

SKILL ACQUISITION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED BAKERIES IN AUCHI, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

¹OSUE Amina, ²E. T OMOLUABI PhD

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Tel: 08061570817, 08061797858

E-mail: aminaosue@gmail.com, oeishighnano@gmail.com or omoluabi.ehis@edouniversity.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study examined skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance of selected bakeries in Auchi, Edo State, specific objectives were to; examine the relationship between technical skill and the performance of Bakeries, examine the relationship between digital marketing skill and the performance of Bakeries and to examine the relationship between managerial skill and the performance of bakery. The study population consisted of 104 employees drawn from five Bakeries-Poly Bread Bakery, S.S Bread Bakery, I.K Bread Bakery, Zelzal Bread Bakery, and Arat Bread Bakery-using a census sampling technique. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 24. The findings revealed that technical skills significantly enhanced product quality and efficiency, digital marketing skills improved customer reach and profitability, while managerial skills strengthened organizational effectiveness and productivity. The study concludes that skill acquisition is a key driver of entrepreneurial performance among bakeries in Auchi. It recommends that bakery owners should strengthen technical training for staff, adopt digital marketing strategies to expand market reach, and improve managerial competence through effective capacity-building programs.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition, Technical Skill, Digital Marketing Skill, Managerial Skill, Entrepreneurial Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Skills acquisition serves as a cornerstone for human and economic development, providing individuals with the technical and practical capabilities required to function effectively in a dynamic business environment, it goes beyond academic learning by emphasizing real-world application, creativity, and innovation, thereby preparing individuals to meet market demands with competence and confidence; through structured vocational training, apprenticeships, and experiential learning, people acquire the problem-solving and adaptive skills necessary to navigate technological disruptions and economic uncertainties, this process not only improves employability but also nurtures entrepreneurial mindsets that drive self-reliance, productivity, and national growth (Ebekozen et al., 2025).

Skill acquisition is a vital driver of entrepreneurial performance, especially in small-scale enterprises like bakeries that require a blend of technical expertise,

innovation, and business management; despite the growing importance of bakeries in fostering entrepreneurship and creating employment opportunities, many operators struggle to achieve sustainable performance due to inadequate skill acquisition in critical areas that drive business success. Technical skills, which determine the ability to produce quality baked products and innovate to meet customer demands, are often underdeveloped, leading to inefficiencies and low competitiveness. Similarly, the limited adoption of digital marketing skills restricts bakeries from effectively reaching wider markets, attracting new customers, and enhancing brand visibility in an increasingly digital economy (Mohammed, 2021). Auchi is a historic and culturally rich city located in Edo State, Nigeria, serving as the headquarters of the Etsako West Local Government Area. Founded in the mid-15th century by Uchi, a migrant from Udo near Benin City, Auchi grew into a significant settlement under the Benin Kingdom before experiencing Nupe invasions in the 19th century, which introduced Islamic influences. Today, it is a predominantly Muslim town with landmarks like the Arafat Mosque, blending Islamic traditions with remnants of its pre-colonial heritage. Auchi is home to Auchi Polytechnic, one of Nigeria's leading technical institutions, and has a population of approximately 150,000 people. The city is divided into five traditional districts and is governed by a monarchy headed by the Otaru of Auchi, reflecting its deep-rooted historical and administrative significance in Edo State.

The broad objective of the study is to examine the relationship between Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurial performance of selected bakeries in Auchi, Edo State. while the specific objectives were to:

- i. examine the relationship between Technical Skill and the Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State.
- ii. determine the relationship between Digital Marketing skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State?
- iii. evaluate the relationship between Managerial Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State?

The following questions were raised to address the above objectives:

- i. What is the relationship between Technical Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State?
- ii. What is the relationship between Digital Marketing Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State?

- iii. What is the relationship between Managerial Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State?

