

Entrepreneurial Competencies Prerequisites: Pitfalls, Opportunities, and Success of Small Businesses in the Nigerian Food Service Sector

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Publication Online: 30 August 2020	Governments all over the world are making efforts to improve the standard of living for its citizenry. In some instances, this may have given room for the introduction of entrepreneurial development programmes to enhance their competencies for available opportunities. This paper examines the small business success using entrepreneurial competencies. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to 78 operators of registered food service businesses operating in Rivers State. Only 65 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and analysed via Spearman's Rank Order Correlation with the aid of SPSS. It was revealed that entrepreneurs who are creative and innovative in managing risk can optimally drive their enterprise(s) towards increased customer patronage, increase in sales, and profitability. This study suggests that; innovativeness enhances business success through value creation, improved brand recognition, competitiveness, and quality service delivery. Hence, it should be applied to bring about increase in revenue and reduced external risk. Conversely, risk-taking gives room for the development of new skills, spurs creativity, and creates unforeseen opportunities to vigorously pursue success at all levels. Consequently, it should be encouraged to achieve increase in profitability and survival ratios. Last of all, technological culture speeds-up organisational activities and makes organisations optimally agile in its communication and networking processes. Thus, technological culture enhances entrepreneurial competitiveness toward improving success potentials and should be adopted
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Introduction

In retrospect, the 1980s is said to be the period that small businesses in Nigeria came into limelight (Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria [SMEDAN], 2015). At the time, small businesses enjoyed soft loans from the government with repayment plan spreading across 5-7 years. This seemed to boost their activities with an evidence in GDP increase by 73.3% in the early 1990s (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2010), thereby reducing unemployment rates to a minimal scale. Currently, the Nigerian State has appeared to have been bedevilled with high unemployment rates. Thus, the government over the years seem to have failed to adequately perform the responsibility of job creation. Evidently, a 2018 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report noted that unemployed Nigerians increased from 17.6 million (19%) to 20.9 million (20.9%), representing a whopping 3.3 million in the third quarter of 2018. In the report; from 2017-

2018; unemployment and underemployment rates skyrocketed from 40.0% to 43.3% in the third quarters of the respective years (Elebeke, 2018). Nonetheless, the outbreak of the Novel Corona Virus Disease (Covid19 Pandemic) has further worsen the situation, as more households are gradually sliding into abject poverty on a daily basis due to job loses without any hope for solace. This has become worrisome to relevant stakeholders (Echu & Okpara, 2020), especially as many graduates conclude the compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme with nearly non-existent employment opportunities.

This may be one of the several reasons Nigeria continues to experience its share of social, economic and political disturbances which may have stunted opportunities for economic prosperity (Nufukho, 2010). In a similar thought, the need to earn a living and make life meaningful in the face of this societal and economic pitfalls is what may have

compelled individuals into establishing small business and/or start-ups (Ahiazu, 2016; Tende & Ekanem, 2018). Certainly, Nigeria needs healthier small businesses that can create value through quality service delivery and employment creation. Since, these small businesses tend to represent over 90% of businesses nation-wide (Elebeke, 2018). In the light of the above, the success of small businesses is vital to the advancement of any country, especially a developing country like Nigeria; as they seem to be the core of economic and business development, income distribution, as well as the creation of essential products/services, and indigenous enterprise (European Commission, 2015; Sidik, 2012). Owing to these, the Federal Government over the years appeared to have made some efforts to put in place palliative measures in an attempt to reduce unemployment rates in the country. This they did by introducing several entrepreneurship development programmes such as: Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN), School to Land, National Agency for Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Graduate Job Creation Loan Guarantee Scheme, Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P), Better Life Programme, Peoples' Bank, Agricultural Sector Employment Programme, National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, Trader Moni, and National Social Investment Program (NSIP) which captures the NPOWER Volunteer Corp. Similarly, Idam (2014) noted that in 1980, the Structural Adjustment Programme initiated other government entrepreneurship development programmes such as; Small and Medium Industries Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Establishment of Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs), Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Rural Development (NACRDB) Microfinance Bank, Bank of Industry (BOI); which was born out of the merger of Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry (NBCI), National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), and Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB). All these were designed to mitigate unemployment and induce entrepreneurial support, activities, and training that will breed entrepreneurial competence.

