



Marketing Skills and Entrepreneurial Business Sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis

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Abstract

This study investigated marketing skills and entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. Two (2) research hypotheses were formulated to guided the study. A survey design was adopted. The sample size of the population was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) which resulted to a sample size of 226 respondents which were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique A-14 item structured questionnaire validated by 3 experts was used for data collection. The pilot study conducted yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.77 which was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable. Regression analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The findings revealed among others that skills of quality with $R^2 = 0.573$, $\beta = .651$ and $P\text{-value of } .000 > 0.05$ which implies it significantly influenced entrepreneurial business sustainability and promotion skills with correlation coefficient of $R^2 = 0.529$, $\beta = .721$ and $P\text{-value of } .000 > 0.05$ significantly influenced entrepreneurial business sustainability. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that in house training should be conducted for entrepreneurs to address skills of quality product for business sustainability.

Key Words: Skill, Marketing Skills, Entrepreneur, Business Sustainability

1.1 Introduction

Skill is seen as the ability to do a task expertly (Abanyam, 2016). Skill therefore can be referred to mean ability and dexterity which if employed on a particular task such as business, the result will commensurate with the predetermined objective and thus brings about improved economic status. A person who acquires adequate skills in business activities during the course of training stands the chance of becoming an entrepreneur by setting up an occupation of his choice and even capable of employing many others after the training. Such person is deemed to enhance sustainability of business activities.

Marketing skill encompasses wide range of abilities related to promotion and selling of products and services (Bateman & Snell, 2021). An entrepreneur exhibit certain personality traits that are responsible for the success or failure of their businesses and that inadequate marketing skills of owners create sustainability and survival problems in management of business. Therefore it is argued that if an entrepreneur does not possess

the required skills or have the knowledge regarding marketing issues and how to apply these skills and knowledge it can and will lead to the demise of the business or at best that it will not become as profitable as it can become. Even though all functions and tasks are important the marketing function is the only one that generates income for the business and therefore the success of the business largely depends on the marketing skills being applied in the business. The marketing skills areas as identified by Murphy (2016) are quality product skills, pricing skills, promotion skills and distribution skills.

The overall expectation of the populace from entrepreneurs is to acquire certain marketing knowledge, understanding, skills which will provide them ample opportunity to provide goods and services that will satisfy the needs and wants of the consumers. It is mostly assumed that most entrepreneurs fail due to a lack of cash flow, or not enough revenue without thinking of the other contributing aspects to such a situation. Arogundade (2019) asserted that entrepreneurs realized something was wrong with the business as the marketing opportunities identified did not match the results expected by the customers. Arogundade (2019) further posited that many entrepreneurs failed because they lacked an understanding of the relevance and importance of marketing skills in their businesses thereby hinder the attainment of business sustainability. Also, Murphy (2016) observed that entrepreneurs exhibit certain personality traits that are responsible for the success or failure of their businesses and inadequate marketing skills of owners create sustainability and survival problems during conduction of business activities in Ilorin metropolis in particular and Kwara State in general. It is on the basis of the foregoing that this study was aimed at investigating marketing skills and entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to: examine the extent of quality product skills influence on entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis. More so, examine the extent of promotion skills influence on entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis In addition, two research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study: To what extent quality product skills influence entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin metropolis? More so, To what extent promotion skills influence entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin metropolis?

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Concept of marketing skill.

Murphy (2016) posited that marketing skill encompasses wide range of abilities related to promotion and selling of products and services. An entrepreneur exhibits certain personality traits that are responsible for the success or failure of their businesses and that inadequate marketing skills of owners create sustainability and survival problems in management of business. Therefore, it is argued that if an entrepreneur does not possess the required skills or have the knowledge regarding marketing issues and how to apply these skills and knowledge it can and will lead to the demise of the business or at best that it will not become as profitable as it can become. Even though all functions and tasks are important the marketing function is the only one that generates income for the business and therefore the success of the business largely depends on the marketing skills

being applied in the business. The marketing skills areas as identified by Murphy (2016) are skills of quality product and promotion skills.

