

th **ICBMED**

**International Conference on
Business Management and
Entrepreneurial Development** **20
24**

THEME

**'Sustainable Business Practices in Developing
Economies: Navigating Uncertainties in a
Digital Transformation Era'**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

24 - 25 April, 2024



Virtual



9.00 a.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ruka Sanusi

Executive Director,
Ghana Climate Innovation Centre (GCIC)
Accra-Ghana

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Prof. Abednego F. O. Amartey

Vice-Chancellor, University of Professional
Studies, Accra

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Dr. Ummu Markwei- (University of Professional Studies, Accra)
Mr. Mark Aryeetey - (University of Professional Studies, Accra)
Mr. Timothy Kwabla Zilevu- (University of Professional Studies, Accra)

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024

A. Conference Opening

Zoom Link: <https://wacren.zoom.us/j/64216298812?pwd=U3pZYTRaM3p5TGnkQ1A5RHdJYIE5QT09>

Meeting ID: 642 1629 8812

Passcode:097008

TIME (GMT)	ACTIVITY
09:00 - 09:05	Formal Welcome & Introduction of Chairman (MC)
09:05 - 09:15	Address by Chairman: Prof. Abednego F. O. Amartey - Vice-Chancellor, UPSA
09:15 - 09:20	Introduction of Keynote Speaker (MC)
09:20 - 09:50	Keynote Address Ruka Sanusi, Executive Director - Ghana Climate Innovation Centre (GCIC), Accra - Ghana
09:50 - 10:00	Remarks by Prof. John K. Mensah Mawutor Pro VC/Chair-Editorial Committee
MC:	Dr. Mercy Naa Merley Desouza / Dr. Andaratu Achuliwor Khalid

B. Paper Presentation

Time	Session	Track	Papers	Chairpersons	Zoom Link
11:00	Session 1	Track 1: Digital Inclusion and Equity	5 Papers	Dr. Adams Salifu and Dr. Gladys Nabiu	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/65454234662?pwd=RH1lcDFLQIV6ZjFCR3ZEEHR3ZGthdz09 Meeting ID: 654 5423 4662 Passcode: 970761
-		Track 2: Sustainable Development and Innovation	5 Papers	Dr. Samuel Arthur and Dr. Abena Asomaning	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/68627413143?pwd=VjBpRnQzVIZrRExZRM5scTZudW15Zz09 Meeting ID: 686 2741 3143 Passcode: 077612
12:30		Track 3: Environmental Sustainability	5 Papers	Dr. Ibn Kailan Abdul-Hamid and Mrs. Kafui Agormeda-Tetteh	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/68424885961?pwd=cklqWEdxQkNXaGNlbnmowNzN5WVZ0dz09 Meeting ID: 684 2488 5961 Passcode: 1234
		Track 4: Digital Ethics and Governance	5 Papers	Dr. Anthony Kumasey and Dr. Ummu Markwei	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/62055730144?pwd=ZVhSY0crV1o3SGJDTnFaNkkyNEJrdz09 Meeting ID: 620 5573 0144 Passcode: 603242

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

11:00 – 12:30	Session 1	Track 5: Economic Growth and Trade	4 papers	Prof. Raymond Dziwornu and Mr. Timothy King Avordeh	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/61700389702?pwd=Y0RjNnI5dEFQdXhwdUxIR3lxaHloQT09 Meeting ID: 617 0038 9702 Passcode: 332042
LUNCH BREAK					
13:00 – 14:30	Session 2	Track 1: Digital Inclusion and Equity	5 Papers	Dr. Rufai Haruna Kilu and Ms. Patience Obeng Ahwireng	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/61267907973?pwd=L1o0NmtqU3VCTGxIVTVSUUpEdTNrUT09 Meeting ID: 612 6790 7973 Passcode: 747935
		Track 2: Sustainable Development and Innovation	5 Papers	Dr. Ernest Abraham Mensah and Dr. Benedicta Quao	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/82162019907?pwd=1JmHUxaHu6XRLH7E5vwt4bcyuVfvuTl Meeting ID: 821 6201 9907 Passcode: 0vWhg0
NETWORKING BREAK					
15:00 – 16:30	Session 3	Track 1: Digital Inclusion and Equity	5 Papers	Dr. Andaratu Khalid and Dr. James Doku	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/65865146771?pwd=WUlyMGdickNYyWpJSXMrQI9yOFFpZz09 Meeting ID: 658 6514 6771 Passcode: 143674
		Track 2: Sustainable Development and Innovation	5 Papers	Dr. Abdul Mumuni Abdallah and Dr. Esther Julia Attigobe	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/66118230812?pwd=RmEydlE1Y1ZvVfHgdDkvZUNnYWQydz09 Meeting ID: 66118230812 Passcode: 424703

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

DAY 2: THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024

A. Doctoral Symposium

Zoom Link: <https://wacren.zoom.us/j/63956716144?pwd=MTJQYnNwa0Z6aHRzTWtoZXB3Q2RjZz09>
Meeting ID: 639 5671 6144
Passcode: 209752

Chairs: Prof. Raymond Dziwornu & Prof. Abigail Opoku Mensah

Facilitators: Prof. Nana Owusu Frimpong & Prof. Nnamdi O. Madichie

09:00 – 10:30 Doctoral Symposium

B. Paper Presentation Sessions

Time	Session	Track	Papers	Chairpersons	Zoom Link
11:00 – 12:30	Session 1	Track 6: Workforce and Skills Development	6 Papers	Prof. Abigail Opoku Mensah and Dr. Mercy Naa Merley Desouza	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/68559404609?pwd=VndXVDh6UzIYVnVOVDZoaGNjeUcrQT09 Meeting ID: 685 5940 4609 Passcode: 091867
		Track 7: Customer Engagement and Value	6 Papers	Prof. Alexander Preko and Dr. Juliana Akushika Andoh	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/65948488356?pwd=QThhY1BBbStCT3pBYkpSTDJ1ckJjZz09 Meeting ID: 659 4848 8356 Passcode: 734810
		Track 8: Business Continuity and Crisis Management	5 Papers	Dr. Godwin Musah and Dr. Abubakar Musah	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/67665239733?pwd=OWI0NlRvZjZ5SVFmbFpKWUtubm9QUt09 Meeting ID: 676 6523 9733 Passcode: 869155
		Track 9: Promoting Financial Inclusion, Social Diversity, and Well-being in the Digital Age	5 Papers	Prof. Joseph Tuffour and Dr. Redeemer Krah	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/66490546331?pwd=ZlZpL0tMQ3IKcFVmcG9pL3RYVjZKQT09 Meeting ID: 664 9054 6331 Passcode: 707063
		Track 10: Urban Sustainability and Management	5 Papers	Dr. Eric Boachie Yiadom and Dr. Isaac Ofoeda	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/63266895389?pwd=cTJ6enErRUowUihyZEdGQWVhbmVGIjZz09 Meeting ID: 632 6689 5389 Passcode: 761538
		Track 11: Law and Business Organisation	5 Papers	Dr. Kusi-Appiah Francisca and Mr. Eugene Ablade Oninku	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/61340675210?pwd=ckcwL2wzdmNUWitXYzBnU216NTN0Zz09 Meeting ID: 613 4067 5210 Passcode: 916467
		Track 12: Language, Communication and Technology	5 Papers	Dr. Sadat Muhammed and Dr. Rebecca Baah- Ofori	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/68639242521?pwd=b0t6MFN6VmZtbStGenZWb0d6N0pNZz09 Meeting ID: 686 3924 2521 Passcode: 453572

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

		Track 13: PhD and Graduate Student Papers	3 Papers	Prof. Samuel Antwi, Prof. Raymond Dziwornu and Dr. Alhassan Bunyaminu	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/6395671614?pwd=MlJQYnNwa0Z6aHRzTWtoZXB3Q2RiZz09 Meeting ID: 639 5671 6144 Passcode: 209752
NETWORKING BREAK					
12:30 – 13:30	Session 2	Track 6(A): Workforce and Skills Development	5 Papers	Prof. Emmanuel Selase Asamoah and Dr. Adwoa Amankwah	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/67156099722?pwd=Uy95aTFmeUErQU5BZ2RYLlIKUzBiZz09 Meeting ID: 671 5609 9722 Passcode: 807411
		Track 6(B): Workforce and Skills Development	6 Papers	Dr. Joshua Ofoeda and Dr. Abdulai Munkaila	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/69818753189?pwd=SnUrVWVQ3NVdQZHQ2bE5DeWlhY3MvUT09 Meeting ID: 698 1875 3189 Passcode: 688892
		Track 7: Customer Engagement and Value	6 Papers	Dr. George Agbemabiese and Mr. John Paul Kosiba	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/64216298812?pwd=U3pZYTRaM3p5TGnkQ1A5RHdJYlE5QT09 Meeting ID: 642 1629 8812 Passcode: 097008
		Track 9: Promoting Financial Inclusion, Social Diversity, and Well-being in the Digital Age	5 Papers	Prof. Isaac Boadi and Dr. Richard Amankwah Fosu	https://wacren.zoom.us/j/63623549190?pwd=d2twcmw5c1JTeVRydUpDUlqWmVqZz09 Meeting ID: 636 2354 9190 Passcode: 041478

C. Closing Ceremony

Zoom Link: <https://wacren.zoom.us/j/64216298812?pwd=U3pZYTRaM3p5TGnkQ1A5RHdJYlE5QT09>

Meeting ID: 642 1629 8812

Passcode: 097008

TIME (GMT) ACTIVITY

13:45 – 14:00 Chairman's Concluding Remarks:

Prof. Abednego F. O. Amartey - Vice-Chancellor, UPSA

MC: Dr. Mercy Naa Merley Desouza/ Dr. Andaratu Achuliwor Khalid

DETAILS OF PAPER PRESENTATION SESSION

DAY ONE PAPER PRESENTATIONS SESSION AND TRACKS

DAY1: SESSION 1 (TIME: 11:00-12:30)		
Track 1: Digital Inclusion and Equity Chair(s): Dr. Adams Salifu and Dr. Gladys Nabiu		
1	The Trust Advantage: Utilizing Trust to Improve E-Commerce Adoption in the Post Covid Era – Kafui Agormeda-Tetteh and Frederick Pobee	15 min
2	Overcoming Standardization Challenges in SMEs' Digital Transformation Journey – Nabil Abubakar Husayn and Samuel Lartey	15 min
3	The Impact of Social and People-Centric Cyber-Attacks on IoT: The Case of Independent Power Producers (Ipps) – Akwetey Henry Matey, James Aminarh, Isaac Asampana, Godfred Yaw Koi-Akrofi and Lawrence Aziale	15 min
4	The Effects of Digital Interaction on the Perception of Customers in the Telecommunication Industry – Genevieve Sedalo, Alexander Kofi Diani Preko, Juliana Akushika Andoh and Robert Kwame Dzogbenuku	15 min
5	Empowering Women in E-commerce: A Systematic Review of Challenges and Opportunities for Female-Led Businesses in Ghana – Isaac Dadzie	15 min
Track 2: Sustainable Development and Innovation Chair(s): Dr. Samuel Arthur and Dr. Abena Asomaning		
1	Talent Development, Innovation Culture, And Adaptive Performance in Ghana's Oil and Gas Industry: A Mediation Approach – Abigail Opoku Mensah and Samuel Koomson	15 min
2	The Effect of Green Purchase Behaviour and Ethical Intention on Willingness to Pay a Premium: The Role of Attitude in Mediating the Relationship. – Rejoice Esi Asante	15 min
3	Dynamic Resilience: Integrating Business Continuity with Sustainable Crisis Management –Freda Kabuki Ocansey, Samuel Lartey, Caiquo Kwesi Rockson and Robert Osei Mensah Boahene	15 min
4	Implementing Operational Rigor In SMES: A Pathway to Business Resilience – Robert Osei Boahene, Caiquo Kwesi Rockson, Samuel Lartey, Felix Gomashie and Nabil Husyn	15 min

5	Supply Chain Innovation and Supply Chain Agility on Environmental Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Ghana – Benedict Ofori Antwi, Gregory Kaku, Daniel Ofori, Daniel Agyapong and Dominic Owusu	15 min
Track 3: Environmental Sustainability Chair(s): Dr. Ibn Kailan Abdul-Hamid and Mrs. Kafui Agormeda-Tetteh		
1	The Effects of Sustainability Marketing Practice on Firm Reputation: A Mediation and Moderation Analysis – Mustapha Iddrisu	15 min
2	The distinct and joint effects of corporate size, leverage, and liquidity on sustainability performance disclosures in Sub-Saharan Africa. – Emmmanuel Kofi Penney, John Kwaku Amoh, Salomey Osei Addo, Alice Anima Aboagye and Lexis Tetteh	15 min
3	Comparative sustainability practices disclosures of Environmental Sensitive Industrial and Non-Environmental Sensitive Sectors: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. – Emmanuel Kofi Penney, John Kwaku Amoh, Lexis Tetteh, Alice Anima Aboagye and Salomey Osei Addo	15 min
4	Stakeholder Pressure, Eco-innovation Strategies and Performance: Perspectives from the Ghanaian Hotel Sector – Tracy Nana Ebaskwa Mallen-Ntiador, Bedman Narteh, Stephen Mahama Braimah and Raphael Odoom	15 min
5	Environmental Sustainability Dynamics in Africa: Examining the Impact of Logistics Performance and Technological Innovation – Mubarik Abdul Mumin, Ibrahim Nandom Yakubu and Ibrahim Osman Adam	15 min
Track 4: Digital Ethics and Governance Chair(s): Dr. Anthony Kumasey and Dr. Ummu Markwei		
1	International Tourists; Data Privacy: Using the Theory of Pessimism and Optimism Lens. – Timothy Kwabla Zilevu. Alexander Preko and Genevieve Sedalo	15 min
2	Do Concentrated Ownership Structures Enhance the Quality of Governance in Firms? Panel Regression Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa – Emmanuel Mensah, Peter Ackah, Timothy Azaa Ayamga and Paul Muda	15 min
3	Differently Abled People in Leadership Positions in Ghana: Experiences and Challenges – Adwoa Tanoah Awusabo-Asare, Ummu Markwei, Abigail Opoku Mensah and Esther Julia Attiogbe	15 min

4	Incorporating Digital Ethics into SME Operations: A Guided Framework – Caiquo Kwesi Rockson, Samuel Lartey, Robert Boahene, Felix Gomashie and Nabil Husyn	15 min
5	The influence of self-efficacy on behavioural intention: moderating role of emotional intelligence in use of self-service technology platforms – Antoinette Yaa Benewaa Gabrah, Kwesi Benyi, Abigail Opoku Mensah and Kwame Twumasi Gyamfi	15 min
Track 5: Economic Growth and Trade Chair(s): Prof. Raymond Dziwornu and Mr. Timothy King Avorkeh		
1	Understanding Immigrant Financial Behavior - An Ethnography Study of a Ghanaian Immigrant Church – Joyce Afriyie	15 min
2	Optimizing SME Growth: Integrating Insurance and The Cross-Border Brown Card in International Ventures – Winfred Kwasi Dodzih, Samuel Lartey and Freda Kabuki Ocansey	15 min
3	Financial Sector Development and Energy Transition: Does Regulatory Quality Matter? – Alhassan Bunyaminu, Ibrahim Nandom Yakubu and Adibura Baba Seidu	15 min
4	Entrepreneurship, Tax Compliance, and Economic Development in Developing Countries: Insights from Ghana – Bede Akorige Atarah, Jonathan Ontoyin, Regentropfen and Patience Obeng Ahwireng	15 min
DAY1: SESSION 2: (TIME: 13:00-14:30)		
Track 1: Digital Inclusion and Equity Chair(s): Dr. Rufai Haruna Kilu and Ms. Patience Obeng Ahwireng		
1	Digital Marketing Capabilities and Business Performance at GCB Bank: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction. – Augutine Tankong, Isaac Kosi, Gloria Noungtaa Kuundaah and Joan-Ark Manu Agyapong	15 min
2	The Good and the Bad: Exploring Online Social Media Brand Community Participation (Obc) and Consumer Well-Being – Kafui Agormeda-Tetteh, Kofi Osei Frimpong, John Paul Kosiba and Frederick Pobee	15 min
3	Strategic Change Management: Key to Digital Transformation in SMEs – Nabil Abubakar Hussayn and Samuel Lartey	15 min

4	Predicting User Satisfaction in Productivity Mobile Applications: A Novel NLP and Deep Learning Approach – Ernest Akpaku and Joshua Ofoeda	15 min
5	Technology and Development in Ashaiman: Orality as a Disenfranchised Media Tool – Erika Mamley Osae, James Kwabena Bomfeh Jr., Hilda Appiah and Dorothy Siaw-Marfo	15 min
Track 2: Sustainable Development and Innovation Chair(s): Dr. Ernest Abraham Mensah and Dr. Benedicta Quao		
1	Sustainable development Goals implementation: the case of selected companies in Ghana. – Deborah Araba Ackon and Francis Aboagye-Otchere	15 min
2	Green Cosmetic Branding and Women's Brand Experience: Through the Lens of Self-identity and Congruity Theories – Robert Kwame Dzogbenuku, Genevieve Sedalor, Timothy Kwabla Zilevu, Lovelace Esinu Agordoh and Alexander, D. K Preko	15 min
3	Unveiling the transformative power: how digital financial innovation amplifies firm sustainability performance in emerging markets. – Antoinette Yaa Benewaa Gabrah, Kwesi Benyi, George Kofi Amoako and Joel Okoe Quarcoo	15 min
4	Sustainable Development and Innovation: perspective from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in developing economies. – Andrews Ayiku and Prince Kofi Mensah	15 min
5	Awareness Creation on Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) Deficiency in a High Impact Ranking University: Is Development Communication a potent tool? – Sandra Yeboah, Adwoa S. Amankwah and Abena Kyeraa Duah	15 min
DAY1: SESSION 3: (TIME: 15:00-16:30)		
Track 1: Digital Inclusion and Equity Chair(s): Dr. Andaratu Khalid and Dr. James Doku		
1	Promoting Digital Inclusion Through Co-Creative Digital Innovation Development: A Value Co-Creation Perspective– Millicent Agangiba, Salah Kabanda and David Aboagye-Darko	15 min
2	Exploring The Impact of Digitalization on Taxation Policies and Practices in The Modern Era: A Case of Ghana Revenue Authority, Greater Accra – Asmah Theophilla, Emmanuel Mensah and Anenya Ernest	15 min
3	Examining Digital Transformation of Accounting Processes in SMEs: Evidence from the Airport Residential Area of Accra, Ghana – Gideon Ghartey, Bugapeh Bede Awewono and Emmanuel Mensah	15 min

4	Digital Media Framing of the Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies of Mining Companies for Environmental Sustainability in Ghana: The Case of AngloGold Ashanti –Adwoa Sikayena Amankwah, John Demuyakor, Rebecca Baah-Ofori, Martin Segtub, Justice Issah Abudulai, Stevens Justice Avenyo and Zillah Boye-Doe	15 min
5	Exploring the Impact of Digitalization on Taxation Policies and Practices in the Modern Era: A Case of Ghana Revenue Authority, Greater Accra – Emmanuel Mensah, Asmah Theophilla and Anenya Ernest	15 min
Track 2: Sustainable Development and Innovation Chair(s): Dr. Abdul Mumuni Abdallah and Dr. Esther Julia Attiogbe		
1	AI-Driven Predictive Analytics for Financial Performance and Market Strategy Optimization: A Cross-Functional Conceptual Perspective – John Kweku Mensah Mawutor, Modupeola Adefunso Dzorka, Caroline Korkor Ahorkonu and Sharon Kraba Woode	15 min
2	Examining the Integration of sustainability content in MBA accounting curriculum of selected universities in Ghana – Helen Karrow-Kamara, Mark Owusu Boadu and Enusah Abdulai	15 min
3	Sustainable Consumption: The Influence of Brand Equity on Behavioral Outcomes. – Stephen Onwona Adjapong, George Kofi Amoako and Beatrice Akosua Adjapong	15 min
4	How may consumer climate change engagement be affected by climate related mis or disinformation? What can firms do to address these issues? – Zakari Bukari, Genevieve Sedallo, George Cudjoe Agbemabiase and Michael Boadi Nyamekye	15 min
5	Addressing Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Related Risks in Ghana from the perspective of Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education – Sharon Donnir, Kingsley Tornyeva, Emmanuel Mensah and Timothy Ayamga	15 min

DETAILS OF PAPER PRESENTATION SESSION

DAY TWO

PAPER PRESENTATIONS SESSION AND TRACKS

DAY2: SESSION 1: (TIME: 10:00-11:30)		
Track 6: Workforce and Skills Development Chair(s): Prof. Abigail Opoku Mensah and Dr. Mercy Naa Merley Desouza		
1	Bridging The Skill Gap: Transforming the Modern Workforce Using Artificial Intelligence – Attiogbe, E.J.K., Martey, I. & Nartey, J.K.,	15 min
2	Towards A Philanthropic Model for Ghanaian Universities – Rufai Haruna Kilu	15 min
3	The Impact of Brand-Oriented Leadership on Employee Brand Performance: The Mediating Roles of Employee Brand Commitment and Mood – Robert Kwame Dzogbenuku, Genevieve Sedalo, Alexander Diani Kofi Preko, Akushika Acquaye and Thomas Elorm Kwesi Tagbotor	15 min
4	Does Employee Motivation Play a Role in Organisational Performance? Insights From the Equity Theory of Motivation and The Balanced Scorecard Framework – Peter Ackah, Sharon Donnir, Emmanuel Mensah, Christiana Ntoso and Andrew Mensah	15 min
5	Digital Skills Development and Sustainable Entrepreneurship among Graduates in Nigeria: A Literature Review. – Ariyo Adebukola, Falola Hezekiah, Igbino Ebegbuki, Ogunaike Oladele and John Nsikan	15 min
6	HR Practices and Employee Retention: Examining the Mediating Role of Work Engagement. – Marijke A. Addobeia Okyireh, Esther Julia K. Attiobe and Rejoice Esi Asante	15 min
Track 7: Customer Engagement and Value Chair(s): Prof. Alexander Preko and Dr. Mrs. Juliana Akushika Andoh		
1	Determinants Of Consumer Street Food Purchase Intention the Mediating Role of Knowledge and The Moderating Role of Attitude – Mustapha Iddrisu and Peter Kwasi Kodjie	15 min
2	Booze Business in Rwanda: Market Positioning of Norbert Business Group (NBG) Limited in The Liquor Business – Felix Nsabigaba and Nnamdi O. Madichie	15 min
3	Customer Citizenship Behaviour in Ghanaian Banks: The Influence of Service Fairness and Customer Commitment – Mohammed Muniru Hussein and John Paul Kosiba	15 min
4	The Impact of Social Media Advertising Reactance on Customer Retention: The Role of Brand Recall and Consumer Brand Engagement – Caroline Korkor Ahorkonu	15 min

5	Customer-focused CSR and Customer Citizenship Behaviour: The Mediation Role of Customer-Based Corporate Reputation – Atia Alpha Alfa and Israel Kpekpena	15 min
6	Advancing Sustainability and Inclusivity in the Cosmetics and Beauty Industry in Ghana: Addressing Consumers' Challenges – Ghinwa Ghamloush	15 min
Track 8: Business Continuity and Crisis Management Chair(s): Dr. Godwin Musah and Dr. Abubakar Musah		
1	The Nexus Between Post-Covid-19 Supply Chain Disruptions And Firms' Performance: The Mediating Roles Of Risk Management And Supply Chain Elasticity – Awo Esaah Bempong and Ummu Markwei	15 min
2	A Synergistic Link Assessment: Reputation Management Strategies and Organisational Performance Assessment: Oil Marketing Companies in Ghana – Ishmael Kodjo Ocansey, Justine Afi Zilevu, Alexander, Diani Kofi Preko and Karen Asiedu-Ofei	15 min
3	Zeitgeist Leadership, a Panacea for Today's Prevailing Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) Business Conditions – Frederick Doe	15 min
4	Modeling Road Accident Mortality Rates Using Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) And Artificial Neural Network (ANN). – Kofi Afriyie Nyamekye, Precious Asabeah-Boakye, Lawrence Asare Boadi, Fiatui Mawutor and Kevin Oforu Acquah	15 min
5	Digital Financial Innovations and Sustainability of SMEs: Evidence from an Emerging Country – Hannah Esi Akyere Acquah, Patience A. Obeng, Esther J. K. Attiogbe and Bismark Darko	15 min
Track 9: Promoting Financial Inclusion, Social Diversity, and Well-being Chair(s): Prof. Joseph Tuffour and Dr. Redeemer Krah		
1	Effect of Local-Level Structures on The Uptake of Citizenship Rights by The Beneficiaries of Cash Transfer Programmes – Robertson Neequaye Kotey	15 min
2	Assessing The Impact of Fintech on Financial Inclusion: Empirical Evidence from the Volta Region of Ghana – Niniwa Maa Abena Offei, Kwaku Afriyie Appiah and Emmanuel Mensah	15 min
3	Promoting Financial Inclusion Using Mobile Money Innovation: A Systematic Review with Reference to Practices in Ghana – David Aboagye-Darko, Samuel Attuquayefio, Amanda Quist Okronipa	15 min

4	Unlocking economic empowerment: Exploring the role of social innovation in improving digital financial inclusion and financial well-being of consumers – Antoinette Yaa Benewaa Gabrah, George Kofi Amoako, Kwesi Benyi and George Oppong Appiagyei Ampong	15 min
5	The Role of Servant Leadership in the Relationship between Work Intensification and Thriving at Work: A Time-lagged Moderated Mediation Design – Erasmus Keli Swanzy, Mercy DeSouza, Abigail Opoku Mensah and Rita Berger	15 min
Track 10: Urban Sustainability and Management Chair(s): Dr. Eric Boachie Yiadom and Dr. Isaac Ofoeda		
1	Sustainability Marketing and Its Significance on Corporate Reputation: The Mediating Role of Organisational Culture– Ishmael Kodjo Ocansey, Genevieve Sedalo, Alexander Diani Kofi Preko and Mohammed Muniru Hussein	15 min
2	Demonopolisation of land information services for competitive service delivery by private firms– Adiaba, S. Y.	15 min
3	Examining The Effect of Entrepreneurial Abilities on the Academic Performance of Students in A Public University in Ghana – Joshua Ofori Essiam, Priscilla Amanorkuor Dseagu, Anthony Adjabeng Nkrumah, Hannah Acquah, Cornelius Kuake, and Emmanuel Mireku.	15 min
4	Leveraging Public Procurement for Sustainable and Circular Economic Transformation – Jacob Naabong Dapilah,	15 min
5	Strategic Insurance Integration and Cross-Border Brown Card Utilization in SME Operations – Winfred Kwasi Dodzih, Samuel Lartey, Freda Kabuki Ocansey and Caiquo Kwesi Rockson	15 min
Track 11: Law and Business Organisation Chair(s): Dr. Kusi-Appiah Francisca and Mr. Eugene Simon Ayivor		
1	Regulated or Not? An Assessment of the Curious Case of Menzgold Co. Ltd. – Kofi Oti Adinkrah Jnr.	15 min
2	An Examination of the Fiduciary Duties of Directors in Insolvency: A Ghanaian Perspective. – Gertrude Amorkor Amarh	15 min
3	The Role of Company Law in Promoting Ethical and Sustainable Business Practices: An Examination of Directors' Duties Under the Companies Act 2019, (Act 992). – Gertrude Amarh and Godwin Adagewine	15 min
4	A Bibliometric Review on the Application of Diffusion of Innovation Theory in Business Research – Gabriel Korankye, Esinam Edzorhoho, Albert Djaba Nyakotey	15 min

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3	Challenges and Impact of social media on Formal Communication in Urban and Rural Ghana: A Comparative Analysis – Adam Salifu and Andaratu Achuliwor Khalid	15 min
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3	Exploring the Influence of Internships on Career Choices Among Public University Students in Ghana. – Joshua Ofori Essiam, Priscilla Amanorkuor Dseagu, Gerald Dapaah Gyamfi, Anthony Adjabeng Nkrumah, Robertson Neequaye Kotey, Cornelius Kuake, and Emmanuel Mireku	15 min
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THE ROLE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK INTENSIFICATION AND THRIVING AT WORK: A TIME-LAGGED MODERATED MEDIATION DESIGN

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Abstract

In the context of the rising global trend of work intensification driven by technological advancements, concerns have surfaced regarding employees' capacity to thrive at work. Despite these concerns, empirical research examining the link between work intensification and employee thriving, as well as the role of leaders in this context, remains scarce. This study addresses this gap by employing the Job-Demand-Resource and Conservation of Resources frameworks to investigate both the direct and indirect effects of work intensification on employee thriving. Also, the study explores the moderating impact of servant leadership. Employing a three-wave time-lagged design spanning six months with 234 participants from diverse organizations in Ghana, online surveys were administered at three-time interval of two months. Surprisingly, the findings revealed a direct positive link between work intensification and thriving at work. Conversely, an indirect effect demonstrated that work intensification decreased thriving by escalating negative work-home in, leading to decrease in positive affect. However, the presence of servant leadership acted as a mitigating factor that attenuates the negative impact of work intensification on thriving at work through its influence on work-family conflict and positive affect. In conclusion, this study provides nuanced insights into the complex relationship between work intensification and employee thriving. The study underscores the crucial role of leaders in fostering employee thriving and wellbeing at work, particularly in the face of increasing work intensification.

Keywords: work intensification, servant leadership, negative work-home interaction, burnout, and thriving at work.

1.0 Introduction

The continual evolution of workplace technologies has notably enhanced employee efficiency and overall organizational productivity. However, it has also led to a worldwide surge in work intensification, characterized by the need for accelerated work pace, tighter deadlines, minimized downtime, and simultaneous engagement in multiple tasks

(Chouhan, 2023; Paškvan & Kubicek, 2017). With the continuous advancement of technology, employees now face heightened work demands, increased workload, and multitasking (Green et al., 2022; Mauno et al., 2023). As technological progress persists, the expectation is for work intensification to further escalate in the future. Despite the growing concern over the global trend of intensified work driven by technological advancements, questions arise regarding employees' ability to thrive in such environments and the role leaders can play. However, empirical research examining the relationship between work intensification, employees' capacity to thrive, and the role of leaders remains scarce, especially within the African context.

In this study, we utilize the Job-Demand-Resource (Bakker et al., 2005) and Conservation of Resources frameworks (Hobfoll, 1989) to analyze the impact of work intensification on employees' thriving at work. This research has three primary objectives: firstly, to examine the direct influence of work intensification on employee thriving; secondly, to delve deeper into the underlying mediating mechanisms linking work intensification to employee thriving, specifically via negative work-home interaction and burnout; and lastly, to investigate the moderating effect of servant leadership on the indirect relationship between work intensification and employee thriving.

2.0 Method

This study employs a time-lagged design spanning six months which involves three waves of data collection through online surveys conducted every two months. At time 1 (T1), the study assessed work intensification, servant leadership, and control variables with 348 workers participating. Negative work-home interaction was measured at time 2 (T2), with 293 workers completing the survey. Surveys capturing burnout and thriving at work were administered at time 3 (T3), with 267 responses received. Following listwise deletion, the final sample comprised 234 working professionals with diverse professional backgrounds in Ghana. Standardized scales were used to measure key variables of the study: work intensification, servant leadership, negative work-home interaction, burnout, and thriving at work.

3.0 Results

The overall findings are depicted in Figure 1. Surprisingly, the results revealed a direct positive association between work intensification and thriving at work ($\beta = 0.15^*$). However, an indirect effect showed that work intensification decreased employees' thriving at work (indirect effect = -0.043, 95% CI: -0.078, -0.018) by heightening negative work-home interaction ($\beta = 0.52^{***}$), subsequently leading to increased burnout ($\beta = 0.22^{**}$), which, in turn, diminished their ability to thrive at work ($\beta = -0.34^{***}$). Nevertheless, the presence of servant leadership served as a mitigating factor ($\beta = -0.15^*$), attenuating the adverse impact of work intensification on thriving at work through its influence on negative work-home interaction and burnout. Specifically, when servant leadership was high, the negative indirect effect of work intensification on employees' thriving at work via negative work-home interaction and burnout was reduced (indirect

effect = -0.027, 95% CI: -0.059, -0.005) compared to when servant leadership was low (indirect effect = -0.059, 95% CI: -0.109, -0.024).

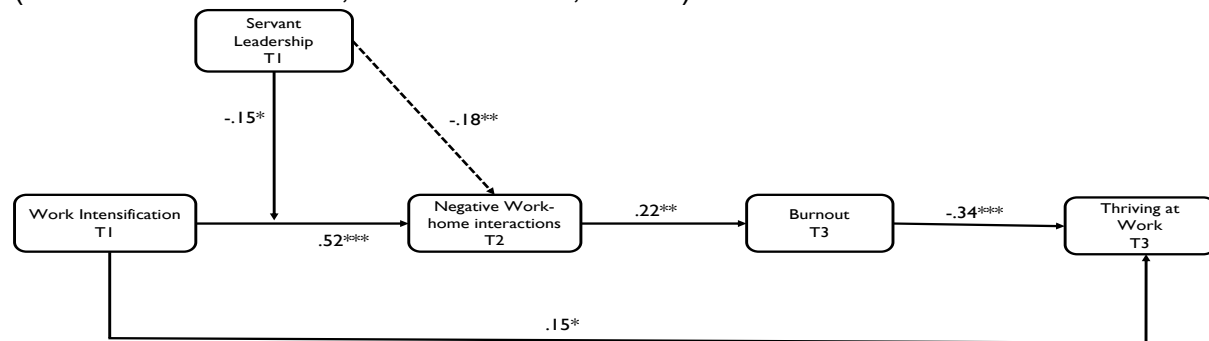


Figure 1. Results of the moderated mediation analysis of work intensification on thriving at work (Unstandardized values were reported). * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

4.0 Implications

The findings of this study hold significant practical implications for organizations aiming to navigate the challenges posed by work intensification while promoting employee well-being and performance. Firstly, organizations should recognize the potential benefits of work intensification in fostering employee thriving, as indicated by the direct positive association uncovered in this study. Rather than viewing intensified work demands solely as stressors, organizations can leverage them as opportunities for enhancing employee engagement, motivation, and productivity. This reframing can inform organizational strategies for workload management and resource allocation, ensuring that employees are equipped with the necessary support and resources to thrive amidst increased work intensity.

Moreover, the identification of an indirect pathway linking work intensification to diminished employee thriving through negative work-home interaction and burnout underscores the importance of addressing these intermediary factors. Organizations should implement measures to mitigate negative work-home interaction, such as flexible work arrangements, clear communication channels, and boundary-setting strategies. Additionally, initiatives aimed at preventing and managing burnout, such as stress management programs, wellness initiatives, and workload adjustments, can help alleviate the detrimental effects of intensified work demands on employee well-being and performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights the crucial role of servant leadership in buffering employees against the adverse effects of work intensification. Organizations should invest in leadership development programs aimed at cultivating servant leadership behaviors. By fostering a supportive and empowering leadership climate, organizations can create an environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and resilient in the face of increased work intensification. Overall, by implementing these practical strategies informed by the study findings, organizations can effectively manage work intensification

while promoting employee thriving which ultimately leads to enhanced organizational performance and sustainability.

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AWARENESS CREATION ON GLUCOSE 6 PHOSPHATE DEHYDROGENASE (G6PD) DEFICIENCY IN A HIGH IMPACT RANKING UNIVERSITY: IS DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION A POTENT TOOL?

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Abstract

With the high prevalence of Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency in sub-Saharan Africa having a disproportionate effect among males than females, this study aims to examine the use of development communication, an advocacy tool, to create awareness among students at the University of Professional Studies, Accra. Using the descriptive survey design, the study adopted both stratified and random sampling techniques by using a questionnaire to collect data from a total of two hundred (200) levels 100, 200, 300 and 400 students. Data collected were analysed using descriptives – frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviations. The study identified that development communication is a potent tool for creating awareness about G6PD. Also, newspaper publications and public conversation were high in creating awareness about the symptoms and effects associated with G6PD. Students were willing to seek medical care for the treatment and management of G6PD symptoms through support from the Government of Ghana; however, support from corporate entities is non-existent. The study recommended that the Ministry of Health and the National Communication Authority should collaborate to deploy both traditional- folk media and modern communication tools - social media platforms to create awareness about G6PD among Ghanaians. This study has provided pertinent information on how development communication channels could be integrated in public health promotion strategies in Ghana.

Keywords: Glucose, Phosphaste, Dehydrogenase, deficiency, development communication, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency is a genetic disorder that affects the red blood cells and can lead to hemolytic anemia under certain condition (Ou et al., 2020). As it is with any health issue, raising awareness about G6PD deficiency is

crucial to ensure timely diagnosis, to ensure proper management, and to address misconceptions and stigmas associated with the condition (Armstrong et al., 2020). One of the ways that can be utilized to promote awareness about Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency is the deployment of development communication. Development communication is a multidisciplinary discipline that focuses on employing strategic communication approaches to facilitate social change, development, and the promotion of sustainable practices (Gupta, Jai & Yadav, 2021). It encompasses a range of methods, including mass media, interpersonal communication, community engagement, and participatory communication. By promoting awareness, such campaigns enable individuals to identify potential triggers and take preventive measures to avoid hemolytic episodes (Ree et al., 2023; Ahmed & Ibrahim, 2023). Additionally, these campaigns work towards eliminating misconceptions and stigmas associated with G6PD deficiency.

Despite the prevalence of Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency among various populations, including those of African and Ghanaian descent, there is a significant research gap regarding the limited awareness, behavior change, and community participation in addressing this condition. The lack of knowledge and understanding about G6PD deficiency hinders early detection, timely diagnosis, and appropriate management of the condition. Furthermore, even when individuals are aware of their G6PD deficiency, there is a lack of behavior change that aligns with the recommended management and prevention strategies. This problem is evident globally and specifically in Ghana, where the prevalence of G6PD deficiency is high among individuals of African descent. By addressing these research gaps, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of G6PD deficiency by assessing the level of awareness, development communication platforms for awareness creation for G6PD deficiency and response management of the G6PD deficiency among the University of Professional Studies, Accra community.

2.0 Review of Literature

Cameroun, Uzoegwu and Awah (2006) discovered that participants showed poor knowledge to basic questions about G-6-PD deficiency, though many have heard and recognized it as blood related disease. However, their knowledge about the pattern of inheritance seems to be lacking. However, such outcomes were at variance with the report of Al-Joborae (2015) in Bahrain whose participants had adequate knowledge about G-6-PD deficiency. These differences may be due to lack of public enlightenment education at various level on the implications of G-6-PD deficiency and compulsory screening of the disease right from birth in most part of the developing countries. Also, Hamali et al (2022) indicated that 50.5% of the community indigenes exhibited a good level of knowledge of G6PD deficiency. Conversely, a study done by Alqahatni et al.

(2022) in Saudi Arabia reported poor knowledge among Saudi mothers, with only 39.4% demonstrating good knowledge. The favorable level of knowledge in their study is theorized to be the byproduct of either personal experience with the disease or a family history of chronic diseases (Alqahatni et al., 2022; Hamali et al., 2022).

3.0 Methodology

The study adopts the quantitative approach using the descriptive survey design to assess the awareness of G6PD deficiency among the university community at the University of Professional Studies, Accra (Brito-Sousa et al., 2022). With an estimated student population of approximately 17, 526 individuals and 2,032 faculty forming the university community. The study adopted both the stratified and random sampling techniques by using a questionnaire to collect data from a total of two hundred (200) levels 100, 200, 300 and 400 students. Data collected were analysed using descriptives – frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviations.

4.0 Findings and Results

The analysis from the field data revealed whether the university community are aware of G6PD, communication development platforms used to create awareness about G6PD and the response from management of the university to G6DP deficiency.

4.1 Awareness of G6PD

Table 1: Awareness of G6PD

Statement	YES	NO
Do you know the symptoms of G6PD?	190 (95%)	10 (5%)
Do you understand that G6PD can cause death?	185(92.5%)	15 (7.5%)
Have you tried to understand the symptoms of G6PD?	60 (30%)	140 (70%)
Have you tried to make other people understand what G6PD is all about?	199(99.5%)	1 (0.5%)
If you are given a media platform, would you explain in detail G6PD to the public?	195(97.5%)	97 (2.5%)

The results revealed that majority of the respondents indicated that they are aware of the deficiencies of G6DP. 190 (95%) and 185 (92.5%) know the symptoms of G6PD as well as understand that G6PD can cause death respectively. It also indicated that 199 (99.5%) university community members understand what G6PD is all about. On the contrary 60 (30%) university members have tried to understand the symptoms of G6PD. Similar finding was discovered by Hamali et al (2022) that many community members are aware of G6PD as there have been public awareness campaigns due to its prevalence. In the same way, Kasemy et al. (2020) discovered that mothers have become aware of the symptoms of G6PD as mother have been educated on what could lead to G6PD.

4.2 Development Communication Platforms for G6PD awareness creation

Table 2: Development Communication for G6PD

Statement	YES	NO
Have you attended any G6PD awareness programme?	197(98.5%)	3 (1.5%)
Have you listened to any G6PD awareness programme on Radio?	53 (26.5%)	147(73.5%)
Have you watched any G6PD awareness programme on TV?	60 (30%)	140 (70%)
Have you read any G6PD awareness programme in a newspaper?	156 (78%)	44 (22%)
Have you heard any person talking about G6PD in Ghana?	182 (91%)	18 (9%)

The study also delved into the use of development communication for G5PD awareness among the university community. Among the development communication platforms that are used to create awareness about G6PD at the University of Professional Studies, Accra include awareness programmes, radio, TV, newspaper and talk/ conversations. It was identified that the respondents confirmed that 197 (98.5%) had attended G6DP awareness programme, 156 (78%) were aware via newspaper and 182 (91%) were aware of G6DP when someone talked about the G6PD in Ghana. However, there were low awareness using radio and TV programmes represented by 53 (26.5%) and 60 (30%) respectively.

4.3 Response to G6PD Management

Table 3: Response to G6PD Management

Statement	N	Min	Max	M	SD
You will seek for treatment if you realised that you have the G6PD status.	200	1	5	3.98	1.545
You will advise others to seek medical attention if they make you know of their G6PD status?	200	1	5	4.07	1.492
You will avail yourself for any form of G6PD status treatment and management?	200	1	5	3.95	1.488
You know of Government of Ghana's intervention on G6PD management.	200	1	5	2.27	1.413
You know of other corporate organisations that sponsor the management of G6PD.	200	1	5	2.48	1.510
Valid N (listwise)	200				

As part of the study, it was interesting to examine the university community's response to G6PD management. Table 3 indicated that the university community had a high response to G6PD by advising other to seek medical attention once they know their G6PD status (M= 4.07, SD= 1.492) followed by seeking treatment once they realise they

have the G6PD status ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.545$). A similar conclusion was reached by Grobusch et al. (2019) and Luzzatto, Nannelli and Notaro (2016) that G6PD can be responded to very quickly through the seeking early medical attention dependent on the willingness of the individual affected by the deficiency.

