

EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study looked into the importance of entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of entrepreneurs in Kogi Central, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to ascertain the extent to which key entrepreneurial competencies influence the performance of entrepreneurs, and to establish the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and the performance of entrepreneurs. The population of the study is 1,265 entrepreneurs from the study areas. Samples of 295 entrepreneurs were selected using Krejcie and Morgan sample determination formula. Using the proportionate sampling technique, the questionnaire was administered to the 295 entrepreneurs. Out of this number, 286 or 97% of the administered instrument were fully completed and usable. A structured questionnaire which was designed based on the review of related literature was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha method and it yielded a coefficient of 0.83. The research questions were answered using Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation. Data sourced were presented and analyzed using descriptive methods involving tables. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression models. Findings revealed that entrepreneurial competencies are crucial for the survival and sustenance of business enterprises. Based on the results of the study, It was concluded that networking competence and entrepreneurial persistence to a large extent, influences entrepreneurial ingenuity and entrepreneurial passion. It is therefore, recommended that entrepreneurs should imbibe those competencies that would lead to optimum performance thereby contributing to national economic development.

Key words: Competencies, Entrepreneurial, Entrepreneurs, Performance, Sustenance.

Introduction

Entrepreneurial activities have a major role to play in economic development of any nation. Every career relies on the competencies of an individual who is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the day-to-day running of such venture. According to Sarwoko (2016), the recognition of these competencies as skills and abilities makes the discipline a teachable and learnable behaviour. Competency refers to traits of a person which results in effective and superior performance of a task. Competency is a unique combination of various qualities and characteristics that are required to perform the job effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The need for the integration of entrepreneurial competencies into the performance of managers of business organizations has opened new challenges because of the future uncertainties owing to the extent to which entrepreneurial activities has taken over the scheme of things.

One of the barriers to effective entrepreneurship is poor networking. Jenssen and Greve (2002) assert that majority of entrepreneurs have little or no networking ability, and this situation regrettably, has led to dearth of entrepreneurial ingenuity.

The attribute of persistence plays a crucial role in effective entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, many entrepreneurs lack this trait and as a result, lack entrepreneurial passion.

It is against this background that the study seeks to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on the performances of selected business owners in five (5) local government areas of Kogi State (Kogi Central).

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does networking competence affect entrepreneurial ingenuity?
- ii. What is the relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion?

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study is aimed at the following objectives:

- i. Examine the extent to which networking competence affects entrepreneurial ingenuity.
- ii. Evaluate the relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion.

Research Hypotheses

The researchers have chosen to operate within the limit of the following predictions:

Ho1: There is no significant effect of networking competence on entrepreneurial ingenuity.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion.

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to business owners in Kogi State, particularly the Central axis. The findings of the study are useful to the government in making significant changes in policies in respect

of entrepreneurial activities. This research results will also be useful to potential and already existing entrepreneurs who intend to grow and sustain their businesses. Those who may wish to carry out study in similar area will find the study beneficial.

Scope of the Study

The study covers activities of entrepreneurs in Kogi central, Nigeria. The study tries to assess the effect and relationship of entrepreneurial competences and entrepreneurial performance.

Literature Review

Concept of Competence

Competence is a comprehensive construct encompassing skills and various characteristics that are relevant to carrying out specific task. To Gustavo and Fernando (2019), competence is the practice of what one knows in a given situation, influenced by work relations, organizational culture, and other factors.

Zdolsek and Sirec (2018), posited that competencies has link with entrepreneurial behavior and are learnable. Kiely and Brophy (2002) sees competence as a proven ability to do something successfully and efficiently as a result of the knowledge possessed. Similarly, Chell (2013) perceives competency as a comprehensive construct involving skills and significant in carrying out specific task. According to Nassif, Andreassi, and Simoes (2011), competency is a top level individual characteristics involving various personality traits, knowledge and skills influenced by experience, training, family traits and other variables. Competency is a basic characteristic which could be generic and special knowledge, self-image, motives, and skills resulting in a venture, its' survival and growth (Pepple & Enuoh, 2002).

Entrepreneurial Competencies

With the complex nature of business environment, and entrepreneurs becoming more innovative, the growth of any business will be almost impossible without being competent. Therefore, it is important that the entrepreneurs act proactively within the environment in order to diminish the negative consequence of the challenging business environment (Pepple & Enuoh, 2020).

