

## MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS OF CONFECTIONERY COMPANIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the relationship between managerial competencies and entrepreneurial success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria. The study has four specific objectives, four research questions and four hypotheses. Correlational research design was adopted by the researcher. Twenty-four (24) confectionery companies were selected and spread across South-South Nigeria. The study relied on the use of primary data, sourced using structured questionnaire. A total of 96 questionnaire were distributed to respondents, and all 96 were successfully retrieved and used in the analysis., hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient. The result obtained revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between managerial competency and entrepreneurial success in confectionery companies. The study asserts that, for confectionery to attain market success companies must ensure they create good customer relationship that will eventually lead to product loyalty. This study concludes that managerial competency plays a critical and positive role in enhancing the entrepreneurial success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria. The findings clearly establish that competencies such as communication skills and problem-solving abilities significantly improve market success and operational success, managerial competency was found to directly influence firm performance. Communication skill emerged as a particularly strong predictor of success, effective managerial communication enhances employee commitment, reduces inefficiencies, and strengthens organizational outcomes. The study therefore affirms that continuous top-down and bottom-up communication is essential for achieving business goals and sustaining performance. The study recommended that confectionery companies should ensure that their product meet up with world standard, well packaged, satisfactory to the final consumers. Managerial competency can be enhanced through training and retraining of employees.

**Keywords:** *Managerial competencies, Entrepreneurial success, Confectionery companies, Marketing success, Operational success, Communication skills, Problem-solving skills.*

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial "success combines economic performance and personal fulfilment. Business success extends beyond profit-making to include personal satisfaction, organizational growth, and broader economic contributions. Successful entrepreneurs are often characterized by passion, vision, resilience, creativity, adaptability, leadership ability, and strong communication and networking skills (Chadha & Dutta, 2020). According to Yin (2019), entrepreneurial success requires a combination of competencies that enable individuals to identify opportunities, make sound decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and overcome challenges. Beyond individual achievement, entrepreneurship plays a vital role in job creation, innovation, and national economic development, particularly through SMEs, which significantly contribute to employment generation and value creation (Babandi & Barjoyai, 2023; Choi & Hwang, 2015). Entrepreneurial success is therefore viewed from both economic and psychological perspectives. The economic approach focuses on objective indicators

such as profitability, sales growth, market share, return on investment, and firm survival (Rauch & Frese, 2021; DeTienne et al., 2023), although limited access to reliable financial data can be a constraint (Dej, 2010).

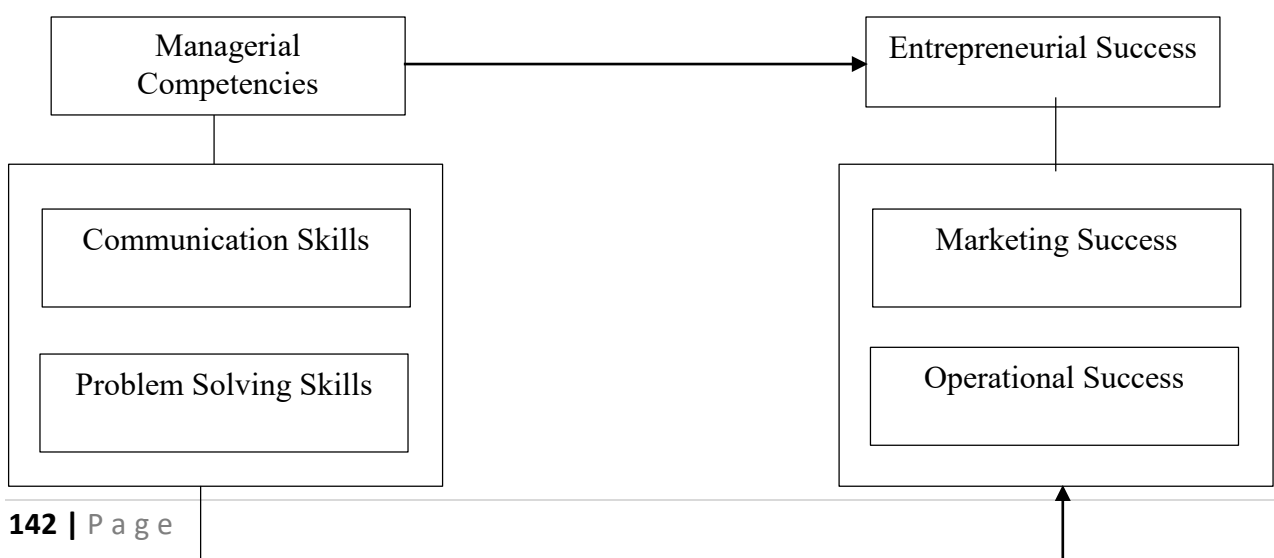
In contrast, the psychological approach emphasizes subjective criteria such as personal satisfaction, autonomy, goal attainment, and work–life balance (Gorgievski et al., 2021; Orser & Dyke, 2019). While subjective assessments may be influenced by personal optimism (Brookings & Serratelli, 2016), they provide valuable insight into how entrepreneurs perceive and define their own success. Scholars therefore recommend a balanced approach that integrates objective performance indicators with subjective evaluations and competitive comparisons (Richard et al., 2022). Central to achieving both dimensions of success is managerial competency, which enables entrepreneurs to effectively mobilize resources, respond to environmental challenges, and sustain competitive advantage (Chadha & Dutta, 2020). Competency encompasses the knowledge, skills, motives, and traits that drive superior performance (Boyatzis, 2022; Hoffmann, 2019), including communication, planning, teamwork, strategic action, delegation, empowerment, and result-orientation (Hellriegel et al., 2015; Rao, 2021). Thus, strong managerial competencies are fundamental to translating entrepreneurial vision into sustainable business” success.