Product refers to tangible and intangible goods meant to satisfy the needs and wants of the consumers. Skills of quality product however are the totality of skills ranging from finding solutions to consumer's problem in preference by selling product, satisfying the needs and wants of consumers, social and environmental boundaries while manufacturing product and project management skills that are required by an entrepreneur to promote effective business sustainability (Kotler, 2014). Skill of quality product involves ability to ensure product meets up with quality standards, ability to understand customers' requirements, skills to detect and fix defects before product reaches customers, skill to evaluate the product from different perspectives and potential problem, knowledge to maintain product quality throughout development, skill to ensure all aspects of the product meet quality expectations, ability to stay updated on the latest tools and best practice for ensuring quality product and skill of keeping customers in mind to exceed their expectation.

Promotion refers to act of communicating the value of products to customers. When it comes to the communication aspect, the old-fashioned one-way promotion process between consumer and brand is neglected and instead transformed towards an interactive dialogue creating not only credibility but also trust in the customers' mindset (Belz & Peattie, 2017). The promotion skills required by entrepreneurs are skills of building and maintaining relationships with potential customers, knowledge of creating valuable content to retain customers, ability to connect with audience and promote products or services, skill to drive sales, ability to effectively message in front of customers, skill to develop a strong brand identity, knowledge to utilize various advertising channels, ability to collaborate with industries to promote product or service and skill to build and maintain relationships with customers required by entrepreneurs for business sustainability.

2.1.2 Concept of Entrepreneur

According to Arogundade (2019), 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. Also, it is indicated 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 (Arogundade, 2019).

2.1.3 Concept of Business Sustainability

Martin and Schouten (2014) defined business sustainability as the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital are preserved or enhanced throughout. Belz and Peattie (2017) provide comprehensive explanations which state that business sustainability consists of planning, organizing, implementing and controlling marketing resources and programmes to satisfy consumers' wants and needs, while considering social and environmental criteria and meeting corporate objectives. The two definitions may vary in content however concern the same issue of generating sustainable value that serve the consumer's wants and needs while ensuring that all activities of the consumption process do not distress or cross the boundaries of the sustainability pillars. In order to enable an entrepreneur to attain sustainability of business activities required certain marketing skills which are skills of quality product and promotion skills.

2.2.1 Social Marketing Theory

Social marketing theory is a collection of theories that focus on how socially valuable information about products and services can be promoted. It has always been adopted in the research work related to marketing skills required for business sustainability. The aspects of this theory include the following: the creation of target customer awareness and stimulation of interest of prospect buyers by producing products of high quality. 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, the needs of buyers and how to reach them through any available channels of promotional tool 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.

2.3.1 Empirical Literature

Kotler (2014) conducted a study on assessment of marketing strategy of quality product as determinant of SMEs business success in Ondo State. The purpose of this study is to analyze the assessment of marketing strategy of quality as determinant of SMEs business success. This study uses quantitative methods and data analysis techniques through regression analysis. The method of selecting the sample using the snowball sampling methods. Online questionnaires were sent to 190 SMEs respondents in the province Nigeria and evaluated the returned questionnaires. The results of data analysis show that marketing strategy had significant influence on SMEs business success with P-value $0.003 < 0.05$. The findings of this research can provide benefits for SMEs actors in developing their marketing strategy of quality product to improve business success. This study is related to the present in term of vital roles the awareness of entrepreneur about different marketing strategy to use in exploring market for enhancement of business sustainability.

Belz and peattie (2017) conducted a study on exploring the critical factors influencing Marketing communication for entrepreneur business sustainability in Cross River State,

Nigeria. The purpose of this study is assess influence of communicating the value of product to target audience in order to explore market. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 150 respondents were made as a sample from the target population via simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. Mean, Standard Deviation were used to answer the research question raised and regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis formulated. The study observed that there is significant influence of marketing communication on entrepreneur business sustainability in Cross River State. The result which revealed P-value $0.000 < 0.05$ that made the hypothesis formulated to be rejected. This study is related to the present study in term of identifying various marketing communication skills required by entrepreneurial for business sustainability such as; skills in promotion that is communicating the value of products through ability to connect with audience and promote product, skill to drive sales, skill to develop a strong brand identity and knowledge to utilize various advertising channels for business sustainability.

3.1 Methodology

A survey design was employed for this study. The study was carried out in Ilorin metropolis Kwara State. A total of 550 entrepreneurs registered with Nigerian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) in Ilorin metropolis formed the entire population. The sample size of the population was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) which resulted to a sample size of 226. Simple random sampling technique was used in drawing the sample from each of the colleges. The instrument titled Marketing Skills and Entrepreneurial Business Sustainability Questionnaire (MSBESQ) was developed by the researcher to collect data for the study. The instrument consisted of 14 items measured on a four point rating 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. The instrument was divided into two parts: A and B.

