

Application of Entrepreneurship Orientation and Practices among Business Operators in University Campuses in Rivers State, Nigeria

EKWEME Blessing

Department of Business Education
Faculty of education,

Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

Corresponding Author's Email: blessing.templeelendu@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent small-scale business operators on Rivers State University Campuses are able to imbibe and apply entrepreneurial practises and orientation. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 1,000 university campus business operators in the three public universities in Rivers State. Taro Yamane's formula was used to select 286 small scale business operators as the sample for the study. A validated 9-item self-designed questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Orientation and Practises among Small Scale Business Operators in Universities Questionnaire (EOPSSBOUQ)" was used as the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a test-retest method. Mean and z-test statistics were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at a 0.05 confidence level. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that people's business commitment is very high, and in business practise, small scale business operators take personal responsibility for business outcomes. It was recommended, among others, that entrepreneurs develop more achievement motivation in order to discover more areas for new ventures as well as improve business performance.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Orientation, Entrepreneurial Practice, Responsibility, Commitment Business Operations*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is the process of creating value by pulling together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity. Entrepreneurship is also an important way in which business organisations create value. In recent years, many managers have been eager to pursue entrepreneurial activities in their organisations due to the variety of pressing problems they encounter. These problems, according to Kurako (2005), include: Rapid gradually increasing weaknesses in the traditional methods of corporate management;

- The needs of dramatic changes, innovations and improvements to prevent the stagnancy and falling in the marketplaces; and
- Increased global competition.

To overcome these problems, both academicians and practitioners have been showing much more interest because of the fact that entrepreneurial activities improve and revitalise the performance

of firms. In today's global marketplace, entrepreneurship is a way in which firms maintain and increase their sustainable competitive capabilities. Thus, entrepreneurs are the driving factors and lubricants of progressive, prosperous, dynamic, and sustainable economics, not small business owners (Kayii & Akpomi, 2022; Igwe, 2009). It takes a lot of effort, ideas, perseverance, research, self-development, and training to produce an entrepreneur, unlike a small scale business that depends on borrowed financial resources from peers, relatives, or friends. Entrepreneurial orientation, therefore, becomes a matter of necessity.

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is the concept used to refer to the processes and endeavours of organisations that engage in entrepreneurial behaviour and activities (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Research on EO is increasing in the literature of business administration due to the fact that it has been recognised so far by many managers and scholars as a critical success factor for organisational survival and success. Business organisations that have high EO exhibit a willingness to innovate, to take risks, to try out new and uncertain products and services, and to be more proactive than competitors towards opportunities in the marketplace (Covin & Slevin, 1986; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003).

Entrepreneurial orientation, which has the same dimensions as international entrepreneurship, is related to risk taking, innovativeness, and proactiveness (Miller & Friesen, 1982; Covin & Slevin, 1986, Kuratko, 2005). Lumpkin and Dess (2001) added autonomy, and corporate aggressiveness to these dimensions. Corporate entrepreneurship is related to handling entrepreneurial behaviours within organisations.

Dimensions of corporate entrepreneurship are product, service, and process innovation, new business venturing, self-renewal, and strategic renewal (Zahra, 2001; Guth & Ginsberg, 1990). – Although corporate entrepreneurship dimensions may be seen as different than EO dimensions, all of the dimensions of corporate entrepreneurship can be condensed into EO dimensions of innovation (product, service, and process innovativeness), risk taking (new business venturing), and proactiveness (self-renewal and strategic renewal).

Entrepreneurial business owners main objective is to achieve the realisation of "new combinations." Individuals with a high need for achievement perform better with non-routine tasks and take responsibility for their performance. They seek feedback, compare themselves with others, set themselves challenging goals, and constantly try to improve their performance. A business owner's daily tasks include taking on challenges such as acquiring a new customer as well as setting high goals for oneself, starting to export, and increasing sales rates for employees. Challenging, specific goals lead to higher performance. Owners with a strong achievement orientation are growth-oriented, enjoy challenging tasks and goals, and are more likely to succeed. Accordingly, the achievement orientation of the owner was found to be related to customer satisfaction (Haber and Lerner, 2001) and firm success (Harcourt et al., 2020; Koop & Frese, 2000; Rauch et al., 2009; Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

