

EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Oforbuike Francis NWACHUKWU

Department of Entrepreneurial Studies,
National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Abuja, Nigeria.

Email: onwachukwu@noun.edu.ng
+234-08037782878

Abstract

This study examines the impact of entrepreneurial competency on SME performance, with particular attention to their implications for business growth, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. A descriptive survey research design was employed, on a population of 14,146 registered SMEs in Enugu Metropolis. Using proportionate and simple random sampling techniques, a sample of 389 SME operators was selected. A pilot test was conducted using 20 SME operators outside the study area. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding an overall coefficient of 0.74, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data were analysed using mean and t-tests at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicate that communication competencies such as drafting letters, proposal writing, effective interpersonal communication, and electronic media usage significantly influence SME performance. Additionally, marketing competencies, including price determination, distribution channel selection, and customer identification, are vital for enhancing customer engagement and business growth. The study reveals no significant differences in perceptions of these competencies between managers and promoters. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of entrepreneurial competencies for productivity, turnover, and sustainability in SMEs. Recommendations include developing communication and marketing skills through targeted training programs and policy interventions to support SME growth in Enugu State.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial competency, Communication skills, Marketing skills, SMEs performance, Enugu state.*

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving economic environment, the ability to adapt, innovate, and solve complex problems is critical for business success. Entrepreneurs must possess a range of competencies which includes; communication, marketing, and problem-solving skills—to successfully manage and grow their enterprises. These competencies enable them to create innovative strategies, generate new ideas, and respond effectively to the challenges posed by dynamic markets. Entrepreneurial competencies are thus central to fostering business resilience and ensuring the sustainability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Adebayo et al., 2021).

SMEs are widely recognized as critical drivers of economic development and poverty alleviation, particularly in emerging economies like Nigeria. They contribute significantly to job creation, wealth generation, and the diversification of economic activities. In Enugu State, SMEs play an essential role in providing employment opportunities and supporting economic growth (ESIBR, 2023). However, many SMEs struggle to survive and thrive due to the lack of essential entrepreneurial competencies among their owners and managers (Ezeh & Onyebuchi, 2020). Communication skills, for instance, are vital for building customer relationships and promoting businesses, while marketing skills are crucial for positioning products and sustaining competitive advantage. Similarly, problem-solving skills enable

entrepreneurs to navigate operational challenges, adapt to changes in the business environment, and seize emerging opportunities (Olajide et al., 2023).

Despite their significance, these competencies are often underdeveloped among SME operators in Enugu State. Many businesses face issues such as poor customer engagement, inadequate planning, and limited market penetration, all of which can lead to reduced profitability and business failure (ESIBR, 2023). The consequences of these challenges extend beyond individual enterprises, affecting the broader economic development of the state (Nwachukwu et al., 2021). This study examines how entrepreneurial competencies influence the performance of SMEs, focusing on two key areas: the impact of communication competencies on business promotion and management, and the role of marketing competencies in driving customer engagement and growth. By addressing these questions, this study seeks to highlight the critical role of entrepreneurial competencies in ensuring the sustainability and success of SMEs in Enugu State. It explores how these skills can enhance business performance, improve customer retention, and contribute to broader economic growth.

2. Research Questions

1. To what extent does communication competence influence management of small and medium scale enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria?
2. How does marketing competence relate to management of SMEs?

3.0 Statement of Hypotheses

Based on the discussion of relevant literature surrounding the variables of communication and marketing competencies, the following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): There is no significant relationship between communication competencies and the management effectiveness of SMEs in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 2 (H₀₂): Marketing competencies do not have a significant impact on customer engagement and growth of SMEs in Enugu State.

