



THE IMPACT OF ACCOUNTING PRACTICES ON THE GROWTH OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES: ANALYSIS FROM CENTRAL ZONE OF TARABA STATE.

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ABSTRACT

Arguably for any Small and Medium scale Enterprises (SMEs) to be successful, owners of such businesses must possess appropriate skills and abilities to run the business. This paper therefore looks at the impact of accounting skills to entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises for sustainable performance and development in a developing nation like Nigeria using the central senatorial district of Taraba State as a focal point. The broad objectives of this paper are to ascertain if acquisition of accounting skills by SMEs operators have benefits that are accruable to the firms. The paper adopted the descriptive research design approach and data were generated from professionals and operators/owners of SMEs in the state through a fifteen point structured questionnaire. However, Data was analyzed using percentage analysis, the weighted mean, and the Z-test statistics. The hypotheses were tested using the Z-test for population proportion adopted at 5% level of significance under the two tailed test. The results showed that accounting skills acquired by owners and operators of SMEs in the state will enhance their economic status and businesses performance. The result also showed that accounting skills will enhance their business acumen and profitability. Based on the findings the paper concluded that, the acquisition of fundamental accounting skills by owners of small and medium scale enterprises is of utmost importance given the numerous contributions which are accruable to owners and operators of SMEs especially in developing nations. In line with the findings the paper recommended that, a massive and regular training of owners and operators of SMEs nationwide on the accounting and business skills.

Keywords: *Central Senatorial District, Sustainable Performance, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, Accounting Skills.*

INTRODUCTION

Okafor, (2018) posited that, the value of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in any economy cannot be overstated. In Nigeria and other countries, micro and small scale enterprises (MSEs) play vital roles in employment and revenue generation. It also leads to the process of industrialization, sustainable economic growth and development, encourages entrepreneurship and employment generation, reduces poverty and contributes to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), introduces innovation and entrepreneurship skills, Small businesses may not have as big resources as larger companies, yet survival is just as critical to economic development. However, there are tremendous increases in small and micro-scale businesses in Nigeria such as supermarkets, poultry farming, fish farming, animal feed production, kiosks, computer services, carpentry works, barbing and hairdressing salons, sachet water production, productions of soap, powder, pomade, and detergents, restaurants, drug shops, car wash, and the host of others. One common feature of SMEs is the daily provision of business operations for a long period of time. However, Akande (2011) posit that, the ability of SMEs operators/managers to acquire the essential bookkeeping and accounting knowledge may have a significant influence on the growth of the SMEs; and the ability to assess the level of growth made in the business operations.

Entrepreneurship started to gain ground in Nigeria as a result of the prevalence of our unemployed youths after leaving the school. Similarly, most graduates from the universities and Polytechnics, after their one year compulsory National Youth Services start searching for unavailable jobs. It is obvious that the government cannot employ all the graduate job seekers and the only way to tackle this problem is for individuals to seek alternative means by being self-reliance and be an employer of labor rather than be a job seeker through entrepreneurship, (Okoye and Emmanuel, 2017). In Nigeria for instance, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in collaboration with Federal and State Governments through the Bank of Industry, Microfinance banks, Centers for entrepreneurship developments, etc. established different training centers for those already in existing businesses as well as those starting up new businesses. Some of the areas mapped out for training are record keeping, financial management, book-keeping and accounting skills, preparation of financial reports, feasibility study, etc. as such SMEs owners/managers must acquire appropriate book-keeping and accounting knowledge or skills to

enable growth in their businesses. In a related development, financial management is the management of working capital, assets and other resources of the organization in such a way to achieve the enterprise' objectives. Kilonzo and Ouma (2020) views financial management to include working capital management, investment, finance, accounting information systems, financial reporting, and analyses. Poor management of finance, lack of accounting skills and practices can result to financial loss and, in the worst-case scenario, business failure. Therefore, it is against this background that this paper is design to look at the impact of accounting skills to entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises for sustainable performance and development in a developing nation like Nigeria using the central senatorial district of Taraba State as a focal point.