5.0 Conclusion

By examining the relevance of development communication in awareness creation for Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) Deficiency in a Higher Educational Institution, the study found out that awareness creation is critical in enlightening the university community about G6PD deficiency. Development communication serves as a potent tool to create awareness about G6PD deficiency within the university community. Therefore, we recommend development communication as a public enlightenment tool towards promoting G6PD screening beforehand to avert acute hemolytic episode which may occur in deficient individuals ignorantly treated with oxidants agents. We also recommend that essential information about common blood diseases, including G6PD deficiency to be included in school curriculums. Furthermore, policy makers should be encouraged to support the health care services providers and motivate them to hold workshops, courses, and educational seminars that could significantly increase the community awareness level about G6PD deficiency.

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INVESTIGATING VALUE CO-CREATION IN SELECTED HOTELS IN GHANA IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper explores the elements of value co-creation and its effects on customer satisfaction, loyalty, survival, growth and profitability of the Ghanaian hotel industry. **Methodology:** Using a mixed method approach, a qualitative tradition was used to explore value co-creation with senior marketing managers of the selected hotels identified for the study. A questionnaire was then employed in sampling the opinions of customers of the selected hotels identified for the study. **Findings:** Both practitioners and customers see transparency as the most important element of value co-creation that leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Risk assessment and access were also identified from the view-point of both practitioners and customers as important elements of value co-creation that leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Dialogue, though a useful element of value co-creation, was not regarded as contributing element to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty by both practitioners and customers. The study also found a positive and significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the Ghanaian hotel industry. Finally, digitalization, although seen by both practitioners and customers as a useful tool to promote DART in hotel industry, it is inadequately employed. **Managerial Implications:** Hotel Managers need to be innovative digitally and must acquire a deeper understanding of value co-creation in order to enhance their competitive advantage. **Originality/Value:** This work is one of the few papers that discusses co-creation from developing economy and digitalization contexts.

Keywords: Value Co-Creation, Selected Hotels, DART, Customer satisfaction, Customer loyalty

1.0 Introduction

For years, the most prevailing paradigm espoused by marketing scholars and practitioners was marketing management, which gained attention in writings by McCarthy (1960) and Kotler (1967). It centred on areas such as customer satisfaction needs and issues surrounding the marketing mix, services marketing (Shostack, 1977), service quality (Babin & Harris, 2009), and relationship marketing (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995), which dominated marketing literature, research and practice. A shift in marketing focus from firm centric value creation to creation of value with customers was advocated (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995, 2000; Vargo and Lusch, 2005). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) explained that the traditional system of value creation is becoming obsolete and the focus in service marketing literature is on value co-creation between firms and its customers. The rationale for value co-creation is the customer involvement in choosing what they consider to be of great importance to them and not what the firms think is good

for customers. It is about changing customers' roles from passive adopters of product-service to equal partners in decision making (Prahalad, 2004).

Value co-creation is defined as partnership between a firm-provider and its customers to jointly create value (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Payne et al., 2008). Gradually, the issue of value co-creation has become a central topic of discussion among marketing scholars and practitioners as a source of competitive advantage (Gronroos, 2011; Ngo & O'Cass, 2008), and building trust, transparency, open dialogue among firms and customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Prahalad, 2006).

Prior research on value co-creation has mainly been undertaken in virtual environment and mass customisation helping to create products (Fuller & Matzler, 2007; Nambisan & Baron, 2009; Fuchs & Schreier, 2011; Kohler et al., 2009). While these studies have shown evidence of the benefits of integrating the customer into the value co-creation process, there are only a few empirical studies on value co-creation and its effects on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the hospitality sector, particularly the hotel industry (Grissmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012; FitzPatrick et al., 2013; Mathis, 2013). Various studies such as the unified services theory in Australia (Grissmann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012), the service-dominant logic framework in New Zealand (FitzPatrick et al., 2013), and the theory of planned behaviour in the US (Mathis, 2013) found that high degree of value co-creation positively affect customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. They, therefore, recommended further research on value co-creation because not only it remains a new and fairly underdeveloped topic, but also given the internationalisation trend within the hotel industry. Therefore, this study is a response to the calls made by these researchers. It can be argued that for hotels to stay ahead of competition and constantly meet the needs of customers, value co-creation should be one of the new strategies and innovative ways of doing business (Prahalad, 2006). This study adopts the dialogue, access, risk assessment and transparency (DART) model proposed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) to understand value co-creation and its effects on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the Ghanaian hotel industry in the era of digitalization from a developing economy perspective.

2.0 Methodology

A mixed method approach was used for this study to explore the elements of value co-creation in the Ghanaian hotel industry and extend of application of digitalization. For the purpose of this study, only the hotels found in the Ghana Association of Hotels Directory 2013 were used for the study population. Five hotels from different star categories (star 1-5) within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana constituted the sample. For the qualitative phase of data collection, the marketing managers from each star category totalling 78 were interviewed for this study. In the case of the quantitative phase, fifty (50) customers from each star category were randomly sampled using a Likert scale questionnaire. In all, two hundred and sixty (260) questionnaires were administered and 254 were retrieved out of which 250 became usable after data screening and cleaning for analysis.

The qualitative and quantitative data collected were subjected to rigorous thematic analysis. The results from the qualitative phase of the study preceded the quantitative

phase but were treated complementarily. The quantitative data, which include the profile of the respondents' demographic characteristics were analysed using descriptive statistics, and with the help of STATA software.

3.0 Findings

Both practitioners and customers see transparency as the most important element of value co-creation that leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Risk assessment and access were also identified from the view-point of both practitioners and customers as important elements of value co-creation that leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Dialogue, though a useful element of value co-creation, was not regarded as contributing element to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty by both practitioners and customers in the Ghanaian hotel industry. The study also found a positive and significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the Ghanaian hotel industry. Finally, this study revealed that both practitioners and customers see digitalization as a useful tool for improving dialogue, access, risk assessment and transparency but it is inadequately employed in the Ghanaian hotel industry.

4.0 Conclusions and Implications

The current study makes contribution to the literature on value co-creation and will be of significance to the hotels in Ghana. The study found that the elements of value co-creation, except dialogue, played important role in customers getting satisfied of hotel services and loyal as well. Firms must digitalize DART, and introduce programmes, initiatives, activities and incentives that will encourage practitioners to be more involved in the customer's business and move beyond the old firm-centric mind-set of conducting business. Firms can apply the findings of this research for efficient and effective implementation of marketing strategy in order to stay ahead of competition. This study has several limitations. Firstly, this study is conducted in the context of only one country, Ghana. However, there is a lot of similarity in how businesses are conducted in Africa, which is the second largest continent. Also, the findings are applicable to many markets. Secondly, this study focuses on only one business industry which is the hotel industry. However, the hotel industry selected is one of the largest markets in all parts of the world.

Future research can explore value co-creation in different countries and different industries using different business customers and practitioners to uncover extra aspects relating to value co-creation.

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WEALTH INDEX APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING POVERTY CORRELATES: EVIDENCE FROM THE GHANA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY DATA

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Abstract

Traditional welfare level assessments have relied on both household income and consumption expenditures, but they are both plagued by extreme volatility. Viewed as a more long-term approach is the reliance on wealth as a welfare indicator. The Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2022–2023 Wealth Index was used in the study, which was based on previous research, to calculate the poverty line. 15,014 women between the ages of 15 and 49 made up the bulk of the respondents (15,044 men between the ages of 15 and 59 participating in the survey). According to the survey, households headed by men experience poverty at a higher rate than those headed by women. Ghanaian poverty is therefore not feminine. Once more, the research verified that poverty is a rural issue. More than 90 percent of the rural household heads in the three northern regions were poor. The findings provide unambiguous proof of the substantial correlation between poverty and a few important attributes of household heads, including age and educational attainment. The study also discovered a correlation between a household's location and poverty status. The study makes a compelling case for policy makers to concentrate their efforts on characteristics that have demonstrated a high correlation with poverty in order to mitigate the issue. This is achieved by using the wealth index, which takes into account variables more than only economic ones.

Keywords: Poverty, Wealth Index, Ghana, feminization, household

1.0 Introduction

The World Bank bemoaned the fact that, more generally, problems with data availability and quality continue to impact analyses of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (The World Bank, 2022) and Ghana is no different. Ghana has seen some progress in reducing poverty, with a peak of 51.7 in 1990 and a low of 23.4 in 2017 (GSS, 2007, 2014, 2018). To fully comprehend the causes of poverty in all of its manifestations, more research must be done on the data that is now available. This research should make use of many data sets that capture a wide range of variables that impact welfare but are not taken into account in the consumption and income matrix measures of poverty. Most of the existing research on poverty in Ghana uses consumption-based indicators of poverty. Studies using cross-sectional data, for instance in Ghana include Adjasi and Osei (2007), Coulombe and Wodon (2007), Fuseini et al. (2019) and Orkoh et al. (2020).

Accurately measuring poverty and comprehending its consequences are crucial for policymakers and scholars in the ever evolving world of today. For many developing nations, including Ghana, poverty continues to be a formidable problem (Agyire-Tettey

et al., 2018; Alkire & Santos, 2014; Booysen, 2002; Poirier et al., 2020; Sackey, 2005, Atkinson, 1991). The multifaceted nature of poverty is not well captured by traditional measures of poverty, such as income-based indicators (Bourguignon & Chakravarty, 2019; Brady, 2003; Thorbecke, 2013). It is common for them to overlook the several elements and circumstances—like living standards, health, and education—that lead to poverty (Brandolini et al., 2010).

Researchers are increasingly using other methods, including the Wealth Index methodology, to evaluate poverty in order to overcome these shortcomings. To provide a comprehensive understanding of poverty, the Wealth Index approach considers a wide range of indicators related to household wealth, including ownership of assets, access to basic services, and housing conditions (Béranger, 2016; Hargreaves et al., 2007). This research article intends to investigate the Wealth Index technique and its use in determining poverty correlates in Ghana using data from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. Because it can represent the multifaceted nature of poverty, the Wealth Index technique has become more and more popular in the field of measuring poverty.

Furthermore, by taking into account many facets of household wealth and living conditions, it offers a more comprehensive picture of poverty (Brandolini et al., 2009; Rutsein & Kiersten, 2004; Rutstein, 2008). The Wealth Index approach can help develop more focused and efficient strategies for reducing poverty in Ghana by providing insightful information about the factors that correspond with poverty. This study intends to investigate particular poverty correlates and shed light on the interplay of many factors that contribute to the incidence of poverty in Ghana by analyzing data from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. Additionally, policy interventions and development programs that aim to lower poverty and enhance population well-being may benefit from the findings of the research.

By understanding the nuanced dynamics of poverty through the Wealth Index approach, policymakers and stakeholders can tailor their efforts to address the root causes of poverty in Ghana and that will ultimately lead to more sustainable and impactful solutions. Moreover, the use of the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey data adds credibility and robustness to this research.

2.0 Method and Data

The 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S is implemented by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2022). The strategy for the collection was based on a stratified representative sample of 18,450 households selected in 618 clusters, that resulted in 15,014 interviewed women age 15–49 and 7,044 interviewed men age 15–59 (in one of every two households selected). The dataset consists of information on household assets ownership and demographic characteristics of the household, such as age, sex, and family size. A multistage cluster sampling technique was used for data collection. In order to investigate the nature of relationship between poverty and gender, two models were run.

The study employed logistic regression for the empirical estimation of the correlates of probability of being poor or not. The logistic regression gives more efficient estimators than the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimates (Budden et al., 2010). Furthermore, this model is suitable when the dependent variable (poverty) is categorical. The independent variables need not be interval; nor normally distributed, nor linearly related, nor of equal variance within each group, and lastly, the categories (groups) must be mutually exclusive and exhaustive (Boateng & Abaye, 2019).

2.1 The Logistic Model

Given that p is the probability that a binary response variable $Y = 1$ when input variable $X = x$, then the logistic response function is modeled as:

$$p = P(Y = 1|X = x) = \frac{e^{\beta_1 + \beta_0 x}}{1 + e^{\beta_1 + \beta_0 x}}$$

In the equation (1), β is the coefficient of the predictor or independent variable x used in a regression equation. Inputting the predictive variables for the model of this study the predictive variables for the model of this study gives us the equation (2)

$$p = P(Y = 1|X = X_1, \dots, X_n) = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n}}$$

This can be transformed into a log form to obtain equation (3)

$$\log i t \left[\frac{P(Y)}{1 - P(Y)} \right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n \quad (3)$$

The logistic regression estimates $n + 1$ unknown parameter β of (3) using maximum likelihood estimation. This estimation involves finding the set of parameters for which the probability of the observed data is greatest.

Table 1: Data type and description

Variable Name	Data Type	Measurement	
Poverty	Binary	0 = non-Poor 1= Poor	Dependent
Head Sex	Binary	0= Male 1= Female	Independent
Head age	Categorical	0= less than 40 1= 40 to 49 2 = 50 to 59; 3 = 60 and above	Independent
Household size	Categorical	0= less than 5 1= 5 and 6 2= 7 and above	Independent

Dependency Ratio	Categorical	0= Up to 50% 1= 50 to 74% 2= 75% and above	Independent
Head level	Education Categorical	0 = No education or preschool 1= Primary 2= Secondary 3=Higher	Independent
Heads status	Marital Categorical	0 = Never married 1= Married 2= Widowed 3= Divorced	Independent
Location	Binary	0 = Urban 1 = Rural	Independent
Region	Categorical	0 = Western 1= Central 2 = Greater Accra 3 = Volta 4 = Eastern 5 = Ashanti 6 = Western north 7 = Ahafo 8 = Bono 9 = Bono east 10= Oti 11 = Northern 12 = Savannah 13 = North east 14 = Upper east 15 = Upper west	Independent

3.0 Results

Simple Bivariate analysis of Data

Tables 3 and 4 are the bivariate analysis of the relationship between poverty and the location characteristics as well as the relationship between poverty and gender characteristics. These considered the strength of the association between dependent variable and their correlates. The evidence from the two tables show that all the correlates significantly affect or associate with a household head's poverty status, irrespective of the location, (i.e., rural or urban) and sex of household head. From Table 3, the result shows that the percentage of heads that are poor are greater in the rural areas than the heads in urban areas. Whereas 19 percent of the urban households were poor, 70 percent of the households were poor in the rural areas given an urban-rural household poverty ratio of almost 1:4. In the rural areas, poverty incidence was higher for male headed households than females. However, in the urban areas, female headed households were poorer than males. Looking at the poor across the 16 regions, rural poor concentrated highly in the Upper West, Savannah and the Northern regions where

more than 90 percent of the rural household heads were poor. The Volta Region, Western North, Ahafo, Bono, Bono East, Upper East and Oti regions have over 50 percent of the rural household heads living poverty. Education of the head significantly associate with poverty status as can be observed that for both urban and rural areas heads with higher forms of education experienced lower rates of poverty although the rates are lower for urban heads. Similarly, the size of the household was seen to significantly affect poverty in both urban and rural dwellings. Larger household sizes have higher poverty rates. This pattern also relates with dependency ratio; higher dependency ratio is associated with higher forms of poverty in both urban and rural areas. Age of household heads also showed strong association with poverty. The aging heads had higher poverty rates compared with the working age. Marital status of the head also has effect on poverty status of the heads in both urban and rural areas.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Variables

Variable Name	Measurement	Freq.	Percent
Head Sex	Male =0	11923	66.49
	Female	6010	33.51
Head age	less than 40 =0	7405	41.29
	40 to 49	3666	20.44
	50 to 59	2923	16.30
	60 and above	3939	21.97
Household size	less than 5 =0	11597	64.67
	5 and 6	3812	21.26
	7 and above	2524	14.07
Dependency Ratio	Up to 50% =0	7938	46.40
	50 to 74%	731	4.27
	75% and above	8438	49.32
Head Education level	No education or preschool =0	5183	28.90
	Primary	2310	12.88
	Secondary	8141	45.40
	Higher	2299	12.82
Heads Marital status	Never married =0	2463	13.73
	Married	11611	64.75
	Widowed	2040	11.38
	Divorced	1819	10.14
Location	Urban =0	8795	49.04
	Rural	9138	50.96
Region	Western =0	1087	6.06
	Central	1160	6.47
	Greater Accra	1387	7.73
	Volta	1082	6.03
	Eastern	1216	6.78
	Ashanti	1397	7.79
	Western North	1061	5.92
	Ahafo	1062	5.92
	Bono	1030	5.74
	Bono East	1054	5.88
	Oti	1048	5.84
	Northern	1137	6.34
	Savannah	1047	5.84
	North East	1034	5.77
	Upper East	1070	5.97
	Upper West	1061	5.92

Observing the bivariate results from the gendered angle shows that for almost all categories, the proportion of the poor household heads were lower for female headed homes than the male headed household with the exception urban, widowed, Western, Central, Greater Accra, Volta and Ashanti regions. This shows that Ghanaian poverty is therefore not feminine.

Table 3: Result of Bivariate Analysis of poverty by Location

Table of Result of Bivariate Analysis of poverty by Location										
Item	Levels	Urban				Rural				
		Poor	Non-Poor	total	sign	Poor	Non-Poor	Total	sign	
Sample		1,684	7,111	8,795	0.000	6,433	2,705	9,138	0.000	
Sample (%)		19.15	80.85	100		70.40	29.60	100		
Head Sex	Male	17.68	82.32	5,476	0.000	72.47	27.53	6447	0.000	
	Female	21.57	78.43	3,319		65.44	34.56	2691		
Head age	Less than 40 yrs.	15.69	84.31	3,824	0.000	64.31	35.69	3581	0.000	
	B/n 40 and 49	19.13	0.87	1,871		70.97	29.03	1795		
	B/n 50 and 59	20.72	79.28	1,385		75.49	24.51	1538		
	60 years and above	25.60	74.40	74.40		76.21	23.79	2224		
Household size	less than 5 = 0	16.15	83.85	6198	0.000	63.36	36.64	5399	0.000	
	5 and 6	23.91	76.09	1702		76.78	23.22	2110		
	7 and above	30.84	69.16	895		85.45	14.55	1629		
Dependency	Up to 50%	14.02	85.98	4379	0.000	61.65	38.35	3559	0.000	
	50 to74%	22.99	77.01	348		72.32	27.68	383		
	75% and above	23.81	76.19	3717		76.76	23.24	4721		
Head level	Education	None/pre-school	46.97	53.03	1,648	0.000	91.17	8.83	3535	0.000
		Primary	29.00	71.00	931		76.43	23.57	1379	
		Secondary	12.74	87.26	4,536		55.81	44.19	3605	
		Higher	3.69	96.31	1,680		23.26	76.74	619	
Heads status	Marital	Never Married	13.01	86.99	1,606	0.000	48.07	51.93	857	0.000
		Married	18.48	81.52	5,232		73.84	26.16	6379	
		Widowed	30.88	69.12	978		74.39	25.61	1062	
		Divorced	21.04	78.96	979		62.02	37.98	840	
Region		Western	5.87	94.13	562	0.000	39.05	60.95	525	0.000
		Central	11.95	88.05	636		40.27	59.73	524	
		Greater Accra	3.27	96.73	1130		28.79	71.21	257	
		Volta	14.08	85.92	490		56.08	43.92	592	
		Eastern	7.73	92.27	621		46.89	53.11	595	
		Ashanti	9.75	90.25	810		42.25	57.75	587	
		Western North	14.82	85.18	398		61.39	38.61	663	
		Ahafo	24.81	75.19	532		83.40	16.60	530	
		Bono	15.68	84.32	574		65.79	34.21	456	
		Bono East	28.01	71.99	557		83.70	16.30	497	
		Oti	35.32	64.68	402		77.86	22.14	646	
		Northern	32.43	67.57	555		95.19	4.81	582	
		Savannah	43.33	56.67	390		90.87	9.13	657	
		North East	61.50	38.50	400		97.63	2.37	634	
		Upper East	26.46	73.54	378		86.71	13.29	692	

Item	Levels	Urban				Rural			
		Poor	Non-Poor	total	sign	Poor	Non-Poor	Total	sign
	Upper West	18.89	81.11	360		92.15	7.85	701	

Table 4: Result of Bivariate analysis of Poverty by Gender

Item	Levels	Male				Female			
		Poor	Non-Poor	total	sign	Poor	Non-Poor	Total	sign
Sample		5640	6283	11923	0.000	2477	3533	6010	0.000
Sample (%)		47.30	52.70	100.0		41.21	58.79	100.0	
Location	Urban	17.68	82.32	5476	0.000	21.57	78.43	3319	0.000
	Rural	72.47	27.53	6447		65.44	34.56	2691	
Head age	Less than 40 yrs.	42.48	57.52	5167	0.000	31.64	68.36	2238	0.000
	B/n 40 and 49	45.83	54.17	2601		41.31	58.69	1065	
	B/n 50 and 59	50.80	49.20	1685		47.82	52.18	1238	
	60 years and above	56.56	43.44	2470		50.17	49.83	1469	
Household size	less than 5 = 0	38.40	61.60	7047	0.000	37.71	62.29	4550	0.000
	5 and 6	54.30	45.70	2779		50.15	49.85	1033	
	7 and above	67.95	32.05	2097		56.91	43.09	427	
Dependency	Up to 50%	36.61	63.39	5734	0.000	32.17	67.83	2204	0.000
	50 to 74%	53.21	46.79	530		37.31	62.69	201	
	75% and above	58.08	41.92	5298		45.61	54.39	3140	
Head level	Education None/pre-school	82.89	17.11	3180	0.000	67.95	32.05	2003	0.000
	Primary	65.70	34.30	1376		44.97	55.03	934	
	Secondary	34.14	65.86	5595		26.71	73.29	2546	
	Higher	10.72	89.28	1772		3.04	96.96	527	
Heads status	Marital Never Married	28.99	71.01	1621	0.000	17.93	82.07	842	0.000
	Married	50.59	49.41	9375		41.77	58.23	2236	
	Widowed	51.59	48.41	283		53.84	46.16	1757	
	Divorced	43.63	56.37	644		37.96	62.04	1175	
Region	Western	19.40	80.60	696	0.000	26.34	73.66	391	0.000
	Central	21.88	78.12	626		28.09	71.91	534	
	Greater Accra	7.20	92.80	931		9.65	90.35	456	
	Volta	34.04	65.96	611		40.98	59.02	471	
	Eastern	28.18	71.82	699		25.15	74.85	517	
	Ashanti	20.90	79.10	799		26.76	73.24	598	
	Western North	44.01	55.99	718		43.73	56.27	343	
	Ahafo	56.02	43.98	714		50.00	50.00	348	
	Bono	38.23	61.77	620		37.32	62.68	410	
	Bono East	58.91	41.09	718		44.35	55.65	336	
	Oti	62.68	37.32	761		58.54	41.46	287	
	Northern	65.94	34.06	1013		53.23	46.77	124	
	Savannah	73.72	26.28	822		71.11	28.89	225	
	North East	84.03	15.97	770		82.58	17.42	264	
	Upper East	65.51	34.49	719		65.24	34.76	351	
	Upper West	68.56	31.44	706		64.79	35.21	355	

3.1 Multivariate analysis of Results

Using 17, 107 sample for the analysis, Table 5 presents the results of both odd ratios (OR) and Marginal Effect (ME) of the independent variables on the dependent variable-poverty. Two models were run – the first on only the main variables and then the second model included two interaction variables to understand the effect of gender on poverty. From model 1, the results show that gender of head significantly affect poverty status and the odds of becoming poor for a female household head is lower than for a male household head. The probability of becoming poor when a household head is a female falls by 3 percent compared with a male head. Household size significantly affects poverty status of the head. Compared with a household size of less than 5 members, all higher household members increase the probability of the household head becoming poor (by 2 % for size between 5 and 6 and about 3 % for size above 7). All levels of formal education of the head significantly reduce the probability of the head becoming poor compared with heads with no or only preschool education. Being married compared with heads that are never married reduces the head's chances of becoming poor by about 2 percent. Being a rural location increases the chance of the head becoming poor by more than 30 percent compared with staying in an urban area. For regional analysis, the results show that, with the exception of household heads that stay in the Greater Accra Region, all households located in other regions compared with the Western Region stood the chance of becoming poor (with such chance as high as 30 % for Upper East and Upper West households and low as just 1 % for households in the Eastern Region).

In model 2, after including the interaction terms of educated female heads and female heads living in rural areas, the results showed that all variables remained significant except head gender however, the direction of the effect remained unchanged. The interaction of education with gender did not show significance. The interaction of gender with location however showed that female heads located in the rural areas have greater chance of becoming poor compared with female heads in the urban areas.

Table 5: A multivariate analysis of Results using Odd Ratios and Marginal effects

Variable Name		Model 1		Model 2	
		OR	ME	OR(Inter.)	ME(Inter.)
Head Sex	Male =0				
	Female =1	0.773***	-0.032***	0.998	-0.000
Head age	less than 40 =0				
	40 to 49	1.061	0.007	1.066	0.008
	50 to 59	1.127*	0.015*	1.134*	0.016*
	60 and above	1.005	0.001	1.007	0.001
Household size	less than 5 =0				
	5 and 6	1.173***	0.020***	1.175***	0.020***
	7 and above	1.231***	0.026***	1.239***	0.027***
Dependency Ratio	Up to 50% =0				
	50 to 74%	1.009	0.001	1.003	0.000
	75% and above	1.361***	0.039***	1.365***	0.039***
Head Education level	No/preschool =0				
	Primary	0.62***	-0.071***	0.598***	-0.076***
	Secondary	0.261***	-0.201***	0.253***	-0.205***

Variable Name	Measurement	Model 1		Model 2	
		OR	ME	OR(Inter.)	ME(Inter.)
Heads status	Marital	Higher	0.041***	-0.441***	0.039***
		Educated (Yes=1)			-0.443***
		Never married =0			
		Married	0.831**	-0.023**	0.824***
Location		Widowed	1.092	0.011	1.087
		Divorced	1.169	0.020	1.162
		Urban =0			0.019
		Rural=1	11.156***	0.303***	13.769***
Region		Western =0			0.329***
		Central	1.231*	0.028*	1.246*
		Greater Accra	0.605***	-0.064***	0.605***
		Volta	2.264***	0.115***	2.312***
		Eastern	1.397***	0.046***	1.404***
		Ashanti	1.2	0.025	1.211
		Western north	2.677***	0.139***	2.663***
		Ahafo	6.958***	0.279***	6.908***
		Bono	3.081***	0.160***	3.083***
		Bono east	6.317***	0.265***	6.249***
		Oti	6.605***	0.272***	6.638***
		Northern	10.775***	0.343***	11.318***
		Savannah	10.336***	0.337***	10.506***
		North east	28.036***	0.472***	28.5***
		Upper east	8.314***	0.305***	8.414***
		Upper west	7.653***	0.293***	7.663***
		Female head			0.561***
		Rural			-0.073***
		Female Educated			1.097
		Constant	0.155***		.139***
Mean dependent var	0.449	SD dependent var	0.497		
Pseudo r-squared	0.425	Number of obs	17107		
Chi-square	10012.192	Prob > chi2	0.000		
Akaike crit. (AIC)	13583.960	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	13824.124		

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

4.0 Conclusion and policy implications

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that Ghanaian poverty requires a renewed focus on policy through the use of the Wealth Index, which takes into account far more socioeconomic factors than the income or spending indices used to evaluate poverty. Even now, poverty is pervasive in the northern regions and affects all rural residents who labor to provide a large amount of food for the urban centers. The multivariate study demonstrates that the poverty status of household heads is highly influenced by demographic characteristics, including household size, dependence ratio, and the sex and age of the household heads. Education is another human capital element that shows to be crucial to drastically reducing poverty. The likelihood of a family head falling into poverty will decrease at all educational levels.

Numerous research indicate that female household heads come from the lowest social classes. But according to Ghanaian data, female household heads are not as impoverished as their male counterparts. The traditional family support structure may be the primary factor in Ghana's lower rate of poverty among female heads of households than in other emerging nations. Frequently, these households receive consistent assistance from family members, neighbors, and government agencies. In addition, compared to homes headed by men, these heads of households typically have smaller households.

One important reason for the comparatively lower occurrence of poverty in female-headed households with male members employed abroad is the potential for remittance inflow. Furthermore, there is a strong inverse association between poverty and household size. More earners equal more savings for the family. Poverty and dependency ratio are positively correlated, to be sure. A population is more likely to be impoverished as the dependency ratio rises. Because of the increased dependency on both youngsters and the elderly, dependency ratios lead to poverty. Working members of the household are more and more affected by the dependency burden as the number of dependents in the household rises.

The older the head of the household is, the less severe the poverty. These elderly home heads may be supported by their children or other family members, in which case they control the entire income of the household.

Direct cross-national comparison of household poverty is made possible by the use of DHS data. Based on data from female heads of households, the study offers a chance to compare the dynamics of household poverty. Finding out how the prevalence, makeup, and causes of poverty differ among the survey from the male and female participants may be interesting. Strong policies are needed to address the high fertility rate, as it has an impact on both the size of the family and the dependence ratio.

Lastly, there is an urgent need for education for everybody. It has been discovered that having higher education reduces the probability of poverty since the relationship is linear: the more educated one is, the less likely one is to be poor.

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TOWARDS A PHILANTHROPIC MODEL FOR GHANAIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Introduction

The research joins a wider scholar-practitioner discourse in the field of educational philanthropy. More specifically, how to promote and popularize philanthropy and giving cultures in Ghanaian universities to build leadership for development. Ghana's development trajectory since independence has been donor dependent. After attaining a lower middle-income status in 2010, donors significantly cut development aid to the country. The national development paradigm then shifted from an aid dependent country to a trade focus with development partners (Haruna, 2020).

Background

A joint study by Harvard and UBS (2018) shows that about 35% of nearly 30,000 foundations channel resources towards quality education initiatives. Similarly, in 2020, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), published a report that looked at education funding in 2018 by a sample of 33 foundations. The results revealed that higher education is the biggest philanthropic beneficiary. However, philanthropic education remains a challenge in Ghana. It is against this backdrop that the current research seeks to answer the following questions:

- i. Where do we start?
- ii. How can we contribute?

Methodology

The research deployed a desk review method to gather information. A number of different databases and search tools were used: JSTOR, Emerald, Wiley, SAGE Journals Online, Academic Search Elite and Ebscohost. Others include Taylor and Francis, WEB of Science, Google Scholar, Annual Reviews and abstractions. These sources consolidated databases maintained by researchers regarding philanthropic research and practice (Ocran 2019, Haruna 2020, Kumi 2017, Mahomed 2020). Different combinations of the following search words were also used: philanthropy, educational philanthropy, giving cultures, Ghanaian universities. Relatively few relevant articles and reports were found and compiled. These articles were meta-analyzed and the findings interpreted with supporting empirical sources.

Results

Philanthropic adaptable models in Ghanaian universities

To start, most universities in Ghana, now established endowment funds to deliver state of the art infrastructure for education and to also support students who are in need. For example, a 100 million Ghana Cedis endowment fund was launched by the University of Professional Studies, Accra.

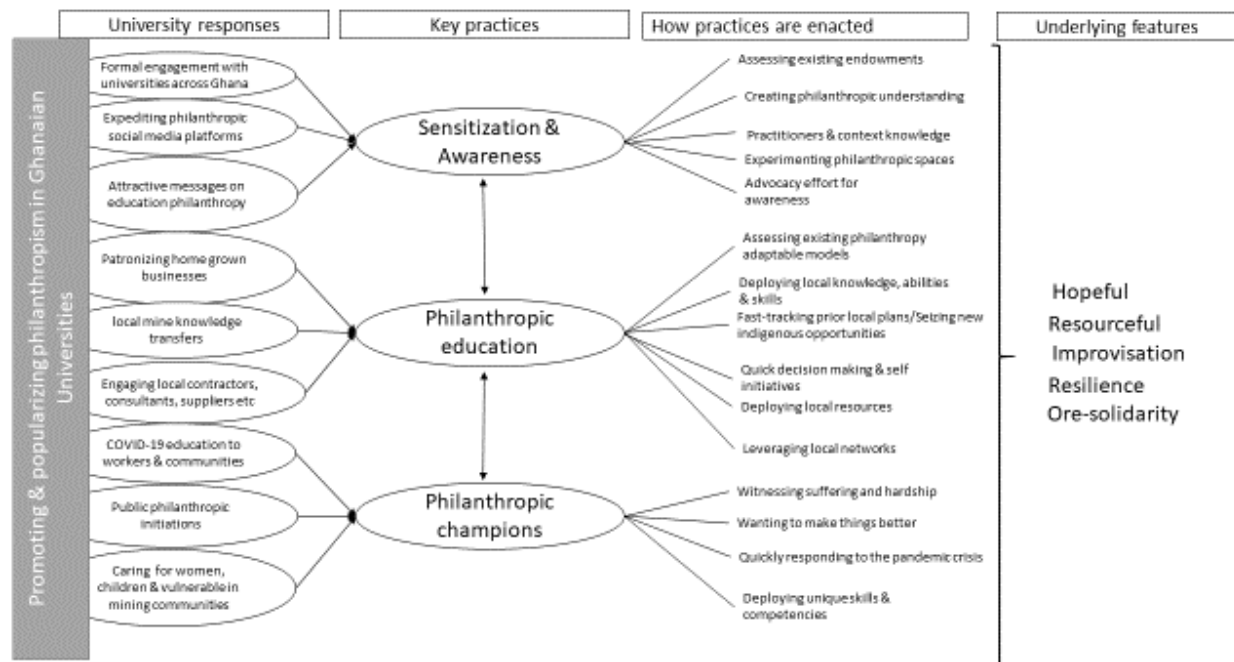
Similarly, in 2018, the University of Ghana endowment fund was launched by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo¹. In his address, President Akufo-Addo who is an alumnus of the University of Ghana described the Endowment Fund as: an excellent initiative and said endowment funds constitute the fulcrum around which most world-class universities in the world operate. He was hopeful that the proceeds from the Fund would assist in the provision of additional facilities to enhance research and teaching.

There is a vibrant alumni presence in all the universities in Ghana that initiate various projects in aid of infrastructural development of their alma maters. For example, the University of Ghana Alumni Association (UGAA) is rehabilitating the Children's Ward of the Legon Hospital to enhance healthcare delivery.

Similarly, the University for Development Studies (UDS) Alumni Association Supports Vice-Chancellor's Business Innovation Awards. The Alumni Association donated a Ten Thousand Ghana Cedis (10,000.00) towards the UDS Vice-Chancellor's Business Innovation Award Scheme. This follows an initial agreement signed between the Alumni Association and the UDS Business Innovation and Incubation Centre (UDS-BIIC).

In Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, there is a 'day of giving' dubbed 'KNUST Day of Giving' which falls on each Friday. The University uses the day to mobilize resources through donations via knustdayofgiving.knust.edu.gh or *887*1350#. This sustained giving among the students is partly due to their used to the idea of weekly giving via 'tithing' (Christianity) and the regular giving of arms in (Islam).

Proposed philanthropic model for Ghanaian universities



The proposed philanthropic model for Ghanaian universities is anchored on three (3) stages: sensitization and awareness creation; establishing centers of learning on philanthropy, and building some philanthropic support ecosystems.

Conclusions

Results from the current paper suggest scholarly learning gaps about philanthropy in the Global South, more especially, on the Ghanaian context. Notable gaps include knowledge, theory, as well as centers of philanthropic learning. The proposed model will promote and popularize philanthropy and giving cultures in Ghanaian universities to build leadership for development. Based on results of the study, the following recommendations have been made: Globally, universities are becoming cash-strapped and Ghanaian universities are no exception. The resources available are often only enough for teaching and research, and other projects have been to the neglected. It is therefore recommended that the proposed philanthropic model of Ghanaian universities, as captured in this paper, may lead to the formation of vibrant youth banks, specialized in mobilization of resources to embark on university-based projects. Similarly, the proposed philanthropic model of Ghanaian universities and its allied centers of philanthropic learning may collaborate and mobilize strong diaspora community, including the universities global alumni and appointed fundraising champions for international resources mobilization.

The whole concept of social leadership is a challenge in Ghanaian society. It is recommended that the proposed philanthropic model of Ghanaian universities and its allied centers of philanthropic learning, should collaborate to build and turnout modern leaders from the universities, well prepared to perhaps, frog leap from philanthropic and civil society leaders to political ones. It is estimated that effective consideration of the results and practical implementation of recommendations from the current work by relevant internal stakeholders and international collaborators will trigger the following benefits: In the short term, there will be a change in societal awareness and attitudes towards philanthropism. In the medium term, there will be a change in decisions, procedures, programs, practices and human behaviors in the field. And in the long term, there will be a national policy and social change to embrace philanthropy and culture of giving in Ghana.

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STRENGTHENING MEMBER TRUST: THE ROLE OF DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEMES IN CREDIT UNIONS ASSOCIATION (CUA)

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Abstract

This paper examines the necessity and efficacy of deposit insurance schemes for credit unions by focusing on the Ghanaian context. Drawing upon literature reviews and empirical findings, the study investigates the operational dynamics, benefits, and challenges associated with deposit guarantee schemes within the credit union sector. It explores the theoretical foundations and practical implementations of such schemes, emphasizing their significance in promoting financial stability and protecting depositor interests. Historical precedents and contemporary experiences shed light on the design, implementation, and outcomes of deposit insurance mechanisms, providing valuable insights into their role in mitigating financial risks. Specifically, the research analyzes the Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS) established by the Credit Unions Association of Ghana to examine its functionality, impact, and sustainability. Findings reveal that the DGS has been instrumental in improving financial stability, safeguarding depositor funds, and providing timely assistance to distressed credit unions. The scheme's robust operational framework, including fund accumulation, investment strategies, and regulatory compliance mechanisms, underscores its effectiveness in ensuring sector-wide protection and risk management. Overall, the study contributes to the discourse on deposit insurance in the credit union sector, offering insights into its relevance, implementation, and implications for financial resilience and depositor confidence in Ghana.

1.0 Introduction

Over the last few decades, banking crises have been pervasive across various countries, highlighting the inherent fragility of banking institutions worldwide (Mishkin & Eakins, 2003). To address this, many nations have implemented deposit guarantee schemes or deposit insurance schemes to safeguard depositor interests and enhance financial stability (Garcia, 2000). However, while deposit insurance can boost depositor confidence, it also introduces moral hazard, that are potentially exacerbating risk-taking behaviors by banks (Gropp & Vesala, 2001). The establishment of deposit insurance schemes thus presents both benefits and costs, necessitating a nuanced understanding of their implications. As such, an increasing number of countries have adopted such schemes, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) advocating for their implementation globally. Banks, integral to financial systems, facilitate economic growth by providing credit and payment services. However, their reliance on short-term deposits to fund long-term assets renders them vulnerable to depositor withdrawals, leading to systemic risks and banking crises (Nilsson et al., 2022). Deposit insurance aims to mitigate these risks,

yet its impact varies depending on jurisdiction and institutional environment. While studies suggest deposit insurance may increase bank instability, its effects on credit unions remain underexplored. Given their unique characteristics and growing protection under deposit insurance, understanding the need for and design of such schemes for credit unions is paramount. This paper shifts focus to credit unions, particularly examining the Deposit Guarantee Scheme of the Credit Unions Association of Ghana to elucidate its setup, benefits, and implications for future policy. Through this analysis, the study aims to extract valuable lessons to inform and enhance deposit insurance practices for credit unions globally.

2.0 Literature review

The literature reviews the evolution and efficacy of deposit guarantee schemes, pivotal for stabilizing financial systems and protecting depositors' interests (Poyo, 2000). It also highlights credit unions' cooperative nature, prioritizing members' needs over profit (Emmons & Schmid, 1998). Originating from the Great Depression aftermath, deposit insurance played a vital role in restoring depositor confidence and averting bank runs (McKillop & Wilson, 2015). Transparent communication is crucial for public understanding of deposit guarantees and their limitations (Hickson & McKillop, 1996). Historical experiments pre-Civil War reveal mixed outcomes for government-sponsored bank liability insurance plans. While New York's system failed due to inadequate backing and supervision, Indiana and Ohio's successful models featured robust regulatory oversight and broad coverage. In Ghana, the Deposit Protection Act aims to safeguard small depositors, yet concerns persist regarding coverage determination and reimbursement amounts (Isaac & Theophilus, 2021; Owusu et al., 2021). The synthesis of historical insights and contemporary perspectives provides valuable insights into the necessity and effectiveness of deposit insurance schemes in maintaining financial stability and preserving depositor trust. Additionally, examining the global landscape of deposit insurance schemes could offer further context and comparative analysis to enrich the understanding of their implementation and impact across different jurisdictions.

3.0 Methodology

The qualitative research study employed a multifaceted approach encompassing literature review, historical analysis, and empirical research. This method allowed for a nuanced understanding of deposit insurance schemes' principles, challenges, and effectiveness. Data collection involved structured questionnaires and interviews within the credit union sector. The analysis of collected qualitative data identified trends and implications, providing valuable insights into the role of deposit insurance schemes in ensuring financial stability and preserving depositor confidence.

4.0 Findings

Deposit insurance schemes play a crucial role in ensuring financial stability and protecting depositor interests (Donnelly, 2002; Koha, 1994). Credit unions, with their cooperative nature, stand to benefit from deposit insurance in strengthening depositor trust and addressing systemic risks (Hickson & McKillop, 1996; Elena, 2012). Historical

experiences underscore the importance of comprehensive coverage and effective oversight for deposit insurance schemes (McKillop et al., 2010). In Ghana, the Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS) within the credit union sector has proven effective in improving financial stability with a considerable fund of over GHc12 million and strategic investment practices (Central Bank of Ireland, 2024; Credit Unions Association of Ghana). The scheme's transparent governance and compliance mechanisms ensure long-term viability and sector-wide participation (Credit Unions Association of Ghana). The DGS's operational activities are managed separately from the Credit Union Association's primary accounts, ensuring openness, accountability, and effective governance. This separation of functions demonstrates a commitment to sound financial management procedures and builds stakeholder trust. Furthermore, fines for noncompliance with contribution duties highlight the importance of regulatory compliance to the scheme's performance. The scheme's constant fund growth, together with participation from over 113 credit unions, demonstrates its long-term viability and market adaptability. Contribution rates defined by primary society grades enable equitable participation and sharing of financial responsibilities within the sector. The DGS has significantly improved financial stability and depositor confidence within the credit union sector in Ghana, highlighting the importance of robust deposit insurance mechanisms in safeguarding the interests of depositors and ensuring the stability of the financial system.

5.0 Conclusion

The findings of the research point out the significant implications of the Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DGS) within the Ghanaian credit union sector. By mandating participation, amassing sizable funds, and responsibly investing them in varied assets, the DGS contributes significantly to financial security, risk mitigation, and depositor confidence throughout the sector. The scheme's offer of concessionary loans to distressed credit unions demonstrates its commitment to assisting members in times of need while guaranteeing prudent fund distribution through rigorous appraisal processes. Furthermore, separating operational activities from the Credit Union Association's main accounts enhances transparency, accountability, and effective governance, which increases stakeholder trust. The consistent growth trajectory of the scheme's fund, combined with equitable contribution rates based on primary society grades, demonstrates its robustness and long-term viability. Moving forward, continuous regulatory compliance, improved risk management techniques, and ongoing public education programs will be critical to the DGS's success and stability. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of deposit insurance schemes in protecting the interests of credit unions and their members, promoting financial stability, and developing a resilient financial ecosystem in Ghana.

