

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCE AND PERFORMANCE OF PLASTIC MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Okeke, Amaka Ukamaka PhD
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka
au.okeke@unizik.edu.ng
&
Anaehobi, Chimeremma Ebuka
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka
Mariosalazar360@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study determined the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of plastic manufacturing industries in Anambra state. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which allows for effective statistical analysis without manipulating variables. The population comprised 1,648 employees from 15 selected plastic manufacturing firms across Anambra State. Using Borg and Gall's (1973) formula, a sample size of 321 was determined and proportionally distributed across the firms. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale, while secondary data were sourced from textbooks, journals, and online databases. To ensure validity, experts in business administration reviewed the questionnaire. Reliability was confirmed through a pilot test and Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded coefficients ranging from 0.71 to 0.92 across the constructs. Data analysis involved both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics, with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation used to test hypotheses at a 5% significance level. The findings revealed that: entrepreneurial leadership styles have a positive relation to job satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra state ($r = 0.847$, at $p .000 < 0.05$); there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra state ($r = 0.813$, at $p .000 < 0.05$). It was recommended that Government agencies, industry associations and educational institutions should collaborate to design and implement structured training programs focused on developing core entrepreneurial competencies.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Competencies, Firm Performance, Entrepreneurial Leadership Style, Employees' Job Satisfaction, Entrepreneurial Innovativeness

1. INTRODUCTION

The manufacturing sector of any economy worldwide is reputed to be the engine of growth and a catalyst for sustainable transformation and national development. This is because of its enormous potentials as a tool for creating wealth, generating employment, contributing to the country's Gross Domestic Product as well as alleviating poverty among the citizenry (Unegbu & Ugwunna, 2024; Okoli et al, 2023; Nuel-Okoli & Okoli, 2024). An increasing inefficiency in the manufacturing process triggers higher production cost. It often degenerates from wrecked machines, low morale of employees, as well as a dysfunctional industrial structure. The consequence of such upsurge in production cost is high product prices and possible shrinkage in the sales volume of the firm. To mitigate the menace of manufacturing inefficiency, it therefore becomes germane for firms to enhance their manufacturing processes efficiency (Johnson 2019).

Furthermore, in today's business environment that the manufacturing firms find themselves in, it is full of frequent changes like increase in globalization as well as knowledge-oriented environment that affects their success (Ezu, Jeff-Anyeneh & Adaora, 2020). To be more specific, the modern business environment is increasingly volatile and uncertain, making it inherently risky for entrepreneurs. However, entrepreneurial competence—such as strategic thinking, innovation, and adaptability—is essential for navigating these challenges and ensuring business success (Nwafor & Nworie, 2025). Therefore, the survival and performance of these manufacturing firms is dependent upon their capabilities in the development of entrepreneurial competencies that can meet up with today's business environmental changes. In this present era, entrepreneurial competency has become an important resource to improving the performance of the organization which needs to be appropriately managed with the application of the right tools. Competencies are touted as problem solving tools deployed by managers and employees to cope with the environment and achieve enterprise goals. Scholars have long agreed that entrepreneurial competence amplifies profitability, growth and overall business performance (Solevik, 2019), which leads to economic development. The competencies of entrepreneurs are one of the significant determining factors for the birth, success and survival or failure of manufacturing business ventures.

Performance is one of the most significant dependent variables for researchers concerned with almost all the areas of business and management, because it explains how well an entrepreneur is doing (Skaf et al., 2024). Organizational performance has been the most important goal as well as issue facing all organizations, be it a profit or non-profit, small or large as well as private or public organizations. This has made organizational performance a recurrent concept in management as well as of immense interest to both academic scholars and practicing managers (Evwierhurmoma & Oga, 2020). Generally, individual goals set by manufacturing industries in Anambra State can only be achieved when they improve on trainings, technology, leadership and energy supply (Ugochukwu & Okafor 2016). Leadership, in simple terms, is the ability to guide, motivate and push/influence others to achieve common goals. In most cases, a leader often has a vision, sets a goal(s), motivates their team and makes decisions to drive collective success. Adopting the right style of leadership helps executive managers to establish time-tested relationships, count-on and respect, involve and motivate their subordinates and ensure a conducive work environment. On the other hand, engaging the wrong and unpopular style of leadership may result to dissatisfied, disengaged or unmotivated employees and at the end of the day result to high labour turnover. Similarly, executive managers who practice a style of leadership that is strange against the ethos of their organizations are unlikely to be successful.

Innovation is an application of technological, institutional, human resources and discoveries of productive processes, resulting in new practices, products, markets into institutions and organizations that need organizational improvement or performance in terms of sales, profitability and market shares (Abdilah, Hassan, & Muhamed, 2017). Innovation is a key success factor to the existence of a typical SME. Innovation springs from the increasing competition in the business environment; amid the increasing competition and technological growth noticed in the business environment (Okoli et al, 2024). Innovation in business means novelty, new things being done, or old things being done in new ways to increase the performance in terms of sales, profitability and market shares in an organization (Nworie, Onochie & Nwakoby, 2025). It is therefore an individualized phenomenon with broader outcomes when applied in entrepreneurship. The manufacturing firms in Anambra state are faced with many challenges. One of such major challenges is declining trend in innovative activities and a high rate of attrition. This is despite the fact that they are an important factor in

the attainment of the vision of the government of Anambra state. The manufacturing sector can facilitate the achievement of the state's objective through the introduction of novel products or by significantly improving the existing products with respect to their characteristics or intended uses. If such failures are not checked, they may lead to lowering of GDP due to low productivity and consequently low sales turnover and profit margins for many firms thus resulting to poor performance.