### Statement of the Problem

The “confectionery industry in Nigeria faces intense competition and operational challenges. Confectionery, which includes sugar products and baked goods such as cakes, pastries, and bread, operates in a highly competitive environment characterized by ease of entry and the presence of numerous registered and unregistered firms. This has resulted in market fragmentation, making it difficult for any single company to control up to 10–15% of market share. Intense rivalry weakens customer loyalty, as consumers frequently shift from established firms to new entrants perceived to offer better services. Consequently, many confectionery businesses struggle to sustain or expand their market share, leading to frequent business failures and instability within the industry.

Beyond competition, operational inefficiency, inadequate financing, and limited managerial competence further hinder the growth of confectionery firms. Many businesses face challenges in improving output volume, maintaining product quality, and ensuring timely delivery, especially under prevailing economic pressures that force some operators to lower standards. Limited access to inclusive financing restricts expansion and modernization, while insufficient entrepreneurial knowledge about funding sources and capital market operations reduces growth opportunities. These challenges highlight the urgent need for confectionery operators to strengthen managerial competencies, adopt sound management practices, promote innovation, and pursue continuous improvement to achieve sustainable entrepreneurial” success.

### Conceptual Framework



**Fig. 1.1** Conceptual framework the managerial competencies and entrepreneurial success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

**Source:** Adapted from Miller, 2023; Lumpkin and Dess, 2021.

### **Aim and Objectives of the study**

The study aimed at examining the relationship between managerial competencies and entrepreneurial success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the relationship between communication skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
2. ascertain the relationship between communication skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
3. examine the relationship between problem solving skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
4. determine the relationship between problem solving skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the above specific objectives the following research questions are drawn

1. To what extent does a relationship exist between communication skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
2. What is the relationship between communication skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
3. What is the relationship between problem solving skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
4. To what extent does a relationship exist between problem solving skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the above research question the following null hypotheses are drawn

- H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between communication skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
- H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between communication skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.
- H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between problem solving skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria
- H0<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between problem solving skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Concept of Managerial Competencies**

Managerial "competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours that enable managers to effectively plan, organize, lead, and control organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals. In management literature, these competencies are recognized as essential determinants of firm performance, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where owners often function as managers (Boyatzis, 2008; Hellriegel et al., 2017). They include technical, human, and conceptual skills that support effective decision-making and adaptability to environmental changes. In the context of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria, managerial competencies are especially important due to intense competition, infrastructural constraints, and shifting consumer preferences that demand responsive and capable management.

Managerial competencies also encompass strategic and operational capabilities that determine how firms compete and sustain advantage in dynamic markets. Drawing from Barney's (1991) resource-based view, competencies that are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate can create competitive advantage. For entrepreneurial firms such as confectionery companies, competencies in planning, financial management, marketing, and operational efficiency significantly influence entrepreneurial success (Man, Lau & Chan, 2002). Strong analytical and problem-solving skills enable managers to allocate resources effectively, control costs, and improve product quality, thereby enhancing both financial and market performance (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013).

