

# Enhancing Organizational Adaptability in Public Enterprises: The Role of Communication Techniques in Stimulating Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking Behaviour

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## ABSTRACT

This research considered the dynamic intersection of communication techniques and entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour within the context of organizational adaptability in public-owned enterprises. Recognizing the pivotal role of effective communication in fostering a conducive environment for entrepreneurial endeavors, the study aimed to investigate the strategies and approaches employed to arouse risk-taking behaviour among stakeholders within these enterprises. The study focused on public enterprises owned by the government of Rivers State, Nigeria. The main objective of the study was to investigate whether the application of communication techniques in public owned enterprises arouses entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour for organisational adaptability. To successfully carry out this study, the quasi-experimental design was employed with a population of 141 employees and a sample size of 104 respondents. The outcome of this research tilted towards understanding the intricate relationship between communication techniques, entrepreneurial risk-taking, and organizational adaptability in public-owned enterprises. The study found that application of communication techniques has a positive and significant relationship with the arousal of entrepreneurial risk taking and the adaptability of public owned enterprises in Rivers State Niger. Finally, the study recommended that public enterprises as well as other organizations should have that organizational mind-set which embraces risk-taking as a dominant culture. That organisations should acquire the best communications technologies as well as employ experts to develop winning communication techniques that would help them communicate effectively to members of their staff as well as allow employees communicate efficiently in order to arouse risk taking behaviours in the organisation.

**Keywords:** Communication Techniques, Entrepreneurial Risk-taking Behaviour, Organisational Adaptability

## INTRODUCTION

The increasingly changing nature of the current business climate seem to mount considerable pressure on public enterprises as they seek to remain in business and thrive therein. These changes are characteristic of the internal and external environments of business. Within these changes are the expectations and demands of different stakeholders, actions of competitors, and business decisions of suppliers. Thus, the extent to which business organizations adapt themselves to the complex constellation of forces of change in the environment would determine the extent to which they survive.

Given the above, organizational adaptability seems to be a crucial end which organizations must seek to attain. The concept of adaptability has as well drawn the attention of a variety of scholars in their attempt to explore the remits of organizational adaptability. In the same vein, it is the intention of this paper to contribute to literature

as we explore the extent to which communicating entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour is related to organizational adaptability of public enterprises in Nigeria.

Considering that Girneata (2014) studied organizational adaptability in turbulent times and concludes that “adaptability of strategy, organizational mind-set, and structures and processes are necessary capabilities for sustaining an organization in turbulent times”. On their part, Baylon and Turner (2017) have concluded based on their findings that “adaptable organizations are responsive to change, but also proactively plan for changing conditions” thus, emphasizing that adaptable organizations thrive in spite of changing environmental conditions.

Furthermore, on organizational adaptability studies, Zhang and Shen (2010) describes and analyses the perceived practices of organisational adaptation to agile project management method and developed a conceptual framework to guide the agile adaptation from a holistic perspective. They focused on the IT industry in China to empirically collect data to verify propositions derived from literature. Four organisational elements were examined by their conceptual model: culture, infrastructure, people and strategy, deduced from classical organisational models and propositions were brought forward covering these organisational factors and their interrelationships. Their research result shows that adaptation from traditional project management to agile project management, organisation should make desirable cultural change and establish project operational infrastructure including processes, facilities and management practices. Nurdin, Stockdale, and Scheepers (2012) investigated what organizational and people adaptation factors affect the sustainability of information technology within government organizations due to the lack of adjustment of government organizational factors in the Information Technology environment. They, conclude that the simplification of government organizations bureaucracy, management and business process, structure and hierarchy, to fit with the new IT environment, and a new clear mission and vision towards Information Technology, implementation goals also need to be established. This agrees with the views of Lewis (2011), who is of the view that communication is essential during organizational change as it fosters understanding, reduces uncertainty, and ensures that all stakeholders are aligned with the change objectives. This position he argues, is a settled position for most scholars. Literature abounds to the fact that even thriving organisations can go under if they decide to adapt to new technologies or new protocols without carrying members of the organisation along.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The increasingly dynamic nature of today's business climate presents significant challenges for public enterprises striving to maintain their competitive edge and achieve long-term sustainability. These challenges are deeply rooted in both the internal and external environments of business, where organizations must navigate the shifting demands and expectations of stakeholders, the competitive actions of rivals, and the strategic decisions of suppliers. The ability of organizations to adapt to these complex and evolving forces is crucial for their survival and success.

