

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATION ABILITY OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN RIVERS STATE

Dr. Joy Amesi

Business Education Department, Faculty of Technical & Science Education,
Rivers State University Of Science & Technology, P. M. B. 5080, Port-Harcourt, Rivers
State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *The study investigated entrepreneurship business and communication ability of female entrepreneurs in Rivers State. Two research questions were posed to guide the study while one hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A total of 245 female entrepreneurs were studied as sample, out of population of 750 female entrepreneurs in Rivers State. The instrument for the study was named Entrepreneurship Business and Communication Ability of Female Entrepreneurs in Rivers State Questionnaire (EBCAFERSQ). The EBCAFERSQ was a modified four point Likert scale ranging from Very Important to Not Important. Twenty (20) female entrepreneurs other than those used for the study validated the instrument and a reliability test using test-retest method yielded a correlation of 0.87. Mean rating and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions and t-test for large group mean was used to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that the respondents considered communication ability important in business success. Also, the respondents considered communication ability important as it is part of what makes them succeed in entrepreneurship business. Based on the findings and conclusions, recommendations made amongst others were that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) should organize sensitization workshops and seminars in all local government areas within the State to create adequate awareness about communication ability and its' important to entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs should educate non female entrepreneurs on the important of communication ability in relation to entrepreneurship business growth and success. This could become possible if female entrepreneurs provide outlets for orientation.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship Business, Communication Ability, Female Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneur, Interplay, Effective, Methods,

INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of attention paid to the subject of entrepreneurship as a means of sustaining the economy of the nation; and this has stemmed primarily from the findings of economic analysts that small firms contribute considerably to economic growth and development. Moreover, many men and women have chosen entrepreneurial careers because doing so seems to offer them greater economic and psychological rewards than does the large company route (Zahra & George, 2002). Entrepreneurship helps to develop pool potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped with skill and technical know-how to manage small and medium scale industries (Amesi, 2011).

Entrepreneurship has a long history in Nigeria. During the colonial era, the concern of the British colonial administration was mostly commercial, and was aimed at promoting the transfer of agricultural commodities to Europe, and the industrialization policy at that time was modest in nature (Nwachukwu, 1990). As a result, after the transfer of power in 1960,

Nigeria continued her dependence on imported European commodities and technology and colonial policy then did not permit indigenous technological development (Amesi, 2011). The absence of a national and industrial development policy did considerable damage to the Nigerian economy (Ottih, 1998). Also, market conditions such as competitors, improper attitudes (laziness, extensive vacating, over commitment and unethical behaviours) made it more difficult for private entrepreneurs to appreciate returns on new investments. Due to the difficulty in running ever-larger factories efficiently and foreign debt crisis, the Nigerian government came to play an increasingly prominent role as investment allocators (Akpomi, 2008).

CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEUR/ ENTREPRENEURS/ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The term entrepreneur is synonymous with independent business activity. Different scholars have defined the term entrepreneur in a variety of ways. These scholars use different indices in defining the concept, owing to their different cultural, academic, environmental and social backgrounds. Osuala (1995) recognized entrepreneurs as those who possess a willingness to take risks while others stand to talk; identify opportunities to which others are blind and develop optimum confidence in themselves well beyond that of others. Nwachukwu (1990) viewed entrepreneurs as people, who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. To Nwachukwu, an entrepreneur is a risk taker, a man who braves uncertainty, strikes out his own and through devotion to duty and singleness of purpose somehow creates a business and industrial activity where none existed before.

According to Amaewhule (1996), entrepreneur is an individual whose function is to carry out new contributions called “enterprises, innovation and creativity”. To buttress the fact, Falkang & Alberti (2000) perceived entrepreneurs as people with entrepreneurial spirit. People with entrepreneurial spirit are likely to have knowledge and skills requirements unique and different from other kinds of entrepreneurial types, that is potential entrepreneurs, managers of entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial sympathizers. Functionally, the entrepreneur will be assumed in this study to include any person who owns a business. To this end, anyone who owns a bookshop, restaurant, beauty salon or super market, fast food joint, nail manufacturing company, printing press, and so on is a sole trader or an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking, reasoning and acting that is opportunity based and holistic in approach (Ezeh, 1998). Entrepreneurship according to Akpomi (2008) stimulates and promotes economy, while entrepreneurs are innovators and job creators. Accordingly, Amesi (2011) viewed entrepreneurship as a mission for self-employment and poverty alleviation, which is the hope of many Nigerians in entrepreneurship businesses. To Amesi, entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. An entrepreneur is one who organizes and manages a business and assumes the risk of the enterprise (Ashmore, 1990). It has to do with doing, achieving, and building an enterprise or organization, rather than just watching, analyzing, or describing one. It refers to the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial, and then do everything possible to get the odds in your favour (Wikipedia, 2008). David (2008) perceived entrepreneurship as the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. This ability according to David should be acquired and should differ in some respects from the abilities required to enable a person obtain an employment. It involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for self-reliance. Agbaeze

(2007) recognized entrepreneurship as that which is associated with different kinds of activities that have to do with the establishment and operations of business enterprise and such activities may include identification to exploit for profit, promotion and establishment of business enterprise. Others to Agbaeze are distribution of goods and services, organization and management of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, risk bearing and innovation.