In addition, human and behavioural competencies—such as leadership, communication, motivation, and relationship management—play a vital role in labour-intensive industries like confectionery production (Boyatzis, 2008). Effective people management improves employee commitment and productivity (Goleman, 2011), while emotional and interpersonal competencies help entrepreneurs manage stress and maintain positive stakeholder relationships (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2014). In developing economies such as Nigeria, managerial competencies further support innovation, adaptability, and calculated risk-taking, which are crucial for business survival (Li & Ahlstrom, 2018; Toms et al., 2019). Therefore, managerial competencies form the foundation linking entrepreneurial capabilities to sustainable market, operational, and financial success.

## **Dimensions of Managerial Competencies**

### **Communication Skills**

Communication skills are a vital driver of entrepreneurial success. Communication skills refer to a manager's ability to effectively transmit information, clarify goals, and receive feedback (Robbins & Judge, 2022). In management theory, communication underpins core functions such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, ensuring coordination and alignment with organizational objectives. For confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria, effective communication enables managers to clearly express business vision, production standards, and marketing strategies, thereby promoting stability and growth. Without clear communication, employees may misunderstand expectations, which can negatively affect operational efficiency and overall firm performance.

Internally, communication skills enhance employee motivation, teamwork, and productivity. Managers who communicate clearly are better able to delegate responsibilities, resolve conflicts, and maintain quality standards (Daft, 2021). In confectionery businesses where hygiene, product quality, and timely delivery are essential, poor communication may result in production errors and customer dissatisfaction. Open communication channels also allow managers to receive feedback, detect operational challenges early, and implement timely solutions. Research shows that participative communication climates significantly improve employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Yukl, 2019; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2014).

Externally, communication competence strengthens relationships with customers, suppliers, and regulators. Market success in confectionery firms depends on effectively communicating product value, negotiating with suppliers, and addressing customer complaints (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Strong interpersonal and persuasive communication builds customer trust, enhances brand reputation, and encourages repeat patronage. It also facilitates networking and access to business opportunities that improve competitive advantage (Baron & Markman, 2023). When integrated with other managerial competencies such as leadership and decision-making, communication skills positively influence financial, operational, and market performance, ultimately enhancing firm survival and growth (Setiawan & Erdogan, 2018; Toms et al., 2019; Gorgievski et al., 2021).

### **Problem-solving Skills**

Problem-solving skills are central to effective management and entrepreneurial success. In management literature, problem-solving refers to a manager's ability to identify challenges, analyze their causes, generate alternatives, and implement appropriate solutions to achieve organizational

goals (Robbins & Coulter, 2018). In entrepreneurial settings such as confectionery companies, managers frequently confront issues relating to production efficiency, raw material supply, pricing pressures, and shifting consumer preferences. The ability to respond systematically and creatively to these challenges determines how effectively resources are utilized and how well firm performance is sustained. Consequently, problem-solving is recognized as a key managerial competency that strengthens decision-making and organizational effectiveness (Boyatzis, 2008).

From a competency perspective, problem-solving encompasses both analytical and intuitive capabilities. Analytical problem-solving relies on logical reasoning, structured evaluation, and data-driven decision-making, while intuitive problem-solving draws on experience and contextual judgment (Mintzberg, 2009). In confectionery firms, managers must balance these approaches when addressing operational issues such as equipment failure, quality control challenges, and demand fluctuations. Effective problem-solving minimizes production losses, ensures consistent product quality, and guarantees timely delivery, thereby contributing directly to operational success—an essential component of entrepreneurial success in SMEs (Gorgievski et al., 2021).

Moreover, strong problem-solving skills enhance market and financial performance by enabling managers to anticipate changes, respond to competition, and develop innovative strategies that improve customer satisfaction and market share (Tece, 2018). In the dynamic business environment of South-South Nigeria, where firms face unstable power supply, rising input costs, and regulatory constraints, effective problem-solving improves profitability, reduces waste, and strengthens competitiveness (Achtenhagen et al., 2020). Additionally, managers who treat problems as learning opportunities foster adaptability and long-term sustainability, reinforcing the role of problem-solving skills as a vital driver of market success, operational efficiency, and overall entrepreneurial success" (Baron & Shane, 2015).

### **The Concept of Entrepreneurial Success**

Entrepreneurial "success is a multidimensional concept that goes beyond financial performance to include managerial effectiveness, personal fulfilment, and stakeholder satisfaction. The entrepreneurship literature views success from both the firm and entrepreneur perspectives, using monetary and non-monetary indicators (Fisher et al., 2014; Gorgievski et al., 2021). At the firm level, success is commonly measured through sales growth, profitability, market share, and expansion in employee size, reflecting competitiveness and survival (Achtenhagen et al., 2020; Baum & Locke, 2014). However, scholars argue that focusing only on financial and growth indicators limits understanding, particularly for SMEs such as confectionery firms in developing economies like Nigeria (Walker & Brown, 2014).