Despite the recognized importance of organizational adaptability, there remains a gap in understanding how specific factors contribute to this adaptability, particularly within the context of public enterprises in Nigeria. While existing literature highlights the necessity of strategic, cultural, and structural adaptability for organizational survival in turbulent times, there is a lack of focused research on the role of communication in fostering entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour as a driver of organizational adaptability.

Given the critical role of communication in aligning stakeholders, reducing uncertainty, and ensuring cohesive organizational action during periods of change, this study seeks to explore the relationship between communicating entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour and the organizational adaptability of public enterprises in Nigeria. The need for such research is underscored by the observations of scholars like Girneata (2014), Baylon and Turner (2017), and Lewis (2011), who emphasize the importance of adaptability in thriving amidst change yet leave a gap in understanding the communicative processes that facilitate this adaptability.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the extent to which effective communication of entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour influences the adaptability of public enterprises in Nigeria, thereby contributing to the broader literature on organizational adaptability in a rapidly changing business environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Entrepreneurial Risk Taking

A firm's tendency to engage in high-risk projects and managerial preferences for bold, as against cautious actions in order to achieve firm objectives is indicative of its entrepreneurial risk taking inclination (Madhoushi *et al.*, 2011). According to Sitkin and Pablo (2023), risk-taking involves not only the readiness to engage in uncertain activities but also the assessment and management of those risks to align with the organization's overall objectives. This process is essential for innovation and growth, as highlighted by Puranam *et al.* (2022), who argue that risk-taking is fundamental to achieving competitive advantage in dynamic business environments. Firms with a strong entrepreneurial orientation are often characterized by risk-taking behaviours, which are demonstrated through significant debt accumulation or large resource investments, aimed at achieving high returns and capitalizing on market opportunities (Anderson *et al.*, 2021).

The approach to measuring entrepreneurial orientation developed by Miller (1983) remains influential, particularly in assessing risk-taking at the firm level. This method evaluates the extent to which managers are inclined to undertake risky projects and their preference for bold actions over cautious strategies to achieve organizational goals. Similarly, more recent studies, such as those by Anderson *et al.* (2015) and Covin and Wales (2019), have expanded on this by exploring how managers balance innovation with risk, focusing on whether they pursue well-established methods or support projects with uncertain outcomes.

The meaning of risk is dependent on the context of its application. Within the remits of strategy, three types of strategic risk were identified by Baird and Thomas (1985: 231- 232) thus: (a) "venturing into the unknown," (b) "committing a relatively large portion of assets," and (c) "borrowing heavily". The first communicates a sense of uncertainty and applies generally to some degree of risk often discussed in the entrepreneurship literature, such as personal risk, social risk, or psychological risk. As captured in financial analysis, risk is used to suggest the familiar risk-return trade-off, where it refers specifically to the chances of a loss or negative outcome. This assumption appears to agree with the conclusions of Miller and Friesen (1978 p.923) when they define risk taking as "the degree to which managers are willing to make large and risky resource commitments - i.e., those which have a reasonable chance of costly failures". Both the idea of heavy leverage from borrowing and high commitment of the organisations' resources resonate with this definition of risk taking. Thus, firms with an entrepreneurial orientation are often typified by risk-taking behaviours, such as incurring heavy debt or making large resource commitments in the interest of obtaining high returns by seizing opportunities in the marketplace.

### The Concept of Adaptability

The concept of Organizational adaptability has been captured on the webpage of IGI Global as "the degree to which an organization can adjust its structure and business processes and successfully achieve its goals in accordance with the peculiar characteristics of dynamic environments". Holtkamp (2014) views adaptability as a desirable attribute, necessary for organizational survival and success. It is defined by Nelson, Zaccaro, and Harman (2010) as a functional change (cognitive, behavioural and/or affective) in response to actual or correctly anticipated alterations in environmental contingencies. Reischauer, Wagner and Peteraf (2014) assembled the self-motivated competences and dependable proportions of adaptability and compliance and holding a strong view that entrepreneurial survival of tempestuous business challenges depends on it. On his part, Cross (2013 p. 1) takes a system-based approach to organizational adaptability, emphasizing "the alignment of vision and strategy, culture and beliefs, processes, plans, people, and desired outcomes". Adaptability is usually visible where there is competitive advantage, and for organizations to be adaptive, CEOs must come up evidence of the readiness of their organizations to exploit new opportunities and overcome threats.

The organizations that seek to play in the big league dominated by performing organisations must develop a strategy that increases their ability to manage all new, volatile risks that they face and how they can transform their adaptability into strategic capability. In times of enormous economic crisis that affect the global economy, organizations operating in competitive markets cannot take an approach based only on plans, due to the fact that such plans cannot anticipate an unpredictable future considering the turbulences of the environment.

