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SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA (EVIDENCE FROM ABEOKUTA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OGUN STATE)

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Abstract

The study examines the impact of Socio-Economic infrastructure on business sustainability of SMEs in Abeokuta south local government area, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. From the statistical result, it was found that there is a significant relationship between Socio-Economic infrastructure and business sustainability, with a confidence level of 99%. All three hypotheses tested were in support of this relationship. The result from the model summary table revealed that the extent to which the variance, Business growth can be explained by organizational training is 60.6% (R Square = 0.606). Revealed that the extent to which the variance, Business growth can be explained by organizational training is 60.6% (R Square = 0.606). Table 4.3.3 shows that the simple model that expresses the significant impact between organizational training and Business growth and also highly significant at 1% level. As a result. This study recommended that Governments should aim at improving infrastructure such as roads and telecommunication as well as power supply and water as a way of promoting the growth of SMEs. Government should seek ways to support SMEs and provide the needed infrastructures such as education to aid their survival and also SMEs should work on ways to attract government interest and attention.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Infrastructure is one of the most critical factors for business sustainability because it interacts with the enterprises

through the production processes and changes in the quality of infrastructure available for production will greatly impact

the production and performance of an organization's levels of output, income, profits and employment creation in the economy. This is because of its direct link with the productivity (Adenikinju 2005). Despite the direct link between the availability and quality of infrastructure electricity, portable water and poor road maintenance to business sustainability (Oseni & Pollitt 2013). The availability of infrastructure in most developing countries especially in the sub-Saharan African region leaves much to be desired (World Bank 2013, 2014). The gap in the availability of infrastructure in Nigeria has greatly impacted on the production processes in the manufacturing sector, especially the ability of the SMEs to compete in the global market.

Some of the reasons given were infrastructural limitations, access to finance, access to enterprise support services, unfavorable business environment and poor access to information about sources of raw materials and market network. Interest in the development of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and their contribution to the development process continue to be in the forefront of policy debates in developing countries. The advantages claimed for SMEs are various including; the encouragement of entrepreneurship, the greater likelihood that SMEs will utilize labor intensive technologies thus have an immediate effect on the promotion of business activities.

Sani (2010) believes that indices of micro-economic infrastructural amenities are inadequate and the operation of the functional ones has not been efficient. This indeed has dire consequences for business performance. The SME sector in Nigeria operates in an environment with very poor infrastructure, which deter prospecting

firms from entry and hinders international competitiveness (Kessides, 2008; Mandel, 2008; Akinwale, 2010).

Therefore, for these small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to thrive, certain infrastructures must be in place to promote and encourage the activities of such businesses. Infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. It can be generally defined as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide framework supporting an entire structure of development. It is an important term for judging a country or region's development.

The term typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, bridges, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications, and so forth, and can be defined as "the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions." Infrastructure refers to resource systems that have been harnessed for the development of a society. Such systems include telecommunications, energy, transportation, governance and other public utilities (Frischmann, 2005; Frischmann, 2007). The development of a society depends on availability of infrastructures at homes or industries. Acute shortages of infrastructures in Nigeria affect individuals and organization in the country.

Different articles relating to this concept have being published in this area as well as numerous investigations and researches, being conducted mainly in the developed world. However, few researches

have been made in the Third World countries. Hence, there is need to extend this research to Nigeria's SMEs sector which is Ogun state. Ogun State is a juggernaut in the fields of SMEs industry and academic institutions and it experiences industrial revolution, making it a Centre of industrial activities and a manufacturing hub.

Statement of the Problem

Infrastructures are basic essential services that should be put in place to enable development to occur. Social and economic activities can be facilitated and accelerated by the presence of infrastructures. It takes little analysis to see that infrastructures play a major role in the economy of a country whether developing or developed. The need for good infrastructure is of great importance to businesses and their owners all over the world and over various sectors of the economy (Adeola, 2005; Agba et al, 2010; Adenipekun, 2013).

But unfortunately, the provision infrastructures to meet the demand of businesses and hence, positively affect the performance of their operation are still in low demand in some parts of the country. It is widely believed that the key to business survival is knowledge. Any who has broken into the business scene recently and has been successful has only been able to do that due to his education and experience. Sound business education will help a business owner to develop his ability to tailor his messages to different types of audiences (communication).