The research aimed to test the following hypotheses:

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Technical Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Digital Marketing Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Managerial Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

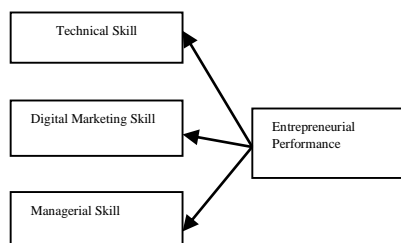
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition transcends basic learning by transforming theoretical knowledge into practical competence through continuous training, experience, and application. It equips individuals with the ability to think critically, solve problems, and adapt to changing business environments qualities that are indispensable for entrepreneurial success. In the context of entrepreneurship, skill acquisition fosters creativity and innovation, enabling entrepreneurs to develop new products, improve processes, and make informed strategic decisions. It also enhances operational efficiency and resilience, ensuring that business owners can respond effectively to market shifts and competitive pressures. Ultimately, skill acquisition forms the bedrock of sustainable entrepreneurship, empowering individuals to turn innovative ideas into viable enterprises that contribute to business growth, job creation, and overall economic development (Agogbua & Mgbatogu, 2022).

Skill acquisition as a gradual process underscores the progressive development of competence through continuous learning, practice, and refinement. It involves the integration of cognitive understanding with hands-on application, enabling individuals to advance from foundational knowledge to expert proficiency over time. In the entrepreneurial context, this process is essential, as it equips business owners with both technical and professional skills ranging from vocational abilities like baking and tailoring to managerial competencies such as financial management, marketing, and customer service. The combination of these skills enhances productivity, encourages innovation, and improves adaptability in a competitive market. Ultimately, gradual skill acquisition strengthens business performance, ensuring sustainability, resilience, and long-term growth in the ever-evolving marketplace (Oyefesobi et al., 2018).

Conceptual Model of Skills Acquisition and the Performance of Selected Bakeries



(Musa & Bawa, 2023)

Technical Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of Bakeries

Technical skill refers to the specialized knowledge and practical competence required to perform specific tasks effectively, often gained through education, training, and experience. In the bakery industry, it forms the foundation of entrepreneurial performance by transforming raw materials into quality products that enhance brand reputation and competitiveness. Technical proficiency enables creativity, innovation, and efficiency in production, allowing bakers to optimize costs, reduce errors, and satisfy customers through consistent quality. Mastery of modern baking technologies and techniques also helps entrepreneurs adapt to changing market trends such as healthier options and customized products thereby sustaining profitability, customer loyalty, and long-term business growth (Uju & Ifeanyi, 2019; Nweke & Osakwe, 2024).

Digital Marketing Skill and Entrepreneurial Performance of Bakeries

Digital marketing skill refers to the ability to strategically use online platforms, tools, and techniques such as social media management, content creation, email marketing, and data analytics to promote products, engage customers, and drive business growth. For bakeries, these skills are crucial in enhancing entrepreneurial performance by expanding market reach, improving customer relationships, and increasing brand visibility in a technology-driven environment. Through effective use of digital channels, bakers can showcase their products, attract targeted audiences, and gather customer feedback to refine their offerings. Consequently, digital marketing enhances competitiveness, boosts sales, fosters customer loyalty, and supports long-term profitability and sustainable growth (Nwewi et al., 2017; Udoh et al., 2017).

Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Performance of Bakeries

The performance of bakeries is influenced by a variety of factors that determine their efficiency, profitability, and sustainability. Elements such as access to finance, technical and managerial skills, innovation, market competition, and government policies play critical roles in shaping outcomes (Udoh et al., 2017).

Access to Finance: One of the most critical factors influencing entrepreneurial performance is access to finance. Entrepreneurs require adequate funds to establish, operate, and expand their businesses. Limited access to capital can restrict the purchase of equipment, raw materials, and other essential resources, thereby reducing production capacity and competitiveness. Conversely, entrepreneurs with sufficient financial resources are better positioned to invest in innovation, marketing, and technology, which enhance performance and long-term sustainability (Abdulkazeem, 2025).

Skill Acquisition and Competence: The level of skill and competence possessed by an entrepreneur greatly determines business performance. Technical skills ensure quality production, managerial skills improve efficiency and decision-making, while marketing and financial skills enhance customer engagement and resource management. Entrepreneurs with diverse and up-to-date skills are more innovative and adaptable to changes in the business environment, which translates to improved profitability, customer satisfaction, and growth (Pulka et al., 2021).

