Archives of Business Research – Vol. 10, No. 11
Publication Date: November 25, 2022
DOI:10.14738/abr.1011.13786.
Charles, J. M. I. (2022). An Exploratory Qualitative Study on Examining Small Business & Entrepreneurial Development: Issues in Franco-phone Sub-Saharan Africa. The Case of Senegal. Archives of Business Research, 10(11). 319-345.

An Exploratory Qualitative Study on Examining Small Business & Entrepreneurial Development: Issues in Franco-phone Sub-Saharan Africa. The Case of Senegal

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PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This particular research as a purpose is part of a series of studies aimed at investigating and identifying factors that enhance or impede growth, performance and development of small businesses and entrepreneurship in Africa and to recommend alternative strategies for progress. From an economic and industrial development perspective, the African sub-Saharan region as with most of Africa is one of the most backward in the world (Mosley, 1992). The economies in most of these countries are characterized by high unemployment, lower living standards and high poverty levels. Most raw materials produced in these countries are cheaply exported to industrialized countries in low value added forms and again re-imported as finished products. For this reason, most of African countries continue to remain and survive as 'rentier' based economies, depending on the bulk of their national revenue generation from exported raw materials (See: Mahdavy, 1970, Mambula, 1997). Manufacturing ability to be competitive in world markets is largely lacking in most of Africa. Further, enormous amounts of funds (borrowed and donated) have been spent towards industrial development including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the African region. However, the results realized despite the plethora of raw materials available on the continent are not impressive. The questions to answer is to ask, why is this so, what factors are responsible and could they be corrected, especially from regional point of view?

Africa is a multi-lingual/ethnic continent and geo-politically categorized according to their former colonial zones, as French, English, Afrikaans/Swahili; Italian or Portuguese oriented countries. It should therefore be expected that factors influencing business practices and the approaches taken for conducting entrepreneurship would differ in these countries. The variations in business activity and entrepreneurial practice among these countries are therefore worth investigating.

The researcher had conducted and draws freely from an extensive research study on small plastic manufacturing firms (SPMFs) in Nigeria, which is another sub-Saharan African country but is Anglophone (Mambula, 1997). In a similar manner, this research proposes the case of a Francophone country namely Senegal to be examined.

In this study, some general distinguishing features of approximately 50 selected entrepreneurs operating small manufacturing firms (SMFs) in Senegal will be compared, drawn together, and some specific comparisons and contrasts made between the firms. Issues of identity, regional

affliation and types of entrepreneurial strategies will be highlighted. Further studies for comparative analysis contributing to knowledge on the differences between Anglophone, Francophone and other African regions in terms of small business, entrepreneurial practice and environment would be possible once this research is accomplished. A series of analytical comparisons examining small business and entrepreneurial development across former colonial zones in Africa will therefore be possible from regions of different backgrounds and colonial heritage.

MODEVHYPOTHESIS BEING TESTED OR DEVELOPED

This research seeks to answer certain questions pertaining to small firms and entrepreneurial development in sub Saharan Franco-phone Africa. Particularly, the underlying question asks for the principle factors that influence performance, growth and development of small firms and entrepreneurship in Senegal. It is going to be found out that some small firms would be more successful than their other counterparts from the results obtained by the research. Some firms would have achieved more consistent 'increases' in all categories than other firms will. The question to ask at this point is why are there discrepancies and to identify the causes for the differences in performance. Furthermore, the research investigates if there are factors that are beneficial or destructive in nature to the g•owth of small firms in this region. In addition, are these factors typical or different from those found in other African countries, especially in Anglophone countries like Nigeria (Mambula, 1997), Ghana (Watanabe, 1983) and Kenya (King, 1993)?

Another investigation issue is to find out and identify, which category the firms studied in Senegal belong to, considering Filley & Adalg's (1978) characteristic model of small firms' categories of craft/survival, promotion and administrative. Other measures of categories of small firms and entrepreneurs are those of Hodgetts & Kuratko's (1998) definitions and criteria of one approach to micro view; Longnecker, Moore & Petty's (2000) marginal, attractive or high potential category of small firms and Stevenson, Bhide, Grousbeck & Roberts (1999) promoter and trustee dimensions.

The culture or approach taken by small business entrepreneurs in Senegal to perform effectively and the constraints against them are particularly examined. The unique creative and innovative qualities and capabilities of Senegalese entrepreneurs will be explored. Peter Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneuship and development will be employed in this research to gather more understanding of the French oriented economic development agents in Senegal.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH—THE LITERATURE

Research has been conducted on factors influencing growth, performance and development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in general and in Africa in particular (See: Mambula, 1997). Reference would be made to such materials to provide the background information needed and to develop the theoretical and conceptual framework required for the study. Among the literature to be reviewed include the following; (Schumpeter, 1934), (Berger, et. al. 1991), Department of Trade and Industry HMSO (1991), (Baysinger, et.al. 1981), (Barber, et.al, 1992), (Timmons, 1994), (Scarborough & Zimmerer 1996), (Bygrave, (Ed.) 1997), (Mambula, 1997), (Hisrich & Peters 1998), (Stevenson et.al. 1999). Other contributors are, Advisory Council on Science & Technology (1990), (Bangs, Jr. & Pinson 1999), (Lussier, 2000), (Foley 1999), (Ryan, et.al. 1999), (Allen, 1999), (Megginson, et.al. 2000), (Scarborough & Zimmerer 2000),

(Longenecker, et. al. 2000). Particular attention is paid to factors that are held to influence growth, performance and development of (SMEs) and entrepreneurship in general and Senegal in particular. The following topics will comprise the different sections reviewed from literature. (i) Role of external support for small business and entrepreneurship development (ii) Alternative sources of funding to small firms in Africa (iii) Role of government for the development of small industries and entrepreneurship (iv) Effect of internal and external factors and the background of the entrepreneur (v) Effect of the economic environment and policies on growth and development of small firms and entrepreneurship (vi) Creating strategies for survival by small business entrepreneurs (vii) Schumpeterian example of an entrepreneur (viii) Motivating factors of entrepreneurs (ix) Factors constraining/enhancing small firms yowth (x) Review •of selected literature in Senegalese industrial and Economic development.

Role ofExternal Supportfor Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development

Some researchers have argued for and against the importance of acquiring external support as a means of influencing effective small business growth and performance (Cook, 2001, McMahon, 2001, Warren & Hutchinson, 2000). This study seeks to answer therefore, if there are any significant differences in levels of performance among those firms who have received external support and those who did not in Senegal. Cook (2000) and McMahon (2001) further argue that financial credit is the most important form of external support required for ShvE growth.

Among other issues this study seeks to identify are the types of difficulties faced by small business owners, to survive and grow in Senegal in view of external support. It would be pertinent therefore to enquire about the impact of the availability or for lack of external support. Does for instance, lack of external support help unleash any latent skills or hidden entrepreneurial talent encouraged by the challenge and necessity for survival as discovered in Nigeria in a study by Mambula? (Mambula, 1997). In addition, how do firms without access to support, cope with the situation and what do they do to sustain their businesses? To analyse these questions, the 50 small firms to be studied in Senegal will be divided into two major categories. These categories are between those that have received external means of support especially, financial assistance and those that hardly received any form of external support at all. The paradox of whether lack of external support would have any significant effect on those firms without them is therefore examined.

Methods towards disbursing funds to small firms in Africa have often been questioned. The basis on which small firms qualify for funding are commonly not dependent on compliance to standard criteria alone. In certain instances, it has been observed that external support from funding institutions, are given on basis of favouritism, nepotism or other forms of bias. Furthermore, Nigerian entrepreneurs for example have reported that they have approached a number of banks, which denied them funding, since they could not meet the stringent collateral requirements (Mambula, 2002).