4.0 Literature Review

Theory and Hypotheses

Theories relevant for this study are discussed in this section:

Theory of Distribution (Say, 1824)

The Theory of Distribution, proposed by Jean-Baptiste Say in 1824, emphasizes the entrepreneur's role in directing the application of knowledge to the production of goods for human consumption. Say posited that successful entrepreneurs must be adept at estimating future demand, determining input quality and timing, calculating production costs and selling prices, and managing operations effectively. This theory is particularly relevant to the current study, as it establishes the connection between entrepreneurial competencies and efficient management practices within small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The assertion that a society with a high need for achievement can produce competent entrepreneurs aligns with the idea that when entrepreneurs acquire necessary competencies, they can manage SMEs effectively, thus contributing to economic growth (Nwachukwu et al., 2021).

Schumpeter's Theory of Entrepreneurship (1961)

Joseph Schumpeter's Theory of Entrepreneurship, articulated in 1961, positions the entrepreneur as a central figure in economic development. Schumpeter characterized the entrepreneur as an innovator and dynamic agent responsible for introducing new products, entering new markets, implementing new production methods, and reorganizing industries. He described entrepreneurship as a force of "creative destruction," where established business practices are replaced by innovative methods. This theory supports the notion that entrepreneurs must acquire competencies to innovate effectively and respond to market demands. The relevance of Schumpeter's theory to the current study lies in its emphasis on innovation and its relationship with entrepreneurial competencies, which are crucial for the sustainability and growth of SMEs.

Underpinning Theory and Relevant Literature

The Schumpeter Theory of Entrepreneurship serves as the underpinning theory for this study, emphasizing the central role of the entrepreneur in economic development through innovation. Schumpeter posits that entrepreneurs are not just business owners; they are innovators who introduce new products and services, which in turn drive economic growth and societal progress (Schumpeter, 1961). This perspective highlights the significance of competencies—specifically communication and marketing skills—as vital tools that entrepreneurs use to navigate complex business environments and achieve success.

Effective communication is a cornerstone of entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurs must articulate their vision clearly, engage with stakeholders, and build strong relationships with customers. Research indicates that entrepreneurs with strong communication skills are more effective in conveying their value propositions, which leads to enhanced customer loyalty and business success. For instance, Adebayo et al. (2021) found that entrepreneurs who can effectively communicate their ideas are more likely to secure funding and partnerships, thus increasing their chances of business sustainability.

Furthermore, communication competencies are essential in crisis management and conflict resolution within organizations. A study by Parnell et al. (2020) highlights that entrepreneurs who possess strong interpersonal communication skills can better navigate challenges, fostering a positive organizational culture and enhancing employee morale. This aligns with the findings of Zafar et al. (2023), who emphasize that effective communication not only enhances customer satisfaction but also plays a crucial role in team dynamics and overall organizational performance.

Moreover, the rise of digital communication channels has transformed how entrepreneurs interact with their customers. Digital literacy, including the ability to use social media and online marketing tools, has become increasingly important. Entrepreneurs who adapt to these changes and effectively communicate through digital platforms are better positioned to reach and engage their target audiences (Osman et al., 2022).

Marketing competencies encompass a broad range of skills, including understanding market dynamics, customer preferences, and effective promotional strategies. Research shows that SMEs with proficient marketing skills are more likely to achieve higher market penetration and customer retention rates. Ezeh and Onyebuchi (2020) conducted a study revealing that SMEs that invest in understanding their customers' needs and preferences through effective marketing strategies experience significant growth compared to those that do not.

In addition to traditional marketing skills, the integration of digital marketing has reshaped the landscape for SMEs. With the increasing reliance on technology, entrepreneurs must

possess digital marketing competencies to compete effectively in the marketplace. A study by Godey et al. (2016) highlights that SMEs that leverage social media and digital marketing strategies not only improve their brand visibility but also enhance customer engagement, leading to increased sales and market share.