Market Environment and Competition: The external market environment also influences entrepreneurial performance. Factors such as consumer demand, market

trends, competition, and customer preferences shape how businesses operate. Entrepreneurs who understand market dynamics and respond swiftly through product innovation, quality improvement, and effective marketing strategies are more likely to outperform competitors. On the other hand, businesses that fail to adapt to market changes risk losing relevance and profitability (Akor-Robaro, 2025).

Government Policies and Infrastructure: Supportive government policies and good infrastructure play a vital role in enhancing entrepreneurial performance. Policies that provide access to credit, tax incentives, and training programs create a favorable environment for businesses to thrive. Similarly, reliable infrastructure such as stable electricity, good transportation systems, and digital connectivity enables entrepreneurs to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and reach wider markets. In contrast, poor infrastructure and unfavorable policies hinder productivity and discourage business expansion (Chukwuka, 2024).

Innovation and Technology Adoption: Innovation and the adoption of modern technology significantly boost entrepreneurial performance by enabling efficiency, creativity, and competitiveness. Entrepreneurs who embrace digital tools, modern production methods, and online marketing platforms are able to expand their customer base, improve service delivery, and reduce operational costs. Innovation also allows businesses to differentiate their products, meet evolving customer needs, and sustain long-term growth in dynamic markets. Without innovation and technology adoption, entrepreneurial performance often stagnates, leaving businesses vulnerable to competition (Danibrahim et al., 2022).

The Challenges of Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Performance

Skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance are closely linked concepts that drive business growth and sustainability; skill acquisition equips individuals with the technical, managerial, and innovative abilities needed to establish and manage enterprises effectively. Entrepreneurial performance, in turn, reflects how these skills translate into profitability, market expansion, and long-term business success (Ezeanolue et al., 2020). Below are the challenges;

Inadequate Training Facilities and Resources: One of the major challenges of skill acquisition is the lack of adequate training facilities, modern equipment, and resources needed for practical learning. Many training centers and vocational programs are poorly equipped, limiting learners' ability to gain hands-on experience with up-to-date techniques and technologies. In the case of entrepreneurship, this inadequacy hinders the development of technical expertise, which directly affects the quality, efficiency, and competitiveness of products and services offered by entrepreneurs. Without the right tools, knowledge, and exposure, the performance of small businesses, such as bakeries, often remains below potential.

Limited Access to Finance: Financing is a critical challenge that affects both skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance. Many aspiring entrepreneurs and trainees lack the financial capacity to pay for quality training programs, purchase learning materials, or invest in the necessary equipment for practical skill development. Similarly, entrepreneurs with acquired skills may find it difficult to access credit facilities or startup capital to establish and expand their ventures. This financial constraint stifles innovation, reduces productivity, and

hampers the ability of businesses to compete effectively in the marketplace.

Poor Infrastructure and Technological Gaps: The absence of reliable infrastructure such as stable electricity, good internet access, and adequate workspaces poses another challenge. Skill acquisition, especially in today's digital era, requires access to modern technologies and digital tools, which are often lacking in developing economies. For entrepreneurs, particularly in small-scale businesses, poor infrastructure disrupts production processes, increases operational costs, and limits the adoption of innovative practices. This creates a gap between acquired skills and their effective application in driving entrepreneurial performance.

Lack of Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Guidance: Another critical challenge is the limited availability of mentorship and professional guidance. Skill acquisition is not only about learning techniques but also about applying them effectively in real-life business situations. Many trainees and entrepreneurs do not have access to experienced mentors who can provide advice, share industry knowledge, and guide them through business challenges. As a result, entrepreneurs may struggle with poor decision-making, ineffective management practices, and inability to navigate competitive markets, which ultimately hinders business sustainability and growth.

Socio-Cultural and Environmental Barriers: Finally, socio-cultural and environmental factors also affect skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance. In some communities, vocational and entrepreneurial training is undervalued, leading to a lack of interest or societal support. Gender stereotypes and cultural biases may also restrict certain groups, particularly women, from acquiring or applying skills. Additionally, unstable economic environments, government policy inconsistencies, and high levels of competition further discourage entrepreneurs from fully utilizing their skills. These barriers collectively limit the ability of skill acquisition to translate into meaningful entrepreneurial performance.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory was propounded by Theodore W. Schultz in 1961, and later expanded by Gary Becker in 1964, with the central argument that investment in people through education, training, and experience enhances their productivity and economic value. In the context of skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance of selected bakeries, the theory explains that when bakery owners and workers acquire relevant skills such as baking techniques, quality control, hygiene standards, creativity in product development, financial management, and customer service they significantly improve their efficiency, innovation, and overall business capability. These accumulated skills function as human capital that enhances productivity, reduces waste, improves product quality, and strengthens competitiveness, ultimately leading to higher sales, customer satisfaction, and profitability. Thus, Schultz's Human Capital Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how continuous skill acquisition directly drives the entrepreneurial success and operational performance of bakery enterprises.

