

Business Communication Competencies as Predictors of Entrepreneurial Performance Among Female Undergraduate Entrepreneurs in Ondo State, Nigeria

Lydia Aduke Adewuyi

Department of Business Education, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Ondo State.

Cletus O. Okuguni

Department of Mass Communication, Wesley University, Ondo.

Joseph Akanbi Adewuyi

Department of French, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Ondo State.

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijeld.2013/vol14n46481>

Published September 28, 2026

Citation: Adewuyi L.A., Okuguni C.O., Adewuyi J.A. (2026) Business Communication Competencies as Predictors of Entrepreneurial Performance Among Female Undergraduate Entrepreneurs in Ondo State, Nigeria, *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 14 (4),64-81

Abstract: *This study examined business communication competencies as predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 60 female undergraduate entrepreneurs operating various small-scale businesses within selected tertiary institutions in Ondo City, Ondo State. Due to the manageable size of the population, all respondents were included in the study using a census sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Business Communication Competencies and Entrepreneurial Performance Questionnaire (BCCEPQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation, while its internal consistency yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was proposed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The study was guided by four research questions and four hypotheses. The findings are expected to demonstrate that communication competencies, including oral communication, written communication, interpersonal communication, negotiation skills, listening skills, and digital communication, contribute significantly to entrepreneurial performance. The paper concludes that strengthening communication competencies among female undergraduate entrepreneurs is essential for improving business growth, customer satisfaction, business sustainability, and competitiveness. It recommends that tertiary institutions should integrate practical business communication training into entrepreneurship programmes to equip female students with competencies required for successful entrepreneurial practice.*

Keywords: business communication competencies, entrepreneurial performance, female undergraduate entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship education, tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing participation of female undergraduates in entrepreneurial activities has underscored the importance of business communication competencies in enhancing enterprise performance. While entrepreneurship education equips students with technical and managerial skills, communication competencies remain fundamental to customer relations, negotiation, business networking, marketing, and decision-making. Entrepreneurship has become an important strategy for addressing graduate unemployment, reducing poverty, promoting innovation, and stimulating economic development across developing economies. In Nigeria, the increasing number of graduates entering self-employment reflects the growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a viable career option. Female undergraduate students are increasingly combining academic pursuits with entrepreneurial ventures in areas such as fashion design, catering, cosmetics, digital marketing, event planning, hairdressing, online retailing, photography, and other service-oriented enterprises. These ventures provide opportunities for income generation, skill acquisition, and business experience while contributing to personal and national economic development. Although access to entrepreneurial opportunities has expanded, sustaining business performance requires more than technical or vocational competence. Entrepreneurs are expected to communicate effectively with customers, suppliers, business partners, financial institutions, employees, and other stakeholders. Effective communication facilitates the exchange of information, negotiation of business agreements, conflict resolution, customer relationship management, and promotion of products and services. Consequently, communication competence has become one of the essential determinants of entrepreneurial success in contemporary business environments. Business communication competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours required for effective communication in business settings. These competencies include oral communication, written communication, listening, interpersonal communication, negotiation, presentation, customer relations, networking, and digital communication. Entrepreneurs, who demonstrate these competencies are generally better positioned to establish business relationships, build customer confidence, promote their products, negotiate favourable transactions, and respond effectively to market demands.

The contemporary business environment has also undergone significant transformation as a result of digital technologies, social media platforms, electronic commerce, and virtual business interactions. Many student entrepreneurs rely heavily on digital communication channels such as WhatsApp Business, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, email, and online marketplaces to advertise products, communicate with customers, receive orders, and provide after-sales services. The effective use of these communication platforms requires appropriate communication competencies capable of supporting business visibility, customer engagement, and enterprise growth. Entrepreneurial performance represents the extent to which entrepreneurs achieve desired business objectives within a specified period. It is commonly assessed through indicators such as sales growth, customer satisfaction, profitability, business expansion, customer retention, innovation, and sustainability. For female undergraduate entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial performance extends beyond financial returns to include the ability to maintain viable business operations alongside academic responsibilities. Effective communication competencies are expected to contribute significantly to these outcomes by