Many African entrepreneurs had never bothered to apply for a loan from any bank or government institution, reasoning that since they lacked any connections with high-placed officials, they would be wasting their time in doing so (Mambula, 1997). Oshagbemi (1983) observed factually (which might equally be the case in some African countries) that without

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contacts in the banking or government systems, it would be difficult for entrepreneurs to receive attention or acquire loans in Nigeria. Favouritism and nepotism by officials have taken over the importance of conforming to ideal standards. Entrepreneurs in Africa saw the lack of influential connections with people who might help them as a serious obstacle to further yowth. They would have liked to secure a substantial bank loan or government grants of some kind, to enable them buy their own machines and equipment. Some entrepreneurs have well-established connections with wellplaced people able to assist them in securing financial resources than others. Some would be able to secure a reasonably sized loan from a bank, which will enable them to increase business sales/output/workforce. Comments gathered from some few entrepreneurs who have been able to receive some loan assistance in Nigeria, explained that their experience reveals that obtaining bank or government support is not easy or always reliable for most SMEs in Nigeria. This is why most small business entrepreneurs would have no choice but to depend on retained earnings and re-investment to boost their company growth. High interest rates on loans also discourage entrepreneurs from applying for loans. Many entrepreneurs in Africa regret that the government has not paid attention that is more serious to the entire SB,ff sector, and has ignored its potential contribution to the industrial development of the African economy. Rigidity of collateral conditions as well as corruption both served to exclude small firms in Africa just like, Cook (2000) observed to be common in other developing countries. These serious administrative flaws on funding would have to be corrected if small business and entrepreneurial development are expected to yield attractive results in Africa or elsewhere. The price of allocating support, grants, loans and other forms of official and private-sector support to StvfEs purely based on existing networks could be a practice that discriminates against talented entrepreneurs. The tendency is to favor familiar names and faces and larger, more conventional firms with secure market positions. Smaller, but possibly very promising, firms are not usually considered seriously, especially when they are involved in the dealing with some unusual commodities. This problem however is not insurmountable as firms could always localise and create niche products that would be accepted to the area of business or other nearby areas (Dereskey, 2000). The need for a more rational and resource-efficient allocation of increasingly scarce credit resources between various StvfEs is highly vital not only in Senegal, but also in the whole of Africa. Whether any changes will result is another matter, and would need to be assessed at some time in the future. Entrepreneurs who qualify for funding should entirely be based on compliance to set standards. Presenting efficacious business plans and interviews to determine qualification for funds is one way of achieving the objective. Feasible and convincing business plans help to reveal how promising a venture would be before it is too late (Timmons, 1994, Upton et. al., 2001, Perry, 2001). Only entrepreneurs who show ingenious and promising qualities should quali%' for loans and grants. Maintaining this standard of practice would not only avoid waste of public funds but would also help to develop high quality, successful and competitive small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially in lesser-developed economies.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING TO SMALL FIRMS IN AFRICA

Some small firms in Africa display many of the qualities usually seen as central to successful entrepreneurial activity to survive in business (See: Mambula, 2000, 2002, 1997). A high rate of reinvestment, innovation, and a tendency to live frugally are seen as vital by Weber, (1930), Schumpeter (1934), Duesenberry (1949), Kuratko, (1989), Bygrave (1997), Zimmerer & Scarborough, (2000). The difficulties in getting access to fi.:nding in African countries as mentioned in the previous section, agrees with Cook, (2000) and McMahon's (2001) findings

about the major impediments that hinders small manufacturing firms' growth in developing countries. By comparison, small firms in western industrialised countries have easier access to funding (Ibid.). Most African small businesses are considered high-risk business ventures by funding institutions especially banks. One advantage of not being able to secure loans by small firms in Africa however is that it helps prevent them from getting into debts, but this has been caused more by necessity than by choice. In a way, this situation has been turned into a type of virtue for both lender and borrower, as conflicts and obligations to pay loans and writing off bad debts would be avoided. In addition, and for the fact that they cannot easily acquire loans for their businesses, a conclusion has been reached apropos, by the entrepreneurs concerned. Most of the entrepreneurs have decided that investments in new machinery and equipment would have to come out of existing capital resources generated within the firm rather than from credit from an external source. In this regard, negligence for funding to small firms could sometimes be seen as a blessing in disguise. This would enable them to develop ways in attempt to cope with austere economic situations. Some entrepreneurs regard being denied funding as a good thing because they continue to remain relatively independent, and are never in debt. This means too that they have the peace of mind of not being obligated to pay any loans, or risk their properties being confiscated in case of default.

Another alternative route for small firms to meet their funding needs is to get support from their extended families and friends. In a 'collective' type of community, setting or society as Deresky (2000) had described, families are extended and relatives care for each others' needs wherever possible. This practice of catering for each other's needs to some extent replaces lack of governmental or institutional support for marginalized entrepreneurs. In certain cases however, Deresky's assertions are not always relevant even in such societies. Attempts to borrow money from family members and friends in order to buy equipment does not work out all the time for some entrepreneurs in Africa (Mambula, 1997). One reason for this could be explained by the fact that when the economy is austere like in many places in Africa, living conditions are hard for most people. When borrowers could give no guarantee that they could repay even 'soft' (i.e. interest-free) loans in good time, it becomes difficult for lenders to part with their monies, even to family members.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENTFOR DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL INDUSTRIES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

It is generally expected that government's and funding institutions should spend some reasonable amounts of money to encourage small business and entrepreneurial development, while they appropriately create programs to address constraints against them. It requires that an enabling environment to facilitate their activities are created (Cook, 2001). Particular areas of attention that call for immediate amelioration include constructing adequate infrastructure facilities, provision of machines and improving standards of technical training and business management (Ibid.). Most of these facilities are not readily available in many African countries (Mambula, 1997). A number of problems stunting entrepreneurial and small business growth in Africa like inadequate infrastructure are often mentioned in literature (Ibid). The usual ones often cited are the need for improved water, electricity, telephones, better roads, and reliable sources of inputs such as spare parts and raw materials (Ibid). These problems are not particular to all firms, but would generally be noted in most cases for example in Nigeria (Mambula, 1997), the rest of Africa and other countries in developing world (Cook, 2001). A positive factor for some entrepreneurs however, has been reported in research (Mambula,

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1997). Entrepreneurs felt that whenever the government bans on imported products as a protectionist policy, it had helped encourage them to produce some of the banned products, including basic products.

EFFECT OFTHE INTERNALÆXTERNAL FACTORS AND BACKGROUND OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

Another objective of the results from this research is to enable readers obtain a clearer understanding of how internal and external obstacles to and opportunities for growth interact in practice and affect (small) manufacturing firms in Senegal. The main question to answer in this regard is to know the principal external and internal obstacles that limit the growth, performance and development of small manufacturing firms and thus other SN'1Es in Senegal. It can be seen from discussions in literature on small firms and entrepreneurship that indeed entrepreneurship can play a significant role in determining the level of success realised by individual small firms to be studied in this research. Although external support is essential in enabling a healthy environment that encourages business groMh, it cannot function efficiently without effective entrepreneurial input. The characteristics traits of Senegalese entrepreneurs will be catogorized in this study to understand their identifring qualities. It will show the different definitions and criteria of one approach to the micro view of entrepreneurship. The micro view of entrepreneurship examines the factors that are specific to entrepreneurship and are part of the internal locus of control (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 1998). The potential entrepreneur has the ability to control, to direct or adjust the outcome of each major influence in this view (Ibid.). In addition, it would show how entrepreneurship has also been characterised as the interaction of the following skills: inner control, planning and goal setting, risk taking, innovation, reality perceptions, use of feedback, decision making, human relations and independence (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 1998). Furthermore, many people believe successful entrepreneurs are individuals who are not afraid to fail (Ibid.). In this research, the overall characteristics of the entrepreneurs studied in Senegal and the methods of approach they adopt will be presented to understand their nature of make-up and identify what qualities are missing. The intention here is to understand the strength and weakness of each entrepreneur and firm and to decide which of these factors and qualities appear to have contributed most to overall performance of selected firms.