However, organizations in different sectors of the Nigerian economy continue to record high cases of misappropriation, embezzlement, immoral and unethical practices, gratifications, high labour turnover, inability to meet basic required obligations, and employees' dissatisfaction, which have further resulted in poor staff performance, absence of motivation, poor growth and development of the institutions and forced some to relocate to neighbouring countries: This has been traced to private and public establishments' inability to raise a crop of time-tested, heroic and authentic leaders (Igbaekemen, 2014; Ojokuku, Odetayo & Sajuyigbe, 2012; Ukaidi, 2016). Leadership vacuum has been noticed and confirmed in every sphere of the Nigerian nation and there is desperate need for competent and principled leaders across the Nigerian sectors (Igbaekemen, 2014; Ukaidi, 2016). These controversies in opinion and empirical findings on the entrepreneurial competency and the performance of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State poses serious concern and necessitate further studies. The question this research seeks to answer will then be: - what is the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on performance of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Entrepreneurial Competency

Competency is defined as the underlying characteristic of a person that is causally linked to a higher job performance (Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014). Competency entails a set of related knowledge, attributes and skills that give an individual the capability to perform an activity or task within a particular function or job (Wong, 2020). Competency can be defined to comprise three main features: knowledge, skills and traits (Ramdhan & Ridwan, 2023). In other words, competencies mean a cluster of related knowledge, skills, attitudes and characteristics which have a substantial impact and improve a person's job. Competencies can be developed through research, training and development. Therefore, entrepreneurial competencies are sets of qualities or constellations associated with the successful operation of a business (Hammoda, 2024).

Competencies as the characteristics of entrepreneurs that differentiate excellent from average or poor entrepreneurial performance are a cluster of knowledge, behaviours, skills and abilities (Wu et al., 2011). There is need for the understanding of the significance of entrepreneurial competencies more especially in the developing economies because entrepreneurs' competencies are vital for business survival, performance and success (Tehseen & Ramayah, 2015). However, the measurement of entrepreneurial competencies varies depending on the context, prediction and assumption. In simple terms, a competence is a combination of body of knowledge, set of skills and cluster of appropriate motives/traits that an individual possesses to perform a given task.

Entrepreneurship competencies combine creativity, a sense of self confidence, problem-solving, the ability to marshal resources, ability to identify opportunity, establishing entrepreneurial networks and technological knowledge (Merung, Sofyan & Sudirman, 2024). Entrepreneurial competencies and Entrepreneurial mindset have continuously played a considerable role in the enhancement of businesses (Asenge & Agwa, 2018). Every opportunity

and successful performance of each role and function has a competence requirement which includes knowledge or know-how, the skills, persistence, initiative, efficiency orientation which may affect the performance of small and medium enterprises. Most significant entrepreneurial competencies, includes opportunity & innovation, relational, conceptual, commitment, strategy, organizing, and capability of managing resources (Jemal 2020).

Entrepreneurial Leadership Style

There are as many definitions of leadership as those who have ever defined the concept. Numerous definitions are made from the aspect of leading followers to obtain a specific success pointing diverse aspects. Furthermore, leadership has been defined as the procedure of influencing a person or a group in conducting activities towards the attainment of a common goal (Gina, Maria & Henry, 2018). Additionally, leadership is considered an interpersonal plan in which a leader exerts efforts to find followers' potential needs and gratifies them. Therefore, the aims of the organization can be achieved through the process of a leader influencing his/her followers (Gina, Maria & Henry, 2018). Leadership is a set of perspectives that helps improve the propensity and behaviors of others in order to meet shared group purposes and needs (Jabbar, 2019). As a matter of fact, leadership styles determine the goal, direction, and employee programs at any organization. These styles may be authoritarian, paternalistic, democratic, laissez fair, transactional, and transformational (Jabbar et al., 2020). The authoritarian style refers to the exercise of strict control over the personnel in order to protect the rules of the organization. The paternalistic style highlights the supportive role among the employees and the leader plays the role of a "father" in a big family (Prameswari et al., 2020). Leadership style is defined as the pattern of behaviors displayed by leaders during their work with and through others (Domfeh, Obuobisa-Darko & Asare, 2016). Leadership style can be viewed as the pattern of interactions between leaders and subordinates (Nam & Park, 2019). Transformational leadership is the ability to motivate and to encourage intellectual stimulation through inspiration (Njiinu, 2017) further defined transformational leadership style as the provision of guidance through individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. Transformational leaders fundamentally change the values, goals, and aspirations of followers who adopt the leader's values and, in the end, choose to perform their work, because it is consistent with the values they acquired and not because they expect to be rewarded (Nugroho et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial Innovativeness

An overarching firm-wide innovation capability structure, referred to as 'innovativeness', is now regarded as the defining factor in the long-term survival of an organization, even though innovation is viewed as a strategic competence of an organization and as one of the most vital factors that empowers firms to retain their competitive position (Borocki, et al, 2013). Innovation in business means novelty, new things being done, or old things being done in new ways to increase the performance in terms of sales, profitability and market shares in an organization (Okoli et al, 2023). In fact, the long-term survival of firms depends more on their overall strategic-level innovativeness and less on the actual innovations themselves. Thus, more than ever before, firms must exploit their innovativeness to develop either new businesses or business models successfully, to confront the challenges of the ever dynamic and turbulent business environment (Nworie, et al, 2025).

