



EXTENT OF UTILIZATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF TOP MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT AND TEAM WORK BY SMES FOR IMPROVED BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract: The study investigated the extent of utilization of top management commitment and team work principles by small and medium scale enterprises for improved business performance in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 2,895 small and medium scale enterprises managers in Anambra State who are registered with the State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Technology. The sample of the study comprised of 869 small and medium scale enterprises managers. The sample was drawn from 2895 registered SMEs across the three senatorial zones (Anambra Central, Anambra North and Anambra South) in Anambra State using proportionate stratified random sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale. The instrument was validated by three experts. The instrument was subjected to a pilot test. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded scores of .70 and .80 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.75 for internal consistency which was deemed reliable for the study. The researcher administered the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of six research assistants. Out of the 869 copies of questionnaire administered, 739 were returned in good condition. The 739 copies amounted to 85 percent return rate. The 739 copies of questionnaire were used for the analysis of data. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and t-test were also used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that small and medium scale enterprises utilize top management commitment principle and team work principle for improved business performance to a high extent. Findings further revealed that the respondents did not differ in their opinions based on size and location of business. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended among others, that Managers of SMEs should make concerted efforts towards improving their knowledge and application of leadership principles in their business operations. They can do these through the reading of books and journals on effective leadership principles for improved business performance.

Keywords: Utilization, Top Management Commitment, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs), and Team Work

Introduction

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) are critical to the growth and development of any nation. This is because SMEs are seen as vital to employment generation, wealth creation and national development. Small and medium scale enterprises are vital to supporting the development of the private sector and joint ventures, and therefore need to remain competitive

and produce high-quality results, which are of paramount importance not only at the macro level but also at the micro level. The existence of these small and medium-sized businesses contributes to the expanded economic activities and a realistic Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) base for the government of Anambra State.

It is against this background that it becomes pertinent to provide a clear definition of small and medium scale



enterprises in the context of the study. According to Ohachosim, Onwuchekwa and Ifeanyi (2012), a small business is a company or business entity with an investment capital of up to one hundred and fifty thousand naira (N150,000) and employing not more than 50 people or staff. Ohachosim, Onwuchekwa and Ifeanyi (2012) further described small businesses as those companies or business entities with total property, facilities, plant and working capital assets that do not exceed N250,000 and employing not more than 30 full-time employees. Furthermore, small-scale enterprises are businesses with less than 100 staff and total assets below N50 million (Monday, Argozie, Bello & Unam, 2015). Onwughalu (2014) described small enterprises as those businesses with at least five employees as well as a maximum of 50 employees. Similarly, Onwughalu (2014) defined medium scale enterprises as those businesses with staff strength spanning between 20-50 and 300-500 for export and manufacturing industries. Onwughalu explained that small scale enterprises in some industrialized nations employ a maximum of 100 employees, with trade and manufacturing options. On the other hand, Oroka (2013) defined medium scale enterprises as business whose operational resources are smaller than N200 million and whose staff strength are fewer than 300 individuals.

The above definitions and classifications of SMEs point to the fact that small and medium scale enterprises are business entities founded by individuals or groups of individuals for the purpose of providing products and services. In this research, the researcher defines small and medium scale enterprises as any enterprise with a maximum asset base of N200 million, excluding land and working capital, with the number of staff employed by the enterprise not less than 10 and not exceeding 300. Many of these types of businesses are run by entrepreneurs who are the individuals who fund and operate the business operations exclusively and sometimes with the help of family members and few other employees. The fact that SMEs are managed by the founders of the businesses with the help of their family members and friends seems to have affected their

capacity and competitiveness in the dynamic and competitive global business world. SMEs must embrace and employ quality management principles for performance enhancement to remain competitive. Without this, SMEs can't survive on the global marketplace (Mutingi & Mbohwa, 2017). Monday, Argozie, Bello and Unam (2015) described weak management skills as a primary impediment to competitiveness of SMEs in Nigeria. Agbola (2013) thought that some of the challenges faced by SMEs could be due to various quality concerns such as low product efficiency, weak market infrastructure, lack of loyalty to top management and poor leadership. Kumari and Kumar (2017) held that if SMEs enshrines the ideals and principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), the enterprises flourishes and becomes successful. Hence, Total Quality Management (TQM) is seen as a management principle that improves business performance and competitiveness. TQM is a management principle that promotes the continuous improvement of the standard of products and services in order to satisfy consumers and increase business performance. Israr and Gangele (2014) stated that TQM prioritizes continuous improvement on aspects of business operation through a new business management system. TQM prioritizes a holistic dedication to customer satisfaction and is capable of supporting the creation of a strategic approach that aligns a business with its diverse markets. It is a customer-oriented and measurement-driven management that uses formal and well-organized operational principles. Top management commitment and team work are two of the principles of TQM.