From an internal point of view, the approaches adopted by the small firms will be depicted in relation to external factors. A combination of internal qualities and external factors will be used to determine a particular small business strategy. Observing the approaches adopted by various small business entrepreneurs is useful in revealing the type of practices, which appear to be more or less successful in determining growth and development of such firms. How the entrepreneurs involved in the study considering their different educational, regional, religious, family and work backgrounds and areas of operations cope with problems confronting their business performance, growth and development (pgd) answers the underlying question.

The characteristics and backgrounds of some African entrepreneurs are that of small and relatively poor families, but could also be quite well educated and oriented towards business.

Virtually each member of some family are involved in some type of business activity, and they advise each other from time to time (Mambula, 1997). Apart from their admirable entrepreneurial abilities, some African entrepreneurs studied by Mambula (1997) have wide

knowledge about the business they are involved with, which is of a very helpful advantage to them (Longenecker, et. al. 2000). Many entrepreneurs seem to have many potentially sound business ideas about manufacturing in general but as Anderson (1982) noted, are only facing the same problem for most developing country entrepreneurs, in form of lack of capital to implement their ideas.

The idea of being a local to the area of business operation should also be examined whether this would have any effect on business performance and growth in Senegal. Africa is made up of multi-ethnic and tribal communities sometimes with rivalries even on religious basis. There could be problems of regional difference that affect business practices and certain regions may not appreciate the kinds of goods that might sell more profitably in that area. Mambula (1997) has discovered that this problem exists in Nigeria. In Senegal, this is a speculative explanation, of course, but it may well be part of the picture at least.

The accounts of McClelland (1961) and Longenecker, et.al. (1991) on the influence of upbringing on entrepreneurship noted that early exposure; mastery of skills and parental influence could have a strong influence on deciding the choice of future professional and career development of children. However, in the case of some small plastic manufacturing firm (SPMF) entrepreneurs in Nigeria results were different. Findings by Mambula (1997) indicated that the choice of career by some of the entrepreneurs had very little to do with their upbringing (Mambula, 1997). It was rather as Mambula found out, partially because of how well a close friend or someone they know was doing in the lucrative business that had motivated and attracted them to go into the business. One small plastic manufacturer explained how he was encouraged by a friend to go into the business. He was informed that plastics manufacturing, was one of the most affordable and profitable lines of business to venture into, as he said (See: Mambula, 1997). Other friends encouraged this entrepreneur's interest in the plastics sector in particular by convincing him that mat manufacturing would be simple and there was a high unmet demand for Moslem prayer mats in the region as a whole (Mambula, 1997). This advice proved to be well founded as most researchers noted opportunities that influence business formation and growth (Bygrave, 1997, Ryan, et.al 1999, Zimmerer & Scarborough, 1996, Cook, 2000, McMahon, 2001).

Although, educational levels of African small business owners varies, some have comparatively higher levels of formal education compared with other small firm owners, having only a primary school certificate. Some entrepreneurs in Nigeria (Mambula, 1997) felt that their religious outlook (Christian or Moslem) has contributed to their business success in certain ways. This according to them is because they portray themselves as God fearing, honest, hardworking and self-disciplined people who are living a frugal lifestyle and avoiding reckless expenditure (See: Weber, 1930). Their responsibilities towards poorer family members however, have reduced the amount of time and money they could invest back into the business (See: Mambula, 1997; Bygrave, 1997), but this is not a serious concern for them. Their main problem as they see it has been in trying to secure sufficient funds to be able to buy their own machinery and equipment so that they can increase sales and perhaps capture a larger market share.

Warren, et. al. (2000) observed that the experiences that some entrepreneurs go through could be instrumental in their realization of profitable business ventures. Previous or related work

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.1011.13786

experiences especially can help influence people become successful entrepreneurs. The example of two entrepreneurs who own "Lasa Tech" a very successful high-tech firm in Australia can be reported (Warren, et. al. 2000). The entrepreneurs of Lasa Tech attributed their level of success among other things to their corporate working experience, in addition to their personalities and high level of expertise as individual managers. Brautigam (1994) and Zimmerer & Scarborough (2000) equally report in literature, that a background in business that is long-standing is clearly of an asset for entrepreneurs. Longenecker et. al. (2000) would describe these types of entrepreneurs as fitting the 'opportunistic entrepreneur' category of entrepreneurs.

An opportunistic entrepreneur can also be described as one who has supplemented his or her technical education by studying such non-technical subjects as economics, law, or English (Longenecker, et. al. 2000). Similarly, Filley and Adalg (1978) classified this entrepreneurial characteristic, as that of the 'promotion' type, while again, this kind of entrepreneurial description is pertinent to what Stevenson et. al. (1999) referred to as the 'promoter' entrepreneur. These entrepreneurs are described in these ways since it makes it more likely that they already have the basic skills needed to run any small business, including the ability to do clerical work and keep accurate records. This would indicate therefore, that the success of a small business is not necessarily dependent on having access to external support alone. The background of entrepreneurs and other qualities in addition are equally useful.

Effect of the Economic Environment and Policies on Growth and Development ofSmall Firms and Entrepreneurship Like other African countries, the Senegalese government in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Itv1F) introduced a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1996-1998 (See: New Africa.com). This is a policy instrument for economic reform, which usually leads to the devaluation of national currencies. Although the Senegalese currency is pegged to the French currency (CFA) and now the Euro, changes were made that usually affects domestic fiscal and monetary policies drastically through the SAP. There is consensus by researchers like Cook, (2001), Lall (1995), and others that the macro-economic changes associated with structural adjustment policies have reduced purchasing power, financial availability and level of investment generally. The level of effective demand and especially for non-subsistence goods has also been curtailed. The scarcity of foreign exchange and the resulting difficulty of importing inputs have squeezed firms. Caught between declining demand, falling prices for final goods, and rising costs of essential inputs, small firms are characteristic of SN'fEs generally, in Africa experiencing a tight squeeze on their profit margin's in recent years (See: Hambagda, 1987). Infrastructure problems have also been exacerbated by cutbacks in government finance for basic amenities and public utilities. In certain parts of Africa, where the harsh SAP has been adopted the problem of harassment and mistreatment by government officials was mentioned. The harsh effect of SAP has extended to make government officials and personnel corrupt. It is common practice that some police or other government officials demand fees as extortion money or bribes without any justification for doing so and there may be little recourse to the authorities, especially if SRvfEs are not recogmized as legal. This is considered as a wider problem for other small firms as we" in the sample interviewed by Mambula (1997). Most of the small firms are not registered and are paying a fee to inspectors to protect them from being reported to the authorities for legal action. Such attitudes are rife and it has now escalated and permeates most parts of the society. The prevailing corrupt practices have mainly been attributed to the austere economic environment

under the pressure of SAP. Financial constraints and pressure therefore; are not only restricted to small manufacturers alone but to all other sectors as well. As mentioned above, the economic environment under SAP has reduced purchasing power, and thus undercut demand from customers wherever they are implemented in Africa (See: Lall, 1995, Hambagda, 1987).