Sales skills are also a specialized subset of communications; a business education helps to develop effective sales methods that suit his field of business. Through education prospective business owners will have progressively more

challenging educational activities that will enable them to develop the insight needed to discover and create businesses and manage the businesses. Therefore, many start-up businesses have collapsed completely due to the lack of education which makes it difficult for the owner to interact well with customers and develop new strategies at tackling competition.

Also in the business world of today, Power/Electricity is very important to the effective performance and continued operation of SMEs. Many businesses have moved from Nigeria to other countries due to the continued drop in electricity supply. Lack of power/electricity infrastructures negatively affects the productivity and profitability of manufacturing SMEs (Adelakan, 2005; Akinwale, 2010; Doe & Asamoah, 2014). The poor quality of electricity supplies in the country is perceived by SMEs to impact their operations negatively. Voltage fluctuations and power outages can halt production, damage equipments and affect product quality. Therefore, it is generally believed that poor power/electricity infrastructure is a serious constraint on SME performance.

In today's digital (information and communication technology) driven environment, it is essential that small businesses understand the used of internet and the strategies behind using ICT for growing their business. Unfortunately, many small businesses do lack digital environment strategy as part of socio-economic infrastructure factor (Adegbuyi & Akinyele, 2015). Moreover, one of the most prevalent areas in which a SME's have problems is socio-economic is to employ/carry out digital environment activities for the business. Digital environment has significantly changed the relationships among customers and

organization by creating and allowing a two-way communication.

It is against this backdrop that makes investigating the impact of organizational training, access to Power

outage and digital environment as well as their effect on the business sustainability of selected SMEs in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State paramount.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Fig 2.1 Conceptual Model showing Effect of Socio-Economic Infrastructure and Business Sustainability

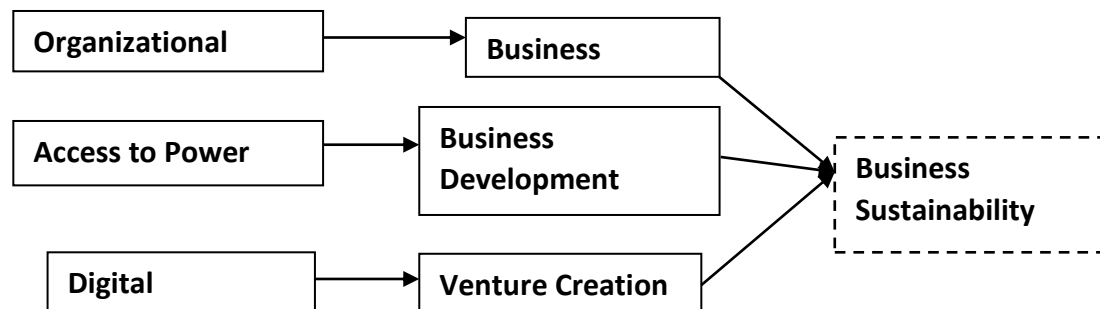


Figure 2.1: the figure above shows the conceptualization of Socio-Economic Infrastructure and Business Sustainability

Source: Researcher's Model (2021)

Concept of Infrastructure

Infrastructure is one of the key components of production and economic development, Fluctuations in the quality of infrastructure used in the production processes will affect in a great deal the performance of an organization in terms of quantity of output, income, profits and job creation in the economy. Even though the presence and quality of infrastructure directly affecting economic development, the availability of proper infrastructure in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa is still limited (Obokoh & Goldman, 2016). Lack of proper infrastructure in developing countries has affected the abilities of SMEs to fairly compete in the global market.

Infrastructure is basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. It can be generally

defined as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide framework supporting an entire structure of development. It is an important term for judging a country or region's development. The term typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, bridges, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications, and so forth, and can be defined as "the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions."

Research on infrastructure dwells on different issues such as education, roads, water supply, power grids, telecommunications, and hospitals (Adelakan, 2005; Abosedra *et al.*, 2009; Mandel, 2008; Achimugu *et al.*, 2010).

In developing countries such as Nigeria, road and poor electricity supply are the twin major infrastructure problems confronting the business sector, including SMEs. In recent times, the introduction of the global system of the mobile communication helped in reducing to some extent the problem of communication in Nigeria, though at a great cost to subscribers. It has been observed that a typical Nigerian firm experiences power failure more than seven times per week without the benefit of prior warning (Adenikinju 2005). This imposes a huge cost on the SMEs arising from idle workers, spoiled materials, lost output, damaged equipment and costs of providing own electricity. The overall effect is the increase in business uncertainty, increase in operational costs, reduced competitiveness and lower return on investment (Nwankwo 2000).