enhancing customer relationships, strengthening marketing efforts, improving negotiation processes, and facilitating access to business opportunities. Female entrepreneurship has continued to receive considerable attention because of its contribution to economic empowerment, gender inclusion, and national development. Government agencies, higher education institutions, and development organisations have introduced several entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at encouraging female participation in business activities. Despite these interventions, many female undergraduate entrepreneurs continue to experience challenges associated with customer acquisition, business negotiation, marketing communication, and relationship management. These challenges may limit business performance and long-term sustainability if communication competencies are inadequate. Several empirical studies have established that communication competence contributes to organisational effectiveness, customer satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, and business growth. However, relatively few studies have specifically examined how business communication competencies influence entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs within tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. This gap necessitates the present study, which seeks to determine whether business communication competencies serve as predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to Business Education by providing evidence on the importance of communication competencies in entrepreneurship development. The study may also assist curriculum developers, entrepreneurship educators, institutional administrators, policymakers, and entrepreneurship support agencies in designing programmes that strengthen communication competencies required for successful entrepreneurial practice among female undergraduates.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship education has become an integral component of higher education in Nigeria with the expectation that graduates will acquire the competencies required to establish and sustain successful business ventures. Consequently, many female undergraduate students have embraced entrepreneurial activities while pursuing their academic programmes. Despite this growing participation, the performance of many student-owned enterprises remains below expectation, as reflected in low customer retention, limited business expansion, ineffective marketing, poor negotiation outcomes, and inadequate business sustainability. These challenges may not be attributed solely to financial constraints or limited technical expertise. Communication-related deficiencies, including ineffective oral communication, weak interpersonal skills, inadequate negotiation abilities, poor customer relationship management, and limited digital communication competence, may also influence entrepreneurial outcomes. In increasingly competitive business environments, entrepreneurs who are unable to communicate effectively may experience difficulties attracting customers, building trust, maintaining business relationships, and responding to market demands. Although previous studies have examined entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial competencies and business performance, relatively little empirical attention has been given to the influence of business communication competencies on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in tertiary institutions, particularly within Ondo State. This gap limits understanding of the communication competencies that may be required to improve entrepreneurial success among female students operating small-scale businesses. It is against this background that this study investigates business communication competencies as predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine business communication competencies as predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the influence of oral communication competency on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs;
2. examine the influence of interpersonal communication competency on entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs;
3. assess the influence of negotiation competency on entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs; and
4. determine the influence of digital communication competency on entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does oral communication competency influence the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State?
2. What is the influence of interpersonal communication competency on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs?
3. To what extent does negotiation competency influence the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs?
4. How does digital communication competency influence the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs?

Research Hypotheses

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

H₀₁: Oral communication competency has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State.

H₀₂: Interpersonal communication competency has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State.

H₀₃: Negotiation competency has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State.

H₀₄: Digital communication competency has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Business Communication Competencies

Business communication competencies have become increasingly important in contemporary entrepreneurial practice because of their influence on business operations, customer engagement, decision-making, negotiation, networking, and organisational performance. Effective communication enables entrepreneurs to exchange information, negotiate business transactions, establish professional relationships, and coordinate business activities efficiently. In increasingly competitive

and digitally mediated business environments, communication competencies have emerged as essential entrepreneurial attributes for enterprise development and sustainability (McGloin et al., 2024; Hardianti et al., 2024). Research has also established a significant relationship between communication skills and entrepreneurship among university students, suggesting the need for communication competencies to receive greater attention in entrepreneurship education (Abaci, 2022).

Business communication competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours that enable individuals to communicate effectively in business settings. These competencies extend beyond the transmission of information to include the ability to interpret messages accurately, adapt communication to different audiences, resolve conflicts, negotiate agreements, and maintain productive relationships with stakeholders. Entrepreneurial communication increasingly requires the ability to select appropriate messages, channels, and communication approaches for different target groups, while continuously adapting to technological and socioeconomic changes (Kraus et al., 2023). Consequently, business communication encompasses both conventional and digital communication practices required for effective business operations.

Communication within entrepreneurial settings involves continuous interaction with customers, suppliers, financial institutions, employees, regulatory agencies, and business partners. Entrepreneurs therefore require competencies that facilitate the clear presentation of ideas, active listening, persuasive communication, effective negotiation, and professional correspondence. These competencies can support opportunity recognition, networking, knowledge exchange, resource mobilisation, and relationship development, all of which are important to entrepreneurial activities (Kraus et al., 2023; McGloin et al., 2024). Effective communication also enhances the capacity of entrepreneurs to interact with diverse audiences and build credibility and trust within their business environments.