Devaluation of the national currencies and resulting foreign exchange scarcity made it even more difficult than before for small firm businesspeople to obtain e.g. the equipment and machinery they need. Furthermore, and unfortunately as a result of the tight economic situation, many entrepreneurs seem vulnerable to abuse in several ways. For those whom, their business so desperately needs its own machinery as an example of this, they have sometimes been deceived into parting with money on the promise of being provided with equipment in a good state of repair. Unable to trust anyone, many entrepreneurs have decided that they will have to raise money themselves to buy their own equipment or machinery. The consequence of all these problems is that the business-operating environment is made difficult for small manufacturers to function effectively under such conditions. In Nigeria for example, since entrepreneurs cannot afford new spare parts, improvised, second hand and recycled spare parts are used. The plastic raw materials used are mostly recycled, which they recycle themselves as this avoids the cost of purchasing fresh raw material from other manufacturers (Mambula, 2002). The economic environment posses problems for small business and entrepreneurs generally although some determined entrepreneurs said on balance it did not. Some entrepreneurs in fact welcome most policy measures composing SAP, seeing them as challenging entrepreneurs in Nigeria to bring out their latent creative abilities (Mambula, 1997). Some in fact, use a military metaphor of the 'survival of the fittest' in which SPrvtFs and other small enterprises are forced to fight to survive or simply perish.

CREATING STRATEGIESFOR SURVIVAL BY SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS

Although some firms do not have the same opportunity as others would have in terms of being assisted with government funds, yet they would use their creative abilities to remain in business. Their entrepreneurial qualities stand out above everything else than for instance the supporting factors which has assisted other businesses such as government assistance. Some Nigerian entrepreneurs have been able to devise various strategies in order to overcome the main constraints they identified as facing their businesses (Mambula, 1997,2000,2001,2002). They build their own machinery and therefore save on the substantial cost of buying new equipment. Some entrepreneurs sell most of their products through stallholders in the local markets. Again some entrepreneurs go to the market place regularly themselves in order to assess how their products are doing in relation to those of competitors by benchmarking (Lussier, 2000). They talk to customers about what they would want or expect in terms of plastic products, and then proceed to alter the size, design and colour of their products accordingly (See: Allen, 1999). Competent entrepreneurs understand that maintaining good customer relationships according to Allen (1999) has profitable benefits for businesses. One of the 'P 's" of marketing (product, place, price and promotion) according to Allen, should be people who are customers. Endorsing Allen's statement, some entrepreneurs have reported that these methods alone can be very useful in maintaining and increasing sales. Informants are also used who keep the manager of some small companies constantly informed about changes in consumer taste in the market place, and about competitors' latest moves (Ibid.).

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.1011.13786

In order to ensure that they are aware of what is expected of them in the firm, the owners/managers insists on training all their employees in-house themselves. Few entrepreneurs are able or willing, to provide professional in-plant training for their employees in Africa. For instance, the industrial training fund (ITF) has been set up to provide training at subsidised costs to formally registered businesses in Nigeria. Most small firms do not use it perhaps because of their informal status and therefore do not qualify, or because they see no need for it to save on time and costs. In addition, visits to larger firms are sometimes arranged in order to obtain ideas about the latest machinery, materials and technical operation. Ironically it can be said that some small firms double as consultants to other small firms, who call on them to deal with the nittygritty of their businesses, including matters of marketing and machinery.

Because of their technical competence and abilities to improvise, other firms from nearby cities both large and small (even in unrelated fields like, textiles, beverage and printing industries) approach some entrepreneurs. They usually ask them to sell recycled raw materials for them, which they grind and stock or to repair broken machinery. Since some small business entrepreneurs are able to do these sub-contracting tasks quickly, this is quite an easy way for them of earning some additional money in the absence of available funding and assistance (Mambula, 1997). Conservative entrepreneurs require part payment from their customers in advance of carrying out work for them, and this assists them with working capital, regular cash flow and in generating revenue for inputs.

Some small plastic manufacturers in Nigeria studied by Mambula (1997) use a strategy by hiring or paying to use their own plastic moulds in machineor owned by other manufacturers. Since they could not afford to have their own machines, in this way the firms concerned are able to keep costs down. The advantage of situating a business in the ideal location has often been considered a success factor for most businesses (Bangs, et. al., 1999, Megginson, 2000, Siropolis, 1997).

Some small businesses are well positioned for access to local markets and other manufacturers. However, some business locations are quite distant and have its price; in order to collect imported inputs, some manufactures for example have to take a two thousand-kilometre round-trip from Kano or Maiduguri to Lagos the commercial capital of Nigeria. This is costly and the journey can take a few days due to bad roads. Small firms that choose to locate nearby to other machine owners therefore, have the advantage to go and rent machinery needed to produce e.g. plastic goods from their moulds (Mambula, 1997). Network activities such as this are quite common internationally and have been known to be very helpful in sustaining small firms remain in business (Bygrave, 1997). Small firms that use other manufacturers machinery for hire in Nigeria (Mambula, 1997) are paid for on hourly basis, or through a sharing-out of the profit on resulting sales. Small firms using this method of business survival are able to gow but are still handicapped, as they cannot afford their own machinery, even though they do report high demand for their products because of their generally high quality. In fact, the main constraint is lack of capital to invest in machinery and equipment. In the face of such severe external constraints, some small entrepreneurs strategy has been to capture more consumer demand for their products by designing and manufacture standard products of high quality. Entrepreneurs also work by themselves except when it is necessary to save costs of having to pay an employee on fixed salary.

A reputation for good quality products has attracted customers from neighboring countries, including Niger, Chad, Benin, Cameroon and Ghana to Nigeria and to few other SPB/TFs (Mambula, 1997). This helps the business owners get some foreign money especially (in franc), which has a higher value from the Franco-phone countries. This means that there are times when entrepreneurs cannot meet with high demands from customers due to the unfortunate handicap of not having their own machines and equipment (Anderson, 1982, Schmitz, 1982, Cook, 2000). Perhaps surprisingly, given the successful increase in sales, some Nigerian entrepreneurs did not envisage exporting their products. In part, this may be because they are broadly satisfied with their present market position or it may also be because formal export procedures are very cumbersome and informal procedures are illegal. However, this does not mean that they do not export or want to but perhaps felt this was a sensitive information to disclose freely to a researcher.

Another form of strategy to secure their firm's survival and profitability is to carve a niche by producing unusual products that other small businesses cannot imitate and copy or that would interest other large producers. Niche ventures have proved to hold greater financial promise for new entrants (Stevenson, et. al. 1999). Sometimes Niche ventures also, require less capital and can achieve financial self sufficiency faster (Ibid.) Various companies directly subcontract to some small firms with niche advantages. Some have been able to manage and to monopolise the local market in these products and have greatly assisted their growth performance. Sometimes however, the very success of small firms in carving out a secure niche in terms of market for their final products, could stifle entrepreneurial innovation. According to Stevenson et. al. (1999).

Niche start-ups sometimes could fail because the cost of serving a specialised niche exceeds the benefits to customers. Entrepreneurs are advised to analyse carefully the incremental costs of serving a niche, taking into consideration their lack of scale and the difficulty in marketing to a small-diffused segment (Allen, 1999). Excess local demand for the main products made by some small firms however, creates a seller's market, reducing any incentives there might otherwise have been to diversiö', to create new market niches, or adapt new techniques and technologies through innovation as Schumpeter described it (Stevenson, et. al 1999, Bygrave, 1997, Timmons, 1994).

