

## Entrepreneurial Skills Required for Small-Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the entrepreneurial skills essential for the survival of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi State, Nigeria. It was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses, utilizing a descriptive survey research design. The study's population included 134 respondents, comprising 36 business education lecturers and 98 proprietors or managers of small-scale furniture enterprises. Total Population Sampling (TPS) was employed to select all participants. Data were collected using a 24-item structured questionnaire, titled Entrepreneurial Skills Required for Small-Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival Questionnaire (ESRSSFISQ). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, and pilot-tested in Gombe State. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.88. Data analysis was conducted with SPSS version 23, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while an independent t-test was applied to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings indicated that managerial, accounting, and marketing skills are vital for the survival of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi State. Furthermore, no significant difference was observed between the mean responses of business education lecturers and proprietors or managers regarding these required skills. The study recommends that proprietors and managers acquire these entrepreneurial skills to enhance business sustainability.*

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History

Received: November, 2024

Received in revised form: December, 2024

Accepted: January, 2025

Published online: March, 2025

### KEYWORDS

Small-Scale, Furniture, Enterprises,  
Entrepreneurial skills, Survival

### INTRODUCTION

Furniture refers to various objects intended to support human activities, such as seating (stools, chairs, and sofas), sleeping (beds), eating (tables), writing (desks), and storing items (cupboards, shelves, and drawers). Furniture can be a product of design and can be considered a form of decorative art. In addition, it can serve a religious purpose. It can be made from a vast multitude of materials, including metal, plastic, and wood. Furniture can be made using a variety of woodworking joints, which often reflect the local culture. Furniture construction is broken down into two main categories: frame and carcass. In frame construction, relatively narrow boards are joined—usually with mortise and tenon joints—as in a chair or table base, or in a frame and

panel door. In carcass construction, boards are joined end-to-end using dovetails, tongue-and-groove joints, and the like.

Furniture enterprises in Nigeria, like any other business, range in size from small-scale factories to medium- and large enterprises. A small-scale furniture enterprise or business is any business whose operations involve less capital and investment, lower labor engagement, and limited integration of technology. The Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industries in Obi (2015) defined a small-scale enterprise as an enterprise whose total cost, including working capital but excluding the cost of land, does not fall below one million naira and does not exceed forty million naira and has a number of employees between 11 and 35. In addition, the Federal Inland Revenue Services

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(FIRS, 2017) defined a small-scale business as those employing between 7 and 10 employees with fixed assets, excluding buildings of ₦2,500,000. It has been generally agreed by scholars that a small-scale business is any business owned by one or a small group of people with few employees and little capital investment.

A small-scale furniture enterprise is an apparatus for reviving the economy through alleviating poverty, wealth creation, and employment generation. Atwood and Ojeke (2012) noted that over the years, small-scale enterprises have been an avenue for job creation and empowerment of Nigerian citizens, providing about 50% of all jobs in Nigeria and also for local formation. Entry into the small-scale furniture enterprise is relatively easy, but survival is not. The survival of a small-scale furniture enterprise can be measured in terms of the length and duration of time the enterprise has been in business. According to Akindele et al., (2012) business survival is the act of a business continuing its activity without interruption and remaining in operation for a longer time by turning around the business.

Inyang (2023) noted that several factors contribute to the failure of businesses, but three reasons stand out prominently. These are the founders: poor management and leadership. Other factors include poor employment practices, a lack of accounting solutions and inadequate technology, poor marketing and sales skills, and poor control practices. Sanchez (2012), Chell (2013), Ng and Kee (2013), and Abdul (2019) all believe that entrepreneurial skills play a pivotal role in ensuring survival and success in business. Entrepreneurial skills are business skills that enable a self-employed entrepreneur to perform effectively in an uncertain business environment (Ibrahim & Sa'idu, 2018). Entrepreneurs are therefore expected to deploy a set of skills to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours. Entrepreneurial skills encompass a wide range of competencies, including managerial skills, marketing skills, networking skills, planning skills, and more.

There is arguably a high mortality rate for small-scale enterprises within the first three years of operation. Adebisi and Gbegi (2013) reported that 80% of small-scale and even medium-sized enterprises in Nigeria go out of

business before their fifth anniversary. Likewise, Anas et al., in Lawal et al., (2021) reported that a significant number of small and medium-scale enterprises in Bauchi State liquidate at the infant stage. The situation rendered many people unemployed and also affected personal and national economic growth. Sanchez (2012) is of the view that for an enterprise to survive longer, its liquidity, profitability, and diversification strategy have to remain strong, as brought about by entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, this study is focused on identifying the entrepreneurial skills required for the survival of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the managerial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria?
2. What are the accounting /marketing skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lecturers and proprietors/managers on the managerial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lectures and proprietors/managers on the accounting/marketing skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

### METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate since the study used a questionnaire to determine the entrepreneurial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The study was carried out in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The state occupies a total land area of

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49,119km<sup>2</sup> (17,719 sq mi) representing about 5.3% of Nigeria's total land mass and is located between latitude 9° 3' and 12° 3' North and longitudes 8° 50' and 11° East. The population of the study was 134 respondents, which comprises 36 business education lecturers and 98 proprietors/managers of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi State, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 98 small-scale furniture enterprises used in the study. Consequently, the choice of the enterprises was based on the ground that they have in existence for more than five years. Creswell (2012) stated that in purposeful, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. A total population sampling (TPS) was used to select all the 134 respondents. According to Kothari (2004) TPS is one of the purposive sampling techniques that involves examining the whole population if found small and manageable that has a particular set of characteristics (e.g. specific attributes/traits, experience, knowledge, skills exposure to an event, etc.). Therefore, the 98 number of proprietors/managers was justifiably used based on the argument earlier made.

Twenty-four (24) items structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Skills Required for Small- Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival Questionnaire" (ESRSSFISQ) was adapted from Umar et al., (2018) and used for data collection in the study. The questionnaire had a 5-point rating response scale of Highly Required, Required, Moderately Required, Not Required, and Highly Not Required with corresponding values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The validity of the instrument was determined by three experts in the Faculty of Technology Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final copy of the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instrument a pilot test was conducted in Gombe State. The choice of the state was because the state is outside the study area and has common characteristics with the study area. Cronbach's Alpha was used to

determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha was considered to be a measurement of scale reliability and use to explain how closely related to each other variables (Chung et al., 2014). The obtained coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.88 which indicated that the instrument is reliable for use in the study.

The service of three trained research assistants was employed to assist the researchers in the distribution and retrieval of the instrument. A spot approach was used for the data collection. One hundred and thirty-four copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved with a 100% return rate. The data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Both descriptive statistic and inferential analysis were employed for data analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while an inferential statistic of *t*-test was used to test the null the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The mean scores were interpreted based on the true class limit of real whole numbers: 4.50 – 5.00 = Highly Required, 3.50 – 4.49 = Required, 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Required, 1.50 – 2.49 = Not Required, and 0.50 – 1.49 = Highly Not Required and P-value greater than the, significant level of 0.05 was considered not significant difference in the mean responses.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** What are the managerial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria?

Table 1 revealed that all the 12 identified managerial skills have average mean responses between 3.50 and 3.94. This indicated that managerial skills such as ability to make critical decisions, coordinate enterprise activities, motivate and influence staff and colleagues, manage industrial conflict, manage interpersonal relationship are all required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Mean Responses of Business Education Lecturers and Proprietors/Managers on the Managerial Skills Required for Small-Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria ( $N_1=36$ ,  $N_2=98$ ,  $N_T=134$ )

S/N	Managerial Skills = ability to:	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}^*$	Remarks
1.	Make critical decisions	3.58	3.62	3.60	Required
2.	Handle situation effectively	3.77	3.42	3.60	Required
3.	Show creativity in work performance	3.54	3.45	3.50	Required
4.	Coordinate industry activities	3.38	3.65	3.52	Required
5.	Motivate and influence staff and colleagues	3.29	3.55	3.50	Required
6.	Delegate authority	3.78	3.85	3.82	Required
7.	Promote team spirit	3.69	3.67	3.68	Required
8.	Supervise work and employee effectively	3.64	3.58	3.61	Required
9.	Employ Total Quality Management approach (TQM)	3.64	3.54	3.59	Required
10.	Manage industrial conflict	4.23	3.21	3.91	Required
11.	Manage interpersonal relationship	4.05	3.58	3.94	Required
12.	Risk management	3.77	3.42	3.60	Required

**Keys:**  $N_1$  = Number Business Education Lecturers,  $N_2$  = Number of Proprietors/Managers,  $N_T$  = Total Number of Respondents,  $\bar{X}_1$  = Mean of Business Education Lecturers,  $\bar{X}_2$  = Mean of Proprietors/Managers,  $\bar{X}^*$  = Average Mean of Business Education Lecturers and Proprietors/Managers.