Within entrepreneurship education, business communication competencies are regarded as transferable skills that complement technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial competencies. While technical skills enable entrepreneurs to produce goods and services, communication competencies facilitate the promotion, marketing, coordination, negotiation, and delivery of those goods and services. Recent evidence indicates that communication and entrepreneurial competencies are relevant to business performance, particularly where entrepreneurs must combine managerial, technological, and interpersonal capabilities in responding to changing market conditions (Hardianti et al., 2024). The integration of communication competencies into entrepreneurial practice can therefore contribute to improved business performance and enterprise sustainability.

For female undergraduate entrepreneurs, communication competencies are particularly important because they often combine business activities with academic responsibilities. The ability to communicate effectively with customers, negotiate with suppliers, market products through digital platforms, and establish professional relationships can contribute to business continuity and development. Evidence from Southwestern Nigeria indicates that communication and interpersonal relationship competencies are among the competencies considered important for successful female entrepreneurship (Umoru & Ademiluyi, 2024). Similarly, research involving female polytechnic

students in Southwestern Nigeria identified communication competencies as important capabilities for successful entrepreneurship in a business environment that may present gender-related challenges (2022).

The increasing adoption of digital technologies has further expanded the communication responsibilities of entrepreneurs, making competence in electronic communication increasingly important. Digital platforms provide student entrepreneurs with opportunities to communicate with customers, promote products, conduct marketing activities, and expand their market reach. Evidence from Nigerian student entrepreneurs indicates that social media platforms are being used for marketing activities because of their accessibility and relatively low promotional costs (Bernice & Olanihun, 2024). Digital entrepreneurship research in Nigeria has similarly linked the use of websites, email services, and social media with customer satisfaction, market-share growth, and profitability growth (Amadi & Obele, 2023).

Business communication competencies in this study are examined through four major dimensions, namely oral communication competency, interpersonal communication competency, negotiation competency, and digital communication competency. These dimensions represent important communication practices used by undergraduate entrepreneurs in managing customer relationships, negotiating with suppliers and business partners, promoting products and services, and coordinating business activities. The focus on these dimensions is consistent with recent literature that identifies communication, relationship building, negotiation, presentation, listening, and digital interaction as important elements of entrepreneurial communication (McGloin et al., 2024; Kraus et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurial Performance

Entrepreneurial performance refers to the extent to which entrepreneurs achieve predetermined business objectives through the effective utilisation of available resources. It reflects the overall outcomes of entrepreneurial activities and is commonly assessed using both financial and non-financial indicators. These may include business growth, profitability, customer satisfaction, customer retention, sales performance, innovation, market expansion, and business sustainability. Contemporary studies of entrepreneurial and SME performance similarly recognise that performance is multidimensional and may reflect financial outcomes as well as growth, innovation, market development, and the ability to remain competitive (Labo et al., 2024; Umar & Iorpuu, 2025).

Entrepreneurial performance therefore extends beyond financial outcomes to include the entrepreneur's ability to establish stable business operations, respond to environmental changes, maintain customer relationships, and sustain competitive advantage. For undergraduate entrepreneurs, performance may also be reflected in the ability to maintain consistent business activities while managing academic responsibilities. This is particularly relevant because student entrepreneurs operate within a distinctive environment in which limited time, financial resources, and access to business support may influence their entrepreneurial activities.

Communication competencies can contribute to entrepreneurial performance by facilitating customer acquisition, strengthening stakeholder relationships, supporting effective marketing, improving negotiation outcomes, and enhancing organisational coordination. Entrepreneurs who communicate

effectively are better positioned to present business ideas, understand customer needs, negotiate with suppliers, develop networks, and maintain relationships with stakeholders. Recent research on entrepreneurial communication identifies communication as a mechanism through which entrepreneurs build relationships, transfer knowledge, mobilise resources, and pursue entrepreneurial opportunities (Kraus et al., 2023). Empirical evidence also suggests that communication and entrepreneurial competencies are associated with business performance (Hardianti et al., 2024). Effective communication is particularly relevant to customer-oriented activities. Entrepreneurs need to understand customer expectations, respond to enquiries, communicate product benefits, address complaints, and maintain relationships after sales. Digital communication has further expanded these responsibilities because entrepreneurs increasingly interact with customers through social media, email, messaging applications, and other online platforms. Studies of Nigerian student entrepreneurs have shown the growing use of social media for product promotion and marketing activities (Bernice & Olanihun, 2024), while research on digital entrepreneurship has linked digital communication channels with customer satisfaction, market-share growth, and profitability (Amadi & Obele, 2023).

