



Social Responsibility as a Tool toward Economic Growth: Nigerian SMSEs' Participation

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Abstract

This study investigated the range in which small and micro scale enterprises (SMSEs) participated in the activities of social responsibility in the state. It was found that the SMSEs in Yobe State, Nigeria do not participate in social responsibility activities, rather few involved ignorantly due to market forces or regulation. The SMSEs categories are wide. This study focused primarily on SMSEs that are more of service, trading and manufacturing industries. The survey was conducted on sample size of eighty one (81) SMSEs in the state. More clearly, their business plan over social responsibility, were reviewed in terms of their income and strengths. Contingency table was 2×2 metric, the Yates Correction method was employed to the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool to test the validity of the issue raised in this paper. In view of these, it is imperative to build strategy toward developing such sector of economy. Yobe State is blessed with enormous small scale business mostly at micro stage, which a need to device mean in which they will grow to meet the international standard is urgently required. Sandberg J. highlighted that, very little research has directly examined corporate social responsibility (CSR) from outlook of small and micro scale business in developing countries, either in terms of how the owners perceive the social activities impact on the organization's performance or on their employees or even on the communities/customers [1]. In conclusion, the result of this paper will help elicit the ignorance behind non participation of some SMSEs in SR activity looking at the benefit enumerated for the participation in the literature review. The study is significant in exposing grey areas in the management of SMSEs.

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It provided pertinent and contemporary solutions towards addressing the challenges faced by managers of SMSEs in the state especially in this area of social responsibility.

Keywords: Economic growth, Participation, Social responsibility, SMSEs.

1. Introduction

National MSME collaborative survey declared that ‘Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the engine of the European economy. They are an essential source of jobs, create entrepreneurial spirit and innovation in the EU and are thus crucial for fostering competitiveness and employment. In Nigeria, Small firms and their practices play a significant role in the economy and society which constitute approximately 95 per cent of commercial organizations. Large Percentage of Nigerian business people operate at the small scale level as most of the industries in Nigeria are comatose [2]. A study done by the Federal Office of Statistics shows that 97% of all businesses in Nigeria employ less than 100 employees, implying that 97% of all businesses in Nigeria are, to use the umbrella term, "small businesses", the SME sector provides, on average, 50% of Nigeria’s employment, and 50% of its industrial output. Indeed, there appears to be an agreement that the development of SMEs in Nigeria is a step towards building a vibrant and diversified economy [3].

In realizing this vital position that this sector (SMSEs) possess, it’s became imperative to shower a contribution toward developing and encouraging such a sector academically, which quest on the position of SR in SMSEs that is to say hypothetically “SMSEs in Yobe State do not participate in social responsibility activities” (null hypothesis). Despite the important role which SMSEs play in the economy of a country. Heidi V. Enumerates that SR in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a relatively new topic in research, SR in SMEs has received limited consideration [4]. In Yobe State, there is few or no record of any research on SR among SMSEs particularly, that tries to investigate the SMSEs’ participation in SR activities. This study, had addressed this gap by investigating the participation of SMSE’s in SR. Turker, D. suggest that “Being perceived as socially responsible can actually enhance overall economic growth”[5].

Although much has been written on society versus business relation, one easily notices that CSR in the African context, remain under explored [6]. Yobe State is not apart, thus, questions such as: How do small and micro scale business that operate in Yobe perceived and apply SR activities remain unanswered. Africa lags far behind [7]. Which Yobe is among in respect to research on SR among SMSEs. This work has added its contribution in this dimension, which greatly improved research on SR activities that especially captured SMSE, and has burst morale of SMSEs in the State. It has also served as role model for all Nigeria’s SMSEs and Africa in general and lastly but not the list had contributed to academic researchers in this field.

2. Materials and Methods

The constraint underpinning this sector, is it’s peculiarity of been owner manager and sometimes illiteracy level of some owners , which discourages researchers, as the owner may not like to disclose or answer some of the research questions as feeling disclosing his organization’s secret.