To Capote and Amparo (2015), entrepreneurial competencies are the combination of individual behavior and attitudes which enable entrepreneurs to achieve and sustain business success. Sarwoko (2016) argues that, entrepreneurs' competence lead small-scale businesses to a larger capacity and strategic vision, which affects performance and growth.

Efe-Imafidon et al (2017) emphasizes that entrepreneurial success depends on competence and ability to identify opportunity in the environment, take initiative towards desirable change and ensure value-based solution in the market place. The significance of entrepreneurial competencies among experts and managers around the globe has prompted potential employees not

only by their conventional training and expertise, rather along with the degree of entrepreneurial skills acquired during their training (Ahmed et al., 2014).

Onstenk (2003) as cited in Shu'aibu (2002), considered the following competencies as defined for entrepreneurs by the International Consortium for Entrepreneurship Training (ICET): ability to deal with the world of entrepreneurship; be able to live with daily insecurity; communicate, identify mentally, persuade and discuss with customers; establish linkages with business persons and other stakeholders for mutual learning, collaborative understandings and other activities aimed at achieving common objective; recognize and analyze market opportunities, and management of business development processes and network of stakeholders.

According to Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013), economic advancement needs the functioning of entrepreneurial competence. Entrepreneurial competence is not just about acquiring skills, but acquiring knowledge and driving towards enterprise in skills that enhance self livelihood through enduring business startups, enhancing job creation, and promoting economic development.

The Study Construct and Relationship:

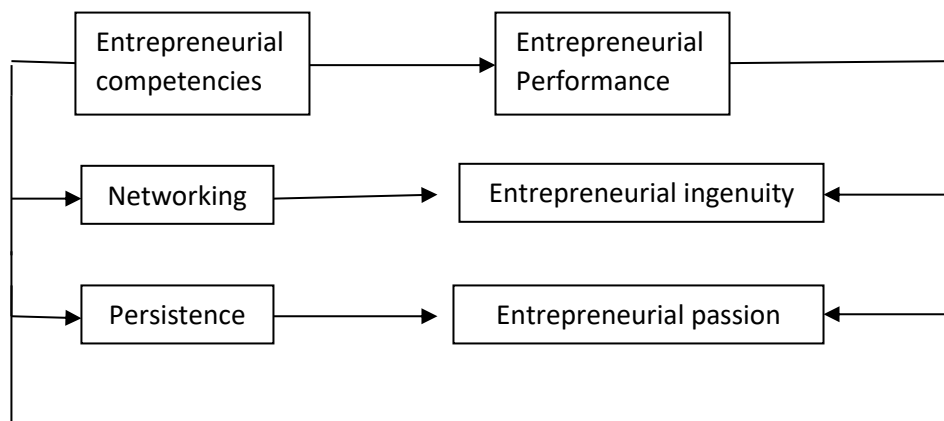


Figure 1: The construct and relationship, 2022.

Concept of entrepreneurial ingenuity, entrepreneurial passion, networking competence, and entrepreneurial persistence.

Pepple and Enuoh (2020) identified the entrepreneur's performances and outcomes linked to the role played by entrepreneurs:

Entrepreneurial ingenuity

This is the ability to create innovative solutions within structural constraints using limited resources and imaginative problem solving (Jenssen & Greve, 2002). Ingenious solutions attract attention, and testify to ability as humans to rise above the mundane, which is why they are often described as elegant, and at other instances colloquially as interesting. Ingenuity is generally associated with creative problem solving which represents quality of being clever, original, and inventive. Hargadon and Douglas (2001) averred that ingenuity often requires circumventing or re-directing organizational norms. For instance, Edison's trial-and-error approach to developing the incandescent light bulb was arguably the easier part of his invention. Overcoming the constraints that were necessary in order to create the so-called Edison system required all of Edison's ingenuity as organizer and promoter (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001).

Entrepreneurial passion

Passion has long been recognized as a central component of entrepreneurial motivation and success (Lunenbergh, 2010). Smilor (1997) averred that passion is an enduring emotional state, such as feeling of enthusiasm, joy and zeal. It is the intensity one feels when engaged in activities that is of great interest. It fills an individual with energy and enables such an individual to perform at the peak. Passion is a "great warmth and intensity", and "strong and enthusiastic devotion", again indicating

that a central component of passion is the strength or depth of feelings.

