

# Communication Competencies Required by Managers of Small Scale Businesses in Enugu State Nigeria for Wealth Creation in a Depressed Economy

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## Abstract

Managers of small scale business to be competent, implies that such manager have acquired the communication knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform successfully at a specific proficiency level in a given work. This study, therefore was carried out to determine communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy. The study adopted survey research design. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was in collecting data from 41 business educators in the public tertiary institutions in Enugu state. The data collected were presented in tables, mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. While the null hypotheses were test at 0.05 level of significance using t – test. It was found out from the study, that managers of small scale businesses required verbal and non-verbal communication competencies for wealth creation in a depressed economy. Based on the findings, recommendations were that: there should be regular workshop conferences and seminars for managers of small scale businesses. Business educators should impart right business communication skills to students (would-be managers).

**Keywords:** Communication competencies, small scale business, wealth creation, depressed economy.

## Introduction

Communication has become an important aspect of our personal daily life, as well as our business activities. Individual in our society and offices relates with one character by means of communication. It is through communication that people reach the lives of people around them. One becomes a communicating organism right from one's first cry at birth.

The word communication is derived from the latin word "communis" which means communication. Chibuikwe (2012), is of the opinion that communication is the process of transmitting a message so that the recipient understands it. Communication is the production and exchange of information and meaning by use of signs and symbols. Based on this, communication involves encoding and sending message, receiving and decoding them and synthesizing information and meaning either verbally or non-verbally.

The verbal mode of communication is characterized by the use of language. According to Otagburuagu (2009), verbal mode required that the people involved in the communication act are conversant or familiar with the specific language in use. Verbal mode of communication should involve words and language structure that should be carefully selected to facilitate meaning and comprehension so that the intended effects of the communication event can be achieved.

Non-verbal communication is the involvement of the use of non-linguistic forms to convey messages. Eze (2011), stated that non-linguistic are signs, facial expression, body movements and the placement of objects at certain locations, positions or angles. Facial expression communicates mostly emotions and attitudes including, friendliness, joy, attention, dislike, suspicion, anxiety and bewilderment (Ugwunwoti, 2017). Ugwunwoti (2017) equally noted that non-verbal communication is the surest means of creation wealth by managers as it requires signs and movement against languages. Managers of small scale business to have effective management of small scale businesses in depressed economy should have the ability to communicate mostly emotions and make movement with ones hand, head or face to show a particular meaning.

Managers of small scale business to be competent, implies that such manager have acquired the communication knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform successfully at a specific proficiency level in a given work. Dimelu (2013), defined competency as the standardized requirement for an individual to properly perform a specific job. Communicative competence on the other hand looks beyond grammatical correctness to fluency in the communication act. Communicative competence is the sum of all the techniques a person employs to communicate effectively with another person in a communication event (Otagburuagu, 2009).

A small scale business, is one which independently is owned, financed and controlled by private individual which is not dominant in its field of operation (Amienghoham, 2004, in Nome, 2016). In Nigeria, the multiplicity of the definition is quite apparent. The Nigerian Bank of commerce and industry (1990) in Nwafor (2016), defines a small scale enterprise as one whose capital does not exceed seven hundred and fifty thousand naira (N750,000). In a depressed economy, small scale businesses constitute a vital engine of economy growth;

as it serves as a linkage or gateway to various sector of the economy.

Economic depressed is the suppression of economic development and activities which results into poverty and unemployment (Onyia, 2010). A depressed economy is an economy which experiences a prolonged downturn in the economy. In a depressed economy, there are declining business activities, falling prices, increasing inventories, public fear and panic as well as rising unemployment. Under these conditions, communicative competence will enhance wealth creation.

According to Anielski (2003) in Amunnadi (2013), the wealth comes from the old English words “weal” (well-being) and “th” (condition) what taken together means the condition of “well-being”. The above shows that real wealth is not just about financial possessions. Wealth is a stock of assets or resources or income owned by an individual or a country at a point in time (Akpan & Charles 2013). On the other hand, wealth creation is the process of making something new or exist before that have monetary value. Oduma (2012), defined wealth creation as the development of something new that is the capable of generating money, or the development of properties and items of great money value. Wealth creation is nothing but creating value in the society.