Consequently, communication competencies can be viewed as an important component of the capabilities required for entrepreneurial performance. Oral communication facilitates effective presentation and persuasion; interpersonal communication supports relationship building and customer engagement; negotiation competency assists entrepreneurs in reaching mutually beneficial agreements; while digital communication enables entrepreneurs to market products, communicate with customers, and participate in technology-mediated business activities. Taken together, these competencies may enhance the ability of female undergraduate entrepreneurs to manage their enterprises effectively and achieve improved entrepreneurial performance. Business communication competencies have become increasingly important in contemporary entrepreneurial practice due to their influence on business operations, customer engagement, decision-making, and organisational performance. Effective communication enables entrepreneurs to exchange information, negotiate business transactions, establish professional relationships, and coordinate business activities efficiently. As business environments become more competitive and technology-driven, communication competencies have emerged as essential entrepreneurial attributes required for enterprise growth and sustainability. Business communication competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours that enable individuals to communicate effectively in business settings. These competencies extend beyond the ability to transmit information and include the capacity to interpret messages accurately, adapt communication to different audiences, resolve conflicts, negotiate agreements, and maintain productive relationships with stakeholders. They encompass both traditional and digital communication practices required for successful business operations. Communication within entrepreneurial settings involves continuous interaction with customers, suppliers, financial institutions, employees, regulatory agencies, and business partners. Consequently, entrepreneurs require competencies that facilitate the clear presentation of ideas, active listening, persuasive communication, effective negotiation, customer relationship management, and professional correspondence. These competencies support informed decision-making, strengthen business networks, improve customer satisfaction, and enhance organisational effectiveness. Within entrepreneurship education, business communication competencies are regarded as transferable skills that complement technical and managerial competencies. While technical skills enable entrepreneurs to produce goods and services, communication competencies

facilitate the promotion, marketing, coordination, and delivery of those products and services. The integration of communication competencies into entrepreneurial practice therefore contributes to improved business performance and long-term enterprise sustainability.

For female undergraduate entrepreneurs, communication competencies are particularly important because they often manage business activities alongside academic responsibilities. The ability to communicate effectively with customers, negotiate with suppliers, market products through digital platforms, and establish professional relationships contributes significantly to business continuity and growth. The increasing adoption of digital technologies has further expanded the communication responsibilities of entrepreneurs, making competence in electronic communication an essential requirement for business success. Business communication competencies in this study are examined through four major dimensions, namely oral communication competency, interpersonal communication competency, negotiation competency, and digital communication competency. These dimensions represent communication practices that are frequently employed by undergraduate entrepreneurs in managing and expanding their businesses.

Female Undergraduate Entrepreneurship

Female undergraduate entrepreneurship refers to the establishment and management of business ventures by female students enrolled in higher education institutions while pursuing academic programmes. This form of entrepreneurship enables students to apply entrepreneurial knowledge in practical settings, generate income, acquire business experience, and develop competencies that enhance employability and self-reliance. In Nigeria, the growing emphasis on entrepreneurship education has encouraged many female undergraduates to engage in income-generating activities such as fashion design, catering, event planning, hairdressing, cosmetics, online retailing, digital marketing, photography, and other service-oriented enterprises.

The participation of female undergraduates in entrepreneurial activities has been influenced by several factors, including the increasing cost of education, limited employment opportunities after graduation, technological advancement, and institutional initiatives promoting entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education programmes offered in tertiary institutions have also contributed to developing entrepreneurial awareness and encouraging students to establish small businesses before graduation. These businesses provide opportunities for skill acquisition, financial independence, innovation, and practical application of classroom learning.

Despite these opportunities, female undergraduate entrepreneurs encounter numerous challenges that may affect business performance. Common constraints include inadequate access to finance, limited managerial experience, poor market access, time management difficulties arising from academic commitments, insufficient business networks, and limited communication competencies. These challenges may reduce business growth and sustainability if appropriate entrepreneurial competencies are not developed. Business communication competencies constitute one of the critical competencies required by female undergraduate entrepreneurs. Effective communication enhances customer relations, facilitates business negotiations, supports digital marketing, strengthens networking activities, and improves collaboration with suppliers and other stakeholders. Female entrepreneurs who communicate professionally are generally better positioned to establish customer

confidence, maintain business relationships, and respond effectively to market demands. Consequently, communication competence has become an important factor influencing entrepreneurial success among undergraduate business owners.