Top management commitment principle is a very important principle of TQM that promotes the commitment of business managers towards ensuring improvements in business operations. Puffer and McCarthy in Gitangu (2015) suggested that the capacity of the top management to establish a vision and facilitate transformation is at the center of effective adoption of TQM. Gitangu (2015) opined that to ensure the successful execution of the TQM, the top management



has a crucial role to play through deep engagement. Top management commitment plays a vital role in building trust with employees, and must go beyond adopting slogans of improving quality and become more involved in quality efforts at various planning, implementation and monitoring phases. Top managers must focus on developing people's skills and capacities through the engagement of employees in several kinds of training programmes, which provide the organizations with skillful sales-force and marketing team (Jones & Grimshaw, 2012). Top managers should involve all employees in the implementation and design stages in order to meet the expectations of stakeholders, students, and to raise levels of quality and satisfaction (Pencarelli, Splendiani & Cini, 2013). To guarantee that top management executes their duties efficiently, they need to provide teamwork, team development in the decision-making processes of the enterprise.

Team work requires employees collaborating together to accomplish the enterprise's aims. Team work will put more workers together to meet company objectives. Teamwork is essential for the TQM philosophy as it creates self-confidence, enhances coordination and breaks the ties of over reliance on the business enterprise (Ekiz, Ozgurer & Sian, 2015). Ekiz et al (2015) noted that SMEs' who engage in team work principle at all levels of management do attain improved performance because it allows them to engage in strategic planning. According to Oster (2012), teamwork has become an essential element in the success and survival of businesses. Oster maintained that teams are able to reach their goals when they have inspiring leaders, well-qualified team members and well-defined goals or missions. Research (Greenwood, 2012) shows that team members should have the following attributes: (1) a common purpose and clear goals; (2). the necessary skills and resource; (3) a common approach to work; (4) the willingness to share information; (5) trust and support in each other; (6) the ability to work through conflict; and (7) the willingness to take responsibility for team actions. Consequently, it is important for owners of SMEs to apply top management commitment and team work

principles in the management of their business operation for improved business performance.

Business performance, according to Zulkiffli and Perera (2011), is defined as the organizational capacity to meet the needs of the major stakeholders of a business which is determined in order to measure the achievement of an enterprise. The standard metrics used to assess business performance are income, return on investment (ROI), turnover or amount of clients, consistency of design and product development. Therefore, business performance in the context of this study is the capacity of a business enterprise to sustain or accomplish its predefined goals through the achievement of improved profitability and a strong return on investment. However, the level of business performance among SMEs in Anambra State seems not to be encouraging. This appear to be evident in low level of output in terms of production and service delivery, poor quality products or services and lack of employee development and training programmes (Onwuka, Asogwu, Ezeigwe & Dibua, 2014). Sadly, these problems point to poor utilization of top management commitment and team work principles in their business operations. Factors like size and the location of business could influence SMEs application of TQM principles in their business operations. However, these views have not been empirically proven to be the true among SMEs in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State are the major contributor to the state internally generated revenue. Despite these contributions, SMEs in Anambra State appear to not have reached its full potentials. This is because some of the SMEs in the State are faced with issue related to poor quality goods and services. Some SMEs in the state appear to be struggling to run, maintain and develop their businesses effectively in order to produce quality goods and services on time (Onwuka, Asogwu, Ezeigwe & Dibua, 2014). This seems to indicate poor management commitment towards ensuring quality practices. However, these are assumptions and have not been proven empirically. It is against this background that this study is conducted to



determine the extent of utilization of the principles of top management commitment and team work for improved business performance in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do SMEs utilize the principle of top management commitment for improved business performance in Anambra State?
2. To what extent do SMEs utilize the principle of team work for improved business performance in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent of utilization of top management commitment principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on size of enterprise.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent of utilization of team work principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on location of business.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 2,895 small and medium scale enterprises managers in Anambra State who are registered with the State Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Technology. The sample of the study comprised of 869 small and medium scale enterprises managers. The sample was drawn from 2895 registered SMEs across the three senatorial zones (Anambra Central, Anambra North and Anambra South) in Anambra State using proportionate stratified random sampling. The researcher sampled 30 percent of SMEs in each senatorial zone of the state. The use of the proportionate stratified random sampling was to ensure that representative from each stratum were equally represented. The instrument for data collection was a