Empirical Review

Oladele et al., (2025) conducted an experimental study titled "Effects of Digital Marketing Training on Bakery Performance in Abuja" that specifically measured the impact of structured digital marketing skill acquisition on entrepreneurial outcomes. The research employed a

pretest-posttest control group design with 60 bakery businesses randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The population consisted of 180 registered bakeries in Abuja, from which the sample was selected using cluster sampling technique across different districts of the city. The experimental group received intensive digital marketing training over eight weeks, covering social media marketing, content creation, data analytics, and e-commerce integration.

Orji et al., (2023) investigated the "Role of Managerial Skills on the Performance of Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) in Jabi District, Abuja, Nigeria," with a specific focus on bakeries. The study used a survey research design, targeting 240 bakery owners and managers selected through proportional sampling from a population of 400 registered bakeries in the district. Data were collected via structured questionnaires assessing technical, conceptual, interpersonal, and budgeting skills. Analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and Kendall's coefficient of concordance via SPSS version 25.0, which confirmed a strong consensus ($W = 0.872, p < 0.01$) on the importance of managerial skills in driving performance.

Dauda et al., (2022) examine the Effect of Entrepreneurial Orientation on Customer Orientation among the bakeries and owner-managers in Minna (Niger State, Nigeria), this cross-sectional descriptive study used a structured 5-point Likert questionnaire administered online and offline to owners/managers; the authors reported a population of 130 registered bakery SMEs and sampled 105 firms using a stratified sampling approach. Data were analyzed with multiple linear regression to test hypotheses (the paper's abstract reports regression results), though the specific statistical package (e.g., SPSS, Stata) is not listed in the publicly available summary. Major findings showed that entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation positively affected bakery performance. The study concluded that managerial/entrepreneurial capabilities matter for performance and recommended that bakery owners adopt stronger entrepreneurial and customer-focused practices (training in entrepreneurship and customer relationship strategies).

Chukwuma & Ibrahim, (2021). "Digital Marketing Skill Acquisition and Market Expansion of Small Bakeries in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria." This study focused on small bakeries within the Abuja Municipal Area Council. The researchers employed a survey design. The population was 150 identified small bakery businesses, and a census sampling technique was used, surveying all 150 due to the manageable size. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis, processed using SPSS (version 26). The major finding was a strong positive correlation between the acquisition of digital marketing skills (e.g., using social media for promotion and customer engagement) and market expansion, measured by increased customer reach and sales volume. The study concluded that in a modern economy, digital marketing skills are essential for growth and competitiveness. It was recommended that bakery entrepreneurs actively acquire these skills or hire expertise to leverage online platforms for market expansion.

Adeyemi & Okafor (2019). Examine the "Impact of Financial Management Skills on the Profitability of Entrepreneurial Bakeries in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria." This research was carried out among entrepreneurial bakeries in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State. The methodology was a cross-sectional survey. The study population comprised 280 registered bakery owners, and a sample size of 162 was selected using a stratified random

sampling technique. Data analysis was performed using multiple regression analysis to determine the impact of financial skills on profitability. The analysis was conducted with SPSS version 25. The major finding revealed that financial management skills, particularly in budgeting, record-keeping, and cost control, had a statistically significant positive impact on profitability (return on investment). The study concluded that financial literacy is a non-negotiable skill for entrepreneurial success in the bakery business. The authors recommended that entrepreneurship development programs for bakers should incorporate robust modules on basic financial management and accounting practices.