The growth potential of SMEs and even large-scale businesses has been seriously impaired by a lack of functional infrastructure (Adenikinju 2005; Cissokho & Seck 2013). The infrastructure problem has become so deplorable that even some MNCs are closing down their factories and shifting operations to other countries.

The Concept of Organizational Training

Training is considered as the process of improving the existing skills, knowledge, exposure, and abilities in an individual (Azara, Syed and Muhammad, 2013). According to Saleem and Mehwish (2011) training is an organized increase from the know-how skills and sensations needed for staff members to execute efficiently in the offered process, as well as, to operate in underling situation. Laing (2009) defines training as an indicator to enhance superior skills, knowledge, capabilities and outlook

of the employees that results in effective performance of the workers.

Ofofokun and Nwakoby (2015) perceived training as the process of developing employees' skills and learning new concepts, rules or attitudes in order to increase effectiveness on a particular job. Dialoke (2015) viewed training as teaching or developing in oneself or others, skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies. Wajdi, Khalil and Maria (2014) perceived training as a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge, skill or behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Other scholars that have perceived training as a planned process are Beardwell and Holden (2001).

They opined that training is a planned process that is used to change attitudes, knowledge, skills and behavior through the learning experience in order to achieve effective performance in a specific activity or range of activities (Beardwell and Holden, 2001). For DeNisi and Griffin (2008), training is a planned attempt by an organization to facilitate employee learning of job-related knowledge, skills, and behaviour.

Training and Business Sustainability

Bowra et al. (2011) has found successful organizations tend to progressively know that there are volume of factors which contribute to performance of organization but human resource is definitely the most essential one. According to Tharenou, Alan and Celia (2007) the goal of training is to enhance the organization effectiveness. It also demands an influence on employee's performance, as well as in relation to organizational performance

which is mediated by means of employee's performance.

Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) said that training improves the overall organization profitability, effectiveness, productivity, and revenue and other outcomes that are directly related to the training in improving the quality of services. Thang and Drik (2008) argued that the success of organization is determined by human resources, definitely not physical resources and is highly endorsed to increase the organization's investments in training in order to offer superior expertise, knowledge and features pertaining to employees rather than their competitors relationship between training and organization performance. AL-Damoe et al. (2012) claimed that business sustainability is measured through financial and non-financial measures like sale, profit, and market share and non-financial factors measures are efficiency, quality of service, productivity of organization, satisfaction of employees and commitment these factors can increase through training. Olaniyan and Lucas (2008) believe that training enhances the employees' capacity to contribute the optimal performance of the organization.

Electricity Outages and Business Sustainability

Business sustainability is the wish of both the entrepreneurs and the State, because of the important role Business sustainability play in the economic development of the individual and the nation at large (beck & Robert, 2014), as a result, efforts are geared towards the growth of Business sustainability from several angles, yet challenges and other factors usually result in stunted growth and early demise of Business sustainability.

A positive correlation has been established by several researchers (Adenikinju, 2005; Rud, 2012) between electricity infrastructure usage by firms and higher growth in firm's productivity and the economy. Hence poor and interrupted electricity supply and its accompanied high tariff lead to lower performance and productivity (Chissokho & seck, 2013). In explanation on the existence of output variations of firms in different countries, (Isaksson, 2009) found that, the existence of reliable electricity infrastructure plays a significant role in firm's growth and development disparities.

Digital Environment

As organizations see their daily activities within a digital environment, the integrations between the various activities generally become stronger and intentional. Optimum digital environments require communications and integrations within individual devices, such as [computers](#), [servers](#), [mobile devices](#), and other personal digitally-based devices, as well as communications and integrations between computer [software applications](#) and programs. For example, a digital environment in an organization includes systems of [email servers](#), Storage/data servers, [accounting software](#) programs, web-based applications, customer relationship management ([CRM](#)) applications and websites. An optimum digital environment would include the strategy and implementation of all of those systems, software programs and applications to work in an integrated environment, which allows them to communicate with each other and with other digital environments outside the organization.