Theoretical Framework

Communication Competence Theory

Communication Competence Theory, developed by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), provides a useful framework for explaining the relationship between business communication competencies and entrepreneurial performance. The theory maintains that communication competence is demonstrated through the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in different situations. It emphasizes that successful communication is achieved through a combination of communication knowledge, communication skills, and the motivation to communicate. These elements enable individuals to interact successfully with others and accomplish intended objectives. Communication knowledge refers to an individual's understanding of communication principles, the nature of different audiences, and the selection of suitable communication strategies. Communication skills involve the practical application of verbal, written, listening, interpersonal, presentation, and negotiation abilities during interactions. Communication motivation reflects the willingness and confidence to initiate and sustain communication in various social and business situations. The theory argues that these dimensions operate collectively to determine an individual's level of communication competence. Within the entrepreneurial context, communication competence is regarded as an important factor that supports effective business operations. Entrepreneurs are required to communicate with customers, suppliers, employees, investors, and other stakeholders on a regular basis. The ability to convey information clearly, negotiate favourable agreements, manage customer relationships, resolve conflicts, and promote products or services contributes to the smooth operation and growth of business enterprises. Effective communication also facilitates networking, collaboration, and access to business opportunities, all of which are important for entrepreneurial success.

The present study draws on Communication Competence Theory because it offers a logical explanation of how business communication competencies may influence entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo City, Ondo State, Nigeria. Female undergraduate entrepreneurs often combine academic activities with business operations, making effective communication essential for coordinating business activities, interacting with customers, maintaining professional relationships, and responding to changing market conditions. Competencies such as oral communication, written communication, active listening, interpersonal communication, negotiation, presentation, and digital communication are expected to support effective business management and improve business outcomes. Entrepreneurial performance in this study is reflected through indicators such as business growth, customer satisfaction, customer retention, profitability, market expansion, and business sustainability. Communication Competence Theory suggests that entrepreneurs who possess stronger communication competencies are better positioned to establish productive business relationships, attract and retain customers, negotiate successfully, and adapt to the demands of competitive business environments. These capabilities are likely to enhance the overall performance of their

enterprises. The theory therefore provides an appropriate foundation for this study by explaining the expected relationship between business communication competencies and entrepreneurial performance. It supports the assumption that improved communication competencies contribute positively to the effectiveness and sustainability of entrepreneurial activities among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in the selected tertiary institutions. The theory further reinforces the importance of developing communication competencies as an integral component of entrepreneurship education aimed at improving business performance and long-term entrepreneurial success.

Research Gap

Existing literature demonstrates that entrepreneurial competencies contribute significantly to enterprise performance. However, most previous studies have examined entrepreneurial competence from broad perspectives without giving adequate attention to business communication competencies as independent predictors of entrepreneurial performance. Studies that specifically investigate communication competence have largely focused on organisational communication, leadership effectiveness, customer relations, or small and medium-scale enterprises. In addition, many available studies were conducted outside the context of undergraduate entrepreneurship or focused on entrepreneurs operating established businesses. Consequently, empirical evidence relating to female undergraduate entrepreneurs in Nigerian tertiary institutions remains limited. There is also limited evidence on the combined influence of oral communication, interpersonal communication, negotiation competency, and digital communication competency on entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in Ondo State. This study addresses these identified gaps by investigating business communication competencies as predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence that will support curriculum development, entrepreneurship education, policy formulation, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving entrepreneurial success among female undergraduates.

RESULTS

Research Question One

To what extent does oral communication competency influence the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Ratings on Oral Communication Competency

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I communicate business information clearly to customers.	3.48	0.58	Agree
2	I confidently explain the features of my products or services.	3.42	0.61	Agree
3	I respond appropriately to customers' questions during business transactions.	3.37	0.65	Agree
4	My communication encourages customers to patronize my business.	3.31	0.69	Agree
5	I express business ideas confidently when interacting with suppliers.	3.40	0.60	Agree
6	My oral communication has improved customer satisfaction.	3.45	0.57	Agree
	Grand Mean		3.41	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results in Table 1 indicate a grand mean of 3.41, which exceeds the criterion mean of 2.50. This suggests that oral communication competency contributes positively to the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of interpersonal communication competency on the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Ratings on Interpersonal Communication Competency

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I maintain cordial relationships with my customers.	3.52	0.56	Agree
2	I listen attentively to customer complaints.	3.39	0.63	Agree
3	I establish trust with customers through effective interaction.	3.47	0.59	Agree
4	I resolve misunderstandings professionally.	3.36	0.66	Agree
5	My interpersonal skills encourage repeat patronage.	3.43	0.61	Agree
6	I build lasting relationships with suppliers and business partners.	3.38	0.64	Agree
	Grand Mean		3.43	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings indicate that interpersonal communication competency positively influences entrepreneurial performance, as reflected by the grand mean of 3.43.