structured questionnaire titled: “Questionnaire on Utilization of Top Management Commitment and Team Work Principles for Improved Business Performance (QUTMCTPIBP)”. The instrument has two main sections- A and B. Section A contains one item on respondents’ background information covering size of business and location of business. Section B contains 21 items. Cluster B1 contains 13 items on top management commitment principles and Cluster B2 contains eight items on team work principle. The instrument was structured on a 4- point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was given to two expert in the Department of Business Education and one expert in the Department of Science Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki for validation. To establish the instrument’s reliability, it was administered on a sample of 20 managers of small and medium scale enterprises in Asaba, Delta State who are not included in the population of the study. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded a score of 0.77 for internal consistency which was deemed reliable for the study.

The researcher administered the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of six research assistants. Direct delivery and retrieval method were employed in the administration of the instrument in order to minimize wastage and achieve a high return rate. The respondents were allowed some time to complete the questionnaire and were retrieved on the spot. However, in cases where this was not possible, an appointment was booked and the respondents concerned were revisited for retrieval of the instrument. Out of the 869 copies of questionnaire administered, 739 were returned in good condition. The 739 copies amounted to 85 percent return rate. The 739 copies of questionnaire were used for the analysis of data. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions. The item by item analysis was based on the real limits of numbers on a 4-point rating scale as shown below:



Response option	Values	Real Limit
Very High Extent (VHE)	4	3.50-4.00
High Extent (HE)	3	2.50-3.49
Low Extent (LE)	2	1.50-2.49
Very Low Extent (VLE)	1	0.50- 1.49

For the hypotheses, t-test was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the p value is greater than the significant level of 0.05, it meant that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents, therefore the hypothesis was accepted. Conversely, where the p value is less than the significant level of 0.05, it meant that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents, therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do SMEs utilize the principle of top management commitment for improved business performance in Anambra State?

Data collected to answer the research question is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Ratings on the Extent of SMEs Utilization of the Principles of Top Management Commitment for Improved Business Performance (N=739)

S/No.	Top Management Commitment principles	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Treating employees as individuals rather than just as members of a group for enhanced motivation.	2.97	.88	High Extent
2.	Regularly holding meetings with employees to discuss issues affecting the business.	2.72	.92	High Extent
3.	Delegating responsibilities to staff to motivate them to work.	2.55	1.01	High Extent
4.	Displaying a sense of confidence in carrying out duties	2.43	.96	Low extent
5.	Clearly explaining employees responsibility for achieving performance objectives	2.53	.93	High Extent
6.	Clearly stating rewards for successfully accomplished tasks.	2.77	.93	High Extent
7.	Rewarding employees for work well done	2.54	1.00	High Extent
8.	Regularly supervising employees' job performance	2.52	1.00	High Extent
9.	Giving employees feedback on their job performance	2.55	.92	High Extent
10.	Encouraging critical thinking among staff to make the business better.	2.75	.99	High Extent
11.	Encouraging problem solving among staff to make the business better.	2.81	1.01	High Extent
12.	Involving staff in setting goals	2.75	.99	High Extent
13.	Involving staff in determining when goals are achieved			



	2.59	.97	High Extent
Cluster Mean	2.65		High Extent

Based on the data in Table 1, small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State utilize items, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 11, 12 and 13 to a high extent with the mean ratings ranging between 2.52 to 2.97. However, small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State utilize item 4 to a low extent with the mean rating of 2.43. The standard deviation scores ranging between 0.88 to 1.01 reveal that the respondents’ opinions were close to each other. Furthermore, the cluster mean of 2.65 indicates

that SMEs utilize the principle of top management commitment for improved business performance in Anambra State to a high extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent do SMEs utilize the principle of team work for improved business performance in Anambra State?

Data collected to answer the research question is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Extent of Utilization of the Principles of Team Work for Improved Business Performance by SMEs (N=739)

S/No.	Team work principles	Mean	SD	Remarks
14.	Collaboratively carrying out business tasks with staff.	2.70	.91	High Extent
15.	Encouraging cooperation among staff to get jobs done.	2.63	.95	High Extent
16.	Encouraging team spirit among staff	2.71	.76	High Extent
17.	Ensuring good working relationship between senior and junior staff.	2.69	.82	High Extent
18.	Encouraging peer review among employees.	2.63	.86	High Extent
19.	Placing staff in teams so as to develop ideas for the business development plans	2.57	.97	High Extent
20.	Ensuring that inputs of team members are objectively considered in meetings.	2.35	.94	Low Extent
21.	Ensuring that decisions are unanimously agreed upon before being adopted.	2.39	.94	Low Extent
Cluster Mean		2.58		High Extent

