

Entrepreneurial Competencies Required By Technicians for Success in Small Scale Automobile Maintenance Enterprises In Lagos State

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ABSTRACT: *The study was carried out to determine the entrepreneurial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance enterprises in Lagos State. Three research questions were developed and answered by the study while three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A survey research design was employed for the study. The population for the study comprised 161 entrepreneurs and employees in automobile industries. A structured questionnaire item was used to collect data from the respondents. Three experts validated the instrument for data collection. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and 0.80 was obtained. Mean was used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses of no significant difference at 0.05 levels of significance and 138 degree of freedom. It was found that 24 personality competencies, 22 managerial competencies and 15 marketing competencies are required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry in Lagos State. It was recommended that all the entrepreneurial competencies identified should be packaged and used to prepare automobile technicians in Lagos State.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The establishment of small and medium scale industries has been seen as a remarkable step to stop poverty and unemployment in Nigerian society. Government in recent time has placed emphases on the promotion of indigenous small scale enterprises with a view to encouraging entrepreneurship. Success in small scale automobile maintenance industries therefore required entrepreneurs with appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to deal with tasks, problem of management and customer relation in the industries. Due to the unemployment situation in the country, automobile technicians in Lagos State are making it a goal to establish their own business venture. However, Toboldt, Johnson and Guihier (1995), cautioned that the desire to own a business in automobile maintenance industry requires a type of entrepreneurs or person with appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities or competencies.

Anyone whose car or truck has broken down knows the importance of the job of an automobile technician. The automobile is a vehicle which can move on wheels and it is used for transportation of goods and passengers. Narang (2005) described automobile as a vehicle producing power within itself for its propulsion. Examples of common automobiles are motor cars, buses, trucks and jeeps. The skilled individuals that maintain all kinds of automobiles especially when they are bad are also called automobile technicians. Dangana (2006) identified a technician as somebody who completed a two year training programme in any branch of science and technology in Polytechnics, Colleges of Technology or any related institution or individuals with professional work experience recognized as equivalent to the period of training mentioned. Automobile technicians therefore are those studied motor vehicle mechanic work and graduated from technical colleges. These graduates acquire enough technical competencies but absolutely lack entrepreneurial competencies to set up their own automobile maintenance workshop. Also, observation and interaction with the automobile technicians who graduated from technical colleges revealed that these individuals lack entrepreneurial competencies required to set up their own automobile maintenance industries to satisfy the customers and to cater for themselves. In order to improve their situation and become demand driven employment, there is need to prepare relevant entrepreneurial competencies for setting up automobile maintenance enterprises.

Maintenance according to Malitza (2002) is a function that should be carried out on plant or any engineering equipment so as to keep it in a good operating condition. Narang (2005) noted that maintenance in automobile is the activities carryout for keeping the vehicle in a good running condition. Hence by proper

maintenance, the vehicle becomes more comfortable, safer and easier to drive. The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence ASE (2003) noted that technicians in automobile industries perform maintenance tasks such as routine checks, lubricating engine and other components, repair and replacement of parts before it causes breakdown. They also undertake tasks like major engine overhaul, engine tune-up, adjusting brakes, wheel alignment and the electrical /electronic components repair /replacement in the maintenance industry. Giri (2005) also added that the increasing sophistication of automobiles now requires technicians who possess competencies in using computerized shop equipment and work with electronic components during maintenance.

Competencies according to Okwunaso and Achilike (2001) are those abilities of power and authority of knowledge, attitude, skills and facts necessary for accomplishing task on the job. According to Gupta and Khanka (2006) competence implies a person underlying characteristics leading to his or her superior performance. It is the combination of various qualities and traits required to perform a job well. The Common Wealth of Virginia (2008) described competencies as the set of identified behaviour, knowledge, skills and abilities that directly and positively impacts the success of entrepreneurs and employees in their work place. Onstenk (2003) described entrepreneurial competencies as the structured and integrated ability to perform entrepreneurial activities adequately and to solve entrepreneurial problems.

Acquiring entrepreneurial competencies is a requisite factor for achieving success in self-employment. Thus, entrepreneurial competencies can be described as factors that make a successful entrepreneur. Geddes and Grosset (2005) described an entrepreneur as a person who takes a commercial risk of starting and running a business enterprise. The entrepreneur is the owner or manager of a business enterprise who by risk or initiative attempts to make profit. Zaharaddeen, Mahmood, Ladan and Kurfi (2006), identified an entrepreneur as someone who assumes the financial risk of beginning and managing a new venture. The venture can be based on totally new idea, new ways of doing things, a new location, or attempting what no one else has done before. Steinhof and Burgess (1993) pointed out that it takes special characteristics and skills to succeed as an entrepreneur. While buttressing this assertion, Hisrich and Peters (2002), highlighted three necessary entrepreneurial competencies required for success in any business venture such as automobile maintenance enterprises to include personality, managerial and marketing competencies. The authors described personality competencies as the individual traits, attitudes or qualities to perform entrepreneurial activities and to solve entrepreneurial problems. Managerial competencies involve the ability to harness human and material resources towards achieving the goal of the enterprise. Osinem (2008) explained marketing competences or skills as the skills which an individual acquires and which enables him keep a job. Richard, Gary and Larry (1991) said that marketing skills involve identifying relevant markets accurately; communicate effectively with potential customers, users, or donors; and maintaining a sensitively to the marketing place. Acquisition of these entrepreneurial competencies by technicians will help them in setting up their own automobile maintenance enterprises and drastically reduce unemployment in Nigerian society most especially in Lagos State