Problem Statement/Justification

However, despite the advantages of small and medium scale enterprises in some developing countries like Nigeria, there are still some challenges to their growth such as lack of accounting knowledge as justified by the study of (Amoako, 2014); lack of managerial accounting skills, technical skills, and improper decision making, careless or poor financial management. However, despite a recent effort by many scholars on this subject matter, there are limited empirical studies in Nigeria that have examined the examine the impact of accounting skills on sustainable entrepreneurial development for self-reliance with special reference to some selected small and medium scale enterprises in southern, taraba state. A number of the studies were focused on Digital Accounting and Entrepreneurship for example, studies of (Uche and Peter, 2013 Nwaigburu and Eneogwe, (2013); all examined the impact of Accounting Skills on entrepreneurship education for self-reliance and sustainable development. However most of the empirical evidence in Nigeria was studies from south-south state of Nigeria. Hence to the best of my knowledge non or only few studies on this specific subject matter were carried out in the North-Eastern states particularly the small and medium scale enterprises in Taraba State, this therefore establishes an important gap in the literature making the research of this type significant with a view of answering questions as to whether accounting skills has any significant impact on entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises for sustainable performance and development in a developing nation like Nigeria using the central senatorial district of Taraba State as a focal point.

Objectives of the Study

The Main objectives of the study are to examine the Impact of Accounting Practices on the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises using the central zone of Taraba state as a focal point. However, the study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives;

1. To ascertain the fundamental accounting skills needed by entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.
2. To determine the benefits accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

Research Questions:

In an attempt to achieve the above research objectives, this study intend to find answers to the following research questions

1. What are the fundamental accounting skills needed by entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state?
2. What are the benefits accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state?

Research Hypothesis:

In order to answer the research questions above and achieve the objectives of this study, the following hypotheses are hereby stated in the null form to guide the study:

Ho1:There is no any fundamental accounting skills needed by Entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

Ho2:There are no any significant benefits accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the paper critically reviews some of the literatures relating to the subject matter under consideration. This would be undertaken in order to provide a theoretical background and framework to the underpinning theories. The second part is the conceptual issues which intends to clarify some definitions relating to the area of study. The third part would be the empirical review/studies that were previously carried

out by other researchers on the subject matter. There is a table showing the proposed literature mapping. While the last part presents the theoretical framework that gives support to this work. Thus, from the review of the literature the researchers would be able to identify the existing gap in the literature, thereby directing the study toward filling this identified gap.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Under the conceptual underpinning the reviews will be done under the following sub-headings:

- (i) The Concept of Accounting Skills
- (ii) The concept of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMES)
- (iii) Accounting and Entrepreneurs
- (iv) Book-keeping and Accounting Knowledge of Operators and Growth of MSEs
- (v) Qualities and Skills for Entrepreneurial Success
- (vi) Efficient Financial Management practices and Growth of Micro and Small Enterprise
- (vii) Accounting Skills for Sustainable Development
- (viii) Link Between Entrepreneurship and Self Reliance
- (ix) Theoretical Consideration
- (x) Empirical Review.
- (xi) Summary of literature and Research Gap

The Concept of Accounting Practice/Skills

Ohuche, &Adenuga, (2014) sees accounting skills as the approaches established by top managers to record, classify, analyze and interpret financial transactions of an organization and with the objectives to achieve the firm's target. One of the advantages of accounting practices is to maintain efficiency in every business activities and to know if the business is growing or not. In Nigeria, the government through the policy of MSMEs 2014 revised made it compulsory for all business enterprises seeking financial assistance from any financial institutions in the country to undergo skills acquisition training where accounting practices such as financial management practices, investment portfolios, decision making etc. are taught. Similarly, individuals who see the importance of accounting practices to their business growth undergo training based on the private arrangement with the trainer

Similarly, Kilonzo, &Ouma, (2014) accounting practices are the adoption of all financial and non-financial methods for gathering and recording a business entity's day-to-day financial activities. Thus, SMSE accounting practices is defined as the method by which the whole financial activities relating to the enterprise are recorded and the rules and regulations observed. Examples of good accounting practices are:

- a) Maintenance of revenue and expenditure records,
- b) Keeping records of sales day books,
- c) Keeping records of purchases daybooks,
- d) Issuing bills to customers immediately goods are supplied to them,
- e) Keeping records of all classes of assets,
- f) Applying one method of depreciation on the assets,
- g) Paying suppliers invoices on the due dates, and
- h) Preparation of financial statements at the end of its accounting year etc.