Entrepreneurial competencies prerequisites are vital for the development of entrepreneurial activities and small business success as it appears to define the characteristics of a person in terms of generic and specific knowledge, being vastly proficient in attitudinal, intellectual, behavioural, technical, and managerial aspects that may drive an optimal operation of the business (Ibidunni *et al.*, 2017; Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2017). Specifically, the competencies of the entrepreneur are categorized into; (a). Personal entrepreneurial competence, and (b). Venture initiation and success competencies (Bird, 1995), which comprises of enterprise launching competencies prerequisites such as; (1). Ability to understand the nature of the business, (2). Examining how to maximize

opportunities and minimize risks, (3). Analysing the personal risk of owning a business, (4). Ability to determine business potentials, (5). Evaluate potential for problem-solving, (6). Creativity, and decision-making, (7). Examine your potential ability for planning, (8). Personnel and public relations, and (9). Enterprise management competencies. All of which together drive business success with the right technology in place (Ahmad, *et al.*, 2010; Shaheen & AL-Haddad, 2018; Tende *et al.*, 2018; Welppe, 2015; Wegwu, 2016). So, entrepreneurial competencies are vital to achieving the success of small businesses because it demonstrates the extent of creativity, initiative, information seeking, self-confidence, persistence, high systematic planning and quality of output, efficiency orientation, assertiveness, problem solving, persuasion, employee welfare orientation, application of influence stratagem, monitoring, commitment to work, seeking and acting on opportunities, and so on (Ibidunni, *et al.*, 2017; Vargas-Halabi *et al.*, 2017; Sadriwala & Khan, 2018). One of the reasons for the need of these competencies is that the entrepreneur does not have a clear job description. That is why building or enhancing personal entrepreneurial capabilities is the first step in the approach to running a successful business (Ismail, 2012). Hence, it enjoys the advantage of (i). Applying capabilities to properly understand the environment of business, (ii). Identify relevant stakeholders that could support the business, and (iii). Enhance the chances of the success of the business. Consequently, having entrepreneurial competencies tend to provide the platform for optimally managing and standardizing business operations.

On a similar note, small businesses may enjoy successes if they are operated and managed by experts who are competent enough to run the business in spite of imminent pitfalls. In this sense, small businesses in Nigeria seems to have underperformed due to; (a). Inability of the operators to put in place a rolling plan in line with mission and strategy, financial objectives, sales growth and market strategies, resource planning, etc., (b). Lack of working capital, (c). Providing too much credit to customers, (d). Failure to manage outsourcing relationship, and/or failure to identify core areas to be outsourced, (e). Failure or inability to understand a competitive environment, (f). Failure to track finances, (g). Ineffective marketing, (h). Hasty growth, (i). Poor entrepreneurial leadership style, and (j). Inability to introduce product differentiation strategies. In a bid to further buttress this point, McIntyre (2020) demonstrated that about $\frac{1}{5}$ of start-ups or small businesses sink in their first year of operation, and about half of these establishments crumble within its fifth year of operation. McIntyre (2020) explained that, the reason for this could be connected to; (i). Wrong business location, (ii). Venturing into the business for the wrong reasons, (iii). Overexpansion, (iv). Lack of internet/social media presence, and so on. McIntyre (2020) further noted that, about half to $\frac{2}{3}$ of small businesses are

likely to survive and thrive within their first year and are likely to fail in the fifth year, while 30% are likely to survive. Although, McIntyre (2020) maintained that about 85%, 70%, 50%, and 35% of food service businesses tend to survive in their first, second, fifth, and tenth year respectively. This paper seeks to address issues impeding the successes of food service businesses in Rivers State. It injects entrepreneurial competencies through proactive plans and actions for manpower needs (Tende & Alagah, 2017), in an attempt to bring small businesses up to speed with events and trends in their industries and better prepare them against rivalry. On the basis of this disposition, it is suitable at this point to establish here how several scholars have conducted numerous studies on entrepreneurial competencies and small business success at different times and in different contexts (e.g. Ismail, 2012; McIntyre, 2020; Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010; Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2017; Tende & Ekanem, 2018; Wegwu, 2016). Still, there seems to be scanty research conducted to ascertain the correlation between entrepreneurial competencies and success of food service businesses in Nigeria, especially in Rivers State. Based on this, our point of departure from previous research is to empirically fill this gap. Therefore, this study intends to ascertain if there exist any correlation between entrepreneurial competencies and success of food service businesses in Rivers State, and if technological culture moderates the correlation between entrepreneurial competencies and small business success.