Some entrepreneurs' are referred to as the 'self-made' type. They tend to live frugally, are innovative in their methods of work, work long hours, and seek to save resources wherever possible (See: Bygrave, 1997, Stevenson, et. al. 1999, Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2000). Some entrepreneurs manifest and sustain their businesses with the discipline of a very frugal and parsimonious living (Stevenson, et.ak. 1999). Some small firms as well present the picture of a tightly run, well-managed business that are able to overcome quite severe capital, technical and labor constraints through creativity and innovation (Mambula, 1997). As mentioned earlier, most of the entrepreneurs interviewed in Nigeria reported that their starting capital were self-generated from previous jobs, and about 60-70 per cent of their profits are reinvested back into the business (Ibid.). They give the rest to charity (like the church, other Christian ministries, like leprosariums, orphanages, or schools for the blind and the deaf). This practice could be taken as some form of ethical social responsibility in another way, giving a good image to the business (Mambula, 1997, Ferrell, et. al. 2000, Allen, 1999).

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.1011.13786

There is a tendency for certain type of entrepreneurs to prefer profit from commercial activity, and hard work itself is not regarded as a virtue, but some entrepreneurs have certainly internalised the values of the 'Protestant work ethic' (Weber, 1930). Part of the objectives of this study is to explore how some small business entrepreneurs are able to overcome impediments against their ventures in the Senegalese business and economic environment, thus creating their own unique culture for survival. The exploitation of the owner/manager's quite marked determination and entrepreneurial acumen is an added advantage that wili continue to sustain a business venture (See: Kuratko, 1998).

THE SCHUMPETARIAN EXAMPLE OFAN ENTREPRENEUR

It has been discovered by researchers that some small firms closely approximate the ideal type of the Schumpeterian firm. These firms are managed by entrepreneurial individuals involved in constant innovation and improvement of production as well as undertaking a high level of reinvestment (See: Bygrave, 1997, Stevenson, et. al. 1999, Timmons, 1999). Whilst capital constraint is clearly tight for some small firms processes of accumulation are taking place based on various forms of specialization and innovation. The creative abilities of some small business managers similar to the ones described in Nigeria by Mambula (1997) provide examples that are fitting of a Schumpetarian type of entrepreneur. According to Schumpeter (1934), the term entrepreneurship is synonymous to "innovation" (Berger, 1991; Stevenson, et. al. eds., 1999) and what he also refers to as, "creative response" for development (Clemence, 2000; Stevenson, et. al eds. 1999; Bygrave, ed. 1997). Through the performance of different functions, Schumpeter notes that the entrepreneur does irrational or unusual things (Clemence, 2000). Schumpeter's type of entrepreneur could resemble one motivated by a drive to build a business venture and make profit through re-investment of revenue, by identifring opportunities and skilfully assembling the necessary resources that successfully sustains-the business.

Some business entrepreneurs believe they have a strong internal locus of control. Such entrepreneurs are optimistic and believe that they are capable of sustaining their own destinies and operations by applying independent efforts from within their businesses (Hisrich & Peters, 1998, Kuratko & Hodgetts, 1998, Lussier, 2000, Allen, 1999, Foley, 1999; Stevenson, et. al.,1999; Longenecker, et. al., 2000: 10; Chell, et. al., 1990). This confidence is demonstrated through their creative skills and ingenuity in making decisions and solving problems over threatening (external and internal) obstacles that stand in their way. Indeed under such circumstances, entrepreneurs produce a culture (Berger, 1991) for business survival. The whole point of entrepreneurial success notes (Berger, 1991), is to get around problems that others find impassable and these barriers could be institutional or technical. As noted from Mambula's study in Nigeria (1997) nevertheless, subcontracting, niche creation, in-house training, exporting, networking, benchmarking, location, re-investment of profits are among the different methods small firms use to sustain their businesses to growth kevels. Schumpeter would describe these entrepreneurs as creatively destructive. These types of entrepreneurs are able to apply a number of innovative qualities. These qualities could be applied in the market, in product development and process to keep their business going amidst the difficult operating conditions within the economic environment, which they find themselves (See: Stevenson, 1999, Clemence, 2000, Bygrave, 1997).

Unlike the Schumpeterian type of entrepreneurs, some entrepreneurs are not of the 'self-made' type in the usual sense, and would not fit the Schumpeterian archetype of an entrepreneur.

Some firms are structural in approach in terms of their organization and do not demonstrate a Schumpeterian method. Some entrepreneurs have a more privileged position or are prominent figures in the local community in which their business operates. On the other hand, some are isolated, and have no such privileges or opportunities relatively speaking. Some entrepreneurs have strong business connections and privileged positions and yet would not seem to be of any serious advantage to them; in fact in terms of entrepreneurial initiative, some entrepreneurs would not match other entrepreneurs. Therefore, it could still be possible that inspite of the advantages some entrepreneurs would have over other entrepreneurs in being free from competition and getting assistance from formal sector banks, their growth could still be constrained. Apparently too secure a market position and lack of entrepreneurial acumen could have a negative impact on business groM•h. Whilst insecurity can undermine the fortunes of some small companies, innovation can also be dampened by too much security. This is an issue to investigate about Senegalese small businessmen from the research.

Some entrepreneurs would actually have no real need to innovate, stretch their management capability or exercise their resourcefulness in the running of their businesses. Some small firms could be suffering so much from insecurity and rising costs of inputs etc. that it could hamper their efforts to invest. In the other cases, while there could be the desire for investment and innovation, in the other case neither would be desired.

MOTIVATING FACTORS OF ENTREPRENEURS

Some entrepreneurs want to be in charge of their destinies rather being dependent on an employer in business, the public sector or in the civil service. These personalities portray themselves as some sort of 'societal or corporate entrepreneurial refugees' or cast-offs (Longenecker et. al, 10I l; Zimmerer Scarborough, 2000; Bygrave, 1997). These types of individuals have a strong desire for responsibility, to be independent and take the (entrepreneurial) risk of working atone (Kuratko, et. al. 1998, Zimmerer, & Scarborough, 2000). These entrepreneurs would leave their previous jobs on not only seeing how lucrative the small business sector could be, but selfemployment appeared to be attractive (Longenecker, et. al. 1999, Bygrave, 1997, Zimmerer & Scarborough 2000). To them, who maintain this outlook, it would be taking a challenging stance of what is possible and what can be achieved through personal initiative, drive, creativity and determination. According to some research findings attitudes like having interest in a business venture and not only to make money from the undertaking, is a quality which has been noticed among the common characteristics of avid entrepreneurs (See: Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2000). Bygrave (1997) explains that getting rich is sometimes not the primary motivator of the ideal entrepreneur. Money is more of a measure of success. They assume that if they are successful they will be rewarded.

As mentioned earlier, Mambula (1997) discovered in Nigeria that some entrepreneurs express a desire to fulfil their interest in small business and help as many people as they can, as a part of their social and religious obligations. The utilitarian ethic view, which is intended to meet the general good of most people, would be relevant to this example (Ferrell, et. al. 2000, Allen, 1999). Taking a more consciously nationalist approach than other small business owners, some entrepreneurs would seek to substitute for imported products in the longer-term. Again, this type of adventurous quality has been noticed among the innovative qualities of growth performing SB.'1E's in Europe (McMahon, 2001). In the UK such innovators are identified and

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.1011.13786

win annual awards given by HRH the Prince of Wales to show his support for their achievements.

Confirming the characteristics of successful small entrepreneurs, some examples are never satisfied or content with their current levels of performance. Their long-term goal is to manage and own modern factories that would be innovation-oriented, with up-to-date machinery and higher productivity. This vision is reflective of the entrepreneur's ego, which is involved in future orientation and the desire for success (Kuratko, 1998). Some entrepreneurs are generally very optimistic that their firms' will meet growth objectives set at being large industries in the future.