The Concept of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMES)

There are no generally accepted definitions of micro and small scale enterprises worldwide. Each country has its definition due to the peculiar nature of MSEs in their respective environments. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Micro Small and Medium Enterprises MSMEs, (Kamyabi, & Devi, 2014). Akande, (2011) gave definition according to size, employees and asset base. He defined micro-enterprises as enterprises operated by financially deprived entrepreneurs with limited or no capacity for credits; less than N1.5 million asset base; and less than Ten (10) employees. It also defined small businesses as an enterprise with asset value less than N50 million but above N1.5 million; and employees between ten (10) and forty-nine(49). Furthermore, the United Kingdom (UK) see micro-enterprises as one with a maximum of nine (9) employees while small business as one with employees between ten and forty-nine (10-49). Micro-enterprises are defined in the United States as small businesses with nine (9) employees or fewer that were established with \$50,000 or less in start-up capital and do not have access to standard commercial financing. It defined a small business as those with fewer than 50 employees but more than nine (9) (Kilonzo, &Ouma 2014).Furthermore, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2020) classified micro-enterprise as a business enterprise employing one to five people, and small business as a company employing six to fifty people. The European Union has announced that the idea of micro and small enterprises would be standardized. Companies with less than 10

workers are classified as "Micro," whereas those with fewer than 50 employees are classified as "Small", (Mbogo, 2015).

According to Pavtar, (2013) the typical micro-enterprises are operated by family members and occasionally school dropouts. Some of the owners employ staffs who assist them in running the business on their behalf. They raise capital through family savings, borrowings, thrift and cooperatives, and the government through granting of free collateral low-interest loans. Most MSE operators operate for a longer period of time daily. Some undertake after-sales services and also adopt credit sales not only to retain their existing customers but also to capture larger market shares which lead to increase in revenue and ultimately growth.

Accounting and Entrepreneurs

Akande (2011), Posits that, although the MSMEs' entrepreneurs can manage their business efficiently, still, there are less knowledgeable about managing accounting and recording transactions of their daily business activities. Among the benefits of recording daily transactions and operations are that it will enable them to make better management and financial-related decisions, assist in preparing annual tax payments, and prepare the next planning for the business. Basic knowledge of bookkeeping is essential for small business owners and entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses. According to Hasbolah, Rosli, Hamzah, Omar, & Bhuiyan, (2021) SMEs need to assess the financial strength of their ventures to continue operations amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, these business managers were forced to explore new strategies to interrelate with customers and to streamline business transaction processes. This is because the post Covid-19 pandemic era has greatly affected businesses, accounting data is becoming increasingly important to enable entrepreneurs to see the ability of their businesses to continue transaction processes. Knowing too well that, the financial health of any business enterprise helps the SMEs and entrepreneurs in deciding what should be done through the financial crisis. In a similar vein, accounting skills, practices and system keep records of all transactions that normally deal with financial events that impact either positively or negatively on the consolidated financial position and performance of an economic entity (Munasinghe & Munasinghe, 2015). This is because the top management has a significant influence to determine and motivate the employees to use the system.

Efficient Financial Management practices and Growth of Micro and Small Enterprise

Pavtar, (2018) posit that acquisition, allocation, and control of financial resources are all parts of MSE financial management processes. It is used to guarantee that the organization's working capital, finances, debtors and creditors, assets, and depreciation are all managed efficiently. It might be viewed as effective working capital management in the organization, ensuring that no private cash is drawn upon business capital. In some cases, MSE owners source their capital from short-term loans or borrowings, etc. However, financial management is the backbone in ensuring the growth of small businesses. Once the finance has been sourced, it requires the involvement of technical skills or the involvement of well-trained/professional accountants which MSEs lack the resources to employ.

Accounting Skills for Sustainable Development

According to Onoh (2011) fundamental accounting skills are those competencies in basic accounting required by a person to function competently, confidently, and successfully in the process of carrying out one's function of recording daily business transactions. They include skills in book-keeping, purchasing and supply, bargaining, determining labour costs, simple budgeting, keeping of accurate receipts, sales records skills in keeping reliable records, sourcing for market outlets, work in progress records, credit purchases, invoices, cheque payments, keeping customers' records and goods inventory. Others are skills in good credit facility practices, operating the cash payment receipts, cash sales, prudent financial and working capital management.

Accounting provides information to a wide range of interest groups and ultimately shows how a business has been managed for a period-whether successfully managed or otherwise. It also provides information regarding the financial position of the firm. According to Osuala (2019) the knowledge of fundamental accounting skills are very imperative for sustainable business. The non-possession of these fundamental accounting skills by SMEs, therefore, constitutes a problem such that, the chances of survival of the business are slim and the probability of imminent failure/collapse become high. Hence every small and medium scale enterprises should strive to acquire and possess these fundamental skills.