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ADVANCING SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN THE COSMETICS AND BEAUTY INDUSTRY IN GHANA: ADDRESSING CONSUMERS' CHALLENGES

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Abstract

The cosmetics and beauty industry in Ghana is a burgeoning sector with immense potential for economic growth and social empowerment. However, it faces many challenges that impede its sustainable development and inclusivity. This research applies the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to investigate the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influencing consumer behavior within the cosmetics and beauty industry in Accra, Ghana. The results are based on a survey involving 200 participants in Accra who work in the beauty sector. The results revealed the following critical challenges within the industry: limited access to sustainable products, affordability, and lack of awareness and education. In order to address these challenges, the study proposes solutions which require collaboration among various stakeholders' efforts. Stakeholders such as government bodies, businesses, NGOs, and consumers will assist to improve education, increase product accessibility, and enhance supply chain transparency. By adopting a multi-stakeholder approach involving governments, industry players, and civil society, the Ghana cosmetics industry can overcome these challenges and emerge as a driver of advancing sustainability and inclusivity in Ghana's cosmetics and beauty industry.

1.0 Introduction

Ghana's cosmetics and beauty industry is a thriving and quickly expanding sector that contributes significantly to the nation's economy, culture, and social cohesion. With a wide variety of goods to suit different hair kinds, complexion tones, and aesthetic tastes, the sector serves a wide range of customers from various demographic groups. But even with its expansion and significance, the business still has to overcome a number of obstacles related to inclusivity and sustainability. The cosmetics and beauty business has seen a global movement in recent years towards inclusion and sustainability, spurred by corporate responsibility initiatives, regulatory pressure, and growing consumer awareness. Customers now want items to be high-quality and efficient, ethically sourced, kind to the environment, and inclusive of a range of beauty standards. These trends are also gaining traction in Ghana, where customers are pushing for greater diversity and outstanding representation in beauty standards. They are also growing more aware of the environmental and social effects of the products they purchase.

In order to advance sustainability and inclusion in the cosmetics and beauty industry, this study intends to investigate the difficulties Ghanaian customers encounter with these issues and offer solutions. Through tackling these issues, the research aims to support the growth of a more socially conscious, inclusive, and sustainable cosmetics and beauty sector in Ghana.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen in 1985 (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) proposed that the purpose of an action influences the individual's behaviour associated with an increase in the intention to act to improve the chance of success. TPB provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting human behaviour, particularly in the context of decision-making related to consumer choices within the cosmetics and beauty industry. The theory posits that behavior is influenced by three main constructs: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Mussolino & Calabro, 2014). The TPB reflects the intention of the consumers to purchase local cosmetics and beauty products.

3.0 Methods

For this study, I selected a qualitative research approach for collecting data regarding the difficulties Ghanaian customers encounter with sustainability and inclusion in the cosmetics and beauty industry and offer solutions. Conducting qualitative research enables the exploration of people's real-life experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The qualitative approach was suitable for this study because this study depended on narrative, descriptive, and non-numeric data. This approach allowed me to develop insights into the problem by conducting semi structured interviews (Yin, 2018). This study conveniently surveyed 200 participants who work in the cosmetics and beauty sector in Accra, Ghana. In addition, the research included three face-to-face interviews conducted with professional cosmetologists with more than ten years of experience in the beauty industry.

4.0 Results

The findings of this study highlighted the challenges of consumers concerning the advancing sustainability and inclusivity in the cosmetics and beauty industry in Ghana. The main challenges include:

Limited Access to Sustainable Products: Most of the consumers in Ghana face challenges in accessing sustainable beauty products due to limited availability or higher costs associated with eco-friendly alternatives which hinder their ability to make environmentally conscious choices.

Affordability: Sustainable and inclusive products in the cosmetics industry have a higher price tag than conventional products, which makes it difficult for consumers, especially those with lower incomes, to afford these sustainable consumption options.

Lack of Awareness and Education: Consumers complained that they did not receive education and awareness about conventional beauty products' environmental and social impacts and the available sustainable alternatives in the Ghanaian market.

5.0 Conclusions

Based on the research findings, addressing the resulting consumer challenges requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including government bodies, businesses,

NGOs, and consumers. Efforts to improve education, increase product accessibility, and enhance supply chain transparency, can all contribute to overcoming these obstacles in Ghana's cosmetics and beauty industry.

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DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER STREET FOOD PURCHASE INTENTION: MEDIATING ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to assess the determinants of consumer purchase intention of street food with knowledge and attitude as the mediator and moderator respectively. The study helps to identify consumer considerations in their purchase of street food and also assist practitioners in the relevant field of study to appreciate and recommend appropriate remedies that will influence consumers to make a purchase.

Design/methodology/approach: The authors used surveys as the research design. There were 350 respondents who patronize street food in Madina, a suburb of Accra. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach was used for the analysis.

Findings: The study finds that consumers attitude plays a major role in purchasing street food. This is because, from the analysis, it was identified that respondents paid critical attention to the environment from where they purchase, the vendor and utensils neatness, health consciousness, time factor, pricing, the behavior of the vendor and the manner in which the food is presented.

Originality/value: First this study helps to assess the factors that consumers consider when purchasing street food. Secondly it examines the challenges consumers are confronted as a result of consuming street food and thirdly, the study then examines the factors that influence the consumer in purchasing and consuming street food.

1.0 Background of the Study

The concept of street food has attracted diverse attention in the literature (Costello, et al, 2010; Nowicki and Sikora, 2012). According to Yidana and Philip, (2018) food can be described as “any material consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrates, and fat foods used in the body of an organism to sustain growth, repair and vital processes and furnish energy.” Street food vending is a rapidly growing industry in both develop and developing countries. As a result, food choice and consumption has also emerged as an intricate subject influenced by several factors (Clotet, 2000) including food hygiene and standards, food allergens, chemicals and pesticide residues, use of additives, synthetic flavours and colours etc. (Kidd, 2000; Wilcock, et al, 2004). In Ghana, just like most developing countries especially in Africa street food is the most common type of food that one can see. It is sold by hawkers or vendors from a portable stall, cart and now food trucks. Most street foods are considered both finger food and fast food and are more reasonably priced than restaurant meals.

The Food and Agriculture Organization –FAO, (2009) defined street food as “ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in

streets and other similar public places”. This definition emphasizes the retail location ‘on the street’, foods sold from handcarts, bicycles, baskets or balance poles, or from stalls that do not have four permanent walls. This distinguishes street food vendors from more formal food service operations, such as cafés, ‘takeaways’, ‘chop bars’ and fast foods the restaurants. Street foods can also be said to be foods that are prepared or cooked and are sold by vendors in a street or other public location for immediate consumption, (Tinker, 1997).

The objective of this present study therefore, are in three folds. First was to explore the factors that determine the street food purchase intention of the Ghanaian consumer. Second to investigate the factors that influence the behaviour of the consumer towards the purchase and consumption of street foods. Third, to examine the mediating role knowledge between the determinants and purchase intention. Socio-demographic factors and consumers’ behaviour towards street food purchase. Finally, to come out with modalities that will help street food vendors, health professionals, and policy makers to understand the most important issues for consumers regarding street food.

2.0 Methodology

The sample size for this study is three hundred and fifty (350) respondents. Convenience sampling techniques was used by the researchers to select the respondents who will prefer to be a part of the study. The authors used surveys as the research design. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analysis using Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach

3.0 Findings

The study finds that consumers attitude plays a major role in consumers resorting to street food. This is because from the analysis it was identified that respondents paid critical attention to the environment where they buy from, the neatness of both the vendor and utensils used in selling, health conscious, time factor, pricing, paying critical attention to the behavior of the vendor and the manner in which the food is presented. Moreover, from the analyses made, the researchers observe that there was a positive and significant relationship between consumers’ attitude and consumers’ resources as well as that of consumers’ purchasing decision in relation to street food. On the other hand, there was a positive but no significant relationship between consumers’ attitude, consumers’ lifestyle, consumers’ need and consumers’ pre purchase evaluation towards street food. Moreover, there was a negative and no significant relationship between consumers’ attitude and that of consumers’ motivation, and consumers’ attitude towards food safety certification.

4.0 Conclusions

From the study, the researcher observed that consumers’ attitude plays a vital role when it comes to selecting street food. In addition, there was no significant relationship between consumers’ attitude and consumers’ lifestyle, consumers’ need, consumers’ pre purchase evaluation, consumers’ motivation, and consumers’ attitude towards food safety certification. Finally, the researcher observes a significant relationship between consumers’ attitude and consumers’ resources, and consumers’ purchasing decisions.

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THE EFFECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING PRACTICE ON FIRM REPUTATION: A MEDIATION AND MODERATION ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Sustainability Marketing has largely been criticised for concentration on the macro-marketing with the neglect of micro marketing. In an attempt to enhance sustainability marketing into a micro marketing concept, sustainability marketing practice has been advanced to take care of such gaps. The main aim of this study was to investigate the effects of sustainability marketing practice on the reputation of firms in the oil marketing industry in Ghana. However, the study used 363 responses for analyses after data cleaning. A structural equation modelling technique, using AMOS 26 to be precise was used for the analysis. The study found a positive and significant relationship between sustainability marketing practice elements and firm reputation. The study found support for the mediating effect of explorative and exploitative innovation on the relationship between sustainability marketing practice and firm reputation. Therefore, the study claims that there is a relationship between sustainability marketing practice and firm reputation. The study also advanced that the relationship between sustainability marketing practice and firm reputation was mediated by explorative and exploitative innovation. Finally, the relationship between sustainability marketing practice and firm reputation was moderated by regulatory regimes while the relationship was not moderated by customer demands. The study recommends that if firms in the oil marketing want to enhance their reputation, they should consider sustainability marketing practices not as a cost but as an investment. Firms have no choice than to integrate the practice of sustainability practices into their activities.

1.0 Background of the study

There has been an attempt by stakeholders from across the world and disciplines (e.g. governments, academics, nongovernmental organizations, practitioners and policy makers) to mitigate the impact of unsustainable practices by firms and by consumers (Lim, 2022). Even though there is some evidence that a certain number of consumers are much concerned about their health which has to do with the general health of the human being and the state in which the ecosystem which they depend on for survival (Shreedhar & Galizzi, 2021) coupled with the fact that they are willing to pay higher prices to be provided with products that are sustainable (Tm et al., 2021; Sharma, 2021) in addition to the increasing rate of greening the processes of business and supply chains as a result of demands from the society (Kumar et al., 2021; Chopra et al., 2021), the fact is that such organizations and consumers are in the minority and that there are persistent issues of unsustainable consumption and practices (Lim, 2022; Bhattacharyya et al., 2022). Both consumers and firms are still ignorant regarding the threat of sustainability practices and unsustainable consumption (Boström, 2020). The firms lack the economies of scale because the demand for sustainable products are poor and these are some of the reasons why most firms involved in producing sustainable products have

largely exited the marketplace (Peattie & Crane, 2005). The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of sustainability marketing practices in managing the reputation of firms in the Oil marketing sector in Ghana.

2.0 Methodology

Positivist Paradigm: testing of hypotheses based on theory and the belief that reality can be measured in a scientific way (Mahmoud, 2014; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Bernardino, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2023). Explanatory in nature (Saunders et al., 2011), Quantitative Approach Convenience sampling, (Saunders et al 2019, p.290). 362 FROs in Accra-Tema, Kumasi, Secondi-Takoradi and Tamale above the age of 18 (Saunders et al., 2019, p.296; Hair et al., 2013). Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) was used for Data Cleaning, Descriptive Statistics and a Mahalanobis test. Structural Equation Modelling (AMOS version 26).

3.0 Findings

The study found SMP to be the elements of the SMM using the Belz & Peattie (2010) 4Cs including customer solutions, Customer Cost, Convenience and Communication and added Cooperation from (Pomering, 2017) in order to make it the 5Cs of SM. According to this study, sustainability marketing practice elements including customer solution, customer cost, communication, convenience and cooperation have effect on the reputation of firm in the oil marketing industry. The study found the mediating effect of innovation (exploitative and explorative) in the relationship between sustainability marketing practice and firm reputation to be supported for some of the elements while others were not supported for oil marketing companies. The study investigated the moderating effect of both customer demands and regulatory regimes on the relationship between sustainability marketing practice and firm reputation. The results for regulatory regimes was supported but the significance was not high which means that customers realisation of an oil marketing company being engaged in sustainability marketing practice by obeying to regulations will not enhance the firm's reputation.

4.0 Conclusions of the Study

Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) now see practices sustainability marketing as a strategy (Jones et al., 2018; Lim, 2021; Bolton, 2022) rather than a cost (George, 2019; Winston, 2019). In light of this, Oil marketing Companies ought to think about creating and implementing Sustainability Marketing Practice (SMP). Oil Marketing Companies are encouraged to embrace innovation both exploitative and explorative as a part of their capabilities when practice Sustainability Marketing (SM) as a tool to enhance their reputation. In order to promote Sustainability Marketing Practice (SMP) for the firm, this study expands it to include the 5Cs: Customer solutions, Customer Cost, Convenience, Communications and Cooperation.

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BOOZE BUSINESS IN RWANDA: MARKET POSITIONING OF NORBERT BUSINESS GROUP (NBG) LIMITED IN THE LIQUOR BUSINESS

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Abstract

Introduction (Purpose and Background)

There are about ten liquor production companies in Rwanda, categorized into blending companies and those handling distillation to packaging. Notably, 1000HILLS, with unique products, does not rank high in sales despite attractive branding. Conversely, traditional liquor 'Kanyanga' dominates sales due to affordability. Leading distilled liquors include NOBILIS, RACK GIN, and GABI GIN, while other top-selling liquors are predominantly blended ones.

This study investigated the pivotal role of procurement practices in shaping the competitive advantage of a local distillery, Norbert Business Group (NBG) Limited within the Rwandan liquor market. Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study addressed four key objectives: (i) assessed the influence of market intelligence on NBG's competitive edge, (ii) examined how procurement planning impacted its competitive positioning, (iii) interrogated the significance of buyer-supplier relationships in enhancing competitive advantage, and (iv) investigated the effects of agile procurement on NBG's market standing.

1.0 Methodology:

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate the pivotal role of procurement practices in shaping the competitive advantage of Norbert Business Group Limited in the Rwandan liquor market. Four key objectives were addressed: assessing the influence of market intelligence on NBG's competitive edge, examining how procurement planning impacted its competitive positioning, interrogating the significance of buyer-supplier relationships, and investigating the effects of agile procurement on NBG's market standing.

2.0 Findings/ Results:

Market intelligence, characterized by customer-driven product customization and real-time pricing adjustments, emerged as a potent force in maintaining a competitive edge in the distillery space. Procurement planning, marked by reliable supply, cost efficiency, and robust supplier relationships, proved pivotal in ensuring product quality and competitive pricing. Buyer-supplier relationships built on collaboration and trust set NBG apart, securing fair pricing, quality ingredients, and a reinforced supply chain.

3.0 Conclusions:

The study underscores the paramount importance of market intelligence and strategic procurement practices in shaping NBG's competitive advantage and market positioning in the Rwandan liquor market. Additionally, insights into market dynamics, including consumer preferences, bottle sizes, and product branding, shed light on the competitive landscape and potential strategies for market penetration and growth.

Keywords: Buyer-supplier relationships, Market intelligence, Procurement planning, Liquor Market, Case Study, Rwanda.

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BRIDGING THE SKILL GAP: TRANSFORMING THE MODERN WORKFORCE USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

In the contemporary landscape of rapid technological advancement, all throughout the world, businesses, economies, and communities are being impacted by the revolutionary power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) which creates both opportunities and challenges for workforce development. This study delves into the pivotal role of AI in upskilling and reskilling initiatives aimed at bridging the skills gap in today's workforce. By adopting a quantitative approach and utilizing a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, this study investigates the perceptions and needs of individuals across various sectors in Accra, Ghana. Data collection involves a structured questionnaire administered online to 384 participants selected through stratified random sampling. The data is analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, particularly standard multiple regression, to assess the relationship between AI initiatives and human capital development and examine key variables such as AI awareness, usage, skills gap, and upskilling needs. Practically, the study is significant in that while AI implementation in organizations can enhance productivity and efficiency, it also poses challenges such as job displacement, emphasizing the criticality of upskilling and reskilling strategies. Grounded in human capital theory, this study underscores the significance of strategic initiatives tailored to address the evolving demands of the workforce, thereby contributing to individual, organizational, and societal advancement.

Key words: Artificial intelligence, workforce, employee upskilling and re-skilling, transformative workplace, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

With the advent of AI, a game-changer in this age of lightning-fast technological development, the very definition of labor and the set of abilities needed to succeed in it have been upended. (Smith, 2020). However, this rapid evolution has also widened the skills gap, posing significant challenges for individuals and organizations alike (Jones & Brown, 2019). Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a pervasive force reshaping industries, economies, and societies worldwide. In the realm of workforce development, AI presents both unprecedented opportunities and formidable challenges (Johnson et al., 2021).

Many employees are unprepared to meet the changing needs of today's workplace due to the skills gap that has opened up as a result of the fast development of AI technology. This disparity not only hampers individual career prospects but also undermines organizational competitiveness and economic growth. Addressing this challenge

requires a multifaceted approach that integrates AI-enabled upskilling and reskilling initiatives tailored to the needs of diverse workforce segments (Smith & Johnson, 2022).

The rapid integration of AI technologies across various regions, from Europe to Africa, has illuminated a stark skills gap, leaving a significant portion of the global workforce ill-equipped to navigate the evolving job market. This study will explore how the deficiency in digital skills, as highlighted by the European Commission (2020), the World Bank (2019), the African Development Bank (2018), the Ghana Statistical Service (2020), and the International Labour Organization (2018), not only limits individual career advancement but also poses a threat to regional economic competitiveness and growth.

The study adopted the human capital theory to understand these issues. It critically evaluates the implications, challenges, and opportunities of upskilling and reskilling policies in the contemporary workplace. Again, it posits that strategic upskilling and reskilling not only enhance individual competencies and organizational performance but also contribute to societal advancement by fostering a resilient and adaptable workforce (Becker, 1964)."

2.0 Literature Review

The revolutionary potential of AI in human resource development has been previously studied. Tamayo et al. (2023) emphasized the strategic imperative for companies to invest in reskilling programs, identifying paradigm shifts necessary for success in the age of AI. Subburayan (2022) underscored AI's role in personalized upskilling and reskilling, emphasizing its ability to enhance learning outcomes and engagement. Rao (2022) outlined best practices for implementing AI-enabled learning solutions, emphasizing alignment with organizational goals and stakeholder engagement. However, challenges persist in the effective implementation of AI-driven upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Arntz, Gregory, and Zierahn (2019) and Bughin et al. (2020) highlighted accessibility concerns and psychological barriers hindering the adoption of such programs. VanLehn (2019) and Hobbs et al. (2021) raised ethical considerations, including algorithmic bias and neglect of socio-emotional aspects of learning.

3.0 Methodology

This study involves a quantitative approach, and a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. A sample size of 384 individuals was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, with participants drawn from various sectors in Accra, Ghana, through stratified random sampling. Data collection was conducted via a structured questionnaire, administered through online platforms to ensure accessibility and participation.

The questionnaire addressed key variables such as AI awareness, usage, skills gap, and upskilling needs. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondent demographics and attitudes, while inferential statistics, including standard multiple regression analysis, were used to examine the relationship between AI initiatives and human capital development.

4.0 Expected Findings

It is believed that AI could automate human-intensive operations or decrease cognitive workload when applied to different areas of organizations, resulting in more efficiency and production. Companies and employees alike will feel the effects of these shifts in the near future, especially if AI is seen as a source of job losses.

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TALENT DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION CULTURE, AND ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE IN GHANA'S OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY: A MEDITATION APPROACH

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship among talent development, innovation culture, and adaptive performance within the uncertain and dynamic context of Ghana's oil and gas industry. Research suggests that fostering talent development enhances an individual's ability to adapt, but there is limited understanding of the specific innovation mechanism by which this process occurs. Utilising the diffusion of innovation theory, this study aims to address this gap by examining evidence from Ghana's oil and gas industry. The survey results, which were based on a talent pool consisting of 745 individuals, indicated that the presence of an innovation culture has a partial mediating role in the relationship between talent development and adaptive performance. This study enhances the existing knowledge on innovation and contributes to the ninth sustainable development goal by examining how innovation culture connects talent development with adaptive performance. The findings imply that companies can enhance their employees' ability to think innovatively and explore novel technologies by investing in talent development projects. This, in turn, enables employees to swiftly adjust to changing market uncertainties. This study enhances the diffusion of innovation theory by demonstrating the process by which new knowledge or information is communicated to oil and gas employees, thereby encouraging them to develop innovative mindsets. This, in turn, enables them to become adopters of innovation and positively influences their ability to adapt in times of uncertainty.

1.0 Introduction

Globally, the modern business environment has become characterised by market uncertainty (Van Nguyen et al., 2024). Market uncertainty refers to the lack of predictability or stability in various aspects of the marketplace (Raza et al., 2024). This market uncertainty has become widespread in the Ghana's oil and gas industry (Sackey et al., 2024). Companies operating in this industry contend with fierce competition from foreign players, changing customer preferences, globalisation, and advances in technology (Mohamed et al., 2024; Tatar et al., 2024). To respond to current and future uncertainties in this industry, firms require adaptation (Schoon & Henseke, 2023). To improve the adaptive performance of employees, firms must invest in employee skills and knowledge using talent development (Kravariti et al., 2023; Colarusso & Lyle, 2014).

Talent development involves planning, selecting, and implementing growth plans for all talent pools to ensure that an oil and gas company has a current and future talent supply to meet its long-term goals and that development initiatives are aligned with talent

management strategies (Garavan et al., 2012). Adaptive performance refers to changing one's behaviour in response to a new scenario, event, or collection of circumstances (Pulakos et al., 2000). Oil and gas firms can also improve employee adaptive performance by instilling a culture of innovation (Stańczyk, 2017). Innovation culture refers to initiatives to improve the oil and gas customer experience, which comprises optimising processes, introducing new ideas, and delivering new products (Åmo, 2006).

However, how innovation culture intervenes between talent development and adaptive performance has not been theoretically and empirically addressed. In the literature, talent development is a driver of adaptability (Ajgaonkar et al., 2022) and innovation (Gouda & Tiwari, 2022), while innovation encourages adaptability (Javed et al., 2017). Yet, the mediating role of innovation culture between talent development and adaptive performance has gone unnoticed. Research is considered lacking in rigour if it fails to take into account mediating factors (Coutts & Hayes, 2023). Companies empower employees to think creatively, experiment with new approaches, and adapt quickly to evolving challenges by investing in talent development initiatives like continuous learning and skill development (Morgan, 2014). By providing opportunities for continuous learning, skill enhancement, personal development, and career growth, companies can attract and retain innovative employees who are essential for driving the innovation atmosphere in firms (Javed et al., 2017), which are needed for adaptation.

The potential mediating role of innovation culture between talent development and adaptive performance finds credence in the diffusion of innovation theory. The diffusion of innovation theory analyses the transmission of new knowledge to employees, which, according to Rogers (1983), might result in the adoption of a new idea or technology. Rogers (1983) defines innovation as a novel concept, method, offering, or product that individuals recognise as being fresh or original. The diffusion of innovation theory operates under the fundamental assumption that all novel approaches are beneficial and efficient and hence should be embraced and implemented. The use of these novel approaches in addressing a need or solving a problem is what matters most. To this extent, the theory considers innovation as a mechanism (Rogers, 1983) for acquiring new insights during talent development programmes. These new insights are needed to solve adaptive performance problems in the oil and gas industry. With this in mind, this research seeks to examine the mediating role of innovation culture between talent development and adaptive performance in Ghana's oil and gas industry. This mediation relationship is illustrated in Figure 1 using a conceptual framework.

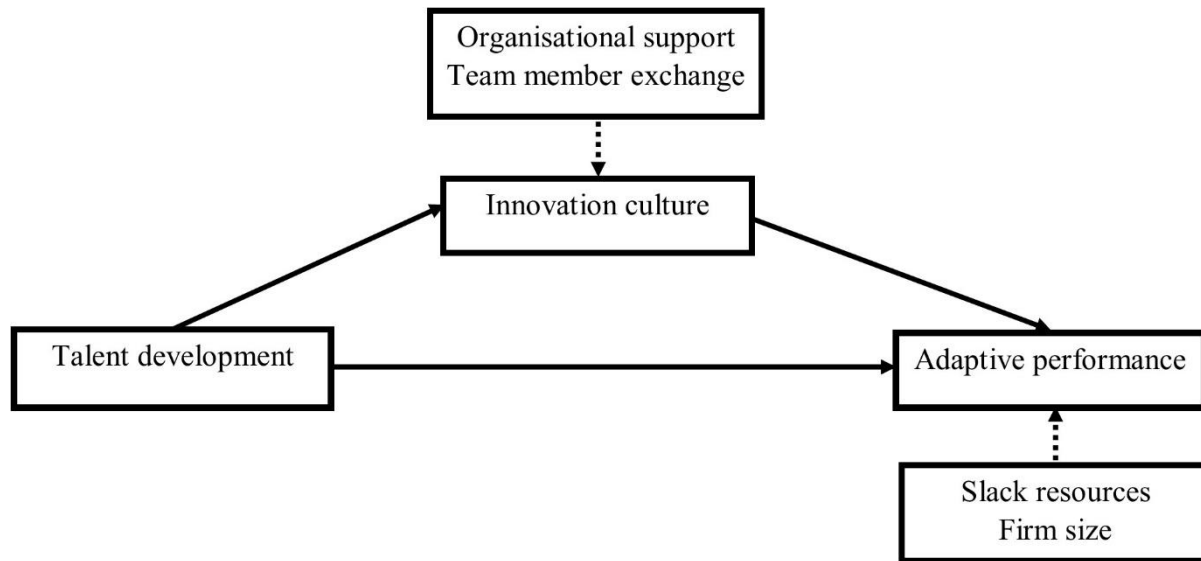


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3.0 Methods

This study conveniently surveyed a talent pool of 745 individuals using the mediation steps recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008) and leveraging the Smart PLS methodology. The control factors of adaptive performance were slack resources (Simsek et al., 2007) and firm size, while organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and team member exchange (Seers, 1989) served as control variables of innovation culture. Talent development was measured using a scale developed by Son et al. (2020), innovation culture was measured using a scale developed by Janssen (2000), and adaptive performance was measured using a scale developed by Marques-Quinteiro et al. (2015).

4.0 Results

The study results showed that talent development had a significant and positive effect on innovation culture ($t = 4.942$, $\beta = 0.356$) and adaptive performance ($t = 3.013$, $\beta = 0.265$). Similarly, innovation culture had a significant and positive effect on adaptive performance ($t = 5.320$, $\beta = 0.411$). Essentially, innovation culture played a partial mediating role between talent development and adaptive performance (Variance Accounted For = 65.30%, $t = 2.057$).

5.0 Conclusions

Based on the results, this research concludes that talent development shapes the innovation culture and adaptive performance of employees. In addition, innovative employees are capable of easily adapting to market uncertainties. Essentially, an innovation culture offers a means by which skilled and developed individuals can enhance their ability to adapt and perform effectively during periods of business volatility.

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UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRANT FINANCIAL BEHAVIOR - AN ETHNOGRAPHY STUDY OF A GHANAIAN IMMIGRANT CHURCH

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Abstract

This paper explores a deeper understanding of immigrant financial behavior through studying members of an immigrant Ghanaian church community based in the United States, by inquiring into the reasons behind their financial behavior. The paper explores immigrants' financial behavior in a more holistic and systematic way, by taking an encompassing approach to examining immigrants' financial behavior. Such encompassing approach to studying immigrant financial behavior is lacking in extant literature, as illuminated by Chen and Lemieux (2016), who argues that although extant studies on immigrants' financial behavior focus on some financial behavior aspects, none has taken an encompassing and systematic approach to studying all key financial behavior aspects of immigrants' financial behavior. Again, none has sought to deepen understanding of why immigrant behave the way they do financially. This present paper attempts to explore not only all key financial behavior aspects including spending, savings, cash flow management, debt management, risk management and investment, but also attempts to explore why immigrants behave the way they do financially.

Previous studies have adopted quantitative research methods to study immigrant financial behavior. However, this present study leverages qualitative (ethnographic) research method to gain in-depth understanding of immigrant financial behavior. It attempts to address two key research questions: 1) What is the financial behavior of members of this Ghanaian Immigrant Church community in the US; and 2) Why do they behave the way they do? By effectively addressing these key questions, this paper will be contributing to knowledge in the financial behavior genre, and it will also be a good source of information to policymakers in their policy making. Finally, it will assist financial institutions in their marketing strategies, and helps grow finances of this important immigrant population.

1.0 Introduction

This paper adopts IGI Global's definition of financial behavior, which describes financial behavior as individual's behavior that is relevant to money management, including savings, cash, and credit behavior. Financial behaviors world-wide are perceived to be generally flawed; yet, those in developing countries are seen to have worse financial behaviors than those in developed countries. This belief is affirmed by Chen and Lemieux (2016) who argue that inadequate financial knowledge contributes to flawed financial behavior; and that, research has shown that the extent of financial knowledge inadequacy in developing countries exceeds that in developed countries, which facilitates graver flawed financial behavior in developing countries. Being a developing

country, Ghana's populations' financial behavior is also perceived as flawed. Thus, when Ghanaians emigrate outside Ghana to seek greener pastures, they take with them these conventions and rules of financial behavior which are shaped by their culture, and which Osili and Paulson (2008) refer to as informal intuitional constraints, to their host countries. Being the second most popular destination for Ghanaian emigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2015), the US has become home to many Ghanaians; and these migrated Ghanaians are drawn to Ghanaian churches in the US, not only as a place of worship and fellowship, but also, as a place that serves their innate need to be among their own to interrelate and support each other.

Thus, the Ghanaian church in the US function as a Christian community bonded by a national (Ghanaian) culture and identity. The Ghanaian church focuses on the multi-mission of teaching the Bible and fellowshiping as well as promoting the economic and social wellbeing of its members, while championing worthy causes back in Ghana. Members of the immigrant church community exhibit similar financial behavior traits as that of other Ghanaian immigrants, which as discussed above, are influenced by conventions and rules of financial behavior brought from their home country, Ghana. Yet, these financial behavior traits, influenced by the Ghanaian culture, are exhibited more intensely among members of Ghanaian immigrant churches in the US than the average US Ghanaian immigrant. This goes to confirm Osili and Paulson's (2008) assertion that informal institutional constraints (conventions and rules of behavior) become more pronounced, enforced and reinforced through immigrant networks. Addressing these flawed financial behaviors adequately with the appropriate policies and strategies, requires the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of why Ghanaian immigrants behave the way they do financially - and this is what the present study seeks to do. The study seeks to gain a better understanding of the financial behavior of a Ghanaian church community in the United States, by inquiring into the reasons behind such behaviors.

2.0 Methodology

The present study adopts ethnographic research method, specifically auto-ethnography, which is believed to be appropriate for studying the behavior of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Ethnography is used to address two key research question: 1) What is the financial behavior of members of this Ghanaian Immigrant Church community in the US; and 2) Why do they behave the way they do? As a qualitative research, ethnographic research method allows for the description and interpretation of the shared and learned patterns of behavior, values, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). Thus, ethnographic research is about examining the regularities or patterns of a culture-sharing group's mental activities expressed through their material activities (Creswell, 2013). Hence, this ethnographic study involves developing a complex, complete description and interpretation of the financial behavior of this target culture-sharing group (Ghanaian church community) with

the view of gaining a better understanding of the group's financial behavior (Creswell, 2013).

3.0 Findings

Overall, there are aspects in participants' financial behavior which are problematic and need to be improved to enhance their financial wellbeing and that of the community. The data analysis shows that while participants are doing quite well with financial aspects like risk management/insurance coverage and retirement planning, they are not doing as well with aspects like cash flow management, spending, savings, debt management, and investment. This finding of flawed financial behaviors confirms some authors' argument (Barcellos et al., 2016; Chen and Lemieux, 2016; Quinn, 2005) of immigrants higher levels of flawed financial behaviors.

The data analysis reveals that these flawed financial behavior traits are rooted and significantly influenced by the Ghanaian culture. Key Ghanaian cultural aspects accountable for the Ghanaian immigrant financial behavior include the following: 1) The Ghanaian orientation toward Interdependent self-construal (Lee and Eaton, 2009) which is demonstrated through obligation to family and community, self-sacrifice for family and societal well-being, as well as harmonious family and community life; 2) The lack of financial socialization (Chowa and Despard, 2014) where families, and the society as a whole, rarely discuss issues of personal financial management; 3) The lack of financial literacy within the community; and 4) The perception of money as a symbol of status and respect, which compels many individuals to strive for this status and respect by showing-off through frivolous spending exceeding what they can truly afford.

This study also reveal that these flawed financial behavior patterns are exhibited more intensely among the Ghanaian immigrant church community in the US than the average US Ghanaian immigrant. Generally, the study participants are in graver financial situations than had been anticipated prior to the study; and the Ghanaian cultural influences on the participants are more pronounced than had also been anticipated. These cultural influences are enforced and reinforced through the Ghanaian immigrant church, as the church has become an ethnic concentration where migrants of the same origin have gathered to form a cohesive immigrant religious network. Thus, this reinforced and strengthened cultural influences have an even stronger impact on participants' financial behavior, and this is evident in the data, particularly, as it relates to similar patterns in participants' frivolous social event spending, unstructured remittances, lack of budgeting and expense tracking, and poor savings habits.

4.0 Conclusion

The in-depth immigrant financial knowledge realized through this study does not only contribute to knowledge in the financial behavior genre, but it also affords policymakers and financial institutions of both host and origin countries the opportunity to come up with

more informed policies and strategies that can augur well for the immigrants in question and the host and origin countries themselves. The acquired knowledge is not only applicable and beneficial to the target group (the studied Ghanaian church community in the US), but it also goes beyond this group to have beneficial implications for the broader Ghanaian church communities in the US, since there are enormous similarities in cultural practices across Ghanaian immigrant communities in the US (Agyekum and Newbold, 2016; Biney, 2011); and, as a people, they tend to have similar financial habits and behavioral patterns shaped by their native (Ghanaian) culture (Ecer and Tomptins, 2010).

The study has been significantly dependent on self-reported data. Self-reported data is vulnerable to bias because it can induce socially desirable responses (Chen and Lemieux, 2016; Dew and Xiao, 2011). This risk is even higher when it has to do sensitive data (Greene et al., 2008), such as financial information. To mitigate this risk of social desirability bias, measures are utilized (such as analyzing data for consistencies or otherwise on participants' responses to interrelated aspects of their financial behavior; observing their reactions to questions; and observing their lifestyles) to paint a more accurate picture.

Finally, while the ethnographic, context-oriented nature of this study makes it possible to delve deeper to gain a better understanding of immigrant financial behavior, this same nature makes generalizability of its findings problematic. Recognizing the generalizability challenge of a context-oriented, single-site study, it is recommended that future studies focus on replicating the present study at multiple sites - i.e. different Ghanaian Immigrant Churches in the US.

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THE EFFECT OF GREEN PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR AND ETHICAL INTENTION ON WILLINGNESS TO PAY A PREMIUM: THE ROLE OF ATTITUDE IN MEDIATING THE RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

The inconsistency of the attitude-behaviour gap in literature presents the main uncertainty in sustainable production and consumption. The failure of consumers to back their promises of sustainable consumption with their willingness to pay a premium fuel the attitude-behaviour gap. This study examines the influence of green purchase behaviour and ethical intentions on consumer's willingness to pay a premium for ethical products. The role of attitude mediating the relationship between green purchase behaviour and ethical intention and the willingness to pay a premium was also examined. Data was collected in a survey of consumers of packaged fast-moving consumer products selected conveniently in Accra. This was statistically analysed in a structural equation modelling. Green purchase behaviour and ethical intention accounted for variations in willingness to pay a premium. Attitude was found to mediate the influence in the relationship between the variables. Practical implications for organisations are that positive attitudes toward ethical products will promote the willingness to pay a premium. Socially, this will promote sustainable consumption in line with SDG 12.

1.0 Introduction:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 12 to 14 emphasise the need to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development (UNDP, 2015). The need to protect the environment and environmental ethics is a shared responsibility after all and over the years consumer behaviour and preferences have changed in that respect. Some consumers have become aware of their responsibilities and started to prefer eco-friendly products and ethical consumption (Cohen, 2021; Abumoghli, & McCartney, 2020).

Green purchase behaviour refers to the purchase of ecologically welcoming goods that can be recycled to benefit the environment to avoid causing harm (Sharma, Aswal and Paul, 2022). Consumer purchase intentions, on the other hand, refer to the preconditions for consumers to sustainably consume (Zhuang, Luo, and Raiz, 2021). Wei, Ang, and Jacenelle (2018) define willingness to pay more to mean the eagerness of buyers to pay an exceptional price for green products. Attitude is considered a sensation toward product(s) influenced by several factors (Septianto and Paramita, 2021), it is concerned with the favourable or unfavourable disposition of the consumer towards a product.

Consumer demands currently have driven organisations to reconsider production processes and to adhere to more ecologically responsive products. Ecologically friendly

packaging is, therefore, one of the marketing methods used by businesses, to meet the demand of consumers who will usually check for ecologically responsive packages before purchasing, especially in the food sector (Prakash & Pathak, 2017). Schmidt and Bijmolt (2019) contend that consumers' willingness to pay is the central factor for price response approaches that govern the decision for pricing and promotion. Prakash and Pathak (2017) specify that price is a significant feature of consumers' purchasing decisions while. Green products are perceived as more expensive than conventional goods (Mishra et al. (2017. Thus, the willingness of consumers to pay for green-packaged products is considered a critical predictor of green purchasing (Mahmoud et al, 2022). The study combines the theory of consumer behaviour and reasoned action to interrogate the research questions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Morrell & Jayawardhena, 2010; Sharma & Dayal, 2017).

Many researchers have raised concerns about the lack of financial commitment by consumers when it comes to supporting the purchase of sustainable products referred to as the attitude behaviour gap. Studies have confirmed that price, inadequate and lack of reliable information, and excessive convenience are factors responsible for the attitude-behaviour gap (Lee et. al., 2020; Van Riper et al., (2020). While inconsistent results have been reported to address the attitude-behaviour gap, (Sharma et al., 2021; Sun, 2019; Yadav & Pathak, 2017), there are still contradictory conclusions that intentions do not essentially lead to real ethical purchasing. The current study presents relevant theoretical and practical implications for organisations that wish to engage in sustainable production. The consumer's willingness to pay a premium should be important to the organisations because it could catalyze the intentions and the behaviour of consumers to reward firms that want to go green in their production. Given the above, the following hypotheses are constructed:

1. Consumer green purchase behaviour (CGPB) and consumer ethical purchase intention (CEPI) will significantly influence consumers' willingness to pay a premium (CWPP) for packaged fast-moving consumer goods.
2. Consumer Attitude (CATT) will mediate the relationship between green purchase behaviour, ethical purchase intention, and willingness to pay a premium?

2.0 Methodology:

The study employed a cross-sectional design using an explanatory survey and the quantitative method to obtain empirical data. The cross-sectional design was adopted because it allowed the researcher to collect one-off data in a survey. The quantitative method was also employed to obtain empirical data for statistical analysis (Saunders et al, 2016). Data was analysed using a structural equation modelling technique.

3.0 Findings/Results:

All the hypotheses were supported. CGPB and CEPI accounted for 22.8% of the variation in CATT. Also, CGPB, CEPI and CATT collectively accounted for 20.3% of the variance in CWPP. CGPB had significant direct positive effects on CWPP. Likewise, the direct effects of CEPI on CWPP and CATT were positively significant. CATT also had a significant direct positive effect on CWPP. CGPB and CEPI had significant indirect

positive effects on CWPP through CATT. Thus, CATT mediated the influence of CGPB and CEPI on CWPP.

4.0 Conclusion

The study investigated the influence of consumer green purchase behaviour and ethical intentions on willingness to pay a premium with attitude mediating the relationship. The hypotheses were supported. Practically, this should be of importance to organisations seeking to go green in their production. The consumer's willingness to pay a premium will go a long way to give organisations assurances that their intentions and green behaviour operations will be rewarded by consumers. With the right and positive attitude, consumers' willingness to pay a premium is an important assurance to help reduce the ethical and ecological attitude-behaviour gap.

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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL AND PEOPLE-CENTRIC CYBER-ATTACKS ON IOT: THE CASE OF INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCERS (IPPS)

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Abstract

The integration of the Internet of Things (IoT) into the electrical grid has facilitated the linking of physical objects and people to various digital assets. As a result, cyber risk are most often conceived from a social and people-centric perspective. This study investigates how social and people-centric factors, such as user attitudes, power struggles, individual training, and trust, influence cyber-attack incidents. The aim is to examine how attackers exploit vulnerabilities associated with these factors within the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) operational environment. The authors administered questionnaires purposively within selected units of IPP staff who are directly involved with the day-to-day operations in the power generation sector. The data analysis utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to measure and evaluate the proposed conceptual framework. The results of the analysis reveal a statistically significant negative association between Power Struggles and Cyberattacks. However, the results reveal a positive relationship but not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.056$; $p = 0.367$). Between Trust of Individuals and Cyber Attack incidents the results reveal a statistically significant positive relationship with values ($\beta = 0.126$; $p = 0.001$) and lastly, the study also reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between User Attitude and Cyber Attack incidents ($\beta = 0.408$; $p = 0.000$). The study supports the idea that power struggles in operational environments can create vulnerabilities that enhance cyberattack risk. It also emphasizes the need to balance confidence with security and awareness to prevent cyberattacks. The study has cybersecurity relevance since user attitudes, including policy compliance, threat awareness, and protocol adherence, can affect security behavior. Further studies with larger samples may be necessary to determine how cyber security training impacts cyber-attacks.

Keywords: Internet of Things, Independent Power Producers, Cyber-attack, Electrical Grid and Power Generation.

1.0 Introduction

This study focuses on independent power producers (IPPs) because over the years, successive governments have striven to solve electricity generation deficits and supply. The improvements in the sector inspire private-sector participation for electricity generation. This participation has called for power generation entities such as independent power producers (IPPs). Fundamental to this initiative is the interconnectivity between grid components (Rajkumar et al., 2020). This study therefore

aim at investigating cybersecurity vulnerabilities within the IPPs power generation sector on how Social and People-Centric elements could impact on Cyberattacks. The contemporary power generation system has evolved possessing an enhanced intelligence, reliability, and efficiency, hence stimulating the emergence and development of the smart grid concept. Currently, the efficiency of power generation is heavily reliant on advanced technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT). The integration of Internet of Things (IoT) and Smart Grids has emerged as an issue of growing significance in recent years (Tauqir & Habib, 2019). Therefore, in relation to the study, emphasis in socio-technical systems lies in comprehending the interplay between individuals and technology within a wider societal framework. Because the approach underscores significance of considering not just the technological efficiency and usefulness, but also the social structures, human behavior, and organizational context that are intertwined with effective systems and processes.