Second constraint was that, SR in SMSEs are different from the one in large companies due to SMSEs peculiarities such as owner manager, strong connection with business partners and the local communities, lack of support to implement SR [8]. Similarly, data are extremely difficult to obtain from small and medium-sized business owners/managers, due to the perceived confidentiality of the data. In other instances, the data may not be available because of elementary management information and control systems [9].

Another constraint, showed that even if the corporations have both the proper intentions and the expertise to successfully implement their SR policies; this is not a simple task, due to the diversity of definitions and approaches as mentioned earlier. Hence, understanding and implementing SR requires certain expertise and resources which many SMSEs do not have [10].

In spite of all these, there is limited research in SR that articulated area required of SMSEs to engage. This study has captured one out of many ways in educating and encouraging SMSEs participation in SR and benefit that the owners may receive.

Therefore, this study aims was achieved as it has establish and build perceptions of good understanding by owner/managers of SMSEs, the importance of SR participation, the relevant activities and the benefit that could be derive by the stakeholders and the organizations in the State.

Under the pressure of changing societal expectations, some corporations are starting to intensify their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) engagement by introducing new initiatives and a new rhetoric in their communications with stakeholders. CSR is becoming a fundamental way to redefine the role of business in society [11].

2.1 Development of Social Responsibility

Carroll traced its emergence to the 1930s. However, the heightened prominence that the concept of Business Social Responsibility (BSR), variously referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Corporate Social Investment (CSI), Corporate Social Performance (CSP), Corporate Citizenship (CC) and so on, has attained in recent times comes amidst growing concerns that, while businesses bring progress to society, their actions more often than not, produce negative externalities that are unintended and need to be repudiated. The fact that these externalities accrue to societies who are not party to the economic decisions of businesses that bring them into being, makes it imperative that “victims” are rewarded and perpetrators take responsibility and provide means to at least minimize their impact. Business Social Responsibility can be seen as a way of “compensating” society for the hardships endured. In this sense, it is fair to say that BSR has a strong social focus [12].

In another perspective the development of CSR is described by Zadek, S. in terms of three generations [13]

- In the first generation of CSR organizations show that they can be responsible in ways that do not detract from, and may contribute to commercial success. This is the most traditional and pervasive form of CSR, most often manifested as corporate philanthropy. It is not part of the main business of the organization but may add commercial value through reputation enhancement. Typically, a company may donate (old) computers to schools, staff may volunteer to work with local community groups, or the company simply finds a 'good cause'. Other approaches are concerned less with reputation enhancement than with reputation protection.

- The second generation is developing where organizations, and whole industries, see CSR as an integral part of long-term business strategy. This is where the businesses, taking a lead in the field of CSR, are positioned. There is a growing body of evidence that CSR is good for business, and leadership by pioneering companies and business leaders has been crucial in moving companies towards second generation CSR.
- The third generation of CSR is needed in order to make a significant contribution to addressing poverty, exclusion and environmental degradation. This will go beyond voluntary approaches by individual organizations and will involve leadership companies and organizations influencing the markets in which they operate and how the markets are regulated to re-mould whole markets toward sustainability. This process will need to involve both partnerships with civil society and changes in public policy, which will both reward CSR and penalize poor performance. According to him this process could include changes to the corporate tax regime, mandatory social and environmental reporting and support for consumer education.

The above issues raised many contentious and unanswered questions regarding the parameters of responsibility of an organization: Where should the lines drawn between the responsibility of the private sector, the state, and civil society to deliver the 'public good'? Will the market be able to shift in line with leading CSR companies, or will these 'leading lights' be priced out of a market? In essence, what is required, according to the above-mentioned writers, is an understanding of the pathway towards Third Generation, CSR that achieves societal as well as business development [14].

