



CREATIVE THINKING, ADAPTABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Imaobong A. Usoro¹ and Christabel D. Brownson^{2*}

¹Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Oruk Anam, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

²Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Oruk Anam, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author's E-mail:

christabelbrownson@yahoo.com, christabelbrownson@aksu.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between creative thinking, adaptability and entrepreneurial development. Using a survey research design, a sample of 361 small scale enterprise owners from a population of 3751 were examined through a random sampling technique. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the Data. Findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between creative thinking ($r = 0.777$; $p = 0.000$), adaptability ($r = 0.589$; $p = 0.000$) and entrepreneurial development. It was concluded that creative thinking and adaptability have a positive relationship with entrepreneurial development. It was recommended that creative thinking skills should be integrated into businesses as it empowers an individual for entrepreneurship development.*

KEYWORDS: Creative Thinking, Adaptability, Creativity, Entrepreneurship Development, Nigeria.



INTRODUCTION

The experiences of developed economies in relation to the roles played by entrepreneurship buttress the fact that the importance of entrepreneurship cannot be overemphasized especially in the developing countries (Anyadike et al., 2012). Over the years, Nigeria has been undergoing internal and external challenges such as poor capacity output, high unemployment, and personnel reductions in organizations. It is thought that the desire for lifelong work and the perks that come with it have diminished. The tendency in our organizations seems to be personnel reductions and layoffs. Indeed, Nigeria needs to foster entrepreneurship due to the high unemployment rate and its unfavourable effects on the populace and the country. Creativity is one of the key drivers of job creation; as such, nurturing creativity is the best way out of unemployment and for creating sustainable jobs. Stimulating people's creativity is bound to lead to innovative products or services which could become a means of generating jobs for others who would be required to help build up the product or service (Brownson, 2014^a).

Since the business environment is changing, this requires creative thinking and adaptability to assist and bridge the business gap. Utilizing creative thinking and adaptability skills will contribute to satisfying market demands, tastes and preferences, eliminating the failure of the majority of businesses in Nigeria caused by lack of creative thinking, an excessive concentration on one or two markets for finished goods and inexperience, among others. Although several studies have been carried out in this area (Juliana et al., 2021; Inegbedion et al., 2021; Yalumo, 2020; Peljko & Antoncic, 2022, Nzewi & Nwaduhu, 2015; Rumanti, Rizana & Achmad, 2023), none of such studies has focused on creative thinking, adaptability and entrepreneurial development. It is in this regard that this study seeks to examine the relationship between creative thinking, adaptability and entrepreneurial development.

Entrepreneurial Development

Entrepreneurship development involves all activities geared towards the creation of a new venture, expansion and growth of an enterprise (Brownson, 2014^b). Entrepreneurship development is a process of enhancing the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs regarding the development, management and organization of a business venture while keeping in mind the risks associated with it (Team Leverage Edu, 2022). Entrepreneurship development is the means of enhancing the knowledge and skill of entrepreneurs through several classroom coaching programs and training. The entrepreneurship development process helps new ventures get better in achieving their goals, improving their business and the nation's economy. The entrepreneurial development process is about supporting entrepreneurs to advance their skills with the help of training and coaching classes. It encourages them to make better judgments and make sensible decisions for all business activities (BYJU'S, 2023). Therefore, active learning and classroom participation can help enhance the entrepreneurs creative thinking skills, cognitive skills with better understanding and increase knowledge (Brownson, 2013) in their attempt to be creative and adaptable.



Creative Thinking Skill and Entrepreneurial Development

Creative thinking is the act of generating solutions to problems by the force of imagination and reasoning (Okpara, 2005). It is the ability to come up with unique, original solutions and about developing innovative solutions to problems (Kaplan, 2023). Creative thinking plays a pivotal role in various aspects of life, including entrepreneurship. Creative thinking is essential for generating novel ideas, finding unique solutions and driving business success in the context of new ventures (Theintactone, 2023). Creative thinking is crucial to an entrepreneur's ability to gain traction with their business and maintain forward momentum. It promotes divergent, innovative thought in business processes, product design and encourages continuous reevaluation of circumstances (Herkert, 2022). Creative thinking enables entrepreneurs to approach problems from fresh angles and find unconventional solutions by exploring different viewpoints and challenging assumptions; entrepreneurs can uncover hidden opportunities and overcome obstacles, thereby driving their ventures forward (Theintactone, 2023). Creative thinking skills improve the quality of business opportunity identification through active information search (Sugito, Kamaludin, Pramaditya & Putri, 2020). Creative thinking is instrumental in generating new and innovative ideas; as such, entrepreneurs who engage in creative thinking are more likely to generate unique business concepts, products, or services that can disrupt existing markets or create new ones. Creative idea generation is the foundation upon which successful new ventures are built (Theintactone, 2023).