The IoT technology holds great potential and is captivating in its application to intelligent grid systems within the power sector. The technology also facilitates the monitoring of various operations, providing operators with sufficient data to inform them about the performance of the grid. According to Moore (2018), interaction between the machines and sensors in the process of production takes place with minimal or no involvement from humans. Despite the interaction of this innovative technology, previous studies have suggested that these extensively interconnected systems are potentially susceptible to cyber-attacks. (Delgado-gomes, 2015; Gunduz & Das, 2020; Lakhoua, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020) leading to national security deficits, disruption of public order, loss of life or large-scale economic damage. This has being confirmed by Ghosh & Ali, (2019); indicating that the electricity system is experiencing deterioration as a result of cyber-attacks. These cyber-attack triggers many power system protection relays, causing power outages. (Rajkumar et al., 2020). According to Hahn, (2018), major and smaller energy generators, as well as grid operators, must follow strict cybersecurity measures in order to protect the infrastructure to ensure smooth operation of power system. Due to this reasons, there has been several research focus on the power grid in line with power generations being initiated with specific focus. For instance, the study by Nguyen et al., (2020) emphasizes the significance of consideration of cyber-attacks into the strategic planning process for enhancing the resilience of electrical infrastructure. According to Eder-neuhauser et al., (2017) and Matoušek et al., (2020), there are instances of malware attacks that were widespread throughout the grid.

Roy & Debbarma, (2020) and Zou et al., (2020) investigate distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, denial-of-service (DoS) attacks impact on surfaces like Automatic Generation Control (AGC), Substation Automation Unit (SAU) and its effects on the grid. There were also specific cyber-attack incident been investigated by prior studies on unauthorised access to systems which were posing challenges to conventional data detection state estimation, Security constraint and economic dispatch (SCED), IEEE 39-bus, IEEE 14-bus and 118-bus systems, Automatic generation control (AGC), and Phasor measurement units (PMUs). Meanwhile a significant number of these cyber incidents are linked to human behavioural weaknesses on insider attacks, have received less attention in the electricity generation sector of which this study focuses on.

According to Evans et al., (2016). Most of these security breaches are technical and routine processing of confidential information etc., can be attributed to human error at the core. Because most vulnerable link is attributed to individuals who operate, administer, and are responsible for these systems. Very often, when cyber security threats are identified irrespective of the sector, 'insiders' are not conceded at the initial stages of investigating the cyber incidents. Meanwhile, such threats are related to people, information, technology and the business environment. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the relationships between social and people-centric elements by specifically considering Individuals Training, Trust of individuals, user attitude and power struggles within the working environment in the context of IPPs. By considering the following specific objectives:

1. To evaluate the influence of individual training on cyber-attack incidents within the operational environment of Independent Power Producers (IPPs).
2. To examine the impact of individuals' trust on cyber-attack incidents within the operational environment of Independent Power Producers (IPPs).
3. To assess the relationship between user attitudes and its effect on cyber-attacks within the operational environment of Independent Power Producers (IPPs).
4. To examine the relationship between power struggles and its effect on cyber-attack within the operational environment of Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The approach employed in this current investigation is exclusively quantitative in nature. The reason for employing this methodology is due to its reliance on empirical research to examine the social phenomena of cyber-attacks from human behaviour within the context of IPPs Operational environment predicting cyber-attacks. The design of the research guarantees the research process and the responses. It also focuses on the fundamentals to achieve the required result. (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021). Subsequently, the researchers collect quantitative data through survey. Utilizing the survey data, the model was assessed and evaluated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

3.2 Data Collection

Collection of data was achieved between March and May of 2021, and questionnaires were administered purposively to IPPs staff members who are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the grid. The design of the questionnaire consists of Six (6) parts: Demographic factor, Cyber Attack(ATK), Training Impact of Cyber Security (TICS), Trust of Individuals (TOI), User Attitude(USAT) which were based on (Happa & Fairclough, 2017) and Power Struggles (PWS) from Giddens, (1984) concept. The questionnaire design is founded on the proposed conceptual framework using a Likert scale from (One) 1 for strongly disagree to (Five) 5 for strongly agree.

3.3 Population and Sampling Procedures

To evaluate cyber-attacks on the electrical grid from a social and people-centric point of view, the study target population was made up of five (5) independent power producers (IPPs) and Ghana grid company limited (GRIDCO). The reason is that this IPPs were

the only active IPPs that were actively in operation working with (GRIDco) at the time for power generation and transmission. The authors estimated a sample frame of 300 based on units within the IPPs: Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Unit, Telecommunication Unit, and Management Information Systems (MIS) Unit. The authors employed the probability sampling method such as random sampling. Random sampling is used because it guarantees selected sample as representative of the target population, and reduces the possibility of selection bias. It also allows for statistical inference, easier to execute and less costly, especially when dealing with vast populations. Hence, the choice of employees was random sampling within the various IPPs

3.4 Sample Size Calculation

PLS-SEM, by nature, offers results with a smaller sample size; the population's nature often determines this, (Rigdon, 2016). To ensure minimum sample results are statistically reliable, the authors first applied the ten (10) rule, as recommended by (Barclay, Higgins, Thompson, 1995; Hair et al., 2011), to estimate a minimum sample size according to our proposed model; the minimum sample size is forty 40. Meanwhile, Kock & Hadaya (2018) also argue that the sample size may be too small and offer the inverse square root method. The study sample size was based on the (Yamane, 1967) formula with a 95 per cent confidence level, with plus or minus 5 per cent confidence intervals using $n = N/1 + N(e)^2$ where n is the sample size, N is the population, and e is the error margin. A value of one hundred and seventy-one (171) was obtained as the minimum sample size from the estimated population of 300. Out of the 300 questionnaires distributed to respondents, two hundred and thirty-eight (238) were returned; hence, 238 form the basis for our sample size for the analysis.

4.0 Results

The data capturing and transformation were achieved using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and also check for irregularities due to data entry errors, missing values, and outliers within the data was performed. We also use Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to estimate causal relationships between the independent and dependent constructs concurrently (Hair et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2018). The PLS-SEM approach was employed in this work due to its ability to provide accurate estimates for the suggested model, as recommended by (Hair et al., 2017). The initial phase of our study involved conducting evaluations, including the non-response bias test and data screening to identify any missing values. We therefore proceed to performed reliability and validity checks on response values before performing PLS-SEM analysis. We then begin estimating our measurement model to determine the reliability and validity of our results. According to Shmueli et al., (2019) and Hair et al., (2018), the data analysis is based on 238 valid responses, with 13.9% being females and the remaining 86.1% being males, as indicated in Table 2 below. The two-step approach for evaluating structural equation models, as recommended by Chin (1998), was applied. First, we assess the measurement model, which seeks to create relationships between the observed variables with existing theoretical foundations for the study. To determine the construct, content, convergent and discriminant validities, we further evaluate the

proposed structural model; to establish the relationships between constructs within the study.

4.1 Measurement Model

As part of our measurement model assessment, all indicator loadings used were more than 0.600 to measure the various construct as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). A reliability value of 0.8 signifies strong reliability. However, values above 0.7 suggest acceptable reliability (Hair et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2019). Cronbach's alpha, Composite reliability were used in measuring the model's internal consistency, which is more than 0.6 and 0.70, based on the recommendation by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The authors assess convergent validity based on threshold values recommended by Hair et al. (2021) and Shmueli et al., (2019). Our Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were more than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), with indicator loadings above 0.6 (Shmueli et al., 2019) for assessing the convergent validity as suggested by Hair et al., (2017) and Hair et al., (2019).

4.2 Structural Model

This section analyses the path coefficients between the independent and dependent variable. Our main focus was to establish the relationship between these variables. In this paper, social and People-Centric is represented by four specific items that is; trust of individuals, power struggle, training of individuals, and user attitude. The analysis declared indicates that although Power Struggles have a negative association with cyberattacks, and it is statistically significant with values of ($\beta = -0.701$; $p = 0.000$), which reflect that H1 was supported. H2 was rejected with values of ($\beta = 0.056$; $p = 0.367$). Meanwhile, it has a positive relationship with Cyberattacks. H3 has a significant positive relationship with cyberattacks with values of ($\beta = 0.126$; $p = 0.001$). Finally, H4 also has a statistically significant positive relationship with the cyber-attack with values ($\beta = 0.408$; $p = 0.000$).

5.0 Conclusion

The study aims to contribute to the ongoing deliberations on cyber security in line with a cyber-attack in the power generation sector. The researchers focus on human-centered vulnerabilities which if are not correctly managed, could lead to cyber-attack. Specific items such as power struggles, training impact of cyber security, trust of individuals and user attitude impact were assessed on cyber-attack within the IPPs' operating environment. Findings from the survey show that power struggle has a negative relationship with cyberattacks but it is statistically significant to influence cyber-attacks, which calls the need for management to define supervisory roles within the operational environment of the IPPs in order to avoid future cyber incidents. The findings of this study reveal training impact of cyber security does not support our proposed hypothesis. Reasons for this result could be that the manager for IPPs has adequate staff training on specific knowledge and skills to protect their operations from cyber-attack.

Trust of individuals also has a significant positive relationship to cyber-attack; the reason could be that if the staff of IPPs fail to report incidents on their cyber systems, which could be conceded as a threat to their cyber systems and operational environment for the IPPs.

In addition to this threat, managers had to ensure all staff within the working environment strictly adhered to the cyber security policies and, if possible, discouraged external sources of unauthorized information processing to the grid. Finally, the result also reveals User Attitude has a significant positive relationship to cyber-attack. Again, staff needs to be encouraged to report any cyber incidents to avoid future cyber-attack incidents. We hope future research studies will explore these issues raised further to test the proposed framework or extend the discussion regarding Social and People-Centric cyber-attacks. Using much larger samples from different services industries of respondents from different IPPs in other countries.

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EFFECT OF LOCAL-LEVEL STRUCTURES ON THE UPTAKE OF CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS BY THE BENEFICIARIES OF CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

This study examines the differential effects of local level structures on the uptake of citizenship rights by the beneficiaries of cash transfer programs. Specifically, it analyses the effects of the local structures in Shai-Osudoku and Ningo-Prampram on the implementation of LEAP and GLST programs. The study uses a comparative multiple case study design with mixed methods. The results suggest that local level structures have differential effects on how benefit from a CT program is implemented. The study highlights the importance of local structures and how they influence the implementation of CT programs.

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how different local structures have differential effects on the uptake of citizenship rights by the beneficiaries of cash transfer programs. In this case, it analyzes how the local structures in Shai-Osudoku and Ningo-Prampram influence the implementation of LEAP and GLST programs. The objective of this paper is to examine the implications of the capacities of local-level structures for the uptake of citizenship rights by the beneficiaries of a Conditional Cash Transfer programme.

Successful implementation of CCT programmes is possible if they are complemented with critical and quality services (Ghosh, 2011; Bastagli *et al.*, 2016; Cahyadi *et al.*, 2020). Glassman *et al.* (2013) contend that countries vary by the context of local factors and therefore the successful implementation of a CCT programme in one country does not mean it will be successful in another country. It has been suggested that implementation challenges related to remoteness can weaken how cash transfer programmes influence their policy goals (Abdulai *et al.*, 2019; Port *et al.*, 2019). Knowledge about how local-level structures influence the implementation of CCT programmes remains limited. There are contextual issues that lead to differences in the level of uptake of citizenship rights by the beneficiaries of the cash transfer programs. Such factors as interactions between the state and beneficiaries at the local level were important opportunities that inform beneficiaries' perception and uptake of civil rights.

2.0 Methodology

Comparative multiple case study was used as the research design for this work. By using a comparative multiple case study, this study compared two cash transfer programmes being GLST and LEAP. These two cash transfer programmes were designed and implemented differently. This was supported by the mixed methods approach. It also compared how the local factors in the two communities, Shai-Osudoku and Ningo-Prampram, contributed to the uptake of citizenship rights by the beneficiaries of the two CT programmes.

3.0 Findings and Results:

Local structures used by LEAP weaken the implementation of a CCT programme. These included the challenge with resource allocation, personnel, as well as logistical challenges. There were also bureaucratic systems that undermined efforts by social workers in implementing their duties in the two districts. For instance, coordination among the various stakeholders took place in Accra which weakened the effectiveness of service delivery in the two districts. This also undermined the citizenship rights of the beneficiaries. This was in agreement with Babasa (2019), who posited that weak institutional capacities pose challenges to the goals of the cash transfer programme. For the beneficiaries of a CCT programme to take up citizenship rights, it requires a strong administrative system at the district level. This is to positively promote coordination among the multi-sectorial organizations that are partners and are required to work with a CCT programme to make it successful.

4.0 Conclusions:

The results suggested that local level structures have differential effects on how beneficiaries of CT programmes uptake citizenship rights.

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STRATEGIC INSURANCE INTEGRATION AND CROSS-BORDER BROWN CARD UTILIZATION IN SME OPERATIONS

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Abstract

This study delves into the strategic integration of insurance and the cross-border brown card system within SME operations, focusing on mitigating risks and facilitating international trade. It underscores the pivotal role of these mechanisms in augmenting the resilience and competitive stance of SMEs in the global marketplace, particularly in navigating the intricacies of cross-border operations and international risk management. The research emphasizes the transformative potential tools hold for SMEs in bolstering their market position and trustworthiness in the global arena.

1.0 Problem Statement

The problem statement of the paper addresses the challenges that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face in managing risks associated with international trade, particularly in cross-border operations. It focuses on the difficulties SMEs encounter in securing their assets and ensuring business continuity in the global market. The statement highlights the need for effective risk management tools, such as strategic insurance integration and the utilization of the cross-border brown card system, to mitigate these risks and enhance the trustworthiness and competitiveness of SMEs in international trade.

2.0 Study Objectives

The study objectives, derived from the provided text, are as follows:

1. To examine the integration of insurance and the cross-border brown card system within SME operations, emphasizing their role in risk mitigation and international trade facilitation.
2. To highlight the significance of these mechanisms in improving the resilience and competitive edge of SMEs in the global marketplace, with a focus on cross-border operations and international risk management.
3. To investigate the challenges and complexities SMEs face in cross-border risk management and how strategic insurance and the brown card system can provide solutions.
4. To analyze the impact of these risk management tools on SMEs' credibility, trustworthiness, and market position in international trade.
5. To identify best practices and common challenges in the integration of insurance and the brown card system into SME business strategies, offering insights for effective implementation.

6. To provide guidelines and recommendations for SMEs on adopting strategic insurance and the brown card system to navigate international market complexities, ensuring business continuity and growth.

3.0 Introduction:

The introduction of the paper outlines the relevance of insurance and the cross-border brown card system as crucial tools for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in international trade. It delves into the challenges these enterprises face in managing risks associated with cross-border operations and how these financial instruments serve as safeguards, enhancing the protection of assets and fostering trust in global business interactions. The section aims to set the context for a detailed exploration of how strategic adoption of these mechanisms can empower SMEs to navigate the complexities of international trade more effectively.

This paper examines the integration of insurance and the cross-border brown card system as essential instruments for SMEs in international commerce. It scrutinizes the complexities SMEs encounter in cross-border risk management and the efficacy of these financial tools in safeguarding assets and fostering reliability in global business exchanges. The introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive investigation into the strategic application of these mechanisms, aiming to elucidate their contribution to SMEs' operational stability and international trade facilitation.

4.0 Methodology:

The methodology section describes a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Quantitative data is collected through a survey targeting SMEs, while qualitative insights are gleaned from case studies and expert interviews. This dual approach aims to provide a comprehensive view of how SMEs utilize insurance and the cross-border brown card system in their international operations, capturing both statistical trends and in-depth perspectives on the practical application of these tools in the global business environment.

Employing a mixed-methods framework, this research synergizes quantitative data gleaned from a survey targeting SMEs with qualitative insights derived from case studies and expert dialogues. This multifaceted approach is designed to offer a nuanced understanding of the insurance and brown card system's role in SMEs' international strategies, providing a balanced perspective on theoretical paradigms and practical applications.

5.0 Findings/Results:

The findings reveal that SMEs employing insurance and the cross-border brown card system enhance their asset security and operational stability, gaining credibility and trust in international markets. The study identifies best practices and outlines the challenges SMEs face in integrating these risk management tools. It demonstrates how strategic utilization of these mechanisms supports SMEs in navigating international trade

complexities, ultimately contributing to their competitive edge and growth in the global marketplace.

The research unveils that SMEs utilizing strategic insurance and the brown card system not only safeguard their assets and operations but also elevate their stature and reliability in the global market. The findings delineate a spectrum of best practices and challenges inherent in the assimilation of these tools, offering a roadmap for SMEs to harness their full potential in risk management and international trade engagement.

6.0 Conclusions:

In concluding, the study accentuates the strategic imperative of integrating insurance and the cross-border brown card in SMEs' international trade endeavors. It furnishes a set of actionable guidelines for the pragmatic adoption of these instruments, advocating for their utilization as a means to navigate the complexities of global markets, ensuring sustained business continuity, and catalyzing growth.

The conclusion underscores the strategic value of integrating insurance and the cross-border brown card system for SMEs in international trade, emphasizing their role in managing risks and fostering business continuity. It suggests that these tools are critical for SMEs to enhance their resilience and trustworthiness in global markets. The paper offers guidelines for effective implementation and encourages SMEs to adopt these mechanisms to overcome the challenges of international trade, ensuring sustainable growth and competitive advantage in the global business landscape.

DOES EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION PLAY A ROLE IN ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE? INSIGHTS FROM THE EQUITY THEORY OF MOTIVATION AND THE BALANCED SCORECARD FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

The present study sought to examine how employee motivation contributes towards organisational performance using Ecobank Ghana as a case study. The study focuses its investigation on the financial sector, and in particular Ecobank, because of the crucial and pivotal role it plays in the economies of the West African sub-region. Drawing from the equity theory of motivation and the four perspectives of organizational performance from the balanced scorecard framework, a survey research approach was deployed to sample 205 employees from the Accra branches of Ecobank Ghana. Correlation and simple linear regression analysis was used for the study. Of the four perspectives of organisational performance from the balanced scorecard framework, only the financial perspective was found to be negatively related with employee motivation. The other three perspectives being: the customer perspective, internal business process perspective and the learning and growth perspectives were found to be positively related with employee motivation. Our findings suggest that, while employee motivation generally has a positive impact on the balanced scorecard perspectives, the potential for a negative relationship with the financial perspective arises when the cost of motivation is high and not aligned with the organization's financial goals. Balancing motivational strategies to ensure alignment with financial objectives and monitoring the cost-effectiveness of such initiatives are crucial for maintaining a positive overall impact on organizational performance. Again, the study found out that employee motivation only explains about 5.2% of the variance in organizational performance, which implies that other factors may lend themselves in explaining organizational performance of Ecobank Ghana.

Keywords: Balanced score-card, employee motivation, equity theory of motivation, organisational performance.

1.0 Introduction

The financial sector has a considerable presence in the global economy due to its crucial role in the growth of an economy. The industry has been impacted by numerous internal and external influences in many nations, most notably Ghana. Due to the banking sector's poor performance, the Central Bank of Ghana conducted a clean-up operation, resulting in some banks collapsing, being taken over, and merging (Benson, 2019; Osei et al., 2019; Agyenim-Boateng, et al., 2020). As a result, the sector's stability and performance are crucial since they decide the next step in the growth of an economy.

Literature has emphasized the need for leaders to consider organizational performance while striving to develop and enhance their operations (Kroll, 2016). However, despite the significance of corporate performance, few researchers have attempted to comprehend what supports desirable performance results.

Over the past few decades, researchers have begun to recognize the importance of motivating employees to improve job performance and boost productivity. The lack of motivation at work affects employee happiness and performance (Octaviannand et al., 2017). According to the work of Gelard and Rezaei (2016), organizational justice in payments is very important, as employees who feel financially discriminated against have lower job satisfaction compared to other employees. Additionally, a critical factor in a firm's success is its workforce's motivation and contentment. This has spurred research interests in examining relationship between employee motivation and organizational performance. Drawing from the equity theory of motivation and the four perspectives of organizational performance from the balanced scorecard framework, the current study formulates and tests hypotheses of a possible favourable connection between employee motivation and each of the four perspectives of organisational performance, by focusing on the unique context of a major player, Ecobank, within the financial services sector of Ghana.

2.0 Methodology

In order to ascertain the possible link between employee motivation and organisational performance, a survey approach was deployed to randomly sample 205 out of a total of 525 employees from the Accra branches of Ecobank Ghana using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size formula (Morgan, 1970). The survey responses obtained via means of a structured questionnaire along the study's conceptual framework (see Figure 1), were analyzed using correlation and simple linear regression analysis.

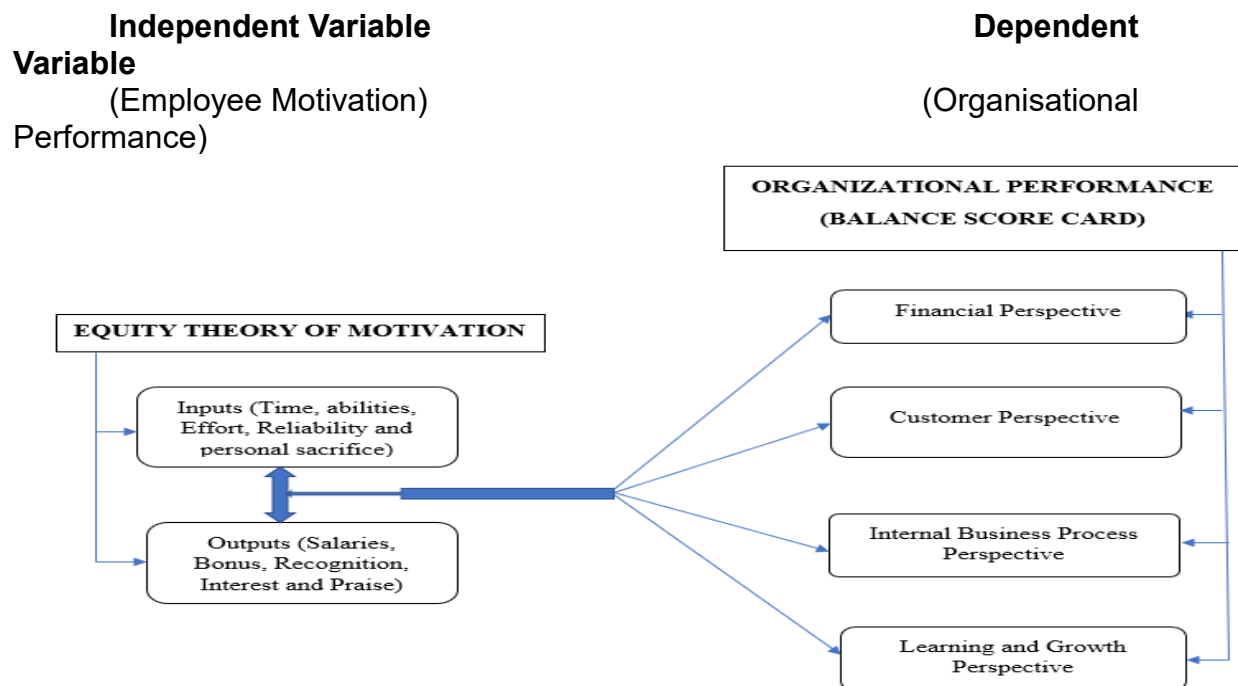


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

3.0 Findings

The results of the study which largely confirms our hypotheses demonstrates that employee motivation generally has a positive impact on the balanced scorecard perspectives, although a negative relationship was ascertained between employee motivation and the financial perspective of organisational performance.

Our findings suggest that while employee motivation generally has a favourable link with the balanced scorecard perspectives, the potential for a negative relationship with the financial perspective arises when the cost of motivation is high and not aligned with the organization's financial goals. Balancing motivational strategies to ensure alignment with financial objectives and monitoring the cost-effectiveness of such initiatives are crucial for maintaining a positive overall impact on organizational performance.

Again, the study found out that employee motivation only explains about 5.2% of the variance in organizational performance, which implies that other factors may lend themselves in explaining organizational performance of Ecobank Ghana. It is therefore recommended for future research to probe other factors which contribute towards organisational performance and sustainability.

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VALUE RELEVANCE OF FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT OF BANKS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: CONTEMPORANEOUS, INCREMENTAL AND SYNERGETIC ANALYTIC PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This paper examined the value relevance of fair value measurement of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. This research was motivated by the growing controversy about fair value measurement (FVM) in which many have questioned the ability of FVM to produce value-relevant financial information for decision makers in developing economies where capital markets are inefficient. Secondary data from eight African Countries: Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Mauritius, Egypt, Botswana, and Namibia was obtained from Osiris Database covering the period 2010 to 2021 for the analysis. Using the Ohlson's model (1995) and the Horizontal incremental value relevance approach (HIV), this paper performed contemporaneous, incremental and synergetic analyses to determine the unique value relevance of FVM. Results from the contemporaneous analysis showed that FVM in Sub-Saharan Africa is generally value relevant both at the income statement level (i.e. FVNI) and the balance sheet level (i.e. FVOCI). It was also established that FVM through net income and OCI have incremental value relevance but no positive synergetic value relevance effect was observed. The implication is that FVM is still useful and value relevant in developing economies and its application should be encouraged and strengthened.

Key words: Fair value measurement, value relevance, incremental effect, synergetic effect

1.0 Introduction

Ensuring financial reporting quality remains a topical issue in accounting research globally (Nguyen, 2016; Paz & Tomacruz, 2017; Watts & Chaturvedi, 2018). Studies have established that the most extensive accounting quality research with mixed and inconclusive results relates to accounting harmonization - IFRS adoption and its related issues (Isidro & Raonic, 2012; Legenzova, 2016). One emerging trend from the accounting harmonization research is the shift from Historical Cost Accounting (HCA) to the Fair Value Measurement (FVM) perspective with the belief that FVM is more value-relevant and enhances financial reporting quality than HCA. However, FVM works better where capital markets are active and function effectively. Although the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), industry experts and some scholars have justified

the value relevance of the fair value measurement (FVM) approach, many still question the appropriateness of this approach in developing economies with weak financial markets (Hodder, Hopkins & Schipper, 2014; Queku, 2015, 2017b).

While some prior empirical studies found that FVM in emerging economies without efficient asset markets produced value-relevant financial information (Al-Barrak, 2011; Oraby, 2017; Queku, 2020), other studies found that financial statements produced in developing economies without inputs from active markets are not value relevant (Daas & Jammal, 2018; Glavan, 2010; Palea, 2013; Xu, 2013;). One possible reason for the mixed results relates to most studies relying on partial fair value based analysis (standard specific) rather than full fair value based analysis (Aladwan, 2018; Bhatia & Mulenga, 2019; Queku, 2020; Umoren & Enang, 2015). The challenge with other studies is that they relied on the whole accounting data presented to conduct contemporaneous or comparative analysis instead of extracting the specific fair value measurement component (El-Bannany, 2018; Erin, Olojede & Ogundele, 2017). In view of this, collectively testing the value relevance of these data only gives value relevance of IFRS compliance but not necessarily value relevance of fair value measurement.

It is, therefore, useful not only for theory but also policy and practice to delink actual fair value measures from the general accounting data (i.e., non-fair value estimates) and investigate its value relevance within the framework of a useful benchmark. This would provide evidence of the true value relevance of fair value measure rather than the composite accounting data clouded with noise from non-fair value data. This study adopted an analytical procedure that delinks fair value from the rest of the accounting data and subsequently evaluated its value relevance through a contemporaneous, incremental and synergetic estimation approach. The results showed that FVM is value-relevant in developing economies.

2.0 Methodology

In line with prior research, this study adopts the Ohlson (1995) model to examine the value relevance of fair value measurement of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the opinion of Ahmad and Aladwan (2015), almost all the accounting literature on value relevance refer to the Ohlson (1995) model. The wider application of the model makes it suitable for this study in order to facilitate empirical comparison of findings.

The Ohlson (1995) model is theoretically expressed as follows:

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 EPS_{it} + \beta_2 BV_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where:

MPS = Market price per share of bank i at time t

EPS = Earnings per share of bank i at time t

BV = Book value per share of bank i at time t

α = constant or intercept of the model

β_1 and β_2 = coefficients of the independent variables and

ε = the error term

It is expected that EPS and BV will have a positive effect on MPS and both β_1 and $\beta_2 > 0$

To empirically apply the theoretical model of equation (1), the operational variables of interest are substituted to analyse the first research question as follows:

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \beta_2 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

Where:

MPS = Market price per share of bank i at time t

FVNI = Fair value through Net Income of bank i at time t

FVOCI = Fair value through Other Comprehensive Income of bank i at time t

α = constant or intercept of the model

β_1 and β_2 = coefficients of the independent variables and

ε = the error term

Regarding the second and third research questions which seek to measure the incremental value relevance effect of fair value measurement (FVNI and FVOCI), the study adopted the Horizontal Incremental Value Relevance (HIV) model by Queku (2020). The testing framework follows the following steps:

- i. Univariate value relevance models are developed to estimate the coefficient of determination (R^2) of both fair value recognized through net income (FVNI) and other comprehensive income (FVOCI) as follows:

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2a)$$

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2b)$$

- ii. The incremental value relevance of FVNI (eqn.2a) is derived as the difference between the R^2 of equation (2) and the R^2 of equation (2b).
- iii. The incremental value relevance of FVOCI (eqn.2b) is derived as the difference between the R^2 of equation (2) and the R^2 of equation (2a).

The third research question seeks to examine whether or not there is any synergetic effect of FVM on the value relevance of banks. This is estimated as an incremental value common to both FVNI and FVOCI. It is measured as the difference between the R^2 of equation (2) and the R^2 of equation (2a) plus the R^2 of equation (2b).

3.0 Findings

Table 1 shows the results of the contemporaneous, incremental and synergetic value relevance dynamics of fair value measurement.

Table 1: Value Relevance of Fair Value Measurement (2010 – 2021)

Model Estimation	Adj. R^2	Objective
$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \beta_2 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$	0.4493	Objective 1
$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2a)$	0.3981	
$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2b)$	0.4068	
Incremental Value Relevance of FVNI	0.0425	Objective 2a
Incremental Value Relevance of FVOCI	0.0512	Objective 2b
Synergetic Incremental Value Relevance	-0.3556	Objective 3

Source: Generated from Audited Financial Statements of Banks, 2023

The results show that fair value through net income (FVNI) and fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) combined has an Adjusted R^2 of 44.93%. This means that both FVNI and FVOCI have significant predictive value in explaining changes in the

market price of shares of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. The implication of this finding is that fair value measurement in the banking sector is value relevant both at the income statement level and the balance sheet level in Sub-Saharan Africa. The results also indicate that the incremental value relevance effect of FVNI is 4.25% while the incremental value relevance effect of FVOCI is 5.12%. This means that fair value through OCI provides additional useful information to users of financial statements than fair value through net income. The results further showed negative synergetic value relevance as the combined Adjusted R^2 of FVNI and FVOCI = 44.93% while the sum of their individual Adjusted R^2 = 80.49%, giving a negative synergetic effect of 35.56% (-0.3556). This means that combining FVNI and FVOCI does not have any positive impact on the value relevance of financial statements as compared to their separate presentations.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

It has been established that both FVNI and FVOCI are contemporaneously and incrementally value relevant but do not exhibit any synergetic value relevance. It can therefore be concluded that fair value measurement is value relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore recommended that the various professional bodies in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, etc.) should train more professionals to be equipped with valuation skills for the banking sector to handle fair valuation of financial instruments.

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PROMOTING FINANCIAL INCLUSION USING MOBILE MONEY INNOVATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW WITH REFERENCE TO PRACTICES IN GHANA

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Abstract

A systematic review that sheds light on how mobile money advances economic growth and development by enabling financial inclusion in Ghana seems to be lacking. A systematic review is required to: i) guide further studies on how mobile money enables financial inclusion in Ghana; and ii) help regulators, mobile money service providers, and financial institutions to facilitate mobile money usage to advance economic growth and development. To address this gap in the literature, this study represents a systematic literature review to shed light on how mobile money enables financial inclusion, with reference to the Ghanaian context. Based on a systematic literature review of 32 publications over a period of 4 years (from 2019 to 2023), our study provides insightful directions for future studies on mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana. We draw inspiration from the “antecedents, phenomenon, outcomes” framework and present an analysis of key themes, theoretical underpinnings, years of publication, levels of analysis, and methods. Our study revealed that although mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana is a growing research area, it has been explored predominantly at the individual level of analysis using theories borrowed from reference disciplines. In addition, several studies did not specify the type of mobile money platform being investigated, thereby limiting our understanding of the dynamics of digital platform-specific attributes that enable financial inclusion. We propose a framework that synthesizes and provides direction for research on mobile money for financial inclusion.

1.0 introduction

Mobile money is considered a means to enhance access to financial products and services, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Mobile money is touted as a viable and practical approach to address financial exclusion, while also promoting economic growth and development (Odoom & Kosiba, 2020). Consequently, the use of mobile money has been actively pursued by governments and citizens in low- and middle-income countries, including Ghana, due to its widely acknowledged potential to enhance financial inclusion and promote economic development (Sakyi-Nyarko et al., 2022). The idea behind accepting mobile money originated from the understanding that a significant facilitator of economic development is the provision of cost-effective financial services to the unbanked, low-income segment, and disadvantaged in low- and middle-income countries (Kim et al., 2018). Emerging economies have focused on leveraging the transformative power of mobile money to increase access to credit and investment and to promote financial stability by minimizing vulnerability (Kim et al., 2018). Although mobile money holds great potential to promote financial inclusion and overcome the challenges associated with the digital divide, it is also important to

acknowledge that mobile money may unintentionally exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities (Bernards, 2019) and pose financial security risks (Senyo et al., 2023), reinforcing existing power imbalances as a result.

A significant challenge in several low- and middle-income countries is the inability of a significant proportion of the population to actively participate in ventures that promote economic growth and development because they lack access to financial services and banking products. As a result, several low- and middle-income countries have taken steps towards adopting mobile money to address this challenge (Kim et al., 2018), although the level of success across various contexts varies. Despite the steps taken towards adopting mobile money, there are still several challenges in effectively delivering financial services to the unbanked, and low-income segment (Kanungo & Gupta, 2021). In addition, instances of reported fraud, unintentional divides, and information capitalism (i.e., the practice of using harvested financial data to develop value for corporate bodies, without directly sharing the benefits with owners of the data) undermine effective delivery and access to financial services in low- and middle-income countries (Senyo et al., 2023). Therefore, it is essential to investigate the extent and nature of the impact of mobile money on financial inclusion in specific low- and middle-income countries. The significance of this matter is crucial because, although existing evidence supports the idea that mobile money enhances financial inclusion, the varying levels of success across low- and middle-income countries make the potential outcomes of embracing mobile money in specific contexts unclear. Hence, there is a need for a systematic review that consolidates the literature on mobile money innovation in specific contexts.

A review of extant literature suggests that existing studies are yet to present a systematic review that sheds light on how mobile money advances economic growth and development by enabling financial inclusion in Ghana. To fill this lacuna, we review existing literature on Ghana's mobile money - the nation's largest mobile financial service scheme which enables financial service delivery to over 17.5 million active users. We focused on the Ghanaian context because of the following reasons. First, Ghana is considered a fast -growing land of opportunity for international fintech firms due to its notable economic progress comparable to Sub-Saharan African countries like Kenya (Odoom & Kosiba, 2020). The evolving commercial landscape of mobile money in Ghana prompted the need to investigate this context. While mobile money is considered a central player in mobile commerce activities and a dominant financial service platform in Ghana, new disruptive players are causing a shift in Ghana's financial service sector (Coffie & Hongjiang, 2023). This evolving landscape raises questions about the sustainability and future progress of mobile money in Ghana. Second, mobile money faces unique challenges such as unstable networks, transaction limits imposed by regulators, fraud attempts, interoperability charges, and liquidity constraints of mobile money agents for some transactions (Odoom & Kosiba, 2020).

Hence, a systematic review that sheds light on how mobile money enables financial inclusion will enhance our understanding of the unique ways in which mobile money is perceived and used, as well as its impact on the various aspects of people's lives in Ghana. In addition, this systematic review sheds light on key themes, theoretical

underpinnings, years of publication, levels of analysis, and methods adopted by researchers to investigate the phenomenon over the past 4 years (from 2019 to 2023). In light of the context and circumstances described, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1 *What themes have been explored in prior research on mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana?*

RQ2 *What theories and methods have been adopted to investigate mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana?*

RQ3 *What existing gaps can be explored in future studies on mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana?*

2.0 Methodology

We adopted the principles of the evidence-based systematic review approach proffered by Tranfield et al. (2003). This approach ensures that systematic reviews are conducted in a systematic, transparent, and thorough manner. Also, this systematic review approach produces “a reliable knowledge stock” and facilitates the development of “context-sensitive research” (Tranfield et al., 2003, p. 207). Given that our study seeks to provide a systematic review that sheds light on how mobile money enables financial inclusion within the Ghanaian context, this approach was deemed appropriate. Furthermore, we adopted this approach to access relevant literature and “to delimit the subject area or topic” (Tranfield et al., 2003, p. 214). By adopting this approach, we can understand the extent and nature of existing literature and provide clear directions for future research in this area.

2.1 Selection of publications

Our study focused on peer-reviewed academic journals indexed in Scopus. This is because prior state-of-the-art systematic reviews (e.g., Thelwall, 2018) have demonstrated that Scopus database coverage of academic journals tends to be higher than other databases. Relevant journals that are not indexed in Scopus constitute a small percentage (Wang & Waltman, 2016). In addition, we focused on Google Scholar because it catalogs several relevant publications from renowned academic databases (Haddaway et al., 2015).

Having identified our academic database outlets, the next step was to identify our final sample of articles. Informed by the objectives of our study and the standard practices of state-of-the-art systematic reviews, we focused on studies that make significant contributions to the literature on mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana (Webster & Watson, 2002). Hence, we focused on full-text from peer-reviewed journals. In addition, we focused on journal articles from 2019 to 2023 to avoid using obsolete content (Behl et al., 2022). Also, we excluded magazine reviews, policy documents, newsletters, book chapters, editorials, conference proceedings, comments, and technical papers. In addition, publications that were not written in English were excluded. Studies that mentioned only mobile money as an example in the abstract or keyword without substantive discussion in the subsequent sections of the main text were also excluded. Publications that deviated from mobile money and financial inclusion in Ghana were also excluded. We defined the search protocol as “mobile money”, “financial

inclusion”, and “Ghana” and applied it to titles, keywords, and abstracts. That is, “*mobile money*” AND “*financial inclusion*” AND “*Ghana*”. Limiting our selection to full-text peer-reviewed journals, and excluding magazine reviews, policy documents, newsletters, book chapters, editorials, conference proceedings, comments, technical papers, and publications that were not written in English, our Scopus database search yielded 26 hits. In addition, our Google Scholar search using the search protocol returned 2,220 hits. The total results of 2,246 publications from both databases were further evaluated. These publications were screened to evaluate the fit of these publications to our research objective. We reviewed the title, abstract, and keywords of each publication manually to ascertain its appropriateness with the focus of this study. This practice was in line with the principles proffered by Glikson and Woolley (2020). Furthermore, we took out 5 duplicate publications. This is because some of the publications indexed in Scopus were also indexed in Google Scholar. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, we obtained a total of 32 publications as the final set of selected studies. These publications were downloaded for further review and analysis.

2.2 Coding

To ensure that we present a bias-free systematic analysis of literature (Tranfield et al., 2003) on mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana, a multi-step qualitative coding analytical method was adopted (Gaur & Kumar, 2018; Stumbitz et al., 2018). To begin, we documented the basic information regarding each publication selected as part of the final sample. The basic information documented includes: i) the year of publication, ii) level of analysis (individual, organizational, societal, national, multi-level), iii) theoretical underpinning, iv) publication outlet, v) type of paper (empirical, theoretical, or review), vi) methodology (mixed method, quantitative, or qualitative), vii) industry context. In addition, the practical implications and areas for future studies were documented to identify recurring recommendations for further studies (Tranfield et al., 2003).

Second, to understand the link between mobile money and financial inclusion in Ghana, we drew on the “antecedents-phenomenon-consequences” logic (Newman et al., 2014; Pisani & Ricart, 2016). Drawing on insights by Pisani et al. (2017), “antecedents” can be described as the main drivers of a phenomenon. Also, “phenomenon” refers to a practice, the key features of the practice and its implementation. Furthermore, “consequences” refer to the effect or outcomes as a result of implementing the phenomenon.

Considering “antecedents-phenomenon-consequences” logic as the framework for the study, the publications in the final sample were thematically mapped (Sarto & Veronesi, 2016). By following this approach, we were able to distinguish key themes, codes, and relationships as follows: i) *Antecedents*: the purpose or problem driving mobile money use for financial inclusion in Ghana (i.e. what drives mobile money use for financial inclusion in Ghana). Based on the antecedents, the sampled publications were categorized into four themes which are discussed in section 4.

ii) *Phenomenon*: “mobile money platforms considered” (i.e. what mobile money platform is considered); central thesis or research questions related to mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana; and iii) *Outcomes*: mobile money use for financial inclusion outcomes in Ghana (i.e. what are the specific outcomes associated with the use of mobile money

for financial inclusion in Ghana). Therefore, examining the “antecedents-phenomenon-consequences” process can provide a more holistic understanding of the link between mobile money usage and financial inclusion outcomes within the Ghanaian context. Based on this, we were able to impose a systematic framework to analyze the sampled publications.

3.0 Findings and Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrate that researchers have predominantly drawn on individual levels of analysis to investigate mobile money for financial inclusion within the Ghanaian context. While organizational, societal, and national levels of analysis have been quite explored (6 each, out of 32 studies), multi-level remains the least investigated. Future research can benefit from extending the scope of research in this area by investigating how mobile money advances financial inclusion at multiple levels of analysis: multi-level, national, societal, and inter-organizational level of analysis. This will enable researchers to demonstrate the dynamic of mobile money for financial inclusion at various levels. Our study reveals the heterogeneity of theories used in existing research on mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana. These theories were borrowed from various disciplines including information systems, economics, psychology, and sociology. Although the act of borrowing theories to advance knowledge in less-explored research areas is valuable, such acts can significantly affect the maturation of the research domain (Senyo et al., 2019). Drawing extensively on theories in an existing field can enhance the maturity of the original field, while the research areas where the theories were applied may remain less advanced. Therefore, we argue for the development of context-specific theories to advance knowledge and proffer unique insights into the dynamics that characterize mobile money for financial inclusion in Ghana.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF SELECTED COMPANIES IN GHANA

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) present goals for tackling global challenges. Companies globally have implemented policies and strategies to achieve these goals. However, how organisations prioritise and integrate the SDGs into corporate strategies have received less attention. This study therefore examines how companies in Ghana are prioritising and integrating the goals into their strategies. A qualitative study design was adopted for the study. Companies operating in Ghana were purposively sampled to achieve the study objective. Findings reveal that organisations are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of operations and products as well as gender equality and are putting in place measures to mitigate negative environmental impact. The findings also show that companies are prioritising SDG targets due to the nature of business operations, organisational policy and country priorities. The result provides insight on strategies that companies can adopt to integrate SDGs into company strategies.