Networking competence

Networking is not only about trading information, but also serves an avenue to create long-term relationships with mutual benefits. Networking is the exchange of information and ideas among people with a common profession or special interest, usually in an informal social setting. Networking often begins with a single point of common ground. Professionals use networking to expand their circles of acquaintances, find out about job opportunities in their fields, and increase their awareness of news and trends in their fields or the greater world. According to Das and Goswani (2019), many studies have argued that the performance of small firms depends on the help of people who can provide the support to identify opportunities and access to resources in the market. Networking boosts the business and allows it to easily fill in the missing resources. It feeds the companies with forward looking information that helps reduce uncertainty in business (Human & Provan, 1994).

Entrepreneurial persistence

This is demonstrated by an entrepreneur's continued positive maintenance of entrepreneurial motivation and constantly renewed active engagement in a new business venture despite counter forces or enticing alternatives (Marco et al. 2020). Entrepreneurial persistence entails two distinct components; the motivation and decision to continue to actively pursue a previously selected entrepreneurial opportunity, and doing so in the face of adversity or attractive alternatives (Holland & Shepherd, 2013).

Challenges Confronting Entrepreneurs

Business creation in the competitive world has created greater challenges to undertake entrepreneurial activity (Viju, 2010). According to Okeke and Eme (2014), the following are the major limiting factors to the success of entrepreneurs in Nigeria:

- i. Economy decline: The Nigerian economy has been on the decline since the 80's. This has created a hostile environment that is unfavorable to entrepreneurial success.
- ii. Stiff policies: Policies made by successive governments has remained a barrier to the success of large-scale entrepreneurial success for many Nigerians. Also, the government systematically ignores laws that are already in place to promote free enterprise.
- iii. There is lack of enforcement of Nigerian patent laws. This scenario discourages entrepreneurs from commercializing their ideas and inventions.
- iv. Political instability: The constant political turmoil in the country greatly limits foreign investors who would be willing to provide resources for entrepreneurial activity in the country.
- v. Religious intolerance and ethnic warfare hinders Nigeria's progress in some areas of economic development.

Programmes / Policies aimed at checkmating the challenges to entrepreneurship

Nigerian economic policies since 1999 provide guide for the nation. The policy recommends partnership with national and international agencies including the United Nations Transfer of knowledge through expatriate nationals program. Enacting policies was never a problem, implementation for the achievement is the key issue (Agu, 2010). Government

programmes and policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in the country include; The UBE and Adult Literacy to educate Nigerians, the Human Apprenticeship Schemes (HAS) established to promote the Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises in the country, the Entrepreneur Training and Development Programme (ETDP) and the development of Allied Agro industries. So, whether the government is doing something? The answer is in the affirmative; but how effective is what they are doing? Hopefully, the current effort won't be like the wasted past. It is not a matter of effort making, but to what extent have we been getting results? (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999).

Theoretical Review

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The researchers adopted the Theory of planned behavior. This theory was propounded by Ajzen Icek in the year 1991. It is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behavior. According to Ajzen (1991), an individual's behavioral intentions is influenced by three core components namely; attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The model's assumption is that a significant quantity of behavior is taken into control of the actor; thus, behavior can be known by understanding an individual's intention to perform an action. When an individual's intentions are based on the person's personal attitudes and translates them into actions, the individual has carried out a planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior is applicable especially when the behavior under scrutiny is rare and hard to observe, or involves unpredictable time lag (MacMillan & Katz, 1992). This theory has been used by many entrepreneurship scholars to define entry decisions. The possibility that a business will evolve depends on the will of an individual entrepreneur that carry out the behavior while

attitudes of the person strongly develop their intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The method is deemed appropriate since there will not be any attempt to control or manipulate the sample subjects from the population.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised of all entrepreneurs with staff strength above ten (10) in the five (5) local government areas operating in Kogi Central. Kogi