Bygrave (1997) interprets this type of quality existing in entrepreneurs as the "Dream". Entrepreneurs have a vision of what the Mure could be like for them and their business and more important, they have the ability to implement their dreams.

FACTORS CONSTRAININGÆNHANCING SMALL FIRMS GROWTH

The main constraint on growth of small businesses and common to most SMEs in developing countries as mentioned earlier is the lack of funds and shortage of working capital (Anderson, 1982, Cook, 2000). To re-iterate again, many SMEs in Nigeria, (which could be true of most small industries in other African countries), cannot meet most of the rigid criteria required for applying for loans from commercial banks (Mambula, 2002). In addition to the difficulty of obtaining good quality equipment's, other obstacles to small firm growth include the lack of skilled personnel, especially those that can help in building and maintaining machines. These problems are typical to small firms in most developing countries (Cook, 2000).

Unusually, in the case of some small firms, is the problem of competition from large indigenous firms. Such firms are seen as failing to cooperate with smaller manufacturers in order to extend to them the benefits of their steady raw material supplies and better machinery (Mambula, 2002). Schmitz, (1982) found similar conditions with large firms in other developing countries as impeding the growth of small manufacturing sector firms. Another serious problem voiced by African small firms is, the high rate of staff turnover, as people leave for better-paying jobs. Cook (2000) observed how large industries draw technical staff away from small firms by attracting them with better pay and benefits in developing countries. According to some entrepreneurs, larger firms sometimes try to force smaller firms out of business. Mainly perhaps so that the small firms do not stand in their way for competition. The large firms may not want to compromise getting attention for funds and raw materials or in the market, through selling products in similar lines of production. Since the small firms could have lower overheads and therefore sell their products cheaper to the poorer segment of society, the larger companies may see this opportunity as a competitive threat. The larger firms attempt to block smaller firms by dominating financial markets and buying favors from officials involved in handling official policies at the expense of the small firms. Perhaps an example could be learned from Japan as an example of large and small firm integrative relationship. Rather than create a practice of rivalry between small and large firms in Japan, complementary and productive subcontracting relationships are encouraged and enacted by law in 1969. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry 041TI), emphasized on policies that help to strengthen links between large and small firms' (Aoyama, 1999).

Problems faced by small firms in sub-Saharan Africa are sometimes compounded by the political instability in countries within the region. People flee from their countries or become refugees and illegal immigrants in other countries. Some of the side effects of these are high crime rates and poverty levels. Banks and businesses are closed during periods of political unrest and all activities comes to a standstill, sometimes this is mainly as a result of warring faction or annulled election results. Dereskey (2000) notes that the political and cultural environments where businesses are situated are important determinants for the success of establishments. The operating environment is affected by cultural factors, which include traditional norms, work ethics, social responsibility, attitudes, and functions of the people. The astute manager would therefore have to analyse the environment and see how he/she could accommodate and manage those forces to the overall advantage of the business.

As mentioned, the informal nature of the small firms usually fall within the 'craft'/artisan or 'marginal', type of organization category of Filley & Adalg, (1978). Some entrepreneurs could be well connected to official or other sources of credit, and others would not be able to receive much capital' even from families or friends. It would be to factors beyond the control of the owners that may oblige small firms to remain within the category of 'craft-survival' or 'artisanmarginal', even if they do seem to exhibit qualities of strong entrepreneurial motivation and ability. For this reason, there seems a strong case for arguing that if some small firms, and other firms of this type were to obtain some genuine external support and assistance, they might well be able to transform themselves quite smoothly into formal, 'promotion' or 'afractive'- high growth type SMEs, as described by (Filley, 1978 and Longenecker, et.al. 2000, Timmons, 1999). Some firms are similar in being largely the work of 'self made' entrepreneurs, who started with very little capital, and have overcome many obstacles. They also remain highly motivated and are optimistic about realising the 'dream' or 'destiny' of their firms' future prospects for growth and diversification (See: Bygrave, 1997, Kuratko, 1998).

Given the severe external constraints that could affect small firms especially in Africa, the fact that they continue to survive at all without any capital backing, and without proper equipment's and up to date machinery, is evidence of their owners' creative abilities, acumen, drive and resourcefu Iness.

What then would be considered to be among the most frequently mentioned constraints for small businesses in Senegal? These would have to be identified from the research. The usual problems as earlier mentioned in other parts of Africa include, infrastructure, especially inadequate electric supplies; the effect of SAP economic policies, especially devaluation, foreign currency restrictions and the declining purchasing power of consumers. These external constraints as mentioned makes it much more difficult to import updated equipment and other inputs on time since these are not produced in the country (Schatz, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1968, 1970, 1996). The main internal constraints as reviewed in literature are seen to be that of inadequate information about market and other opportunities. Other problems are that of organisational planning and poor management, shortage of financial capital (e.g. loans and grants) and the widespread negative attitudes of personnel towards the work.

Views of interviewees from small businesses would be useful in providing some confirmation on personnel and managers in some of the major institutions in Senegal. That capital, raw materials, foreign exchange and infraså•ucture are indeed considered to be among the most

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.1011.13786

serious impediments to effective growth in the small business sector will be determined after the research is concluded. Groups of non-SPMF respondents will also be contacted and interviewed. Their views will confirm if the problem of the non-implementation of government policies and the lack of any low-interest capital specifically earmarked for small firms are responsible factors for the anaemic small business yowth and development as the small firm entrepreneurs it to be.

Inadequate training opportunities is another impediment exacerbated by the nascent industrial and scientific processes in African countries. It would be worthwhile knowing the extent to, which this factor has impacted on small firms development in Senegal.

The important, but variable and often intangible role, played by family, peers and previous professional experience should not be underestimated. This issue was clear from other studies on African businesses and should equally be examined in Senegal. As a constraint, responsibility to family and friends or community sometimes can affect the amount of money re-invested into the business, thus determining business growth. On the other hand, family and friends can help in offering advice and support to businesses. It is significant for the purposes of this research that these observations on the current situation of Senegalese small businesses echo the major findings of the review of the existing literature.

As in most situations, various opportunities exist both for expanding the size of small firms, and for diversiWing their range of activities. The prospects for greater use of subcontracting are a mentioned, example in literature. To re-iterate again, exporting to regional markets could also be a means of ensuring growth of the small sector firms and of manufacturing StvfEs as a whole, especially in petrochemical and related industries (Mambula, 1997). Further expansion of small business activities through import substitution is also possible, particularly as imports become more and more expensive in real terms, given the devaluation of the local currency. Literature has shown that many of these potential niches are yet to be fully exploited in many African countries.

Expectations cannot always be predicted with equal accuracy but it would appear that small firms could graduate from the 'survival/marginal or the promotion/attractive' category to a higher category determined by external support or entrepreneurial quality. However, lack of external support and assistance could have its own advantages as well. It was under such challenging conditions that some small plastic entrepreneurs had said earlier that helped to bring out the best in them (Mambula, 1997). It may not be a general view, but it is possible that the skills and innovative potentials latent in certain entrepreneurs will not have been realised under more relaxed conditions. Some small businesses seemed to have mainly survived through sheer determination and fortitude. Some entrepreneurs are examples of promising avant-garde Schumpeterian personalities that it could be argued have been neglected by sources of external assistance. Schumpeter's type of entrepreneur according to Stevenson, et al. (1999) Indulges in all kinds of innovation including process innovation, market innovation, product innovation, factor innovation and even organisational innovation. The entrepreneur in Schumpeter's context is creating and responding to economic discontinuities. Similarly, as seen from earlier explanations some entrepreneurs would maintain their own machinery, train their own employees on the job, and closely supervise, monitor and adapt production processes and products in order to save costs and resources. They would further be able to accumulate capital

for further investment in addition. For example and as mentioned earlier because they could not obtain loans to afford buying fresh raw materials, they often resolve to recycle waste plastics. In the absence of expensive new imported machinery, some resourceful entrepreneurs would endeavour to improvise and build their machines and make their own spare parts. To meet training needs, the entrepreneurs train their own personnel in-house to save costs of training them in institutes and conduct their own market research in the market place through benchmarking and personal customer contact. In addition, because water and power supply, are erratic and can increase overhead costs in developing countries especially, the entrepreneurs dig wells and buy electric generators. Yet, another type of strategy used by these entrepreneurs is to subcontract work to other less busy manufacturers and then split profits afterwards. Sub-contracting deals are usually negotiated with other fellow manufacturers when machines are broken down, during periods of high workloads, or when trying to meet with customer order deadlines (Mambula, 1997). This practice of ingenuity has been observed by Anderson, (1982) as a means of economising capital costs adopted by who have limited access to financial support or assistance. However, the advantage of close supervision by the entrepreneurs, administrative, production, sales and marketing activities could be better integrated.

