

DROP-SHIPPING, E-COMMERCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN EBONYI STATE NIGERIA

Ozor, Kelechukwu C¹., Aleke, Stephen F.¹, Okeke, Frankline C. S. A²., and Adibe, Gozie Charles³

¹Department of Banking and Finance, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State.

²Department of Accountancy, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State

³Department of Business Administration Fed Polytechnic Unwana Ebonyi State

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of drop shipping and e-commerce on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study while a structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The internal consistency aspect of the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded an index of 0.72 which was adjudged reliable. Two well-briefed research assistants were used to administer the copies of the questionnaire. A sample of 80 respondents was selected from 100 entrepreneurs in Abakaliki, Ebonyi state using a judgmental sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviations for answering the research questions while the hypotheses were tested with OLS. The findings of the study revealed that drop shipping and e-commerce have positive and significant effects on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. It was therefore, recommended that entrepreneurs in Nigeria should as a matter of relevance and urgency adopt drop shipping and e-commerce in carrying out their businesses effectively; and on the other hand, government should mandate appropriate agencies to organize seminars and workshops for entrepreneurs on the need to adopt drop shipping and e-commerce as business models to enhance their entrepreneurial growth and development.

Keywords: Drop-shipping, E-commerce, and Entrepreneurship development

Introduction

Entrepreneurship, in recent years, has been recognized the world over as the engine room and catalyst for sustainable economic development. This is because of its potential to create wealth for nations, facilitate self-reliance, addressing the twin challenges of unemployment and poverty especially in most third-world countries by equipping individuals with requisite skills for self-employment. Chowdhury (2021) observed that it is a way to improve business owners' knowledge and abilities through various classroom coaching programs and training.

Digitalization via technological advancement in our contemporary society has occasioned the emergence of myriads of opportunities through which entrepreneurial spirit could be achieved, and in modern business world, online business has become a notable area that taken business beyond world geographical boundaries. To Barnes, Hood, and Gallardo (2013), e-business utilizes the internet for marketing, identification, payment, and delivery, promoting cost-effective interaction and promoting visibility for businesses of all sizes, thereby increasing meritocracy and market competitiveness.

Collaborating this, Zhang and Zhang (2019) define online business as any business or transaction using ICT, defined by the OECD as a new way of conducting business over a network using non-proprietary protocols like the internet. Randall, Netessine, and Rudi,(2016) pointed out that Drop shipping is a retail fulfillment method where a store buys products from a third party and has them shipped directly to the customer, allowing the business to operate without maintaining inventory or owning a warehouse, and as a retailer forwarding customer orders to a wholesaler, distributor, or manufacturer, who fills them directly from its inventory. In the views of Chen, Chen, Parlar, and Xiao (2019) it as outsourcing inventory to another party. Ayanso (2016) states that drop shipping is a virtual supply chain that efficiently achieves e-fulfilment by discarding large warehousing and inventory investments, focusing on actual sales.Drop shipping, once limited to mail-order firms and bulky products, has become a common method for fulfilling online orders due to e-commerce advancements and improved real-time communication within the supply chain (Netessine and Rudi 2021)

One of the factors that has boosted drop shipping is the COVID-19 contagion. The pandemic came with several efforts to reduce physical contact not only in business spheres but also in almost all works of life, be it academia, hospitals, eateries, and various workplaces. The efforts to lessen person-to-person interaction provided more basis for online businesses.

In this sense, the term "electronic commerce" has been most frequently

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey design and a validated questionnaire from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Aliki, Ebonyi State. The instrument was vetted by experts for clarity, suitability, and adequacy. Corrections were made based on valuator's suggestions, and internal consistency was determined through youth in Enugu state. Cronbach alpha statistics yielded a reliable 0.72 index. A sample of 80 respondents were selected from 100 entrepreneurs in Abakaliki Ebonyi State using judgmental sampling technique. The model for

referred to the computerized exchange of business transactions between larger companies, facilitated by electronic fund transfer systems. According to Akanibo and Adokiye (2021) e-commerce is a crucial aspect of the modern e-world, enhancing business efficiency, supply chain stability, and customer convenience, and serving as a sustainable economic growth tool.

With the growth and popularity of online businesses, the surging rate of unemployment and poverty ought to be mitigated. This means that if people engage in online marketing like drop shipping and e-commerce there should be an increased level of employment generation through generation of more entrepreneurs. The youth in our society ought to have skills that would guarantee their self-employment and reliance and consequently poverty level would be low

Ebonyi State, is one of the south east Nigeria, was ranked fourth-poorest state. Also Equally, Nigeria's unemployment rate rose from 27.1% to 33.3% from December 2020 to March 2021, with young people aged 15-34 experiencing the highest rate, rising from 34.9% to 42.5% in the second quarter of 2020.