Furthermore, the ability to analyse market trends and adapt marketing strategies accordingly is vital for long-term success. Kamboj et al. (2020) emphasize that data-driven decision-making in marketing allows entrepreneurs to identify emerging opportunities and threats, enabling them to pivot their strategies in a rapidly changing business environment. This adaptability is particularly crucial for SMEs operating in highly competitive markets.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the promotion and management of small and medium enterprises in Enugu State, with specific focus on communication competencies and marketing competencies.

Model Relationship

The model hypothesizes that entrepreneurial competencies (independent variables) have a direct and positive effect on the promotion and management of SMEs (dependent variable). This relationship can be moderated by environmental factors, which may strengthen or weaken the impact of competencies on SME performance.

Diagrammatic representation of the model

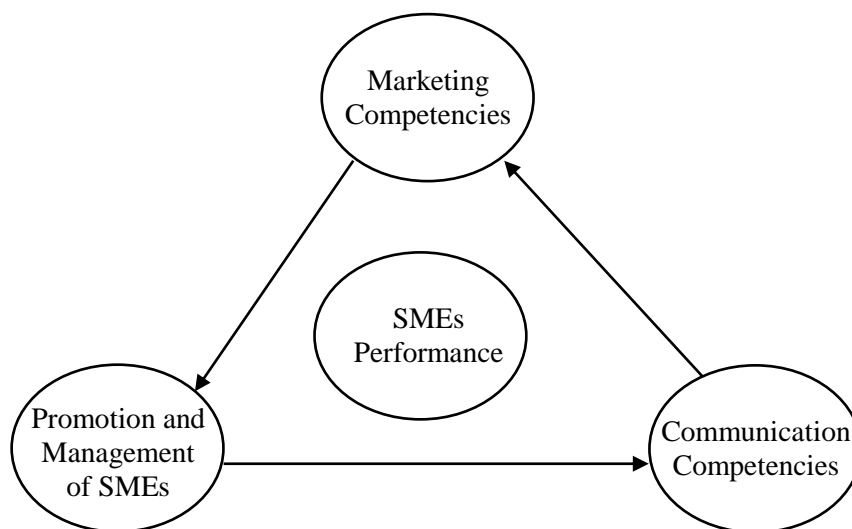


Figure 1: Author framework (2025)

At the centre of the diagram is SMEs Performance, which is the ultimate outcome influenced by the synergy of these competencies. The arrows connecting the components illustrate the dynamic and interconnected relationships among them, emphasizing that improvement in one area positively impacts the others, collectively enhancing overall SME performance.

5. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey research design is considered appropriate for this study. As noted by Nworgu (2015), this design entails examining a group of individuals or items through the collection and analysis of data obtained either from the entire population or from a representative subset. It relies on the systematic gathering of information from selected respondents in order to ascertain and

present their views on the subject under investigation. Therefore, the survey design was considered appropriate for the study as it concerns gathering of opinions and information from male and female experienced entrepreneurial managers in Enugu State. The selection of Enugu State was informed by the presence of a substantial number of registered small and medium enterprises operated by both male and female managers with varying levels of managerial experience. The state hosts a diverse range of registered enterprises operating across manufacturing, trade, agro processing, hospitality, education, construction, and service related activities. This diversity provides a broad empirical base for examining managerial practices, organisational performance, and related variables within different business contexts. The presence of both male and female managers allows for a more balanced and inclusive analysis of managerial dynamics. The coexistence of experienced and less experienced managers within the SME ecosystem also creates variation in leadership styles, decision making approaches, and operational strategies. Such heterogeneity enhances the analytical depth of the study by enabling comparative insights across managerial categories. The relatively high concentration of formally registered SMEs in the state improves access to verifiable business records and structured organisational systems, which strengthens the reliability of data collection.

The population for the study consists of all the SMEs in Enugu Metropolis. According to the Enugu State Internal Board of Revenue (ESIBR, 2023), there are approximately **14,146** registered SMEs in Enugu Metropolis.