Today, wealth creation remains an interesting area of attention, especially in a depressed economy, with the current global recession, individuals now focus on legitimate ways or processes to create wealth, make their living. Managers of small scale businesses partly or wholly lack communication competencies to create wealth to reduce poverty and unemployment. It is against this background that, this study on communication competencies required by the managers of small scale businesses in Enugu State for wealth creation in a depressed economy was carried out.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu State for wealth creation in a depressed economy. Specifically the study sought to determine the:

1. Verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses Enugu State for wealth creation in a depressed economy.
2. Non-verbal communication required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy?
2. What are the non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators regarding the verbal communication required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educator on non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

### **Method**

The study adopted a survey research design. A survey research design according to Nworgu (2015) is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire population. This design was adopted because of the wide distribution of the respondents.

The area of the study was Enugu state. Enugu state is one of the states in South-East geographical zone of Nigeria with many tertiary institutions. The population for the study was 41 Business educators in the public tertiary institutions offering business education. The institutions are, Enugu state University of Science and Technology (ESUT), University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET) and Federal College of Education Eke-Amufu. The sampling techniques was adopted, due to the manageable size of the population to the researchers.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers after relevant materials have been consulted. The questionnaire has 23 items statement based on the two research questions. The questionnaire was structured in four point response category of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and

Strongly Disagree with numerical value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts. Two experts from business education and entrepreneurship in the Department of Technology and Vocational Education and one from measurement and evaluation in the Department of Science and Computer Education, all in Enugu State University of Science and technology.

The reliability of the instrument was determined from pilot tests of the questions with 20 business educators at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Their responses were computed using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded 0.69 showing that the instrument is reliable. This is in line with Uzoagulu (2011), that any cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of 0.79 indicates a high correlation, giving credence, that the instrument is highly reliability.

The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of 4 trained research assistants (one per institution). The research assistants were trained on the administration, contents of the questions and methods of collecting data from the respondents. Out of 41 questionnaires distributed, 38 were properly filled and returned representing 92.68 percent returned rate.

Mean and standard deviation was used in answering research questions and decision was based on the principle of upper and lower limit of the mean rating. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. Where the t-value obtained is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is not significant, otherwise the null hypotheses will be significant.

## Results

### Research question 1

What are the verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy?

**Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female business educators on the verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale business in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy**

S/ N	Verbal communication competencies	Male n = 12		Female n = 26		Overall		Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
1.	face to face conversation	3.13	1.03	2.82	1.00	2.95	1.01	Agree
2.	addressing the public	3.44	0.89	2.64	0.90	2.97	0.97	Agree
3.	answering telephone calls	2.81	1.27	2.97	1.02	2.92	1.09	Agree
4.	drafting memorandum	3.62	0.62	3.09	0.92	3.32	0.84	Agree
5.	Drafting official letters	3.25	1.18	3.05	0.99	3.13	1.07	Agree
6.	drafting notices and a announcements to people	3.13	1.03	2.98	1.26	3.10	1.13	Agree
7.	drafting and reading business filers	3.50	0.81	3.09	0.97	3.26	0.92	Agree
8.	reading handbills	2.95	0.95	3.75	0.45	3.29	0.87	Agree
9.	endorsing and minuting of documents	3.62	0.62	3.09	0.92	3.32	0.84	Agree
10.	manipulating the computer keyboard	2.81	1.27	2.97	1.02	2.92	1.09	Agree
11.	inputing data correctly in a system (computers)	3.44	0.89	2.64	0.90	2.97	0.97	Agree
12.	sending electronic mails	3.23	0.97	3.05	0.94	3.12	0.99	Agree
13.	printing documents from computer	3.13	1.03	2.82	1.00	2.95	1.01	Agree
14.	scanning documents	3.50	0.81	3.09	0.97	3.26	0.92	Agree
15.	browsing the internet	2.95	0.95	3.75	0.45	3.29	0.87	Agree
<b>Cluster mean/SD</b>		3.23	0.97	3.05	0.94	3.12	0.99	Agree

The result of data analyzed in table 1, showed that, both male and female business educators in public tertiary institutions in Enugu state agreed that the itemized are verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale business for wealth creation in a depressed economy. The grand mean of 3.12 further confirmed, the opinion of respondents. The low standard deviation shows that the respondents had a consensus opinions on their responses.