2.2 *Definition of SMSEs*

SMEs varied from country to country, since countries do not use the same definition for classifying their SME sectors. Nor does a universal definition appear to be necessary. The definitions in use depend on the purposes those definitions are required to serve and the policies which govern the SME sector. However, the three parameters generally applied by most countries, singly or in combination are: capital investment on plant and machinery; number of workers employed; and volume of production or business turnover. [3]

In most countries it is, therefore, accepted practice to make use of quantitative and qualitative criteria when attempting to define a small or medium-sized enterprise. The most general quantitative measure for a small business is the number of people it employs, and from a qualitative point of view, the general criterion is that the owner must be part of the management of the business [15]. The European definition of SME follows: "The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro." [16].

SMSEs was also defined in Nigeria, as an industry with total capital employed of over N1.5million, including working capital but excluding, cost of land and/or a labor size of 11 to 100 workers [17].

2.3 *Motives behind the participation of SMSEs in SR*

According to the European Multi-stakeholder Forum for Corporate Social Responsibility, said that apart from SMEs being driven to CSR because of the personal beliefs and values of the owners/managers, many SMEs are driven by some combination

of minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities. In this regard, the Forum identified the following drivers of CSR for SMEs [16].

TABLE: 1 Benefit of SMSEs from SR activities

PERFORMANCE/BENEFIT TO ORGANISATION	PERFORMANCE/BENEFIT TO STAKE HOLDERS
<p>TANGIBLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales growth • Profit growth <p>INTANGIBLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community goodwill • Access to local talent • Customer loyalty • Increase customer base • Employee loyalty • Increase productivity • Motivated workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce local unemployment • Community improvement • Community contribution as percentage of gross profit • Social and economic inclusion • Social cohesion in the community • Customer satisfaction • Happy workers • Job satisfaction • Skill development • Employability • Work/life balance

SOURCE: Derive and adapted from Dennis, Y.D. and Pretorius, M. (2009).

- Attracting, retaining and developing motivated and committed employees especially because the speed of market and technology changes requires flexible and committed staff.
- Being a good neighbor - maintaining a license to operate from the local community.
- Reputation - with internal and external stakeholders.
- Cost and efficiencies savings - for example, reduced insurance and landfill costs.
- Product/market innovation, differentiation, and competitive edge; and the need for more sources of creativity and innovation in business.
- Winning and retaining consumers and business customers (supply chain pressures and opportunities).
- Responding to pressures from banks and insurers.

- Changing perceptions of the role of business in society - through the media, education, and actions by stakeholders.
- Networking opportunities.

2.4 What restrict the participation of SMSEs in SR

There are numerous reason that created setback to the participation of SMSE in the SR activities, especially those SMSEs in the under develops countries. However, to mention but a few, are;

- Incidence of multiplicity of regulatory agencies and taxes which has always resulted in high cost of doing business and poor management practices and low entrepreneurial skill arising from inadequate educational and technical background or many SME promoters [18].
- SMEs, being largely "invisible", are unlikely to see SR in terms of risk to their brand image or reputation. The writers maintain that the majority of them are simply content to survive; and as long as they are earning a decent living, there is little incentive to reduce the bottom line with SR related activities [19].
- Since the majority of SMEs operate only in the domestic market, or in export markets that have not had to respond to scrutiny on ethical issues, therefore, 'business case' for SR must be found elsewhere [20].
- SME's owners perceive SR activities as a cost that will result in competitive disadvantage [21]
- There is increasing recognition that SMEs are not miniature versions of large firms and that SR practices cannot simply be scaled down.
- SMEs are heterogeneous, and their size, resources, management style and personal relationships make it difficult for them to adopt the social responsibility practices of large organizations.
- The stakeholder relationships for an SME may be based on a more informal, trusting basis and characterized by intuitive and personal engagement [22].
- Apart from time and knowledge constraints, small business owners also cite a lack of financial resources as one of the main stumbling blocks to engaging in SR practices.
- More important than the practical barriers to engage in socially responsible activities are the cognitive processes that forgo such actions. If an issue is not recognized, then the propensity for socially responsible action is low [22].