1.0 Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introduced by the United Nation in 2015, provide a global framework for addressing global problems such as the hunger, poverty, inequality, climate change among others (KPMG, 2022; Pineda-Escobar, 2019; Zanten & Tulder, 2021). The SDGs present the road map to achieve the various dimensions of sustainability namely environment, social and economic (Rosati & Faria, 2019). Achieving the targets of the SDGs require huge financial investments from various governments and this continues to be a challenge facing most countries over the world (Rosati et al., 2023; Sachs, 2012; van Zanten & van Tulder, 2018). This implies that other stakeholders like private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or Philanthropic organisations can provide support (Fraser, 2019; Yakovleva et al., 2017). Studies have shown that the private sector can play key role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Fiandrino et al., 2022; Kuswantoro et al., 2023; Rosati et al., 2023; Van Zanten & Van Tulder, 2021b) by incorporating the SDGs into corporate strategies and value chain (Ike, Donovan, Topple, & Masli, 2019; Pineda-Escobar, 2019). Besides, the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of companies contribute to the achievement of the SDGs (Kumi et al., 2020; Gunawan, Permatasari, & Tilt, 2020; Buhmann, Jonsson, & Fisker, 2019; Poddar, Narula, & Zutshi, 2019; Antoh & Arhin, 2018; Schönherr, Findler, & Martinuzzi, 2017). However, some aspects of sustainability receive more attention than other. This implies the need for studies to examine the prioritization of the SDG targets by companies (Ike, Donovan, Topple & Masli, 2019). The phenomenon of how companies prioritize the SDG targets is necessary because the SDGs have the potential to influence the sustainability initiatives of companies.

The ultimate outcome of corporate initiative depend greatly on how they are implemented which implies that the successful achievement of SDGs (which seeks to make global transformation) depends on appropriate implementation (Fiandrino et al., 2022). Studies reveal that companies are integrating the SDGs into business processes and function (Fiandrino et al., 2022; Kuswantoro et al., 2023; van Zanten & van Tulder, 2021a; Yamane & Kaneko, 2022) thus creating a business model that achieves financial objectives together with sustainable development (Bonfanti et al., 2023; Nylund et al., 2022). Other studies also stress on the need to integrate the goals in corporate strategies (Moldavska & Welo, 2019; Pineda-Escobar, 2019; Zanten & Tulder, 2018) since the lack of integration can contribute to business failure (Jaramillo et al., 2019). There is the need to examine how the companies are contributing to the SDGs in their business processes and functions as Bonfanti et al. (2023) and Nylund et al. (2022) have stressed the need to examine how organisations are integrating the goals into their business. The study therefore seeks to examine how organisations are implementing and integrating the SDGs into business process.

2.0 Methodology

The study adopted the qualitative research method. Semi-structured interview was conducted since it helps obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon understudy (Creswell, 2007). Data was collected from fourteen companies purposively sampled as it allows the researcher to select units of the population that will provide the information which will enable the study objectives to be achieved (Saunders et al., 2019). The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis process helps to identify the relationship in the data gathered considering the regularities and sequences linking the data (Yin, 2003).

3.0 Findings

The analysis of data gathered suggest that companies in Ghana are integrating the SDGs into business processes. Companies align with the SDGs by linking business operation to the specific targets of the SDGs to ensure business operations and functions contribute to the SDGs. They also mitigate the negative environmental impact of business operation by reducing pollution and emissions. *"We are producing cement and cement produces a lot of dust. We have also invested in machines and equipment that trap the dust we call them deductors. They trap the dust that would go into the air. So when you come into our environment you don't see dust."* Organisations also integrate SDGs into business by reducing waste and using renewable sources of energy. *"We are looking at repositioning all our branches so we use energy-efficient lightning instead of the subsequent systems. We are doing something like reducing our water consumption".* Companies are also concerned with producing environmentally friendly products and services. *"Our business is aligned with the SDGs. This largely ensures that when we are coming up with new products we look at them through the lens of SDGs."*

Organisations have become aware of the need to ensure gender equality or address issues related to gender inequality in all levels of management. *"We must relentlessly address gender equality. So we want to include women at all leadership levels. Where*

women and men are having equal opportunities and equal pay for work of equal value.” Findings from the study also suggest that organisations have aligned their CSR initiatives to the SDG targets. *“I know of a fact that most organisation are tailoring their CSR activities to make sure they contribute to sustainability.”* Additionally, companies prioritise SDG targets that align with their core operations, organisational objectives, country priorities and SDG targets that can influence company performance. *“For us broadly speaking we focus on maternal healthcare, things to do with eradicating maternal mortality, we look at issues concerning education and girl child education. We look at health broadly speaking, things to do with sustainable development touching on the environment. And all these issues are part of the broader group we belong and what they do. These issues as I said is because we belong to a larger group and these issues fit into it.*

4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

The study showed that organisations in Ghana are committed to supporting government’s efforts to achieve the SDG targets. Thus, companies are seeking ways to align their operations and business functions to achieve the targets of the SDGs. The integration of SDG into business process will help organisation to focus all the aspects of sustainability, namely: social, environment and governance. The study provides practical knowledge on how organisations are contributing to the SDG targets.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN IN E-COMMERCE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE-LED BUSINESSES IN GHANA

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Abstract

In spite of the exponential expansion of electronic commerce on a global scale, women operating businesses enterprises in Ghana encounter distinct obstacles such as societal norms, technological impediments, financial constraints, childcare obligations, logistical complexities, and consumer scepticism. Nevertheless, the evaluation also highlights significant prospects, including expanded market entry, a competitive edge, augmented revenue, and enterprise expansion, all of which have the potential to economically empower women and foster the growth of women-led enterprises in Ghana. By systematically examining empirical research spanning the years 2010 to 2023, this study provides an all-encompassing examination of the present state of affairs. The results indicate that although female entrepreneurs face considerable challenges, e-commerce offers a feasible avenue for their economic advancement and empowerment. It is imperative to implement focused policies and initiatives that enhance financial assistance, digital literacy, and internet accessibility in order to effectively utilise e-commerce as a mechanism for empowering women economically in Ghana, according to the findings of this study. The research supports the notion that gender-inclusive business practices should be implemented in order to create a favourable atmosphere for female entrepreneurs to thrive in the digital economy.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurs, E-commerce, Ghana, Economic Empowerment.

1.0 Introduction

Electronic commerce (“e-commerce”) is the exchange of goods and services supported by internet-based systems and it is paving the way for new avenues of financial freedom for women entrepreneurs worldwide (IFC, 2024; Hashemi-Pour & Lutkevich, 2024). Major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Alibaba, Jumia and Etsy offer women entrepreneurs the opportunity to generate income, expand business copy, and acquire business skills (UNCTAD, 2023). But while the prospects are encouraging, gender inequality in the digital economy still hinders women's ability to support business e-commerce (World Bank, 2021). According to Basil (2022), approximately 163 million women are managers or supervisors of emerging businesses in 59 industrialised countries (Basil & Aly, 2022). However, these companies are often still focused on slow-moving businesses and are hampered by the pressure on the economy from challenges such as limited capital, technological development, and storage (IFC, 2024) (World Bank, 2021). E-commerce has the potential to solve some of these problems by helping women entrepreneurs enter the business world, streamlining the supply chain for simple products, and allowing them to cross the borders of their immediate regions (UNCTAD, 2023). Research shows that e-commerce has the potential to empower women-owned businesses through increased income, increased decision-making, and improved overall

health (Buvinić & Furst-Nichols, 2016; Roscoe & Ntim, 2021; Davarpanah, 2021). However, due to the combination of economic society, culture, and technology, electricity adoption (e-business) by women's businesses has been slow, especially in developing countries (World Bank, 2021; Boaeng et al., 2019; Asare and Frempong, 2022).

In the case of Ghana, women's participation in the labour market has increased significantly, accounting for approximately 40% of the non-agricultural sector (World Bank, 2020). Access to capital, technology, and employment, among others, are obstacles that these companies frequently encounter in common with their global rivals (Mastercard Women's Entrepreneurship Index, 2020). Due to economic, cultural, and technological barriers, the adoption of e-commerce by female entrepreneurs in Ghana has been sluggish (Boateng et al., 2019; Asare and Frempong, 2022; Osei-Assibey, 2015). This occurs within the framework of a broader global discourse concerning the utilisation of digital marketing to advance the economic empowerment of women.

By examining the barriers that prevent women from participating in e-commerce and examining its effectiveness and demonstration, this review is designed to help support education in the development of good policies and strategies that can support women entrepreneurs. This study aims to build on existing research on the challenges and opportunities for female entrepreneurs in Ghana to use e-commerce as a tool to support their businesses. The main objective is to provide insight to inform policies and plans that support the establishment of women-owned e-commerce businesses in the country. Specifically, the analysis aims to identify key barriers to women accepting and succeeding in e-commerce, explore the advantages and opportunities that e-commerce brings to women's empowerment, and examine best practices and success stories in encouraging women's participation in e-commerce.

2.0 Literature review

In recent years, the use of e-commerce has revolutionised the way businesses operate, enabling cost reduction, capital expansion, efficiency, and high client satisfaction (Kartiwi & Gunawan, 2013). E-commerce has become a key factor for success, not only for large organisations but also for small and medium enterprises in various industries such as retail, manufacturing, and services. According to a study on e-commerce adoption among Malaysian SMEs, one of the major reasons for non-adoption of e-commerce is the organisation's lack of readiness to make the necessary changes due to external pressure and cultural reasons (Mahroeian, 2012). Another study conducted in the United States and other countries also emphasises the lack of research on the adoption of e-commerce among SMEs and its future prospects. Additionally, one of the common difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs in Ghana is finding funding to start a business.

In addition, women face the constraint of child-rearing obligations, which limits their mobility and access to information about market opportunities. However, despite these challenges, e-commerce has the potential to empower female-led businesses in Ghana. E-commerce is a cost-effective way for SMEs to access customers globally and compete with larger businesses (Chen & Zhang, 2015). E-commerce can provide a source of competitive advantage for female entrepreneurs in Ghana by enabling them to overcome location and gender-specific barriers to business growth.

Boateng (2019) and others point out that there are significant barriers to e-commerce adoption including social norms, inadequate technological development, and a lack of support at home. Their research shows that, in addition to experiencing gender stereotypes that prevent them from participating in digital businesses, female entrepreneurs are often not connected to the internet or technical training. Asare and Frempong (2022) conducted a study to investigate the barriers that prevent women who own and operate small businesses in Ghana from using e-commerce. Their research found significant problems such as inadequate supply and delivery, low spending, and a lack of trust in online businesses. The importance of medical programmes and plans to build capacity to overcome these problems is emphasized. Advantages and prospects:

Despite the obstacles, many studies have shown the advantages and potential of e-commerce. Fiscal impact on women's economic empowerment in Ghana. Aidoo's (2021) study explores the potential of e-commerce to promote women's economic empowerment through broader market access, reducing dependence on the average, and improving capital gains. This study provides examples of Ghanaian women entrepreneurs successfully growing self-sufficient funds and acquiring customers using e-commerce platforms. Osei-Assibey (2015), in his study, explored the benefits and challenges of adopting e-commerce in Ghana. The authors highlight the benefits that women entrepreneurs can realise, including business development, debt reduction, and increased entrepreneurship. This study supports the implementation of strategic plans and initiatives to close the digital divide and create a positive environment for women's participation in the digital economy.

4.0 Research method

The study used a systematic review research method to explore the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Ghana's e-commerce sector. Initially, a detailed search strategy was applied across databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, EconLit, and Google Scholar, employing keywords like "women entrepreneurs," "e-commerce," and "Ghana," from 2010 to 2023. Studies were then meticulously selected through a two-stage screening, focusing on empirical research related to women's e-commerce activities in Ghana. Data from relevant articles were extracted and synthesized narratively, emphasizing the identification of common themes, especially the barriers and opportunities in the field. This thorough method ensured an unbiased review, paving the way for informed policies and interventions to support Ghanaian women in e-commerce.

5.0 Findings

The systematic review highlights critical findings regarding the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Ghana's e-commerce sector. Challenges identified include societal norms and gender stereotypes that discourage women's participation in digital businesses, inadequate technological infrastructure, financial constraints, childcare responsibilities limiting mobility and time, logistical issues in supply and delivery, and consumer mistrust in online transactions. Despite these challenges,

the review also uncovers significant opportunities for female entrepreneurs through e-commerce. These include expanded market access beyond traditional boundaries, competitive advantages overcoming location and gender-specific barriers, the potential for increased income and economic empowerment, and opportunities for business development and growth.

6.0 Conclusion

The study demonstrates that although female entrepreneurs in Ghana encounter considerable obstacles in the realm of electronic commerce, there are also considerable prospects for empowerment and economic advancement. Cultural stereotypes, technological gaps, financial constraints, logistical issues, and consumer scepticism are the principal obstacles. Nevertheless, the prospective advantages, including expanded market penetration, competitive edge, and business growth, indicate that e-commerce has the capacity to revolutionise enterprises lead by women. The results of the study diverge from a universal methodology concerning digital entrepreneurship that underscores the distinctive socio-economic conditions prevalent in Ghana. As a result, customised approaches are required to surmount the particular obstacles encountered by women. Implementing policies to improve digital literacy and internet access, providing financial and logistical support, and promoting gender-inclusive business practices are among the recommendations derived from the review. By taking into consideration of these domains, stakeholders have the potential to greatly augment the involvement and triumph of women in Ghana's e-commerce industry, thereby making a substantial contribution to the overall progress of society and the economy.

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DIGITAL MARKETING CAPABILITIES AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AT GCB BANK: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.

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Abstract

The study delves into the impact of digital marketing capabilities on business performance, exploring the mediating role of customer satisfaction. Drawing from the resource-based theory, the research investigates the significant competitive advantages derived from digital marketing capabilities. 150 branch managers from GCB Bank in Ghana were purposively sampled to participate in the survey. The data set for the study was collected through an online structured questionnaire administered to GCB Branches nationwide. The research scrutinizes three key digital marketing capabilities: marketing sensing capabilities, marketing linking capabilities, and customer retention capabilities. It assessed their influence on the development of customer satisfaction and, consequently, business performance. Utilizing the Partial Least Square–Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM), the study rigorously analyzes model under consideration. The findings of the study underscore a positive link between marketing sensing capabilities and customer satisfaction. Consequently, the study concludes that effective implementation of digital marketing capabilities, including marketing sensing capabilities, customer-linking capabilities, and customer retention capabilities, foster consumer satisfaction and business performance. As a result, the study recommends that banks adopt an intensive customer-linking approach to enhance both customer satisfaction and business performance.

1.0 Introduction

Over the past two decades, the landscape of marketing, both in consumer and industrial contexts, has been revolutionized by digitalization (Herhausen, Miočević, Morgan & Kleijnen, 2020). This shift has elevated consumer power globally, marking a paradigm change in the economic arena (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). The profound impact of digital marketing resonates across diverse industries, inducing radical transformations in marketing activities worldwide (Kanapathipillai, 2021). The surge in digital marketing aligns with the pervasive expansion of digital technology, encompassing smartphones, intelligent products, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence (AI) (Berg et al., 2020; Jianjun et al., 2021). The escalating significance of digital marketing in the industrial landscape is underscored by recent trends in B2B marketing (Janda, 2018; Gupta, 2019; O'Neill, 2018), wielding a substantial influence on customer satisfaction, thereby reshaping business performance (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). In the banking sector, the advent of digital technologies has empowered customers with access to services anytime, anywhere (Gabriel & Kolapo, 2015). The utilization of smartphones has not only provided additional benefits, such as instant access to banking services (Algharabat et

al., 2020) but also holds immense potential to enhance customer satisfaction. Furthermore, digital technologies have created opportunities for banks to reduce marketing costs by integrating with social media. Presently, digital marketing allows banks to elevate consumer awareness, understand expectations, and influence purchasing decisions (Pandey, 2021). Ghanaian banks have universally embraced digital banking to offer customers convenience, cost-effectiveness, and rapid banking services (Momeni, 2013; Simon & Thomas, 2016; Tetteh, 2021). Additionally, digital marketing serves as a catalyst to establish effective connections with a diverse customer base through digital media, guiding them through the procurement process (Lodhi & Shoaib, 2017). It plays a pivotal role in reinforcing brand value by sharing consumer ideas, views, and experiences, ultimately enhancing both customer satisfaction and business performance (Wai et al., 2019).

Given the escalating global demand for digital banking, business executives must equip themselves with proficient digital marketing capabilities to attain and sustain a competitive advantage (Leung et al., 2017). A challenge highlighted by Abdelfattah, Rahmanand, and Mohamad (2015) is the insufficient digital marketing capabilities among some senior bank executives, hindering efforts to enhance customer satisfaction and overall performance. Effective marketing capabilities, as emphasized by Parise, Guinan, and Kafka (2016), bridge the gap between banking products/services and customers by providing digital services at their convenience, seamlessly integrating financial services into their lives. Consequently, banks can expand their customer base and enhance performance through the strategic implementation of digital marketing capabilities (Dutta et al., 2015). While existing research explores various facets of digital marketing such as social media and mobile marketing (e.g., Kannan & Li, 2017; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Yadav & Pavlou, 2014; Tandon et al., 2020; Garg, 2019) and its impact on customer satisfaction, there remains a gap in the comprehensive examination of digital marketing capabilities and their direct link to business performance. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the significance of digital marketing capabilities at GCB Bank in enhancing business performance.

2.0 Theoretical and Hypothesis development

The Resource-Based Theory provides a valuable framework for exploring digital marketing strategies and their substantial competitive advantages (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). Broadly, the theory explains how a firm's competitive advantage is developed through capabilities or competencies, defined as a set of skills and resources enabling superior performance (Harmsen & Jensen, 2004). Capabilities are challenging for competitors to imitate (Barney, 1991). Despite being widely used in industrial marketing literature (e.g., Morgan et al., 2019), the resource-based approach is surprisingly underutilized in digital marketing research. This study, in line with Guesalaga et al. (2018), differentiates between resources and capabilities when analyzing digital marketing in industrial firms.

2.1 Marketing Sensing and Customer satisfaction

In alignment with the insights from Amangala and Wali (2020), the profound influence of marketing sensing capabilities on customers' cognitive and emotive experiences is

evident. The act of marketing sensing not only positively resonates with customers, showcasing a genuine concern for their opinions, but also instills a profound sense of satisfaction in their brand interactions (Wang, Wang & Xu, 2016). This positive engagement leaves an enduring impression, cultivating the belief that the company will uphold fair dealings and transactions, consistently delivering quality products at reasonable prices (Agnihotri, Gabler, Itani, Jaramillo & Krush, 2017). Therefore, we hypothesize:

H1: Marketing sensing exerts a positive influence on customer satisfaction

2.2 Customer-Linking Capabilities and Customer satisfaction

In the digital era, establishing connections with customers through posts and blogs across diverse social media platforms emerges as a potent strategy for fostering enduring relationships (Nuseir, et al., 2021). Kanapathipillai and Kumaran's (2022) examination of digital marketing strategies in the Malaysian automotive industry revealed a significant relationship between such strategies, relationship marketing, and consumers' purchase decisions. Similarly, effective customer-linking capabilities, manifested through an active presence on social media and strategic website selections, facilitate continuous engagement with customers. This not only keeps customers informed about the company's social interactions and transactions but also cultivates emotional and moral satisfaction (Dobrzykowski, Leuschner, Hong & Roh, 2015). Al-Refaie, Li, and Ko (2012) further substantiate this by highlighting the positive impact of customer linking capabilities and content efficiency on customer satisfaction. Based on the foregoing discussion, we hypothesize:

H2: Customer linking capabilities of GCB bank exert a positive influence on customers' satisfaction

2.3 Customer Retention and Customer satisfaction

Cohen et al. (2016) delved into the factors influencing consumers' decisions to stay or leave their banks in New Zealand, pinpointing customer satisfaction as a paramount construct in retention dynamics. Echoing this sentiment, Ghanbarpour & Gustafsson (2022) and Eriksson and Vaghult (2000) affirm that satisfaction stands as a key driver fostering customer retention, emphasizing the interplay between satisfied customers and enduring relationships. Stauss (2021) builds on this foundation by asserting that satisfaction serves as a pivotal step towards achieving customer retention goals, with the effects of retention amplifying as satisfaction levels rise. While Omotayo and Joachim (2018) caution that satisfaction alone may not guarantee retention, Alshurideh, Masa'deh, and Alkurdi (2012) and Danesh et al. (2012) counter this by establishing a direct positive effect of customer satisfaction on retention. Darzi and Bhat (2018), through empirical analysis employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), affirm a significant positive association between customer satisfaction and retention in business-to-consumer markets. Furthermore, Alshurideh, Ra'ed, Masa'deh, and Alkurdi (2012) conducted a study in the Jordanian mobile behavior setting, substantiating the impact of customer satisfaction on retention. Drawing from this discourse, we posit the following hypothesis:

H3: Customer retention capabilities exhibit a positive association with customers' satisfaction

2.4 Marketing sensing capabilities and business performance

Market sensing capabilities are deemed pivotal for establishing market focus and, consequently, influencing business performance positively (Murray et al., 2016). Sugiyarti and Ardyan (2017) characterize this understanding of diverse customer insights as 'market sensing.' Validating this perspective, Nuseira and Refaea (2022) scrutinized the influence of digital marketing capabilities, including market sensing, on business performance in the UAE insurance sector, revealing a significant positive impact. In the context of service-based firms in Ghana, Kankam-Kwarteng et al. (2021) conducted a survey-based study, employing hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Their findings underscored the substantial contribution of market sensing capability and interaction orientation to variations in the marketing performance of service-based firms. Aligning with the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory, Hilmi (2021) emphasized the significant contribution of market sensing to Sustainable Competitive Advantage. According to Day (2022) and Cepeda et al. (2017), enterprises employing market-sensing activities gain a competitive advantage and achieve higher business performance. However, Lindblom et al. (2008) suggested a weak positive correlation between market sensing capability and enterprise growth, with no statistically significant impact on profitability. Morgan et al. (2009) found no direct significant effect of market sensing capabilities on firm financial performance but highlighted their indirect impact on brand management capability and financial performance. Building on this discourse, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Market sensing capability has a positive and significant effect on the business performance of GCB Bank

2.5 Customer-Linking Capabilities and Business Performance

Lin, Sanders, Sun, Shipton, and Mooi (2016), anchored in the organizational capabilities literature, formulated and tested a model showcasing how supportive human resource management (HRM) enhances firms' financial performance, as perceived by marketing managers, by fostering the implementation of a customer-oriented strategy. The dynamic facet of customer linking capability, as emphasized by Ambrosini et al. (2019) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2019), bestows upon firms the agility to grasp evolving customer needs and reconfigure products and services in response to the challenges posed by environmental dynamism. Although the specifics of effective customer-linking practices may lack explicit articulation, they often rely on shared understanding or experiences within an organization (Gibbons & Henderson, 2012). Nielsen (2022) provides evidence that banks deploying internet technologies can indeed cultivate customer-linking capabilities. Against this backdrop, the study proposes that customer-linking capability possesses the potential to generate sustained competitive advantage and contribute significantly to business performance. The hypothesis is articulated as follows:

H5: Customer Linking Capabilities have a positive effect on business performance

2.6 Customer Retention and Business performance

Kyei and Bayoh (2017) highlighted that service innovation, process innovation, and marketing innovation stand as crucial determinants of customer retention. Farquhar (2013) emphasizes that customer retention (CR) is a pivotal business objective, with organizations striving to retain customers to enhance overall business performance. Kim

and Cha (2022) further assert that a 15% reduction in customer defections can lead to a remarkable improvement in profitability, ranging from 25 to 85 percent. Consequently, organizations are directing their efforts toward retaining their most valuable customers. In the contemporary digital landscape, leveraging social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter for customer retention emerges as a compelling method. The active engagement through likes, comments, and reviews on these platforms positively influences customers' perceptions and emotions (Nawaz et al., 2020). Additionally, cooperative virtual interactions play a significant role in dispelling misunderstandings, fostering satisfaction, and enhancing the overall customer experience (Bode, Singh & Rogan, 2015). Drawing from these insights, the study posits that Customer Retention Capabilities (CRC) encompass distinctive capabilities that have the potential to create a competitive advantage for firms and elevate business performance. The hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H6: Customer Retention Capabilities have a positive effect on business performance

2.7 Mediating effect of customer satisfaction in the relationship between digital marketing and business performance

The very existence of a business is intricately tied to its ability to attract and retain customers, who essentially fuel its operations. Customer satisfaction emerges as the linchpin that influences customers' purchasing power, their inclination to buy, and consequently, the overall marketing landscape and performance of a business organization (Chavez, Yu, Feng & Wiengarten, 2016; Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020). The quality of products and services offered by a company holds the key to emotionally satisfying customers. When a brand aligns its offerings with the contemporary market requirements, it stimulates emotional satisfaction among customers, driving them to prefer products and services from that specific brand. This heightened customer satisfaction, in turn, contributes to an upswing in marketing activities, generating a positive ripple effect on production and operational functions (Martinaityte, Sacramento & Aryee, 2019). Moreover, economic satisfaction, achieved by offering high-quality products at reasonable prices, further fuels marketing efforts. As customers compare prices and quality across brands, a perception of economic satisfaction can significantly enhance the marketing and business performance of the organization (Xie, Jia, Meng & Li, 2017). Extending this perspective to the realm of digital marketing, Kpahambang and Majeed (2019) probed into the effects of digital marketing strategies on customer service, revealing a statistically significant prediction of customer satisfaction through digital marketing. Based on these insights, the study hypothesizes that:

H7: Customers' satisfaction significantly mediates the links between digital marketing strategies and business performance of GCB bank

3. 0 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study builds upon the foundational research conducted by Nuseir and Refae (2022) and Ardyan (2017), particularly focusing on the intersection of digital marketing, customer satisfaction, and business performance within the banking sector. Leveraging the dynamic capabilities theory, the study aims to explore how banks align their digital marketing strategies and resources to elicit positive customer

outcomes, ultimately resulting in heightened customer satisfaction. The conceptual framework, postulates that the achieved customer satisfaction can transcend into increased patronage of the bank's services, thereby contributing to enhanced business performance.

4.0 Research Methods

Sample and data collection

The study based empirical analysis on a sample of 186 branch managers of GCB Bank in Ghana. Based on the review of extant literature, we developed questionnaires to solicit primary data regarding digital marketing capabilities; marketing sensing, customer linking, and customer retention capabilities; customer satisfaction and business performance from managers of GCB bank in Ghana. All One hundred and eighty-six (186) branch managers of GCB Bank limited were selected from the Banks directorate using the census sampling technique. The questionnaire paired with a cover letter explaining the objectives of the study were sent to the 186 branch managers via e-mail and follow-up phone calls were placed to show appreciation and serve as reminders for non-respondents after a week to two weeks interval. Several items (questions) were used to form a multi-item scale to measure the exogenous (digital marketing strategies) and endogenous (customer satisfaction and business performance). The idea behind using many different things to measure an abstract concept is to provide more accuracy and reduce measurement error (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, structured responses were provided for the items that measured the variables in the questionnaire. Respondents were required to select the appropriate responses that accurately fit their preferences regarding variables measured. A seven-point Likert scale was used to quantify respondents' responses on the items measuring the constructs in the context of this study. This resulted in the assignment of numerical values to the responses stated on the questionnaire. For instance, 1 indicates strong disagreement, 2 indicates disagreement, 3 indicates slight disagreement, 4 indicates neither agreement nor disagreement, 5 indicates slight agreement, 6 indicates agreement, and 7 indicates strong agreement. In such symmetric scaling, equidistant attributes would typically be more clearly observed or, at least, inferred (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014). This study obtained items measuring digital marketing strategies from empirical studies (Ramesh & Vidhya, 2019; Jacuński, 2018). These items perfectly epitomize the current digital marketing strategies. Customer satisfaction was obtained from empirically validated sources (Mukami, 2017; Padmavathy, Balaji & Sivakumar, 2012) and business performance scale was adapted from Al-Matari, Al-Swidi, and Fadzil (2014) which consist of "7" items. All the items for this study were adapted after making necessary changes according to the required sector study. The items were submitted for the supervisor's expert critiques, and the supervisor agreed that the items adequately measured the constructs they purported to measure.

From the 186 questionnaires shared among branch managers of GCB Bank, 140 responses were retrieved, representing a 75.2 percent response rate.

4.1 Common method bias (CMB)

Common method bias was tested using Harman's one factor test. Common method bias focuses on the possible measurement errors (occurs when variations in responses are caused by the instrument instead of the respondents' actual predispositions that the instruments aim at uncovering) (Podsakoff et al., 2003; MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012). To address common method bias, this study followed the acceptable approaches of Podsakoff et al. (2003) and Tehseen et al. (2017). After the data collection exercise, the data obtained from the respondents were scrutinised to ensure that any data which had the unrelated questions answered were deemed inappropriate and subsequently removed. Next, the only valid and relevant data were subsequently processed and analysed to minimise the presence of common method bias. Kock (2015) also suggested the use of variance inflation factor (VIF) values to report for common method bias in partial least square-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) studies. In the context of PLS-SEM, a tolerance value of 0.20 or lower and a VIF value of 5 and higher respectively indicate a potential collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2011). More specifically, an indicator's VIF level of 5 indicates that 80% of its variance is accounted for by the remaining formative indicators associated with the same construct. This demonstrates the uniqueness of each model and the fact that no two models accurately represent the same reality. In general, "a model is regarded valid if all VIFs produced from a thorough collinearity test are equal to or less than 5 may be considered free of vertical or lateral collinearity and standard technique bias, as explained before (Kock, 2013)". We used SPSS version 24 and Smart PLS 3. SPSS was used for descriptive analysis and Smart PLS for structural equation modelling analysis based on the study's hypotheses. The demographic features of respondents were described using descriptive statistics and percentages.

4.2 Data analysis and results

In this study, the internal consistency reliability of the constructs was measured using the composite reliability. The composite reliability is a more appropriate measure of internal consistency than the Cronbach's alpha (Rossiter, 2002). The results in Table 2 indicates that all latent variables in this study are reliable, as they all loaded about the 0.7 threshold by (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Additionally, "an AVE value of 0.50 or above suggests that the construct on average accounts for more than half of the variation in its indicators". Discriminant validity suggests that "a concept is different from the model's other constructs and captures phenomena not represented by the other constructs" (MacKinnon & Luecken, 2008). Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio has been adopted to test the discriminant validity. Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) suggest calculating the Heterotrait Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)". State that "a latent concept has discriminant validity if its HTMT ratio is less than 0.850."

Table 2: Validity and Reliability

	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Business Performance (BPM)	0.915	0.917	0.932	0.662
Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)	0.904	0.905	0.924	0.635
Customer-Linking (CUS-LINK)	0.868	0.873	0.910	0.716
Customer-Retention (CUS-RET)	0.888	0.891	0.923	0.749
Marketing Sensing (MKT SEN)	0.782	0.790	0.872	0.695

Table 3: Heterotrait - Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

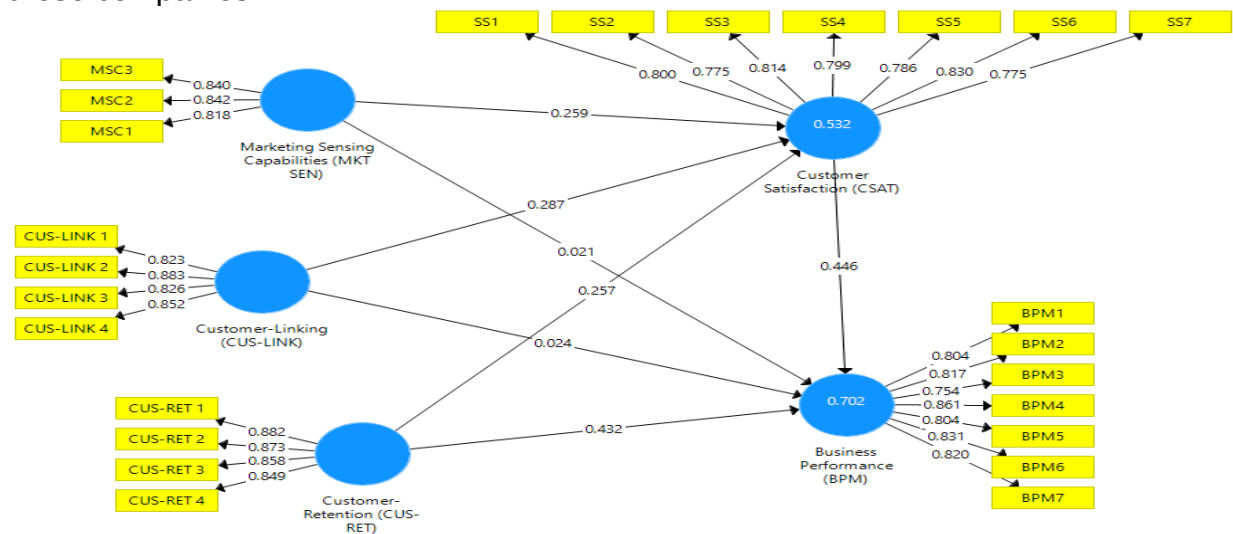
	BPM	CSAT	CUS-LINK	CUS-RET
CSAT	0.839			
CUS-LINK	0.761	0.753		
CUS-RET	0.844	0.744	0.850	
MKT SEN	0.742	0.757	0.837	0.848

Table 3: Coefficient of Determination and Predictive relevance

	R Square	R Adjusted	Predictive Relevance
Business Performance (BPM)	0.702	0.693	0.450
Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)	0.532	0.521	0.327

5. Discussion

The first hypothesis of the study was formulated to test the relationship between marketing sensing capabilities and customer satisfaction. Based on the path estimation, the results of the PLS-SEM showed that marketing sensing capabilities had a significant positive effect on Customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.259$, $p < 0.05$; Table 4, Figure 1). These results are approved by the past study of Bindroo, Mariadoss, Echambadi & Sarangee (2020). These results are also in line with the past study of Mulyana, Hendar, Zulfa & Ratnawati (2020), which reveal that the act of collecting qualitative information from the potential or current customers through digital ways like websites, pages, or different digital social media plate-forms like what's an app, Facebook, Instagram, etc. assures the audience customers that they will gain social and economic benefits in dealings with these companies.



The second hypothesis of this study lends support to the idea that the customer linking capabilities of GCB banking has a favorable impact on customer satisfaction. These results are in line with the previous study of Chiu, Liu and Tu (2016), which reveals that the company's efforts to build links with the customers through digital plate-forms

facilitate to create links with the audience at a broader level. While building maintaining these links, emotional, social, and economic satisfaction can be aroused in the audience, and they can be made potential customers. The third hypothesis of the predicted the relationship between customer retention capabilities and consumer satisfaction. Following figure 3 and Table 8, the results revealed a path coefficient of 0.257 and a p-value of 0.038. These results are supported by the past study of Gordini and Veglio (2017). Cohen, Gan, Yong and Choong (2016) suggested that the most important constructs for customer retention was customer satisfaction. Omotayo and Joachim (2018) also argued that customer satisfaction is a key driver of customer retention Alshurideh, Masa'deh and Alkurdi (2012) and Danesh et al. (2012) found that customer satisfaction has a direct link with customer retention

The fourth hypothesis of the study demonstrated that, digital marketing have weak positive effect on business performance. Thus, the hypothesis not supported. This result is not surprising because it has been posited that, marketing sensing capabilities in firms' business ecosystem form the basis for building their dynamic capabilities, including sensing development of technology, customer demand, and market segmentation which are vital ingredient for competitive advantages (Lin & Wang, 2015).

The fifth hypothesis was formulated to determine whether there is a relationship between Customer-Linking Capabilities and business performance. Thus *H5: Customer linking capabilities of GCB bank has positive influence business performance*. Based on the path estimation, the results of the PLS-SEM showed that customer-linking Capabilities had a weak positive effect on business performance ($\beta = 0.024$, $p > 0.05$; Figure 1). As hypothesized, the customer linking capabilities has a significant positive effect on business performance. Therefore, one could argue that, customer linking capabilities influence customer retention which may later transcend to profitability and performance.

The sixth hypothesis of this study implied that, the ability of the bank to retain customers would go a long way to improve performance. Numerous studies have confirmed this assertion. For example, (Ndubisi, 2013; Rosenberg & Czepiel, 2019) have shown that the cost of serving one loyal customer is five to six times less than the cost of attracting and serving one new customer. Also, Reichheld and Sasser (2020) found that when a company retains just 5 per cent more of its customers, profits could increase by 25 per cent to 125 per cent.

The mediation analysis was tested between digital marketing capabilities, customer satisfaction and business performance. The indirect effect was rather significant. This implies that customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between customer linking capabilities and business performance. This is logical in the sense that, customers of the bank feel satisfying both emotionally and economically when they are contacted or get interactions with their bank. Moreover, customers are likely to stay when they are inquired to give the reason for leaving the brand; if there is any complaint or other problem, they could handle politely when the organisation contacts the lost customers and show concern (Nuseir, et al., 2021). It has already been proven that retain customers improves performance. The study further advances the earlier studies on

digital marketing by providing a shred of evidence that digital marketing contributes to enhancing the business performance of GCB bank in Ghana.

Table 3: Structural model results for hypotheses 1-9

	Hypotheses	Path	F2	T-Stat	P Values
H1	MKT SEN -> CSAT	0.259	0.064	2.074	0.038
H2	CUS-LINK -> CSAT	0.287	0.059	2.313	0.021
H3	CUS-RET -> CSAT	0.257	0.043	2.070	0.038
H4	MKT SEN -> BPM	0.021	0.001	0.272	0.786
H5	CUS-LINK -> BPM	0.024	0.001	0.206	0.836
H6	CUS-RET -> BPM	0.432	0.185	3.348	0.001
H7	CUS-LINK ->CSAT -> BPM	0.128		2.058	0.040
H8	CUS-RET -> CSAT -> BPM	0.114		1.668	0.095
H9	MKT SEN -> CSAT -> BPM	0.116		1.347	0.178

6.0 Conclusion

The study examines the three digital marketing capabilities, such as marketing sensing capabilities, marking linking capabilities, and customer retention capabilities, and checks their influences on the development of customer satisfaction and in extension business performance. The study relied on the resource-based theory to investigate digital marketing capabilities, and their significant on business performance. The study states that the application of marketing sensing capabilities creates and develops the customers' satisfaction. The marketing sensing capabilities are ways to know about the thinking and emotions of the customers towards their products and services. This creates a sense in the customers that the company has great care about the customers' opinions, so it can be expected that it will provide better products. The study highlights that the GCB bank attempt to establish links with the customers through digital media and plate-forms facilitates to create links with the audience at a broader level. During the establishment of these links, emotional, social, and economic satisfaction can be aroused in the audience, and they can be made potential customers. Similarly, the application of customer retention capabilities enhances the customers' satisfaction towards the companies' brand with the long-term fair dealings. This study adds to the literature by addressing the company's customer satisfaction as a mediating between the digital marketing capabilities like marketing sensing capabilities, customer linking capabilities, and customer retention capabilities, and business performance. The study recommended GCB and other companies to embark of intensive customer linking capabilities approach in order to enhance customer satisfaction and business performance. The effective customer linking capabilities help to build long-lasting relations with the customers, and these relations make the satisfaction in customers stronger. Again, Banks seeking to retain and create loyal customers must first satisfy their customers through embarking on rigorous customer retention approach in order to achieve effective customer satisfaction and improve business.

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DEMONOPOLISATION OF LAND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR COMPETITIVE SERVICE DELIVERY BY PRIVATE FIRMS

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Abstract

The paper argues for demonopolisation of land information service delivery for competition among private firms to provide services required by the public in Ghana. It draws on the Economic Theory of Knowledge propounded by Hayek and explores the relationship between competition and utilization of practical knowledge of entrepreneurs for service delivery. The paper presents a Multinomial Logistic Regression Model assessment that predicts whether competition among entrepreneurs will promote utilization of practical knowledge for supply of land information. Primary data of self-report rating responses was collected from 102 potential land information suppliers within the private sector in Accra using a combination of 5-point and 3-point Likert scale format questionnaire. Using an R software to determine the extent of inter-rater agreement on the 5-point Likert scale, the findings of κ values for four kinds of practical knowledge exceed 0.34 at $p < 0.01$. The findings suggest significant agreement among the ratings that potential information suppliers possess practical knowledge likely to be utilized in competition for supply of land information. However, the findings based on the Multinomial Logistic Regression Model predict the likelihood of two types of practical knowledge namely adaptive and efficiency knowledge possessed by potential private sector land information suppliers and they are more likely to be utilized than market and effectiveness knowledge. The findings are consistent with propositions in Economic Theory of Knowledge that competition promotes utilisation of practical knowledge. However, potential private actors are more likely to utilize adaptive and efficiency knowledge in competition for land information service delivery in Ghana.

1.0 Introduction

The paper empirically investigates the likelihood of private firms providing land information services to the public to tackle the problem of information asymmetry in urban land markets in Ghana. The investigation is against the background that land information management in the country as in many developing countries, remains a service monopolised by public sector land administration agencies, which are known for being inefficient in delivering services that satisfy the needs of citizens. The paper, therefore, argues for demonopolisation of land information service provided by the Lands Commission for competition among private sector firms to promote healthy flow of information among all participants in the land market. Based on review of literature on market failures and competition, the paper draws on the Economic Theory of Knowledge propounded by Hayek and explores the statistical relationship between competition and utilization of four kinds of practical knowledge namely, market knowledge, adaptive knowledge, efficiency knowledge, and effectiveness knowledge. The findings suggest that adaptive and efficiency knowledge are critical for dynamic competition for land information service delivery in the land market in Ghana.

2.0 Methodology

The 5-point Likert scale format questionnaire was used to collect ratings by 102 respondents' possession of the four kinds of knowledge identified for competition and inter-rater agreement analysis conducted using R software and result reported as r_{WG} . Table 1 shows the results. Responses from the 3-point Likert scale format questionnaire were coded and used to run the regression model on competition and likelihood of utilization of knowledge. The model is based on standard multinomial logistic regression model formula as follows, $\text{Prob}(C) = \frac{\exp(x_i\beta_c)}{\sum_c \exp(x_i\beta_c)}$ where, $\text{Prob}(C)$ is the probability of belonging to outcome group of "to compete", "not to compete", and "don't know" whereas x_i is the vector of predictor variables and β_c are the coefficients estimated using the maximum likelihood estimation. Tables 2 and 3 shows some of the relevant results.

3.0 Findings/Results

The findings of the paper based of the 5-point Likert scale statistical analysis and the R software suggest that the 102 raters "agree" to possessing practical knowledge likely to be utilized in competition for supply of land information. The self-reported rating with median of 4 score and $r_{WG} = 0.73$ for utilisation of market knowledge, median score of 4 and $r_{WG} = 0.66$ for utilisation of adaptive knowledge, median score of 4 and $r_{WG} = 0.69$ for utilization of effectiveness knowledge, and median score of 4 and $r_{WG} = 0.65$ for utilisation of efficiency knowledge represent a consensus among raters that they agree to possess the practical knowledge required for land information service delivery. For purposes of all mean values proxied on median ratings on the Likert scale to be interpreted with confidence, r_{WG} values for all the items rated exceed 0.34 at $p < 0.01$. This is evidence of significant agreement among the ratings that potential information suppliers possess practical knowledge likely to be utilized in competition for supply of land information. Table 1 provides details of the results.