Similarly, technological progress (of countries, nations, or regions) stems from the build-up of innovative activities. For this reason, firm innovativeness has become an issue of major importance in the quest to produce companies that are more creative, efficient, competitive and, most importantly, healthy in the long term. Given the importance of innovativeness in the

modern economy, firms are continuously looking for ways to use it for the effective management of innovations. Understanding the processes that lead to innovativeness is crucial to academia, industry (Boly, Morela, Assielou, & Camargo, 2014), and policymakers alike, and thus the assessment of innovativeness at both the firm and the level of the economy has become necessary. This is because, when firms understand their innovativeness process, they will be able to manage it and so increase their return on investment in innovation (Debreczeny, Uwe-Meyers, Schwartz, & Katsikis 2016). Innovation is an important corporate strategy. Many scholars have defined it as the adoption of new concepts or behaviour. It can be the introduction of new product, service, technology, or a new management approach. The positive effect of innovation on performance has been proven right in a significant number of empirical studies. For an organization to survive in an uncertain and competitive environment, it has to value various types of innovation to survive and to grow (Li, 2010). Every enterprise must be able to develop a unique and innovative strategy to improve its business performance and sustain competitive advantage.

Performance

In today's dynamic business environment, an organization must stay competitive by closely scrutinizing and understanding business performance (Nworie, Odah & Nworie, 2024). Through the middle of 90's, firms have understood the significance of monitoring the production process by exploiting financial and non-financial performance perspectives. Measurement has been recognized as a crucial element to improve business performance (Zairi, 2012). There is various and different explanation of performance in management literature, but the general definition of performance is the accumulated results of all work activities in the organization. Firms are very complex systems that classical financial performance systems such as return on investment, sales growth, profitability, are not adequate to measure performance.

Performance is one of the most significant dependent variables for researchers concerned with almost all the areas of business and management, because it explains how well an entrepreneur is doing (Aminu & Sharif, 2015). Although there is not most accepted definition of performance, it's always depended on perspectives of the person defining it. Performance of manufacturing industry has been studied by some researchers in several literature and they concentrate majorly on the causes of performance and how it can be maintained (Pollack, Rutherford, Seers, Coy & Hanson, 2016). Entrepreneurial performance is defined as the profit growth made by the entrepreneur (Ahmad, 2010). Financial and non-financial measures are both used to evaluate performance. Meanwhile, some researchers tried to define performance in terms of turnover, growth and sustainability. Hafeez, Sheriff, and Rogo (2017) asserted in their research that performance is the result of business organization activities and can be measured by its limited resources. They view performance as the result of activities on scarce resources. According to Eniola and Entabang (2015) performance can be defined as a company's ability to produce acceptable actions and outcomes.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a combination of physiological and psychological factors that make an employee feel satisfied in his/her job. In reality, job satisfaction is identifying the effective directions of individuals about their role in the organization. Job satisfaction also refers to a set of positive and negative feelings, attitudes and beliefs that employees have about their job. Additionally, it is an inner feeling linked with internal and external motivations (Chukwura, 2017) this internal feeling is considered an underlying principle in human resources and has various roles within an organization. Other studies defined job satisfaction as the feeling of

enjoyment originating from performing a job and the motivations related to an organization (CUBAY, 2020). In other words, job satisfaction is the main internal feeling created by numerous factors found in the workplace. This basic human need is identified as an individual's feeling about his/her work and the related environment (David & Afnan, 2017).

Job satisfaction is a kind of organizational behavior illustrating various reactions toward a particular job. It obtains positive and negative energies existing in personal and social life; because both depend on the amount of satisfaction a person has (Fayzhall et al., 2020). Gina and Henry (2018) reported that work organizations should become a great social system that provides support to human resources, because these resources have a noticeable role in achieving an organization's goals. Furthermore, considerable attention should be given to employee satisfaction, because this basic human need is a key variable that can affect organizational performance. In addition, job satisfaction is a known factor in the emergence of behavioral organization and demonstrates employees' inner feelings toward their work (Baxi & Atre, 2024). Thus, increasing or decreasing this fundamental need has a direct effect on organizational outcome.

Customer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment that result from comparing a product or service's perceived performance (or outcome) to expectations (Hill & Brierley, 2017). Consumers can experience one of three levels of general satisfaction, namely if the performance is below expectations, consumers will feel disappointed but if the performance is in accordance with customer expectations will feel satisfied and if the performance can exceed expectations, the customer will feel very satisfied, happy or happy (Tahir, Adnan & Saeed, 2024). Consumer satisfaction is the level of consumer feelings after comparing what is received and what is expected. In addition, consumer satisfaction is an emotional response to experiences related to certain products or services purchased, retail outlets, or even behavioural patterns (such as shopping behaviour and buyer behaviour), as well as market behaviour (Ekka & Bhardwaj, 2024). Emotional responses are triggered by a cognitive evaluation process that compares perceptions (or beliefs) of certain objects, actions or conditions with individual values (or needs, wants and desires).