Theoretical Underpinning

The disposition of Chandler (1990) necessitated the adoption of organisational learning theory to serve as an undergirded theory especially when the success and/or failure of business is to be ascertained. In this regard, Chandler (1990) explained that organisations succeed or fail because of what they learn, what they fail to learn, and how they apply what they have learnt. As a function of this disposition, Cheprasov (2020) submitted that successful organisation that have been in operation for decade, manages their longevity, outcompete their rivals and remain pertinent within their space since they keep on learning. Learning in this sense characterises acquiring and applying new set of abilities to improve performance (Cheprasov, 2020). Organisational learning theory is a broad field which is characterized by the ability to acquire new aptitude, skills or competencies intended to drive the central objective of the firm (Castaneda & Rios, 2016; Cheprasov, 2020; Onağ *et al.*, 2014). One of the most notable ideas of organisational learning theory as suggested by Chris Aryis and Donald Schon holds that proper learning appears to have taken effect when there is evidence of error correction. For instance, if the outcome of a cooking process of a food service business fails to meet expected benchmark, management, team, and/or unit involve may want to investigate what might have gone wrong and why it turned out that way. Consequently, they may be compelled to take practical steps to correct the errors and mitigate such situations in the future.

Conceptual Model

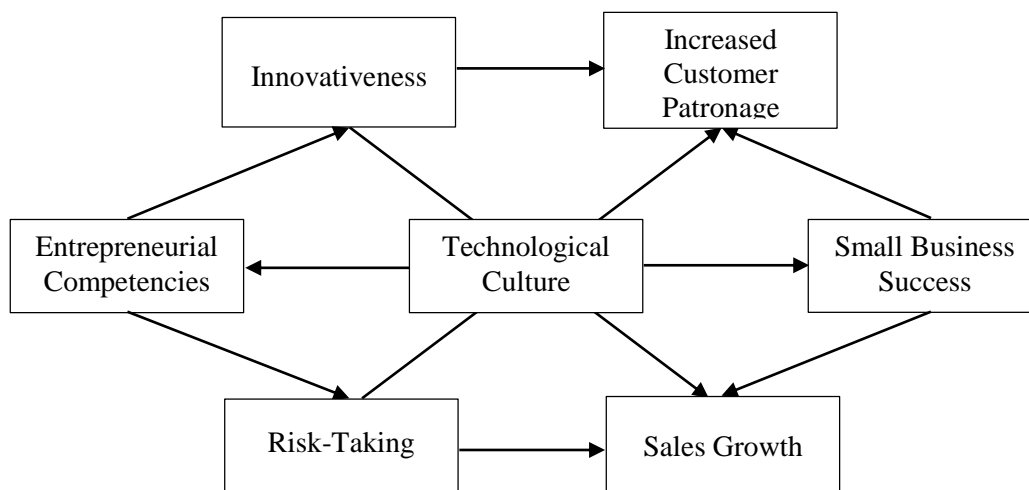


Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. above portrays the interrelationship between entrepreneurial competencies, innovativeness, risk-taking, small business success, increased customer patronage, sales growth, and technological culture. It demonstrates how technological culture offers valuable support for entrepreneurial competencies to gain success for the business.

Entrepreneurial Competencies

Competencies connotes a combination of attributes which are entrepreneurial and/or industry specific. As stated earlier, there are two categories of competencies viz; personal entrepreneurial competencies, and venture initiation and

success competencies (Bird, 1995). Chronologically, entrepreneurial competencies exemplify basic generic features such as customer orientation, concern for high quality, initiative, persistence, problem-solving, systematic planning, self-confidence, commitment, concern for

employees, and other related abilities applied in the business process of a firm. These set of skills and aptitude are necessary for organisations to adequately launch a creative, and innovative climate solid enough to withstand the storm that may emanate from the business environment (Bird, 1995; Ismail, 2012; Komarkova *et al.*, 2015). As reviewed previously, traits and motivations can spur the development of entrepreneurial competencies. Traits can lead to the development of work place skills necessary for entrepreneurial success. Since there are many factors that impact a growing firm, researchers have had a difficult time identifying specific entrepreneurial competencies that significantly predict organisational success, the growth rate of the current market, access to key resources and network connections that have the likelihood of bringing success. While a great deal of research had focused on environmental characteristics and opportunities (Vargas-Halabi *et al.*, 2017). Other researchers have continue to identify the vital influence of human activity in form of attributes and competencies when predicting what will make a small business successful, why external factors will always affect entrepreneurial success, so will the characteristics of the individual entrepreneurs who make decisions about how to undertake the venture process (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Yet, studies seem not to have specifically identify a trait that is predictive of success and perhaps never will, as they have identified specific competencies that play key role in supporting successful business growth. Although, researchers at the central Michigan University developed an *innovation competency model*, which specifies the way in which creativity, enterprising, integrating perspectives, forecasting and managing change relate to entrepreneurial success. Thus, when considering value creation, entrepreneurial competencies espoused should be geared towards innovation and risk-taking.