L.G.A	Total Population
Enugu East	6,080
Enugu South	3,780
Enugu North	4,286
TOTAL	14,146

To determine the sample size for the study, the following Taro Yamane’s formula was used:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

I = constant

n = SampleSize

N = PopulationofInterest(14,146)

e = Level of Significance(0.05)

$$N = 14146 \quad n = 14146 / 1 + 14146(0.05)^2 \quad n = 14146 / 1 + 14146(0.0025) \quad n = 388.98 \approx 389$$

The sample size for the study was determined to be 389 SMEs, representing a reasonable proportion of the target population. A two-stage sampling procedure was adopted to enhance coverage and representation across the three local government areas in Enugu Metropolis. At the first stage, proportionate sampling was applied to distribute the sample across Enugu East (183 SMEs), Enugu South (113 SMEs), and Enugu North (93 SMEs) based on official SME registration records obtained from the Enugu State Internal Board of Revenue. Although these records provided an operational basis for allocation, independent verification of the figures was not undertaken, and minor discrepancies between official records and current SME distributions may therefore exist.

At the second stage, simple random sampling through balloting without replacement was used to select respondents within each area. To reduce potential selection bias associated with accessibility and availability, efforts were made to ensure that different categories of

respondents; operators, managers, promoters, and account/finance officers were approached across diverse business locations and sectors. A copy of the questionnaire was administered to each selected respondent, yielding a total of 389 administered instruments.

The researcher adopted a survey design method using primary and secondary data sources. These two sources, when combined, helped the researcher produce a study report with minimal bias or errors. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed to elicit relevant information on the influence of access to finance on the growth of agribusiness ventures in Enugu State. The questionnaire included relevant questions that directly addressed the research questions. The literature review served as the basis for the secondary data collection, with proper acknowledgment provided in the text and a list of references included. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to 20 SMEs in Enugu State, yielding a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.74 for the overall instrument, confirming its reliability. The data collected for the study was analysed using mean with standard deviation to answer the research questions, while a t-test was employed to test the null hypotheses at a .05 level of significance.

Decision rules for answering the research questions were established using the upper and lower limits of the mean, such that responses with mean scores between 3.50 and 4.00 were classified as Very Highly Needed, those between 2.50 and 3.49 were regarded as Highly Needed, responses within the range of 1.50 to 2.49 were interpreted as Fairly Needed, while mean scores from 1.00 to 1.49 were categorized as Not Needed.

The decision regarding the null hypotheses was based on a comparison between the computed t statistic and the critical threshold, such that hypotheses were rejected where the calculated t statistic met or exceeded the critical value, and were retained where it fell below that threshold.

Mathematical Expression

$$\text{SME Performance} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Communication Competencies}) + \beta_2(\text{Marketing Competencies}) + \beta_3(\text{Environmental Factors}) + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- SME Performance: The overall performance, measured in terms of promotion and management outcomes.
- β_0 : Constant term.
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$: Coefficients representing the influence of the variables.
- ε : Error term.

6.0 Data Analysis and Results

The two research questions would focus on thus:

1. To what extent does communication competence influence management of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)?
2. How does marketing competence relate to management of SMEs?

Research Question One

Results in Table 1 show that the cluster mean of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.71 indicates that respondents rated communication competencies as highly needed for the promotion and management of SMEs. High mean values recorded across items such as drafting letters, electronic mail usage, customer interpersonal communication, and proposal

writing demonstrate that effective communication competence substantially influences SME management. The relatively low standard deviation suggests consensus among respondents.

Research Question Two

Findings in Table 3 reveal a cluster mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.83, indicating that marketing competencies are highly required for SME management. Competencies such as determining prices, selecting distribution channels, advertising, referral marketing, and offering free samples recorded high mean values, suggesting that marketing competence plays a vital role in enhancing SME promotion and management.

The results of this study are presented in this section. There are tables presentation according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study. Moreover, the data analysed were based on the questionnaire returns of 380 out of 389 representing 97.7 percent return rate.