Based on some of the definitions of customer satisfaction above, it can be concluded that customer satisfaction concerns the components of expectation satisfaction (expectations and perceived performance/results). More specifically, customer satisfaction means the extent to which the perceived quality of the product meets customer expectations (Ifedi et al., 2024). Customer satisfaction has been one of the top tools for a successful business. Customer satisfaction is incredibly important for growing a sustainable business in an extensively competitive environment (Oktaviani, 2024). Marketers are becoming more aware that it is more cost effective to make sure customers never get on the exit path to competitors in the first place and are implementing retention strategies (preemptive and proactive).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on competency theory by Richard E. Boyatzis in 1982. Competency theory by Boyatzis (1982) suggests that competency is a capacity that exists in a person that leads to behaviour that meets the job demands within the parameters of organizational environment, and that, in turn brings about desired results. Competency is composed of knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics which underlie effective or successful job performance. These competency attributes are observable and measurable and distinguish between superior and other performers. The business operation is considered to be very

complex in a competitive business environment which is constantly changing with fast technological advancements.

Based on the competency theory, entrepreneurial competencies are defined as underlying characteristics possessed by a person which result in new venture creation, survival, and, /or growth. These characteristics include generic and specific knowledge, motives, traits, self-images, social roles, and skills that may or may not be known to the person (Boyatzis, 1982). Some of these competencies are innate while others are acquired in the process of learning and training and development. The innate competencies involve traits, attitudes, self-image and social roles (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1990) and the acquired competencies involves components acquired at work or through theoretical or practical learning (skills, knowledge, and experience). In the context of a small business enterprise, these competencies are the characteristics of the entrepreneur, who owns and actively manages the business.

In the realm of entrepreneurship, competency theory suggests that certain skills and abilities are crucial for success. These competencies include things like innovativeness, leadership skills, and financial literacy amongst others. Entrepreneurs who possess these competencies are better equipped to identify market opportunities, develop innovative solutions, and navigate the ever-changing business landscape. When it comes to manufacturing firms, competency theory also plays a significant role. Competencies such as technical expertise, process optimization, and quality management are vital for achieving high-performance levels. Manufacturing firms that prioritize developing these competencies among their employees can enhance operational efficiency, product quality, and customer satisfaction. Moreover, competency theory emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and development. Both entrepreneurs and manufacturing firms can benefit from investing in training programs and professional development opportunities to enhance their competencies.

Empirical Review

Kamuri (2023) explored the relationship between entrepreneurial competency, innovation, and business performance in Kenya's leather industry. The objective was to assess whether entrepreneurial behavior drives innovation and performance within an industry ecosystem. A cross-sectional survey involving members of the Leather Articles Entrepreneurs Association and related actors was conducted using mixed sampling. Findings showed that entrepreneurial competency and innovation positively influenced performance, but innovation did not mediate the competency-performance relationship. Megawaty, Hendriadi, and Karta (2022) examined how entrepreneurial leadership influences SME performance. Using a grounded theory approach and meta-analysis, they synthesized findings from existing studies. Data were analyzed using Strauss and Corbin's systematic coding method. The study revealed that traits such as motivation, inspiration, responsibility, and a positive attitude among leaders were crucial to SME performance, though regional and sectoral variations were not deeply examined.

Amaonwu and Ifechukwu-Jacobs (2022) investigated how entrepreneurial competencies affect the performance of paint firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted, with data collected via questionnaires and analyzed using ANOVA and regression. The study found that innovativeness, risk-taking, and strategic thinking each had significant positive effects on profitability. Tri, Srifatmawati, and Afriyani (2022) conducted a quantitative study in Wajo Regency, Indonesia, to determine how entrepreneurial commitment and competence affect silk industry performance through competitiveness development. Data were collected via structured instruments, and findings indicated that while commitment and

competence significantly impacted business performance, only commitment influenced competitiveness development. Entrepreneurial competence did not significantly develop competitiveness.

Shittu and Isihola (2022) assessed the effect of entrepreneurial commitment on SME performance in Ikeja, Lagos. Using a cross-sectional survey and multi-stage sampling, 120 questionnaires were distributed with 114 valid responses. Descriptive statistics showed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial commitment and business performance. The study recommended stronger commitment by SME owners to improve outcomes. Sawaeen, Alenezi F., Ali, Khairul, and Alenezi Ahmad (2021) studied SMEs in Kuwait to explore how entrepreneurial leadership affects organizational performance, mediated by innovation management and moderated by learning orientation. A cross-sectional descriptive survey was employed. The results confirmed a strong positive impact of entrepreneurial leadership on performance, with innovation management acting as a mediator and learning orientation as a moderator.

Yakob, Rubayah, Hafizuddin-Syah, and Roslida (2021) investigated the role of financial literacy on SME performance in Malaysia. Using a structured questionnaire distributed to 200 SME owners, the study applied multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between financial literacy and performance, with financially literate managers showing better understanding of debt, savings, and investment. Tarurhor and Olatunji (2021) examined business dynamics and manufacturing firm performance in Delta State, Nigeria. A quasi-experimental design was used to survey 20 manufacturing firms. Data analysis showed that the rate of new firm entry did not determine market share, while poor innovation led to firm exits. Productivity was found to be crucial for firm survival and performance. Alamene and Sylva (2021) studied the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on the success of paint manufacturing SMEs in Rivers State. Using a cross-sectional survey of 20 firms, the study focused on strategic, operational, and learning competencies. Results showed that all three competencies positively influenced enterprise success, with operational competence being the strongest predictor.