Innovativeness: Within the domain of this study, innovation characterises originality, creativity, and uniqueness in the introduction of new ideas. This suggests that, the individuals involve dares to be different from the regular or norm. Pallas *et al* (2013) demonstrated that, (i). strategic innovative focus, (ii). openness to communication, (iii). extrinsic motivation, and (iv). management encouragement are the dimensions of innovativeness. Although, innovativeness could be exhibited in several form. It could also take the form of product innovation, process innovation, technological superiority, and so on. Imaginativeness might be slow, thorough or difficult depending on whether it begins inside, or outside. Innovativeness attempts to change the manner in which firms are getting things done. It is linked to pushing the firms towards what is expected of one who intends to create new and valuable ideas. Accordingly, innovativeness raises profitability propensity and expectations for ease of business

operation, as it extends the scope of products differentiation, and business diversification (Zhai *et al.*, 2018).

Risk-Taking: Risk is an essential part of business that attempts to prepare it for something unforeseen or bad that could happen (Bird, 1995). It involves activities surrounding the effect of uncertain events or occasion that could possibly occur. It signifies the energy of the firm that focuses on negative and undesirable consequences which seems to help prepare the firm against failure (Bird, 1995). In this regard, risk-taking is a necessary action taken to anticipate unfavourable conditions and avert same in the favour of the firm (Bird, 1995; Brettel *et al.*, 2015; Hillson & Murray-Webster, 2011). To stress the need for entrepreneurs as well as firms to take logical risk, Zeilinger (2017) noted that; (1). Unnoticeable opportunities accompany risk-taking, (2). Risk-taking builds confidence at several levels, (3). Risk-taking provides room for learning, (4). Risk-taking helps to effectively pursue success, (5). Risk-taking helps overcome failure and fear. Based on these submissions, risk-taking is a necessary part of the life of any organisation if the intention is to break new grounds and carve a niche in their industry.

Small Business Success

The meanings of small businesses are usually inferred in every country, in view of its function to the economy, resources and activities of regulatory organisations authorised to regulate activities of small businesses (European Commission, 2015). Although, European Commission (2015) categorized small businesses as; (a). a micro enterprise when it does not have a labour strength of more than ten employees, (b). a small business when it has between ten to forty-nine employees, (c). a medium size business when it has between fifty to two hundred and forty-nine employees, (d). a small and medium scale enterprise when it has between one to two hundred and forty-nine employees, and (e). a large enterprise when it has two hundred and fifty employees and above. Correspondingly, the Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN] (2010) submitted that small business connotes both micro and small-scale businesses with a labour strength between one to ten or eleven to one hundred employees or a cumulative operating cost of ₦1.5 million or less, or not more than ₦50 million plus working capital, minus cost of land. In essence, small businesses could be characterized based on their resources, which is not limited to; number of employees and venture capital. Within the context of this study, small business success requires; (i). understanding risk and rewards, (ii). analytical thinking, (iii). detained strategic rolling plan, (iv). determination, and (v). flexibility; towards attaining favourable outcomes.

Increased Customer Patronage: This characterises the level of the market which the firm has or possess in the industry. This is categorised with regards to the measure of all firm deals or sale in the business. One's portion of the overall

industry might be ascertained with respect to the expertise of the business manager (Dop & Racolta-Paina, 2013). In addition, it is observed as the percentage of the offer gotten by a single firm from the total market. Firms attempting to survive sometimes become industry leaders by owning an extensive size of the market. In the event that a firm is reliably seizing a huge size of the market and eventually the key stockholders in the industry, it will be wise to continue the use of such a strategy (Ajagbe *et al.*, 2011). One typically thinks about a market as being a gathering of people that are probably going to buy a specific class of item. For customer service patronage, the market is a gathering of buyers who are potential customers of an item (Dop & Racolta-Paina, 2013). **Sales Growth:** Khalique *et al* (2011) observed that sales growth is the profit on investment. Thus, the excess profit obtained over a period of time on sales. It is in terms of the similar inferences linked to operational cost. Khalique *et al* (2011) insisted that profit is the wheels that drives the firm from where it is to an expected height. Hence, a deal that showcases the benefits of the firm. Interestingly, sales growth tends to show the level or amount of development. Little wonder Khalique *et al* (2011) in their hypothetical survey reported that a firm is said to develop and make adequate benefit from its task. Sales growth is as a result of an inspiring push for the consumer to buy a brand over the other (Ismail, 2012; Khalique *et al.*, 2011). The discoveries of Ismail (2012) affirmed that there is a correlation between sales growth and success. Khalique *et al* (2011) led an examination on the effect of sales growth, and discovered that the application of sales growth impacts the viability of small businesses.

