

Servicing Skills Needed by Managers and Workers in Micro Business in Ondo State

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated the servicing skills needed by managers and workers in Micro Business. The study employed a survey research design and it was conducted in the three senatorial zones in Ondo State. The population of the study was 730 respondents made up of 563 respondents. Two hypotheses were analysed using mean and standard deviation at 0.05 level of significance. A Likert scale of 14 structured questionnaire items was used for data collection. The reliability co-efficient was 0.948 which was calculated using Guttman split-half, findings revealed that the managers and workers lack the servicing skill which will be needed for the business to grow, when there is servicing skill, there will be high rate of patronage, conclusion and recommendation was drawn that the managers and workers needs training in order to acquire the skills needed.*

KEYWORDS: servicing skills, micro business, managers, workers

INTRODUCTION

Micro-businesses is a type of small business often registered with five or fewer employees and requiring seed capital of not more than N75,000. The Small Business Administration (SBA) (2021) provides a concise definition of a micro business as a firm that employs between 1 and 9 employees. A micro business is typically characterised as a tiny enterprise that employs nine individuals or less and has a balance sheet or turnover below a specific threshold (Wikipedia, 2021). Micro businesses or micro-enterprises contribute to a country's economy by generating employment opportunities, increasing income levels, bolstering buying power, reducing expenses, and providing business ease. A micro-business cannot operate without a management. A manager has the capacity to be the proprietor of a business. Managers often have the primary responsibility for overseeing a certain function or department within the organisation. (John, 2020). The

individual in question has the potential to own the initial investment funds and assume the role of employing the workforce. They are a someone entrusted with the task of overseeing and guiding the endeavours of others. The micro-business manager is accountable for directing the endeavours of their personnel towards achieving the organization's intended objectives. The primary duty of a manager is to ensure that the marketing activities are executed in a manner that results in the company generating profit. For a firm to sustain its operations, it is imperative that it generates profit. The main objective of a small-scale company management is to achieve a break-even point, sustain the firm, and enhance its performance.

According to Wikipedia (2021), skill refers to the acquired proficiency in carrying out a certain task with precise outcomes, often within a specified timeframe and with optimal performance, including the utilisation of time, energy, or both. Skill acquisition refers to the attainment of sufficient competence, expertise, and understanding to effectively perform a certain task or role. The acquisition of skills is both practical and academically driven. Acquiring skills requires significant effort, and to ensure effective skill development, it is necessary to repeatedly practice a certain task. Individuals must possess a diverse set of abilities in order to make valuable contributions to a contemporary economy. A micro-business manager must possess a high level of expertise in order to effectively carry out management activities and fulfil various roles. The primary purpose of every entrepreneur is to optimise profitability and attain success, which is contingent upon their management acumen and the calibre of their workforce.

Brian (2008) has delineated six essential marketing management abilities that are necessary for the effective functioning of a micro firm. Servicing competence is a component of the six marketing management skills. Service skills refer to the qualities and actions that enable an individual to effectively meet client requirements and provide a favourable customer experience. The focus is mostly on problem-solving and communication.

The economic importance of micro-business enterprises to a nation encompasses several key factors, such as the generation of job possibilities, a significant contribution to the gross domestic product, the promotion of entrepreneurship, the establishment of self-employment prospects, and the advancement of technology. The Ondo State administration is determined to address the prevailing poverty in the state. Previous administrations, as well as the current administration, provided financial assistance to state residents in the form of loans to facilitate the establishment of their own businesses. A lack of skills can negatively impact the rate at which resources are converted into profits, perhaps resulting in insufficient funds for corporate growth and the proper management of materials and personnel. Consequently, the firm may enter a state of decline and the repayment of loans will become a challenging endeavour.

The purpose of the study is to determine the servicing skills needed by managers and workers in micro business.