Kabir, Muhammed, and Sunday (2021) explored how working capital affects business performance using a qualitative meta-review of empirical studies. Findings suggested that longer cash conversion cycles and debtor collection periods reduce performance, while longer creditor payment periods enhance profitability. Effective working capital management was deemed essential for improved performance. Nnamani, Agbo, and Umeh (2020) analyzed the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on profitability in Nigerian manufacturing firms using an ex-post facto design. Panel multiple regression showed a positive but statistically insignificant effect. The study recommended better alignment of operational strategies with profit planning, especially in areas of capital structure and asset management.

Onyenma (2020) studied innovativeness and its impact on SME performance in Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria. Using questionnaires from a sample of 186 SMEs, the analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between innovativeness and performance metrics such as customer satisfaction and business growth. The study recommended adoption of innovative practices for sustained performance. Olayemi, Okonji, Oghojafor, and Orekoya (2020) examined innovative behavior and performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using ANOVA. The study emphasized that innovativeness significantly influences firm performance and called for stronger innovation policy frameworks to promote economic growth and social welfare. Pepple and Enuoh (2020)

conducted a theoretical review on entrepreneurial competencies as essential skills for business performance. The review identified personal traits, risk-taking, creativity, and managerial competencies as vital for success. While lacking empirical data, the paper called for increased government investment in entrepreneurial education and training.

Abubakar and Hussaina (2020) proposed a framework to assess the effect of innovation on SME performance in Nigeria. Using simple random sampling and multiple regression analysis of questionnaire responses, the study found that innovation significantly boosts firm performance. However, the effect was positively mediated by access to finance and negatively moderated by firm size. Muneria and Otinga (2019) investigated how financial literacy and working capital management affect financial growth of small businesses in Kakamega County, Kenya. Using a descriptive survey design and regression analysis, the study concluded that financial literacy and efficient working capital management were both significant predictors of business financial growth. Ahmed and Kar (2018) studied the link between entrepreneurial competencies and SME performance in Ethiopia's manufacturing sector. Surveying SME owners in Kombolcha City, the results showed a positive relationship between competencies—particularly strategic and relationship competencies—and firm performance.

Diaw and Asare (2018) examined how innovation affects customer satisfaction and retention in Ghana's telecom industry. Using a quantitative approach and customer-based surveys, the findings showed that service and marketing innovations significantly contributed to both satisfaction and loyalty in a competitive telecom environment. Tola and Chimucheka (2018) focused on the role of entrepreneurial competencies in the performance of women entrepreneurs in South Africa. A quantitative study using self-administered questionnaires revealed that entrepreneurial competencies were crucial to the survival and performance of women-led small enterprises, with strong implications for training initiatives. Ezekiel, Omotayo, and Olaleke (2018) explored the impact of entrepreneurial commitment on business performance during economic recession in Nigeria. Using random sampling and data analysis through AMOS and SPSS, the study confirmed that commitment significantly influenced performance, with recession acting as a full mediator between the two variables.

Daragahi (2017) analyzed how innovation in product presentation influences customer satisfaction in Iran's cosmetics sector. Using simple random sampling of 387 customers, the study found that presentation-related innovations positively affected customer satisfaction, highlighting the importance of packaging and display in consumer preferences. Igwe and Kalu (2017) studied the relationship between service innovativeness and customer satisfaction in four-star hotels in Rivers State. Data from questionnaires analyzed through multiple regression revealed a strong, positive correlation. Both service process and outcome innovations were found to be effective tools for customer satisfaction. Gwadabe and Mohd (2017) examined the role of entrepreneurial competencies in SME performance in Nigeria's challenging economy. The study identified a positive and significant link between entrepreneurial competencies—especially in innovation, traits, and marketing—and firm performance, offering a competency framework for SMEs facing economic instability.

Onwuchekwa, Chukwuma, and Mgbemena (2017) assessed how entrepreneurial competencies contribute to entrepreneurship promotion in Anambra State. Using a descriptive survey and ANOVA analysis, the study found that beyond financial access, skills in time management, communication, marketing, and financial planning were critical for entrepreneurial success. Abdullah, Persna, Noorshella, and Raihani (2016) investigated the performance of informal micro-enterprises in Malaysia. Using variance-based structural equation modeling, the study

showed that risk-taking and self-efficacy significantly influenced performance, suggesting that development programs should target psychological empowerment for micro-entrepreneurs. Ulusoy, Kılıç, and Günday (2015) studied innovativeness in 184 Turkish manufacturing firms. Their framework linked internal and external innovation strategies to business growth. Findings emphasized that innovativeness must be embedded in corporate philosophy to strategically support long-term success.

Ezeanokwasa (2014) explored how human resource development impacts organizational performance in Anambra State. With 100 respondents and chi-square analysis, the study revealed that employee development significantly contributed to organizational profitability, recommending HR initiatives as strategic tools for growth. Ezejiofor, Olise, Otugo, and Ezenyilimba (2014) appraised the impact of entrepreneurship and SMEs on sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. Using statistical tools like Z-tests and standard deviation analysis, they concluded that SMEs significantly contribute to domestic capital formation and long-term economic development through investment mobilization.