This ugly situation makes it appear as if the majority of youth are not aware of the drop in shipping and e-commerce as well as the attendant employment opportunities. They seem not to have appropriated or exploited these opportunities for self-employment and improved standard of living. It therefore appears germane to investigate the effect of drop shipping and e-commerce on entrepreneurial development in Ebonyi State.

the study is specified in its mathematical function below

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e_i$$

.....1

.....2.

Where;
 Y= Service delivery in Nigeria as proxy for entrepreneurial development
 X₁ = Drop shipping
 X₂ = E-commerce

e_i = error term
 β_0 = intercept

$\beta_1 - \beta_2$ = parameter estimates

Results and Discussion

The study's research questions and hypotheses were used to present and analyze the collected data.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire

No of Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	80	100
Returned	75	94
Not returned	5	6

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

The table 1 shows that the researcher distributed 80 copies of the questionnaire; out of which 75(94%) copies were returned while 5(6%) copies were not returned.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	28	37
31-40	18	24
41-50	17	23
51+	12	16
Total	75	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that respondents within the age of 18-30 were 28(37%), those within the age of 31-40 years were 18 (24%), respondents within the age of 41-50 years were 17 (23%) and those within 51 and above were 12(16%).

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	35	47
Single	39	52
Divorced	1	1
Total	75	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

The table 3 shows that number of respondents who were married were 35(47%); single, 39(52%) while divorced was 1(1%).

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	60
Female	30	40
Total	75	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 shows that respondents who are male are 45(60%) where female were 30(40%).

Table 5: Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No formal Education	1	1
FSLC	2	3
SSCE/GCE	15	20
OND/NCE	25	33
B.Sc/HND	27	36
M.Sc/Ph.D	5	7
Total	75	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 shows the distribution of the respondents based on educational qualification. It revealed that those without formal education were 1(1%), those with FSLC were 2(3%), those with

SSCE/GCE were 15(20%), those with OND/NCE were 25 (33%), those with B.Sc/HND were 27 (36%) and those with M.Sc/Ph.D were 5(7%).

Table 6: Monthly Income

Monthly Salary	Frequency	Percentage
0-30,000	3	4
31,000 - 60,000	21	28
61,000 - 90,000	30	40
91,000 - 120,000	14	19
Above 120,000	7	9
Total	75	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

Table 6 shows the distribution of the respondents based on monthly income. It revealed that those that earn 0-30,000 were (3%), those that earned 31,000 - 60,000 were 21(28%), those that earned

61,000 - 90,000 were 30(40%), those that 91,000 - 120,000 were 14(19%) while those that earn above 120,000 were 7 (9%).

Table 7: Job experience

Number of years worked	Frequency	Percentage
1—5	2	3
6—10	30	43
11—15	21	30
16—20	9	13
21—25	7	10
Above 25	1	1
Total	75	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2023

Table 7 shows the distribution of the respondents-based job experience. It revealed that for those that had 1—5 job experience were 2(3%), those that had 6—10 were 30(43%),

those that had 11—15 were 21(30%), those that had 16—20 were 9(13%), those that 21—25 were 7(10%) while those that had more than 25 years of job experience were 1(1%).

Descriptive Analysis of respondents

Research Question 1: What is the effect of drop shipping on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria?

Table 8: Effect of drop shipping on entrepreneurship development

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
Drop-shipping enhances the acquisition of innovative skill among entrepreneurs	200	80	15	16	2	313	4.17	Accepted
Drop shipping promotes risk taking ability of entrepreneurs	148	112	15	6	2	283	3.77	Accepted
Drop shipping promotes creative ability of entrepreneurs	180	108	21	8	1	318	4.24	Accepted
Drop shipper facilitates value creation ability of entrepreneurs	230	84	9	8	1	332	4.42	Accepted

Source: Author's Field survey, 2023: Decision rule: ≥ 3.0 = Accepted, < 3.0 = Rejected

Result in table 8 showed that item 1, 2, 3 and 4 with the mean responses of 4.17, 3.77, 4.24 and 4.42 indicated that most of the respondents accepted that drop-shipping enhances the

acquisition of innovative skill, promotes risk taking ability, creative ability and facilitates value creation.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of e-commerce on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria?