Managerial competencies significantly influence entrepreneurial success. These competencies—such as decision-making ability, communication skills, innovation, risk-taking, and stress management—enable entrepreneurs to effectively coordinate resources and respond to market challenges (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2014; Setiawan & Erdogan, 2018). In confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria, strong managerial competencies enhance operational efficiency, product quality, customer satisfaction, and adaptability, thereby improving overall performance (Li & Ahlstrom, 2018). Entrepreneurs with well-developed managerial skills are better equipped to sustain competitive advantage and achieve long-term success.

Beyond financial outcomes, non-monetary indicators such as personal satisfaction, work-life balance, reputation, and societal contribution are increasingly recognized as essential dimensions of entrepreneurial success (Wach et al., 2016; Gorgievski et al., 2021). Many small business owners prioritize stability and independence over rapid growth (Davidsson et al., 2023). From a stakeholder perspective, firms that meet the expectations of customers, employees, suppliers, and the community are more likely to achieve sustainable success (Freeman, 2014; Ghosh et al., 2021). Therefore, entrepreneurial success in confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria is best assessed through an integrated framework of market success, operational success, and financial

success, shaped by managerial competencies and strong stakeholder relationships" (Eyana et al., 2017; Vermeire & Bruton, 2016).

## **Measures of Entrepreneurial Success**

### **Marketing Success**

Marketing "success reflects a firm's ability to understand and satisfy its target market. In entrepreneurship literature, marketing success extends beyond short-term sales to include the entrepreneur's capacity to identify customer needs, create value, and sustain long-term demand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). For confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria, marketing success is critical due to intense competition, shifting consumer preferences, and high price sensitivity. Entrepreneurial success in this environment depends largely on how effectively managers apply marketing competencies such as market analysis, branding, product positioning, and customer relationship management to achieve favorable outcomes (Falahat et al., 2018).

Marketing success is commonly measured using market-based indicators including sales growth, market share, customer retention, brand recognition, and customer satisfaction (Steffens et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2017). These indicators demonstrate a firm's competitive strength and market relevance. Strong marketing performance enhances firm survival and growth, thereby contributing to overall entrepreneurial success (Achtenhagen et al., 2020). In the confectionery industry, strategies such as attractive packaging, competitive pricing, product differentiation, and efficient distribution channels help firms build customer loyalty and transform marketing performance into sustained business growth.

Managerial competencies are central to achieving marketing success because managers design and implement market strategies. Skills such as strategic thinking, innovation, communication, and effective decision-making enable firms to respond to dynamic market conditions (Setiawan & Erdogan, 2018; Toms et al., 2019). In South-South Nigeria, where infrastructural and economic challenges persist, competent managers who understand local market realities are better positioned to adapt and compete effectively. Furthermore, marketing success strengthens stakeholder relationships and enhances long-term survival, consistent with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2014; Ghosh et al., 2021). Therefore, marketing success serves as a key indicator of entrepreneurial success by linking managerial competencies to competitive advantage, firm growth, and sustainable development" (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2014).

### **Operational Success**

Operational "success reflects how efficiently a firm transforms resources into valuable outputs. It is widely regarded as a core indicator of entrepreneurial success, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. Unlike measures that focus solely on profitability, operational success emphasizes internal efficiency, quality control, cost management, production reliability, and timely delivery (Rouse, 2015; Cho & Lee, 2018). For manufacturing-based ventures such as confectionery companies, strong operational capability determines survival and competitiveness in dynamic markets. Firms with well-developed operational systems are better able to sustain performance and respond to environmental challenges (Day, 1994; Rapp et al., 2020).

Operational success is strongly connected to managerial competencies. Effective planning, organizing, coordination, communication, supervision, and problem-solving directly influence workflow efficiency and minimize waste or production errors (Setiawan & Erdogan, 2018; Toms et al., 2019). Competent managers ensure optimal resource utilization, adherence to standards, and continuous process improvement, thereby translating managerial skills into tangible entrepreneurial outcomes (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2014). In confectionery businesses, this is particularly important due to product perishability, hygiene standards, and the need for consistency in taste and packaging (Cho & Lee, 2018; Rouse, 2015).