Literature Gap

Existing literature on skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance in Nigeria has provided useful insights, but there is still a clear gap when it comes to bakery enterprises. For instance, Adewale and Adesina (2019) focused on technical skill acquisition and performance of SMEs in Lagos, but their study lumped together different businesses such as tailoring, welding, and catering without giving specific attention to bakeries. Similarly, Eze and Nwankwo (2020) investigated entrepreneurial training and youth-led enterprises in Enugu State, but their findings generalized across sectors, thereby overlooking the unique production processes and market challenges faced by bakeries. In another study, Ibrahim and Musa (2021) assessed managerial skills and SMEs' survival in Kano, yet bakeries were not singled out as a case study, limiting sector-specific conclusions. These studies show that while the importance of skill acquisition for entrepreneurial performance is acknowledged, the peculiar technical, managerial, and innovative skills required in bakeries are rarely addressed directly in Nigerian research.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to employees and owners of selected bakeries. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on respondents' technical, digital marketing, and managerial skills, as well as indicators of entrepreneurial performance such as productivity, profitability, and efficiency. A census sampling technique was used to include all employees from the selected bakeries, ensuring comprehensive coverage. The population of the study comprises of 104 employees from selected bread bakery factories, including Auchu Poly Bread Bakery, S.S Bread Bakery, I.K Bread Bakery, Zelzal Break Bakery, Arat Bread Bakery, this can be seeing in the table below:

Bakery Factory Name	Frequency (Units)
Auchi Poly Bread Bakery	28
S.S Bread Bakery	22
I.K Bread Bakery	20
Zelzal Break Bakery	18
Arat Bread Bakery	16
Total	104

Source: Human Resource Department, 2025

The whole of total population of 104 was used for the analysis, For the analysis, a significance level of $p = 0.05$

was used, this degree of relevance serves as the foundation for each hypothesis' rejection or acceptance. Multiple Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses with the assistance of the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS v 20).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho₁: Technical skill does not influence Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State.

Ho₂: Digital Marketing Skill does not have impact on Entrepreneurial Performance of selected bakeries in Auchi, Edo State

Ho₃: Managerial Skill does not influence Entrepreneurial Performance of selected Bakeries in Auchi, Edo State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.961 ^a	.924	.922	.26617

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technical Skill, Digital Marketing Skill, Managerial Skill

Table 6 presents a model summary for a regression analysis, indicating a strong relationship between the dependent variable and the predictors (Financial Management Skill, Strategic Planning Skill, and Marketing Skill). The high R value (0.961) suggests a very strong positive correlation, while the R Square (0.924) reveals that approximately 92.4% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The Adjusted R Square (0.922) adjusts for the number of predictors and remains high, confirming the model's robustness. Additionally, the Standard Error of the Estimate (0.26617) indicates that the average prediction error is relatively low, further supporting the model's accuracy in predicting outcomes based on the given independent variables.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.957	3	28.652	404.416	.000 ^b
	Residual	7.085	100	.071		
	Total	93.041	103			

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Performance (Bread Bakery)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Technical Skill, Digital Marketing Skill, Managerial Skill

The ANOVA table in table 7 evaluates the overall significance of the regression model in predicting entrepreneurial performance based on Technical Skill, Digital Marketing Skill, Managerial Skill. The Regression Sum of Squares (85.957) indicates the variance explained by the model, while the Residual Sum of Squares (7.085) represents unexplained variance. The high F-statistic (404.416) and its extremely significant p-value (.000) confirm that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning the predictors collectively have a strong influence on entrepreneurial performance (selected bakeries). This suggests that at least one of the independent variables significantly contributes to predicting the dependent variable, reinforcing the model's validity.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.229	.120		1.903	.060
	Technical Skill	.644	.052	.693	12.439	.000
	Digital Marketing Skill	.191	.081	.120	2.372	.002
	Managerial Skill	.209	.060	.191	3.516	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Performance (Selected Bakeries)

The coefficients table in table 8 demonstrates the relative influence of three managerial skills on SME performance, with all predictors showing statistically significant effects. Technical Skill skills exhibit the strongest impact ($B=0.644$, $\beta=0.693$, $p<0.001$), suggesting they are the most critical driver of performance. Both digital marketing skill ($B=0.191$, $\beta=0.120$, $p=0.002$) and managerial skill ($B=0.209$, $\beta=0.191$, $p=0.001$) contribute significantly but to a lesser degree, with marketing skills showing slightly greater influence than strategic planning. The constant term ($B=0.229$, $p=0.060$) approaches but does not reach statistical significance at the conventional 0.05 level, indicating that when all skills are absent, entrepreneurial performance does not significantly differ from zero. These results collectively emphasize that while all three competencies enhance entrepreneurial performance, technical skill capabilities are particularly vital for business success.

