

AFRREV IJAH  
An International Journal of Arts and Humanities  
Bahir Dar, Ethiopia  
Vol. 1 (3), August, 2012:323-339

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print)

ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

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**Hindrances towards Infusing Environmental Management  
into the Operation of Micro Enterprises in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*The economic situation of Nigeria today has led to the existence of numerous micro enterprises and they experience the biggest environmental impact. The non-consideration of environmental impact in the operations of micro enterprises in most cases lead to low productivity and untimely exit from the business arena. This study therefore aimed at finding out the hindrances towards infusing environmental management (EM) in the operations of micro enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. Survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was 450 operators of registered micro enterprises in Anambra State. A sample of 215 was drawn from the population. A structured questionnaire, validated by four experts was used*

*for data collection. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study identified lack of substantial capital, lack of proper managerial/entrepreneurship skills and infrastructure as factors that constitute barriers to effective infusion of environmental management in the business operations of micro enterprises. The study recommended among others that the three tiers of Nigerian government should carry out sensitization campaign on the implications of EM in the operations of micro enterprises and as well create massive awareness regarding government constituted environmental regulatory agencies and their functions in order to reduce clashes between entrepreneurs and the government officials. Adherence to these will help them to succeed in this modern competitive business world where technology is constantly changing the face of businesses.*

### **Introduction**

The 21st century has raised significantly the global profile of environmental issues. Businesses, organizations, institutions and Nigerian government have acknowledged environmental issues as one of the key concerns in the present social and economic world order. Biondi (2000) stressed that the need of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) for a reliable means of managing environmental issues has become increasingly important. This assertion is true especially with the Nigerian situation where the number of micro enterprises has been on the increase in today's business arena and they experience the biggest environmental impact which could be seen as the positive or negative effect of surroundings or environment on businesses. The implications of the environment issues call for a change in the manner and ways in which business of our modern time are operated. Zutshi and Sohal (2002) stated that the most effective way of addressing these issues is by developing and using environmental management system (EMS).

### **Concept of Micro Enterprises in Nigeria**

The term 'Micro' is relatively a new concept in business which according to Hornby (2000) means small or on a small scale. The meaning attached to micro business enterprise depends on the country in which the terminology is used. Hence, Hussmanns (2003) stressed that micro enterprises are defined on the basis of the following:

- The size of the business
- The amount of money invested in assets, excluding real estate.

- The number of employees (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NPC), 2003).

Micro enterprises, according to the Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME, 2003) is any enterprise whose capital investment excluding cost of land does not worth more than ₦10 million. Micro enterprises in the context of this paper are businesses/enterprises with a work force not exceeding 10 employees and working capital of not more than ₦1.5million. This is in line with the National Council on Micro/Cottage Industry definition as contained in Onodugo (2004), as well as the definition of small scale enterprises as contained in the Third National Development Plan which see it as any manufacturing, processing or service industry with a capital base of about ₦600,000 and a workforce of 10 people.

A micro enterprise which is usually owned by an entrepreneur involves creating and managing one's business with the assistance of others employed to work for or act on behalf of the promoter. For an entrepreneur to manage his enterprise effectively and achieve high productivity and maximize profit, he must put into consideration the impact of the environment in his business decision making.

### **Environmental Management (EM) and Its Impact on Business**

Environment according to Farrant (1980) is the physical, social and cultural conditions that prevail in the world. The forces emanating from these factors influence the entrepreneurs' business growth. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001 as quoted in Zutshi and Sohal (2003) defined environment as the surrounding in which an organization operates. It includes air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their relationships. The above definition shows that environmental issues ranged from an individual to global systems and cannot be avoided if entrepreneurs want micro enterprises to maintain permanent existence within the environment.

The environment or surroundings in which an entrepreneur operates his business may have positive or adverse effect on the development and growth of the business. Adverse environmental impact according to Shane (2004) include low productivity, destruction of brand values, loss of sales, consumer boycotts, loss of law suits, loss of capital, inability to secure finance, contingent liabilities and damage to corporate image. In Nigeria, the major problem of entrepreneurs is that they always seem to look at the short term

success of growth calculated by immediate profit made which might disappear after a short while. The short-run term profit maximization seems to cause them to avoid integrating environmental factors into their management decision making processes which in most cases lead to untimely death or closure of micro enterprises at the long run.

