



Business Communication Skills Acquisition Required by Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study x-ray business communication skills acquisition required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State, Nigeria. Four (4) research questions guided the study. A survey design was adopted. The population was 2600 entrepreneurs registered with Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIIMA) in Oyo State while 10% totalling 260 respondents were randomly selected using simple random sampling techniques formed the sample size for this study. A-35 item structured questionnaire validated by 4 experts was used for data collection. The pilot study conducted yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78 which was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable. Mean and the standard deviation was used to analyze the findings. The findings revealed among others that listening and speaking communication skills are highly required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that in house training should be conducted for entrepreneurs to address communication skill gap for sustainable development.

Keywords: Business Communication Skills, Entrepreneurs, Sustainable Development

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INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a vital role in the fulfilment of all marketing objectives. Therefore, communication is essentially an important ingredient which makes possible various links, contact and interaction among members of a various organization; this is because of its universal nature and multi-disciplinary applications. Durop (2012) perceived communication as the process by which information is passed between individual and organization employing previously agreed symbols. Communication is a vital tool for business success because it is important in bringing about understanding among individuals and groups of organizations (Afolabi, 2018). An entrepreneur must be an effective communicator and no business can build required goodwill without effective communication skills. A poor communication system may result in mismanagement and bad outcome. The major aim of this paper was to show that the success of any business reposes in effective communication and that effective communication is crucial for the progress of business activities. Specifically, it was emphasized that communication skills need to be developed by entrepreneurs to sustain the development of their business. One major purpose of communication in business is to give and reserve information

about the availability of products and services and encourage customers to buy more. According to Nwosu (2014) information is an authentic data processed in form of progress, reports, new products and services development for a useful purpose, decision making and knowledge acquisition. Information in business can by-pass through many channels such as telephone call, email, voice messages, Whatsapp, Instagram and face-to-face conversation. Hence, information is critical to business operations to bring about growth and development of a business. A business refers to all economic activities carried out by people (entrepreneur) and organizations aimed at producing goods and services for satisfying customer needs profitably. Business is concerned with the production and distribution of goods and services which involve risk and uncertainty by an entrepreneur.

The entrepreneur is the coordinator of all other factors of production. He/she is the owner of a business. The one that seizes opportunity around him to make again. An entrepreneur is a person who perceives a business opportunity and takes advantage of the scarce resources to meet with unlimited opportunities profitably. It is a classification of a group of individual who developed business activities where non-

existed before. This symbolizes that entrepreneurs are individuals who possess the ability to see and assess business opportunities, to mobilize resources to exploit the opportunities and put in place necessary action-oriented (Arogundade, 2011).

The attributes of an entrepreneur according to Afolabi (2018) include; provider of employment opportunities and infrastructures, mediators between larger society and his economic unit, risk-takers and innovators. All those attributes of entrepreneurs associated with good business communication skills. Moreover, entrepreneurs interact with people on a daily bases they make use of various medium that include interpersonal, intrapersonal, oral, written and the like. To communicate effectively using these channels they require abilities in some basic business communication skills that include listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. According to Afolabi (2018), listening skills are critical for understanding and involves conscious effort in following what is spoken, in recognizing the main points and making sure that they are understood. Effective listening skills are the ability to actively understand the information provided by the speaker and display interest in the topic discussed. Hence, an employee in an organization reacts to instructions he receives and his ability to react effectively depends on his listening capability.

Speaking is rated next to listening to communication. It is the process of transmitting ideas and information orally in a variety of situation. Speaking according to Joughin (2007) is the ability to speak fluently and presuppose not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot. Speaking skills allow the speaker to convey his message in a passionate, thoughtful and convincing manner towards effective communication. Speaking, therefore, provides an avenue for exchanging and obtaining information needed for decision making from which audience feedback is obtained and clarifications made.

Reading is the third importance in business communication skills. Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehending and flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources to develop. Reading skill is a cognitive ability which an entrepreneur can use when interacting with the written text. Reading skills lead entrepreneurs to interact and gain meaning from written language (Whalo, Otaiba and Delano, 2009).