Adaptability resides in a competitive advantage for small, medium-sized and large organizations alike, because, as identified in the paper, adaptability is not necessarily a function of size. Even though an enterprise has identified its capabilities, analysed the opportunities, and found strategies to maximize its future success, it is required that the managers cope with unexpected events that might occur in turbulent times. In order for the organization to be adaptable, the managers must be prepared to develop the company's ability to exploit new opportunities and threats.

Adaptability has been empirically linked with firm performance (Marcoulides & Heck, 1993). Some specialists demonstrated the existence of an important relationship between firm performance and adaptability, viewed as a set of cultural values. (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). These researchers state that organizations capable of better internalizing values leading to a superior ability that allows them to recognize and adapt to changing conditions are more likely to reap superior rewards. According to them, adaptability is a combination of two or more cultural values, including innovation and action orientation, that allow a firm to adjust to environmental conditions better than others, thereby, leading to superior performance.

Strategy and adaptability are closely related concepts, given that, strategy is intended to help an organization to achieve success within its environment. In addition, strategy sets the organizational direction which will result in a superior competitive position within that environment. It is necessarily to state that there is an interrelationship between strategy and the changing organizational environment. In other words, a strategy is designed to help an organization adapt to a changing world. In a strategic sense, adaptability is the ability of a firm to form and execute an effective strategy. The ability to adapt, however, seems to include much more than just the ability to do strategy.

### **The concept of Organisational communication**

Hope and Hope. (1997 p.1) state that “two hundred years after the industrial revolution dramatically changed the established world order, we are once again in the midst of sharp transformation, the likely effects of which will be a period of dislocation followed by a period of prosperity. How long either will last is uncertain”. Today, nearly every company is seeking better ways for members of staff to communicate within the organisation. The question therefore is, considering how information technology is transforming organisational communication structure and the nature of the organisations of the future with the movement of organisations from being mere telephone companies to information technology companies, how are public organisations measuring up?

In looking at organisational communication and information technology, it is important to appraise how connections within an organisation and between organisations and the outside world are evolving. In essence, we should review the nature of organisations: the relationships between organisations and their employees as well as the difficulties companies face in passing information and how information technology has affected all of these.

Gates (1999, p. 65) in his book “Business @ the Speed of thought.” Listed some questions he posed to some German bankers in relation to information technology. The questions go thus:

You believe that in the future people at work will Use computers every day for most of their jobs? Do you believe that today's paperwork will be replaced by more efficient digital administrative processes? Do you believe e-mail will become as common a method of communication among people in business and homes as the telephone or paper mail is today?

Today, most of these questions have become reality. Information revolution is raging across organisations both public and private and organisations that had anticipated these changes are reaping benefits. In support of this view, Cairncross (2002 p.2) asserts that “Information Technology is sweeping across organisations and only organisations that are prepared can withstand the impact.” But the question according to Cairncross (2002) is, why should a new group of information and communication technologies that has evolved around the Internet confound us so? The answer is simple. First, the new technologies are driving down the cost and speeding up the rate of processing, transmitting and storing information. We should always remember that almost every business process involves information in some form, an instruction, a plan, an advertisement, a blueprint; a set of accounts

etc. organisations can handle and share all this information more cheaply than ever before. Secondly, the astonishing fall in cost of transferring information around the world is a powerful force for globalisation. Cairncross (2002, p. 5) quotes, Robert Hormats, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs International thus: “There has never been a commercial technology like this in the history of the world whereby from the minute you adopt it, it forces you to think and act globally. Some companies can now reach a Global market and “look” like big firms”. Thirdly, the innumerable applications of the internet make the changes it brings more pervasive and varied than any that have gone before. Its ability to change and adjust at very short intervals will allow it to boost the efficiency of more or less everything an organisation does.

The Internet is not simply a new distribution channel or a new way to communicate. It is many additional things - a marketplace, a meeting place, a reference station, an information service centre, a means for manufacturing goods and services, a computing platform in its own right, an escape etc. It makes a difference to myriad task that organisations do daily, from locating new suppliers to coordinating projects to accounting to collecting and managing customer data. Each of these functions of the Internet in turn affects corporate organisational communication process in many ways. Finally, the Internet speeds up the dissemination and adoption of new techniques. The Internet allows organisations to connect teams of designers or engineers in different parts of the world, enabling them to hand off work to each other and use time zones to accelerate work, research and testing through collaborations. Information technologies affect the way companies’ pool skill and knowledge of their work forces. Thus, they offer new opportunities for knowledge management and ways relate with varied organisations and requests from partners and clients; the development of sophisticated database and Internet enable companies to build a core of knowledge upon which they can draw globally in unprecedented ways (Cairncross, 2002). It is common today for organisations to expect managers to be reachable in the evenings, weekends, at lunch and on vacations. There may be nothing wrong with that in itself but in the past, cost of communicating information was high enough to make the sender pause and ask whether the message was worth sending. Until early 2000s, the most effective way for organisations in Nigeria to send messages they considered valuable was through courier and that didn’t come cheap. That constraint has vanished. The cost of sending an additional e-mail is now a few moments of sender’s time. However, there are basic considerations for organisations that intend to evolve in virtual communication. These considerations according to Porter (1998) include the following:

**Assess Information intensity:** An organisations first task is to evaluate existing and potential information intensity of the product and processes of its business units. To help organisations accomplish this, porter (1998) developed some measures of the potential importance of information technology. Porter states that it is likely that information technology will play a strategic role in an organisation that is characterized by one or more of the following features:

- a. potentiality high information intensity in the value chain- a large number of suppliers or customers with whom the company deals directly, a product requiring a large quantity of information in selling, a product line with many distinct product varieties, a product composed of many parts, a large number of steps in the organisations manufacturing process etc.
- b. Potentially high information intensity in the product – a product that mainly provides information, a product whose operation involves substantial information processing, a product whose use requires the buyers to process a lot of information, a product that has many alternative users or is sold to a buyer with high information intensity in his or her own business.

**Determine the role of information technology in the industry:** Organisations should predict the likely impact of information technology on their industry structure. They must examine how information technology might affect each of the five competitive forces. Many organisations are partly in control of the nature and pace of change in the industry structure. Companies have permanently altered the bases of competition in their favour in many industries through aggressive investment in information technology and have forced other companies to follow.

### **Identify and rank IT impact**

The starting assumption must be that the technology is likely to affect every activity in the value chain. By taking

a careful look, organisations can identify the value activities that are likely to be most affected in terms of cost and differentiation. Obviously, activities that represent a large proportion of cost or that are critical to differentiation bear closest scrutiny, particularly if they have a significant information-processing component. Activities with important links to other activities inside and outside the organisation are also critical. Organisations must examine such activities for ways in which information technology can create sustainable competitive advantage. In addition to taking a hard look at its value chain, the organisation should consider how information technology might allow a change in competitive scope. Can information technology help the organisation serve new segments? Will flexibility of information technology allows broad line competitors to invade areas that were once the province of niche competitors? Will information technology provide the leverage to expand the business globally? Can organisations harness information technology to exploit interrelationships with other organisations?

### **Investigate the opportunities of IT**

Information technology is an increasingly important avenue for corporate diversification. Identifying opportunities to spawn new business requires answering questions such as: what information generated (or potentially generated) in the business could the organisation sell? Note that this is the cash cow for some business-like Yahoo, Hotmail, Rock and so many other email providers on the internet. What information processing capacity exists internally to start a new business? Dose information technology make it feasible to produce new items related to the company's products.

### **Develop a plan for taking advantage of IT**

This action plan should rank the strategic investments necessary for the hardware and software, and a new product development activity that reflects the increasing information content in products. Organisations need to distribute the responsibility for system development more widely in the organisations. At the same time, all departments in the organisation must be involved to ensure that the cross-functional linkages, more possible to achieve with information technology are exploited.

Information technology can help in the strategy implementation process. Project managers can track work progression towards milestones and issue out instructions and make changes to the project in real time. Notwithstanding where he or she may be. By using information systems, organisations can measure their activities more precisely and help motivate employees to implement strategy successfully. Hence Porter (1998) comments thus:

The importance of information technology is not in dispute. The question is not whether information technology will have a significant impact on organisations. Rather, the question is when and how this impact will strike. Organisations that anticipate the power of information technology will be in control of events. Organisations that do not respond will be forced to accept changes that others initiate and will find themselves at a competitive disadvantage. (p.96)

Pearlson and Saunders (2001) point to a 'flexibility paradox' whereby for teleworkers to have the flexibility to work offsite and to have some level of autonomy in temporal and spatial terms, then the firm must have procedures in place to ensure that the organisation continues to work effectively.