Table1: Mean ratings and standard deviations on communication competencies of entrepreneurs on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

S/N	Communication competencies Ability to:	Manager N = 150		Promoters N = 230		Overall N=380		Decision
		\bar{x}_1	SD ₁	\bar{x}_2	SD ₂	\bar{x}	SD	
1	Use bulletin board	3.14	0.90	3.35	0.82	3.25	0.86	HN
2	Generate and send electronic mails	3.58	0.84	3.45	0.87	3.52	0.71	VHN
3	Photocopy document	3.60	0.49	3.32	0.71	3.43	0.66	HN
4	Browse internet	3.57	0.50	3.33	0.89	3.45	0.70	HN
5	Input data correctly in the system	3.28	0.72	3.52	0.57	3.40	0.63	HN
6	Use perforating machine	3.14	0.88	3.45	0.57	3.30	0.73	HN
7	Proofread document	3.40	0.66	3.25	0.775	3.33	0.71	HN
8	Print document	3.40	0.63	3.22	0.68	3.31	0.66	HN
9	Interpret official abbreviations	2.85	0.94	3.32	0.71	3.09	0.83	HN
10	Use additional language (when needed)	3.60	0.49	3.32	0.71	3.43	0.66	HN
11	Use different communication gadgets	3.14	0.88	3.45	0.57	3.30	0.73	HN
12	Use body language	3.25	0.75	3.42	0.66	3.33	0.66	HN
13	Draft official proposals	3.35	0.82	3.14	0.90	3.25	0.71	HN
14	Customer interpersonal communication	3.60	0.49	3.32	0.71	3.34	0.71	HN
15	Draft official letters	3.38	0.73	3.36	0.69	3.43	0.73	HN
	Cluster mean (\bar{x})	3.33	0.73	3.36	0.69	3.34	0.71	HN

Source: Filed Work (2024)

Data presented in table 1 above shows that the mean response of the respondents (managers and promoters of SMEs) on item number 2 was very highly needed with mean score of 3.52. The table also show the items numbered, 1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15 respectively with mean scores of 3.25, 3.43, 3.45, 3.40, 3.30, 3.33, 3.31, 3.09, 3.43, 3.30, 3.33, 3.25, 3.34 and 3.43 respectively were highly needed as communication competencies of entrepreneurs on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State. The cluster mean of 3.34 also attested to that: The cluster standard deviation of 0.71 shows that the disparities of opinions of respondents are slim.

Hypothesis 1

Entrepreneurial competencies have no significant effect in the mean response of managers and promoters regarding communication competencies of entrepreneurs on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

Table 2: Summary of t- test on effect of mean ratings of managers and promoters regarding communication competencies on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

Respondents	NO	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Signif	t-tab	t-cal	Decision
Managers	150	3.33	0.73	378	0.5	1.96	0.71	Do not Reject
Promoters	238	3.36	0.69					

Source: Filed Work (2024)

Table 2 Shows that the calculated t- value at 0.5 level of significance and 378 degree of freedom is 0.71; while the critical t- value under the same condition is 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is less than the table value, the null hypothesis is therefore not significant. This invariably means that, there is no significant difference between the managers and promoter’s responses regarding the communication competencies on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation on marketing competencies of entrepreneurs on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