The negative impact of EM is felt more in Anambra state of Nigeria where each government in power tries to change EM policy to suit her regime by creating new agencies with new action plans to enforce EM actions and laws against defaulters. These agencies inaugurated by the government visits business premises to detect defaulters and take legal actions against them which could be closure of their business premises among other measures. Other negative impacts could be loss of patronage, loss of capital, destruction of corporate image, collapse of business among others. These in effect, necessitate the need to integrate EM in the operations of micro enterprises for sustainability.

The idea of integrating manpower, capital, equipment, facilities, product, marketing, research and design, image building, work conditions, environmental cleanliness, skill development of workers, behaviour control among others into the environmental management consideration or decision, which Gondran (2001), Charles and Worth (1998) and NALAD (1997) said can be a response to the requirement of customers, shareholders, and supply chains which are prominent factors driving micro enterprises towards environmental improvement. This, according to them, can create an economic advantage, general development and growth of micro enterprises. The consideration of environmental issues in the management decision of micro enterprises will also help the entrepreneur(s) to:

- Identify and scrutinize environmental forces thereby find alternative ways of managing them as they arise in the course of running the business;
- Identify environmental agencies or government regulatory bodies whose activities and actions might hinder the progress of the enterprise;
- Always monitor the environmental trend so as to improve their environmental performance at a reduced cost.

In spite of the benefits inherent in environmental management, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, low productivity and untimely death/exit beset most of the micro enterprises. The sudden setback and perpetual exit could be attributed to non-adoption and non-consideration of environmental management factors in the operations and decision making processes of micro enterprise owners, hence, the need to identify factors that hinder micro entrepreneurs from infusing environmental management in their business operations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to find out the extent micro entrepreneurs identify the under listed factors as hindrances to effective infusion or inclusion of environmental management in their business operations:

1. Capital.
2. Entrepreneurial/managerial skills.
3. Infrastructural facilities

### **Research Questions**

Efforts were directed at finding answers to the following questions:

To what extent do micro entrepreneurs identify the under listed factors as hindrances to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations:

1. Capital.
2. Entrepreneurial/managerial skills.
3. Infrastructural facilities

### **Hypothesis**

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

- Micro entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas of Anambra State do not differ significantly on their opinions regarding capital as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management into their business operations.
- Micro entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas of Anambra State do not differ significantly in their opinions regarding entrepreneurial/managerial skills as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations.

## Method

Descriptive survey design was employed for the study because it sought the opinions of the respondents on hindrances to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations. The study covered three industrial zones in Anambra State, namely: Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha. The three industrial zones were further classified into urban and rural areas based on the location of the enterprises and the infrastructural facilities available in the area. The population of the study was made up of 450 micro enterprises registered with Anambra State Ministry of Commerce and Industry. A sample size of 270 micro enterprises was drawn using stratified random sampling technique based on location of the industry. Out of the 270 operators (entrepreneurs) of micro enterprises studied, 215 (134 from urban and 81 from rural) returned their completed 35-item structured copies of the questionnaire which were distributed to the entrepreneurs/managers by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. Entrepreneurs or managers were used because entrepreneurs sometimes employ managers to oversee the affairs of their businesses and these entrepreneurs/managers usually know the problems they encounter in the course of infusing environmental management in their business operations.

Mean ratings and standard deviation were used in answering the three research questions, while t-test was used in analyzing the null hypotheses at 0.05 probability level. For any item to be accepted as a hindrance, it must achieve a mean score of 2.50 and above on the 5-point Likert rating scale of very high extent (5.00-4.50), high extent (3.50-4.49), slightly high extent (2.50-3.49), very low extent (1.50-2.49) and low extent (0.50-1.49). The hypotheses were accepted if the calculated t-values were less than the critical t-value. The hypotheses were however not accepted if the opposite was the case. Results were presented in Table 1-5.

## Results

### Research Question 1

To what extent do micro entrepreneurs identify capital as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations?

Results contained in Table 1 show that both urban and rural micro entrepreneurs/managers rated highly items 1 and 2, while items 3,4,5,6,7 and 8 attracted slightly high extent ratings (see Table 1).

### **Research Question 2**

To what extent do micro entrepreneurs identify entrepreneurial/managerial skills as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations?

Data presented in Table 2 reveals that both urban and rural micro entrepreneurs rated highly all the items on entrepreneurial/managerial skills as hindrances to effective adoption of environmental management in their business operations (see Table 2).

### **Research Question 3**

To what extent do micro entrepreneurs identify infrastructural facilities as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations?