Writing is the fourth-ranked basic business communication skills used in organizations today. It is the highest and most complex of business communication skills. Writing is a form of communication that allows the entrepreneur to put his feelings and ideas on paper to organize his knowledge and benefits into convincing arguments and to convey meaning through well-constructed text. Huemer and Mann (2010) state that writing is an intellectual activity of finding the ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement and paragraph that is clear to be understood by the people. Writing skill encourages the individual entrepreneur to focus on accurate language use because they think as they write.

Given the complexities of the Nigerian business environment, effective communication is crucial and important to enable entrepreneurs to keep abreast of what is happening in the business environment, promote favourable competition among businesses and respond to challenges in the world of work. The success of every enterprise depends on communication skill. In any undertaking involving two or more persons, communication is essential because it is the glue that holds an enterprise together. Communication skill is not only vital information and implementation of enterprises activities for sustainable development. Development is a systematic transformation of overall social, economic, political, scientific and technological life of a nation through the effective and well-oriented management system. Mbata (2009) cited in Nwaigburu and Eneogwe (2013), sustainable development means the all-round development of individuals. It concerns not only personality development but also nation-building which goes beyond the construction of bridges, roads and provision of social amenities. Okeke (2008) defined sustainable development as a kind of development that can be initiated and managed properly in such a way as to give attention to continuing and preservation as people explore and explicitly available resources for the enlargement of their existence. Arogundade in Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014) pointed out that the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development should include: improving the quality of basic education, reorienting existing education programme to address sustainable development, developing public awareness and understanding and improving training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Despite the importance of communication skills in society as well as in business organization, entrepreneurs face a lot of challenges some of which include: lack of strategic consistency, insufficient marketing budget, ambiguity on a business issue, scarcity of creativity and innovation and complex cultural and social values. Lesikar and Flatley (2005) observed that good business communication which builds trust and teamwork among employee is a requirement for successful leadership. Hence, business success can only be attained when entrepreneurs are adequately equipped with business communication skills. It is therefore become imperative to x-ray business communication skills acquisition required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Communication

Communication may be defined as the process of sharing facts, ideas, information, perspectives or concerns between two or group of people with the concept of reaching a mutual understanding for the attainment of the desired results. According to Keynote (2011), Communication is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. In a business environment, the effective communication process is significant to the success of any business activities. Business communication is the lifeblood of any business organization and its major purpose is to facilitate the activities of the organization towards the attainment of business goals. Sherron and Paul (2012), described business communication as the sharing of information between people within an enterprise to promote business growth. Business communications are used to promote a product, service, or an organisation; relay information within the business; or deal with legal and similar

issues. It is also a means of relying on between a supply chain, for example, the consumer and manufacturer. At its most basic level, the purpose of communication in the workplace is to provide employees with the information they need to do their jobs (Barnett, 2008). Also, business communication can refer to how a company shares information to promote its product or services to potential customers. The success of any business depends largely on the efficient and effective use of communication skills.

Senécal, Loughhead and Bloom (2008) defined business communication skills as the ability to convey information to another effectively and efficiently. It also means a purposeful exchange of information between participants. Hence, the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place. Therefore, good reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are essential for effective communication for the excellent performance of business tasks. However, this calls for the need to develop proper business communication skills. It is helpful to understand the differences in how to communicate through face-to-face interactions, phone conversations and digital communications, like knowing how to use email, Whatsapp, fax, Telegram and other social media platforms. Business communication skills are the tools that we use to remove the barriers to effective communication. Communication is important and critical for both managers/executives and lower personnel. In the age of digital, global businesses, it is essential for organizations of all sizes to effectively communicate not only within their organization, but also with shareholders, vendors, clients, and customers. Effective communication is at the forefront of significant business processes and must be efficient so that personnel can successfully share and communicate information that helps to run a successful enterprise, and to drive the most critical business processes (Aaron, 2019).