The findings of the paper based on the Multinomial Logistic Regression Model provide sufficient evidence that there is a relationship between practical knowledge and competition. The model predicts the likelihood of two types of knowledge namely adaptive and efficiency knowledge possessed by potential private sector land information suppliers that is more likely to be utilized in competition in land information supply service in Ghana. The result was arrived through the model fitting, classification accuracy with case processing summary, likelihood ratio test and factors affecting likelihood to compete. Tables 2 and 3 provide some information.

6.0 Conclusion

The findings of the study are consistent with propositions in Economic Theory of Knowledge that competition promotes utilization of practical knowledge for efficient and effective production and service delivery. The paper also concludes that demonopolisation of land information search service can enable potential private sector actors to utilize adaptive and efficiency knowledge in competition for service delivery to the public. The paper recommends for a policy consideration for demonopolisation of

land information service delivery to enable private firms to compete in service delivery to help tackle the challenge of information asymmetry in the land market in Ghana.

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Tables

Table 1: Potential suppliers self-report rating on utilisation of knowledge in competition

Utilisation of type of knowledge possessed:	Mean	Std.	Std. Error	Median	Mode	rWG	p <.01
Market knowledge	4.392	0.798	0.0791	4	5	0.73	0.34
Adaptive Knowledge	4.088	0.934	0.0925	4	4	0.66	
Effectiveness knowledge	4.176	0.872	0.0775	4	4	0.69	
Efficiency knowledge	4.039	0.958	0.0949	4	4	0.65	
Economic knowledge	4.284	0.749				0.72	

Table 2: Likelihood Ratio Test

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria			Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	AIC Reduced Model	BIC Reduced Model	-2Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig
Intercept	48.953	85.702	20.953 ^a	.000	0	
MKTK	46.991	73.241	26.991	6.039	4	.196
ADATK	62.652	88.902	42.652	21.699	4	.000*
EFFCK	139.402	165.652	119.402 ^b	98.449	4	.000*

Source: Computed from Data, 2013

0.00-0.01 * Chi-square significant at 1%

0.02-0.05 * * chi-square significant at 5%

0.06-0.10 *** Chi-square significant at 10%

Table 3: Pseudo R-Square Test

Cox and Snell	.669
Nagelkerke	.865
McFadden	.745

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION: PERSPECTIVE FROM SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

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Abstract

The pursuit of sustainable development is pivotal in reshaping societal paradigms, integrating environmental, economic, and social dimensions. Collaboration between large firms and SMEs is imperative, with SMEs playing a crucial role in implementing sustainable practices. However, SMEs encounter challenges in designing business models and timing the integration of sustainability into their life cycle. Innovation acts as a catalyst, and it empowers SMEs to develop sustainable products, manage resources, and engage stakeholders. Research focuses on understanding the relationship between innovation, SMEs, and sustainable development, especially in underdeveloped countries. Empirical studies aim to determine optimal timing and methods for SMEs to adopt sustainable practices and innovation. The systematic literature review (SLR) design facilitates data collation and pattern recognition, thereby advancing research objectives. Using the PRISMA framework and SCOPUS database, this study underscores the importance of multisectoral coordination and evidence-based policymaking in achieving global sustainable development goals. The findings emphasize the critical role SMEs play in driving sustainable economic development and highlight the necessity for informed decision-making and collaborative efforts across sectors to address complex sustainability challenges.

1.0 Introduction

The increasing interest and backing for sustainable development represent a significant change in how humanity views its relationship with nature and with each other (Roy, 2021; Vig, 2023). Contribution by both large and small firms are required to attain sustainable development agenda (Cai & Choi, 2020; Kayikci et al., 2022; Madsen, 2020). Sustainable development hinges on three pillars: environmental, economic, and social (Mensah, 2019). Simply, sustainable development as a concept advances the need to protect the environment and society as individuals and businesses strive for economic gains (Álvarez Jaramillo et al., 2019; Fukuda & Watanabe, 2012; Mensah, 2019). Thus, sustainable development finds meaning within the Triple Bottom Line theory (Hammer & Pivo, 2017; Zak, 2015).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are important for economic growth and employment globally. Their dedication to sustainable practices is essential for reaching global sustainability objectives (Ndubisi et al., 2021; Platonova & Kareva, 2023). Critical examination of business models and operations for the attainment of sustainable development is therefore on the rise (Evans et al., 2017; Schaltegger et al., 2016).

Complexities in the design of business models by SMEs still abound, and therefore questions the level and rate at which SMEs can effectively and efficiently adopt sustainable development initiatives (Quintás et al., 2018). Sustainable development in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) involves combining economic growth, social responsibility, and environmental care to guarantee long-term sustainability and success.

Integration of sustainable development practices into the processes of SME is mostly done with a couple of methods. Some SMEs make conscious effort to decrease their environmental footprint by optimize resource use, minimizing waste generation and adoption of eco-sensitive technologies (Dicuonzo et al., 2020; Majid et al., 2023). Besides this, incorporating social responsibility inside the organization through fair labor practices, community engagement, and diversity programmes to enhance sustainability leads to the growth of all the parties in a continuous way (Babajee et al., 2022; Gangi et al., 2018; Sarpong, 2021). In like manner, SMEs employ innovations and technology in developing environmentally sustainable products hence they meet demand for eco-friendly products thereby creating new business opportunities (Hardin et al., 2019; Pacheco et al., 2018). SMEs collaboration with other stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs and other industry players, help to share knowledge and work together in sustainability drives (Journeault et al., 2021).

Innovation has played a crucial role in the advancement and progress of society during the 21st century (Fukuda & Watanabe, 2012). Progress in science and technology has increased industry productivity and competitiveness, as well as significantly enhanced living standards and quality of life (Çalışkan, 2015; Sredojević et al., 2016). Rapid industrial output development has significantly boosted energy and natural resource demand. Subsequent environmental repercussions have led to dangers like global warming and the overuse of energy, land, and water resources, endangering life's survival (Mondal & Palit, 2021; Xu & Zhao, 2023).

Few extant literatures have indicated that SMEs in less developed countries benefit from innovation, and this gives them chance to achieve sustainable development as they promote economic growth and acts as the way to deal with social and environmental problems (Falahat et al., 2020; Klewitz & Hansen, 2014; Valdez-Juárez & Castillo-Vergara, 2021). Innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) take many shapes, including product development, process improvement, and business model innovation among others that are aimed at the conservation and improvement of the environment (Oduro, 2019; Saunila, 2020). SMEs use innovation for sustainability to produce affordable and eco-sustainable products that fit local conditions and needs. In addition, SMEs in the renewable energy sector are designed devices like solar-powered devices and clean cook-stoves for powering devices and substituting fossil fuel. These developments thus do not just contribute to better and cleaner environments but also work as poverty reduction and quality of life improvement tools (Arsawan et al., 2020; Oduro, 2019).

The life cycle of SMEs has become crucial in the determination of innovation adoption as well as attaining sustainable development (Álvarez Jaramillo et al., 2019; Khurana et

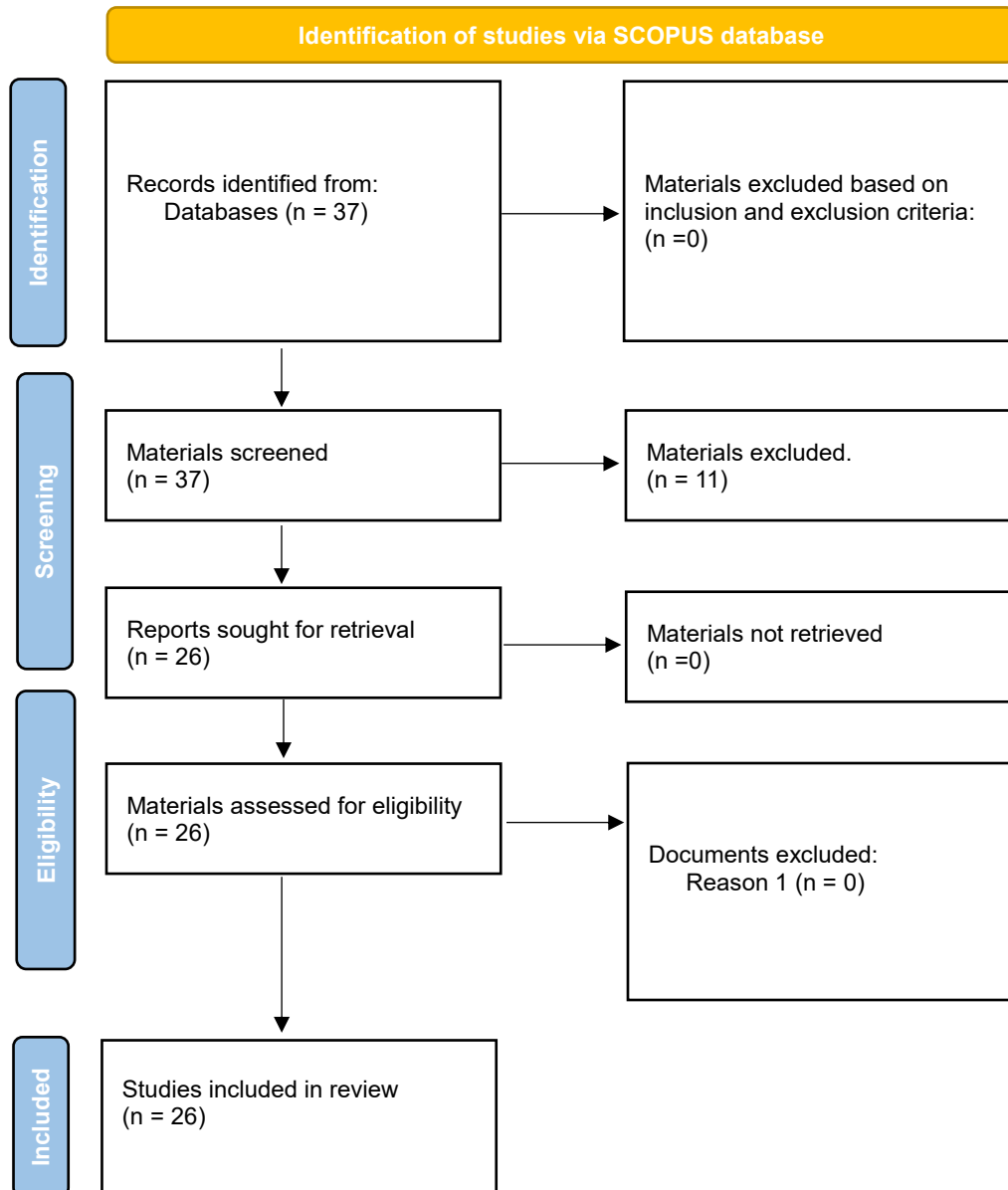
al., 2021). Gaining experience arises as SMEs grow within their respective industry, and it becomes imperative to determining the time that SMEs can initiate and implement sustainable practices (Álvarez Jaramillo et al., 2019). Business model design for sustainable development must therefore be seen to occur at a certain period of SMEs. However, extant literature does not capture and or discuss when it is prudent for SMEs to adopt sustainable development and innovation practices. The bane for practitioners and industry players on SMEs adoption of sustainable development and innovation practices has therefore been when in the SMEs life cycle is it appropriate to adopt sustainable development practices and innovation practices. Again, there is lack of extant empirical literature within developing countries that map out sustainable development practices adopted by SMEs and those that significantly contribute to the attainment of sustainable development. Therefore, this current study seeks to provide systematic literature review of empirical studies to provide information on when it is necessary and appropriate for SMEs to adopt and implement innovative and sustainable development practices.

3.0 Methodology

This study is qualitative research and particular attention is given to systematic literature review design. The systematic literature review strategy is adopted for this study because it provides numerous advantages such as thorough coverage of current research, reducing bias through strict methodology, and offering a methodical way to combine evidence (Kraus et al., 2020; Linnenluecke et al., 2020; van Dinter et al., 2021). It allows scholars to pinpoint trends, gaps, and inconsistencies in the literature, guiding future study paths. Systematic reviews improve the credibility and dependability of research findings through transparent and replicable techniques (Kraus et al., 2020; van Dinter et al., 2021). This design is highly beneficial for guiding evidence-based decision-making in different fields, aiding in the progress of knowledge and comprehension in certain areas of study (Paul et al., 2021, 2023).

Leveraging the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, data was collected via SCOPUS database (Rethlefsen et al., 2021). The reason for the adoption of SCOPUS was its wide acceptance and adoption of reviewing quality and relevant journals. The documents were located by doing searches using certain keywords and terminology: Sustainable Development, innovation, small and medium enterprises, and developing countries. For inclusion criteria, empirical journal articles that were published in English language were included. The period for inclusion was from 2000 to 2024. Conference papers and presentations, editorials, and book chapters were excluded in this study. SCOPUS search query was (TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainable AND development) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (innovation) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (small AND medium AND enterprises) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (developing AND countries)) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")). Following the screening and eligibility steps described, 37 articles were selected for full-text retrieval, and 26 of them were found to match the final inclusion requirements, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Material Selection using PRISMA.



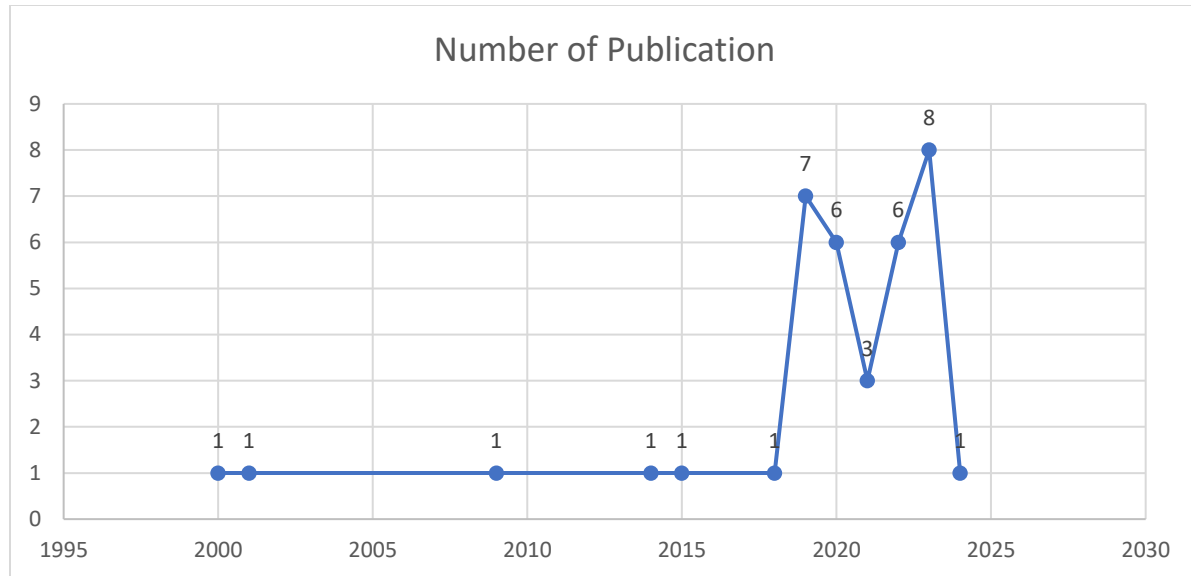
The complete texts were carefully examined to obtain pertinent information.

4.0 Results

4.1 Descriptives Findings

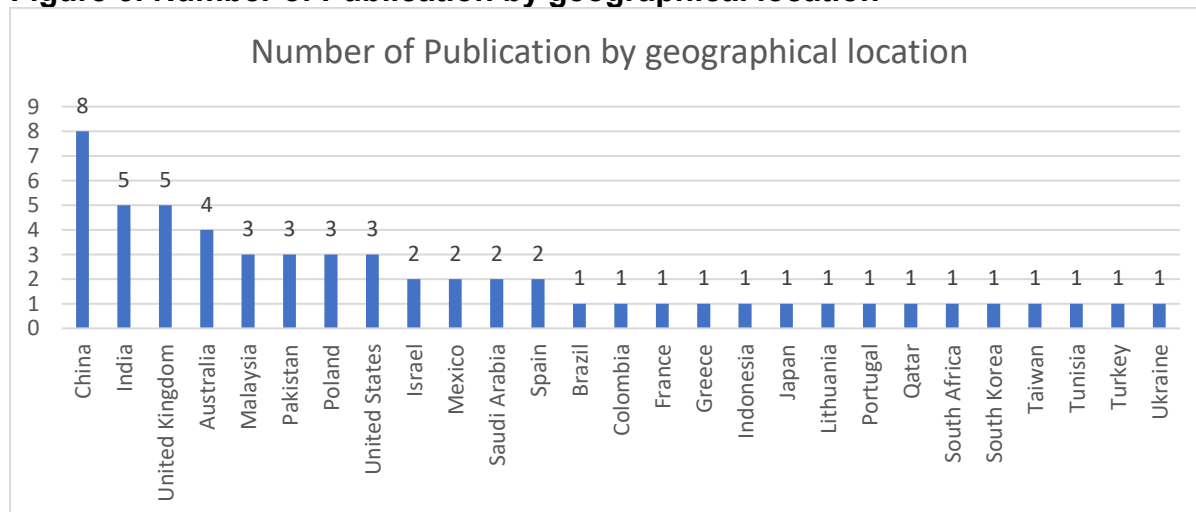
The curled data illustrates a fluctuating trend in the number of publications over the years. While there is a noticeable increase in publications from 2019 to 2023, with 2023 having the highest number at 8, there are sporadic peaks and troughs in earlier years. This variation reflects shifts in research interests, funding availability, or methodological advancements. It is important for researchers and stakeholders to analyze these trends to understand the dynamics driving publication patterns. Additionally, identifying factors influencing peaks and troughs can inform strategic planning for future research endeavors, ensuring sustained productivity and relevance in the academic landscape.

Figure 2. Number of publications per year



The distribution of publications across different countries/territories reflects a diverse global research landscape. China leads with the highest number of publications, indicating its significant research output and growing influence in various fields (China 8). Other countries like India, the United Kingdom, and Australia also demonstrate substantial contributions to research. However, there's a broad representation of countries with varying levels of publication output, highlighting the global nature of academic inquiry. This diversity underscores the importance of international collaboration and exchange of knowledge to address complex challenges and advance scientific understanding across borders.

Figure 3. Number of Publication by geographical location



The distribution of publications across various source titles showcases the diverse platforms contributing to research dissemination. "Sustainability Switzerland"(7) emerges as the most prolific source, underscoring its significance in publishing sustainability-related research. Journals like the "Journal of Cleaner Production" (3) also demonstrate notable contributions, reflecting a focus on environmental issues and

sustainable practices. Furthermore, the inclusion of interdisciplinary journals like "Information Systems Frontiers" and "Technology in Society" highlights the multidisciplinary nature of sustainability research. Each source title offers unique perspectives and insights, enriching the discourse on sustainability and fostering collaboration among researchers across different domains.

Figure 4. Journal Sources of Publication



5.0 Conclusion

Sustainable development is a matter of great importance for people as it shifts the paradigm upon which our societies are based by adding environmental, economic and social considerations. It is a joint effort of both large companies and SMEs. SMEs, being responsible for the two mentioned features make it possible to implement sustainable production methods. SMEs are subject to obstacles during the adoption process of sustainable development activities incorporating specifically in designing business models and timing the implementation into SME life cycle. Innovation serves as a market

driver for green product creation by empowering small and medium enterprises to produce sustainable goods, manage resources and partner with various stakeholders. The literature search showed an ongoing resolve to study the relation between innovation, SMEs and sustainable development, which is especially in underdeveloped countries. Empirical studies will be determined on which are the suitable times and methods of the SMEs to put in place sustainable practices and innovative projects.

The systematic literature review (SLR) design adopted in this research has been an advantage since it eases collation of the existing data aiding in recognizing patterns that move us towards accomplishing our research objectives. Main empirical papers were scrutinized applying PRISMA framework and SCOPUS database as an effective means to know how small and medium-sized enterprises tie the notions of innovation and sustainable economic development together. It underscores the role multisectoral coordination and evidence-based policymaking play in reaching sustainable development goals at the global scale.

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A SYNERGISTIC LINK ASSESSMENT: REPUTATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: OIL MARKETING COMPANIES IN GHANA

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of reputation management strategies on the performance of Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) following Ghana's downstream oil sector liberalization, which spurred competition and privatization. Traditionally dominated by multinationals and the state-owned Ghana Oil Company, the sector opened up for pricing to be set by OMCs rather than the National Petroleum Authority, aiming to stimulate competition. Using a cross-sectional survey with drop and pick-up questionnaires within a positivist framework, 212 out of 357 issued questionnaires were retrieved, marking a 59.3% response rate. The data was analyzed using SPSS to evaluate the influence of reputation management on organizational performance, employing descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings highlight a positive link between corporate communication and performance, a modest connection with branding, and a noteworthy, but not strong, correlation with crisis management. Corporate social responsibility was shown to significantly enhance reputation and success, while identity management also positively correlated with performance. Risk management, however, had a weaker association with performance. This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of reputation management—including corporate communications, crisis management, branding, CSR, and identity—and its varied effects on organizational success. The study calls on leadership to fine-tune reputation strategies to optimize performance, suggesting a more proactive stance in reputation management could amplify its impact on organizational outcomes.

Keywords: reputation management, reputation management strategies, organisational performance, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

The introduction of trade liberalization policies in Ghana's downstream oil sector marked a pivotal shift, and it transforms the market dynamics from an oligopoly comprised primarily of multinational corporations—such as Shell, Total, and Oando Petroleum—and the state-controlled Ghana Oil Company, to a more diverse and competitive landscape (Goosen, 2023). This change catalyzed an influx of private investors, motivated by the newly available opportunities to enter the oil retailing market, facilitating enhanced competition and consumer choice. Previously, the National Petroleum Authority held the exclusive authority to set fuel product pricing, serving as the centralized regulatory body governing the sector (Bansal & Dua, 2022). However, as a result of the liberalization, the power to price fuel products was distributed among Oil Marketing Companies, enabling them to exercise greater autonomy and to strategically position themselves within the market. The decentralized pricing mechanism was a deliberate move to ignite competitive pricing practices, thereby contributing to a more dynamic and market-driven oil industry (Heilbrunn, 2021).

In light of these sectoral changes, this study pursued a dual objective: firstly, to explore the correlation between reputation management strategies and the performance of organizations within the Ghanaian OMC industry; and secondly, to evaluate the extent to which these reputation management strategies could predict organizational performance outcomes (Oduro et al., 2020). The study's central aim was to discern whether and how the careful management of an organization's public image could influence its commercial success, especially in a context where competition had been markedly intensified due to policy transformation. Considering the implications of reputation in securing a competitive edge, the research sought to comprehensively assess various reputation management strategies, including corporate communication, crisis management, and branding efforts, and their potential effects on OMCs' performance. In doing so, the study aimed to provide empirical insights into the strategic value of reputation management in the context of Ghana's liberalized oil sector and its impact on the operational success of emerging and established OMCs alike.

2.0 Design/methodology/approach

The methodology of the study was meticulously crafted to ensure a robust and comprehensive collection of data. A multi-sampling approach was incorporated, allowing for a blend of both purposive and random sampling methods to be used in selecting participants for the cross-sectional survey. This hybrid approach aimed to combine the specific targeting of key groups, as determined by the purposive element, with the representativeness and generalizability afforded by random sampling. The survey employed a drop and pick-up questionnaire technique—an effective method for increasing response rates and ensuring adequate coverage of the target population. By physically distributing the questionnaires to participants and later collecting them, researchers were able to facilitate ease of response for participants and ensure a higher quality of collected data. With a dedication to the positivist research paradigm, the study emphasized the objective measurement and quantitative analysis of observable phenomena. This positivist stance underpinned a systematic approach to understanding the cause-and-effect relationships within the data. The study achieved a notable rate of

response, with 212 of the 357 questionnaires distributed being adequately completed and returned by participants, resulting in a satisfactory response rate of 59.3%. This significant number of responses provided a rich data set for analysis and lent credibility to the study's subsequent findings.

The analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS version 20, a statistical software package widely recognized for its robust analytical capabilities. The process encompassed various statistical techniques starting with descriptive statistics, which facilitated a fundamental understanding of the data through the calculation of frequencies and measures of central tendency. Beyond these basics, the study also employed correlation analysis to identify and measure the strength of relationships between reputation management strategies and organizational performance. Moreover, regression analysis was utilized to delve deeper into predictive insights, gauging the extent to which reputation management could serve as a predictive factor for organizational performance. The analytical findings were expected to encapsulate the nuances of data, presenting a clear and empirical assessment of how reputation management strategies impact and predict the performance of organizations within the Ghanaian OMC industry. Through these diverse and rigorous statistical techniques, the study aimed to delineate the tangible effects of reputation management on organizational success.

3.0 Findings

The study highlights a significant connection between an organization's corporate communication strategy and its overall performance. This implies that the manner in which a company articulates its values, engages with its stakeholders, and conveys its corporate narrative can play a critical role in driving its success. Effective communication has been shown to facilitate better understanding, foster trust, and enhance stakeholder engagement, which collectively contribute to the operational excellence and competitive advantage of an organization. In terms of crisis management, although the data suggests the relationship with performance is not robust, the management of crises is intricately linked with an organization's reputation. Effective crisis management, which often necessitates timely and strategic communication, can mitigate potential damage to a company's reputation. The study advocates for more proactive crisis management strategies as reactive approaches, while essential, may not be as efficacious in bolstering organizational performance.

The research also sheds light on the role of branding, indicating a positive, albeit modest, relationship with performance. Branding, while a significant aspect of marketing and identity formation, appears to have less influence on performance when compared to other factors at play within an organization. This suggests that while a strong brand holds value, it might not be the paramount driver of performance. Corporate Social Responsibility strategies exhibit a notable correlation with enhanced organizational performance. The practice of undertaking socially responsible initiatives not only fortifies a company's reputation but also contributes significantly to its success. This aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of ethical business practices and the value they provide to both the company and society at large.

Identity management was clearly correlated with organizational performance. Maintaining a consistent and positive corporate identity appears pivotal for organizations, pointing to the idea that a well-managed identity can lead to positive performance outcomes. Lastly, the study touches upon risk management strategies, citing a less pronounced but still relevant association with performance. This underscores the idea that while managing risks is crucial for protecting a company's reputation and performance, it might not be a primary driver of success compared to other factors such as CSR or corporate communication. The findings suggest that a comprehensive approach to reputation management, encompassing a range of strategies from communication to CSR, is instrumental for an organization looking to achieve and maintain high performance.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted nature of reputation management strategies and their influential role in organizational performance. By systematically scrutinizing strategies such as corporate communications, crisis management, branding, risk management, CSR, and corporate identity management, the study has illuminated the complex interplay between an organization's reputation and its success. The novelty of the study lies in its extensive scope, which has not only identified the individual contributions of these varied strategies but also emphasized how they collectively shape organizational achievements. The nuanced insights gained from this approach offer a holistic understanding of reputation management as a critical factor in business practice.

Moreover, the strategic implications of this research are particularly salient. The findings suggest that management and leadership teams should actively re-evaluate and refine their reputation management techniques. By adopting a hands-on and proactive stance, organizations can enhance areas pivotal to their reputation and, in turn, bolster their performance. This study emphasizes that reputation is not simply a by-product of business operations but a strategic asset that can be cultivated through deliberate and informed practices. Leadership teams are therefore encouraged to integrate these insights into their strategic thinking. Prioritizing effective communication, proactive crisis management, coherent branding, vigilant risk management, meaningful CSR initiatives, and a well-crafted corporate identity can serve as cornerstones of a successful reputation management strategy. Ultimately, by ensuring that these elements are expertly managed, organizations can significantly enhance their performance and establish enduring success in the competitive business landscape.

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THE EFFECTS OF DIGITAL INTERACTION ON THE PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMERS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how digital interaction influences customer experiences and their intent to purchase. It adopted the uses and gratification theory as a foundational framework, and a convenience sampling method was used through online questionnaires to gather data from 255 respondents engaged with Ghana's telecommunications networks. Key findings from the study indicated that brand communication positively affects customer perceptions and brand awareness, which in turn increases customer involvement and enhances the overall brand experience. This enhanced brand experience has a notable positive effect on customers' purchase intentions. However, customer involvement alone did not show a direct impact on the likelihood of purchase. The novelty of the study lies in its focus on the specific context of the highly competitive telecommunication market in Ghana, thereby contributing new insights to the existing body of knowledge on digital interaction's effects on customer perception and behaviors. The implications are significant for marketing strategy, which highlight how digital interaction plays a vital role in shaping the customer brand experience and intentions to buy telecommunications products and services. These findings reinforce the importance of uses and gratification theory in understanding consumer engagement in the digital age, and further emphasize the pervasive influence of digital platforms in bringing consumers together to exchange crucial brand information across varying locations.

Keywords - Digital Interaction, Telecommunication, Brands, Purchase Intention, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

The ascendance of digital interaction has revolutionized the marketing strategies of contemporary businesses, so it fundamentally alters traditional customer engagement models. In this dynamic digital landscape, companies have come to recognize the paramount importance of leveraging digital channels as a means of crafting and modulating customer perceptions (Andiana et al., 2021). Through strategic online brand engagement activities, firms aim to steer consumer behaviors, nurturing a pathway from brand awareness to the eventual consumption of products and services (Liu et al., 2021). Acknowledging the pervasive influence of digital platforms, the present study delves into

the impact that digital interactions have on shaping the customer experience and their subsequent intentions to purchase. In a market where attention is the currency of growth, the ability of businesses to captivate and maintain consumer attention through digital engagement is crucial (Nöjd et al., 2020). By investigating this nexus between digital interaction and customer behavior, the study seeks to provide actionable insights into how effectively orchestrated digital strategies can lead to measurable outcomes in terms of customer loyalty, satisfaction, and purchase frequency (Satya, 2023). This study's endeavor to map the effect of digital interaction on consumer decision-making processes is timely, given the exponential rise of e-commerce and online consumerism. With the immense pool of data and interactive touchpoints available online, businesses possess the unprecedented ability to influence customer journeys (Melumad et al., 2020). The aim is to unfold how these digital interactions not only craft memorable customer experiences but also propel the decision-making process that precedes the act of purchasing, providing a comprehensive understanding of the digital marketing impact on consumer behavior.

2.0 Design/methodology/approach

The design, methodology, and approach of the study are rooted in the uses and gratification theory, which posits that individuals actively seek out media and channels that fulfill their specific needs and desires (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023). In applying this theoretical framework, the study aims to comprehend how consumers use and derive satisfaction from digital interactions, particularly within the context of the telecommunication industry in Ghana (Kammer et al., 2021). To gather the necessary data, the study utilizes convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that selects participants based on ease of access and willingness to take part (Simkus, 2022). This approach is beneficial for the efficient and economical collection of data, though it may not fully represent the entire population (Emerson, 2021). The sampling method is particularly useful when working under constraints of time and resources and when the research aims to gather preliminary insights into a phenomenon. Primary data was collected through self-reporting questionnaires hosted on Qualtrics, an advanced online survey platform known for its robust capabilities in data collection and analysis. The respondents comprised 255 users of various telecommunications networks within Ghana, thus providing a broad perspective of digital interaction within this specific sector. By employing the U&G theory as a lens and convenience sampling for data collection, the study ensures a focused approach that taps into the personal experiences and motivations of telecommunications users. The reliance on primary data via self-reporting questionnaires facilitates the acquisition of data straight from the source, which allows for a more nuanced understanding of the individual user's interaction with digital platforms in relation to their telecommunication providers (Perkel, 2023). The design and methodology of the study are thus constructed to address the research objectives effectively, yielding insights into the implications of digital interaction strategies on the customer experience and purchase intentions within the telecommunication sector in Ghana.

3.0 Key Findings

The study reveals the critical role of brand communication in shaping customer attitudes and behaviors thereby highlighting its positive effect on the consumer base. Effective brand communication strategies, which include advertising, social media engagement, and other forms of customer outreach, are shown to resonate with customers, fostering positive perceptions and enhancing their overall experience with the brand. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of brand awareness in cultivating an involved customer base. The awareness that customers have of a brand significantly drives their level of involvement with the brand, suggesting that high levels of brand recognition can lead to increased engagement and interaction. The positive influence of brand awareness extends to the overall brand experience as well. Customers who are well-acquainted with a brand tend to report more enriched experiences, which in turn expressively sway their intentions to make a purchase.

A positive brand experience encompasses various customer touchpoints and interactions over time, which collectively contribute to a customer's likelihood of choosing the brand when ready to buy. Interestingly, however, the study indicates that customer involvement on its own does not have a conspicuous influence on purchase intention. This suggests that while customers may engage with a brand, such engagement does not necessarily translate to an immediate intention to make a purchase. This separation highlights the complex nature of the customer journey, where involvement is a step in the process but might not be a direct predictor of sales conversions. It signals the need for brands to dive deeper into understanding the factors that convert involved customers into purchasing customers. These findings offer businesses valuable insights into the intricate interplay between brand communication, awareness, customer involvement, experience, and purchase intention. They illustrate the necessity for brands to craft cohesive and strategic communication initiatives that not only elevate brand awareness and engagement but also meticulously guide customers through a memorable brand experience that can eventually lead to concrete purchase actions.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this article provides a significant contribution to the literature on the effects of digital interaction on customer perception, particularly within the competitive telecommunication market in Ghana. The uniqueness of this study is marked by its empirical focus on a market characterized by intense brand competition and its illumination of how digital interaction strategies shape customer behaviors and expectations. The application of the Uses and Gratifications Theory has been instrumental in analyzing the quantitative findings of the study, which have demonstrated that brand communication, brand awareness, customer involvement, and brand experience have discernible influences on purchase intention. By underscoring these elements, the study enriches our understanding of consumer behavior in a digital context and reaffirms the relevance of the U&G Theory in the digital age.

Furthermore, the implications of this research are far-reaching. It adds depth to the existing body of knowledge surrounding digital interaction and its impact on customer experiences and purchasing behaviors within the realm of telecommunication brands. It also extends previous research by emphasizing the essential role of the U&G Theory in

interpreting these dynamics. The study highlights digital interaction as a potent, latent force that unites consumers across geographical boundaries, enabling them to exchange vital brand information and shape collective perceptions. By accentuating these findings, the study acknowledges that the mastery of digital interaction is pivotal for brands aiming to navigate the complexities of consumer engagement effectively and shape the future landscape of telecommunication and beyond.

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SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE ON CORPORATE REPUTATION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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Abstract

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to develop a framework proposing that sustainability marketing impacts corporate reputation, but not exclusively; organizational culture is a crucial mediating variable that influences the strength and direction of this relationship. The study posits that an organization's cultural paradigm significantly dictates the outcomes between sustainability and corporate reputation. This study employed a secondary research approach, critically reviewing over thirty peer-reviewed papers on sustainability and corporate reputation published from 2018 to 2023. The review aimed to uncover insights and gaps within existing conceptual frameworks, narratives, and theoretical discussions. The findings of the paper acknowledges gaps in existing literature and propose a new conceptual framework. This framework suggests that sustainability-oriented programs—encompassing economic, social, and environmental sustainability—affect corporate reputation, yet are mediated by an organization's culture. Moreover, the paper introduces the novel concept of 'competitive sustainability, a dimension underexplored in current discourse. The implication of this study is that while traditional research on sustainability has focused on the triple bottom line concept, there has been a lacuna regarding 'competitive sustainability' and the role of organizational culture. By proposing this conceptual framework, the paper encourages future empirical testing to validate the interactions between these factors and deepen the understanding of how sustainability marketing and organizational culture interplay to shape corporate reputation.

Key Words: sustainability, corporate reputation, corporate reputation, organizational culture, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

The central aim of this conceptual paper is to construct and advance a framework theorizing the nuanced impact that sustainability marketing has on corporate reputation. In the proposed framework, sustainability serves as a predictor variable while corporate reputation functions as the response variable, drawing a line of inquiry into the intricate dynamics that govern their interrelationship (Gong et al., 2023). The paper posits a critical perspective that challenges the notion of a direct, unequivocal link between sustainability marketing and corporate reputation. Instead, it introduces organizational culture as the mediating variable, a lens through which the strength and influence of this relationship can be discerned (Gómez-Trujillo et al., 2020). The core argument suggests

that it's not sustainability marketing efforts alone that sway corporate reputation; rather, it is the underlying organizational culture—an embodiment of a company's values, beliefs, and behaviors—that moderates and gives direction to this influence (Bank et al., 2018).

Organizational culture, with its myriad of dimensions and expressions, is presented as a key determinant in understanding the variability and outcomes in the link between sustainability marketing and corporate respectability (Gong et al., 2023). Depending on the nature of an organization's cultural paradigm, which sets the standard for its operations and strategic approach, sustainability marketing efforts may take on different levels of significance and lead to varied impacts on corporate reputation (Webinformatrix, 2022). The innovative proposition laid out in this paper implies that examining how a company integrates and aligns its sustainability efforts with its cultural fabric can provide deeper insights into their actual effect on corporate reputation (Gómez-Trujillo et al., 2020). It's this interaction between sustainability marketing and organizational culture that the paper theorizes as foundational in molding corporate reputation, thereby expanding the conversation beyond a simplistic cause-and-effect scenario.

2.0 Design/methodology/approach

To provide a solid empirical foundation for the conceptual framework proposed in this study, a meticulous secondary research methodology was employed. The research delved into a comprehensive analysis of both theoretical and empirical literature, enlisting sources that are particularly relevant to the constructs of sustainability marketing and corporate reputation. This exhaustive literature review encompassed a thorough examination of over thirty peer-reviewed academic papers. Each paper was dissected not only for the conceptual framework it was based on, but also for the broader discussions, narratives, and arguments it presented. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of the prevailing academic discourse and the accumulation of diverse perspectives on the subject. The disproportionate nature of the review refers to the meticulous selection and analysis of papers that offer substantial insights into the intricacies of the proposed theoretical model. Critical analysis was key to both understanding the nuances of different conceptual frameworks and to evaluating the cogency and validity of the arguments and discussions within the literature. By engaging with a range of academic narratives, the secondary research technique facilitated the identification of common threads and distinctive viewpoints across a spectrum of studies. This rigorous investigative process enabled the study to calibrate its own conceptual contributions and assumptions against the established scholarly work, thereby ensuring a well-grounded and richly contextualized proposition for the impact of sustainability marketing on corporate reputation through the mediating role of organizational culture.

3.0 Findings

Following a comprehensive review of the latest literature from the period of 2018 to 2023, which pertains to the intersection of sustainability marketing and corporate reputation, the research unveiled certain voids within the current conceptual frameworks. These gaps pertain to the understanding of the direct and indirect relationships between sustainability initiatives and corporate reputation, as well as how organizational culture

influences these relationships. In response to these identified gaps, this paper proposes an original conceptual framework for further examination. This framework hypothesizes that the implementation of sustainability-oriented programs—whether in isolation or in combination—can significantly affect a corporation's reputation. However, this impact is not standalone; rather, it is filtered through the specific cultural paradigm that defines the organizational environment. Culture here is perceived as a mediating variable, affecting how sustainability efforts are perceived and ultimately how they contribute to or detract from the company's public esteem.

The proposed framework seeks to articulate that sustainability marketing might enhance corporate reputation, but this effect is contingent upon the company's cultural context. A culture that is aligned with sustainability values could amplify positive outcomes, while a mismatch might dampen the effects or steer them in an unintended direction. This proposition sets the stage for future empirical research to validate and quantify these theoretical predictions, though the scope of empirical testing lies beyond the bounds of this particular conceptual paper. The framework opens a path for subsequent scholarly inquiry into the intricate dynamics between sustainability, organizational culture, and corporate reputation.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper introduces novel perspectives on the interaction between sustainability marketing and corporate reputation by examining the key constructs and variables presented within the bounds of the triple bottom line—economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The paper identifies and addresses a notable gap in the current discourse regarding the competitive dimension of sustainability, which it terms 'competitive sustainability'. Furthermore, the exploration of corporate reputation is deepened through an analysis of related concepts such as corporate identity, image, and personality. Theoretical frameworks pertaining to sustainability marketing and corporate reputation were scrutinized, revealing that existing literature predominantly overlooks the concept of 'competitive sustainability' and the role of organizational culture within these frameworks. This discovery paved the way for the design of a new conceptual framework that integrates these underexplored aspects. The implications of these findings suggest that while the triple bottom line has been a focal point in sustainability research, a broader lens that includes competitive sustainability and organizational culture can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how sustainability initiatives influence corporate reputation. This paper's contribution therefore lies in its proposed framework, which serves as a novel foundation for future empirical research to investigate and validate these relationships further.

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BRAND-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYEE BRAND PERFORMANCE, ROLES OF EMPLOYEE BRAND COMMITMENT AND MOOD

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Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between brand-oriented leadership and firm performance, highlighting the mediating roles of employee brand commitment and mood. It is based on Barney's resource-based view theory and draws on primary data from 324 respondents across various industries. The findings suggest that job satisfaction leads to higher employee brand commitment, which then has a positive effect on firm performance. This study contributes to brand leadership literature by exploring the impacts of brand-oriented leadership on employee brand commitment and mood, representing a novel addition to global brand literature. Practical implications suggest that managers should focus on brand communication to increase employee commitment and performance.

Keywords; Brand - Oriented Leadership, Employee Brand Performance, Employee Brand Commitment, Mood, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

Amidst a global business environment, the power of robust branding is becoming increasingly recognized for its ability to synergistically amplify marketing efforts and carve out a distinct identity for a firm (Wand, 2020). Brand orientation—a firm's strategic focus on nurturing its brand's values and identity—is now seen as integral to driving sustainable brand growth and enhancing overall firm performance (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023). Marketing scholars argue for brand orientation to be embraced as a strategic corporate policy, given its growing relevance. However, despite the critical role of brand orientation, there is a knowledge gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which it interacts with and influences firm performance (Kumar et al., 2021). Specifically, there is a lack of empirical insight into how employee brand commitment—the degree to which employees embody and advocate for the brand's values—and their prevailing mood can mediate the relationship between brand-oriented leadership and a firm's success (Garr & Mehrotra, 2022). This gap points to the need for a comprehensive study that can elucidate these relationships. Recognizing this need, the present study aims to shed light on the influence of brand-oriented leadership within firms (Stewart, 2023). It seeks to address how leadership that emphasizes and prioritizes the brand's core values

and mission can affect employees' alignment with the brand, their emotional state, and, ultimately, the performance of the firm at large. The study is built upon Barney's resource-based view theory, which posits that firms can gain (Barney et al., 2011). With this theoretical foundation, the study employs a convenience sampling technique to administer a self-reporting questionnaire to employees across various industries (Barney, 2021). This methodology serves to gather primary data which is then analyzed to establish the relationship between brand-oriented leadership and firm performance, incorporating employee brand commitment and mood as vital mediating factors. The expected outcomes of this study are poised to contribute significantly to branding and leadership strategies, offering new insights for marketing academics and practitioners on the intricate interplay between branding and human resource dimensions within organizational settings.