### Research question 2

What are the non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale business in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of male and female on the non-verbal communication required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy**

S/ N	Non-verbal communication competencies	Male n = 12		Female n = 26		Overall		Decision
	The ability to:	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
16.	make eye contact to conveys information	3.13	1.03	3.05	0.99	3.71	1.02	Agree
17.	communicate mostly emotions and attitudes (facial expression)	3.62	0.50	3.45	0.91	3.53	0.76	Agree
18.	make movement with one's hand, head or face to show a particular meaning (gesture)	3.69	0.66	3.73	0.77	3.71	0.69	Agree
19.	touch by way of warm handshake, by embrace or gentle touching of the shoulder	3.56	0.73	3.36	0.90	3.45	0.79	Agree
20.	have good personal appearance as perceived by others (grooming, addressing, body shape, body cleanliness)	3.32	0.74	3.41	0.79	3.36	0.76	Agree
21.	use pictures as a medium of mass communication	3.41	0.94	3.43	0.95	3.42	0.95	Agree
22.	view communication as people process rather than language process (communication climate)	3.47	0.80	3.33	0.81	3.45	0.79	Agree
23.	represent ideas with colours (black for mourning, white for purity, red for danger, green for safety)	3.75	0.57	3.83	0.40	3.76	0.94	Agree
24.	use piece paper, wood, cloth, metal that has a drawing or picture or figures on it to give information	3.31	0.93	3.17	0.98	3.29	0.93	Agree
<b>Cluster mean/SD</b>		<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The result of data analysis in Table 2 shows that, items 16, 17 and 22 have their mean ratings above 2.50 showing that the respondents strongly agree on these items. The remaining six items are agree with mean rating ranging from 3.29 to 3.45 showing that, the male and female business educators agree on the itemized as non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy. The cluster mean of 3.52 shows strongly agree, while the low standard

deviation of 0.80 shows that the respondents responses are homogenous.

**Hypothesis 1:**

**Table 3: t-test comparison of the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	12	3.23	0.97	36	0.526	1.968	Not Significant
Female	26	3.05	0.94				

The table above show that the calculated t-valued at 0.05 level of significance is 0.526, while the critical t-value, under the same conditions is 1.968. Since the calculated value of t-test is less than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators regarding verbal communication competencies by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

**Table 4: t-test comparison of the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	12	3.09	0.76	36	1.069	1.968	Not Significant
Female	36	3.42	0.83				

Table 4 shows that, the calculated t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 36 degree of freedom is 1.069, while the critical value is 1.96 under the same conditions. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that no significant difference exists between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale business in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

**Summary of major findings**

- 1) The verbal communication competencies are required by managers of small scale business in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.
- 2) There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators regarding their opinions on the verbal communication competencies required by managers small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.
- 3) Non-verbal communication competencies are required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.
- 4) No significant difference exists between the mean ratings of male and female business educators regarding the non-verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

**Discussion of Findings**

With respect to the first research question, the results indicated that both male and female business educators in public tertiary institutions in Enugu state were in agreement that verbal communication competencies are required by managers of small scale businesses for wealth creation in a depressed economy. This is in agreement with Otagburuagu (2009) that, verbal communication makes people involved in the communication act, to be conversant with the specific language in use. In a depressed economy, wealth could be created by managers of small scale businesses through proper use of verbal communication techniques. The results in relation to first null hypothesis showed that the respondents did not significantly differ in their mean ratings on the verbal communication competencies required by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

The findings of the study in respect to research question two showed that, the respondents were in agreement that non-verbal communication competencies are required for wealth creation in a depressed economy by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state. This is in line with Ugwunwoti (2017) that non-verbal communication is the surest means of creating wealth by managers, as it requires signs and movements against languages. Moreover, no significant exists between the mean ratings of male and female business educators

regarding the non-verbal communication competencies by managers of small scale businesses in Enugu state for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

### Conclusion

Communication competencies is a yardstick by managers of small scale business for wealth creation in a depressed economy. Through verbal and non-verbal competencies business transactions are enhanced; thereby creating wealth.

Verbal mode of communication is characterized by the use of language while, non-verbal communication is the involvement of the use of non-linguistic forms to convey message. Therefore, communicative competence which looks beyond grammatical correctness to fluency in the communication act, should be acquired by managers of small scale businesses for wealth creation in a depressed economy.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the researchers proffer the following recommendations:

- 1) There should regular workshops, seminars and conferences for managers of small scale businesses. This would enable them to have update on the modern business communication techniques.
- 2) Business Educators should impart right business communication skills to business students (would-be managers) to be gainfully, employed, either with private or public sectors or self employed.
- 3) Business communication as a course, should be made compulsory in all business departments; as a baseline for would-be managers.
- 4) Communication experts/staff should be employed in business departments to impart the right communicative competence.

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