Link between Entrepreneurship and Self Reliance

According to Medayese (2019), a self-reliant person is one who is self-employed, because self-employment is one of the keys to work out of poverty. The benefit of being self-reliant through entrepreneurship can never be over-emphasized because entrepreneurship is the backbone of many great and developed nations today, such as China, United States of America, Japan etc. Consequently, self-reliance cannot be achieved in an atmosphere where entrepreneurial activities are lacking; hence entrepreneurship is a strong acquisition programme that will help people of a country like Nigeria become better and greater.

Entrepreneurship which involves recognizing a business opportunity, mobilizing resources and persisting to exploit that opportunity is a necessary ingredient for self-employment. Employment creation and the boosting of income – opportunity are some of Nigeria's top challenges today. The Federal Government Policies and strategies are now being geared to encourage and support the private sectors in generating growth in self-employment through the introduction of entrepreneurship development. What it simply means is that if these government policies and strategies are properly implemented, our educational system will now produce graduates who will be job creators, rather than job seekers. Entrepreneurship prepares people to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities, and thus become self-Reliant.

Theoretical framework

Efficiency theory

Banton (2020) propounded Efficiency theory who argue that, a micro and small business owner is someone who starts and runs a business enterprise to achieve personal goals, and sees the enterprise as an extension of their own wants, goals, and personalities. In most cases, the overall objective is to make a steady profit to enable the business to grow. The growth of any business is normally achieved when the managers of such businesses are efficient in their performances. Efficiency as defined by (Banton, 2020) is a level of business activity that uses the fewest inputs to provide the most output. To accomplish a given result, it requires using less resources, such as human time and energy to produce a given quantity or quality of output. It is a measurable concept that is calculated by dividing total usable output by total input

Empirical Review

This section of the literature review critically examine the extant literature abounds with empirical studies on “The Impact of Accounting Practices on the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises” with findings either mixed or inconclusive so as to find the existing research gap and direct the study. The table below depicts the empirical literature mapping to actualize the objective of this research study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The paper adopted the descriptive research design approach and data were generated from professionals and operators/owners of SMEs in the state through a fifteen point structured questionnaire.

Description of study area:

The area for this research will be central Taraba state, Nigeria. The central region consists of four (4) local Government areas which includes Bali, Gashaka, Gassol, and Sardauna LGA's.

Population of the study

The population of the study would comprise of all registered and non-registered SMSEs in (4) four LGA in the central zone of Taraba State.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size of the Study

However, since the population cut across different local governments, this study would employ a proportional stratified random sampling technique to pick the required sample in form of a stratum. Thereafter a sample size of 284 staff was selected using Bill Godden sample size formula.

Sources and Method of Data Collection

The study would adopt a primary source of data collection. This would be achieved via the administration of designed questionnaires to obtain and collate data required for this study.

Technique of Data Analysis

In this study, hypotheses previously formulated were tested using the Z-test for population proportion adopted at 5% level of significance under the two tailed test.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistical analysis

The results obtained from the survey and the descriptive analyses are presented in this section.

Table 1: Analysis of response: The presence of accounting skills will enhance SMEs performance.

Table 1: Analysis of Response to question 1

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
NO	8	14.8	14.8	14.8
YES	46	85.2	85.2	100.0
TOTAL	54	100.0	100.0	

Source: field Survey (2023)

Table 1 shows that 85.2% of the respondents agree that the presence of accounting skills in operators of SMEs will improve their performance while 14.8% of the respondents do not agree. Since over 80% of respondents agree, we conclude that the presence of financial experts boosts the performance of SMEs.

Table 2: Analysis of response: To what extent do accounting literacy of operators of SMEs affect the effectiveness of firms' financial controls and reporting?

Table 2: Analysis of Response to question 2

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
NO EXTENT	11	20.4	20.4	20.4
SOME EXTENT	5	9.3	9.3	29.7
A LARGE EXTENT	8	14.8	14.8	44.5
VERY LARGE EXTENT	30	55.5	55.5	100.0
TOTAL	54	100.0	100.0	

Source: field Survey (2023)

Table 2 shows that 20.4% of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no extent to which the accounting literacy of operators of SMEs would effectively affect the financial controls and reporting of SMEs, 9.3% of the respondents are of the opinion that to some extent there is a need for a high degree of accounting literacy of the SMEs operators for effective financial controls and reporting, 14.8% of the respondents are of the opinion that to a large extent there is a need for accounting literacy of entrepreneurs for an effective financial controls and reporting, while 55.5% of the respondents are of the opinion that to a very large extent that there is a need for a high degree of accounting literacy of SMEs operators for an effective financial controls and reporting. Since an aggregate of 70.3% respondents submitted that to a large extent there is need for accounting literacy of SMEs operators for an effective financial controls and reporting, we therefore conclude that accounting literacy of SMEs operators affect the effectiveness of firms' financial controls and reporting. The result of the analysis in table 1 reinforces that of table 2; to be financially literate enhances one's financial expertise which in turn positively affects ones delivery on financial matters. Being financially literate as an operator of SMEs enhances the effectiveness of financial controls and the quality of reporting which translates to effective performance of the entrepreneur.