On the contrary, while some constraints are almost universal (poor infrastructure, lack of external credit) (Cook, 2001) even these as Schumpeter explained, can sometimes be turned to advantage through the resourcefulness and determination of particular entrepreneurs. Even if firms suffer from the most severe constraints in terms of credit, with determination and creativity they can still be able to accumulate even so. This is not what Schatz (1967) was thinking of when he referred to the illusion of credit shortage in Nigeria, but it may be a new way of interpreting that term. In the case of Nigerian small manufacturing entrepreneurs, for instance, the importance of control appeared to be highlighted, and the difficulties of running a firm without external support seemed to be pointed too. Yet, this was not true of all the small firms surveyed in many cases. The study by Mambu[a (1997) has highlighted the difficult situation of financial capital for small businesses in Nigeria. Firms confining to a state of virtual subsistence production can be attributed to a whole range of external and internal factors, which are difficult to disentangle in practice.

After each firm is assessed in turn, comparative case studies and overviews of individual firms will be presented to make it, clear just how complex the inter-relations between various factors, internal and external, positive and negative, can be in reality. Not all, small firms will be expected to obtain credit from formal-sector institutions (whether public or private). Yet, the ability of small firms to be creative in overturning their disadvantages into success should not be underestimated. Those firms that did not obtain external support, could still be doing relatively well, perhaps showing the most promise of future growth based on innovative present survival strategies. Entrepreneurs can indeed create a 'survivalist culture' for sustaining their business activities in a constraining business environment.

At times, being in a favorable position to obtain loans and other forms of assistance does not seem to be of a very significant advantage for some entrepreneurs, since they perform no better than firms that are less privileged in this respect. Mambula (1997) had observed that most small plastic manufacturers (SPNffs) - like many SRvfEs in Nigeria more generally in manufacturing sector especially - are simply struggling to survive. They would have to depend

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on their own initiative and determination, as well as the assistance of family and friends. Discovering ways of encouraging, correcting or ameliorating specific small firms' yowth strategies is one of the goals of this research. The implications of this however is that they might have the problem of sustaining that position in the long-run. This is mainly due to the various types of external constraints against them, which may be affecting even the larger industries as well.

The multi-dimensional nature of small businesses must be emphasised, since it means that one single factor cannot always be held responsible for variations in the growth performances of small firms, as an example (Orru, 1991, Allen 1999). The same factors can of course operate very differently in differing contexts. It is a simple point, but one that can easily be forgotten in the search for definitive 'sets of factors' to explain small business growth, stagnation and decline.

Review ofSelected Literature on Senegalese Industrial and Econonüc Development.

Some particular and relevant literature that supports the issues to be examined for this research are now presented. To begin with, Senegal a semi-arid country with its capital city Dakar is located on the westernmost point of Africa. The population of Senegal in 1995 was given as approximately 8,600,000, (www. Mbendi.co). The common and official language spoken in Senegal is French. Main ethnic groups are the Wolof (43%), Fulani (Peulh and Toucouleur (23%) sere, (15%), Diola, Mandingo and others (19%) (See: www. state.gov). Major cities are Saint Louis, Theis and Kaolack. The majority of Senegalese are Moslems (95%) and about 70 per cent of the Senegalese population live in rural areas.

There are different forms of business in Senegal, which include the following; sole trader, liability company, public company, economic interest goups, branches of foreign companies and joint ventures. For purposes of categorizing small manufacturing firms under this study, it would be useful to fully understand the nature of these business formations in Senegal and to know the form that fits and most commonly applies to small manufacturing firms (See: Senegalese business guide: newafrica.com).

Senegalese law enables foreigners to obtain real estate and properties while providing huge advantages, as incentives on tax relief and liberty to transfer profits abroad by investing firms (Ibid.) In addition, transfer of funds for commercial operations are authorized; for this purpose and for purposes of current financial operations, the banking system is efficient (Ibid.). The fiscal and monetary system in Senegal seems to be encouraging and supportive to businesses, which could equally be attractive to foreign small businesses to practice in Senegal. However, would these reasons see foreign immigrants as players in the small manufacturing sector in Senegal?

This issue will be investigated further in the research.

In terms of monetary regulation, Senegal belongs to the Franc zone in which transfer of funds is free. There is no exchange control between Senegal, and other countries, which belong to the French zone. These countries include France, Monaco, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of

Congo, Gabon and Chad. For other monetary zones, there is an exchange control. The French zone countries use the CFA franc, which is now replaced by the "Euro" as their main currency (BBC News Africa, Monday 21 January 2002). Senegalese traders and business people however, reacted to the new "Euro" with mixed reception. Some regard the advantages of the Euro, as good for the Senegalese people doing business in Europe, because of it's, ease in convertibility. People will not need to be changing currencies all the time for business in Europe. Senegalese manufacturers especially, can easily import machines and equipment from Europe than other African countries manufacturers could, because of the problem of securing foreign exchange for imports in their national currencies. Another advantage for Senegalese business would be that, it will be much easier for exporters to get standardized payments without all the usual variations and they can get their money in Senegal (Ibid.). On the other hand however, it has been reported that many people were not prepared for the use of the Euro when it was introduced in Senegal (Ibid.). Banks did not give much notice, through adequate information or publicity nor did they have enough Euro in stock. It is estimated that about 60 per cent of Senegalese people don't know or understand much about the Euro (Ibid.). Due to poor enlightenment, some sceptics even see the advent of the Euro and it's acceptance in Senegal as a French plot to economically colonize and destabilize and impoverish Africa by perpetually making them dependent on their former colonies. Someone was quoted as saying "Senegal's economic performance is not about outside currencies, it is about improving our own products, becoming more competitive. It's down to people in Senegal not the Euro" (BBC News Monday, January 21, 2002). From the foregoing, information at least two things are apparent about the business environment and how it might affect small businesses, in Senegal. The problem of naivety due to non-exposure, distrust and lack of apprehension of information especially on foreign, economic perspectives or on other business opportunities create obstacles to development and even confusion. Responses from people about the introduction of the Euro for example showed their non-awareness by a high percentage (60%) in terms of how they could benefit from the new European currency. Moreover, their pessimism about relating with their former colonies for economic and business ties could affect their involvement in international and foreign markets. There is need therefore, for banks and other institutions concerned to provide adequate training and information to businesses especially small firms to boost their confidence. Business people's views need to be broadened on how they would be affected by macro-economic decisions and what they could do to accommodate them better for growth.