Information in Table 2 reveals that small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State utilize items, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 to a high extent with the mean ratings ranging between 2.57 to 2.71. However, small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra State utilize items 20 and 21 to a low extent with the mean ratings of 2.35 and 2.39 respectively. The standard deviation scores ranging between .76 to .97 reveals that the respondents’ opinions were similar. Furthermore, the cluster mean of 2.58 indicates that SMEs utilize the principle of team

work to a high extent for improved business performance in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent of utilization of top management commitment principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on size of enterprise.

Data collected to test the hypothesis is presented on Table 3.



Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Managers of SMES on the Extent they Utilize Top Management Commitment Principles for Improved Business Performance

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	p-value	Decision
Small Enterprises	231	2.68	.96	737	.05	0.36	Not Significant
Medium Enterprises	508	2.61	.96				

Data in Table 3 showed that the p-value of 0.36 is greater than .05 alpha level of significance. This means that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent they utilize top management commitment principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on size, therefore the hypothesis was accepted. This means that the size of the businesses of the respondents (managers) had no influence on their responses.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Managers of SMES on the Extent they Team Work Principles for Improved Business Performance

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	α	p-value	Decision
Urban SMEs	536	2.52	.91	737	.05	0.01	Significant
Rural SMEs	203	2.70	.82				

Data in Table 10 showed that the p-value of 0.01 is less than .05 alpha level of significance. This means that there is a statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent they utilize team work principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on location, therefore the hypothesis was rejected. The responses were influenced by the location of the businesses of the respondents-urban and rural. Location determines the extent to which they utilize the principle of team work.

Discussion

The study revealed that small and medium scale enterprises utilize the principle of top management commitment for improved business performance to a high extent. This finding may have resulted because of the desire and efforts put in place by managers of SMEs in Anambra State to see that their business is profitable

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent of utilization of team work principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on location of business.

Data collected to test the hypothesis is presented on Table 4.

and competitive. The finding of the study is in agreement with Kumari and Kumar (2017) who reported that top management commitment is a key component of TQM utilized by SMEs. However, the findings of the study disagrees with Alintah-Abel, Okolie, Emoh and Agu (2018) who reported that top management commitment was implemented to a low extent. According to Shahab, Muhammad, Razia and Jia (2014), leadership behavior that shows top management commitment, consists of eight elements namely, develop a widely shared vision, build consensus about organizational goals and priorities, hold high performance expectations, provide individualized support, provide intellectual stimulation, model behavior, strengthen organizational culture and build collaborative structure.

Furthermore, findings of the study revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of small and medium scale enterprises on the extent they



utilize top management commitment principles for improved business performance in Anambra State based on size. This indicates that managers of small and medium scale enterprises irrespective of the size of their businesses utilize the principle of top management commitment to a high extent. This is in disagreement with Ali, Mohammad, Talib and Abdullah (2018) who stated that the size of an organization has an impact on the top management commitment since a formal approach to business management and planning may be more suitable in large companies than in small businesses.

The study revealed that SMEs utilize the principle of team work for improved business performance in Anambra State to a high extent. This finding is in disagreement with Nonxuba (2010) who reported that TQM principle of team work was not well implemented. However, Azizi (2017) stated that team work principle play a positive role in improving organizational performance. Adza-Awude (2012) opined that team work principle of TQM is very critical to SMEs performance. Furthermore, the finding of the study revealed that there exist a significant difference in the mean ratings of managers of SMEs in urban and rural areas on the extent they utilize team work principles for improved business performance in Anambra State. This is in agreement with Adil and Hamid (2020) who reported that external characteristics such as the location of a business could influence the utilization of TQM principles.

Conclusion

The researcher concludes based on the findings of the study that top management commitment and team work principles were utilized by SMEs for improved business performance in Anambra State. The utilization of these principles would ensure that goods and services produced by SMEs are of high quality. This would facilitate SME growth and development as well as ensure continuous development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

1. Managers of SMEs should make concerted efforts towards improving their knowledge and application of leadership principles in their business operations. They can do these through the reading of books and journals on effective leadership principles for improved business performance.

2. Managers of SMEs should continuously utilize the team work principles in their business operations. SMEs should, as a business rule, encourage employees to work in teams. This can be done by assigning duties to employees in groups.

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