### **Entrepreneurial Risk Taking and Organizational Adaptability**

Risk taking as a dimension of entrepreneurial orientation, and according to Rauch *et al.*, (2009 p. 763) it "involves taking bold actions by venturing into the unknown, borrowing heavily, and/or committing significant resources to ventures in uncertain environments". It also suggests the degree to which managers are willing to make large resource commitments (Wang, 2008). Lumpkin and Dess (1996, p. 144) have also said that "firms with an entrepreneurial orientation are often typified risk taking behaviour such as incurring heavy debts or making large resource commitments in the interest of obtaining high returns by seizing opportunities in the marketplace". They further assert that borrowing heavily, investing in unexplored technologies, or bringing new products to new markets" Lumpkin and Dess (1996) are features of an entrepreneurially oriented firm. Given

these definitions, we shall attempt to theoretically relate risk taking to adaptability.

Organizations that develop essential features and behaviour patterns in response to changes in the environment are adaptive organizations (Tikka, 2010). Macmillan and Tampoe (2000) have said, that adaptability “represents the capacity of an enterprise to react quickly to opportunities and risks, and convert them into business advantage”. Thus, we address our enquiry to the extent to which an organization’s willingness to break away from the tried-and-true venture into the unknown (Ejdys, 2016), can cause the organization to be able to respond to environmental variations through the development of a more nimble and agile structure and processes (Zhang & Shen 2010).

An organization’s propensity to get involved in high-risk projects and its managerial preferences for bold versus cautious actions in order to achieve firm objectives reflects the organizations risk taking disposition (Madhoushi, Delavari, Mehdivand & Mihandost 2011). Considering that firms with an entrepreneurial orientation are often typified by risk taking behaviour, characterised by making large resource commitments, incurring heavy debts, and breaking away from the known (Lumkin and Dess, 1996; Ejdys, 2016), it therefore suggests that such behaviours can be successfully channelled to organizational survival. This is especially so because such risk taking behaviours can produce adaptability in an entrepreneurially oriented organization.

The ability of organizations to anticipate, prepare for, and respond and adapt to changes and disruptions in the environment points to their resilience. Thus, resilient firms are those that are able to achieve positive adjustments and order under challenging conditions for the purpose of bouncing back or even bouncing forward into a better state of existence (British Standard for Organizational Resilience; Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007; Cox and Perry, 2011).

Entrepreneurial risk taking points to a firms propensity to venture into high-risk projects, take bold investment decisions, and break away from the routine (Rouch *et al.*, 2009; Madhaushi *et al.*, 2011; Ejdys, 2016). These pointers to organizational resilience and entrepreneurial risk taking tend to suggest the possibility of a relationship between these concepts. We hold this opinion, given that firms open to taking daring investment decisions that break away from the traditional way of doing business, and investing in unexplored technologies (Wang, 2008; Lumpkin & Dess 1996), can achieve resilience. This tends to be so because these entrepreneurial risk taking actions are able to cause the organization to anticipate or respond to sudden or incremental change of trends in the environment of business. It is further able to cause organizations to develop the ability to bounce back after a crisis or a series of devastating events that hit the organization or industry.

## Theoretical Review

This study explored the intersection of communication, organizational adaptability, and entrepreneurial risk-taking within the context of public enterprises. To develop a solid theoretical foundation, this review synthesizes concepts from organizational adaptability, communication theory, and entrepreneurial orientation, emphasizing how these elements interrelate to influence the behaviour and performance of public enterprises.

## Organizational Adaptability

organizational adaptability according to Gibson and Birkinshaw (2004) involves both the flexibility to respond to changes and the proactive ability to shape those changes to the organization's advantage. This dual approach ensures that the organization can handle immediate shifts while also positioning itself for future developments. Similarly, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) emphasize that adaptable organizations are characterized by dynamic capabilities that allow them to reconfigure resources and processes rapidly in response to environmental changes.

In public enterprises, which often operate under rigid bureaucratic structures, adaptability is particularly crucial for navigating the complexities of changing regulatory environments, political pressures, and stakeholder demands (Girneata, 2014). The literature on organizational adaptability highlights the importance of dynamic capabilities, such as flexibility in decision-making, innovation, and proactive change management, in fostering resilience and long-term sustainability (Teece, 2014). However, these capabilities are often constrained in public enterprises, making the role of communication techniques vital in overcoming these challenges.

## Communication Theory

Communication is a fundamental process in organizations that facilitates the exchange of information, alignment of goals, and coordination of activities. Effective communication is essential for ensuring that all members of an organization understand the rationale behind changes and are committed to the organization's objectives (Lewis, 2011). Communication theory provides a framework for understanding how information is transmitted and received within organizations, emphasizing the importance of clarity, consistency, and feedback in the communication process (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).