Research Question Three

To what extent does negotiation competency influence the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Ratings on Negotiation Competency

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I negotiate favourable prices with suppliers.	3.34	0.67	Agree
2	I negotiate effectively with customers.	3.29	0.71	Agree
3	Negotiation improves my business profitability.	3.38	0.65	Agree
4	I resolve business disagreements through negotiation.	3.35	0.63	Agree
5	Negotiation has strengthened my business relationships.	3.41	0.60	Agree
6	My negotiation skills contribute to business growth.	3.46	0.58	Agree
	Grand Mean		3.37	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results reveal that negotiation competency contributes positively to entrepreneurial performance, with a grand mean of 3.37.

Research Question Four

How does digital communication competency influence the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Ratings on Digital Communication Competency

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I use social media to promote my products and services.	3.63	0.52	Agree
2	I communicate regularly with customers through digital platforms.	3.51	0.58	Agree
3	Digital communication has increased my customer base.	3.47	0.61	Agree
4	I respond promptly to customers' online enquiries.	3.44	0.62	Agree
5	Digital communication has improved my sales.	3.39	0.66	Agree
6	I effectively utilise digital platforms to manage my business.	3.56	0.54	Agree
	Grand Mean		3.50	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings indicate that digital communication competency exerts a positive influence on entrepreneurial performance, with a grand mean of 3.50, the highest among the communication competency dimensions examined.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Oral communication competency has no significant relationship with entrepreneurial performance.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Oral Communication Competency and Entrepreneurial Performance

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Oral Communication Competency	60	0.648	0.000	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Performance	60			

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Since $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant positive relationship between oral communication competency and entrepreneurial performance.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Interpersonal communication competency has no significant relationship with entrepreneurial performance.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation between Interpersonal Communication Competency and Entrepreneurial Performance

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Interpersonal Communication Competency	60	0.684	0.000	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Performance	60			

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The null hypothesis was rejected because $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Interpersonal communication competency demonstrated a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial performance.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Negotiation competency has no significant relationship with entrepreneurial performance.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation between Negotiation Competency and Entrepreneurial Performance

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Negotiation Competency	60	0.612	0.000	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Performance	60			

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between negotiation competency and entrepreneurial performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: Digital communication competency has no significant relationship with entrepreneurial performance.

Table 8: Pearson Correlation between Digital Communication Competency and Entrepreneurial Performance

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Digital Communication Competency	60	0.731	0.000	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Performance	60			

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The null hypothesis was rejected because $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Digital communication competency exhibited the strongest positive relationship with entrepreneurial performance among the four communication competency dimensions investigated.

Summary of Findings

The study established that:

1. Oral communication competency positively influenced the entrepreneurial performance of female undergraduate entrepreneurs.
2. Interpersonal communication competency significantly enhanced customer relations and overall entrepreneurial performance.
3. Negotiation competency contributed significantly to business growth, customer retention, and profitability.
4. Digital communication competency emerged as the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial performance, highlighting the importance of digital platforms in contemporary entrepreneurial practice.

Overall, the findings indicate that business communication competencies constitute significant predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study indicate that business communication competencies are significant predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. The results demonstrate that oral communication competency, interpersonal communication competency, negotiation competency, and digital communication competency each contribute positively to business performance. These findings are consistent with the proposition of Communication Competence Theory, which maintains that effective communication enhances interpersonal interactions, facilitates goal attainment, and

improves performance in professional contexts. The study revealed that oral communication competency significantly influenced entrepreneurial performance. Respondents generally agreed that the ability to communicate business information clearly, explain products and services, respond appropriately to customer enquiries, and interact confidently with suppliers contributed positively to the performance of their businesses. The corresponding hypothesis also confirmed a statistically significant positive relationship between oral communication competency and entrepreneurial performance. This finding suggests that effective oral communication enhances customer confidence, facilitates business transactions, and strengthens business relationships. Entrepreneurs who communicate confidently are more likely to persuade customers, build credibility, and sustain customer patronage.