Table 3: Analysis of respondents' views on the various issues on accounting skills for sustainable entrepreneurial development

S/N	Items	Response (in %)					Weighted Mean
		SA	AA	ID	DA	SD	
1	The presence of accounting skills among operators of SMEs will have a positive effect on entrepreneurial development	31.5	19.0	29.5	12.3	7.7	3.54
2	Accounting skills play a crucial role in enhancing financial performance of entrepreneurship	29.5	21.5	22.7	2.7	23.6	3.30
3	Non-financial skills by SMEs operators negatively affect the quality of their financial reporting	19.0	13.6	38.1	3.4	25.9	2.97
4	Accounting skills is associated with financial reporting quality	27.8	20.4	31.5	3.7	16.6	3.39

5	High level of accounting education of entrepreneurs has a favourable impact on entrepreneurial development	23.8	17.0	39.5	3.4	16.3	3.29
6	Acquisition of accounting skills alone by SMEs operators is a tool for sustainable entrepreneurial development	14.7	11.6	38.1	5.4	30.2	2.75
7	Possessing accounting education by SMEs operators guarantees sustainable performance and development of entrepreneurship	22.2	29.6	27.8	7.4	13.0	3.41
8	Operators of SMEs with accounting skills perform better than those with non- accounting skills	20.1	13.6	38.1	3.0	25.2	3.00
9	Accounting skills aid capacity building in the area of financial management and record keeping	23.8	17.0	34.7	3.4	21.1	3.19
10	Accounting skills are needed by entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises for sustainable performance and economic development	22.8	18.0	32.7	2.7	23.8	3.13

Key: SA-Strongly agree, AA-Agree, ID- Indifference, DA-Disagree, SD-Strongly disagree

Table 3 above shows the summary of analysis for statements in the research instrument. Results of the analysis show that 20% of the respondents disagree that the presence of accounting skills among operators of SMEs will have a positive effect on entrepreneurial development, 29.5% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement while, 50.5% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.54. We therefore conclude that the presence of accounting skills among operators of SMEs will have a positive effect on entrepreneurial development.

Similarly, 26.3% of the respondents disagree that accounting skills play a crucial role in enhancing financial performance of entrepreneurship, 22.7% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement, 51% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.30 which represents a strong consensus to uphold the

statement. We therefore conclude that accounting skills play a crucial role in enhancing financial performance of entrepreneurship. 29.3% of the respondents disagree that non-financial skills by SMEs operators negatively affect the quality of their financial reporting, 38.1% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement, while 32.6% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 2.97 which represents a weak consensus to uphold the statement.

20.3% of the respondents disagree that accounting skills is associated with financial reporting quality, 31.5% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement, and 48.2% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.39; we therefore conclude that accounting skills is associated with financial reporting quality.

19.7% of the respondents disagree that high level of accounting education of entrepreneurs has a favorable impact on entrepreneurial development, 39.5% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement, 40.8% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.29; we therefore conclude that high level of accounting education of entrepreneurs has a favorable impact on entrepreneurial development. While, 35.6% of the respondents disagree that the acquisition of accounting skills alone by SMEs operators is a tool for sustainable entrepreneurial development, 38.1% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement, 26.3% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 2.75; we therefore conclude that the acquisition of accounting skills alone by SMEs operators is not the only tool for sustainable entrepreneurial development. 20.4% of the respondents disagree that possessing accounting education by SMEs operators guarantee sustainable development of entrepreneurship, 27.8% of the respondents are indifferent about the statement, 51.8% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.41; we therefore conclude that possessing accounting education by SMEs operators guarantee sustainable development of entrepreneurship. 28.2% of the respondents disagree that operators of SMEs with accounting skills perform better than those with non-accounting skills, 3.0% of the respondents are indifferent, and 33.7% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.00; we therefore conclude that operators of SMEs with accounting skills perform better than those with no accounting skills. 24.5% of the respondents disagree that accounting skills aid capacity building in the area of financial management and record keeping, 34.7% of the

respondents are indifferent, and 40.8% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.19; we therefore conclude that accounting skills aid capacity building in the area of financial management and record keeping. 26.5% of the respondents disagree that accounting skills are needed by entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises for sustainable performance and economic development, 32.7% of the respondents are indifferent, and 40.8% of the respondents agree. The mean score for the statement is 3.13; we therefore conclude that accounting skills are needed by entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises for sustainable performance and economic development.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Ho1: There is a fundamental accounting skills needed by Entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