Central is made up of Adavi, Ajaokuta, Ogori-Magongo, Okehi and Okene local government areas respectively. Based on the outcome of the researcher’s field survey, the total population is 1,265 (Adavi L.G.A. – 253, Ajaokuta L.G.A. – 190, Ogori-Magongo L.G.A. – 278, Okehi L.G.A. – 228, and Okene L.G.A. - 316).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In estimating the sample size for the study, the formula for determining sample size given by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) was used. The formula is as follows:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1 - P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}$$

Where:

S = required sample size

X² = Chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841)

N = the population size

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

N = 1,265

X² = 3.841

P = 0.5

d = 0.05

Substituting;

$$S = \frac{3.841 * 1,265 * 0.5 * 0.5}{(0.05)^2 * (1,265 - 1) + (3.841 * 0.5 * 0.5)}$$

$$\frac{1214.71625}{(0.0025 * 1,264) + 0.96025}$$

$$\frac{1214.71625}{3.16 + 0.96025}$$

$$\frac{1214.71625}{4.12025}$$

S = 294.816151933

Approximately **295** as Sample size

The sample size therefore is two hundred and ninety five (295).

Using the proportionate sampling technique, the questionnaire was administered to the 295 entrepreneurs from the five local government areas as follows: Adavi L.G.A. – 59, Ajaokuta

L.G.A. – 44, Ogori – Magongo L.G.A. – 65, Okehi L.G.A. – 53, and Okene L.G.A. – 74. The proportion for the sample size in each local government area was arrived at using this formula:

$$\frac{\text{Sample size} \times \text{No of Entrepreneurs}}{\text{Total Population}}$$

E.g. Proportion for Adavi L.G.A = $\frac{295 \times 253}{1265}$

$$\frac{74635}{1265}$$

$$= 59$$

Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument used for this study is the questionnaire which is structured in line with the research objectives, research questions and research hypotheses. The questions measure the opinions and the experiences of the respondents because it has direct bearing on them. The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of business education and entrepreneurship. The questionnaire is in sections: section 1 sought the personal information/profile of the respondent, while section 2 was divided into two sub-sections which contain five (5) questions each relating to the research objectives. The data collected were sorted and analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version (20.0). The questionnaire used is closed ended in which the respondents are required to pick out of the options available. All items in the questionnaire were coded on a 4-point rating scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD). Items with 3.50-4.49 were regarded as Strongly Agree; and those with 2.50-3.49 were considered as Agree; while items with Mean scores of 1.50-2.49 were considered as Disagree; items with Mean ratings of 1.00 - 1.49 were regarded as Strongly Disagree. This helps in ensuring accuracy in the respondent's answer and also guarantees needed information. A reliability of the instrument was ensured through a pilot

study test (two-week interval) administered to 48 entrepreneurs in neighboring State outside the scope of the study, and data collected through this platform were analyzed using Cronbach-Alpha method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83.

Method of Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the data collected. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages was used to analyze the demographic data of the respondents. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression models. For the hypotheses, if the observed significant value is less than or equal to 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. If otherwise, the null hypothesis was retained.

Data Presentation and Analysis

General Response Rate

A total number of two hundred and ninety five (295) copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents (entrepreneurs) in the five (5) local government areas where they operate. Out of this number, two hundred and eighty six (286) or 97% were fully completed and usable. Therefore, all generalization was based on this figure (286).

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

This segment shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, level of education, status of

business registration and length of business.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics (%)	No of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	195	68
Female	91	32
Total	286	100
Age		
18 – 30	68	23.7
31 – 40	80	27.9
41 – 50	76	26.5
50 and above	62	21.6
Total	286	100
Level of Education		
WASSC/SSC/NECO/NABTEB	89	31.1
ND	35	12.2
NCE	41	14.3
HND	44	15.4
B.Sc/B.Ed/B.A	58	20.3
Master's Degree	19	6.6
Ph.D	-	-
Total	286	100
Business Registration		
Yes	207	72.4
No	79	27.6
Total	286	100
Length of Business		
Less than 5 years		
6 – 8 years		
9 – 11 years		
12 years and above		

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

Gender: 195 out of the total respondents were males representing 68%. The remaining 91 were females representing 32% of total respondents. It can therefore, be inferred from the above analysis that the ratio of males to females is approximately 2:1.