Concept of Entrepreneur

The world view of the entrepreneur as a catalyst towards solving the problem of poverty in the country is increasingly gaining more ground among the committee of nations. This is as a result of their activities and ability to take risks more societal problems have been solved. The entrepreneurs are important agents of change in every society, yet they present the most mysterious features in the cause of economic growth, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. Although it is an entrepreneur's purposive activity that bridges the gap between plan and reality, the precise way that this agent of change acts is often unpredictable. Examining the concept of entrepreneurship in developing countries is significant to understand the pattern of their growth and development. Entrepreneurship is not a uniformly distributed quality throughout these given societies. The psychological attributes are the key factors in driving the entrepreneurial activities. Certain individuals are achievement-oriented and are prepared to take risks. Entrepreneurship is scattered over a wide range of business functions to bring out the effects within the structure of the business itself (Binuomote cited in Salami, 2019).

The entrepreneur also plays a negotiating role between the larger society and its economic unit. Entrepreneurial action is likely to initiate changes for both the economic unit and its environment. Entrepreneurs recognize business opportunities for their success. Entrepreneurs are people who identify the

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of their business enterprise and put-up opportunities for its success. Their decisions are based on accurate data and information than a layman who operates by trial and error. What others see as a problem or difficult task may not be perceived as such by those who possess relevant information. (Binuomote, 2011). An entrepreneur is an individual who gathers and coordinating other business resources for production in both the required quality and quantity to make a profit. Entrepreneurs are also seen as people who can see and evaluate business opportunities to gather the necessary resources, to take advantage of them and to imitate appropriate action to ensure success. The owners and managers of the business enterprise are entrepreneurs. They take a risk to build their business enterprises and aim at making a profit as well as the impact on society. These entrepreneurs are conscientious for the success or failure of their business. As risk bearers, they either succeed or make a developmental contribution or they disappear from the market place (Anyakoha, 2009).

According to Arogundade (2011), entrepreneurs are individuals who can see and utilize business opportunities, marshal resources to explore the opportunities and put in place necessary action-oriented for the benefit of society. Inegbenebor and Igbinomwanhia, (2008) indicate that is someone who operates a business of his own, accountable for the risks and the results of the business. He is a self-employed individual who utilizes his cognitive ability and courage by combining the four factors of production such as natural resources, human resources, capital, and creativity for meaningful entrepreneurial activities. An entrepreneur is a provider of employment opportunities and infrastructures. To the economists, an entrepreneur is one who utilizes his savings for the accumulation of materials and other assets into combinations that make their value greater than before, and also one who introduces changes, and innovation into business (Baron, 2007). One of the importance of entrepreneurs is that they are innovators. Thus, an entrepreneur is a person in a large organization who can add more value to the betterment of the business organization. The entrepreneurs are key individuals in the country for promoting socio-economic development of any society. The socioeconomic growth and development can be determined by the numbers of entrepreneurs available in a given society. However, the fundamental ingredients to the entrepreneurial success in any business activities are being able to communicate effectively. It is therefore essential for the entrepreneur to be versatile in all area of the communication process, this is because it helps a lot in sustaining achievement of the business.

Sustainable Development

According to Fatoki (2010), entrepreneurship is the ability of an individual and willingness to undertake a business-like concept, and management of a rewarding business venture with all attendant risks. Typically, entrepreneurship entails making new products in a way that will enhance products quality by developing resources and people in a unique way of adding more goodwill to the business organization. In a business environment, the idea of sustainable development focuses majorly on maintaining constant economic growth accrued from the combination and utilization of business resources. Sustainability development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the

ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN Brundtland Report, 1987). In the view of Luke (2013) development is eliminating poverty, unemployment and inequality while sustainability is associated with satisfying a national economy's needs for natural resources without compromising generations. The idea of sustainable development as conceived in this study is all-round business strategies undertaken by the entrepreneur to make sure that business upholds the going concern principle. The business achievement could be the acquisition of goodwill and qualified personnel, large market share, high customer patronage, long years of operations etc. Sustenance of these achievements is crucial for business growth and development; therefore, it is imperative for the entrepreneur to efficiently plan and implement good business programmes that will allow a business to compete favourably in both local and international markets.