Discussion of Findings

This section deals with the explanations of the results obtained from the analysis of the research questions tested in the previous section and discussion of responses from the administered questionnaires to the respondents. Multiple regression analysis was used in analyzing the three hypotheses and required decisions made. In summary, our findings are as follows:

The regression analysis in research Hypothesis One reveals that, technical skill influence entrepreneurial performance of selected bakeries; bakers with strong technical skills in production processes, recipe innovation, and quality control tend to achieve higher performance outcomes. Such skills enable them to produce consistent and innovative products that meet customer preferences, thereby increasing customer loyalty, sales growth, and competitiveness. Research also indicates that lack of technical proficiency often leads to waste, low product quality, and reduced profitability.

In research hypothesis two, the finding revealed that, digital marketing skill has impact on entrepreneurial performance; bakeries that effectively use social media platforms, online advertisements, and e-commerce channels experience wider market reach and improved customer engagement. Digital marketing skills enhance visibility, attract new customers, and allow bakeries to compete beyond their immediate locality. Conversely, bakeries with poor digital marketing knowledge face limitations in brand recognition and market expansion, which negatively affects their overall performance.

Finally, in research hypothesis three, the finding revealed that, managerial skill demonstrates that strong leadership, planning, financial management, and human resource management contribute significantly to bakery performance. Managers with these skills are better positioned to allocate resources efficiently, motivate staff,

and implement strategies that ensure sustainability and growth. Findings also emphasize that weak managerial capacity often results in poor decision-making, high employee turnover, and financial mismanagement, thereby reducing entrepreneurial success.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Skill acquisition is fundamental to improving entrepreneurial performance in bakeries because it equips entrepreneurs with the competencies necessary for operational excellence, market competitiveness, and business growth. Technical skills enable bakers to produce high-quality and innovative products that meet consumer preferences, fostering brand loyalty and repeat patronage. Digital marketing skills empower them to leverage online platforms for advertising, customer engagement, and sales expansion beyond local boundaries, thereby increasing market share. Managerial skills, on the other hand, ensure efficient resource allocation, sound financial management, and effective leadership that enhance productivity and organizational coherence. Consequently, bakeries that prioritize continuous learning and skill enhancement not only improve profitability but also build resilience and sustainability in a highly competitive business environment.

The study recommended that;

- i. Bakery owners and entrepreneurs should continuously improve their technical skills through training, workshops, and apprenticeship programs to enhance product quality, reduce waste, and introduce innovative varieties that meet changing customer preferences. This will improve efficiency, customer loyalty, and overall performance.
- ii. Bakery owners should embrace social media platforms, online advertising, and e-commerce to expand their customer base and increase visibility. Attending digital marketing seminars or partnering with professionals will help them effectively utilize online tools to boost sales and strengthen brand recognition.
- iii. Bakery entrepreneurs are advised to develop competencies in financial management, leadership, planning, and human resource management. This can be achieved through entrepreneurship training programs and mentorship, enabling them to make sound decisions, manage resources effectively, and sustain business growth.

Limitation of the Study

One major limitation of the study on skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance of selected bakeries was its restricted geographical scope. The research was confined to bakeries within Auchi, Edo State, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or industries. The business environment, market size, and level of competition in Auchi may differ from those in other locations, making it difficult to assume that the same results would apply elsewhere. Additionally, the study focused only on selected bakeries, thereby excluding other types of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) where the relationship between skill acquisition and performance might manifest differently. This narrow sample may not fully capture the broader dynamics of entrepreneurship across different sectors.