Gap in Literature

Previous studies have introduced different views on entrepreneurial competency and how it affects the performance of manufacturing industry in different regions. Most studies have been focusing on developed countries where the idea of entrepreneurship and measuring SMEs performance is completely different from that of the developing and under-developed countries. Previous studies on entrepreneurial competency have mostly focused on SMEs. Scholars have highly concentrated on one or two dimensions of entrepreneurial competency while overlooking other dimensions of entrepreneurial competency especially financial literacy. There is very little or no known study on entrepreneurial competency and how it can affect the overall performance of manufacturing industries in developing countries like Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design to gather the research data. This design is cost effective compared to other designs and is suitable for statistical analysis and presentation. A descriptive survey design does not require any effort to be made in manipulating or controlling the variables. The main goal is to describe accurately the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The population of the study comprises all the employees of selected plastic firms in Anambra State. The following plastic firms were selected from the three commercial zones of Anambra State due to their accessibility, size, industry concentration and availability of data:

Table 1: Names of plastic firms and number of employees in Anambra state

S/N	Manufacturing Firms	Number of Employees
1.	Ocean Plastics Industries Ltd	240
2.	Dozy Plastics Industrial Layout, Onitsha,	125
3	Obike Basic Plastic Industries Ltd, Onitsha	110
4	Syndivel Plastic Industries Nigeria Ltd, Onitsha	122
5	Silas Polyplastic International Ltd, Onitsha	114
6	Reliable Steel & Plastic Industry Ltd, Onitsha,	89
7	Olympic Plastic Nigeria Ltd Onitsha,	92
8	Reliable Steel & Plastic Industry Ltd, Onitsha	105
9	Ano Plastic & Metal Industries Nigeria Ltd, Onitsha	87
10	Nakpo Plastic Container Ltd, Onitsha	142
11	Ezenwa Plastic Industries Nigeria Ltd, Onitsha	116
12	Double Diamond Plastic Company, Onitsha	80

13	Ubanese Plastic Industry Ltd, Onitsha	125
14	Ozalla Plastic Enterprises Ltd Awka	101
15	Millennium Plastics, Awka	64
	Total	1648

Sources: Nigeria Business Web & Nigeria Directory (2024)

The size of a sample should be a function of the variation in the population parameter under study and the estimated precision by the researcher. The statistical formular devised by Borg and Gall (1973) was employed to determine the sample size. The formular states thus:

$$n = (Zx)^2 eN$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population Figure

e = Margin error and this case= 0.05

Z = Confidence level and for 0.05 it is 1.964

N.B: The target population of plastic firms is 1648

Substituting the population variables of this study into the formula above, the sample size can be computed as follows:

$$n = (1.964)^2 0.05 \times 1648$$

$$n = 321.4$$

Therefore, the total sample size for the study is 321

This study used both Primary and Secondary sources of data. The primary source of data was gotten from mainly questionnaire while the secondary source of data was derived from journals, textbooks and internet. The instrument that was employed for data collection was questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The instrument was a 5-point Likert scale designed to elicit information on Compensation management and employee performance on selected plastic firms in Anambra State.

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results, and the degree to which the results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under study. The researcher consulted lecturers in the Department of Business Administration who were experts in item analysis and research methodology. They assessed the relevance of the contents in the questionnaire and gave their opinions and suggestions that were incorporated to improve the validity of the questionnaire.

To check reliability of the instrument, the questionnaires were pre-tested through pilot study to ascertain its effectiveness in soliciting information intended. The researcher used test-retest method in order to test reliability of the research instruments. Copies of the research instruments were retested on a sample of ten respondents who were representatives drawn from selected plastic firms in Anambra State. Thus, the study employed Cronbach's Alpha to verify the internal consistency of each construct in order to achieve organizational sustainability. The Cronbach's Alpha results shows that entrepreneurial leadership, entrepreneurial innovativeness, entrepreneurial financial literacy, employee knowledge accessibility, employee learning capacity, and entrepreneurial commitment recorded reliability coefficients of 0.79, 0.72, 0.90 and 0.74 while customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, working capital and employee engagement recorded reliability coefficients of 0.92, 0.71, 0.84 and 0.86 respectively. Based on the threshold, they are found to be reliable for the study.

Table 2 Reliability Test

S/No	Variables	Number of Items	Reliability Value
1	Entrepreneurial leadership style	6	0.79
2	Entrepreneurial Innovativeness	6	0.72
3	Entrepreneurial Financial Literacy	6	0.90
4	Entrepreneurial Commitment	6	0.74
5	Customer Satisfaction	5	0.92
6	Job Satisfaction	5	0.71
7	Working Capital	5	0.84
8	Employee Engagement	5	0.86

Source: SPSS Vision 23

In this study, data analysis was based on quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis based on descriptive statistics analysis and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics includes frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation was used to assess respondent's characteristics and present key findings of the study. For the inferential statistics and test of hypotheses, because of the way the hypotheses are structured, all hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. They were tested at a 5% level of significance. The decision rule is: Reject the null hypotheses if the coefficient is >5% and accept the alternate hypotheses.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Questionnaire Distribution Analysis

Table 3: Questionnaire Response Rate

ITEMS DISTRIBUTED	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Copies of the questionnaire distributed	321	100
Copies of the questionnaire Returned	300	100
Copies of valid questionnaire Returned	300	88.1
Copies of the questionnaire not returned	21	11.1
Total	300	100

A total of three hundred and twenty-one (321) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the employees of the selected plastic firms. A total of three hundred (300) copies were retrieved from the respondents. The researcher worked with the three hundred (300) copies retrieved. The section covers the demographic features of the respondents and Section B analyzed the data relevant to research questions.