Results in Table 3 show that urban and rural entrepreneurs rated highly all the items on infrastructural facilities as hindrances to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations (See Table 3).

## **Test of Hypotheses**

### **Hypothesis 1**

Micro entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas of Anambra State do not differ significantly on their opinions regarding capital as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations.

Information contained in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of .878 was lower than the critical t-value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. This means an acceptance of the null hypothesis which signifies that micro entrepreneurs' inability to raise substantial capital for their businesses hindered effective adoption of environmental management in their business operations (see Table 4).

### **Hypothesis 2**

Micro entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas of Anambra State do not differ significantly in their opinions regarding entrepreneurial/managerial skills as a

hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations.

Data in Table 5 shows that the stated null hypothesis was rejected. This is because the calculated t-value of 2.790 was higher than the critical t-value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that urban and rural micro entrepreneurs differed in their opinions regarding entrepreneurial/managerial skills as a hindrance to effective adoption of environmental management in their business operations (see Table 5).

### **Findings of the Study**

The major findings of the study show that:

1. the inability of the micro entrepreneurs to raise substantial capital from personal savings and loans from banks created a vicarious barrier for the effective infusion of environmental management in their enterprise decision making.
2. the micro entrepreneurs' inability to carry out business research, employ qualified employees with business skills, receive orientations, seminars and trainings, gather appropriate information regarding the benefit of environmental management as well as government constituted environmental regulatory agencies and their functions hindered effective adoption of environmental management in their business operations.
3. lack of infrastructural facilities hindered highly the effective adoption of environmental management in their enterprise operations.

### **Discussion**

The data collected and analyzed revealed that the inability of the micro entrepreneurs to raise substantial capital hindered effective adoption of environmental management in their business operations. This finding was in agreement with Onuoha (1999), Hillary (2000) and Gondran (2001) to the effect that poverty and socio-economic level in the country make it difficult for micro entrepreneurs to save and raise substantial amount of capital for their businesses. This created a vicious circle working against the integration of environmental management in the operations of micro enterprises.

The result of the data analysed also indicated that lack of proper managerial/entrepreneurship skills as well as infrastructural facilities hindered effective infusion of environmental management in the operations of micro enterprises. This agrees with the findings of Hillary (1998) that micro entrepreneurs lacked environmental skills and in most cases were not properly informed about environmental legislations, responsibilities and benefits to be derived in adopting environmental management in their businesses. Improper information, guidance and materials, Pooles, Coombs and Van Gool (1999) said, can lead to misguided decisions. For instance the government of Anambra state in 2004/2005 set up a lot of environmental agencies but their activities were not made public. This lack of publicity resulted in micro enterprises failing to comply with government policies resulting in incessant clashes. Lack of proper information therefore is a serious barrier. Non-consideration of the environmental implications in businesses might also be attributed to the level of education of the micro entrepreneurs. The level of one's education, experience, skills and competencies has an important role to play as a deciding factor. This is in line with the view of Osuala (1993) who believed that valuable skills needed by the entrepreneurs can be learnt through trial and errors but most of these errors can be eliminated through proper education.

### **Recommendations**

The findings of this study have important implications for government and micro entrepreneurs. Thus, the writer recommends that:

1. The three tiers of Nigerian government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should carry out sensitization campaigns on the need for micro entrepreneurs to adopt environmental management in their business operations. This should be done through seminars, workshops and conferences.
2. Government should create massive awareness regarding government constituted environmental regulatory agencies and their functions through the print and electronic media in Nigeria. This will help to reduce clashes between entrepreneurs and government constituted authorities over EM implementation.
3. Management/entrepreneurship skills as well as implications of environmental management in the operations of micro enterprises should be incorporated into the vocational education curriculum of

tertiary and secondary schools. This will enable the students to acquire the necessary skills needed for setting up micro enterprises while in school.

4. Micro entrepreneurs should employ qualified employees with business skills needed for successful management of their businesses since lack of proper business skills has been identified as hindrance to the growth of enterprises.
5. Capital is the key that opens the gate for any business. Based on this, micro entrepreneurs should first of all map out viable strategies for raising initial capital before embarking on any business venture. This will help them to withstand market competition and tackle environmental problems as they arise.

### **Conclusion**

For micro entrepreneurs to infuse environmental management in their enterprise decision making, they must be aware of the environmental implications and various opportunities available for environmental improvement. Obviously, proper awareness through publications in Nigerian dailies, seminars and workshops organized by the government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will definitely ginger them to adopt environmental management in their enterprise operations.