Age: Majority of the respondents are within the age bracket of 31 – 40, specifically 80, representing 27.9% of the respondents. This is followed by 76 respondents in the age bracket of 41 – 50 which represents 26.5% of total respondents. 68 respondents are in the age bracket of 18 – 30 which makes up

23.7% of total respondents. 62 respondents are within the age of 50 years and above, representing 21.6% of total respondents.

Level of Education: Table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents are holders of secondary school certificates (WASSCE/NECO/NABTEB), specifically 89 which represents 31.1% of total respondents. This is followed by 58 respondents who hold B.Sc, B.Ed, or B.A degree certificates with 20.3% of total respondents. 44 respondents represents HND graduate certificate

with 15.4% of total respondents. 41 respondents holds N.C.E. certificate, specifically representing 14.3% of total respondents; followed by 35 respondents who acquired N.D certificate, and this represents 12.2% of total respondents. The least is 19 representing 6.6% and they are holders of Master’s Degree. None of the respondents holds a Doctorate degree certificate.

Business Registration: 207 with 72.4% of total respondents represent those who have their businesses registered with appropriate Authority, while the remaining 79 representing 27.6% of total respondents have not registered

their businesses. Many of those who have not registered blamed it on bureaucratic bottlenecks at Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

Length of Business: 96 respondents represent those that have been in business for less than 5 years with 33.6% of total respondents. 73 respondents are those that have been operating their businesses for between 6 – 8 years with 25.5% of total respondents. 52 respondents with 18.2% of total respondents have been doing their businesses for between 9 – 11years. 65 entrepreneurs (respondents) with 22.7% of total respondents have been in business for the past 12 years and above.

Discussion of Results

Question 1: To what extent does networking competence affect entrepreneurial ingenuity?

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation on Entrepreneurs’ perception on the effect of Networking competence on Entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central.

S/No	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Networking is communicating with others.	3.46	0.57	A
2.	Networking competence allows you to set goals.	3.15	0.62	A
3.	You can develop a core relationship with individuals.	3.46	0.67	A
4.	You may not necessarily agree with everyone but you can agree to disagree and move on.	3.15	0.63	A
5.	Hearing the word “no”, over and over again will build your character.	3.56	0.82	SA
	Weighted average	3.36	0.66	A

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2 revealed that 4 items (1, 2, 3, and 4) on the perception of entrepreneurs on the effect of networking competence on entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central were rated “Agree” because their Mean values fell below 3.50, while 1 item (5) was rated “Strongly Agree” because the Mean value fell above 3.50. The values of Standard Deviation between 0.57 and 0.82 showed that the entrepreneurs were unanimous in their perception on the effect of networking

competence on entrepreneurial ingenuity. The entrepreneurs have the perceptions that: Networking is communicating with others, allows you to set goals, enables you to develop core relationship with individuals, have the understanding that you can agree to disagree and still move on, and hearing discouraging word like “no” over and over again which only builds your character.

Question 2: What is the relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion?

Table 3: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation on Entrepreneurs’ perception on the relationship between Entrepreneurial persistence and Entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central.

S/No	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Persistence lead to continued maintenance of entrepreneurial motivation.	3.49	0.64	A
2.	Without persistence, success can be guaranteed.	2.33	0.86	D
3.	The longer you stay committed to a task or goal, the more likely something good will happen.	3.32	0.58	A
4.	Persistence means showing up again and again until you make it.	3.45	0.67	A
5.	There is constantly renewed active engagement in a new business venture despite counter forces or enticing alternatives.	3.54	0.61	SA
	Weighted average	3.23	0.67	A

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 3 revealed that 3 items (1, 3, and 4) on the perception of entrepreneurs on the relationship between Entrepreneurial persistence and Entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central were rated “Agree” because their Mean values fell below 3.50, while 1 item (2) was rated “Disagree” because the Mean value fell below 2.50. 1 item (5) was rated “Strongly Agree” because the Mean value fell above 3.50. The values of Standard Deviation between 0.58 and 0.86 showed that the entrepreneurs were homogeneous in their perception on the relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and Entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central. The entrepreneurs have the perceptions that: Persistence lead to continued maintenance of entrepreneurial motivation, something good happens if you are committed to a

task, persistence denote showing up again and again until you make it, and there is constantly renewed active engagement in a new business venture despite counter forces or enticing alternatives.