Within the context of South-South Nigeria, where infrastructural and supply chain constraints are common, operational success depends on the entrepreneur's ability to adapt processes, manage

risks, and maintain productivity despite challenges (Eyana et al., 2017; Vermeire & Bruton, 2016). Strong internal operations enhance stakeholder satisfaction, improve employee morale, ensure consistent product availability, and strengthen firm reputation (Gorgievski et al., 2021; Freeman, 2014). Therefore, operational success complements financial and market performance by capturing the internal strength that enables confectionery firms to achieve sustainable entrepreneurial success.

### **Theoretical Review**

**The "Resource-Based View (RBV) theory by Barney 1991:** The managerial framework described here aims to ascertain the strategic resources that a company can leverage to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Barney's 1991 article, "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage," is recognized as a seminal work in the evolution of the resource-based view (RBV). While some scholars point to evidence of a fragmented resource-based theory from the 1930s, the RBV suggests that firms are diverse due to their possession of varied resources, enabling the adoption of different strategies based on unique resource combinations. The Resource-Based View (RBV) emphasizes the importance of a firm's internal resources, encouraging managers to identify and develop assets, capabilities, and competencies that can provide sustainable competitive advantages. According to Schumpeter (1934), this perspective aligns with the view of entrepreneurs as innovators who generate new combinations of resources, resulting in the creation of products and driving economic growth. This process involves employing a diverse range of productive means, such as developing new products, adopting unproven production methods, exploring new market segments, and accessing novel sources of raw materials or semi-finished goods. Innovation is recognized as a critical factor for long-term economic dynamism, thereby providing entrepreneurs with diverse competencies an edge over those lacking proficiency in professional, social, and personal aptitudes.

### **Empirical Review**

Ogunyomi and Bruning (2016) "examined the influence of managerial competencies on the performance of small manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and utilized a structured questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprised 210 owner-managers of small-scale food and confectionery manufacturing firms operating across Lagos and Rivers States, from which a sample of 140 respondents was drawn using stratified sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that managerial competencies such as planning ability, leadership skills, and decision-making competence had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial success measured by sales growth and market expansion. The results further showed that firms managed by entrepreneurs with higher managerial competence recorded better operational efficiency and customer retention. The study concluded that managerial competencies are critical drivers of entrepreneurial success in manufacturing-oriented SMEs. It was therefore recommended that confectionery entrepreneurs in South-South Nigeria should engage in continuous managerial training and skill development to enhance competitiveness.

Akanbi (2017) carried out a study on managerial competence and SME performance in the Nigerian food processing sector. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, using questionnaires and interview schedules as research tools. The population consisted of 185 registered food and confectionery SMEs in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, with a sample size of 125 firms selected through simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using correlation and regression techniques. Findings from the study indicated that technical competence, communication skills, and financial management competence significantly influenced entrepreneurial success measured by profitability and firm survival. The results demonstrated that poor managerial competence was a major cause

of low performance and business failure among confectionery firms. The study concluded that managerial competencies are indispensable for sustaining entrepreneurial success in competitive markets. It recommended that government agencies and business associations should organize competency-based workshops for confectionery business owners to improve their managerial capacity.

Eyana, Masurel, and Paas (2017) conducted a study focusing on entrepreneurial competencies and success of SMEs in Sub-Saharan Africa, with evidence applicable to Nigeria. The researchers used a quantitative research design and employed structured questionnaires as the data collection tool. The population included 300 SME owners in the manufacturing and food-processing sectors, while 180 respondents formed the sample. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings revealed that managerial competencies such as opportunity recognition, strategic planning, and risk management significantly enhanced entrepreneurial success measured by market growth and operational performance. The results showed that entrepreneurs with strong managerial skills were better positioned to respond to environmental challenges. The study concluded that managerial competence is a vital resource for entrepreneurial success in developing economies. The authors recommended that entrepreneurship development programmes in Nigeria should place greater emphasis on managerial and strategic competencies, particularly for food and confectionery enterprises.

Asante and Affum-Osei (2019) investigated the relationship between managerial competencies and SME performance in the manufacturing sector. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and used questionnaires as the primary research instrument. The population comprised 250 SME owners and managers, with a sample size of 150 selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that competencies such as leadership ability, internal locus of control, and human resource management competence significantly influenced entrepreneurial success measured by productivity and business growth. The results indicated that managers who demonstrated confidence and effective people management achieved higher firm performance. The study concluded that managerial competencies are strong predictors of entrepreneurial success in manufacturing firms. It recommended that confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria should prioritize managerial competence during business expansion and succession planning.