According to Ige and Apulu (2011) showed that most small businesses in Nigeria used ICT for basic operations, such as word processing, prints, and fax machines, but hardly used ICT for computer analysis, or planning and decision making. Ige and Apulu claim that power failure and infrastructural deficiencies were instrumental to the low usage of ICT. They recommended repositioning of the power sector in Nigeria, to foster the distribution of the efficient power supply. Aleke et al. (2011), researchers from Northumbria University and University of Southampton used data from focus group made up of 27 agribusiness proprietors in Nigeria to support their hypothesis that a balance is needed for the amounts of effort expended in the design of ICT and social factors such as language and traditional life.

Research Method

This study adopted quantitative data analysis for this study; the survey research design was employed. The scope of the study covers Abeokuta south Local Government area, Ogun State, Nigeria. The respondents who are owners of businesses (SMEs) in the areas were purposively selected in order to accomplish the objective of the study.

Primary method of data collection was used for this study through a field survey of businesses with the aid of purposive well-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires instrument was designed using five (5) likert's scale, as well as through an in-depth personal interview guided by the questions raised in the questionnaire which proved to be most effective due to the fact that most respondents could not fill in their responses or due to time constraints. A sample of 109 respondents was identified from a population of 150 respondents among selected small and medium enterprises within the study area using purposive sampling method of yaro-Yemane calculation based on reports of the number of small and medium businesses in the study area and approximately 93.0% of the administered questionnaires were retrieved. Each of the dependent and independent variables of the research construct were measured by three (3) items each validated by different authors found in extant literature.

Interpretation of Result

Linear Regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses and analyze the dependent and independent variables.

Hypothesis 1: Organizational training does not have significant effect on Business growth.

Table 4.3.1 Model Summary of Organizational training and Business growth

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.527 ^a	.606	.507	.74942

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational training

Table 4.3.2 ANOVA^a of Organizational training and Business growth

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.143	1	4.143	77.378	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.409	104	.562		
	Total	62.552	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Business Growth

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational training

Interpretation of Results

The result from the model summary table revealed that the extent to which the variance, Business growth can be explained by organizational training is 60.6% (R Square = 0.606). The ANOVA table shows

the Fcal 77.378 at 0.000 significant level. The table shows that there is a significant impact between organizational training and Business growth.

Table 4.3.3 Coefficients^a of Organizational training and Business growth

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.523	.385		6.559	.000
	Organizational training	.263	.097	.257	2.716	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Business Growth

Decision

The above result implies that there is a significant impact between organizational training and Business growth i.e. since our P value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Thus, the decision would be to reject null hypothesis (Ho) and accept alternative hypothesis (H1), i.e. there is a significant impact between organizational training and Business growth.

Conclusion

The importance of SMEs is such that cannot be ignored by the socio-economic infrastructure of any country especially in Nigeria. Consequently it has been agreed

that the growth of SMEs constitutes one of the corner stones of economic development in the country. In other words, SMEs constitute the driving force of industrial growth and development in the country. It therefore makes it a sector that should be focused on and cared for, nurtured by the government by making socio-economic infrastructure more feasible to all companies especially manufacturing firms at the right time as they in their production capacity to thrive and survive.

It was however discovered that socio-economic infrastructure to a large

extent determines SMEs sustainability in Abeokuta south local government area, Abeokuta, Ogun State, and that some factors such as political instability, political interference, poor management, poor attitude, financial mismanagement, and government policy militate against socio-economic infrastructure to encourage youth to established SMEs businesses towards achieving their aims of promoting SMEs sustainability.

To this end, it is high time small and medium scale enterprises owner attach more importance and pay attention to the areas of socio-economic infrastructure as socio-economic infrastructure reduce cost of production and to a large extent positively affects SMEs sustainability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study and further to induce SMEs performance in Nigeria, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. Governments should aim at improving infrastructure such as roads and telecommunication as well as power supply and water as a way of promoting the growth of SMEs.
- ii. Government should seek ways to support SMEs and provide the needed infrastructures such as education to aid their survival and also SMEs should work on ways to attract government interest and attention.
- iii. There is need for government to consciously develop the business environment by provision of necessary infrastructure, which will lower the cost of doing business in Nigeria this will induce the growth of SMEs.
- iv. The Nigeria government should recognized the importance of SMEs and attach priority to the

development of SMEs by encouraging the socio-economic infrastructure to assist them because they constitute a major tool in boosting employment in the country.

- v. SMEs should outsource for and utilize more sophisticated technology in its operations as this will increase their sales and give them an edge over their competitors.

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