Research Question

1. What are servicing skills needed by managers and workers in micro-business?

Research Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of the managers and workers on the servicing skills needed by micro-business managers in Ondo State.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a survey research. This method involves the collection of data from the field in order to answer research questions. The study was conducted in three senatorial zones of Ondo State, viz: Ondo North, Ondo Central and Ondo South. The population for the study consisted of 730 respondents made up of 280 managers and 450 workers. The sample of the study size derived through Yamane Formula is 256 respondents made of 98 managers and 158 employees in the three senatorial zones. Three experts in Vocational Teacher Education were given the draft of the instrument, the purpose of the study and the research questions for face validity. To determine the reliability of the instruments, Test-retest was used; the respondents were not part of the final sample used. The data from the Test-retest of the questionnaire were analyzed by using Guttman split-half, the reliability co-efficient is 0.95, the questionnaires were given personally to the managers and the workers. A Five- point Rating Scale made up of eleven structured questionnaire items was used for the collection of data for this study.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the servicing skills needed by managers and workers in micro business?

The data collected were analyzed to answer this research question as shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Customer Service Skills Needed by Managers in Micro-Business

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	VMN	MN	FN	SN	NN	X	SD	DECISION
1	Possess knowledge of the history and objectives of the organization	3	9	67	216	268	1.69	0.78	Slightly needed
2	Formulate realistic goals	11	3	84	279	188	1.88	0.81	Slightly needed
3	Management of time effectively	6	17	96	209	235	1.84	0.88	Slightly needed
4	Provide recognition for customer	5	17	83	217	241	1.80	0.86	Slightly needed
5	Develop rapport with customers	9	13	110	198	233	1.87	0.91	Slightly needed
6	Develop problem solving skills	15	17	101	228	202	1.96	0.94	Slightly needed
7	Employ the problem solving approach	6	25	112	229	191	1.98	0.90	Slightly needed
8	Conduct discussions, panels, symposia and other technique with customers	41	40	114	225	143	2.30	1.14	Slightly needed
9	Deal with complains	31	24	102	192	214	2.05	1.10	Slightly needed
10	Promote effective relationship with customers	8	27	109	207	212	1.95	0.94	Slightly needed

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11	Present information in a seminar	8	50	115	206	184	2.09	1.00	Slightly needed
12	Present information with the assistance of a resources person	3	16	134	262	148	2.04	0.81	Slightly needed
13	Encourage customers to ask questions, conduct telephone/ratio conversation with customers	11	21	72	201	258	1.80	0.93	Slightly needed
14	Establish rapport with customers	12	16	89	229	217	1.89	0.91	Slightly needed

On item 1, there were 3 respondents for very much needed, 9 for much needed, 67 for fairly needed, 216 for slightly needed and 268 for not needed, and the mean score is 1.69, indicating that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need to possess knowledge of the history and objectives of the organization. On item 2, respondents for very much needed were 11, much needed were 3, 84 for fairly needed, 279 for slightly needed, 188 for not needed and the mean score is 1.88. This indicated that managers and workers in micro business slightly need the skill to formulate realistic goals.

With reference to item 3, very much needed was 6, much needed was 17, fairly needed was 96, slightly needed 209, not needed 235 and the mean score is 1.84. This indicated that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need the skill of management of time effectively.

In respect of item 4, out of total of 563, there were 5 respondents for very much needed, 17 for much needed, 83 for fairly needed, 217 for slightly needed, 241 for not needed and the mean score is 1.80. The implication of this is that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need the skill for recognition for customers.

Item 5, presented 9 respondents for very much needed, 13 for much needed, 110 for fairly needed, 198 for slightly needed and 233 for not needed and with a mean score of 1.89 to show that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need to develop rapport with customers.

The responses for very much needed for item 6 were 15, much needed 17, fairly needed 101, slightly needed 228, and not needed 202. The mean score of 1.96 an indication that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need to develop problem solving skill.

Base on the responses to item 7, with not needed 191, slightly needed 229, fairly needed 112, much needed 25 and very much needed 6 and the mean score of 1.98, it implies that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need to employ problem solving approach skill.

With reference to item 8, there were 41 responses to very much needed, 40 to much needed, 114 to fairly needed, 225 to slightly needed, 143 to not needed and the mean score is 2.30 indicating that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need the skill of conducting discussions, panels, symposia and other techniques with customers.

On item 9, there were 31 respondents to very much needed, 24 to much needed, 102 to fairly needed, 192 to slightly needed and 214 to not needed and the mean score is 2.05 indicating that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need the skill of dealing complains.