**Research Question 2:** What are the accounting /marketing skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria?

Table 2 revealed that all the 12 identified accounting/marketing skills have average mean responses between 3.50 and

3.75. This indicated that accounting/marketing skills such as ability to determine the extent to which products will sell, determine appropriate customers' needs, advertise and promote sales to win customers to win enterprise are all required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Mean Responses of Business Education Lecturers and Proprietors/Managers on the Accounting/Marketing Skills Required for Small-Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria ( $N_1=36$ ,  $N_2=98$ ,  $N_T=134$ )

S/N	Accounting/Marketing Skills = ability to:	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}^*$	Remarks
13.	Determine the extent to which products will sell	3.70	3.40	3.55	Required
14.	Monitor sales overtime	3.70	3.80	3.75	Required
15.	Advertise and promote sales to win customers to win enterprise	3.50	3.50	3.50	Required
16.	Determine appropriate customers' needs	3.54	3.45	3.50	Required
17.	Working capital management	3.64	3.38	3.51	Required
18.	Prepare and interpret financial statement	3.64	3.44	3.54	Required
19.	Proper book keeping	3.82	3.70	3.76	Required
20.	Control and manage cost	3.40	3.82	3.61	Required
21.	Retain customers	3.40	3.70	3.55	Required
22.	Source for and obtain loan	3.48	3.54	3.51	Required
23.	Identify the new trends in marketing environments	3.57	3.46	3.51	Required
24.	Use social networking and direct marketing to market business products	3.52	3.48	3.50	Required

**Keys:**  $N_1$  = Number of Business Education Lecturers,  $N_2$  = Number of Proprietors/Managers,  $N_T$  = Total Number of Respondents,  $\bar{X}_1$  = Mean of Business Education Lecturers,  $\bar{X}_2$  = Mean of Proprietors/Managers,  $\bar{X}^*$  = Average Mean of Business Education Lecturers and Proprietors/Managers.

## HYPOTHESES TESTING

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lecturers and proprietors/managers on the managerial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

The result presented in table 3 shows that the difference in the mean responses of business lecturers and proprietors/managers on the managerial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria is not significant as the p-value obtained (.634) is greater than 0.05 significant level. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained.

**Table 3:** t-test Analysis for Difference between the Mean Responses of Business Education Lecturers and Proprietors/Managers on the Managerial Skills Required for Small-Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Business Education Lecturers	36	3.58	161	.484	.634	Accepted
Proprietors /Managers	98	3.56				

P<0.05=Significant, P>0.05=Not Significant

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lectures and proprietors/managers on the accounting/marketing skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

business lecturers and proprietors/managers on the accounting/marketing skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria is not significant as the p-value obtained (.429) is greater than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

The result presented in table 4 shows that the difference in the mean responses of

**Table 4:** t-test Analysis for Difference between the Mean Responses of Business Education Lecturers and Proprietors/Managers on the Accounting/Marketing Skills Required for Small-Scale Furniture Enterprises Survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Business Education Lecturers	36	3.60	161	.83	.429	Accepted
Proprietors /Managers	98	3.55				

P<0.05=Significant, P>0.05=Not Significant

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of the study revealed that managerial skills such as ability to make critical decisions, coordinate enterprise activities, motivate and influence staff and colleagues, manage industrial conflict, manage interpersonal relationship are all required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria. It further showed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lecturers and proprietors/managers on the managerial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The finding is in conformity with the

finding of Umar et al., (2018) who found that leadership skills; abilities to meet organizational goals and objectives, make critical discussion, coordinate workshop activities among others as the management skills needed by craftsmen for establishing small and medium scales enterprises in welding and fabrication. Similarly, they found that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and entrepreneurs on the managerial skills needed by craftsmen for establishing small and medium scale enterprise in welding and fabrication in Kwara State. The result also supported Chukwurah (2018) who recommended that woodwork business owner

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managers should acquire management competencies in order to guarantee the survival of woodwork business.

The finding of the study also revealed that accounting/marketing skills such as abilities to determine the extent to which products will sell, determine appropriate customers' needs, Advertise and promote sales to win customers to win enterprise are all required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria. It equally indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of business education lecturers and proprietors/managers on the accounting/marketing skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi State, Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with that of Umar et al., (2018) who found that the abilities to advertise product properly using various medium, relate with customers effectively, keep track of expenses and customers record as the accounting/marketing skills needed by craftsmen for establishing small and medium scales enterprises in welding and fabrication. Similarly, they found that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and entrepreneurs on the managerial skills needed by craftsmen for establishing small and medium scale enterprise in welding and fabrication in Kwara State.

## CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to identify the entrepreneurship skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that managerial skills and accounting/marketing skills are the entrepreneurial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Since managerial and accounting/marketing skills are the identified entrepreneurial skills required for small-scale furniture enterprises survival in Bauchi state, Nigeria, there is need for the proprietors/managers to acquire the skills otherwise the enterprises will continue to be facing challenges of liquidating at infant stage.

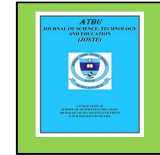
## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The proprietors/managers of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi state, Nigeria should acquire the entrepreneurial skills in order to guarantee the survival of their enterprises.
2. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Bauchi State Skills Acquisition Centres should organize workshops, seminars and conferences for proprietors/managers of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi state, Nigeria on entrepreneurial skills.
3. The directorate and skills centres should utilize the identified entrepreneurial skills in the training of proprietors/managers of small-scale furniture enterprises in Bauchi state, Nigeria.

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