2.5 Data collection methods

The study include, registered SMSEs that obtained loan from Yobe state board of small and medium scale enterprises. Random sampling was administered to select a sample size across the state. The total sample selected was eighty one (81) SMSEs and this is only limited to those SMSEs that were either in manufacturing sector, servicing or trading industries. This is because SMSEs are many and differently categorized, hence this application limit the scope. The method was employed because the essence is to draw a conclusion from individual characteristic on the bases of trying to generalize the findings. The choice of 81 SMSEs is adopted upon ethical and cost consideration. The primary data was collected from the response of managers/owners of SMSEs with a semi structured self-designed questionnaire. The hypothesis was tested with chi-s

Table: 2 Peculiar activities relevant for their participation MSMEs.

PRACTICAL SR ACTIVITIES to communities/environment	PRACTICAL SR ACTIVITIES to customers	PRACTICAL SR ACTIVITIES to employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employment • Philanthropy (bursaries etc) • Employee community volunteerism • Disaster relief • Support to community orgs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honest marketing • Speedy customer complain handling • Politeness to customers • Commitment to customer care • Product safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care provision • Prohibition of child labor • Gender diversity • Flexi working practices • Prohibition of compulsory overtime • Payment of above living wage • Religious tolerance • Compassionate leave • Availability of training

Sources: Dennis Y Z (2008) with adaptation

The respondents of the actual study were randomly selected, using disproportionate stratified random squire (χ^2) and Yates correction method was implore to reduce the errors that may likely occur, whilst using the chi-squire for a 2x2 contingency table.

Testing the hypothesis = Ho: SMSEs do not participate in social responsibility activities.

Test instrument: Chi-squire (χ^2) using Yates correction method

From the formula $\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(OF - EF)^2}{EF}$

Where: OF= Observed frequency

EF= Expected frequency

χ^2 = chi square

Table 3: Categories of SMSEs

Categories of SMSEs	Total frequency
Service sector:	
• School services	3
• Restaurant	
• Barbing saloon	6
• Tailoring	6
• Coffee center/tea seller	
• Car repairers	9
	3
	3
Trading sector:	
• Cosmetic stores	6
• Provision store	
• Kiddies ware stores	6
• Patent store	3
• Kitchen wares store	
	3
	3
Manufacturing sector:	
• Water producers	6
• Bakeries	
• Printers	3
• Grain milling	3
• Welding	
	9
	9
TOTAL	81

Sources: survey data 2014

Table 4: The responses of SMSEs and their approach to SR activities

Approach to SR activities	Service industries	Trading industries	Manufacturing industries	Percentage (%)
Participated	9	6	11	32%
Not participated	21	15	19	68%
TOTAL	30	21	30	100%

Source: survey data 2014

$$\text{The expected frequency (EF)} = \frac{\text{Total row} \times \text{Total column}}{\text{Sample size}}$$

Therefore;

1) Expected frequency for service industries are:

$$\text{Row 1: } \frac{26 \times 30}{81} = 9.63$$

$$\text{Row 2: } \frac{55 \times 30}{81} = 20.37$$

2) Expected frequency for trading industries are:

$$\text{Row 1: } \frac{26 \times 21}{81} = 6.74$$

$$\text{Row 2: } \frac{55 \times 21}{81} = 14.26$$

3) Expected frequency for manufacturing industries are:

$$\text{Row 1: } \frac{26 \times 30}{81} = 9.63$$

$$\text{Row 2: } \frac{55 \times 30}{81} = 20.37$$

Table 5: presentation of the summary of observed and expected frequencies of SMSEs

SR activities	Number of participant & non participant	Service industries		Trading industries		Manufacturing ind.	
		OF	EF	OF	EF	OF	EF
Participated	26	9	9.63	6	6.74	11	9.63
Not participated	55	21	20.37	15	14.26	19	20.37
TOTAL	81	30	30	21	21	30	30