Test of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis One (H₀₁): There is no significant effect of networking competence on entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central.

Research Hypothesis 1 was set to examine if networking competence has significant effect on entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central. To do this, linear regression model was employed and the result is presented below:

Table 4: Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.		
(Constant)	B	Std. Error	Beta			r	R Square
1	5.872	.554	.	10.559	.000	0.683	0.896
Networking Competence	.404	.052	.041	7.769	.001		

Source: SPSS Printout, 2023

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial ingenuity

The table above revealed the contributions of networking competence to entrepreneurial ingenuity and their level of significance (NC; $\beta = 0.404$; $t = 7.769$; $p < 0.01$).

Since networking competence is significant at 0.001, it can therefore be concluded that the null hypothesis should be rejected. That is, networking competence significantly affects entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central.

Regression model given as $Y = a + \beta_1 X_1$
Where Y= Entrepreneurial ingenuity

a= Constant

βX = Coefficient of X

Research Hypothesis Two (Ho2):

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central.

Research Hypothesis 2 was set to examine if there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central. Linear regression model was employed and the result is presented below:

Table 5: Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.		
(Constant)	B	Std. Error	Beta			r	R Square
1	6.356	.692	.	9.184	.005	0.648	0.749
entrepreneurial persistence	.448	.049	.062	9.142	.001		

Source: SPSS Printout, 2023

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial passion

Table 5 above revealed the relationship between entrepreneurial persistence and entrepreneurial passion and their level of significance (EP; $\beta = 0.448$; $t = 9.142$; $p < 0.01$).

Since entrepreneurial persistence is significant at 0.001, it can therefore be concluded that the null hypothesis should be rejected. That is, entrepreneurial persistence has

significant relationship with entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central.

Regression model given as $Y = a + \beta_1 X_1$
Where Y= Entrepreneurial passion

a= Constant

βX = Coefficient of X

Findings

The linear regression models were used to examine the statements of hypotheses. Hypothesis one (**H₀₁**) states that networking competence does not significantly affect entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central. According to findings, networking competence has considerable and favourable effect on entrepreneurial ingenuity in Kogi Central at R square 0.896 which is positive with significant variance of 0.001, less than the p-value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, networking competence has significant and positive effect on entrepreneurial ingenuity. This suggests that an increase in networking competence automatically results in an improvement in the level of entrepreneurial ingenuity. Invariably, the null hypothesis (**H₀₁**) cannot be supported.

Hypothesis two (**H₀₂**) states that entrepreneurial persistence has no significant relationship with entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central. According to findings, entrepreneurial persistence has considerable and favourable relationship with entrepreneurial passion in Kogi Central at R square 0.749 which is positive with significant variance of 0.001, less than the p-value of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, entrepreneurial persistence has significant and positive effect on entrepreneurial passion. This denotes that an increase in entrepreneurial persistence automatically results in an increase in the level of entrepreneurial passion. Invariably, the null hypothesis (**H₀₂**) is rejected.

Conclusion

It is expected that the support and stimulation of entrepreneurial competencies will increase the strength of entrepreneurial performances. Findings show that there is a direct positive effect and relationship between

entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial performances. The findings therefore validate the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen Icek (1991).

Recommendations

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

- Entrepreneurs should imbibe valuable entrepreneurial competencies capable of entrenching favourable networking capacities which would lead to optimum overall performance.
- Persistence is one of the good attributes of an entrepreneur. Every entrepreneur should endeavour to have spirit of resilience which could catapult the entrepreneurial activity to enviable height.

Limitations to the Study

The findings of this study could not be generalized because of the scope of study. Data collected was limited to entrepreneurs operating within the boundary of Kogi Central in Kogi State. Kogi Central comprise of Adavi L.G.A., Ajaokuta L.G.A., Ogori-Magongo L.G.A., Okehi L.G.A. and Okene L.G.A. respectively, and may not reflect what obtains in other States of Nigeria.

Contributions to Knowledge

- This study considered networking competence and entrepreneurial persistence as attributes.
- It specifically highlights the key importance of entrepreneurship competencies to the development and sustainability of business organizations.

This study has therefore contributed to knowledge by pointing out that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial behaviour.

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