Creative thinking is a crucial driver of innovation. Creative thinking gives rise to innovative ideas that can revolutionize industries, capture market attention and provide competitive edge. Creative thinking encourages collaboration and teamwork within new ventures. Entrepreneurs who value and foster creative thinking create an environment where team members feel empowered to contribute their ideas and perspectives (ibid.). Harnessing these collective creativity benefits new ventures in the synergy of collaborative problem-solving and generate more innovative solutions. Creative thinking drives continuous improvement within new ventures. Continuous improvement fueled by creative thinking enables new ventures to stay relevant and exceed customer expectations. Creative thinking is not only beneficial for new ventures but also for personal growth and development. Engaging in creative thinking expands an entrepreneur's perspective, cultivates a curious mindset, and enhances their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Creative thinking challenges individuals to push their boundaries, learn from failures and embrace a growth-oriented mindset, fostering personal and professional growth (Ibid).

Adaptability and Entrepreneurial Development

Adaptability is an important factor in entrepreneurial success (Savitri, Dp & Syahza, 2021). Adaptability and flexibility skills are critical characteristics for every entrepreneur seeking to thrive in today's economic climate (Naimov, 2023). Adaptability refers to the ability to adjust, evolve, and thrive in the face of changing circumstances. It involves being flexible, open-minded, and resilient. Entrepreneurs who possess adaptability are better equipped to navigate uncertainty, identify new opportunities, and make informed decisions in rapidly evolving environments (HustleHub, 2023; Rawal, 2023). Being adaptive and flexible entails being open to new ideas and opinions (Alewo, 2016). In a new entrepreneurial world, the business environment is always constantly changing and evolving. Therefore, it is critical to be adaptable and flexible to flourish in this ever-changing world (Naimov, 2023). The capacity to pivot and alter direction, to be open to new ideas, and to think on their feet are all essential



qualities for any entrepreneur navigating the ever-changing business landscape (Ibid). Whether it is a change in market conditions, a shift in customer tastes, or the entry of new competition, the capacity to adapt is critical for survival. Entrepreneurs must be able to change direction quickly to negotiate the often-choppy seas of the commercial world, much as a naval vessel must be able to change course quickly to cross the perilous business waters (Ibid.).

Adaptability enables entrepreneurs to embrace innovation and leverage emerging trends; by staying open to new ideas and approaches, entrepreneurs can capitalize on market disruptions and create innovative solutions that meet evolving customer needs. Successful entrepreneurs understand that the ability to adapt is crucial for staying relevant and staying ahead of the competition. Adaptable entrepreneurs excel at problem-solving. They can quickly assess new challenges, identify alternative strategies, and pivot when necessary. Rather than being discouraged by obstacles, adaptable entrepreneurs view them as opportunities for growth. They find creative solutions and use setbacks as stepping stones to success (Rawal, 2023). Entrepreneurs who prioritize adaptability place the customer at the centre of their business. They continuously monitor customer feedback and market trends, enabling them to adjust their offerings and business models to better serve their target audience. By adapting to changing customer demands, entrepreneurs can maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty (HustleHub, 2023). Adaptability is closely linked to resilience—the ability to bounce back from setbacks and failures. In entrepreneurship, setbacks are inevitable, but adaptable entrepreneurs view them as valuable learning experiences. They learn from failures, adjust their strategies, and persevere in the face of adversity. Resilient entrepreneurs understand that adaptability is essential for weathering storms and emerging stronger on the other side. By cultivating adaptability, entrepreneurs can effectively navigate uncertainty, seize opportunities, and build resilient businesses (Rawal, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used and data was collected from a sample of 361 small scale enterprise owners derived using Taro Yamane formula from a population of 3751 registered enterprise owners in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Analysis of the data was carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Analysis

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between Creative Thinking, Adaptability and Entrepreneurial Development.

Table 1: Number of questionnaires administered and returned

Distribution of Questionnaires	Number s	Percentages of Questionnaires
Questionnaires returned	355	98%
Questionnaires not returned	6	2%
Questionnaires administered	361	100%

Source: *Fieldwork, 2023*



From Table 1 above, out of 361 questionnaires administered, 355 questionnaires, representing 98% of the total questionnaires administered, were successfully filled and returned, while 6 questionnaires, representing 2% of the total questionnaires administered, were not returned.

Table 2: A test of relationship between creative thinking skill and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Creative thinking skill	3.2022	.55924	355
Entrepreneurial development	2.3455	.66026	355

Correlations

		Creative thinking skill	Entrepreneurial development
Creative thinking skill	Pearson Correlation	1	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	354	354
Entrepreneurial development	Pearson Correlation	.777**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	354	354

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

From the analysis in Table 2 above, the correlation coefficient (R) was $R_{x_1} = 0.777$, suggesting a strong positive correlation between creative thinking skill and entrepreneurial development. The result was statistically significant ($R_{x_1} = 0.777$; $n = 355$; $p = 0.000$). Based on this, it is safe to assume that creative thinking skills will influence entrepreneurial development. The p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$); hence, the test shows that there is a significant positive relationship between creative thinking skill and entrepreneurial development.