2.0 Design/methodology/approach

The research design and methodology of the study are meticulously formulated on the foundation of Barney's resource-based view theory. This theoretical framework posits that a firm's internal resources and capabilities can be harnessed to create competitive advantages that are valuable, rare, non-substitutable, and difficult for competitors to imitate. In the context of this study, such resources include brand-oriented leadership and the resultant employee brand commitment and mood, which are posited to influence firm performance. To explore these variables, the study employs a convenience sampling method, chosen for its practicality and efficiency. Convenience sampling allows researchers to collect data from subjects that are readily available and willing to participate, making it a cost-effective strategy for gathering information quickly. This method entails selecting respondents based on their ease of access and willingness to contribute to the study, without randomization, which affords a prompt data collection process.

The primary data is amassed through a self-reporting questionnaire, a tool that enables participants to personally reflect and respond to questions pertaining to their experiences and perceptions related to brand-oriented leadership and its impact on their commitment to the brand and mood at work. The questionnaire is distributed to a total of 324 individuals, offering a robust sample size from an array of industrial backgrounds. By utilizing such a strategy, the study aims to collect diverse and rich primary data, reflecting a broad range of perspectives from individuals across different sectors. This heterogeneity in the respondent pool is crucial as it adds depth to the study, potentially revealing industry-specific nuances in how brand-oriented leadership translates into firm performance through the lens of employee commitment and mood.

3.0 Findings

The core hypotheses of the study are focused on uncovering the interconnectedness between brand-oriented leadership, job satisfaction, employee brand commitment, and firm performance. Through rigorous empirical testing, the research demonstrates that there exists a positive correlation among these critical business variables. The findings of the study highlight the pivotal role that job satisfaction plays in developing a robust sense of employee brand commitment. Employees who report higher levels of

satisfaction with their job are observed to have a stronger alignment with the firm's brand values and are more likely to engage in behavior that supports and promotes the brand. This deepened commitment is a catalyst for driving performance metrics upward, suggesting that satisfied employees are not just happier but also more productive and impactful to the firm's success.

Furthermore, the study elucidates that employees who perceive their firm's brand in a positive light are more inclined to invest in the brand's success. This positive perception of the brand is integrally linked to their overall job satisfaction, forming a virtuous cycle where job satisfaction, brand perception, and brand commitment mutually reinforce each other to drive firm performance. The implications of these results are significant, indicating that firms with strong, positive brand reputations and high levels of job satisfaction among employees can expect an escalation in both employee engagement and organizational performance. The tested hypotheses thus substantiate the argument that cultivating a supportive and brand-centric work environment is not just beneficial for employee morale but is also a strategic imperative for achieving superior performance in the marketplace.

4.0 Conclusion

Innovatively, this study contributes to the brand leadership literature by examining the effects of brand-oriented leadership on employee brand performance, particularly by identifying the mediating roles played by employee brand commitment and mood. This aspect of the research is considered a novel addition to the global body of knowledge on brand literature. Moreover, the study illuminates aspects of the resource-based view theory, indicating through quantitative analysis that job satisfaction and positive perceptions of the brand's reputation are likely to bolster employee commitment to the organization. The implications of this research are far-reaching and of practical importance to marketing executives and business leaders. The findings suggest that managers should concentrate their efforts on leading brand communication that supports and develops an employee's dedication to the brand. Such commitment is expected to lead to subsequent enhancements in employee performance. The study, therefore, provides actionable insights for industry professionals, and advocates for a strategic focus on fostering strong, brand-aligned leadership as a catalyst for organizational growth and success.

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UNLOCKING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION IN IMPROVING DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND FINANCIAL WELL-BEING OF CONSUMERS

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Abstract

The study proposes a relationship between social innovation, financial inclusion and financial well-being. The study is a conceptual study and is underpinned by self-determination theory. The study proposes that social innovation have a positive and significant connection with digital financial inclusion. The study demonstrates that the transformative potential of social innovation will improve financial well-being by consumers. The findings of the study establish that digital literacy strengthens such relationships. The study adds to existing research on the critical role of technology in developing countries.

Keywords: *Social innovation, digital financial inclusion, financial well-being, consumer well-being, digital literacy, self-determination theory*

1.0 Introduction

This study proposes how the transformative potential of social innovation enhances financial inclusion and financial well-being. The study also explores the moderating role of digital literacy in the relationship. Although much research has been conducted in developed and developing nations, little is known about the potential of social innovation and its relevance in enhancing financial inclusion and financial well-being (Bhatti & Prabhu, 2019; Haugh & O'Carroll, 2019; Salampasis & Mention, 2018; Vik et al., 2021; Aziz & Naima, 2021; Kanungo & Gupta, 2021; Twum et al., 2023). Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) is a strategic alliance between organizations and societies for profitable and sustainable mutual gains where parties in this alliance release their energies towards overcoming chronic social ills to stimulate positive business outcomes (Dionisio & de Vargas, 2020). For example, social interventions of leading MNCs such as Microsoft, Oando, Nestle, Lego, Standard Chartered and Price Water Coopers (PWC) in Nigeria are directed towards promoting educational equality and development aligned to the world's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Financial well-being and financial inclusion have emerged as important understudied important (Losada-Otálora & Alkire, 2019; Chatterjee, Kumar & Dayma, 2019; Ianole-Calin et al., 2021; Shabir, 2022; Ianole-Calin et al., 2021; Bustamante & Amaya, 2020; Dzogbenuku, Kumi & Bonsu, 2022). This study assesses how the transformative potential of social innovation enhances financial inclusion and financial well-being. The study further explores the moderating role of digital literacy in the relationship. The study is underpinned by self-determination theory. Self-determination theory seeks to explain how being self-determined impacts how people feel and behave. The theory emphasizes the satisfaction of basic human needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness as a key driver for motivating individuals to act (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that self-determination theory serve a facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being of individuals.

2.0 Methodology

This paper is a conceptual paper based on 115 published articles after screening. Thus, this paper is a non-empirical review of the literature. These articles are published in English. The search for literature was done using databases like Wiley, Science direct, Francis and Taylor, Emerald insight, and JSTOR. Only ABS ranked journals were used including *International Journal of contemporary hospitality Management*, *Social Forecasting and Social Change*, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, *Information technology and people*, *Journal of Business Research* et.c. Key words used include social innovation, social innovation initiatives AND digital financial inclusion; AND financial well-being e.t.c.

3.0 Findings/results

The result reveals that the transformative potential of social innovation have a positive and significant connection with digital financial inclusion. The study demonstrates that the transformative potential of social innovation improves financial well-being by consumers. The findings of the study establishes that digital literacy strengthens such relationships.

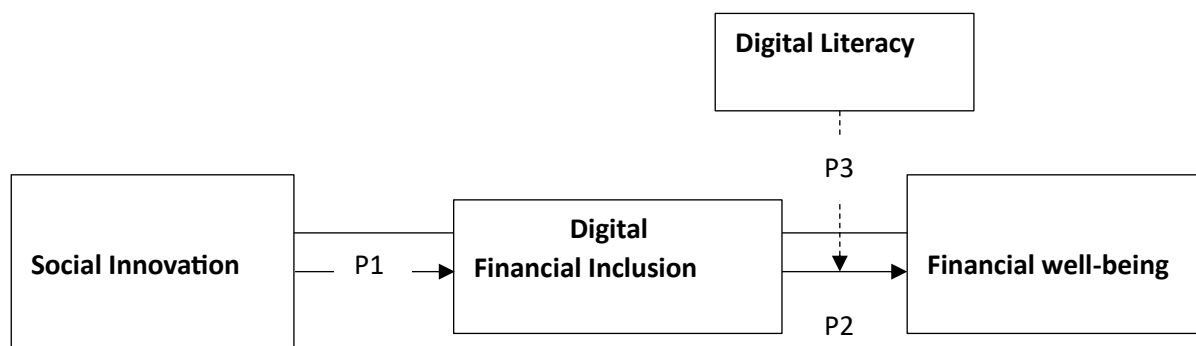


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study
Source: Authors' Construct (2024)

4.0 Conclusions

The study concludes that the transformative potential of social innovation has a positive and significant connection with digital financial inclusion. The study proposes that the transformative potential of social innovation would affect financial well-being of consumers. The study reveals the role of digital literacy in the relationship between social innovation and financial well-being. Digital literacy strengthens such relationship. The use of digital literacy as a moderating factor in the relationship between technology use, financial inclusion and financial well-being in financial setting in emerging markets is uncommon in financial literature and unique.

5.0 Originality

The use of digital literacy as a moderating factor in the relationship between technology use, financial inclusion and financial well-being in financial setting in emerging markets is uncommon in financial literature and unique. The study adds to existing research on the critical role of technology in developing countries.

6.0 Practical Implications

Managers of firms have to develop strategies to manage social innovations effectively to ensure that they encourage financial inclusion of persons who are the banked and unbanked population.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-EFFICACY ON BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION: MODERATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN USE OF SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS

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Abstract

The purpose is to develop a conceptual framework to aid in understanding the relationship between, self-efficacy and behavioural intention, and role of emotional intelligence in the context of self-service technology. This paper is a conceptual paper. Based on social cognitive theory, the study found that there is an association between self-efficacy, behavioural intention, and emotional intelligence. The study emphasizes that emotional intelligence strengthens the relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural intention in the context of self-service technology. This study emphasizes the instrumentality of operant resources on self-service technology platforms. The study adds to existing research on the influence of emotional intelligence.

Keywords: *Self-efficacy, Behavioural intention, Emotional intelligence, Self-service technology platforms, Social cognitive theory*

1.0 Introduction

In recent times, scholars and practitioners alike have paid attention to behavioural intentions (Hameli et al., 2023). Extant literature suggests that self-efficacy is the third factor besides attitude and subjective norm which is a predictor of behaviour intentions (De Vries et al., 1988; Nwibe & Bakare, 2022). Nonetheless, few studies have investigated the impact of self-efficacy on behavioural intention in the usage of self-service technology platforms as well as the role of emotional intelligence in strengthen in the relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural intention (Rahman et al., 2018; Hameli et al., 2023; Abu-Shanab & Shanab, 2022; Ellen et al., 1991; Wang et al., 2013). According to Harvard Business Review (2023), emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand and manage one's emotions, as well as recognise and influence the emotions of those around. Four key core competence critical of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Frenández-Abascal et al., 2019; Abu-Shanab & Shanab, 2022).

This study is timely and relevant since it demonstrates the interrelationships between self-efficacy and behavioural intention, and emotional intelligence. The study was supported by social cognitive theory. The study is supported by social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory was developed by Bandura, 1977. He fully developed social cognitive theory of human functioning and his work has been crown by self-efficacy. The

social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of observed behaviour in shaping an individual's actions. The theory provides valuable insights into how people perceive and interpret their social environment which in turn shapes their behaviour.

2.0 Methodology

This paper is a conceptual paper. Thus, this paper is a non-empirical review of the literature. The search for literature was done using databases like Wiley, Science direct, Francis and Taylor, Emerald, and JSTOR. Articles published in English and in ABS ranked journals were used. 197 articles were used after screening. These articles were published between 2020 to 2024. Keywords used in search include self-efficacy AND behavioural intention, self-awareness AND behavioural intention, self-management AND behavioural intention and emotional intelligence.

3.0 Findings/Results

The study reveals that there is an association between self-efficacy, behavioural intention, and emotional intelligence. The study establishes that there is a link between self-efficacy, and behavioural intention. The study validates that the role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between self-efficacy and behavioural intention of consumers. This is presented in Figure 1.

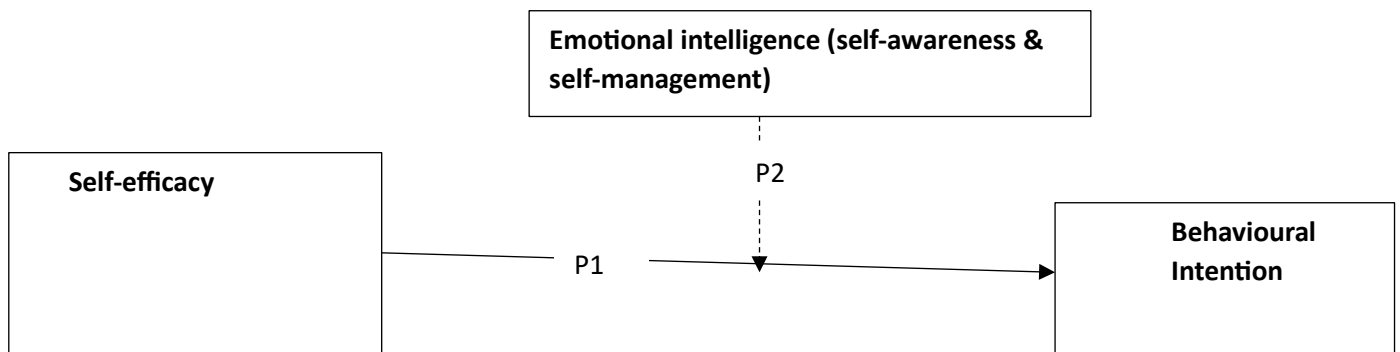


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Authors' Construct (2024)

4.0 Conclusion-

Self-efficacy is a predictor of behaviour intentions and this relationship can be largely influenced by emotional intelligence. This study provides insights into the significance of emotional intelligence (in terms of self-awareness and self-management) in determining consumers' behavioural intentions when using self-service technology platforms.

5.0 Originality

The study explores the interrelationship between self-efficacy and behavioural intention, and emotional intelligence in the context of self-service technology. This study emphasizes the instrumentality of operant resources on self-service technology platforms. The study adds to existing research on the influence of emotional intelligence. This study further expands on the literature on self-service technology.

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UNVEILING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER: HOW DIGITAL FINANCIAL INNOVATION AMPLIFIES FIRM SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE IN EMERGING MARKETS

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Abstract

This study explores that the linkage between digital financial innovation and firm sustainability performance. This paper is a conceptual paper. The study is supported by resource-based view theory. This study demonstrates how digital financial innovation improves firm sustainability performance via the lens of resource-based view theory. The study further proposes that the moderating role of pro-environmental behaviour of employees in the relationship between digital financial innovation and firms' sustainability performance. The findings of this study provide evidence to practitioners, and firms on how to manage digital financial innovation to help improve their sustainability performance.

Keywords: Digital financial innovation, Firm sustainability performance, Sustainability performance, Performance, Pro-environmental behaviour, Resource-based view theory

Introduction

Research has made several contributions on financial innovations and firm performance (Abbas et al., 2024; Chege & Wang, 2020; Zhou et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019; Qing et al., 2022). For instance, Chege and Wang (2020) in their study explored technology innovation and SMEs performance whilst few others (e.g Abbas et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2022) focused on the linkages between financial innovation, digitalization and firm performance. Successful realization of digital financial innovation requires a digital transformation of the organization (Hussain & Papastathopoulos, 2022). According to Chishti and Sinha (2022), financial innovation is the innovations in the financial products for better management of financial risk, transferring of risk and efficient management of credit and liquidity.

However, extant literature has failed to explore the relationship between digital financial innovation and how it drives sustainability performance (Singh et al., 2023; Sempere-Ripoll et al., 2020; Huan & Qamruzzaman, 2022). Hence, studies (Abbas et al., 2024; Cao et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2023; Sempere-Ripoll et al., 2020) have called for more

exploration into sustainability performance driven by digital financial innovation initiatives (digital insurance, digital payment, digital savings and digital credit). Sustainability performance is measured with environmental performance, social performance and economic performance (Coulmont et al., 2022). This study sought to demonstrate how digital financial innovation improves firm sustainability performance via the lens of resource-based view theory. The resource-based view theory posits that firms have collections of unique resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable and which are able to provide them with a sustainable competitive advantage (Laosirihongthong et al., 2014). This theory was originally proposed by Birger Wernerfelt (1984) and later developed and refined by Jay B. Barney (1991). The resource-based view theory has found considerable support in the business literature (Salazar et al., 2017). Hence, in this study, the deployment of digital financial innovation and its initiatives are observed as firm's resources and can influence the firm's ability to enhance its sustainability performance. Again, pro-environmental behaviour of employees serves as a key resource to promote sustainability performance of firm (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Suganthi, 2019). Therefore, the study further explores the moderating role of pro-environmental behaviour of employees in the relationship between digital financial innovation and firms' sustainability performance.

Methodology- This paper is a conceptual paper based on 103 published articles. Thus, this paper is a non-empirical review of the literature. The search for literature was done using databases like Wiley, Science direct, Francis and Taylor, Emerald insight, and JSTOR. Only ABS ranked journals were used including *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, *Information Technology and People*, and *Journal of Business Research* et.c. Key words used include digital financial innovation AND sustainability performance; environmental performance, social performance and economic performance e.t.c.

Findings- The result shows how digital financial innovation (digital insurance, digital payment, digital savings and digital credit) enhances firm sustainability performance. The study establishes that the moderating role of pro-environmental behaviour of employees in the relationship between digital financial innovation and firms' sustainability performance. Thus, to say that pro-environmental behaviour of employees strengthens the relationship between digital financial innovation and firms' sustainability performance rather than weakens the relationship.

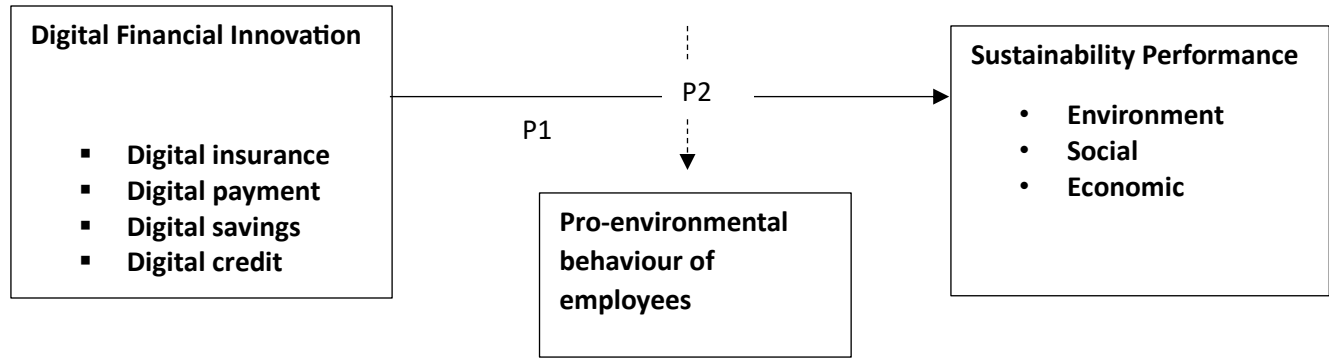


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study
Source: Authors' Construct (2024)

Conclusions- Digital financial innovation improves firms' sustainability performance. Pro-environmental behaviour of employees is a critical element in ensuring that digital financial innovation drives firms' sustainability performance. The study identified that Digital insurance, Digital payment, Digital savings and Digital credit are key digital financial innovation that drives sustainability performance. The study observes that environmental, social and economic performance are an integral aspect of sustainability performance of firms. The propositions of the study should be tested empirically. The study adds to existing research on the relevance of firm's deployment of digital financial innovation initiatives and it contributes to its sustainability performance over time. Firms are encouraged to implement digital financial innovation initiatives to help ensure their firm achieve improved sustainability performance irrespective of the size.

Originality- The use of pro-environmental behaviour of employees as a moderating factor in the relationship between digital financial innovation and firms' sustainability performance in emerging market is uncommon in financial literature and unique. The study adds to existing research on the relevance of firm's deployment of digital financial innovation initiatives and it contributes to its sustainability performance over time.

Practical Implications- Firms are encouraged to implement digital financial innovation initiatives to help ensure their firm achieve improved sustainability performance irrespective of the size.

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DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG GRADUATES IN NIGERIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

The study reviews the state of sustainable entrepreneurship among graduates through skills development in the digital era. It explores how paramount workforce and skills development is to individual graduate and the workforce in a developing country like Nigeria. The outcome of the review of literature reveals digital skills such as technological literacy as the topmost missing connection in the preparation for work after school. Such missing connection that has limited the conversion of what have been learned during school into effective performance among Nigerian graduates in the labour market needs to be developed after school for sustainable entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The study concludes that skills acquired during school are not sufficient but must be developed and embraced as a lifelong learning endeavour in this digital transformative era for a competitive workforce. The study recommends a skill development initiative to trigger a renewed confidence to applying developed skills to solving real life situations for the workforce.

Keywords: Digital, Graduates, Skills development, Sustainable entrepreneurship, Technology

Introduction

The country's business climate has improved to some extent, despite this fact, development issues still exist in Nigeria making it difficult for some businesses to survive. There is something lacking in the preparation for work after school that has hindered the translation of knowledge gathered from schooling into effective workforce performance. Increasingly, new graduates have discovered that the knowledge and ability acquired in school are not enough (Klemp, 1977; Okolie & Udom, 2019) to adapt and manoeuvre the uncertainties in the business environment. These are issues that needs to be addressed hence embracing technological literacy especially as a way of lifelong learning to enhance the role of digital skills development of workforce to sustain entrepreneurship among graduates in Nigeria is a major facet of this study. The study addresses issues and examines the influence of technological literacy in digital skills development among graduates in Nigeria for sustainable entrepreneurship.

The government in different developing countries seeks for massive entrepreneurship and innovation and sustainable environment thus providing uninterrupted services to increase the proportion of the universities' graduate's employment and entrepreneurship as seen in the developed nations like China. Several developing nations have now identified the need for digital skills and the continued efforts in skills development by

Nigerian youths and workforce to sustainable entrepreneurial and this has gained recognition in recent times as there is a high increase in the demand for highly skilled workforce and knowledge for entrepreneurial growth and economic development (Liu, Lin, Zhao & Zhao, 2019; Olokundun *et al.*, 2022) despite these, entrepreneurial development and sustainability among youths in Nigeria has been limited.

It has been affirmed by Kuratko (2014) that the skills required to become entrepreneurs can be acquired through developing human capital. Human capital helps in planning for future uncertainties across different sectors (Boateng *et al.*, 2023). Investment in the workforce will create room for adaptability for uncertainties that is associated with businesses (Suri, 2021). Falola, Osibanjo and Ojo, (2014) agrees that skills and training development activities are strategies for the improvement of employee's performance. Ibidunni, (2022) urges that skills training can be effective for graduates during their Youth Corps Service year for employability.

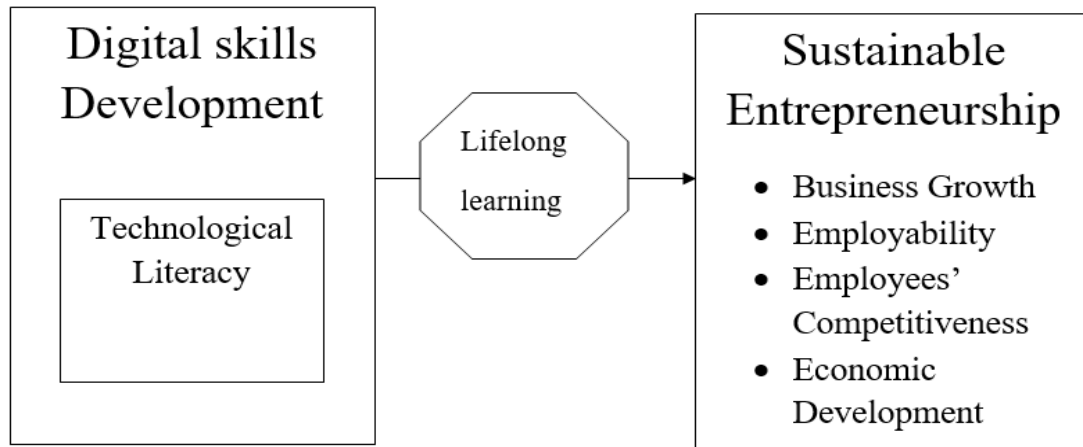
Given the account of unemployment level in the world today in which Nigeria is not exempted, there is need for skills development in digital. Most prospective graduate entrepreneurs are unable to scale through while setting up businesses due to lack of requisite digital knowledge and skills development. Current and prospective entrepreneurs rigorously seek and continue to seek for requisite technological literacy skills to excel in businesses and workplace in the most positive way (Ayegba & Omale, 2016; George & Emmanouil, 2023). This imbalance is harmful to individuals, industry, society and ultimately entrepreneurial development and sustainability in Nigeria. In terms of skill development, technological skills literacy is potentially growing at 10% while workforce skills acquisition and development has declined by nearly 70% (Osatis & Asavanirandom, 2022). The implication is that the level of technological literacy and adoption is still low for a sustainable entrepreneurship. According to Ufua *et al.*, (2021) digital transformation is thus necessary because it will help in achieving even the SDGs 4. There is also a stringent ongoing assumption that graduates cannot perform beyond the level of skills and knowledge acquired from school and the development of entrepreneurial has not been a constant process as many businesses' failures have been recorded due to low technological literacy. Even employees have reported low satisfaction to skills development initiatives (Muchiri, 2020).

Literature Review

Digital skills refer to the ability to use devices to find and use information safely. Such skills as technological literacy, digital marketing, understating basic browsing, hardware and software, data coding, etc. Digital skills development is the empowerment of workforce to adapt to shifting roles, embrace emerging technologies, and drive innovation. It was agreed that digital skills development is required for business uncertainties (George & Emmanouil, 2023). Technological literacy is a vital component of digital skills development and it refers to the ability to use, comprehend, and analyse technology safely, effectively, and responsibly. This literacy includes using technology to evaluate, create and integrate information. The International Technology Education Association (2003) stresses the importance of technological skills or literacy and refers to technological literacy as a component that aids the development of technological

knowledge, ways of thinking and acting, and capabilities to increase workforce participation.

Figure 1: *A Schematic Model of Digital Skills Development and Sustainable Entrepreneurship*



Source: Authors, (2024)

Methodology

The study reviewed literatures systematically using PRISMA, (2020) to analyse the various relevant and related articles with the key search words such as digital, technology, skills, skills development, and graduates from Google Scholar for a clear understanding of digital skills development and sustainable entrepreneurship. The selected seventeen eligible journals from the pool of thirty-three identified journals were based on abstract relevance and suitability and most recent journals. The exclusion procedure first excluded a set of eleven journals that are not eligible and later removed five irrelevant articles whose abstracts were not related.

Results

The literature review aimed to examine the key issues associated with from different authors, and outcome of the study reveals that skills acquired during school are not sufficient but must be developed and embraced as a lifelong learning endeavour in this digital transformative era for a competitive workforce.

Area of Research	Authors	Problems identified or addressed
Technology Literacy	Ayegba & Omale, 2016	Excelling in business through technological literacy
Human Capital	Falola <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Kurako, 2014	Training improves skills
Skills in Technology	Klemp, 1977; Ogbari <i>et al.</i> , 2018	Imbalance between school and work Knowledge
Digital Skills	Ufua <i>et al.</i> , 2021	Digital skills transformation
Skills development	Suri, 2021	Missing link is low investment in digital skills
Technological Skills	Olokundun, 2022; Osatis & Asavanwadam, 2022	Skills related to innovation
Modern Technology	Patiko <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Continuous skills development for competitiveness
Source: Author's compilation, (2024)		

Findings reveals the vital role skills development in digital plays in promoting business growth, by several studies thus, making graduates employable and competitive. Subsequently mere awareness is not adequate as graduates should be able to apply the skills in practical form in solving real time problems. Training institutions must be able to produce people who can leverage modern technology as this is the missing link; and the submission by Patiko *et al.*, (2023) agrees with this finding that producing a globally competitive workforce requires the development of skills in digital or technology. The reviews and analysis of relevant literatures shows that the modern workforce needs to acquire new digital skills to be in line with the new advancement in technological process, A well-balanced system is such that will embrace the improvement of skills for graduates for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The low level in leveraging on technological knowledge is a limitation to graduates to perform competitively in their respective vocations. This is in support of the findings of (Stiakakis & Barboutidis, 2022) that the development of skills in digital was an hindrance to entrepreneurship advancement and the rapid need to leverage on technology remains vital. Therefore, technological literacy is an increasingly recognised and vital skill set in the 21st century. Besides, as technology continues to play a crucial role in nearly every aspect of modern life, graduates who are technologically literate are better positioned to thrive in a rapidly changing digital world, adapt to new challenges and opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to their societies, workplaces, and nation. The study recommends a skill development initiative to trigger a renewed confidence to applying developed skills to solving real time business situations.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY: A MODERATED MEDIATION ANALYSIS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CRISIS SEVERITY

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Abstract

Crisis represents an inherent and unforeseeable threat of significant magnitude, detrimentally affecting the organization and its stakeholders. Given the pivotal role of leaders in ensuring organizational viability, it becomes imperative to evaluate the effectiveness of transformational leadership in steering turbulent circumstances, particularly during crises, and its consequent influence on operational continuity. This research delves into the association between transformational leadership and business continuity through crisis management. Additionally, it examines how the severity of a crisis moderates both the mediating and the direct relationships. The study employed a cross-sectional approach to collect data from 273 owners of small and medium-sized enterprises in Accra, Ghana. Participants completed questionnaires designed to evaluate variables related to transformational leadership, business continuity, crisis management, and crisis severity. Data analysis was conducted utilizing the PROCESS Model. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity. Crisis management partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity. However, while crisis severity did not directly influence the link between transformational leadership and crisis management, it moderated the association between transformational leadership and business continuity via crisis management. This study offers valuable insights into the mechanisms through which transformational leadership shapes business continuity, underscoring the importance of adept crisis management strategies and the influence of crisis severity.

Introduction

Amidst the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, small-scale industries faced unprecedented range of obstacles (Purnomo et al., 2021), from financial strains to operational disruptions and the exacerbated vulnerabilities within these enterprises (Alhassan, 2022). Consequently, these small-scale industries find themselves particularly susceptible to various crises (Sawalha, 2020) which may impact on their continuity. It is therefore crucial to examine the factors driving business continuity.

Prior research has indicated the significance of transformational leadership in organizational effectiveness and resilience, highlighting its positive impact on employee motivation, innovation, and adaptability (Awang Ali et al., 2023; Galaitsi et al., 2023). Despite its importance, research on business continuity, especially in regions like Ghana, remains limited (Sawalha, 2020). Additionally, studies have emphasized the critical role

of business continuity planning in mitigating the adverse effects of crises and other disruptions (Fenera & Cevikb, 2015; Trkman et al., 2021). Furthermore, existing literature suggests that crisis management strategies and the severity of crises and the strategies to manage these crises play crucial roles in ensuring business continuity (Sawalha, 2020; Zhou & Ki, 2018). However, there is a dearth of empirical research that focuses on the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity, especially considering the mediating and moderating factors that may influence this relationship. Based on the existing literature, the researchers formulated a testing framework, illustrated in Figure 1.

To address this gap, this study aims to elucidate the impact of transformational leadership on business continuity and explore the intervening roles of crisis management and severity using the contingency theory. By doing so, it seeks to enhance our understanding of how organizations can manage and ensure their continuous existence amidst crises. According to the theory, there is no one-size-fits-all behaviour for all situations (Harney, 2016). Thus, we argue that with the four different characteristics of the transformational leader, the situation will determine which of these characteristics will be exhibited the most.

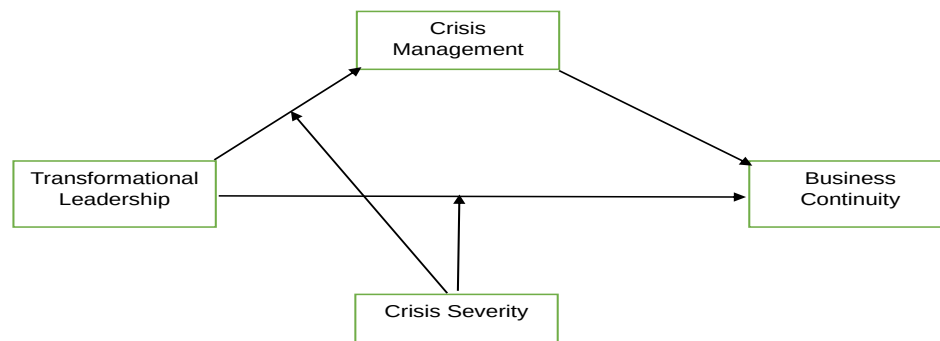


Figure 1: Hypothesized framework

Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional survey approach to gather data from small and medium-scale industry owners registered with the National Board for Small-Scale Industries (NBSSI) in Accra, Ghana. This method was chosen for its capacity to collect diverse numerical data from a wide range of small-scale owners within a specific timeframe (ref). A total of 382 samples were targeted for the study using the Raosoft online calculator, A total of 273 responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 71.5%. Demographic analysis revealed that 54.2% of respondents were female, with 56% holding a first degree. The average age of participants was 35.9 years. Data analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro, employing the bootstrap method with 5000 replications.

Findings/results

Hypothesis 1 proposed that transformational leadership would have a positive and significant impact on business continuity, while Hypothesis 2 suggested that crisis management would act as a significant mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity. Hypothesis 3 further indicated that

crisis severity would significantly moderate the connection between transformational leadership and business continuity. Hypothesis 4 posited that crisis severity would significantly moderate the relationship between transformational leadership and crisis management, and Hypothesis 5 similarly postulated that crisis severity would significantly moderate the relationship between transformational leadership and crisis management. All hypotheses were analyzed using the PROCESS macro.

Table 1: Relationship between transformational leadership, crisis severity, business continuity, and business management

IV	DV	Coeff	Se	t	P	95%LL CI	95%UL CI
TL	BC	0.03	0.03	2.39	0.02	0.33	0.11
TL → CM → BC	BC	0.05	0.03	3.22	0.00	0.01	0.09
TL X CS	BC	-0.01	0.00	5.35	0.00	-0.02	0.01
TL X CS	BM	0.01	0.01	.75	0.46	0.02	0.01

NB: TL, transformational leadership; CS, crisis severity; BC, business continuity; CM, crisis management

The process model outlined in Table 1 illustrates a significantly positive influence of transformational leadership on business continuity ($t = 2.39$, $p < 0.01$). To bolster this observation, the bootstrap method was utilized with 5000 replications. The results of the bootstrap analysis indicate that the confidence interval does not include zero, with LLCI = 0.33 and ULCI = 0.11. Therefore, this statistical analysis provides support for H1.

Furthermore, an indirect relationship was found between transformational leadership and business continuity through crisis management ($t = 2.36$, $p < 0.05$). Employing the bootstrap method with 5000 replications confirmed the mediating role of crisis management in the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity (LLCI = 0.01, ULCI = 0.09). These findings support H2.

The interaction between transformational leadership and crisis severity on business continuity was found to be significant ($t = -5.35$, $p < 0.01$). The bootstrap method also revealed a significant interaction effect of transformational leadership and crisis severity on business continuity (LLCI = 0.02, ULCI = 0.01). These results also confirm H3.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal that crisis severity did not act as a moderator in the relationship between transformational leadership and crisis management ($t = -0.75$, $p < 0.01$). The bootstrap results, encompassing zero (LLCI = -0.02, ULCI = 0.01), further support this conclusion. These results do not support H5.

Table 2. Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator

Group Statistics	Effect	SE	95% CI	
			Low	High
Low severity (SD): 1	-5.03	0.07	0.02	0.13
M: 0	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.09

High severity (SD): 1	5.03	0.05	0.01	0.09
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Analyzing the results presented in Table 2, it is evident that the moderating effect of crisis severity on the relationship between ethical leadership and business continuity via crisis management is significant. This assertion is supported by the bootstrap method, which produced confidence intervals excluding zero (LLCI = 0.02, ULCI = 0.09). This effect remains consistently non-zero across both lower (LLCI = 0.02, ULCI = 0.13) and higher levels of the moderator (LLCI = 0.01, ULCI = 0.09). These findings are in line with the fifth hypothesis.

Conclusion

The results indicated that transformational leadership positively predicts business continuity and also crisis management partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity. This means organizations should prioritize the development of transformational leadership qualities among their leaders. Given that crisis management mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity, organizations should ensure the seamless integration of crisis management practices into their overall strategy.

The is moderation of crisis severity on the relationship between transformational leadership and business continuity via crisis management, which is not directly affecting the relationship between transformational leadership and crisis management itself, but can be attributed to the intricate dynamics of organizational response to crises. Crisis severity often dictates the urgency and intensity of organizational responses, with transformational leadership guiding the overall crisis response strategy. However, the effectiveness of crisis management practices in addressing crisis challenges and ensuring business continuity depends on various factors beyond leadership style, including crisis severity, available resources, and organizational preparedness.

The research reinforces Contingency theory by demonstrating that different situations in the organizational mechanisms play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of leadership behaviour that is most appropriate in crisis. Specifically, this study emphasizes the significance of crisis management and highlights the necessity of embracing a contingency-oriented leadership approach. Such an approach acknowledges the dynamic interaction between leadership behaviors and situational variables, recognizing that effective leadership strategies must be adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs and challenges faced by organizations.

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VALUE RELEVANCE OF FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT OF BANKS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: CONTEMPORANEOUS, INCREMENTAL AND SYNERGETIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper examined the value relevance of fair value measurement of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. This research was motivated by the growing controversy about fair value measurement (FVM) in which many have questioned the ability of FVM to produce value-relevant financial information for decision makers in developing economies where capital markets are inefficient. Secondary data from eight African Countries: Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Mauritius, Egypt, Botswana, and Namibia was obtained from Osiris Database covering the period 2010 to 2021 for analysis. Using the Ohlson's model (1995) and the Horizontal incremental value relevance approach (HIV), this paper performed contemporaneous, incremental and synergetic analyses to determine the unique value relevance of FVM. Results from the contemporaneous analysis showed that FVM in Sub-Saharan Africa is generally value relevant both at the income statement level (i.e. FVNI) and the balance sheet level (i.e. FVOCI). It was also established that FVM through net income and OCI have incremental value relevance but no positive synergetic value relevance effect was observed. The implication is that FVM is still useful and value relevant in developing economies and its application should be encouraged and strengthened.

Key words: Fair value measurement, value relevance, incremental effect, synergetic effect

Introduction

Ensuring financial reporting quality remains a topical issue in accounting research globally (Nguyen, 2016; Paz & Tomacruz, 2017; Watts & Chaturvedi, 2018). Studies have established that the most extensive accounting quality research with mixed and inconclusive results relates to accounting harmonization - IFRS adoption and its related issues (Isidro & Raonic, 2012; Legenzova, 2016). One emerging trend from the accounting harmonization research is the shift from Historical Cost Accounting (HCA) to the Fair Value Measurement (FVM) perspective with the belief that FVM is more value-relevant and enhances financial reporting quality than HCA. However, FVM works better where capital markets are active and function effectively. Although the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), industry experts and some scholars have justified the value relevance of the fair value measurement (FVM) approach, many still question the appropriateness of this approach in developing economies with weak financial markets (Hodder, Hopkins & Schipper, 2014; Queku, 2015, 2017b).

While some prior empirical studies found that FVM in emerging economies without efficient asset markets produced value-relevant financial information (Al-Barrak, 2011; Oraby, 2017; Queku, 2020), other studies found that financial statements produced in developing economies without inputs from active markets are not value relevant (Daas & Jammal, 2018; Glavan, 2010; Palea, 2013; Xu, 2013;). One possible reason for the mixed results relates to most studies relying on partial fair value based analysis (standard specific) rather than full fair value based analysis (Aladwan, 2018; Bhatia & Mulenga, 2019; Queku, 2020; Umoren & Enang, 2015). The challenge with other studies is that they relied on the whole accounting data presented to conduct contemporaneous or comparative analysis instead of extracting the specific fair value measurement component (El-Bannany, 2018; Erin, Olojede & Ogundele, 2017). In view of this, collectively testing the value relevance of these data only gives value relevance of IFRS compliance but not necessarily value relevance of fair value measurement.

It is, therefore, useful not only for theory but also policy and practice to delink actual fair value measures from the general accounting data (i.e., non-fair value estimates) and investigate its value relevance within the framework of a useful benchmark. This would provide evidence of the true value relevance of fair value measure rather than the composite accounting data clouded with noise from non-fair value data. This study adopted an analytical procedure that delinks fair value from the rest of the accounting data and subsequently evaluated its value relevance through a contemporaneous, incremental and synergetic estimation approach. The results showed that FVM is value-relevant in developing economies.

Methodology

In line with prior research, this study adopts the Ohlson (1995) model to examine the value relevance of fair value measurement of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the opinion of Ahmad and Aladwan (2015), almost all the accounting literature on value relevance refer to the Ohlson (1995) model. The wider application of the model makes it suitable for this study in order to facilitate empirical comparison of findings.

The Ohlson (1995) model is theoretically expressed as follows:

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 EPS_{it} + \beta_2 BV_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where:

MPS = Market price per share of bank i at time t

EPS = Earnings per share of bank i at time t

BV = Book value per share of bank i at time t

α = constant or intercept of the model

β_1 and β_2 = coefficients of the independent variables and

ε = the error term

It is expected that EPS and BV will have a positive effect on MPS and both β_1 and $\beta_2 > 0$

To empirically apply the theoretical model of equation (1), the operational variables of interest are substituted to analyse the first research question as follows:

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \beta_2 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

Where:

MPS = Market price per share of bank i at time t

FVNI = Fair value through Net Income of bank i at time t

FVOCI = Fair value through Other Comprehensive Income of bank i at time t

α = constant or intercept of the model

β_1 and β_2 = coefficients of the independent variables and

ε = the error term

Regarding the second and third research questions which seek to measure the incremental value relevance effect of fair value measurement (FVNI and FVOCI), the study adopted the Horizontal Incremental Value Relevance (HIV) model by Queku (2020). The testing framework follows the following steps:

- iv. Univariate value relevance models are developed to estimate the coefficient of determination (R^2) of both fair value recognized through net income (FVNI) and other comprehensive income (FVOCI) as follows:

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2a)$$

$$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2b)$$

- v. The incremental value relevance of FVNI (eqn.2a) is derived as the difference between the R^2 of equation (2) and the R^2 of equation (2b).
- vi. The incremental value relevance of FVOCI (eqn.2b) is derived as the difference between the R^2 of equation (2) and the R^2 of equation (2a).

The third research question seeks to examine whether or not there is any synergetic effect of FVM on the value relevance of banks. This is estimated as an incremental value common to both FVNI and FVOCI. It is measured as the difference between the R^2 of equation (2) and the R^2 of equation (2a) plus the R^2 of equation (2b).

Findings

Table 1 shows the results of the contemporaneous, incremental and synergetic value relevance dynamics of fair value measurement.