S/N	Marketing Competencies Ability to:	Managers N = 150	SD ₁	Promoters N = 230	SD ₂	Overall N=380	SD	Decision
31	Determine seasonal fluctuation of goods	3.08	1.08	3.42	0.73	3.25	0.91	HN
32	Free samples, giveaways and trials.	3.63	0.70	3.42	0.15	3.53	0.61	VHN
33	Determine profit and loss	3.26	0.73	3.38	0.61	3.32	0.67	HN
34	Advertise commodities to the public	3.22	0.73	3.26	0.76	3.29	0.75	HN
35	Content Marketing	3.32	0.99	3.25	0.93	3.29	0.96	HN
36	Familiarize with various aspects sales and salesmanship	3.48	0.50	3.49	0.71	3.49	0.61	HN
37	Select distribution channels to reach the customer’s place	3.18	0.86	3.65	0.68	3.42	0.79	HN
38	Sponsorship	3.28	0.96	3.63	0.56	3.46	0.71	HN
39	Referral marketing	3.23	0.73	3.40	0.70	3.32	0.83	HN
40	Determine the extent to which product will sell	3.31	0.75	3.21	0.80	3.26	0.77	HN
41	Determine prices of goods	3.09	1.01	3.36	0.72	3.23	0.81	HN
	Cluster mean (X1)	3.28	0.82	3.41	0.67	3.67	0.83	VHN

Source: Filed Work (2024)

Table 3, shows that items numbered 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 with scores of 3.25, 3.32, 3.29, 3.29, 3.49, 3.42, 3.46, 3.32, 3.26 and 3.23 respectively are of highly needed responses by the respondents. However, the item number 32 with mean score of 3.53 was rated very high needed (VHN) response. The grand mean of value of 3.67 also attested to that while cluster standard deviation of 0.83 shows homogeneity of opinions of respondents.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant effect on Entrepreneurial competencies in the mean responses of managers and promoters regarding marketing competencies on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

Table 4: Summary table of t- test analysis of mean ratings of managers and promoters regarding marketing competencies on the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

Respondents	NO	\bar{x}	SD	Df	Signif	t-tab	t-cal	Decision
Managers	150	3.41	0.82	378	0.5	1.96	1.11	Do not Reject
Promoters	230	3.28	067					

Source: Filed Work (2024)

Table 4, shows that the calculated t- value at 0.5 level of significance and 378 degree of freedom is 1.11, while the table value under the same condition is 1.96. Since the calculated t- value is less than the critical or table value, the null hypothesis is therefore not significant. These invariably mean that, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of managers and promoters of SMEs on marketing competencies and the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher found that, effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the promotion and management of small and medium enterprise (SMEs) in Enugu State will enhance the productivity, business growth, increase in accounting record and productive turnover in business. This is in line with Nwachukwu (2021) examine a work on influence of entrepreneurial promotion on the growth of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Enugu metropolis Kumar (2015) investigated the impact of sales promotion on middle class consumers and brand equity perception with respect to selected FMCG products in India. The findings of this study have positive implications for student of entrepreneurship studies, academics, managers of SMEs, curriculum planners and future researchers. From the result of the study, it is obvious that there are high needs for competent entrepreneurs to manage and promote small and medium enterprises. The findings would enable SMEs entrepreneurs to acquire high competencies. Business educators with bias in entrepreneurship studies to be productive in their field of endeavours. It would enable the students to know in advance the effective competencies on the promotion and management of small and medium enterprises. The knowledge acquired from the study would enable the entrepreneurs to come out with plans that would motivate both students and general public.

5. Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study examined the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of small and medium enterprises in Enugu State, Nigeria, with specific emphasis on communication and marketing competencies. The findings demonstrate that both competency domains are

strongly associated with effective SME promotion and management. The high cluster mean values recorded for communication competencies indicate that skills such as electronic communication, proposal drafting, interpersonal engagement, and customer interaction are widely perceived as essential for operational efficiency and business sustainability. Similarly, marketing competencies, including price determination, distribution channel selection, promotional strategies, and customer targeting, were rated as highly required for enhancing market penetration and turnover. The statistical analysis further revealed no significant differences between the perceptions of managers and promoters regarding the relevance of communication and marketing competencies. This homogeneity of responses suggests a shared recognition among SME stakeholders of the strategic importance of these competencies in achieving organizational objectives. The absence of perceptual divergence strengthens the internal validity of the findings and indicates convergence in experiential understanding of enterprise management requirements within the study area.