Another limitation lies in the data collection and analysis methods used. The study relied primarily on self-reported data from structured questionnaires, which may have been influenced by respondents' bias or exaggeration to present their organizations positively. Moreover, the cross-

sectional design only provided a snapshot of the relationship between skill acquisition and performance at a particular time, without accounting for long-term effects or changes over time. The use of only quantitative analysis also limited the depth of insight that could have been gained from qualitative approaches such as interviews or observations. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal or mixed-method approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how skill acquisition influences entrepreneurial performance over time and across various business environments.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Future research on skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance should broaden its geographical and sectoral scope to include more bakeries across different states and industries. This expansion will help uncover how varying market conditions, access to resources, and government support influence the relationship between skill acquisition and business performance. Including other SME sectors will also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different types of skills, such as financial management and innovation, contribute to entrepreneurial success in diverse contexts.

Moreover, subsequent studies should employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs to examine both immediate and long-term effects of skill acquisition on business outcomes. The use of qualitative methods like interviews and case studies can provide deeper insights into how entrepreneurs practically apply their skills and navigate challenges. Future research should also consider factors such as access to finance, government initiatives, and technological advancement as possible mediators in this relationship. Such an approach would strengthen the existing body of knowledge and generate more practical strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship and business sustainability in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Abdulkazeem, A. (2025). Exploring the Innovative Practices of Small and Medium Confectionery Enterprises and Their Performance in Bida, Niger State, Nigeria. *Kardan Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.31841/kjems.2025.185>.
- Agogbua, S., & Mgbatogu, C. (2022). Self-employment motivation of national youth service corp members in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, 10(5), 1325. <https://doi.org/10.37745/gjhrm.2013/vol10n51325>
- Akpor-Robaro, M. (2025). Relative influence of sociocultural determinants of entrepreneurial emergence in Africa: evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jec-12-2023-0235>.
- Andrew, O., R. O., Franklyn, I., Idiaghe, O., Fidelia, A., & Uyiosa, O. (2023). Promoting quality apprenticeship and skills acquisition for sustainable national development in Nigeria. *American Journal of Education and Technology*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajet.v2i1.1183>
- Chukwuka, E. (2024). The Nexus between Cultural Factors and Entrepreneurial Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation*. <https://doi.org/10.52589/ijebi-ij3sh8qz>.
- Danibrahim, N., Kohar, U., & Indiran, L. (2022). Influence of Entrepreneurial Competencies on the Performance of SMEs in Northwest Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v12-i5/13074>.
- Ebekozien, A., Nwaole, A., Aigbavboa, C., Ahmed, M., Samsurijan, M., Thwala, W., & Ikuabe, M. (2025). Appraising young-adult internal migrants into construction craftsmanship: Issues surrounding skill acquisition and competencies in Nigeria. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ecam-06-2024-0801>
- Ezeanolue, U., Okoli, I., & Onwuteaka, I. (2020). Entrepreneur's level of management skills and performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the automobile industry: Evidence from Anambra State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 4(4), 494-500.
- Ibidunni, A. S., Ogundana, O. M., & Okonkwo, A. (2021). Entrepreneurial competencies and the performance of informal SMEs: The contingent role of business environment. *Journal of African Business*, 22(4), 468–490. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228916.2021.1874784>
- Mohammed, I. (2021). Entrepreneurial education on skills acquisition for university graduates in Nigeria. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 10(4), 1438–1445. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i4.20461>
- Nweke, E., & Osakwe, M. (2024). Entrepreneurial skills as correlate of technical and vocational education in Rivers State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.62154/b6z32567>
- Olumuyiwa, O. O., Kimweli, K., & Modise, M. (2023). Comparative factors influencing entrepreneurial skills acquisition amongst students in rural universities of Sub-Saharan Africa's developing nations. *Education Sciences*, 13(3), 229. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13030229>
- Oluwatoyin, A., & O., O. (2024). Embracing technical skills circular economy: Strategy for entrepreneurship development and job creation. *International Journal of Latest Technology in Engineering, Management & Applied Science*, 13(7). <https://doi.org/10.51583/ijltemas.2024.130711>
- Oyefesobi, O. O., Adetunji, O. S., & Ayedun, C. A. (2018). Entrepreneurial skills' acquisition and employment generation among polytechnic graduates in South West, Nigeria. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business*, 3(2), 273–284.
- Pulka, B., Ramli, A., & Mohamad, A. (2021). Entrepreneurial competencies, entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial network, government business support and SMEs performance. The moderating role of the external environment. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 28, 586-618. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jsbed-12-2018-0390>.