In the context of organizational adaptability, communication plays a critical role in disseminating information about environmental changes, facilitating the alignment of organizational strategies with new realities, and fostering a culture of openness to change (Kotter, 1996). Moreover, strategic communication techniques, such as storytelling, persuasion, and active listening, can be employed to overcome resistance to change and encourage entrepreneurial behaviours (Heath & Heath, 2007).

## Entrepreneurial Orientation and Risk-Taking

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses a firm's propensity to innovate, take risks, and act proactively in the marketplace. Risk-taking, a key dimension of EO, involves the willingness of managers to commit significant resources to ventures with uncertain outcomes in pursuit of high returns (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Research suggests that risk-taking behaviour is essential for organizational adaptability, as it enables firms to explore new opportunities, experiment with innovative solutions, and adapt to changing environments (Covin & Wales, 2019). However, in public enterprises, where the risk appetite may be lower due to political and bureaucratic constraints, fostering a culture of risk-taking requires deliberate efforts. Here, communication techniques can play a transformative role by framing risk-taking as a necessary component of adaptability and by building a shared understanding of the potential benefits of entrepreneurial initiatives (Anderson et al., 2015).

## Integrating Communication and Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking

The integration of communication and entrepreneurial risk-taking within public enterprises is critical for enhancing organizational adaptability. Effective communication can stimulate risk-taking behaviour by creating a shared vision, reducing perceived uncertainties, and building trust among stakeholders (Hornsby et al., 2002). By clearly articulating the rationale for entrepreneurial initiatives and the expected outcomes, leaders can encourage managers and employees to embrace risk as a strategic tool for achieving adaptability.

Moreover, the use of communication techniques such as feedback loops, participatory decision-making, and transparent reporting can help mitigate the potential downsides of risk-taking by ensuring that all organizational members are informed and aligned with the organization's strategic objectives (Lewis, 2011). This approach not only enhances the likelihood of successful adaptation to change but also fosters a culture of continuous learning and innovation within public enterprises.

This theoretical review explores the interconnectedness of organizational adaptability, communication, and entrepreneurial risk-taking in public enterprises. By grounding the study in theories of organizational adaptability, communication, and entrepreneurial orientation, it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how communication techniques can be leveraged to stimulate risk-taking behaviour and, consequently, enhance organizational adaptability. This theoretical foundation guided the empirical investigation and provided insights into practical strategies for fostering adaptability in public enterprises.

## Empirical Review

This study sought to understand how communication techniques can influence entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour and, consequently, organizational adaptability in public enterprises. This empirical review draws upon existing research to explore the relationships between communication, risk-taking, and adaptability, particularly within the context of public enterprises.



## **Organizational Adaptability in Public Enterprises**

Research on organizational adaptability often focuses on how firms respond to changes in their environment, emphasizing the role of internal and external factors in shaping adaptive capacities. In public enterprises, which operate under unique constraints such as bureaucratic structures, regulatory oversight, and political influence, adaptability is critical for survival and success.

Girneata (2014) conducted a study on the adaptability of public organizations in turbulent environments, finding that flexibility in strategy, mindset, and organizational structure is essential for public enterprises to navigate uncertainty. The study highlighted the importance of strategic leadership in fostering adaptability, noting that leaders must be able to anticipate changes and adjust organizational strategies accordingly. The findings suggest that adaptability in public enterprises is not only about reacting to change but also about proactively shaping the environment through strategic decision-making.

Similarly, Nurdin, Stockdale, and Scheepers (2012) investigated the sustainability of information technology (IT) within government organizations, focusing on the adaptation of organizational processes to fit new IT environments. The study found that simplifying bureaucratic processes and aligning organizational structures with IT goals were crucial for sustaining adaptability. The researchers emphasized the role of leadership in guiding these changes and ensuring that the organization remains flexible in the face of technological advancements.

## **Communication Techniques and Organizational Change**

Communication plays a pivotal role in organizational change, particularly in how it influences employee attitudes and behaviours. Effective communication ensures that all members of the organization understand the reasons for change, the benefits it will bring, and the role they play in the process. This is particularly important in public enterprises, where resistance to change can be high due to entrenched bureaucratic practices.

Lewis (2011) conducted a comprehensive review of communication strategies during organizational change, finding that transparent and consistent communication is crucial for reducing uncertainty and fostering buy-in from employees. The study emphasized that communication should not be one-way; rather, it should involve feedback loops that allow employees to voice their concerns and contribute to the change process. This approach not only improves the quality of decision-making but also enhances employee commitment to the organization's objectives.