Grounded in Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship, the results reinforce the proposition that entrepreneurial success is closely tied to the ability to innovate, communicate effectively, and respond strategically to market dynamics. The evidence supports the argument that entrepreneurial competencies are not peripheral attributes but constitute core determinants of SME productivity, customer retention, financial performance, and long-term sustainability. In practical terms, the study underscores that strengthening entrepreneurial capacity through structured training, curriculum integration, and policy-driven skill development initiatives can significantly enhance SME outcomes. Given the critical role of SMEs in employment generation and economic development in Enugu State and Nigeria more broadly, the institutionalization of competency development frameworks is imperative.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. It was recommended that implementations of effective communication competencies will greatly affect the promotion and management of SMEs in Enugu State. Some of these competencies are; abilities to draft official letters, communicate meaningfully, draft official proposals, use body language, use bulletin board, generate and send electronics mails, customer interpersonal communication among others.
2. Marketing competencies are highly recommended by the entrepreneurs for promotion and management of small and medium enterprises in Enugu State. Some of the marking competencies recommended are the abilities to: determine price of goods, select distribution channels, and identify products by customers, forecast business opportunities, free samples: giveaways and trails, advertising commodities to the public, sponsorship and referral marketing. With the implementation of these marketing competencies, entrepreneurs and promoters of SMEs will have increase in turnover.

References

- Adebayo, O., Adekunle, T., & Bello, K. (2021). The role of entrepreneurship in economic transformation: Evidence from emerging economies. *African Journal of Economic Studies*, 14(2), 89–103.
- Adebayo, O. A., Adetayo, T. O., & Oyekan, A. O. (2021). Communication skills as a catalyst for entrepreneurial success: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 24(3), 1–11.
- Ezeh, G. O., & Onyebuchi, E. O. (2020). Marketing competencies and performance of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. *International Journal of Management Studies*, 7(4), 59–73.

- Ezeh, P., & Onyebuchi, C. (2020). Entrepreneurial competencies and the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Business Research*, 8(1), 33–47.
- Enugu State Internal Board of Revenue. (2023). *Annual report on the registration of small and medium enterprises in Enugu State*. Enugu: ESIBR Publications.
- Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Cadogan, J. W., & Kiran, R. (2016). *Social media marketing: A systematic review of the literature*. *Marketing Review*, 16(3), 264–291. <https://doi.org/10.1362/146934716X14673582517261>
- Kamboj, S., Sarmah, H., & Gupta, S. (2020). Role of big data analytics in improving customer engagement and marketing performance: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 113, 379–392. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.08.004>
- Nwachukwu, O. F., Okonkwo, P. C., & Ibrahim, M. G. (2021). Influence of entrepreneurial promotion on the growth of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Enugu metropolis. *NOUN Journal of Management and International Development (NOUN-JOMAID)*, 6(1), 229–240.
- Nworgu, B. G. (2015). *Educational research: Basic issues and methodology* (3rd ed.). Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Olajide, K., Okafor, T., & Lawal, R. (2023). Enhancing SME performance through entrepreneurial skills: Evidence from Nigerian enterprises. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Studies*, 11(4), 76–91.
- Osman, A. K., Rahim, R. A., & Saad, M. N. (2022). The impact of social media on entrepreneurial performance: A case study of Malaysian SMEs. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 12(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40497-022-00315-3>
- Parnell, J. A., Lester, D. L., & Long, J. A. (2020). The influence of managerial communication on business performance in SMEs. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 57(1), 123–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488417737471>
- Population Data. (2023). Enugu – Historical population data (2023). Retrieved from <https://www.populationdata.org/enugu/>
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1961). *The theory of economic development: An inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle*. Harvard University Press.
- Zafar, A., Durrani, S., & Raza, A. (2023). The role of communication skills in entrepreneurial success: Evidence from Pakistan. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 19(1), 69–89. <https://doi.org/10.7341/20231914>