Presentation of Data Relevant to the Research Questions

Here, data relevant in answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses were presented in tables as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the influence of entrepreneurial leadership style on employees' job satisfaction of the plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State?

Table 4: Respondents Responses on The Influence of Leadership Style

Leadership Style		Percentage (%)				
S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	UND	D	SD
1	Respondent's opinion on our firm effectively communicates expectations on performance and gives guidance to employees in the firm	50	33	10	5	2
2	Respondent's view on our firm is adaptable and open to new ideas and perspectives of each employee that can improve performance	30	24	17	23	6
3	Respondent's opinion on whether our firm inspires employees to be innovative in thinking out best ways to improve overall performance and motivates them to achieve success	31	39	16	8	6
4	Respondent's view on whether management empowers employees to take ownership of their work and make decisions that are best for the overall performance of the firm	56	29	12	2	1
5	Respondent's view on our firm employs the best leadership style that suits best to the employees effectiveness	38	53	6	2	1
6	Respondent's view on whether our firm promotes collaboration and teamwork among team members which improves firm's productiveness	50	33	10	5	2

From the results, it was revealed that 50% of the respondents strongly agree that their firm effectively communicates expectations on performance and gives guidance to employees in the firm, 33% agree, 10% are neutral, 5% disagree while 2% of respondents disagree. It also shows that 30% of the respondents strongly agree that is adaptable and open to new ideas and perspectives of each employee that can improve performance, 24% agree, 17% are neutral, 23% disagree while 6% of respondents strongly disagree. Furthermore, 31% of the respondents agree that our firm inspires employees to be innovative in thinking out best ways to improve overall performance and motivates them to achieve success, 39% strongly agree, 16% are neutral, and 8% disagree while 6% of respondents strongly disagree. Also, 56% of the respondents strongly agree that management empowers employees to take ownership of their work and make decisions that are best for the overall performance of the firm, 29% agree, 12% are neutral, and 2% disagree while 1% of respondents strongly disagree. Moreover, it was revealed that 38% of the respondents strongly agree that the firm employs the best leadership style that suits best to the employees' effectiveness, 53% agree, 6% are neutral, and 2% disagree while 1% of respondents strongly disagree. Finally, greater percentage of 50% of respondents agree that the firm promotes collaboration and teamwork among team members which improves firm's productiveness, 33% strongly agree, 10% are neutral, 5% disagree while 2% of respondents strongly disagree.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of innovativeness on customer's satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State?

Table 5: Respondents Responses on The Influence of Innovativeness

Innovativeness		Percentage (%)				
S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	UND	D	SD
1	Respondent's view on our firm supports and values innovative thinking that are result-oriented	28	61	8	1	2
2	Respondent's view on our firm always adopts new ways of doing things or always ready to take risks in improving performance	67.2	29.6	1.6	0.6	1
3	Respondent's view on our firm always comes up with innovative ideas to improve performance in production and manufacturing	41.6	52.3	3	2.1	1
4	Respondent's view on our firm makes connections between trends in the technological environment and opportunities for optimization of firm's performance	28.3	61	8.6	1.6	0.5
5	Respondent's view on whether firm allows employees to take risks and try out new approaches to work to enhance the firm's performance	19.5	72.5	2.8	3	2.2
6	Respondent's view on our firm provides necessary resources and support to implement innovative strategies for better effectiveness and productivity.	47.7	45.6	4	2	0.7

The results reveals that 28%of the respondents strongly agree that firm supports and values innovative thinking that are result-oriented 61% agree, 8% are neutral, and 1% disagree while 2%of respondents strongly disagree. Furthermore, it showed that 67.2%of the respondents strongly agree firm always adopts new ways of doing things or always ready to take risks in improving performance. 29.6% agree, 1.6% are neutral, 0.6% disagree while 1.0% of respondents strongly disagree. Also,41.6%of the respondents strongly agree that firm always comes up with innovative ideas to improve performance in production and manufacturing,52.3% agree, 3%are neutral, 2.1% disagree while 1.0%of respondents strongly disagree. Additionally, the results revealed that 28.3%% of the respondents strongly agree that firm makes connections between trends in the technological environment and opportunities for optimization of firm's performance, 61% agree, 8.6% are neutral, 1.6% disagree while 0.5% of respondents strongly disagree. More so, greater percentages of 72.5% of respondents agree that firm allows employees to take risks and try out new approaches to work to enhance the firm's performance, 19.5% strongly agree, 2.8 % are neutral, 3% disagree while 2.2%of respondents strongly disagree. Conclusively, 47.7% of the respondents strongly agree that firm provides necessary resources and support to implement innovative strategies for better effectiveness and productivity, 45.6% agree, 4% are neutral, 2% disagree while 0.7% of respondents strongly disagree.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀: Entrepreneurial leadership styles does not statistically relate to job satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State

Table 6: Result of Pearson product-moment correlation analysis between entrepreneurial leadership and job satisfaction

		Correlations	
Job Satisfaction		Job Satisfaction	Entrepreneurial Leadership
	Pearson Correlation	1	.847**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Entrepreneurial Leadership		Job Satisfaction	Entrepreneurial Leadership
	Pearson Correlation	.847 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Interpretations

The correlation in Table 6 shows that entrepreneurial leadership style statistically relates to job satisfaction of manufacturing industries in Anambra state. The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values reveal a strong positive and significant correlation between entrepreneurial leadership styles and job satisfaction, a correlation coefficient values ($r = 0.847$, at $p.000 < 0.05$). This implies that an increase in entrepreneurial leadership styles will increase employee job satisfaction of plastic firms in Anambra State. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that entrepreneurial leadership styles do not statistically relate to job satisfaction of manufacturing industries in Anambra State was rejected.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State.