Part A of the instrument collected personal information of the respondents while part B was divided into two sections: section 1 with 7 items on skills of quality product which addressed hypothesis 1 and section 2 with 7 items elicited information relating to promotion skills and addressed hypothesis 2. The instrument was face-validated by three experts from the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. Corrections were accordingly effected. The reliability of the instrument was determined through application of Kuder Richards formula (K-R 21) and a reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The instrument was considered reliable based on the reliability value obtained. Two hundred and twenty-six (226) copies of the instrument was administered through online via google form and were all retrieved and used for analysis. The research hypotheses formulated were tested using regression analysis. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. For the hypotheses, if the observed p-value is less than the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, if the observed p-value is greater or equal to the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected

4.1 Results and Discussion

Test of Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were postulated in the course of this study. It was tested using Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁: Skills of quality product has no significant influence on entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis

Table 1: Regression Analysis on Influence of skills of quality product on entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis

Model	B	Std. Error	T	R-Cal	R ²	Adjusted R ²	P-Value
Skills of quality product	0.651	0.059	16.231	0.757	0.573	0.571	.000
Entrepreneurial business sustainability	0.061	0.021	5.765				

Source: Field Survey (2024)

$R^2 = 0.573$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$

From Table 1, Regression analysis was used to test if skills of quality product has no significant influenced on entrepreneurial business sustainability. The results revealed that $R^2 = 0.573$, $t=16.231$, and 5.765 , $p = .000$. This showed that skills of quality product significantly influenced entrepreneurial business sustainability ($\beta = .651$, $p = .000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that skills of quality product has no significant influence on entrepreneurial business sustainability was rejected as P-value of $.000 < 0.05$.

HO₂: promotion skills has no significant influence on entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis

Table 2: Regression Analysis on Influence of promotion skills on entrepreneurial business sustainability in Ilorin Metropolis

Model	B	Std. Error	T	R-Cal	R ²	Adjusted R ²	P-Value
Promotion skills	0.721	0.112	9.587	0.728	0.529	0.526	.000

Entrepreneurial business sustainability	0.768	0.097	11.391
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Source: field survey (2024)

$R^2 = 0.529$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$

From Table 2, Regression analysis was used to test if promotion skills has no significant influenced on entrepreneurial business sustainability. The results revealed that $R^2 = 0.529$, $t=9.587$, and 11.391 , $p = .000$. This showed that promotion skills significantly influenced entrepreneurial business sustainability ($\beta = .721$, $p = .000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that skills of quality product has no significant influence on entrepreneurial business sustainability was rejected as P-value of $.000 < 0.05$.

However, result in Table 1 showed that skills of quality product significantly influenced entrepreneurial business sustainability. This is in consonance with the work of Kotler (2014) that skills of quality product are required by entrepreneur for business growth and development. If entrepreneurs in Ilorin metropolis Kwara State are duly aware of essence of manufacturing quality product they will be able to possess various skills on how to ensure product meet up with quality standard, ability to understand customers taste, knowledge in manufacturing goods base on consumers needs and wants and knowledge to maintain product quality.

Result in Table 2 revealed that promotion skills significantly influenced entrepreneurial business sustainability. This is in line with the work of Belz and peattie (2017) that perceived the essence of communicating the value of product to prospects customer is highly required by entrepreneurs for business sustainability. In kwara State entrepreneurs are required to possess skills in promotion that is communicating the value of products through ability to connect with audience and promote product, skill to drive sales, skill to develop a strong brand identity and knowledge to utilize various advertising channels for business sustainability.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate marketing skills required by entrepreneurs for business sustainability in Ilorin metropolis Kwara State. Data were collected, analyzed and interpreted. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that entrepreneurs required skills in quality product, pricing skills, promotion skills and distribution skills for business sustainability. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: Business bodies should organize in-house training for their members on the significance of product quality skills to the progress of the business because it will enhance the ability of entrepreneurs to produce goods of quality standard and the government at all level should make it as a resolution for any potential entrepreneur to possess good promotion skills in communicating value of products this will assist in building interpersonal relationships with customers.

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