Technological culture, entrepreneurial competencies, and small business success.

A collection, collation, and interpretation of empirical data suggests that entrepreneurial competencies improve small businesses. On this note, Wegwu (2016) examined the correlation between entrepreneurial competencies and competitive advantage (which signifies success in this case). Wegwu (2016) found that entrepreneurial competencies improve competitive advantage. On a similar note, Komarkova *et al* (2015) examined entrepreneurial competencies and reported that, it led to success-prone practices such as operational cost minimization, focal plan for higher quality of products and services, and customer patronage.

Chronologically, technology has altered the way we live and do business. Today, individuals and organisations are employing technologically enhanced ways of conducting tasks to attain expected results. In support of this view, Eketu and Tende (2019) noted that individuals and organisations appear to rely heavily on technological apparatus to function effectively on a daily basis in today’s business environment. They explained that, work organisations are now automating work-processes to getting things done quickly and in a

reliable fashion. They further posited that, technology seems to dictate the pace, pattern, process, and progress of operational activities within work environment and social cycles. This means that, if technological culture is developed and enhanced, organisations will be more prepared to take advantage of available opportunities to create value through offering valuable products and services and capture the attention of the customer. Owing to this reality, technological boom has offered food service businesses technological devices such as; point of sale systems, kitchen display screens, self-order kiosks, cash drawers, and so on (Cumella, 2020). All of these are designed to simplify food service operations with expected positive outcomes. On this basis, technological culture positively affects how firms develop and sustain shared value overtime. Therefore, it allows for the adoption and application of scientific knowledge; and transforms the beliefs, behaviours, interaction, and cumulative traits of organisation members for organisational gains.

Empirical Insight

Based on epistemological validations, a healthy entrepreneurial spirit has the tendency to create competence at several levels. This submission was drawn from the report of a survey conducted by Isabell M. Welpé in 2015. The study depicted the degree to which high entrepreneurial spirit could promote competency among entrepreneurs across board. Accordingly, Welpé (2015) surveyed about five hundred thousand participants who are small business operators (or owners) in over forty counties in terms of desirability, stability, and feasibility in an attempt to survive. This investigation inquired into how unfavourable environmental trends are handled amidst lack of self-confidence towards business failure, as a characteristic of these business operators. The result demonstrated that a large percentage of entrepreneurs are open to learning and change; giving them the right spirit to acquire competence which will help them pull through hurdles.

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study are stated as follows:

H₀₁ There is no correlation between innovativeness and increased customer patronage of food service businesses in Rivers State.

H₀₂ There is no correlation between innovativeness and sales growth of food service businesses in Rivers State.

H₀₃ There is no correlation between risk-taking and increased customer patronage of food service businesses in Rivers State.

H₀₄ There is no correlation between risk-taking and sales growth of food service businesses in Rivers State.

H₀₅ Technological culture does not moderate the correlation between entrepreneurial competencies and success of food service businesses in Rivers State.

Methodology

Quasi-experimental research design and cross-sectional research design were adopted and applied. The target population consists of all 532 registered food service businesses operating in Rivers State. Although, due to unavoidable circumstances and easy accessibility, only 78 operators and/or owners of these food service businesses participated as the population (www.riversstateyellowpages.com). However, since the population size is relatively small there was no need resorting to drawing a sample so the entire participants (respondents) were surveyed using census technique (Kothari & Garg,

2014). 78 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to them but only 65 were retrieved/analysed with Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation via SPSS.

Test of Hypotheses

Bivariate and multivariate level analysis were conducted.

Bivariate Level Analyses

In testing the hypotheses, decisions were made at the point where the p-values obtained is greater than alpha value. Thus, reject null and accept alternative hypotheses stating a correlation between the predictor variable and its dimensions and the criterion variables and its measures.

Table 1: Test of correlation between innovativeness and increased customer patronage (H₀₁).

			Innovativeness	Increased Customer Patronage
Spearman's rho	Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.960**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	Increased Customer Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.960**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output, Version 22 – Field Survey, 2020.