In an attempt to provide research evidence and explanation for dominant profiles, Ottih (2000) assets that the business interest of the entrepreneur is generally wide. They can create a variety of ventures depending on their experience, background, and specialization. Venturing into any business entails the taking of responsibility for such an action. Starting a business, therefore, is undoubtedly a risky venture which could crumble as soon as they are started. There is need for

one to assess one's personality traits and technical abilities before the entrepreneurial adventure. Consequent upon these facts put forward, Amaewhule (2014, p. 40) averred that:

Entrepreneurs feel personal responsibility for the outcome of ventures in which they are engaged. They want to seek responsibilities to enable them accomplish their goals. Such responsibilities include prudent management of resources available to achieve desired goals. If this were not the case the entrepreneur would be doomed to failure.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a need for governments at all levels to promote entrepreneurship in the areas of job creation, incentive provision, youth development, and enterprise creation. This is more pronounced in the problems faced by most practising entrepreneurs in Rivers State, particularly, and Nigeria generally. This attention is due to the fact that entrepreneurship has become an important policy issue. Thus, it is relevant for the government to make pragmatic efforts to provide entrepreneurial orientation in Rivers State. The relevance is to enable Nigerian entrepreneurs to develop strategies that will enable them to be competitive, proactive, take risks, innovative, and autonomous. Thus, this study seeks to examine how achievement orientation and responsibility for action can be used for making strategic decisions by businesses and entrepreneurs on university campuses in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent small business operators in Rivers State University Campuses are able to imbibe / apply entrepreneurship practices/orientation.

The specific objectives were:

- i. To examine the extent to which small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses exhibit the motive to achieve and show commitment.
- ii. To examine the extent to which small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses take action in the ability to assume responsibility.

Research Questions:

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent do small scale business operations in Rivers State University Campuses exhibit the motive to achieve and show commitment?
2. To what extent do small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses take actions in the ability to assume responsibility?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 confidence level:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and the less-experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of the motive to achieve.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and the less experienced counterparts in their mean scores in the ability to assume responsibility.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 1000 university campus business operators in the three public universities in Rivers State. The sample size comprised 286 small-scale business operators. A validated 9-item instrument tagged "Entrepreneurship Orientation and Practises among Small Scale Business Operators in Universities Questionnaire (EOPSSBOUQ)" developed by the researcher was used for data collection. Its reliability coefficient was established at 0.80 using Pearson r. 286 copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which 280 copies were retrieved. The collected data were analysed using mean and z-test statistics to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at a 0.05 confidence level. The weighted mean score of 2.50 served as the criterion mean. Items above the criterion mean were accepted.

Results

The results obtained in this study after data analysis were presented and analyze as follows:

Research Question 1

To what extent do small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses exhibit the motive to achieve and show commitment.

Table 1: Mean Score on the extent small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses exhibit the motive to achieve and show commitment

Responses to Achievement Orientation					
S/N	Achievement Orientation	Experienced Operators N=134 \bar{X}_M	Less-Experienced Operators N=146 \bar{X}_F	Means Set $\frac{\bar{X}_M + \bar{X}_F}{2}$	Remarks
1.	My business commitment is very high	3.56	3.55	3.56	Very High Extent
2.	I do not easily give up in the face of business challenges.	2.82	2.54	2.68	High Extent
3.	To succeed in my business I explore various options to ensure survival	3.51	3.53	3.52	Very High Extent
4.	Careful analysis of market conditions helps me in my commitment to business success	2.78	2.66	2.72	High Extent

5.	In my business pursuits, I always persevere and do not easily give up	2.75	2.66	2.71	High Extent
6.	As a business owner, I always take challenges and determine to succeed	2.45	2.38	2.42	Low Extent
Aggregate means		2.98	2.89	2.94	

The data on Table 1 showed that items 1 and 3 have weighted mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed to a very high extent as responses to achievement orientation. Items 2, 4, and 5 have weighted mean scores above the criterion means of 2.50 and were agreed to high extent as responses to achievement orientation. Item 6 had a weighted mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.50 and was agreed to low extent as a responses to achievement orientation by the respondents.

Research Question 2

To what extent do small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses take actions in the ability to assume responsibility

Table 2: Mean Score on the extent small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses take actions in the ability to assume responsibility.