From the perspective of the researcher, there is no much dissimilarity between entrepreneur, entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, what appear to be difference between the concepts is that while entrepreneur is describing the person or the actor, entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is talking about the actions, efforts, abilities, risk, skills, efforts, process or sometimes the business unit itself. Based on this, entrepreneurship is the process by which individual entrepreneurs on their own or inside organizations pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control.

Interplay with Communication Ability and Entrepreneurship Business

Communication occupies an important and central place in an organization. The scope of a business organization and the society entirely determines the manner, nature and technique of communication. Communication ability is by and large the foundation upon which entrepreneurship business is built (Nwaogwugwu & Okoye, 2009). Azuka & Agomuo (2002) viewed communication ability as the process of exchanging ideas, opinions, or emotions between two persons. This according to Azuka & Agomuo and Dollinger (2003) is the passing of information from one person to another (the entrepreneur to customers) by the use of words, letters, telephone, reports, invoices, body gesture, orders and symbols. Communication ability is an important aspect of female entrepreneurs in business and it is the only process that links the female entrepreneurs and their customers to function effectively (Amesi, 2011). According to Amesi, for communication to originate, a message must be composed, transmitted and understood. Communication ability among female entrepreneurs evolved from psychology, manner, style, circumstance, environment and ethics in which communication is taking place. Denyer (1998) perceived that communication ability is dependent on one's ability and skill to listen, read, write, and speak. To Denyer, communication ability is the ability and skill of female entrepreneurs to get in touch with other people (customers and others) as well as getting the right feedback.

Tips for Effective Communication Ability

Gorman, Harlon & King (1997) and Taylor (1997) observed that for any entrepreneur to succeed in business venture, such entrepreneur must have the following tips as basic means for effective communication ability:

- i. **Think clearly:** Clarity of message and language cannot be in doubt if an entrepreneur's thinking is clear. Therefore, for any female entrepreneur to succeed in business such entrepreneur needs to think first before committing her ideas into writing or speaking.
- ii. **Assemble facts:** For female entrepreneurs to succeed in business, such entrepreneur needs to jot down the important points as she think about her business idea or issue. Also every entrepreneur that aspires to succeed needs to jot down any point of reference (if any) concerning the business and the way the business will grow to greater levels (Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005).
- iii. **Arrange your points:** Every successful entrepreneur sort point into logical sequence before she commits her ideas, information, opinions, and so on into writing. For one to be a

successful entrepreneur, you have to make your reference handy and do not pass on information you are not sure of concerning your business (Amesi, 2010; Amanda, 2008).

- iv. **Good listening habit before jumping into conclusion:** Good listening demands attention and concentration in business venture. For any female entrepreneur to succeed effectively in her business, such entrepreneur needs to be able to understand what customers actually want and concentrate on the demands of the customers. Lack of understanding can lead customers or people to hasty and premature conclusion concerning your business (Alanis, 2009).
- v. **Reading:** For any female entrepreneur to succeed in business such one must be able to read and write effectively (Gorman et al, 1997). Reading as part of communication ability enables female entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship business to successfully carry out the operation of their business.
- vi. **Body gesture:** This is another way of communicating with customers or neighbours, and it is very important as it speaks volume about us. When an entrepreneur is not happy or angry, it shows in either the movement of that entrepreneur or body reflection, it is very necessary for an entrepreneur to try to manage her motion while talking to customers as it is often said that first appearance of one in any event or business matters a lot to his or her customers (Amesi, 2011).
- vii. **Spoken Language:** This is also another way we express our self while communicating, it is necessary to say that as an entrepreneur in business, one thing that is most needed is for us to be able to control our temperament. If we can control and coordinate ourselves effectively in attending to our customers in business, then we are sure of achieving success (Amesi, 2011).