The finding agrees with previous studies that identified communication competence as an important determinant of entrepreneurial effectiveness. Earlier investigations have reported that entrepreneurs who possess effective oral communication skills demonstrate greater customer satisfaction, stronger business relationships, and improved enterprise growth. Effective oral communication therefore remains an essential competency for entrepreneurs operating in competitive business environments. The findings further revealed that interpersonal communication competency significantly predicted entrepreneurial performance. Respondents acknowledged that maintaining cordial relationships with customers, listening attentively, resolving complaints professionally, and establishing trust contributed to improved business performance. The positive correlation obtained between interpersonal communication competency and entrepreneurial performance indicates that entrepreneurs who maintain effective interpersonal relationships are more likely to retain customers and sustain business growth.

This finding supports earlier empirical evidence which reported that interpersonal communication strengthens customer loyalty, improves organisational reputation, and promotes business sustainability. Entrepreneurial activities depend largely on interpersonal interactions with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Consequently, entrepreneurs possessing effective interpersonal communication competencies are better positioned to establish productive business networks and improve enterprise performance. The results also established that negotiation competency exerted a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial performance. Respondents indicated that effective negotiation enhanced pricing decisions, supplier relationships, conflict resolution, and profitability. The hypothesis tested further confirmed a statistically significant relationship between negotiation competency and entrepreneurial performance. This finding suggests that negotiation competence enables entrepreneurs to secure favourable business agreements while maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with customers and suppliers.

The result corroborates previous studies which identified negotiation as one of the essential entrepreneurial competencies required for business sustainability. Effective negotiation contributes to efficient resource utilisation, improved customer satisfaction, reduced business conflicts, and increased profitability. Female undergraduate entrepreneurs who negotiate effectively are therefore more likely to achieve sustainable business outcomes. Digital communication competency recorded the highest mean score among the communication competency dimensions examined in the study. Respondents agreed that the effective utilisation of digital platforms for product promotion, customer

communication, online transactions, and business management contributed significantly to entrepreneurial performance. The corresponding hypothesis equally revealed the strongest positive correlation between digital communication competency and entrepreneurial performance.

The finding reflects the increasing importance of digital technologies in contemporary entrepreneurial practice. Digital communication platforms provide entrepreneurs with opportunities to expand market reach, promote products, strengthen customer engagement, and improve business visibility at relatively low operational costs. The finding is consistent with recent studies that emphasize the role of social media communication, electronic commerce, and digital marketing in enhancing entrepreneurial competitiveness and business growth. Overall, the findings indicate that business communication competencies constitute important entrepreneurial resources that contribute significantly to enterprise performance. Female undergraduate entrepreneurs, who demonstrate effective communication competencies are more likely to establish productive customer relationships, improve business operations, expand market opportunities, and sustain enterprise growth. The findings further reinforce the proposition of Communication Competence Theory that communication knowledge, communication skills, and communication motivation collectively influence successful performance outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study examined business communication competencies as predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in selected tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that oral communication competency, interpersonal communication competency, negotiation competency, and digital communication competency each exert significant positive influences on entrepreneurial performance. These competencies facilitate effective customer interaction, strengthen business relationships, improve negotiation outcomes, enhance digital marketing activities, and contribute to sustainable enterprise development. The study therefore concludes that communication competence constitutes an important entrepreneurial capability required for improving business performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs. As entrepreneurial activities continue to depend increasingly on effective communication and digital engagement, strengthening communication competencies should remain a priority within entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business Education departments should integrate practical business communication training into entrepreneurship curricula to strengthen the communication competencies of undergraduate entrepreneurs.
2. Tertiary institutions should organise regular workshops, seminars, and practical training programmes on oral communication, interpersonal communication, negotiation techniques, customer relationship management, and digital business communication.
3. Female undergraduate entrepreneurs should be encouraged to develop communication competencies through participation in entrepreneurship clubs, business networking events, mentorship programmes, and communication skills development activities.

4. Entrepreneurship Development Centres in tertiary institutions should incorporate digital communication, social media marketing, online customer engagement, and electronic commerce into entrepreneurship training programmes.
5. Government agencies and entrepreneurship support organisations should provide capacity-building programmes focusing on communication competence as an essential entrepreneurial skill for enterprise growth and sustainability.
6. Business educators should adopt experiential teaching approaches that provide students with opportunities to practise communication, negotiation, customer service, and presentation skills in simulated and real business environments.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to existing literature by demonstrating that business communication competencies are significant predictors of entrepreneurial performance among female undergraduate entrepreneurs in tertiary institutions. It further provides empirical evidence on the relative contributions of oral communication, interpersonal communication, negotiation competency, and digital communication competency to entrepreneurial success. The findings also extend the application of Communication Competence Theory within entrepreneurship education by establishing communication competence as a strategic resource for improving enterprise performance among undergraduate entrepreneurs.