Table:1 shows rho = .960**, p = .000 < 0.05. Signifying a strong positive correlation.

Table 2: Test of correlation between innovativeness and sales growth (H₀₂).

			Innovativeness	Sales Growth
Spearman's rho	Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.905**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	Sales Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.905**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output, Version 22 – Field Survey, 2020.

Table:2 shows rho = .905**, p = .000 < 0.05. Indicating a strong positive correlation.

Table 3: Test of correlation between risk-taking and increased customer patronage (H₀₃).

			Risk-Taking	Increased Customer Patronage
Spearman's rho	Risk-Taking	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.911**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	Increased Customer Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.911**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output, Version 22 – Field Survey, 2020.

Table:3 shows rho = .911**, p = .000 < 0.05. Signifying a strong positive correlation.

Table 4: Test of correlation between risk-taking and sales growth (H_{04})

		Risk-Taking	Sales Growth
Spearman's rho	Risk-Taking	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.867**
		N	.000
	Sales Growth	Correlation Coefficient	.867**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output, Version 22 – Field Survey, 2020.

Table:4 shows rho = .867**, p = .000 < 0.05. Indicating a strong positive correlation.

Multivariate Level Analysis

Examining technological culture on entrepreneurial competencies and small business success.

Table 5: Test for technological culture, entrepreneurial competencies, and small business success.

Control Variables			Entrepreneurial Competencies	Small Business Success	Technological Culture
-none ^a	Entrepreneurial Competencies	Correlation	1.000	.891	.830
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	168	168
	Small Business Success	Correlation	.891	1.000	.744
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	168	0	168
Technological Culture	Correlation	.830	.744	1.000	
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	
	Df	168	168	0	
Technological Culture	Entrepreneurial Competencies	Correlation	1.000	.734	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		Df	0	167	
	Small Business Success	Correlation	.734	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		Df	167	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

SPSS output, Version 22 – Field Survey, 2020.

Table:5 indicates a strong positive partial correlation. The statistical significance of technological culture revealed ($r(167) = .734 = 170, p = .000$) when controlled; and ($r(168) = .891, n = 170, p = .000$) when not controlled. Where the zero-order correlation examined the effect of technological culture on the correlation of both variables. This revealed that, technological culture influences the control of the correlation between the predictor and criterion variables.

Discussion of Findings

Firstly, hypotheses one and two showed that innovativeness has a significant positive correlation with sales growth and

increased customer patronage of food service businesses in Rivers State. This finding agrees with other existing scholarly assertions where innovativeness is said to bring about competitive advantage (e.g. Wegwu, 2016). Again, for hypotheses two and three, risk-taking proved to have a positive significant influence on the success of food service businesses in Rivers State. This finding agrees with some scholarly positions that risk sometimes entails some economic benefits, as firms may derive considerable gains by taking risk (e.g. Brettel *et al.*, 2015). Lastly, hypothesis five showed that entrepreneurial competencies have a strong positive partial correlation with success of food service

businesses in Rivers State. This finding conforms with the study of Ahmad *et al* (2010).

Final Thoughts and Practical Implications

In the light of reality, there is no established correlation between the subscription for government entrepreneurship development programmes with the number of millionaires who emerge from operating small businesses in Nigeria. This shows that, the government needs to redirect its focus and reshape entrepreneurial development programmes from necessity-driven to an opportunity-driven perspective. This means that the process of training, learning and acquiring practical entrepreneurial competencies should be geared towards preparing participants to perceive, seize and harness available entrepreneurial opportunities to ensure individual and business success.

Lastly, from the analysis and discussion of findings above, it was concluded that entrepreneurial competencies has a significant impact on the success of food service businesses in Rivers State. This implies that entrepreneurs who are creative and innovative in managing risk can optimally drive their enterprise(s) towards increased customer patronage, increase in sales, and profitability. Therefore, this study suggests that; innovativeness enhances business success through value creation, improved brand recognition, competitiveness, and quality service delivery. Hence, it should be applied to bring about increase in revenue and reduced external risk. Conversely, risk-taking gives room for the development of new skills, spurs creativity, and creates unforeseen opportunities to vigorously pursue success at all levels. Consequently, it should be encouraged to achieve increase in profitability and survival ratios. Last of all, technological culture speeds-up organisational activities and makes organisations optimally agile in its communication and networking processes. Thus, technological culture enhances entrepreneurial competitiveness toward improving success potentials and should be adopted.

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