METHODS FOR COMMUNICATION ABILITY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP BUSINESS

To buttress this view on communication ability Denyer (1998); Azuka & Agomuo (2002); Dollinger (2003); Nwaogwugwu & Okoye (2009) and Amesi (2011) perceived that some of the methods for communication ability in entrepreneurship business are:

- a. **Transportation:** This is very vital in the area of communication to enable the entrepreneur to succeed, the entrepreneur has to transport her goods effectively to her business point as at and when due to ensure that customers do not lose their money or time in waiting for their goods to be delivered. Talking about transportation as an aspect of communication ability, the entrepreneur has to ensure that all goods bought are delivered and transported to the owners (Amesi, 2011 and Denyer, 1998).
- b. **Workshops and seminars on ability development in communication:** Entrepreneurs that actually want to succeed in business can occasionally organize and also attend workshops and seminars. Workshops and seminars according to Azuka & Agomuo (2002) are aspects of methods and communication ability that make an entrepreneur to be successful in business because in it, entrepreneurs are thought how to facilitate the achievement of goal of improving their business among their equals.
- c. **Good planning:** Good communication needs planning; lack of planning is a bane to effective communication (Dollinger, 2003). For a female entrepreneur to effectively succeed in business venture, the purpose of communication must be understood between the entrepreneur and his or her subordinates or customers. To this, Nwaogwugwu & Okoye (2009) viewed that good planning in entrepreneurship business enhance business success and that good communication planning promotes every business venture thereby, making such a business to be successful. It is in this regard that the study sought to investigate the issue of entrepreneurship business and communication ability of female entrepreneurs in Rivers State.

Research Questions

Two basic questions answered in this study are:

1. How important do female entrepreneurs in Rivers State consider communication ability?
2. How important do female entrepreneurs in Rivers State succeed through communication ability?

Hypotheses

Only one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significant. (1) There is no significant difference in the mean rating of female entrepreneurs on how important communication ability is and how they succeed through communication ability.

METHOD

The study area is in Rivers State. The design of the study was a survey research design. The population of the study was 750 female entrepreneurs in Rivers State. The sample for the study was 40 percent of the total population, given a total of 300 female entrepreneurs. The sampling techniques used was simple random sampling techniques. Data for the study was collected using an instrument (questionnaire) named Entrepreneurship Business and Communication Ability of Female Entrepreneurs in Rivers State Questionnaire (EBCAFERSQ). The EBCAFERSQ was a modified four point Likert scale, designed as Very Important = 4 points, Important = 3 points, Fairly Important = 2 points and Not Important = 1 point, with 10 question items to elicit answers to the research questions. Part A of the instrument has two question items while part B has eight (8) question items which gave answers to the research questions posed in the study. Test-retest method was used to test the reliability of the items with face and content validity. The validity was done by twenty (20) female entrepreneurs other than those used for the study and a reliability co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained. Mean rating and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions and t-test for large group mean was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS

It is necessary to state that not all the questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents, and as such, the researcher worked with 245 questionnaire that was retrieved out of 300 questionnaire distributed to the respondents. The results obtained from the study are shown on the tables below:

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on How Important Communication Ability is (N = 245 and Mid point = 2.50)

S/n	Item	Mean	S.D	Remarks
1.	Ability and skill to listen, read, write, and speak is necessary in business.	3.55	0.67	Very Important
2.	Establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise through writing and speaking.	3.29	0.63	Important
3.	Lead, direct, motivate and create a climate in which customers want to contribute.	3.42	0.69	Important
4.	Getting in touch with other people (customers and others) as well as getting the right feedback.	3.51	0.60	Very Important
Total Mean/S.D =		13.77	2.59	
Grand Mean/S.D =		3.44	0.65	

Table 1 shows that the respondents considered some of the items in the table very important and other items important. The items that were considered to be very important includes; ability and skill to listen, read, write, and speak is necessary in business, which ranked highest with a mean score of 3.55; followed by getting in touch with other people (customers and others) as well as getting the right feedback, with a mean score of 3.51. The items that were considered important in the table includes; lead, direct, motivate and create a climate in which customers want to contribute, with mean score of 3.42 and establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise through writing and speaking, with a mean score of 3.29. The grand mean of 3.44 and standard deviation of 0.65 shows that the respondents considered communication ability important in business success.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on How Important they Succeed through Communication Ability

(N = 245 and Mid point = 2.50)

S/n	Item	Mean	S.D	Remarks
5.	Understanding what customers actually want and concentrate on the demands of the customers is essential in business.	3.67	0.53	Very Important
6.	Transporting goods effectively to the business point as at and when due is necessary.	3.60	0.66	Very Important
7.	Jotting down any point of reference (if any) concerning the business helps the business to grow to greater level.	3.38	0.77	Important
8.	Workshops and seminars on ability development helps the entrepreneurs to succeed in business.	3.47	0.66	Important
Total Mean/S.D =		14.12	2.62	
Grand Mean/S.D =		3.53	0.66	