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**Table 1: Mean Ratings of urban and rural micro entrepreneurs/managers on the extent capital constituted a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations.**

		N <sub>1</sub> =134				N <sub>2</sub> =81				N <sub>3</sub> =215			
S/N	Lack of capital	Urban micro entrepreneurs/managers				Rural micro entrepreneurs/managers				Rural and Urban micro entrepreneurs/managers			
	Inability of the entrepreneurs to raise capital from the following sources constitute a hindrance:	X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	Rank	Decision	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	Rank	Decision	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	Rank	Decision
1.	Personal savings	4.49	.64	1	HE	4.25	.99	1	HE	4.40	.80	1	HE
2.	Loan from banks	3.90	.78	2	HE	3.93	.72	2	HE	3.91	.76	2	HE
3.	Loan from friends/relatives	3.38	1.02	4	SHE	3.42	.93	3	SHE	3.40	.93	4	SHE
4.	Loan from government agencies	3.44	1.11	3	SHE	3.36	1.09	4	SHE	3.41	1.10	3	SHE
5.	Loan from cooperative societies	3.09	1.28	5	SHE	2.75	1.31	6	SHE	2.96	1.39	6	SHE
6.	Grants from government	2.09	1.38	7	SHE	3.11	1.31	5	SHE	2.98	1.36	5	SHE
7.	Grants from private bodies	2.81	1.32	8	SHE	2.75	1.31	6	SHE	2.79	1.32	7	SHE
8.	Grants from individuals	2.98	1.19	6	SHE	2.37	1.45	8	VLE	2.75	1.32	8	SHE

N<sub>1</sub> = Number of Urban Micro Entrepreneurs, N<sub>2</sub> = Number of Rural Micro Entrepreneurs,

N<sub>3</sub>= Grand Total of Urban and Rural Micro Entrepreneurs.

HE = High Extent, SHE = Slightly High Extent, VLE = Very Low Extent, LE = Low Extent

**Table 2: Mean ratings of urban and rural micro entrepreneurs/managers on the extent entrepreneurial/managerial skills constituted a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations**

S/N	Entrepreneurial/Managerial skills	N <sub>1</sub> =134				N <sub>2</sub> =81				N <sub>3</sub> =215			
		Urban micro entrepreneurs/managers		Rural micro entrepreneurs/managers		Rural and Urban micro entrepreneurs/managers							
		X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	Rank	Decision	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	Rank	Decision	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	Rank	Decision
9.	Inability of entrepreneurs to do the following constitute a hindrance: Carry out business research	4.03	.98	1	HE	4.12	1.04	6	HE	4.07	1.00	1	HE
10	Gather appropriate information on environmental management system regulations	3.37	.81	13	SHE	3.88	.91	14	HE	3.56	.88	14	HE
11	Employ qualified employees	3.51	.91	8	HE	3.51	1.13	18	HE	3.51	.99	18	HE
12	Employ experienced workers with business etiquette	3.31	1.03	18	SHE	4.12	1.03	6	HE	3.61	1.10	10	HE
13	Gather information and data regarding government legislation on environmental management systems	3.33	1.03	15	SHE	3.75	1.18	16	SHE	3.49	1.11	19	SHE
14	Gather information regarding constituted	3.29	1.16	20	HE	3.38	1.55	20	SHE	3.33	1.32	21	SHE

	authorities/bodies that oversee environmental management system activities on behalf of government												
15	Gather information regarding the benefits of environmental management system	3.66	1.00	2	HE	4.42	.74	1	HE	3.94	.98	2	HE
16	Formulate and implement a plan of action that will result in effective adoption of environmental management system in the business operations	3.62	1.02	4	HE	3.38	1.55	20	SHE	3.53	1.25	17	HE
17	Include environmental management system in the management decision process of the business	3.31	1.07	18	SHE	4.11	1.15	8	HE	3.61	1.16	10	HE
	Inability of entrepreneurs to do the following constitute a hindrance:	$X_1$	$SD_1$	Rank	Decision	$X_2$	$SD_2$	Rank	Decision	$X_3$	$SD_3$	Rank	Decision
18	State appropriate business goals or objectives	3.54	1.03	7	HE	3.94	.76	12	SHE	3.69	1.95	6	SHE
19	Evaluate and monitor business progress and failures	3.28	1.04	21	SHE	3.35	1.13	22	SHE	3.31	1.08	22	SHE
20	Identify withstand and challenge business competition	3.25	1.19	22	SHE	3.31	1.54	23	SHE	3.27	1.33	23	SHE
21	Make very sound business judgements	3.32	1.14	17	SHE	3.44	1.37	19	SHE	3.37	1.23	20	SHE
22	Appraise employees' performance towards the effective implementation of environmental management system	3.46	1.11	9	SHE	4.22	.69	3	HE	3.74	1.04	5	HE
23	Share/delegate responsibilities among employees	3.56	1.08	6	SHE	3.91	1.33	13	HE	3.69	1.19	6	HE