Hornsby, Kuratko, and Zahra (2002) explored the role of middle managers in facilitating corporate entrepreneurship, highlighting the importance of communication in encouraging entrepreneurial behaviours. The study found that when managers effectively communicate the organization's vision and the importance of innovation, employees are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours. The findings suggest that communication is a key driver of entrepreneurial orientation within organizations, influencing the extent to which employees feel empowered to take risks and pursue new opportunities.

## **Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking in Public Enterprises**

Entrepreneurial risk-taking, a core dimension of entrepreneurial orientation (EO), involves the willingness of an organization to commit resources to initiatives with uncertain outcomes. While much of the research on EO has focused on private sector firms, there is growing interest in understanding how these concepts apply to public enterprises.

Anderson et al. (2015) examined the relationship between EO and firm performance, finding that risk-taking is positively associated with organizational adaptability. The study found that firms with a higher propensity for risk-taking were better able to adapt to changing market conditions, as they were more likely to experiment with new ideas and approaches. This finding is particularly relevant to public enterprises, where risk aversion is often a barrier to innovation and adaptability.

In a study of public sector organizations, Van der Voet (2014) investigated how leadership influences

organizational change and risk-taking behaviours. The research found that transformational leadership, characterized by the ability to inspire and motivate employees, is positively associated with risk-taking and adaptability in public organizations. The study highlighted the importance of leaders in shaping organizational culture and promoting an environment where employees feel safe to take risks and innovate.

Additionally, Covin and Wales (2019) reviewed the literature on entrepreneurial orientation, emphasizing the role of communication in fostering a risk-taking culture within organizations. The study found that when leaders clearly communicate the importance of innovation and risk-taking, employees are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial behaviours. This finding underscores the importance of communication in aligning organizational goals with individual actions, particularly in environments where risk-taking is not traditionally encouraged.

### **Integrating Communication, Risk-Taking, and Adaptability**

The empirical evidence suggests a strong relationship between communication, entrepreneurial risk-taking, and organizational adaptability. In public enterprises, where adaptability is often constrained by rigid structures and conservative cultures, communication techniques can play a transformative role in stimulating risk-taking behaviour and enhancing adaptability.

Research by Heath and Heath (2007) on the power of storytelling in organizational communication found that narratives can be a powerful tool for framing risk-taking as a positive and necessary behaviour. By crafting stories that highlight successful examples of risk-taking within the organization, leaders can shift the organizational culture towards greater acceptance of risk and innovation. This approach can be particularly effective in public enterprises, where resistance to change is often rooted in fear of failure.

Moreover, the findings from Zhang and Shen (2010) on agile adaptation in the IT industry suggest that adaptability is closely linked to how well organizations communicate the need for change and involve employees in the change process. The study found that organizations that effectively communicated the benefits of agile methodologies and provided clear guidance on how to implement these changes were more successful in adapting to new environments.

The empirical studies reviewed in this section provide strong evidence for the critical role of communication techniques in stimulating entrepreneurial risk-taking behaviour and enhancing organizational adaptability in public enterprises. Effective communication not only facilitates the alignment of organizational goals with individual actions but also helps to overcome resistance to change and fosters a culture of innovation. As public enterprises face increasingly complex and dynamic environments, leveraging communication to stimulate risk-taking and adaptability will be essential for their long-term success.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The quasi-experimental design was employed for this work. The essence of this choice is premised on the fact that it is apt for administrative or social science research, due to the complex relationships that exist between variables, in addition to the reality that these variables are not subject to manipulation. The study also adopted the survey method, and a cross-section of organizations were explored. It has also been defined by Cooper and Schindler (2011) as “the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences” (p. 364). The population for the study was all Public Enterprises owned by Rivers State Government of Nigeria represented by the members of management staff of these enterprises.

Furthermore, considering that the study was conducted at the macro level, the unit of analysis was the organization, but the unit of measurement was the management staff of public enterprises owned by Rivers State government, Nigeria. Thus, primary data was required and used for the study. The population of the study comprised of 141 members of staff and was obtained from the human resource managers of the organizations studied as a total population of all management staff. Given this population size, the taro Yamen’s formula for sample size determination was used to obtain a sample size of 104. The purposive non-probability sampling method was used as the sampling technique. The reliability of the data instruments was confirmed by the

Cronbach Alphas Coefficients (See Table 1).

Table 1: Reliability test results for Entrepreneurial Risk Taking and Organizational Adaptability

Variables	Dimensions/Measures	Items	Alpha
Entrepreneurial Risk-taking	Risk-taking	5	.794
Organizational Adaptability	Adaptability	5	.762

Source: SPSS Output

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Application of Communication Techniques

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Application of Communication	651.60	5.00	3.4828	.80617
Techniques				

Source: Research Data, 2018, (SPSS Output).