Item 10 showed 8 respondents for very much needed, 27 for much needed, 109 for fairly needed, 207 for slightly needed 212 for not needed and the mean score is 1.95 showing that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need the skill of promoting effective relationship with customers.

There were 8 responses to item 11 for very much needed, 50 for much needed, 115 for fairly needed, 206 for slightly needed, 184 for not needed while the mean score of 2.09, to show that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need the skill of information presentation in a seminar.

On item 12, there were 3 for very much needed, 16 for much needed, 134 for fairly needed, 262 for slightly needed, 148 for not needed and 2.04 as the mean score. This implies that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need to present information with the assistance of a resource person.

On item 13, very much had respondents of 11, much needed 21, fairly needed 72, slightly needed 201, 258 for not needed and 1.80 as the mean score, indicating that managers and workers in micro-business slightly need to encourage customers to ask questions conduct television/radio conversation with customers as a skill.

On item 14, there were 12 respondents to very much needed, 16 to much needed, 89 to fairly needed, 229 to slightly needed, 217 to not needed and 1.89 as the mean score, showing that managers and workers in micro-business slightly to established rapport with customers as a skill.

Analysis of Data on hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of the managers and workers on servicing skills needed by micro business managers in Ondo State.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of mean Ratings of the responses of Managers and Employees on servicing skills needed by micro-business managers

S/N	ITEM	XM	XW	t-cal	Decision
1	Possess knowledge of the history and objectives of the organization	1.88	1.57	4.67	S
2	Formulate realistic goals	1.93	1.85	1.17	NS
3	Management of time effectively	1.94	1.78	2.08	S
4	Provide recognition for customers	1.93	1.72	2.70	S
5	Develop rapport with customers	2.06	1.75	3.92	S
6	Develop problem solving skills	2.10	1.87	2.89	S
7	Employ the problem solving approach	2.12	1.89	2.92	S
8	Conduct discussions, panels, symposia and other techniques with customers	2.26	2.32	0.40	NS
9	Deal with complains	2.04	2.05	0.08	NS
10	Promote effective relationships with customers	1.96	1.94	0.23	NS
11	Present information in a seminar	2.07	2.10	0.34	NS
12	Present information with the assistance of a resource person	1.93	2.11	2.60	S
13	Encourage customers to ask questions, conduct telephone/ radio conversation with customers	2.04	1.65	4.66	S
14	Establish rapport with customers	1.86	1.90	0.48	NS

NS- Not Significant; S = Significant; t-crit = 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant.

With reference to Table 2 above, the t-test analysis indicated that the calculated values for 8 items were greater than their critical values of t, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected, while the

calculated t- values for the other 6 items were less than the t-critical values, hence the null hypothesis was accepted for the 6 items.

Summary of Findings

1. It was found that staff in micro-business are not properly groomed and trained to obtain the required standard and this affects the smooth running of business enterprises.
2. It was also found out that most of the workers in micro business are senior secondary school certificate holders.
3. It was also found out in the responses of the respondents that managers in micro-business slightly have the servicing skills in their operation.
4. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of managers and employees on servicing skills.

CONCLUSION

Micro-business plays a very significant role by contributing immensely and crucially to economic characteristics and development of any economy. Lack of proper selection of educated and trained staff constituted constraints to effective management and growth of micro business. Micro-business managers and workers seem to neglect the importance of skills. They feel they can cope with the business without having the necessary skills. Skill acquisition is the possession of enough ability, experience and knowledge to do a particular job well. The aim of any businessman is to maximize profit and achieve success; the achievement of these objectives depends on his managerial skills and quality of those employed. A well-seasoned micro-business managers and workers should possess the necessary skills for effective expansion.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations given;

- Management should ensure that experienced, skilled, qualified, educated and trained personnel and managers and workers are employed, to assist in the smooth administration of the business.
- Ministry of commerce and industry should make concerted efforts in developing a good training programme for entrepreneurs and managers. Programmes like regular seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, on the job training should be organized and so on. These will beef up their knowledge so as to enable them to carry out their activities better.

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