Social Marketing Theory

Social marketing theory is a collection of theories that focus on how socially valuable information can be promoted. It has always been adopted in the research work related to communication skills required for business success. The aspects of this theory include the following: the creation of audience awareness, target the right audience, reinforce the message, and stimulation of interest. This theory is related to this study because the entrepreneur needs to create awareness by making the potential customers know the existence of the products through any available channels of communication after the products have been advertised to the target market, there is need for the reinforcement of the information through the promotion of the products in various mass media when the entrepreneur succeed in stimulating the interest of the customers, it enhances patronage which in turn guarantee sustainability of business development.

Statement of the Problem

For many developing countries, development of business communication skill is a powerful engine of economic growth, wealth creation and it is crucial for improving employment opportunities among citizens. Business communication skill has several multiplier effects on the economy, spurs innovation and foster new investment in people. However, acquiring business communication skills by entrepreneurs will enable them to create new commercial activities, enterprises and economic sectors for sustainable development. Despite the important roles of communication skills for business sustainability, the observation shows that the non-performance of many entrepreneurs in Oyo State could be traced to inadequate application of communication skills. The resultant effect of this is that business mission and vision may not be achieved as stated. And also, it may be difficult for entrepreneur most especially in Oyo State to compete favourably with their counterparts in other parts of the country if they cannot take advantage of the global deployment of communication resources to source for information. Therefore, businesses succeed only when customers continue to demand their products and services. Hence, effective communication skill is necessary for increasing customers' patronage regularly. It is on this premises that the researchers felt the need to x-ray business communication skills acquisition required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine business communication skills acquisition required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Ascertain listening communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State,
- ii. Determine speaking communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State,
- iii. Identify reading communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State,
- iv. Examine writing communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State.

Research Questions

- i. What are the listening communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?
- ii. What are the speaking communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?
- iii. What are the reading communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?
- iv. What are the writing communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?

Methodology

A survey design was employed for this study. A total of 2600 entrepreneurs registered with Nigerian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) in Oyo State formed the entire population. A sample of 260 respondents was made through simple random sampling techniques. Simple random sampling is defined as a sampling technique where every item in the population has an even chance and likelihood of being selected in the sample. One way of obtaining a random sample is to give each individual in a population a number, and then use a table of random numbers to decide which individuals to include (Ben-Shlomo, Brookes, and Hickman, 2013). A-35 items structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled: Business Communication Skills Acquisition required by Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development questionnaire validated by 4 experts in the Department of Business Education, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State was used for the study. The instrument was designed on a four-point scale of Very Highly Required (VHR), Highly Required (HR), Low Required (LR) and Not Required (NR) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to determine the reliability index which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Two hundred and sixty (260) copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents through online via email. The mean is explained as the average value of the data set (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Whereas the standard deviation is a measure of spread or dispersion, which provides an index of variability in the data. Both mean and standard deviation are descriptive statistics for interval and ratio scale. Both mean and standard deviation are descriptive statistics for interval and ratio scale. Items whose mean scores are less than 2.50 were regarded as Not Required while those

items that ranged from 2.50 and above were regarded as Very Highly Required.

RESULT

Research Question 1: What are the listening communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Listening Communication Skills required by Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development

S/N	Ability to:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Determine important ideas	3.56	0.50	VHR
2.	Relate what you hear	3.51	0.51	VHR
3.	Think from the speakers' viewpoint	3.48	0.52	VHR
4.	Listen to message clearly on the telephone and other devices	3.38	0.66	VHR
5.	Note and think on ideas communicated	3.29	0.64	VHR
6.	Remember points communicated	3.46	0.67	VHR
7.	Respond to points raised while engaged in oral communication	3.39	0.66	VHR
8.	Manage and provide the required attention spur for listening	3.24	0.62	VHR
9.	Show patience while listening	3.61	0.55	VHR
10.	Avoid physical distraction	3.65	0.59	VHR
Weighted Mean/SD		3.46	0.59	VHR

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 1 revealed listening communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development with mean ratings ranged from 3.24 to 3.61 and a weighted mean of 3.46. Based on the finding the standard deviation of all items was ranged from 0.50 to 0.67 meaning closeness and very highly required.