Table 3: A test of relationship between adaptability and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Adaptability	4.8376	.85277	355
Entrepreneurial Development	2.6156	.87030	355

Correlations

		Adaptability	Entrepreneurial Development
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	1	.589**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	354	354
Entrepreneurial Development	Pearson Correlation	.589**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	354	354

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

From the analysis in Table 3 above, the correlation coefficient (R) was $R_{x_2} = 0.589$, suggesting a strong positive correlation between adaptability and entrepreneurial development. The result was statistically significant ($R_{x_2} = 0.589$; $n = 355$; $p = 0.000$). Based on this, it is safe to say that adaptability will influence entrepreneurial development. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), as such, the test therefore shows that there is a significant positive relationship between adaptability and entrepreneurial development.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the relationship between creative thinking skills, adaptability and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The analysis indicated the following:

A: The test to examine the relationship between creative thinking skill and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria

The result revealed a positive relationship between creative thinking skill and entrepreneurial development. By applying creative thinking skills, an entrepreneur can identify or recognize valuable business opportunities and contribute to better business decision making (Sugito, Kamaludin, Pramaditya & Putri, 2020). The research also shows that creative thinking skill helps the entrepreneur to conceive novel ideas and propose creative solutions to problems, bringing sustainable competitive advantage and expanding market share for their enterprises through the innovation of value proposition, value creation and value acquisition, to realize enterprise growth (Theintactone, 2023). From the analysis, the correlation coefficient (R) was



$R_{x_1} = 0.777$, suggesting a strong positive correlation between creative thinking skill and entrepreneurial development. The result was statistically significant ($R_{x_1} = 0.777$; $n = 40$; $p = 0.000$). Based on this, it is safe to assume that creative thinking skills will influence entrepreneurial development. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), it implies that there is a significant positive relationship between critical thinking skill and entrepreneurial development. The empirical research in this study confirms the point of view by Gercek and Özsoy-Güneş (2015) who studied the relations between critical thinking dispositions and entrepreneurship levels of future teachers and found that critical thinking dispositions have a significant effect on entrepreneurship levels. The result aligns with the views of Olorunfemi (2021) who examined the nexus between strategic thinking and entrepreneurship and found that strategic thinking helps entrepreneurs to discover new business opportunities and to take advantage of such opportunities to maximize profit in the society. The result also agrees with the work of Skrzek-Lubasinska and Malik (2023) who pointed out that the application of critical thinking at different business areas would increase profit and increase effectiveness by enabling new product concepts and unique product designs.

B: The test to examine the relationship between adaptability and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria

The result revealed a positive relationship between adaptability and entrepreneurial development. As industries evolve, customer preferences and needs change. Adaptability allows entrepreneurs to stay attuned to the shifting demands of their target market and tailor their offerings accordingly (Naimov, 2023). By cultivating a culture of increased adaptability, entrepreneurs can foster innovation, agility and proactive decision making, all of which contribute to sustained entrepreneurial success (HustleHub, 2023). By embracing change, entrepreneurs can position businesses for growth, capitalize on emerging opportunities, and navigate challenges effectively (Rawal, 2023). From the analysis in Table 3, the correlation coefficient (R) was $R_{x_2} = 0.589$, suggesting a strong positive correlation between adaptability and entrepreneurial development. The result was statistically significant ($R_{x_2} = 0.589$; $n = 40$; $p = 0.000$). Based on this, it is safe to say that adaptability will influence entrepreneurial development. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), as such, the test implies that there is a significant positive relationship between adaptability and entrepreneurial development. This finding contradicts the findings of Savitri, Dp and Syahza (2021) who found that adaptability and entrepreneurial orientation have no effects on business performance.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to examine the relationship between creative thinking skills, adaptability and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. The findings indicate that creative thinking skills and adaptability have a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial development. It is concluded that creativity is an important driving force that affects the growth of enterprises in many ways. Rapid technological advances are creating an increasingly complex world where adaptation to changing environments is crucial. This cultural evolution demands more flexibility from individuals than ever before. Given that creativity contributes to greater flexibility, creative individuals may be more prepared to adapt to the changes in everyday life and remain flexible in their responses to the environment.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that creative thinking skills should be integrated into businesses since it empowers an individual for entrepreneurship development as his own boss or for employability purposes. Effective creative thinking skills will enable entrepreneurs to seize and exploit opportunities to solve problems, generate and communicate ideas, and make positive differences. The study also recommends that entrepreneurs should embrace change as it ensures success in today's fast-paced and unpredictable business environment. Adaptability empowers businesses to navigate change, seize opportunities, and ultimately achieve their goals in the face of uncertainty. It is a key variable for entrepreneurial growth and development.

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