Table 9: Effect of e-commerce on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
5. E-Commerce facilitates the acquisition of managerial skills among entrepreneurs	210	92	15	6	2	325	4.3	Accepted
6.E-Commerce enhances acquisition of marketing skill entrepreneurs	180	116	12	8	2	318	4.24	Accepted
7.E-Commerce improves resources utilization skill of entrepreneurs	175	112	21	8	1	317	4.22	Accepted
8. E-commerce provides skill for identification of business opportunities	205	104	9	8	1	327	4.36	Accepted

Source: Author's Field survey, 2023: Decision rule: ≥ 3.0 = Accepted, < 3.0 = Rejected

Table 9 showed that item 5, 6, 7 and 8 with the mean responses of 4.3, 4.24, 4.22 and 4.36 indicated that most of the respondents accepted that E-Commerce facilitates the acquisition of

managerial skills, enhances acquisition of marketing skill, improves resources utilization skill and provides skill for identification of business opportunities among entrepreneurs.

Table 10: Summary of the Regression Analysis of Effect of Drop shipping and E-commerce on Entrepreneurial Development**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.769 ^a	.701	.665	1.811

a. Predictors: (Y)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.8	2	4.9	20.41	.001 ^b
	Residual	18.98	78	0.24		
	Total	28.78	80			

a. Dependent Variable: X₁, X₂

b. Predictors: (Constant), Y

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.102	.019		53.263	.001
	X1	2.077	.248	.031	8.375	.000
	X2	1.054	.21	.43	50.190	.000

a. Dependent Variable: : Y

The result of coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) was 0.70 which implies that 70% of the variations in dependent variable were explained by changes in the independent variables while 30% were unexplained by the stochastic variable indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 1% probability level. The coefficient of drop shipping (X1) was statistically significant and positively related to entrepreneurial development at 1percent level (8.375***). This implies that a unit increase in drop shipping (X1) relationship led to corresponding increase entrepreneurial development. The coefficient of e-commerce (X2) was statistically significant and positively related to entrepreneurial development at a 1percent level (50.190***). This implies that a unit increase in e-commerce led to a

corresponding increase entrepreneurial development

Test of Hypotheses 1

H₀₁: Drop shipping has no significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria
Table 10 showed that the probability value of 0.0000 of drop shipping which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the P-values is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected and conclusion made was that drop shipping has significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses 2

H₀₁: E-commerce has no significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria
Table 10 shows that the probability value of 0.0000 of e-commerce which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the P-value is less

than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected and the conclusion made was that e-commerce has a significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were discussed thus

Effect of Drop Shipping on entrepreneurship development in Ebonyi state, Nigeria

The first finding of this study is that drop shipping has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Table 8 revealed that most of the respondents accepted that drop-shipping enhances the acquisition of innovative skill, promotes risk-taking ability, creative ability and facilitates value creation. Also, table 10 which showed the test of hypothesis on this revealed that drop shipping has significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. What this means is that when people engage in dropping which enhanced through digital devices they develop skills that enable create job opportunities become worthwhile and contribute to the development of the society. This finding is line with Hartmann *et al* (2016) who note that drop shipping enables youth who engage in it to acquire saleable skill that make them self-reliant in the society.

Effect of e-commerce on entrepreneurship development in Ebonyi state, Nigeria

The second finding showed that e-commerce has positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Table 9 revealed that most of the respondents accepted that E-Commerce facilitates the acquisition of managerial skills, enhances acquisition of marketing skill, improves resources utilization skill and provides skill for identification of business opportunities among entrepreneurs. Also table 11 revealed that e-commerce has significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. This implies engagement in e-commerce equips entrepreneurs with skills that enable them to manage business effectively and efficiently, take up calculated risks, identify opportunities and invest in them for optimum productivity and profitability. This finding agrees with Akutson and Udeh (2015) who stated e-commerce provides opportunities

for individuals to acquire entrepreneurial skills that make them robust and have an edge over their counterparts in the competitive business environment.

Conclusion

Digitalization in contemporary society popularly referred to “information age” has provided myriad opportunities which individuals and nations could exploit and improve their well-being. It has also provided a formidable platform for tackling the hydra-headed problem of unemployment and poverty and salvaging the economy especially that of the developing countries from the problem of underdevelopment. Therefore, this paper focused in examining the effect of drop shipping and e-commerce on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. It was found out that drop shipping and e-commerce have positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria and e-commerce has positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings the following recommendations have been suggested by the researchers:

Firstly, entrepreneurs in Nigeria should as matter of urgency adopt drop shipping and e-commerce as models for carrying out their businesses effectively as they reduce the challenges of sourcing for capital to commence business.

Secondly, government at different levels of governance should mandate appropriate agencies to organize seminars and workshops for entrepreneurs and especially youths on drop shipping and e-commerce as e-business techniques that are profitable and equally have them gainfully employed.

Thirdly, since these business models are internet compliant, government and policy makers should partner with private sectors and internet mobile providers to offer support policies by making data affordable to entrepreneurs especially youths to enable them key into these rewarding business. In doing so, employment and insecurity of lives will be reduced drastically

since idle youths will engage in a more meaningful and profitable business

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