Communication techniques as captured in this study had five items which were focused on it in the instrument. As shown in Table 2 above, the results imply that the organizations under study ranked high in application of various communication techniques with an average mean score of  $X = 3.4828$ . Given this result, we therefore infer that Rivers State Owned companies employ the use of various communication techniques to communicate risk-taking behaviours and expectations to her members of staff in order to encourage them to engage in projects that are considered high risk, make large and risky resource commitments, and incur heavy debt for the purpose of achieving organizational outcomes. This inference is further strengthened by the overall mean score ( $X$ ) of entrepreneurial risk-taking being 3.4627 as shown in Table 3 below which is considered relatively high.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Entrepreneurial Risk taking

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Entrepreneurial	671.60	5.00	3.4627	.80619
Risk-taking				

Source: Research Data, 2018, (SPSS Output).

Risk-taking as captured in this study had five items which were focused on it in the instrument. As presented in Table 3 above, the results imply that the organizations under study ranked high in entrepreneurial risk-taking with an average mean score of  $X = 3.4627$ . Given this result, we therefore infer that Rivers State Owned Enterprises are usually commit significant resources to ventures in uncertain environments, engage in projects that are considered high risk, make large and risky resource commitments, and incur heavy debt for the purpose of achieving organizational outcomes. This inference is further strengthened by the overall mean score ( $X$ ) of entrepreneurial risk-taking being 3.4627 as shown in Table 3.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Adaptability

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Organizational	671.60	5.00	3.2358	.82211
Adaptability				

Source: Research Data, 2018, (SPSS Output).

## Bivariate Analysis

**H01.** There is no positive and significant relationship between application of communication techniques for arousal of entrepreneurial risk-taking and organizational adaptability of Public owned enterprises.

**Table 4.1: Correlation Matrix for Entrepreneurial Risk-taking and Organizational Adaptability**

		Application of Comm technique		Risk-taking/Adaptability
Spearman's rho	Innovate	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.380**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	67	67
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.380**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	67	67
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Positive and significant relationship between Application of Communication Techniques and Risk Taking and Public Enterprise Survival

Application of Communication techniques was found to have a positive and significant relationship with arousal of entrepreneurial risk taking and the adaptability of rivers state owned public enterprises. This means that these organizations studied are able to take bold actions, venture into the unknown, engage in high risk projects, make large and risky resource commitments and maintain a healthy disposition towards incurring heavy debt for the purpose of obtaining desired organizational outcomes if the benefits, methods and implications of such risk-taking is properly communicated to them. Thus, these organizational attributes, mind-set, and actions have been found to result in these organizations being able to make appropriate adjustments to their business concepts, make changes to organizational attributes, develop behavioural patterns which respond aptly to the environment, develop the capacity to react promptly to opportunities and threats, possess the ability to respond to change based on past, present, and future information communicated to members of staff.

Given the opinions, findings, and assertions from studies related to measure of organizational survival as highlighted above, we affirm therefore that the findings from this study adds to the existing body of knowledge. This position is informed by the fact that hitherto, there has been a scarcity of studies that enquire into the relationship between application of communication techniques and entrepreneurial orientation cum organizational survival. Especially, within the context of public enterprises. Thus, give our finding which points to a positive and significant relationship between application of communication techniques and entrepreneurial risk-taking cum the survival of public enterprises, the following conclusions are drawn;

Entrepreneurial Risk-taking, as characterised by venturing into the unknown, managerial preferences for bold investment activities, and a healthy disposition towards incurring heavy debts for the purpose of desired

organizational outcomes results in organizations being able to make appropriate business adjustments in terms of strategy, structure, and the development of the capacity to react quickly to opportunities and threats, thus ensuring survival and this can only be possible if members of staff of the organisation understand in clear terms why, when and how to take risks that can yield the expected result. This can only be communicated through certain communication techniques.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that public enterprises as well as other organizations should have that organizational mindset which embraces risk-taking as a dominant culture. Organizations are therefore encouraged to acquire the best communications Technologies as well as employ experts to develop winning communication techniques that would help them communicate effectively to members of their staff, allow employees communicate efficiently among themselves in order to understand the benefits of risk-taking, risk assessment, and benefits of taking informed risks that may culminate into high risk projects and managerial preferences for bold actions aimed at achieving objectives, make large and risky resource commitments to further organizational objectives, and develop a healthy disposition towards incurring heavy debt for the purpose of obtaining desired organizational outcomes. These are characteristic of entrepreneurial risk-taking and have been found to be positively related to organizational survival.

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