Source: survey data 2014

Instead of calculating for (OF – EF), in Yates correction 0.5 is subtracted from the absolute value of (OF-EF) for every items, so as to make the answer less approximated (IOF-EFI-0.5)

Table 6: Calculation of the Yates correction method

OF	EF	(OF - EF)	(IOF – EFI – 0.5)	$(IOF - EFI - 0.5)^2$	$\frac{(IOF - EFI - 0.5)^2}{EF}$
9	9.63	-0.63	-1.13	1.06	0.11
21	20.37	0.63	1.13	0.36	0.02
6	6.74	-0.74	-1.24	1.11	0.16
15	14.26	0.74	1.24	0.49	0.03
11	9.63	1.37	0.87	0.93	0.10
19	20.37	-1.37	-0.87	1.37	0.07
TOTAL					0.49

Source: survey data 2014

NOTES: The degree of freedom is 1 because, (R-1)(C-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = 1

Decision rule: Reject null hypotheses (Ho) if the calculated value of chi-square (χ^2) is greater than the critical or table value which is 3.84 at 1 degree of freedom and 5% level of significance. Discursion

Therefore, since the calculated chi-square value (χ^2) is 0.49, which is less than the critical or table value (3.84), the null hypothesis was accepted.

3. Results

Out of the whole sample (81), 68% percent of sample populations were not participating in any of the SR activities. Whereas only 32% percent were actually engaged in SR activities, but unknown to them that what they are doing is SR.

Another observation shows that, manufacturing sector of the sample indicated greater participant which carried 42% out of the 100% of those participated, where service and trade sectors goes with 35% and 23% respectively.

Below represent a summary table of the number of participant and their percentage varying from sector to sector.

Table 7: number and percentage of participant

Industries	Number of participant	Percentage of participant
Servicing	9	35%
Trading	6	23%
Manufacturing	11	42%
Total	26	100%

Source: Survey data 2014

3.1 Discursion

Reason behind the championship of manufacturing sectors amongst the participant comes due to the control of an organization called national food and drugs agency (NAFDAC). They control sectors such as bakeries, water producers etc. In view of these, it enhances their capability in participating in more socially responsible attitude in comparism to other sectors.

The test result revealed that the SMSEs in Yobe state, Nigeria are:

- Not socially responsible
- Lacks information about what actually is social responsibility
- Lacks knowledge of relevant dimension of social responsibility and the related activities.

The small percentage of the participant was only recorded due to some external forces, such as

- government regulation
- Environmental factors and
- Competitors.

These findings is not in variance with the work of Chetty in his paper ‘‘social responsibility among small and medium enterprises’’. The findings indicate that the majority of SMEs in KNZ tend to be particularly limited in respect of their social responsibility towards the community and the natural environment [9].

4. Conclusion

Nigerian SMSEs so to say are in a vacuum, internal and external business reforms are not carried and build within the organizations’ mission and objectives. Even if done, the implementation becomes a problem. Social responsibilities as a whole is live wire of business growth, as the study indicated, the greater percentage of SMSEs were not even aware of what actually is SR, nor the dimension relevant to them. Therefore, SMSEs should Incorporates the activities of SR in their mission statement as an obligatory attitude. Such will enhance business growth and of course compute effectively with the international sister SMSEs. Let me summarize with the word of Michael A. who lament that Ethos, pathos and logos are classical elements of Aristotelian rhetoric. Ethos refers to the personality or trustworthiness of the speaker who expresses herself with integrity and reputation. Logos refers to the internal consistency of reasoning, whereas pathos is an appeal to (the audience’s) emotion. In the organizational context, this kind of pathos is an indispensable element of (ethical) leadership and a driving force when striving for (business) excellence and (organizational) improvements. Pathos for ethics can influence business life or the way corporations unfold their corporate strategies and conduct their business [23]. Today, the need for responsible business practice, fair reward policy, stable business relations, job security and sustainable corporate policy are felt more than ever. SR reflection becomes a foremost duty of responsible management.

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