S/N	Achievement Orientation	Experienced Operators N=134 \bar{X}_M	Less-Experienced Operators N=146 \bar{X}_F	Means Set $\frac{\bar{X}_M + \bar{X}_F}{2}$	Remarks
7.	In business practice, I take personal responsibility for any business outcome	2.78	2.68	2.73	High Extent
8.	While the business may be a family business, I take responsibility for its success/failure.	2.81	2.60	2.71	High Extent
9.	In my business, when once decisions are taken, I have learnt to copy with the outcome	3.57	3.52	3.55	Very High Extent
Aggregate means		3.05	2.93	2.99	

The data on Table 2 showed that items 7 and 8 have weighted mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed to a high extent as responsibility for action. Items 3 had a weighted mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50 and was agreed to a very high extent as responsibility for action by the respondents.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less-experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of the motive to achieve.

Table 3: Summary of z-test analysis on the difference between mean scores of experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of the motive to achieve.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Experienced operators	134	2.98	0.99	278	0.77	1.96	H ₀₁
Less-experienced operators	146	2.89	0.96				Accepted

Table 3 showed a mean score of 2.98 for experienced business operators and 2.89 for less-experienced with a z-critical and z-calculated values of 1.96 and 0.77 respectively. It was glaring that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the experienced business operators and less-experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses. Since the z-calculated is less than the z-critical, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less-experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of the motive to achieve was accepted by the researchers.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and the less-experienced counterparts in their mean score in respect of ability to assume responsibility.

Table 4: Summary of z-test analysis on difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses business operators and the less-experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of ability to assume responsibility.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Experienced operators	134	3.05	0.99	278	1.02	1.96	H ₀₂
Less-experienced operators	146	2.93	0.98				Accepted

Table 4 showed a mean score of 3.05 for experienced business operators and 2.93 for less-experienced with a z-critical and z-calculated value of 1.96 and 1.02 respectively. It was glaring that there is no significant difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less-experienced counterparts. Since the z-cal was less than the z-crit, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less-experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of ability to assume responsibility was accepted by the researchers.

Discussion of Findings

On the extent small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses exhibit the motive to achieve and show commitment, the findings of this study revealed people's business commitment is very high; they do not easily give up in the face of business challenges; to succeed in their business, they explore various options to ensure survival; careful analysis of market conditions helps in their commitment to business success; and they always persevere and do not easily give up. In line with these findings, Haber and Lerner (1999) highlighted that individuals with a high need for achievement perform better with non-routine tasks and take responsibility for their performance. They seek feedback, compare themselves with others, set themselves

challenging goals, and constantly try to improve their performance. A business owner's daily tasks include taking on challenges acquiring a new customer as well as setting high goals for oneself starting to export as well as for others sales rates for employees.

On the extent small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses take actions in their ability to assume responsibility, the findings of their study revealed that in business practice, small scale business operators in Rivers State University Campuses take personal responsibility for business outcome, while the business may be a family business, they take responsibility for its success/failure, and in their business, when once decisions are taken, they have learnt to cope with the outcome. In line with these findings. Amaewhule (2014) averred that entrepreneurs feel personal responsibility for the outcome of ventures in which they are engaged. They want to seek responsibilities to enable them accomplish their goals.

The findings of this study revealed in table 3 and 4 that there were no significant differences between mean scores of experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less-experienced counterparts in their mean of scores in respect of the motive to achieve; and between experienced business operators in Rivers State University Campuses and their less-experienced counterparts in their mean scores in respect of ability to assume responsibility.

Conclusion

It is an established fact that effective entrepreneurial orientation has a great impact on the practices in the business sector. The study equally observed that variables, and the nature of business of the entrepreneurs determine the extent to which entrepreneurs exhibit the motive to achieve and show commitment, and take actions in the ability to assume responsibility. Firms with high levels of entrepreneurial orientation tend to venture into new fields involving certain degrees of commitment and speculations to find new opportunities and increase their competitive advantage.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion made so far, the researchers recommended as follows:

1. Entrepreneurs that operate small scale businesses should develop more achievement motivation in order to discover more area of new ventures as well as improve business performance.
2. Entrepreneurs should own up to responsibility for their action in order to be innovative in the 21st century business world.
3. Entrepreneurs should be rational in taking business decisions and explore various options to ensure survival of their ventures.

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