.77. This shows that strong relationship exists between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of the relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	r-cal
Financial management skills	22455	649150		
Performance of Small-scale business	421025	751715	547941	0.89*

n=311, *Significant $P < .05$, $df = 198$; critical r-value = 0.139

The result presented in Table 3 reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.89 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.111 at 309 degrees of freedom and .05 alpha levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is a significant relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State



Table 4: Correlation Analysis of marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	r-cal
Marketing skills	52485	748038	446477	0.77*
Performance of Small-scale business	421025	751715		

$n=311$, *Significant $P < .05$, $df = 198$; critical r -value = 0.139

The result presented in Table 4 revealed that the calculated r -value of 0.77 is greater than the critical r -value of 0.11 at 309 degrees of freedom and .05 alpha levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Findings of the Study

The results of the data analysis revealed the following findings:

1. Strong positive relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State
2. Strong relationship exists between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State
3. There is a significant relationship between financial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State
4. There is a significant relationship between marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Discussion of Finding

Financial Management Skills and Performance of Small-Scale Business Enterprises

The finding presented in Tables 1 and 3, showed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between financial management skills and the performance of small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area ($r = 0.89$, $df = 309$, $p < .05$). The coefficient indicates that enterprises whose owner-managers reported higher competence in budgeting, cash flow tracking, record-keeping, and financial projection also reported higher performance across profitability, liquidity, and operational measures. The magnitude of the association is notable: a coefficient of this size suggests that financial management competence accounts for a substantial share of the variation in performance observed among enterprises operating in the same market.

A plausible explanation lies in the immediacy of financial decisions in small-scale operations. Unlike larger firms, small enterprises rarely employ dedicated accounting staff, so the owner-manager's personal capacity to track receipts, separate business from personal funds, and anticipate cash shortfalls determines directly whether the enterprise remains solvent from month to month. Where this capacity is absent, the enterprise may be profitable on paper yet still fail through illiquidity. This interpretation is consistent with Ng'ora et al. (2022), who identified financial literacy as a determinant of survival and profitability among small enterprises in low-income economies, and with Orji et al. (2023), who found that managerial financial competence in Jabi District, Abuja, predicted both profitability and the ability to secure external funding. The present finding extends that evidence to a South-South Nigerian setting not previously examined. The result also lends empirical support to Windapo's (2018) contention that deficiencies in managerial skill account for much of the observed mortality among small enterprises. Where



Windapo inferred this from firm outcomes, the present study measures the skill dimension directly and finds it strongly associated with performance in the expected direction.

Marketing Skills and Performance of Small-Scale Business Enterprises

The finding, presented in Tables 2 and 4, showed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between marketing skills and the performance of small-scale business enterprises ($r = 0.77$, $df = 309$, $p < .05$). Owner-managers who reported greater competence in identifying target customers, promoting products, pricing, and maintaining customer relationships also reported stronger enterprise performance.

This is consistent with Ayiku and Grant (2021), who reported a positive association between entrepreneurial marketing competence and small-business performance in Ghana, and with Popescu et al. (2019), who found managerial marketing capability to be a determinant of SME performance across European Union contexts. It also aligns with Asabi et al. (2023), whose study of small businesses in Oyo State identified marketing competence as one of three managerial skills with a direct effect on market share and profitability. That the relationship holds in Eket — a smaller and more informal market than those examined in the Ghanaian, European, or Oyo State studies — suggests the association is not confined to comparatively formalised business environments.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it is concluded that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial management skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The result also indicated that strong positive relationship existed between financial management skills, marketing skills and performance of Small-scale business enterprises in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. It is also concluded that entrepreneurial management skills help small-scale business enterprise to maintain optimal and effective performance. It is therefore crucial for owners of small-scale businesses to adopt suitable entrepreneurial skills in their daily business operations. The entrepreneurial management skills that has the potential to enhance the performance of small scale business enterprises

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Entrepreneurs should strive to acquire entrepreneurial management skills if it is not innate in them as this will help to improve performance of their businesses.
2. Financial management skills should be acquired by entrepreneurs to enable them manage financial flow of their business.
3. Training on entrepreneurial management skills should be carry out periodically to enable them to develop the ability to their business enterprises effectively.
4. Marketing skills should be acquire by business entrepreneurs as this will help to enhance the performance of their businesses.

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