REFERENCES

- Abaci, N. I. (2022). Relationship between entrepreneurship perception and communication skills: A structural equation model. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 16(2), 112–126.
- Abosede, A. J., Adebayo, O. S., & Oladele, A. O. (2023). Entrepreneurship, inclusive growth and poverty reduction in Nigeria. *Journal of Economy*, 12(1), 1-10.
- Ali, M., Ahmad, N., & Khan, S. (2021). Entrepreneurial competencies and business performance among women-owned enterprises. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 24(5), 1–15.
- Audretsch, D. B., & Belitski, M. (2022). A new role for entrepreneurship in economic development. *Small Business Economics*, 59(3), 1021–1038.
- Bauman, A., & Lucy, C. (2021). Enhancing entrepreneurial education: Developing competencies for success. *International Journal of Management Education*, 19(1), 100293.
- Bernadó, E., & Bratzke, F. (2024). Revisiting EntreComp through a systematic literature review of entrepreneurial competences: Implications for entrepreneurship education and future research. *International Journal of Management Education*, 22(3), Article 101010.
- Chen, Y., Maidin, S. S., Tsegnyu, S., Tihamiyu, K. A., Ogbonne, I. P., Yare, D. M., & Ogiri, H. K. (2023). Developing and evaluating the impact of a small group communication programme in improving entrepreneurial competence and economic self-efficacy. *PLOS ONE*, 18(11), e0292640.
- Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. R. (2014). Online entrepreneurial communication: Mitigating uncertainty and increasing differentiation through Twitter. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 29(4), 565–583.

- Garcia, M., & Martinez, P. (2022). Communication competence and entrepreneurial success among youth-owned enterprises. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 29(4), 614–629.
- Ibrahim, A., & Yusuf, M. (2021). Communication skills and entrepreneurial success among university student entrepreneurs in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 8(2), 88–101.
- Kaiser, M., & Kuckertz, A. (2024). Bibliometrically mapping the research field of entrepreneurial communication: Where we stand and where we need to go. *Management Review Quarterly*, 74, 2087–2120. doi-org.
- Kokkonen, L., & Koponen, J. (2020). Entrepreneurs' interpersonal communication competence in networking. *Prologi*, 16(1), 8–25.
- McGloin, R., Saxton, A., Rao, A., Hintz, E., Coletti, A., Hamlin, E., Turner, M., & Mathieu, J. (2024). Examining the importance of developing entrepreneurial communication skills in accelerator programs: A focus group-based approach. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, 7(4), 468–493. <https://doi.org/10.1177/25151274231183382>.
- Mensah, E., & Boateng, K. (2024). Communication competence and entrepreneurial resilience among women-owned enterprises in Ghana. *African Journal of Business Management*, 18(2), 65–79.
- Mis Buscà, N., Manresa, A., & Buil-Fabregà, M. (2026). Mapping communication skills within entrepreneurial competence: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Management Education*, 24(2), Article 101413. , 24(2), 101413. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2026.101413>.
- Nwosu, C., & Eze, P. (2024). Digital communication practices and entrepreneurial performance among student entrepreneurs in South-East Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary Entrepreneurship*, 6(1), 41–57.
- Ogunleye, A., & Adeyemi, T. (2023). Interpersonal communication and business performance among women-owned micro-enterprises in South-West Nigeria. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Studies*, 11(3), 52–67.
- Rahman, N., Karim, S., & Hassan, R. (2023). Entrepreneurial competencies and business performance among female entrepreneurs in Malaysia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 15(4), 732–750.
- Shin, C., & Fu, J. S. (2024). Looking back, moving forward: A systematic review of entrepreneurship studies in communication research. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 61(3), 861–889. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884241255906>.
- Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (1984). *Interpersonal communication competence*. Sage Publications.
- Tittel, A., & Terzidis, O. (2020). Entrepreneurial competences revised: Developing a consolidated and categorized list of entrepreneurial competences. *Entrepreneurship Education*, 3(1), 1–35.
- World Bank. (2022). *World Development Report 2022: Finance for an equitable recovery*. World Bank.