Research Question 2: What are the speaking communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on Speaking Communication Skills required by Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development

S/N	Ability to:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Capture and retain the attention of the audience	3.79	0.87	VHR
2.	Speak politely to customers	4.35	1.21	VHR
3.	Pronounce words courteously	3.99	0.87	VHR
4.	Give information on the cellular phone and other devices	3.79	0.87	VHR
5.	Make a presentation based on a prepared note	3.99	0.87	VHR
Weighted Mean/SD		3.99	0.87	VHR

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Information in table 2 revealed that speaking communication skills are very highly required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development with mean ratings ranged from 3.79 to 4.35 and the weighted mean of 3.99 while the standard deviation ranged from 0.87 to 1.21 meaning closeness and very highly required.

Research Question 3: What are the reading communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Reading Communication Skills required by Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development

S/N	Ability to:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Read documents, letters, business books, journals, periodicals regarding the line of business and its environ	3.02	0.61	VHR
2.	Receive information from computer	3.18	0.57	VHR

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3.	Pick out the major points in a report	3.67	0.48	VHR
4.	Survey business materials properly	2.98	0.58	VHR
5.	Handle graphics and illustrate materials carefully	3.51	0.51	VHR
6.	Read with alertness SMS and MMS message on the phone	2.82	0.68	VHR
7.	Acts fast on messages	3.00	0.56	VHR
8.	Criticize the writer's message after reading through	2.98	0.58	VHR
9.	Read the document on the internet and act on them promptly	3.49	0.51	VHR
10.	Access information from an electronic database	2.87	0.57	VHR
Weighted Mean/SD		3.15	0.57	VHR

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 3 revealed the mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the reading communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development with mean scores ranged from 2.82 to 3.67 and weighted mean of 3.15 while the standard deviation ranged from 0.48 to 0.68 meaning closeness and very highly required.

Research Question 4: What are the writing communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development in Oyo State?

Table 4: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation on the Writing Communication Skills required by Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development

S/N	Ability to:	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Write messages in a clear and concise form	3.58	0.57	VHR
2.	Choose the correct sentence style and use appropriate vocabulary	3.32	0.61	VHR
3.	Avoid misspelling of words	2.86	0.71	VHR
4.	Send invitation notices to organizational members	3.01	0.64	VHR
5.	Develop major points into paragraphs with clarity	2.98	0.60	VHR
6.	Present points logically suited for the purpose	2.92	0.58	VHR
7.	Present reports to management and external audience	3.16	0.75	VHR
8.	Choose appropriate means of sending written messages	2.67	0.73	VHR
9.	Express oneself contentiously	2.81	0.62	VHR
10.	Evaluate things from readers' point of view	2.56	0.80	VHR
Weighted Mean/SD		2.99	0.66	VHR

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Information in table 4 above showed mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the writing communication skills required by entrepreneurs for sustainable development with mean scores ranged from 2.56 to 3.58 and the weighted mean of 2.99. Based on the findings the standard deviation ranged from 0.57 to 0.80 indicating very highly required.

CONCLUSION

It has been confirmed that the end products of good communication most especially in business activities is the attainment of a business goal. This is because effective communication brings more cordiality between the business and customers. This formed the bases that business succeeds in the acquisition of all forms of communication skills. Proper handling of customer complaints depends largely on the ability of the entrepreneur listening capacity to their problems and at the same time need to communicate with them in a very clear language. Understanding communication skill is essential since it is the basic process through which entrepreneurs accomplish their set objectives culminating in their success for sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions of the study, the following recommendations were made: Business bodies should organize in-house training for their members on the significance of listening skills to the progress of the business. Also, the publication of journals on the importance of listening skills acquisition could be made available or distributed among the members in their respective business location. When the customer complaints are listened to, it enhances their patronage. Every individual entrepreneur should thrive as much as possible to develop their speaking skills to a very significant level that could be of help to the business. The importance of reading skills in a business environment cannot be over-emphasized. The understanding between the entrepreneurs and customers matters because it is when the duo understands each other business transactions succeed. The government at all level should make it as a resolution for any potential entrepreneur to possess good skill in writing. This will go a long way in helping them to write a good order, issuance of cheque without error, receipt and most significantly aid in proper record keeping.

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