Irwin, Fisher, and Zahra (2018) carried out a study on entrepreneurial behaviour, managerial competence, and firm success among SMEs. The study employed a survey research design and used structured questionnaires for data collection. The population of the study included 220 SMEs in the food and beverage sector, with a sample size of 160 firms. Data were analyzed using regression and factor analysis techniques. The findings revealed that managerial competencies such as innovative thinking, problem-solving ability, and strategic decision-making had a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial success measured by market success, operational efficiency, and financial performance. The results confirmed that firms with competent managers were more resilient and competitive. The study concluded that entrepreneurial success is strongly dependent on the managerial competencies of business owners. It recommended that SME support policies in Nigeria should integrate managerial competence development as a core requirement for accessing financial and technical assistance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a census-based correlational survey design to investigate managerial competencies and entrepreneurial success among registered confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria. The study population comprised twenty-four (24) selected registered confectionery companies operating within the region, from which a total of ninety-six (96) respondents were drawn. This population was derived by selecting four (4) respondents from each of the twenty-four companies, making the population finite and manageable. Given the relatively small and accessible population size, the census technique was employed, allowing data to be collected from every

member of the study population to ensure comprehensive coverage and enhanced accuracy of findings. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data complemented the analysis. Prior to analysis, data obtained from the field were carefully cleaned to ensure consistency and reliability of responses. The collected data were coded according to relevant themes and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Data analysis was conducted in three major phases. First, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze respondents' demographic characteristics. Second, univariate analysis was carried out using mean scores and standard deviations to describe the central tendency and dispersion of the study variables. Bivariate analysis was undertaken to test the hypothesized relationships using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, given the ordinal nature of the data. For multivariate analysis, partial correlation was applied to examine the moderating effects among the study variables. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, with weighted values assigned to each response option for mean computation and comparison against established acceptance criteria. This systematic analytical approach ensured logical interpretation of the data and facilitated valid inferences consistent with Zikmund's (2004) assertion on the role of data analysis in research "decision-making."

### Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected in the questionnaire were presented in this section. A total of 219 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents.

**Table 1 Showing "the Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaire from the Confectionery Companies in South-South Nigeria.**

Number of confectionery companies	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires retrieved	Number retrieved in %
24	96	96	100

**Source:** Survey Data, 2026

A total of 96 questionnaire were distributed to the twenty-four (24) confectionery companies in South-South region of Nigeria see Table 1 above is a display of the sorting of the questionnaire retrieved from the respondents in each of the selected confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria. 96 Questionnaire were successfully retrieved representing 100 percent of the respondents. This means all the respondents responded and their filled questionnaire were all accepted and are used in the study.

### Demographic Analysis

**Table 2 Showing the Respondents Sex**

Item	Title	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	60
	Female	38	40
	Total	96	100%

**Source:** Survey Data, 2026

The table 2 above shows that there are 60% males of the respondents, as against 40% percent female. Implying that there are more male than female employees in confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Age**

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
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15-20	15	16
21-25	20	21
26-30	22	23
31-35	23	24
36-40	11	11
41 year & above	5	5
Total	96	100

**Source:** Survey Data,  
2026

Table 3 above show the Respondents age distribution. The first category show that 16% of the respondent has their age range from 15-20 years. The next age category is in the range of 21-25 representing 21%. The third age bracket has 23% of respondents whose age range is between 26-30 years, the fourth age category is in the category of 31-35 years representing 24% of the respondents. The fifth category is in the range of 36-40 years representing 11% of the respondents lastly, 5% of the respondents are within the age category of 41 years and above. The implication of age analysis was to show if the respondent's age is active and efficient, as to perform optimally,

## Bivariate Analysis

### Hypothesis 1

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between communication skill and marketing success of Confectionery companies in South-South

**Table 4: Showing the Relationship between Dimension of Managerial competency and Measures of Entrepreneurial Success**

		<i>Communication skill</i>	<i>Marketing Success</i>
<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>Communication skill</i>	1.000	.868**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.	.000
	<i>N</i>	96	96
<i>Financial Success</i>	<i>Communication skill</i>	.868**	1.000
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.
	<i>N</i>	96	96

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**Source:** Survey Data, 2026 via SPSS v.23 Output.