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to determine the entrepreneurial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry in Lagos State. Specifically, the study sought to identify;

1. The personality competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry.
2. The managerial competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry.
3. The marketing competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the personality competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry?
2. What are the managerial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry?
3. What are the marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the personality competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

H₀₂: There will be no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the managerial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

H0₃: There will be no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

II. METHOD

Survey research design was employed for this study. Osuala (2001) stated that survey research focuses on people and their opinions, attitudes, motivations and behavior. The survey research design was therefore suitable for this study since it tends to obtain data from entrepreneurs and employees in industries on the entrepreneurial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

The study was carried out in Lagos state of Nigeria. The population for the study was 161 respondents consisting of 58 entrepreneurs and 103 employees in automobile maintenance industries in Lagos State. A structured questionnaire consisted 61 entrepreneurial competency items. The instrument was in three sections A-C. A was considered to collect data on The personality competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry, B centered on managerial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry while C was for collecting data on marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. Each entrepreneurial competency item was assigned a five point response scale of highly required, Required, undecided, slightly required and not required with values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

Three lecturers from the department of vocational and technical education, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba validated the instrument for the data collection. Cronbach alpha technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and a coefficient reliability of 0.81 was obtained. The 161 copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents with the help of one research assistant who understand the terrain of study area. Out of 161 copies of the questionnaire administered, only one hundred and forty copies were retrieved representing 86.95 percent return rate.

The data collected from the study were analyzed using mean for answering the research questions and the t-test for testing the hypotheses at probability level of 0.05 and 138degree of freedom. An item with a mean rating of 3.50 or above was regarded as required while any item with the mean rating below 3.50 was regarded as not required.

III. RESULTS

The results for the study were obtained from the research questions answered through data collected and analyzed.

Research Question 1

What are the personality competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry?

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the personality competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

The data for answering research question one and the t- test analysis were presented in table one.

Table 1: P-values and Mean Ratings of the Responses of Entrepreneurs and Employees on the Personality Competencies Required for Success in Small Scale Automobile Maintenance Industry

S/N	Item Statements	X	P-Values	Remarks, Ho
1	Ability to take risk	3.58	0.12	Required, NS
2	Find and act on business opportunities	3.91	0.19	“ “
3	Ability to function independently	3.57	0.09	“ “
4	Ability to work hard	3.75	0.59	“ “
5	Ability to persist on task	3.53	0.22	“ “
6	Ability to endure and persevere	3.72	0.13	“ “
7	Ability to remain focused	3.60	0.10	“ “
8	Innovative skills in operating the enterprise	3.56	0.52	“ “
9	Ability to asserts one’s vision and convincing others of its value	3.69	0.71	“ “
10	Ability to take initiative	3.78	0.56	“ “
11	Convert ideas into profit making venture	3.70	0.56	“ “
12	Find solutions on difficult task	3.96	0.67	“ “
13	Creative skills with modern ideas	3.99	0.66	“ “
14	Conduct personal evaluation	3.98	0.58	“ “
15	Ability to motivate oneself	3.95	0.78	“ “

16	Adopt to changing situation	3.78	0.11	“	“
17	Fulfill the need of customers	3.97	0.74	“	“
18	Strong will to achieve success	3.91	0.56	“	“
19	Ability to try things that are very new	3.89	0.74	“	“
20	Ability to exercise leadership	3.78	0.53	“	“
21	Ability to get along with people	3.50	0.21	“	“
22	Ability to be alert to new opportunities	3.67	0.42	“	“
23	Build a team for effective operation	3.53	0.22	“	“
24	Ability to deal with all people in an honest ethical and moral way	3.78	0.42	“	“

The data in table 1 revealed that all the twenty four items had their mean values ranged from 3.50 to 3.99 which are above the cutoff point of 3.50. This shows that all the items are the personality competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. The table also indicated that items had their P-values greater than 0.05. This showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the personality competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for the items.

Research Question 2

What are the managerial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry?

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the managerial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

The data for answering research question two and the t- test analysis were presented in table two.