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents as they considered some of the items in the table very important and others important. Items considered very important includes; understanding what customers actually want and concentrate on the demands of the customers is essential in business, ranked first with a mean score of 3.67, followed by transporting goods effectively to the business point as at and when due is necessary (mean = 3.60). Workshops and seminars on ability development helps the entrepreneurs to succeed in business with mean score of 3.47 and jotting down any point of reference (if any) concerning the business as it helps the business to grow to greater level, with mean score of 3.38 were considered important by the respondents. The grand mean and standard deviation of 3.53 and 0.66 respectively, proves that the respondents considered communication ability important as it is part of what makes them succeed in entrepreneurship business.

T-test of Difference between Female Entrepreneurs on Communication Ability and Success

	Mean	S.D	Num.	Df	Std. Error	T-Cal	T-Crit.	Remarks
Success	14.12	2.62	245	243	0.33	1.06	1.96	Accepted
Ability	13.77	2.59						

Since the T- calculated value of 1.06 is less than the T-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05, the hypothesis is therefore accepted that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of female entrepreneurs on how important communication ability is and how they succeed through communication ability. It therefore proves that communication ability is a necessity in entrepreneurship business.

DISCUSSION

The findings proved that female entrepreneurs were of the views that communication ability is a necessity in entrepreneurship business. This finding is in agreement with the views of Azuka & Agomuo (2002) and Dollinger (2003) who perceived that communication ability is the passing on of information from one person to another (the entrepreneur to customers) by the use of words, letters, telephone, reports, invoices, body gesture, orders and symbols. Porterfield & Kleiner (2005) buttressed the findings by affirming that, for female entrepreneurs to succeed in business, such entrepreneur needs to jot down the important points as she think about her business idea or issue and also need to learn how to communicate effectively in her area of business. In agreement with the view of Azuka & Agomuo and Dollinger, and Porterfield & Kleiner, Amanda (2008) perceived that communication ability is necessary in entrepreneurship business because it helps every female entrepreneur sort point into logical sequence before she commits her ideas, information, opinions, and so on into writing, which is the ability and skill they have to get in touch with other people (customers and others) as well as getting the right feedback. In agreement to the words of Azuka & Agomuo and Dollinger, Porterfield & Kleiner, and Amanda, Nwaogwugwu & Okoye (2009) depicts that communication ability is by and large the foundation upon which entrepreneurship business is built upon. Agreeing to this fact, Amesi (2011) illustrates that communication ability is an important aspect of female entrepreneurs in business and it is the only process that links the female entrepreneurs and their customers to function effectively. In confirmation to this, the researcher writes that communication ability is the process of exchanging ideas, opinions, or emotions between two persons and for any entrepreneurship business to succeed, communication must take place. This is so because the ability to communicate effectively in one's business enhances growth in that business. The most important thing to note here is that communication ability is very effective and important in entrepreneurship business growth and has contributed to business success as it also helps us in one way or the other in both academic and individual lives.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it implies that:

1. Female entrepreneurs in Rivers State require communication ability for them to succeed in their entrepreneurship business.

2. The need for emphasis on communication ability of entrepreneurs is of utmost necessity in all aspects of entrepreneurship business in Rivers State.
3. Entrepreneurs in rural and urban areas who do not regard effective communication ability as a necessity in business can in one way or the other appreciate the important of communication ability as encouragement to business success.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and data analysis relating to entrepreneurship business and communication ability of female entrepreneurs, it was concluded that the developed EBCAFERSQ is a valid and reliable rating instrument that could be used in assessing entrepreneurship business and communication ability of female entrepreneurs. Consequent upon the findings of this study, discussions and conclusions drawn there from, the researcher proffers the following recommendations, which should be beneficial to the Government, Female Entrepreneurs, and Intending Entrepreneurs.

1. Government should organize seminars in the State about the important of communication ability for both businesses and organization.
2. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) should organize sensitization workshops and seminars in all local government areas within the State to create adequate awareness about communication ability and its' important to entrepreneurs.
3. Establishment of adequate communication networks to assist female entrepreneurs in both rural and urban areas is very essential as this could be actualized if important of communication ability could be taken seriously in rural areas, since this would foster better pathways for them (the entrepreneurs).
4. Female entrepreneurs should educate non female entrepreneurs on the important of communication ability in relation to entrepreneurship business growth and success. This could become possible if female entrepreneurs provide outlets for orientation.

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