Table 4: Analysis of Response: Accounting skills is needed for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	9	16.6	16.6	16.6
DISAGREE	3	5.6	3.7	20.3
INDIFFERENT	2	3.7	31.5	20.3
AGREE	17	31.5	20.4	51.8
STRONGLY AGREE	11	20.4	27.8	72.2
TOTAL	54	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2023)

$$X = 48.2 (20.4 + 27.8)$$

$$P = \frac{X}{n} = \frac{48.2}{54} = 0.89$$

$$\bar{p} = 1 - 0.89 = 0.11$$

$$Z = \frac{0.89 - 0.50}{\sqrt{0.89 \times 0.11}}$$

$$\sqrt{0.89 \times 0.11}$$

$$Z = \frac{0.39}{0.043} = 9.07$$

From the Z-table at 5% level of significance under the two-tailed test, the table Z value is ± 1.96 .

α = level of significance

$$\frac{\alpha}{2} = \frac{0.05}{2} = 0.025$$

The analysis shows that the computed Z-value of 9.07 is greater than the table Z value of 1.96. Figure 1 in table 4 shows that the computed Z-value of 9.07 falls outside the acceptance region into the rejection region; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a fundamental accounting skills needed by Entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state..

Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There are no any significant benefits accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

Table 5: Analysis of Response on: firms that acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	7	13.0	13.0	13.0
DISAGREE			7.4	
INDIFFERENT	4	7.4	27.8	20.4
AGREE			29.6	
STRONGLY AGREE	15	27.8	22.2	48.2
TOTAL			100.0	
	16	29.6		77.8
	12	22.2		100.0
	54	100.0		

Source: Field Survey (2023)

$$X = 51.8 (29.6 + 22.2)$$

$$P = \frac{X}{n} = \frac{51.8}{54} = 0.96$$

$$\bar{q} = 1 - 0.96 = 0.04$$

$$Z = \frac{0.96 - 0.50}{\frac{\sqrt{0.96 \times 0.04}}{0.46}} = 17.0$$

From the Z-table at 5% level of significance under the two-tailed test, the table Zvalue is ± 1.96 .

$$\alpha = \text{level of significance}$$
$$\frac{\alpha}{2} = \frac{0.05}{2} = 0.025$$

The analysis shows that the computed Z-value of 17.0 is greater than the table Zvalue of 1.96. Figure 2 in table 5 shows that the computed Z-value of 17.0 falls outside the acceptance region into the rejection region; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant benefit accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

Discussion of findings

Considering the roles played by entrepreneurs as major drivers of the economy, it is pertinent that they as operators of SMEs have relevant accounting skills that would help them carryout their daily business activity in an efficient and effective manner. However, from the analysis carried out based on data generated from the field survey together with the test result of the two hypotheses, the findings based on the objectives clearly indicate as follows:

- i. There is a fundamental accounting skills needed by Entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.
- ii. There is a significant benefit accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.

However, The above findings are in agreement with Chibunna (2012) who posited that acquisition of accounting skills by managers and operators of small and medium scale enterprises enhance their business acumen thereby making them to have a comprehensive knowledge of business but in contravention to the findings of Onoh (2016).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings this study concluded that;

- i. There is a fundamental accounting skills needed by Entrepreneurs for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state.
- ii. There is a significant benefit accruable to the firms who acquire accounting skills for the Growth of Small and Medium scale Enterprises in central zone of Taraba state

RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, based on the findings arrived at from the data Analyses of this study and the conclusion drawn above, the following recommendations were proffered:

- i. Owners of small and medium scale enterprises should endeavour to acquire accounting skills in other to promote the quality of their products and upgrade their services.
- ii. Appropriate government organs and agencies should organizing free seminars and workshop for owners of small and medium scale enterprises to achieve this goal.
- iii. Strong awareness campaign should be embarked upon by appropriate authority to sensitize owners of small and medium scale enterprises on the need for acquiring accounting skills.

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