The relationship between communication skill and marketing Success is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation: .0.868\*\* and a p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables at a 95% confidence interval. The positive sign value of  $r = .868$  reveals a direct relationship between communication skill and marketing success, the significance value is less than 0.01, which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. This indicates that the good and more effective confectionery companies can communicate, the more successful they would be in the market (customer share). Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between communication skill and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South (Null) hypothesis is rejected based on the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$ . We therefore accept the alternative

hypothesis and restate the null that communication skill is significantly related to marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

### Hypothesis 2

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between communication skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 5: Showing the Relationship between Dimension of Managerial Competency and Measures of Entrepreneurial Success**

		<i>Communication skill</i>	<i>Operational Success</i>
<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>Communication skill</i>	1.000	.794**
	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	.	.000
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.	.000
	<i>N</i>	96	96
<i>Operational Success</i>	<i>Communication skill</i>	.794**	1.000
	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	.000	.
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.
	<i>N</i>	96	96

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**Source:** Survey Data, 2026 via SPSS v.23 Output.

The relationship between communication skill and operational efficiency is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation: .0.794\*\* and a p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables at a 95% confidence interval. The positive sign value of  $r = .794$  reveals a direct relationship between communication skill and marketing success, the significance value is less than 0.01, which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. This indicates that the good communication skill is a pre-requisite for achieving operational success. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between communication skill and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South (Null) hypothesis is rejected based on the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$ . We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis and restate the null that communication skill is significantly related to operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

### Hypothesis 3

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between problem solving skills and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 6: showing the Relationship between Dimension of Managerial competency and Measures of entrepreneurial Success**

		<i>Problem solving skill</i>	<i>Marketing Success</i>
<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>Problem solving skill</i>	1.000	.786**
	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	.	.000
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.	.000
	<i>N</i>	96	96

<i>Marketing Success</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>.786**</i>	<i>1.000</i>
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>.000</i>	<i>.</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Survey Data, 2026 via SPSS v.23 Output.

The relationship between problem solving skill and marketing success is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation:  $.0.786^{**}$  and a p-value of  $.000$  which is less than  $0.05$ . The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables at a 95% confidence interval. The positive sign value of  $r = .786$  reveals a direct relationship between problem solving skill and marketing success, the significance value is less than  $0.01$ , which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. This indicates that the good problem-solving skill is a pre-requisite for achieving marketing success. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between problem solving skill and marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South (Null) hypothesis is rejected based on the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$ . We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis and restate the null that problem solving skill is significantly related to marketing success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

#### Hypothesis 4

$H_{04}$ : There is no significant relationship between problem solving skills and operational success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 7: Showing the Relationship between Dimension of Managerial Competency and Measures of Entrepreneurial Success**

		<i>Problem solving skill</i>	<i>Operational Success</i>
<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>1.000</i>	<i>.811**</i>
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>.</i>	<i>.000</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Financial Success</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>.811**</i>	<i>1.000</i>
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>.000</i>	<i>.</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Survey Data, 2026 via SPSS v.23 Output.

The relationship between problem solving skill and operational success is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation:  $.0.811^{**}$  and a p-value of  $.000$  which is less than  $0.05$ . The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables at a 95% confidence interval. The positive sign value of  $r = .811$  reveals a direct relationship between problem solving skill and operational success, the significance value is less than  $0.01$ , which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. This indicates that the good problem-solving skill is a pre-requisite for achieving operational success. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between problem solving skill and financial success of confectionery companies in

South-South (Null) hypothesis is rejected based on the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$ . We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis and restate the null that problem solving skill is significantly related to operational success of confectionery companies in South-South" Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed hereunder:

**Communication "Skill and Marketing Success:** The first hypothesis also affirmed positive relationship between communication skill and market success. The result shows that firms that communicate effectively perform better and more successful in the market. The finding supports the theoretical assertion made by Venkatraman, (2022), according to him communication skill leads to enhanced firm performance because firms with this strategic posture pursue opportunities that are unrelated to existing operations, which enables introduction of new products and brands ahead of competitors, giving them competitive advantages that leads to better firm performance, Rauch & Frese, (2021) all agreed to this theoretical assertion. Similarly, Eggers et al., (2013) assert that firms characterized by communication skill initiate actions that competitors must react to, leading the way in products and services improvement and successful market dominance. While, (Krauss, et al., 2015; Baba & Elumalai, 2021) empirically, ascertained that communication skill leads to better performance in terms of sales and employee growth, profitability, product, and customer performance.

**Communication Skill and Operational Success:** The second hypothesis was on establishing empirical relationship between communication skill and operational success. The result of the tested hypothesis revealed that the relationship between the two variable is significant and positive. There is no specific link of this result to any known theoretical and empirical result. Therefore, this result standards out to close this gap. Based on our findings, good communication skill will help organizations improve operational efficiency, hence, achieve success.