Table 2: P-values and Mean Ratings of the Responses of Entrepreneurs and Employees on the Managerial Competencies required by Technicians for Success in Small Scale Automobile Maintenance Industry

S/N	Item Statements	X	P-Values	Remarks,	Ho
1	Plan for the operation of the business	3.82	0.51	“	“
2	Organize human and material resources to achieve organizational goal	3.89	0.09	“	“
3	Direct all activities in the industry	3.70	0.85	“	“
4	Control the activities of the employees	3.84	0.66	“	“
5	Skills in human resources management	3.65	0.69	“	“
6	Ability to take rightful decision	3.80	0.38	“	“
7	Set policies for the organization	3.78	0.69	“	“
8	Ability to handle personnel matters	3.51	0.57	“	“
9	Build a team that will enhance job performance	3.94	0.27	“	“
10	Ability to delegate responsibilities to a team of employees or external consultants	3.78	0.38	“	“
11	Ability to judge the performance of employees	3.52	0.08	“	“
12	Ability to network with others in a related business	3.94	0.49	“	“
13	Control subordinates to ensure effective performance	3.66	0.48	“	“
14	Determine employee wages and allowances correctly	3.89	0.18	“	“
15	Ability to function as internal consultant to organization	3.81	0.12	“	“
16	Ability to do things for less cost	3.52	0.23	“	“
17	Skills in handling negotiations	3.69	0.12	“	“
18	Identify the political influence that can affect the success of the business	3.77	0.08	“	“
19	Knowledge of town planning policy	3.84	0.09	“	“
20	Displace knowledge of regulating agencies in the business environment	3.65	0.21	“	“
21	Identify friendly environment that allows business to operate successfully	3.85	0.23	“	“
22	Identify a hostile business environment	3.67	0.11	“	“

The data in Table 2 reveal that all the twenty two competency items had their mean values ranged from 3.51 to 3.94 which are above the cutoff point of 3.50. This shows that all the items are the managerial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. The table also indicated that items had their P-values greater than 0.05. This showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the managerial competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for the competency items.

Research Question 3

What are the marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry?

Hypotheses 3

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry

The data for answering research question two and the t- test analysis were presented in table three.

Table 3: P-values and Mean Ratings of the Responses of Entrepreneurs and Employees on the Marketing Competencies required by Technicians for Success in Small Scale Automobile Maintenance Industry

S/N	Item Statements	X	P-Values	Remarks, Ho
1	Ability to develop customer orientation	3.56	0.09	“ “
2	Ability to build network of customers	3.69	0.08	“ “
3	Ability to maintain effective contact with customers	3.57	0.29	“ “
4	Skills in fulfilling the needs of internal and external customers	3.72	0.27	“ “
5	Ability to interpreting market information	3.82	0.38	“ “
6	Ability to obtain data to measure customers satisfaction	3.76	0.36	“ “
7	Ability to deliver services accurately	3.58	0.67	“ “
8	Ability to deliver service on time	3.64	0.45	“ “
9	Ability to communicate and persuade people	3.83	0.58	“ “
10	Use of media to advertise the organizations activities	3.78	0.36	“ “
11	Use of sales promotion to encourage clients to patronize the organizations service	3.53	0.11	“ “
12	Ability to negotiate price of goods and services	3.64	0.53	“ “
13	Ability to fix price of goods and services	3.86	0.21	“ “
14	Ability to handle issues of growing competition in the business environment	3.56	0.12	“ “
15	Ability to develop marketing strategies to attract customers	3.53	0.55	“ “

The data in Table 3 reveal that all the fifteen competency items had their mean values ranged from 3.53 to 3.86 which are above the cutoff point of 3.50. This shows that all the items are the marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. The table also indicated that items had their P-values greater than 0.05. This showed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the marketing competencies required for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for the competency items.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that technicians required 24 personality competencies, 22 managerial competencies and 10 marketing competencies for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry in Lagos State. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Ogbuanya, Bakare and Zakka (2009) who conducted a study on mechatronics skills required for integration into electrical/electronic engineering technology programme in polytechnics for sustainable employment of graduates in contemporary Nigeria. The findings revealed that 16 mechatronics contents and 40 mechatronics skills were required for integration into electrical/electronic engineering technology programme in polytechnics for sustainable employment of graduates. The result agrees with the opinion of Ogieva (2003) who outlined the activities involved in marketing palm oil to include assembling, canning, advertising, fixing prices and so on. The opinions and submissions of the authors cited above help to validate the results of the study on the entrepreneurial competencies required in oil palm processing enterprise. The result of the study is also in

agreement with the view of Olaitan, et al (1999) who said that planning should be organized to seek information continuously for problem solving and decision making process.

Findings on the hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of entrepreneurs and employees on the 24 personality competencies, 22 managerial competencies and 15 marketing competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry. This indicated that the professional experience of the respondents did not significantly influence their responses and since the 61 entrepreneurial competencies were judged required, the two groups of respondents were in support of the competencies counting on their experiences.

V. CONCLUSION

The establishment of small and medium scale industries is a remarkable step to stop poverty and unemployment among youths in Nigerian society. Observation and interaction with the automobile technicians who graduated from technical colleges reveal that these individuals lack entrepreneurial competencies required to set up their own automobile maintenance industries to satisfy the customers and to cater for themselves. It is in direction that the study was carried out to determine entrepreneurial competencies required by technicians for success in small scale automobile maintenance industry in Lagos State.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. All the entrepreneurial competencies identified should be packaged to retrain automobile technicians in Lagos State
2. Relevant material resources should be given to the automobile technicians after training in order to set up their small scale automobile maintenance enterprise

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