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24	Consider workers needs and welfare	3.40	1.04	10	SHE	3.83	1.06	15	HE	3.56	1.07	14	HE
25	Give orientation training and retraining to workers	3.40	1.09	10	SHE	4.06	1.39	9	HE	3.65	1.25	8	HE
26	Lack of information on the activities of regulatory agencies on environmental management system of business organization	3.37	1.07	13	SHE	4.40	1.00	2	HE	3.75	1.16	4	HE
27	Be included and/or receive government training, retraining, orientations, conferences and seminars on environmental management systems	3.57	.92	5	SHE	3.56	1.31	17	HE	3.56	1.08	14	HE
28	Take initiatives on environmental issues	3.39	.88	12	SHE	4.04	1.33	10	HE	3.63	1.11	9	HE
29	Be creative and innovative base on environmental circumstances	3.33	.88	15	SHE	4.04	1.16	10	HE	3.60	1.05	12	SHE
30	Find alternative opportunities to respond to environmental change	3.20	1.17	23	SHE	2.96	1.20	24	SHE	3.11	1.82	24	SHE
31	Deal with business uncertainties with ease	3.19	1.17	24	SHE	4.21	.97	4	HE	3.58	1.20	13	HE
32	Locate appropriate business sites	3.66	1.18	2	SHE	4.14	1.10	5	HE	3.84	1.17	3	HE

$N_1$  = Number of Urban Micro Entrepreneurs,  $N_2$  = Number of Rural Micro Entrepreneurs,  
 $N_3$  = Grand Total of Urban and Rural Micro Entrepreneurs

**Table 3: Mean ratings of urban and rural micro entrepreneurs/managers on the extent infrastructural facilities constituted a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations**

s/n	Lack Of Infrastructural Facilities	N <sub>1</sub> =134				N <sub>2</sub> =81				N <sub>3</sub> =215			
		Urban micro entrepreneurs/managers				Rural micro entrepreneurs/managers				Rural and Urban micro entrepreneurs/managers			
		X <sub>1</sub>	SD <sub>1</sub>	Rank	Decision	X <sub>2</sub>	SD <sub>2</sub>	Rank	Decision	X <sub>3</sub>	SD <sub>3</sub>	Rank	Decision
33	Lack Of Infrastructural Facilities constitute a hindrance through: Difficulty in getting regular water supply	3.94	.76	2	HE	4.21	1.02	1	VHE	4.04	.88	2	HE
34	Difficulty in transporting both raw and finished products	3.78	.80	3	HE	4.06	.95	3	VHE	3.89	.87	3	HE
35	Difficult in having regular energy supply for business operations	4.46	.72	1	HE	4.21	1.29	1	VHE	4.36	.98	1	HE

N<sub>1</sub> = Number of Urban Micro Entrepreneurs, N<sub>2</sub> = Number of Rural Micro Entrepreneurs,

N<sub>3</sub>= Grand Total of Urban and Rural Micro Entrepreneurs.

**Table 4: T-test of ratings of urban and rural micro entrepreneurs on capital as a hindrance to effective infusion of environmental management in their business operations**

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crt	Level of sign	Decision
Urban Micro Entrepreneurs	134	3.37	1.04	213	.878	1.960	0.05	Accept
Rural micro entrepreneurs	81	3.24	1.07					

Total t-value = 1.960; df (Degree of freedom) = 213,  $N_1=134$   $N_2=81$

**Table 5: T-test of mean scores of urban and rural micro entrepreneurs on the extent entrepreneurial/managerial skills constituted a hindrance to effective adoption of environmental management in their business operations**

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crt	Level of sign	Decision
Urban Micro Entrepreneurs	134	3.34	1.00	213	2.790	1.960	0.05	Accept
Rural micro entrepreneurs	81	1.08	1.08	213				

Total value = 1.960; df (Degree of Freedom) = 213,  $N_1=134$ ;  $N_2=81$ .