Table 1: Value Relevance of Fair Value Measurement (2010 – 2021)

Model Estimation	Adj. R^2	Objective
$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \beta_2 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$ (2)	0.4493	Objective 1
$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVNI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$ (2a)	0.3981	
$MPS_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 FVOCI_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$ (2b)	0.4068	
Incremental Value Relevance of FVNI	0.0425	Objective 2a
Incremental Value Relevance of FVOCI	0.0512	Objective 2b
Synergetic Incremental Value Relevance	-0.3556	Objective 3

Source: Generated from Audited Financial Statements of Banks, 2023

The results show that fair value through net income (FVNI) and fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) combined has an Adjusted R^2 of 44.93%. This means that both FVNI and FVOCI have significant predictive value in explaining changes in the market price of shares of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. The implication of this finding is that fair value measurement in the banking sector is value relevant both at the income statement level and the balance sheet level in Sub-Saharan Africa. The results also indicate that the incremental value relevance effect of FVNI is 4.25% while the incremental value relevance effect of FVOCI is 5.12%. This means that fair value through

OCI provides additional useful information to users of financial statements than fair value through net income. The results further showed negative synergetic value relevance as the combined Adjusted R^2 of FVNI and FVOCI = 44.93% while the sum of their individual Adjusted R^2 = 80.49%, giving a negative synergetic effect of 35.56% (-0.3556). This means that combining FVNI and FVOCI does not have any positive impact on the value relevance of financial statements as compared to their separate presentations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It has been established that both FVNI and FVOCI are contemporaneously and incrementally value relevant but do not exhibit any synergetic value relevance. It can therefore be concluded that fair value measurement is value relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore recommended that the various professional bodies in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, etc) should train more professionals to be equipped with valuation skills for the banking sector to handle fair valuation of financial instruments.

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THE DISTINCT AND JOINT EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SIZE, LEVERAGE, AND LIQUIDITY ON SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE DISCLOSURES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract

Purpose: Extensive studies have focused on the correlation between firms' financial characteristics and corporate environmental and social responsibility (CESR). Limitations of literature include using samples limited to specific locations, inappropriate control variables, and reliance on self-developed measures of CESR disclosure that may not accurately reflect a company's actual CESR performance.

Methodology: Using interpretive content analysis and a non-parametric approach, this study investigates the correlation between financial performance and corporate ESR reporting, as indicated by the variance in voluntary disclosure methods and in reporting countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. The predicted effects are curvilinear because ESR disclosures' additional costs and benefits vary with firm size, leverage and liquidity.

Findings: The findings show a strong relationship between size and CESR performance, and the strength of the link is contingent on the level of leverage but not on liquidity. Also, leverage associates with CESR, however liquidity shows no relationship with CESR, contrary to what was predicted. The article argues that the effects of size, leverage and liquidity should be analysed independently instead of restricting the analysis to the impact of signalling.

Originality/Value: This study broadens the range of prior research by incorporating novel independent and dependent factors. Studying the factors that influence CSR disclosure helps enhance the application of disclosure requirements.

Introduction

The literature review of the correlation between firms' size, leverage, liquidity and CSR performance has yielded inconclusive findings. Literature dating back decades shows no significant relationship between financial performance characteristics with CSR disclosures (Monteiro & Aibar-Guzmán, 2010; Mahadeo et al., 2011; Widiastuty & Soewarno, 2019). On the contrary, companies with superior financial performance tend to produce more sustainability disclosures (Gillan et al., 2021; Ho & Taylor, 2007; Rodriguez-Fernandez, 2016), yet it is more effective in larger companies (D'Amato & Felivena, 2019). Leverage value associates negatively with CSR information disclosure (Ramadhani & Agustina, 2019; Richardson et al. 1999; Roberts 1992; Trotman and Bradley 1981). However, a positive relationship was observed between leverage and environmental and social disclosures (Fahad & Nidheesh 2020). Subramaniam et al. (2016), found a positive correlation between the extent of CSR disclosure and liquidity.

Buttressing the positive relationship, Cheung (2016), showed a direct relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the amount of cash that companies possess. Bertrand et al. (2014) found a strong and statistically significant correlation between a company's CCSR performance and liquidity in Europe, likewise, Gantowati and Agustine (2017) found that organisations with ample liquidity are more likely to engage in a greater extent of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in Indonesia. On the opposing, in their study, Chang et al. (2018) discovered a detrimental correlation between stock liquidity and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Hapsoro and Sulistyarini (2019) found no significant correlation between liquidity and CSR disclosure, as entities that possess a considerable amount of liquid assets prioritise the repayment of their short-term debts over seeking social approval. There was no significant correlation between liquidity and CSR activity in Malaysian enterprises (Gantowati and Agustine, 2017) in Brazilian firms (Santis et al., 2016) in the Middle East listed entities (Hussainey et al., 2011) In all these aforementioned discussions, past research typically assumes linear associations (D'Amato & Felivena, 2019; Gillan et al., 2021; Ho & Taylor, 2007; Rodriguez-Fernandez, 2016) between CSR performance and corporate characteristics, leading to inconclusive findings (Uyar et al., 2023).

However, recent research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability, including sustainability reporting, indicates that these interactions may be more intricate and non-linear (Schreck and Raithel, 2018; Udayasankar, 2008). Most studies have examined either CCSR performance or business characteristics (such as size, leverage, and liquidity) as the key factors influencing sustainability reporting. The unique characteristics of firm size, leverage, liquidity, and their interactions are not only conceptually diverse but may also have specific impacts on a company's CCSR performance (Gallo and Christensen, 2011) and reporting. On these arguments, this study comprehensively examines the effects of size, leverage, liquidity and their collaboration on sustainability reporting.

Methodology

This study sampled across Sub-Saharan Africa giving recognition to regional balance. Data was drawn from ten stock markets. Crossectional data- 2019yr common in CSR (Talbot and Barbat, 2019; Saber and Weber, 2019; Hassan et al., 2020) (Beck et al., 2018; Tilt et al., 2021). The study deployed interpretive content analysis, a GRI-derived checklist and a composite scoring index of Clarkson et al., 2008 and Ong et al., 2016 to draw sustainability data. Kendall's tau-b (tb) coefficient and the corresponding P-value are the main non-parametric statistics used to assess the linear relationship. The static is calculated as below:

$$tb = \frac{(P - Q)}{\sqrt{((P + Q + Xo)(P + Q + Yo))}}$$

The non-linear relationship was based on R-software in-built nonlinear correlation (nlcor) that prides in several non-linear models. Depending on the raw data captured in the software the most appropriate model is accessed to assess the relationship. The adjusted P-value assesses the non-linear relationship. If the adjusted p-value is statistically significant there is a non-linear relationship.

Results

Table 1: Firm characteristics and level of statistical significance with sustainability reporting

Firm Characteristic	Size	Liquidity	Leverage	Size/Liquidity	Size/Leverage
P-values	4.827e-09	0.4899	0.0018	0.2367	0.000366
Adjusted P-values	0.00	0.6996	0.9690	-----	-----
Implications	Concave relationship	No relationship	Linear relationship	No relationship	There is a relationship

Table 1 above shows that there is a non-linear relationship between firm size and sustainability reporting, there is no significant relationship between liquidity and sustainability disclosures. In the case of leverage, there is a positive linear relationship. Size interacts with leverage to significantly impact sustainability reporting, however, the interaction between size and liquidity does not affect sustainability disclosures.

Conclusion

Per the findings, firms may get more engaged in sustainability as their size grows due to the relative cost advantage (hoping for access to extra resources). However, very large and highly resource-endowed corporations have less incentive to further strengthen their sustainability reporting (Schreck & Raithel, 2018). Leverage has a significant positive relationship with CSR reporting. Highly leveraged firms provide more CSR information as a preemptive measure to maintain a realistic evaluation of their financial risk (Fahad & Ndheesh, 2020) and to overcome pressure (Cho & Patten, 2007) due to high earnings management practices (Dang et al., 2018). However, closeness to cash plays no key role in sustainability disclosures as CSR reporting is insensitive to liquidity echoed in prior findings (Gantowati and Agustine, 2017; Hapsoro and Sulistyarini, 2019; Hussainey et al., 2011; Santis et al., 2016). The interaction between size and leverage that is associated with CSR reporting is because large firms are highly leveraged (Kurshev and Strebulaev, 2015) and so they attract substantial external pressure from investors to make more CSR disclosures (Fahad & Ndheesh, 2020). The analysis suggests that business size and leverage are linked to sustainability reporting. However, the authors recommend more replications to confirm these findings. Further research could examine additional parameters related to sustainability reporting. Additional interaction effects may suggest a literature gap in understanding moderation and mediation processes for sustainability activities and reporting.

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COMPARATIVE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES DISCLOSURES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVE INDUSTRIAL AND NON-ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVE SECTORS: EVIDENCE FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper sheds light on the claim that the environmentally sensitive industry (ESI) reports more sustainability initiatives than other industries by examining how ESI broken down into its significant subsectors, performs compared to the banking sector from the less environmentally sensitive industry in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Using content analysis vis-a-vis non-parametric techniques, 175 firms categorised into banking, mining, energy and manufacturing firms in ten stock markets in Sub-Sahara Africa were sampled and studied using the homogeneity of variance around the mean and post-hoc tests to detect a significant difference.

Findings: The study shows that the banking sector outperforms the sustainability disclosures of energy and manufacturing sectors. However, the banking and the mining sub-industry exhibit no significant differences in disclosures. Further analysis shows that mining sector reporting performance may account for the exceptional performance of the ESI when sustainability disclosures are compared at the industry levels.

Practical implications: The findings are consistent with the importance of considering the difference in sustainability behaviours when examining the consequences of sustainability practices in the banking, mining, energy, and manufacturing sectors.

Originality/value: This paper departs from previous reports on sustainability disclosures by comparing sub-industries from the ESI and non-ESI.

Keywords: sectors; environmentally sensitive industry (ESI); sustainability; corporate social responsibility (CSR); initiatives

Introduction

Prior studies suggest variations in CSR performance and reporting practices exist based on a company's industrial sector (Fifka *et al.*, 2018; Gul *et al.*, 2020). These findings are considered by investors when assessing a company's level of commitment to CSR (Lock and Seele, 2015). In that regard, Wright *et al.* (2005) and Aguilera *et al.* (2007) argue for a greater emphasis on the relationship between sector-level characteristics and CSR practices. Otherwise, findings provide generic sustainability disclosures that are not valid

for comparison (Frost, 2007) and investment decision-making (Stuart *et al.*, 2021) when selecting a sector to invest in.

Across industries, firms in ESI are deemed to practice and report the most on sustainability initiatives (Aggarwal and Singh, 2018; Cho *et al.*, 2015; Garcia *et al.*, 2017; Villiers and Marques, 2016). However, they neglected to consider the heterogeneity of the sectors included in the ESI. ESI is a multifaceted industry (Kumar *et al.*, 2021; Radhouane *et al.*, 2020) with many sectors (Blasi *et al.*, 2018; Feng *et al.*, 2017) that extensively impact the physical environment. These include the primary sectors such as mineral and exploration, oil and gas, and the secondary sector called manufacturing (agriculture, chemical, pharmaceutical, material, construction), thus, processing firms. Variations in the activities of these three key groups clustered as a single group at the industry level in those previous studies reduce the capacity to compare their sustainability disclosures across different sectors. When literature emanates from disparate sectors with a shared focus on a particular topic (such as sustainability reporting), they are prone to conceptualize it in distinct ways (Buallay, 2020). Whereas some sectors see social and environmental issues as a company's voluntary practices, hence optional (Krukowska, 2014), others disclose CSR information with the "intent" to create a CSR performance impression (Clarkson *et al.*, 2008, 2011). However other groups, see the "necessity" to be environmentally and socially responsible (Wang *et al.*, 2018) and hence report their commendable practices. Prior studies make it difficult for stakeholders to ascertain the relative CSR performances of specific groups of organisations due to various circumstances, including the absence of compulsory sustainability disclosure reports (Mahoney *et al.*, 2013). This paper separates the major key players in ESI into mining, energy, and manufacturing sectors (Cho and Patten, 2007), which have diverse CSR-driven characteristics emanating from structural variations (Kuhn *et al.*, 2018), environmental sensitivity differences and dissimilar proactivity (González-Ramos *et al.*, 2018) propagated by subsector regulation as an underlying institutional factor (Tilt *et al.*, 2021) that visibly affect CSR practices (González-Ramos *et al.*, 2018; Kuhn *et al.*, 2018; Maroun, 2017; Rudynato and Siregar, 2018). For this reason, groups in ESI should respond differently to sustainability initiatives. This study compares the CSR performance of these key players with that of a subsector from the less environmentally sensitive financial industry.

As a service industry, the financial industry is less environmentally sensitive, making stakeholders pay less attention to the environmental impact of the firm economic activities (Dell'Atti *et al.*, 2017; Feng *et al.*, 2017) and their CSR performance (Connelly *et al.*, 2011b), yet banks as subsector in the financial industry is ranked higher on the international CSR investment index (Pérez and Del Bosque, 2013).

A conspicuous absence of cross-sector study remains, particularly about CSR matters (Buallay, 2020). At cross-sector levels, except limited studies (Buallay, 2020; Kuzey *et al.*, 2021), past research on CSR disclosure has typically not included in their samples the banking sector from the financial industry (da Silva Monteiro and Aibar-Guzma ´n, 2010; Matuszak and Róžańska, 2020; Siregar and Bachtiar, 2010). Among these limited studies, there has not been research that has compared the CSR performance of banks

with all the critical sectors from the established CSR-performing groups (Aggarwal and Singh, 2018; Cho *et al.*, 2015; Garcia *et al.*, 2017; Villiers and Marques, 2016) such as mining, energy and manufacturing more so from the signalling cum socio-political theories perspective. This paper advances the signalling cum socio-political theories to assess whether sectors in the ESI are better reporters of CSR than the banking sector and how these sectors' sustainability practices align with the dimensions of intent, camouflage, and necessity signal.

Methodology

This study sampled across Sub-Saharan Africa. Data was drawn from ten stock markets using content analysis, GRI-derived checklist and a composite scoring index of Clarkson *et al.*, 2008 and Ong *et al.*, 2016. The study deployed the Fligner-Killen Model (statistics) using the formula

$$FK = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k n_j (\bar{a}_j - \bar{a})^2}{s^2}$$

and Games Howell a post-hoc model represented

by the expression

$Q = (Y.A. - Y.B.) / S$ to detect significant difference between any two independent sectors.

Results

The study compares the reporting performances of the banking, energy, manufacturing and the mining sectors on structural credence (Str_cred), supportable performance indicators (Sup_ind) and total disclosures (Aggre_dis). The results are shown for each pair of sectors in tables I, II, III and IV below.

Table I: banking and energy sustainability performance

Basis of comparison	Group 1	Group 2	Mean Difference	P-values	Significance level
Str_cred	Banking	Energy	21.7	0.017	5%
Sup_ind	Banking	Energy	9.31	0.012	5%
Aggre_dis	Banking	Energy	13.8	0.029	5%

Table shows the banking sector CSR reporting performance is significantly better than the energy sector in all the three sustainability practices.

Table II: banking and manufacturing sustainability performance

Basis of comparison	Group 1	Group 2	Mean Difference	P-values	Significance level
Str_cred	Banking	Manufacturing	16.3	0.06	10%
Sup_ind	Banking	Manufacturing	7.24	0.036	5%

From table 11 above performs better than manufacturing sector.

Table III: banking and mining sustainability performance

Basis of comparison	Group 1	Group 2	Mean Difference	P-values	Significance level
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Str_cred	Banking	Mining	-3.46	0.97	No significance
Sup_ind	Banking	Mining	-1.42	0.98	No significance
Aggre_dis	Banking	Mining	-5.28	0.753	No significance

Table III indicates that there are no significant difference in the sustainability reporting levels of mining and banking.

Table IV: Mining, energy and manufacturing sustainability performance

Basis of comparison	Group 1	Group 2	Mean Difference	P-values	Significance level
Str_cred	Mining	Energy	17.4	0.001	1%
Sup_ind	Mining	Manufacturing	12.4	0.013	5%
Aggre_dis	Manufacturing	Energy	4.93	0.393	No significance

The table IV shows that the mining group is better than energy and manufacturing at 1% and 5% an indication that the exceptional CSR disclosure of the ESI could possibly as a result of mining firm unique performance more so as manufacturing and energy firms show no differences in their level of reporting.

Conclusions

As a public trust, the banking sub-industry engages in higher tangible CSR practices and reporting to signal its commitment to social and environmental responsibilities (Matuszak et al., 2019), as Spence (1973) proposed. Mining firms extract finite/non-renewable resources (Cowell et al., 1999) to deprive future generations of their needs (Gorman & Dzombak, 2018) and they, in return, recognise the “necessity” to drive environmental performance (Cormier and Magnan, 2015) as strategy to mitigate the negative impacts of their operations on stakeholders (Ackers & Grobbelaar, 2021). Both banking & mining firms recognise the necessity to be environmentally and socially responsible.

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IMPACT OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: INSIGHTS FROM THE GHANAIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract

This study assesses the impact of virtual meetings on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) within the Ghanaian public sector, utilizing a quantitative research methodology through a cross-sectional survey. The primary aim was to examine the effects of virtual meetings on voluntary employee behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness but are not formally rewarded. Our analysis, supported by responses from 347 public sector employees, reveals both positive and negative influences of virtual meetings on OCB. The findings suggest that virtual meetings enhance communication efficiency, provide flexibility, and reduce operational costs, which indirectly foster some aspects of OCB such as altruism and civic virtue. However, challenges such as reduced physical engagement, distractions during meetings, and technological issues pose significant barriers to OCB. Factors like effective communication, trust, and a supportive ergonomic environment emerged as critical to enhancing OCB in virtual settings. Our regression analysis indicates that while effective communication and ergonomic setups positively impact OCB, frequent and lengthy meetings, coupled with technical disruptions, diminish it. This mixed impact highlights the need for well-structured virtual meeting practices and supportive organizational policies to nurture and sustain OCB in the digital era. This study contributes to the understanding of virtual work environments in the Ghanaian public sector and provides actionable insights for enhancing organizational practices to support and improve OCB. Future research should explore more deeply the nuanced interactions between virtual work conditions and employee behaviors to refine organizational strategies further.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior; Virtual meeting; Ghanaian Public Sector; Effective Communication; Diminishing Physical Engagement; Ergonomic Work Environment.

Introduction

The rise of virtual meetings has significantly transformed the dynamics of workplace communication globally (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). This paper focuses on the Ghanaian public sector to assess the influence of virtual meetings on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which entails voluntary employee behaviors that are not formally rewarded but crucial for organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Guffey & Loewy, 2020). The primary objective is to understand the impact of digital transformation in workplace communications on such behaviors.

Existing literature reveals a rapid evolution in virtual communication tools, heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating a shift to remote work and virtual interactions (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). Virtual meetings have become essential, particularly within contexts requiring robust governance and effective service delivery, such as the public sector in Ghana. Previous studies underscore that while virtual meetings offer advantages like enhanced flexibility and reduced overheads, they also present challenges such as potential declines in team cohesion and employee engagement (Wiederhold, 2020). Organizational Citizenship Behavior, conceptualized by Organ (1988), includes altruism, conscientiousness, and other discretionary behaviors that contribute to the smooth functioning of organizations. The relevance of OCB is particularly pronounced in the public sector, where it can offset bureaucratic inertia and enhance service delivery (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

The study employed a qualitative research methodology involving a cross-sectional survey among 347 public sector employees. Findings indicate that virtual meetings have both positive and negative effects on OCB. These insights are crucial for policy makers and administrators aiming to optimize virtual work environments in the Ghanaian public sector.

Methodology

The qualitative research approach was employed in this study in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impacts of virtual meetings on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) within the Ghanaian public sector. Data collection utilized structured questions delivered electronically, focusing on demographics, meeting frequencies, durations, formats, and their perceived impacts on OCB. The analysis was conducted using a multiple regression model to evaluate how factors such as effective communication, trust, meeting frequency, ergonomic environment, and other variables influence OCB, aiming to reveal the complex interrelations and impact strength of these predictors on employee behavior in virtual settings.

Findings/results

The regression model used to analyze the impact of various predictors on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) reveals an R-squared value of 0.404, indicating that approximately 40.4% of the variability in OCB is explained by the model's predictors, which include effective communication, trust, meeting frequency, promotion scheme, ergonomic environment, physical engagement, distractions, meeting length, and technical issues. However, this also indicates that about 60% of the variability remains unexplained, suggesting the presence of additional factors influencing OCB not captured by the current model. The adjusted R-squared value, slightly lower at 0.386, suggests that while the model accounts for a significant portion of OCB variability, not all predictors are equally informative, and the model may benefit from further refinement to enhance its explanatory power.

The statistical robustness of the model is further evidenced by an F-statistic value of 22.77, indicating a very low probability (Prob (F-statistic) of 1.73e-32) that the model's results are due to chance, thus strongly rejecting the null hypothesis that the predictors

have no effect on OCB. The model's health is supported by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.004, suggesting no autocorrelation among the residuals, and the normality tests (Omnibus and Jarque-Bera) confirm that the residuals are normally distributed. These diagnostics imply that the model is fundamentally sound but also indicate opportunities for improvement by integrating additional variables or reassessing existing predictors to capture a more comprehensive view of the factors affecting OCB. Table 1 provides the overall model evaluation of the regression model:

Table 1. Results of Regression Analysis

Dep. Variable:	OCB	R-squared:	
0.404			
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	
0.386			
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	
22.77			
Date:	Sun, 14 Apr 2024	Prob (F-statistic):	
1.73e-32			
Time:	23:27:06	Log-Likelihood:	-
1051.4			
No. Observations:	347		AIC:
2125.			
Df Residuals:	336		BIC:
2167.			
Df Model:	10		
Covariance Type:	nonrobust		
Omnibus:	0.519	Durbin-Watson:	
2.004			
Prob(Omnibus):	0.772	Jarque-Bera (JB):	
0.412			
Skew:	0.082	Prob(JB):	
0.814			
Kurtosis:	3.039	Cond. No.	1.42

The regression analysis of predictors reveals that effective communication, trust, promotion schemes, capacity building, and ergonomic environments positively influence OCB, with effective communication emerging as the most significant positive factor (regression coefficient +2.9963, p-value <0.001). These enhancements are strongly associated with higher levels of OCB, suggesting that improving these areas could be key strategies for organizations. Conversely, factors such as physical engagement, distractions in virtual meetings, meeting length, meeting frequency, and technical issues presented negative coefficients; however, their impacts were not statistically significant, indicating a complex relationship with OCB that might be influenced by other unaccounted factors. This analysis not only identifies areas for potential organizational improvement but also highlights the need for further investigation into the intricate dynamics affecting OCB in virtual settings. Figure 1 is a scatter plot of effective communication against OCB.

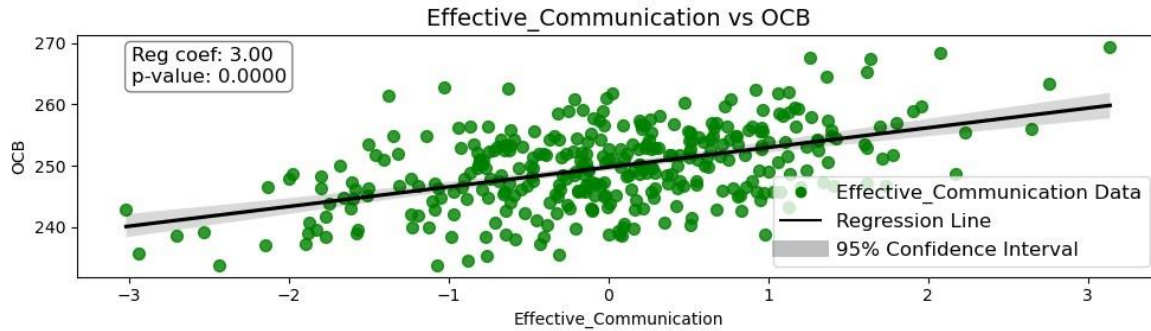


Figure 1. Regression of Effective Communication against OCB

Conclusion and Recommendations

The regression analysis revealed that while the model accounted for approximately 40.4% of the variance in OCB, it indicated a significant relationship between several predictors and OCB, underscoring the influence of aspects not fully captured by the model. Key findings pointed to effective communication as the strongest positive predictor of OCB, highlighting the crucial role of enhanced communication in fostering higher levels of OCB. Other factors such as trust, capacity building, promotion schemes, and ergonomic environments also showed significant positive impacts that enhance organizational citizenship behaviors. However, factors like physical engagement, distractions, meeting length, meeting frequency, and technical issues were found to have minimal or unclear impacts due to their non-significant statistical influence.

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EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNSHIPS ON CAREER CHOICES AMONG PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN GHANA

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Abstract

Internships are generally known to be activities of students where they get into the work field to have an industrial experience of a real working environment. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of internships on career decision-making among students at a public university in Ghana. The study adopted the quantitative approach to determine the relationship between internship and student career decision-making. The study population was all final-year students at the university. Stratified, proportional, and random sampling techniques were used to select 352 students through questionnaire administration. Results showed a positive significant relationship between internship (opportunity gained) and career decision-making. The study recommended that there is a need to enhance career counseling and guidance services for university students in Ghana.

Keywords: Internship, Career decision-making, Information, Opportunities, University, Students.

Background

Internships are generally known to be activities of students where they get into the work field to have an industrial experience of a real working environment. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of internships on career decision-making among students at a public university in Ghana. Enhance students' readiness to their professional careers, including a greater use of experiential learning activities (ELA) to enhance students' soft skills (Cheng, et al., 2023). Internships involve well-coordinated, structured, and career-relevant work experiences that students undertake before the completion of an academic program (Ocampo, et al., 2020). Consider, for example, two graduating students competing for the same job. Both of them obtained the same university qualifications, but one student had participated in an internship program. Who is more likely to secure the job?

Purpose/aim

To find out whether students after experiencing internship, make decisions on their future career.

To determine the relationship between information gained during internship and their career decision making.

To analyse the relationship between opportunities gained during internship and their career decision making.

Literature review

Self-efficacy Theory

Their study concludes that parental authority over their children is highly predictive of their career choices. Career decision-making self-efficacy (Alboliteeh, et al., 2022). This indicates that internal factors are needed to help students adapt to changes in the working world and make career choices. Students who lack the confidence to make decisions (Salim, et al., 2023). Quality of work experience is relevant for the vocational development of students (Gamboa, et al., 2013). The pandemic affected students' intentions to drop out of careers (Duprez, et al., 2021) and cultural differences (Wu, et al., 2023). Internship quality was found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between proactive personality and career adaptability as well as employment success (Pan, et al., 2018).

Methodology

The study adopted the quantitative approach to determine the relationship between internship and student career decision-making. The study population was all final-year students at the university. Stratified, proportional, and random sampling techniques were used to select 411 students through questionnaire administration.

Results

Results of the analysis of correlation between information gained, opportunity gained and decision making (N=411)

	Information_ Gained	Opportunities_ Gained
(r)	.503**	.417**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0

Results showed a positive significant relationship between internship (opportunity gained) and career decision-making.

Conclusions

Internship opens up students to gain information, and opportunities and also to decide their future careers. Internships should not be viewed as merely an academic requirement for obtaining or completing an academic program but an integral part of student learning experience.

Recommendations

The study recommended that there is a need to enhance career counseling and guidance services for university students in Ghana.

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EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ABILITIES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN GHANA

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between entrepreneurial abilities and academic performance among students in a public university in Ghana. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data was collected to analyze students' academic performance alongside their entrepreneurial skills, including creativity and problem-solving. An in-depth interview approach was used to collect data for qualitative analysis while the quantitative cross-sectional survey strategy was adopted to recruit 449 students from levels 200, 300, and 400 at a public university in Ghana. The selection was done using stratified simple random sampling and proportional techniques. Findings reveal that students perform poorly when they engage in entrepreneurship. However, students with high self-efficacy were able to engage in entrepreneurial activities and perform academically well. The study recommended that students should be encouraged to engage in more critical thinking and practical thinking simulation exercises to develop their self-confidence.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, higher education, Students, self-efficacy, academic performance

Background

All over the world, the academic engagement of students from one activity to the other is gradually gaining a lot of traction with some scholars indicating that student engagement is a factor that may influence quality standards in universities (Erdoğan, 2016).

In the face of declining academic performance, one could make excuses that, in most instances, most students are usually confronted with financial burden that sometimes compel them to engage in entrepreneurial activities in their bid to make some monies to survive on campus (Atuahene, 2012). As students tend to engage in entrepreneurial activities, they also tend to trade-off the amount of time they spend on learning, preparing for lectures and doing their assignments to catch up with submission deadlines. This situation may likely lead to a dilemma in such a way that students who do not engage in entrepreneurial activities become overly dependent on their parents, guardians, family members, and loved ones for financial support. In situations where funds are not

forthcoming as it used to be, then these students become restless, disturbed, apprehensive, vulnerable, and sometimes emotionally and psychologically alienated from their studies and this may likely influence their academic performance negatively.

Purpose

This study investigates the relationship between entrepreneurial abilities and academic performance among students in a public university in Ghana.

Literature review

Findings from their study indicated that self-efficacy positively and significantly correlated with student grade points average while correlating negatively and significantly with student absenteeism in class (Ersanli, 2015). Robotham (2009) concluded that there was a negative relationship between students engaging in part-time work and academic performance. Although the study was skewed in favour of the males, the results were silent on their level of education.

Methodology

The study employed quantitative method as the research design. Data was collected to analyze students' academic performance alongside their entrepreneurial skills, including creativity and problem-solving. An in-depth interview approach was used to collect data for qualitative analysis while the quantitative cross-sectional survey strategy was adopted to recruit 449 students from levels 200, 300, and 400 at a public university in Ghana. The selection was done using stratified simple random sampling and proportional techniques.

Results

Regression results from the analyses has been presented below:

Hayes' Process Regression Matrix for the moderating effect of Efficacy on the relationship between Student Entrepreneurial Activities -> Academic Performance

Variable	Coef		t	p	95% Confidence interval	
	f	SE			LLCI	ULCI
Self-Efficacy	0.303	0.043	7.084	0	0.219	0.387
Student Entrepreneurial Activity	0.064	0.027	2.422	0.016	-0.117	-0.012
Student Entrepreneurial Activity* Efficacy	0.195	0.043	5.029	0.004	0.138	0.256

Results suggest that there was a statistically significant effect of efficacy and student entrepreneurial activities on the dependent variable academic performance ($\beta = 0.195$; $SE\beta = 0.043$; 95% CI = [0.138; 0.256]; $p < .05$). This results suggest that when the

students believe in themselves that they are good and in addition they study very well, they can engage in entrepreneurial activities and still perform well academically.

Conclusion

The study concluded that when the students believe in themselves that they are good and in addition they study very well, they can engage in entrepreneurial activities and still perform well academically.

Recommendation

There should be an intentional promotion of entrepreneurial skills development among students to reduce the levels of graduate unemployment in the country. However, this should not be at the detriment of academic work and students' performance.

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EXPLORING STUDENTS' SAFETY AND EMERGENCY AWARENESS IN A GHANAIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SETTING

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Abstract

The research examines safety and emergency resources at a public university in Ghana, focusing on potential risks students may encounter while at the school. The study also highlights the importance of evaluating students' safety and emergency awareness while on campus. The qualitative approach was adopted. Data was gathered using in-depth interviews of study participants. The study used convenience sampling in selecting students, lecturers, and security personnel as participants. It is expected that the findings will equip school management with some baseline data about safety and security issues on campus while helping students to react swiftly and efficiently by reducing their potential risk. Recommendations would be based on the findings of the study.

Keywords: Safety, Emergency, Awareness, Higher Education, Communication Channels.

Background

The study focused on exploring the knowledge of emergency preparedness among people in flood-prone areas in Mzuzu City, Northern Malawi. More than 60% of participants lacked knowledge of emergency preparedness, with a significant association found between education level and knowledge. A significant association was found between the level of education and knowledge of emergency preparedness (Munthali, et al., 2024).

Objective

The general objective of the study is to explore the safety and emergency awareness of students at a public university in Ghana.

Research questions

What are the existing safety and emergency resources?

What channels of communication are employed by the university to inform students about these resources?

How effective are these channels of communication in creating awareness of students about these resources?

Literature review

Assessment and influencing factors of urban residents' in relation to flood emergency preparedness capacity (Liu, et al., 2024). Safety preparedness in Arab schools includes, for example, protection from biological, physical, and chemical risks and physical

hazards associated with poor construction and maintenance practices (Al-Ansary, et al., 2023).

Methodology

The qualitative approach was adopted. Data was gathered using in-depth interviews of study participants. The study used convenience sampling in selecting students, lecturers, and security personnel as participants.

Results

Existing safety and emergency resources

The interviewee listed a number of the safety and emergency resources that are currently available at the university: They include security officers stationed at different locations, CCTV cameras in some areas of the campus and hostels, cooperation with the police, safety officers, fire extinguishers, alarm systems, and an ambulance stationed on campus.

Existing safety and emergency resources

Staff 3 - *"We have a safety officer who is working with the physical development, who is in charge of fire extinguishers, alarm systems....And then we have a central one too, when there is any problem, there is a siren that sounds for any emergencies. For the medical, the school has an ambulance which is stationed every evening, especially in the hostels and on campus. The school has a clinic which is well staffed with medical doctors, and nurses"*

Existing Channels of Communication

Communications on safety issues are done in partnership with the Student representatives', the school's website, electronic billboards, and other communication channels are frequently utilised to notify students about safety resources (Student 5). The website offers safety information around the clock, and the electronic billboard runs continually. Additionally, the SRC uses a variety of platforms to distribute information to students (student 6)

Specific training or orientation sessions

Student 2 (Level 300): *No, I haven't received any training session regarding my safety on campus but was informed about my safety on campus during orientation in Level 100.*

Conclusion

Our findings suggest that the emergency capacity is inadequate, especially concerning communication and regular updates.

Recommendations

This requires urgent intervention by the university management. There should be regular and timely updates through student representatives. There is the need for collaborations with Fire service to provide trainer of trainees' sessions for students. There is a need for regular simulation exercises for students and staff.

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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES USAGE AMONGST STUDENTS: A CASE OF A HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN GHANA

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Abstract

This study investigates the acceptance and use of digital technologies in higher education, focusing on a case from a higher educational institution in Ghana. Amidst the global push for digitalization in education as a means to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education, this research explores the drivers behind technology acceptance and usage in the academic sector. Utilizing the Unified Technology Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model for qualitative analysis, the study aims to provide insights into how digital technologies can enhance educational outcomes in developing countries. Through a detailed examination involving interviews with students across various levels of study, the research identifies performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence as key factors influencing technology adoption. The findings highlight the potential benefits of digital technology in education, such as improved access to resources. Also, the study acknowledges challenges like the digital divide that may hinder some students from fully utilizing these technologies. This study contributes to the understanding of digital technology adoption in higher educational contexts within developing nations and suggests implications for policymakers and institutional authorities to facilitate a more inclusive and effective digital transition in education.

Keywords: Digitalization, Digital Technologies, Higher Educational Institutions, UTAUT, Ghana.

Introduction:

Digitalization is the use and application of digital technologies (such as social, mobile, analytics, and cloud computing) to improve processes, enhance efficiency, and create new value (Frenzel, Muench, Bruckner, & Veit, 2021). Digitalization presents higher education institutions with a unique opportunity to change access to education across diverse social strata (Machekhina, 2017; Petrusevich, 2020). Also, one essential element of the Sustainable Development 2030 agenda of the United Nations pertains to quality education. Its primary objective is to guarantee inclusive and fair quality education for all individuals. The utilisation of digital technologies has become indispensable in the pursuit of this objective. This study examines the drivers of technology acceptance and usage in a higher educational sector. The importance of this study is underpinned by offering insights on how leveraging technologies could harness educational outcomes in developing countries like Ghana. Theoretical foundations used as a lens for this study are generally used for quantitative research. This research fills the gap using Unified Technology Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) for a qualitative study.

Literature Review:

Digitalization (Frenzel et al., 2021b) has reshaped the educational landscape worldwide, prompting institutions to embrace innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and administrative processes (Dobudko et al., 2019). However, the impact of digital technologies is disruptive, with complexities that arise from their constant re-shaping. This study therefore extends existing literature on how these factors drive digital technology acceptance and usage with evidence from a higher educational institution in Ghana.

Theoretical Foundation: This study adopts the Unified Technology Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003) as the theoretical foundation. This framework is adopted to provide insights into the factors driving the digitalization of education at higher educational institutions. This enabled a detailed examination of the reasons behind the acceptance and use of digital technology, the difficulties encountered by users (students), and the institutional assistance provided to aid this digitalization.



- **Performance Expectancy:** The degree to which individuals believe that using the technology will help them attain academic excellence
- **Effort Expectancy:** The degree of ease associated with the use of technology
- **Social Influence:** The degree to which individuals perceive that their peers and lecturers believe they should use digital technology.
- **Facilitating Conditions:** The degree to which an individual believes that an organisational and technical infrastructure exists to support the use of the system

Figure 1: The UTAUT model based on the original framework by Venkatesh et al., (2003).

Methodology:

Given the aim of the investigation, an interpretive single-case study (Myers & Avison, 1997) was implemented to comprehend the acceptance and utilization of digital technology for educational purposes. Employing an interpretive case study was deemed appropriate as it aligns with the perspective that reality and knowledge are socially

constructed between the researcher and the participants, especially when delving into a reality within a multifaceted real-world setting (Myers & Avison, 1997). As a result, data collection was carried out through various means such as interviews, observations, document analysis, and perusal of media reports. This methodology is consistent with interpretive research, which advocates for the utilization of multiple data sources by researchers for data collection purposes (Walsham, 1995). The interviews took place from February 1 to March 15, 2024, utilizing purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques to identify suitable participants for the study.

The selected interviewees were representative of different categories of students who significantly influence the use of digital technologies in learning. These participants comprised individuals pursuing PhD, Masters, and undergraduate degrees. A total of 42 respondents took part in the interviews at their convenience, with each session being recorded after obtaining consent. The interviews followed a semi-structured format (Myers & Avison, 1997) and lasted between 25 to 40 minutes. The demographic details of the interviewees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Interview Demographics

Interviewees	Students Groups
42	PhD (4), Masters [M Phil (3), MBA (6), MA (6),], Undergraduates [Degree (11), Diploma (12)]

Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed, and notes were organized coherently to facilitate analysis. The transcribed data was thoroughly reviewed multiple times to develop a comprehensive understanding of the responses and their relevance to the research objectives. A process of iterative data analysis was conducted, involving the comparison of interview data with information from other sources and pertinent literature findings to ensure data consistency and validation. In cases where clarification was needed, interviewees were contacted to validate emerging findings under the principles of hermeneutics (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

Empirical Findings: The analysis of data followed a theory-driven thematic approach. Themes from data correspond to the key constructs of the UTAUT theory, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions.

- **Performance expectancy:** Some students expressed their desire to accept and use digital technologies, citing perceived benefits such as improved access to resources such as electronic libraries, digital textbooks, academic journals, research databases, and many others.
- **Effort expectancy:** Findings also revealed that some students can easily navigate the platforms and hence are ready to use them: others find it a bit challenging to navigate their way around the digital platforms and hence tend not to use them.
- **Facilitating conditions:** More so, those who do not have access to digital devices like personal laptops and reliable internet tend to be more accustomed to the traditional classroom approach and hence not use digital technologies.

- **Social influence:** Findings showed that social influence and norms affect the use of digital technologies in education. Some students intend to use digital technologies because their colleagues in other institutions use them in online lectures and their learning methods in general. Also, learning materials are now placed on the Learning Management Systems (LMS) of the university: hence it has become a norm for students to access assignments and quizzes from such platforms.

Conclusion and Implications:

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the acceptance and use of digital technologies in higher educational institutions with a case from Ghana. Findings have shown that university students will accept and use technology as part of their education following perceived benefits associated with such technologies. Conversely, the findings show that, following the unequal access to digital devices and infrastructure (a concept called the digital divide), some may not have the opportunity to utilize digital platforms such as electronic libraries, and learning management systems. The findings of this study carry implications for both further inquiry and how the issue is approached going forward. For policymakers, in this case, institutional authorities, to ensure a more positive adoption and use of digital tools and platforms in education, authorities must see to it that there is a reliable internet connection such as effective campus-wide WI-FI for students and policies to support them in acquiring digital technologies for learning. For practice, proper orientation and training on how to use these technologies are needed to encourage students in their usage of the technologies. For research, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on the acceptance and use of digital technologies in developing countries with the case of a higher educational institution in Ghana. For theory, this study used UTAUT as a lens for analysis in a qualitative study.

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FINANCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENERGY TRANSITION: DOES REGULATORY QUALITY MATTER?

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Abstract

Introduction (Purpose/aim & background)

The imperative to transition towards renewable energy sources has become increasingly evident in global efforts to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). Central to this transition is the role of the financial sector in allocating resources to renewable energy projects and influencing the pace and direction of energy transition (Klein et al., 2020). However, the efficacy of this role is contingent upon the quality of regulatory frameworks within the financial sector, which can significantly impact the availability and cost of financing for energy projects, as well as the risk management and governance of financial institutions (World Bank, 2019). Strong regulatory frameworks not only reduce the risk associated with renewable energy investments but also enhance investor confidence and mobilize private sector funding. Despite the acknowledged importance of regulatory quality, there exists significant variation in the regulatory frameworks across countries, with some exhibiting more effective and efficient systems than others (World Bank, 2019). This discrepancy underscores the critical need for research to explore the implications of regulatory quality on energy transition and financial sector development, particularly in the context of developing countries. Moreover, existing empirical studies linking financial development and the energy sector predominantly focus on energy consumption, overlooking the dynamic linkage between regulatory quality, financial development, and renewable energy consumption. Therefore, an investigation into the impact of regulatory quality on green energy consumption, through the lens of financial development, is essential to inform policy interventions and foster sustainable energy transitions.

Theory Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is rooted in institutional theory, as proposed by North (1990), which elucidates how formal and informal rules, norms, and regulations shape economic behavior and outcomes. Within this framework, regulatory quality emerges as a critical component influencing financial market behavior and energy sector dynamics. A well-developed and supportive financial system is paramount for facilitating investment in renewable energy, and regulatory quality plays a pivotal role in fostering such an environment. Thus, institutional quality is perceived as a key factor that may

either facilitate or impede energy transition, with ramifications for sustainable development and climate action.

Methodology

Employing a panel method, data from 43 African countries spanning from 1990 to 2022, sourced from the World Development Indicators (WDI) of the World Bank, are analyzed. The dynamic generalized method of moments (GMM) approach developed by Arellano and Bond (1991) is utilized to mitigate potential endogeneity issues. The study examines the relationship between financial development, regulatory quality, and renewable energy consumption, employing various econometric models.

Findings/results

The results show that financial development has a negative significant impact on the demand for renewable energy. This implies that finance does not promote the renewable energy drive in Africa. The implication is that financial development through credit advancement is insufficient for renewable energy investment efficiency in Africa. This can be ascribed to the underdeveloped nature of the financial system in the continent. Regulatory quality is also observed to reduce the demand for renewable energy. This suggests that stringent regulatory framework does not resonate on the promotion of renewable energy in Africa. The study findings reveal that the interaction between financial development and regulatory quality has positive effect on renewable energy demand. Trade openness has a negative significant impact on the demand for renewable energy. FDI is also observed to reduce the demand for renewable energy. This suggests that technology transfer and the use of heavy equipment which are mostly imported by African countries increases the utilization of other energy sources such as fossil fuels and lowers renewable energy consumption.

Policy recommendations include strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing transparency and accountability mechanisms, fostering collaboration between regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders, and promoting investments in clean energy technologies. By prioritizing regulatory quality, policymakers can create an enabling environment conducive to both financial sector resilience and the successful transition to a low-carbon economy.

Keywords: Financial Development, Energy Transition, Regulatory Quality, Africa

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