Table 7: Result of Pearson product-moment correlation analysis between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction

		Correlations	
Customers Satisfaction		Customers Satisfaction	Entrepreneurial Innovativeness
	Pearson Correlation	1	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Entrepreneurial Innovativeness		Customers Satisfaction	Entrepreneurial Innovativeness
	Pearson Correlation	.813 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Interpretations

The correlation in Table 7 shows that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction of plastic manufacturing industries in Anambra State. The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values reveal a strong positive and significant correlation between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction ($r = 0.813$, at $p.000 < 0.05$). This implies that an increase in entrepreneurial innovativeness will increase customers' satisfaction. Based on the findings, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction of manufacturing industries in Anambra State.

Discussion of Research Findings

The result indicates that entrepreneurial leadership style has a strong positive relationship with employee job satisfaction in plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.847$ and $p = 0.000$, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the 5% level. This means that as the quality of entrepreneurial leadership improves—such as exhibiting vision, empowerment, proactiveness, and adaptability—employees tend to feel more satisfied with their jobs. Entrepreneurial leaders often promote participative decision-making, creativity, and a supportive working atmosphere, which can increase motivation and morale among workers. In the context of plastic manufacturing, where tasks may be repetitive or rigid, an inspiring leadership style may help employees feel more valued and engaged, translating into higher satisfaction levels. The strength of the relationship suggests that leadership behaviors are not just mildly important—they play a critical role in shaping how satisfied employees are within these firms. This finding aligns strongly with the study by Megawaty, Hendriadi, and Karta (2022) emphasized that entrepreneurial leadership is central to SME success, particularly because of its ability to mobilize internal resources and create a positive organizational climate. The finding is also consistent with the results from Sawaeen Alenezi, Fahad, Ali, and Alenezi (2021), which highlighted how entrepreneurial leadership indirectly boosts performance through innovation management and learning, creating a more engaging work environment that likely increases job satisfaction. Furthermore, Usman (2020) showed that strategic thinking and visionary leadership—both key components of entrepreneurial leadership—have a positive impact on performance outcomes, which include employee satisfaction. These empirical findings collectively validate the role of leadership as a critical competency that affects internal stakeholders, especially employees, in a manufacturing context.

The second finding demonstrates a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customer satisfaction, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.813$ and $p = 0.000$, indicating statistical significance at the 5% level. This suggests that as firms in the plastic manufacturing sector adopt more innovative practices—whether in product design, production methods, packaging, or delivery—customers perceive greater value and express higher satisfaction. In a competitive market like plastic manufacturing, where product differentiation can be minimal, innovation becomes a strategic tool for responding to customer needs more efficiently and distinctively. By introducing new product variations, improving quality, or customizing offerings, firms are better positioned to exceed customer expectations. This explains why customer satisfaction rises with increased innovativeness, as innovation often translates into better functionality, aesthetics, sustainability, or convenience—factors that heavily influence consumer loyalty and perception. This result is strongly supported by Onyenma (2020), who reported a positive and significant link between innovativeness and customer satisfaction in SMEs in Rivers and Bayelsa states. The study emphasized that firms adopting innovative practices achieved superior customer outcomes, including satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Diaw and Asare (2018) found that innovation significantly enhances customer satisfaction and retention in the telecommunications sector, implying that this effect is robust across industries. Abubakar and Hussaina (2020) also confirmed that innovation boosts performance outcomes, although they noted the role of mediators like finance. Further reinforcing this view, Amaonwu and Ifechukwu-Jacobs (2022) demonstrated that innovativeness significantly affects the profitability of manufacturing firms, a proxy for customer satisfaction and market acceptance. Additionally, Ulusoy, Kılıç, and Günday (2015) observed that innovativeness in manufacturing operations was key to firm growth and performance in Turkey, further validating the universal importance of innovation in satisfying external stakeholders, especially customers.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and performance of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra state. Data generated from the employees of selected plastic firms were tested using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. The findings of the study showed that entrepreneurial leadership styles is statistically related to job satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms; that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial innovativeness and customers' satisfaction of plastic manufacturing firms. Therefore, the study concluded that entrepreneurial competencies have a significant relationship with performance of plastic manufacturing firms in Anambra State.

Based on the results of the analysis and the conclusions made above, the following recommendation/policy dialogue was made:

1. Government agencies, industry associations and educational institutions should collaborate to design and implement structured training programs focused on developing core entrepreneurial competencies. These programs should be tailored to the specific needs of manufacturing firms and delivered through workshops, mentorships, etc.
2. Policymakers should improve access to credit facilities and financial services to plastic manufacturing entrepreneurs especially those operating informally. Support could include low-interest loans, grants and financial literacy programs with advisory services on business planning, marketing and compliance.

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