**Problem Solving Skill and Marketing Success:** The third hypothesis aimed at ascertaining the type of relationship between problem solving skill and market success of confectionery companies. The result affirmed positive, and significant relationship between problem solving skill and market success. This finding concurs with the continuous improvement and establishment of the product selling network and supply chain, these complementary assets would generate dynamic capabilities to creatively appropriate economic value from their new products (Lee et al. 2016). This helps improve the efficiency of commercializing new products and obtains marginal benefits from new product sales. With the increasing acceptance of new products, the sales and market share increase and accelerate due to the economics of scale. Therefore, the up-front improvement costs can be continuously decreased. Once the average up-front cost is lower than the marginal benefit of new product sales, the production and sales increase of new products will bring the expected growth of revenue and profit and, therefore, better financial performance. Furthermore, it means a positive follow-up relationship exists between innovation output and financial performance when innovation output passes a certain. The result of the third empirical test revealed that problem solving skill is a panacea for improving the operational success of organizations, this was affirmed by a positive correlational value. Problem solving skill is the innovation skill of organization to manipulate through huddles and improving on existing method. The empirical result support the works of Gorgievski, Ascalon, and Stephan, (2021) which they affirmed that organizations with better problem solving strategy will excel in improving the operational success.

**Problem Solving Skill and Operational Success:** The fourth hypothesis result affirmed positive and significance relationship between problem solving skill and operational success. The result may be interpreted to mean that problem solving activities may allow innovators to earn monopoly profits. Numerous studies have validated the positive relationship between innovation and firm performance. However, firm-level profits may not follow the same pattern. The initial high returns

from new products gradually decrease due to increasing competition, more entrants, the defensive strategy of incumbents, and market share shrinkage (Pisano and Teece 2007). Firms aiming to maintain the success of new products or services in the market often face the dilemma of choosing between market success (i.e., market share) and operational success" (i.e., profits).

### **Conclusion**

This "study concludes that managerial competency plays a critical and positive role in enhancing the entrepreneurial success of confectionery companies in South-South Nigeria. The findings clearly establish that competencies such as communication skills and problem-solving abilities significantly improve market success and operational success, managerial competency was found to directly influence firm performance. Communication skill emerged as a particularly strong predictor of success, effective managerial communication enhances employee commitment, reduces inefficiencies, and strengthens organizational outcomes. The study therefore affirms that continuous top-down and bottom-up communication is essential for achieving business goals and sustaining performance.

Additionally, the study concludes that poor product quality, weak communication, limited problem-solving ability, inadequate infrastructure, high cost of funds, and lack of modern food-processing facilities contribute significantly to low output, poor service quality, and untimely delivery among confectionery firms in the region. Market success can be achieved through customer loyalty, which depends largely on service quality and effective distribution channels. Consequently, it is recommended that financial institutions promote inclusive financing to enable confectionery businesses access loans for expansion and modernization. Confectionery companies should adopt a proactive and futuristic approach by improving output volume, enhancing product quality, strengthening managerial administration, and fostering innovation. These measures will serve as a panacea for achieving sustainable entrepreneurial success in South-South" Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based "on the findings and conclusions drawn the following recommendations are considered imperative that:

1. owners and managers of confectionery businesses should adopt proactive communication strategies to navigate market uncertainties and competitive pressures. By strengthening communication channels and encouraging open dialogue across all organizational levels, firms can improve financial probity, minimize misunderstandings, and ensure that resources are efficiently allocated to drive profitability. sustained attention to communication skills will ultimately reinforce financial discipline and long-term business success.
2. confectionery sector should deliberately invest in strengthening the problem-solving competencies of their entrepreneurs and managers. Since problem-solving skill enhances innovation, enables organizations to navigate challenges, and supports continuous improvement in operational methods, business owners should prioritize training programs, workshops, and mentoring initiatives that build these competencies.
3. since operational success in the confectionery industry relies heavily on the integration of production, quality control, distribution, and customer relations, leaders must possess the capacity to provide clear strategic direction, motivate employees, and coordinate resources effectively. Confectionery sector should embed leadership development into their internal policies by creating opportunities for continuous learning, succession planning, and performance-based leadership assessment. By strengthening leadership capabilities, confectionery businesses will not only enhance operational efficiency but also sustain competitiveness in a dynamic and demanding market environment.
4. Finally, policymakers and industry associations should provide support programs that focus on strengthening managerial competencies in communication, problem-solving, and

leadership. Business development centers, chambers of commerce, and SME support agencies should design capacity-building workshops, mentorship networks, and knowledge-sharing forums that enhance these competencies. Such interventions will empower confectionary entrepreneurs to improve performance across market, operational, and financial dimensions, thus contributing to regional economic" growth.

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