One drawback on Senegalese business growth is that, despite its encouraging macroeconomic performance as well as progress in the structural and sectoral areas, SenegaPs economy continues to suffer from structural weaknesses. The government's financial position especially remains vulnerable because of the relatively overall weak tax efforts (about 16% of GDP). Furthermore, high cost and deficiencies in the quality and availability of factors of production (water, electricity, transport) and weak basic infrastructure severely hampers competitiveness (newafrica.com). Jubilee-usa-net in an internal article titled "Senegal's perpetual debt" on Wednesday, 28, 2001, reported the effect of World Bank and IMF debt crisis on the Senegalese people. The article further stated that, standard and poor, the global rating agency defines Senegal as a country at a low level of development, with a per capita income of less than $500:00 and deficiencies in the social and physical infrastructure. Low educational standards, high poverty and other human development indicators reflect the subsistence nature of Senegalese agriculture, which employs more than one half of the labor force. Senegal's population is

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/abr.1011.13786

growing fast but 60 per cent of the population have no access to health services, there are 7 doctors per 100,000 people and 26 per cent of the population live on less than $1 a day. Life expectancy is only 52 years. Conventional economic wisdom would suggest that for countries in such conditions like Senegal would need to be more productive in manufacturing for exports and diversify to other non-agricultural activities. More alternative routes to subsistence agriculture would help to create more employment, raise standards of living and alleviate poverty. Senegal cannot continue to remain on subsistence agriculture indefinitely and expect to get out of its backward economic development position and clear its debts. In fact, the article by Jubilee continues to state that the Senegalese debt only keeps getting worse as the debt only keeps getting larger and continues to rise. Relying on agricultural exports in low value added forms alone would not be expected to redeem Senegalese debts and economic predicaments any sooner. Investments in manufacturing activities and other alternative routes to development, especially ones that resourcefully harnesses agricultural and other natural products should be encouraged.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY—DATA COLLECTION

To develop an in depth understanding of small businesses and since individual businesses vary in both organizational structure and in systems of management control, it is pertinent that multiplemethodological approaches are pursued (Mambula, 1997; Denzin, 1994; Romano, 1989; Davidsson, et. al., 2001). This approach will be used to conduct this research including both mixed-method and multi-site strategies to study a sample of 50 small manufacturing firms identified in Senegal. A mixed method strategy is when more than one method of approach is used in data collection, analysis, comparison or integration of results while conducting a research (Romano, 1989). This approach is similar to what Mikkelsen (1995:81) Janesick (1994:214-215) and Denzin (1994:2) described as Triangulation. Triangulation according to Mikkelsen and Denzin is "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon". The use of the multiple method strategy will be adopted in order to enable the researcher obtain in-depth information and to reduce the level of personal bias by not depending on only one method of approach.

The researcher will collect from a variety of sources different kinds of data, and use at least three methods to ensure triangulation as Janesick (1994) Denzin (1994) and Mikkelsen (1995) suggested. These three methods are the case study method, the survey method and the use of descriptive data. Qualitative, quantitative and historical, personal dimensions on the topic under study can thus be clarified and triangulated or cross-checked.

Adopting this method of approach supports the authenticity of the study. This is because there would be no other way of making genuine tests or corrections in case any short-comings or limitations are experienced in the course of the research, which could also affect the validity of final results.

In other words, as Bouchard (1976:286) noted, It would be reasonable to conclude that the use of several methods "enhances our beliefs that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact". Similarly, a multi-site strategy, which will be used for this research has been regarded as when more than one sector or institution other than the main sector or institution under research, is studied. In another fashion, the multi-site approach closely examines several homogeneous units under research to further investigate their variations in-depth. More than

one small manufacturing business firm in Senegal will therefore be considered for investigation in addition, to obtaining information from other non-SNE but related establishments (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). Taking this approach is to avoid the possibility of bias response coming from only one firm or sector. As part of the multi-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative data will be used in the research. This data will be used in a variety of ways, including as earlier mentioned a case study approach and a detailed overview of the survey results in terms of a general profile and model of Senegalese small firms. A participant observation approach that would involve visits to the research 'habitat' of the small firms under study will be done, while examining each company's historical records. Relevant data and records will be examined from companies. These will include a review of growth indicators to see if there are any changes in profits, assets, employment, sales, production and expansion in size of space over the years since the firms were established. Adopting this method is expected to help identib' the factors that are responsible for the changes in growth and performance observed in the firms as at the period of study. In addition, semi-structured interviews based on open-ended, flexible questionnaires and some structured interviews will be conducted with several groups of people interested or involved with the small manufacturing sector in Senegal. The idea behind this is to obtain some crossreferencing data and some independent confirmation of data, as well as a range of opinions that will further be analysed in the main body of the research. The views of the following youps will be solicited: (l) Government officials who formulate and implement policies on SME promotion and industrial development in Senegal (2) Company officials responsible for raw material supply to small manufacturers (3) Managers of large manufacturing firms who are operating in the same sector as small firms (4) Representatives of development banks who might be requested to give loans to small firms (S) Industrial experts and consultants who are well informed about the present state of the industrial sector in Senegal and (6) Some customers who buy products as retailers to the public or to other small or larger firms. The information obtained from interviews mainly from those conducted with small firm managers and owners will be processed and presented. These will be interpreted by creating tables after compiling overall percentage measurements, and frequency distribution measurements.

Since semi-structured open ended interviews provide a lot of information that cannot be tabulated in these ways and may take the form of individual opinions expressed or comments made in response to open ended questions, the use of qualitative methods of expression will be employed where appropriate. Secondary sources will first be used to gain an understanding of the relevance of existing theories concerning the growth and development factors of small firms generally, and their roles in the industrial and economic development process (Cook, 2001, McMahon, 2001). Secondly, empirical evidence from field based research through participant observation in the firms and institutions visited and through in-depth semi-structured interviews will be presented in several different ways. Responses to interviews with the 50 small business manufacturers targeted for the research in Senegal will be interpreted in the light of the main concerns expressed in small business and entrepreneurship literature, as reviewed. Particular attention is paid to factors that are held to influence the growth, performance and development of small manufacturing firms and entrepreneurship in general and in Senegal in particular. This is to be able to illustrate some of the general findings drawn out of the literature review. In particular the concern is to place the situation of Senegalese small manufacturing firms' sector i_n a wider context. At the practical level, case study examples will be analysed in order to draw specific conclusions as to the 'best practice' and the

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varieties of 'worst practice' existing among individual firms within the small manufacturing sector in Senegal.

EXPECTED FINDINGS

It is expected that the following results will emerge from the research:

- The category of small firms and entrepreneurs in Senegal
- Characteristics of the entrepreneurs; outlooks, education, professional and personal background.
- The nature and types of enhancing or constraining factors that influence the performances, growth and development of small firms in Senegal
  - Characteristics of business setbacks (Internal).
  - Characteristics of business setbacks (External).
- The culture and approach adopted by small business entrepreneurs in Senegal for survival
  - Characteristics of strategies adopted to overcome Internal/External setbacks; whether the internal and external requirements for frture yowth and development are met.
  - Characteristics of capital and growth; type of growth.
  - Crucial requirements identified by respondents.
- Differences in practice between Anglophone and Franco-phone small business entrepreneurs
- A model for small business and entrepreneurial development in Senegal
  - Recommendations for effective small business and entrepreneurial development in Senegal

Likelihood that the findings from this research can be used as a basis for applying for additional funding from external funding agencies.

The likelihood that the findings from the proposed project would receive additional funding is justified by the fact that this research has been designed to give it a continuous direction, which requires constant updating. For instance, current information is necessary and constantly required to effectively implement and adjust to policy decisions in view of prevailing factors that affect small businesses at particular periods. The ongoing aspect of the research builds on history and trends that can be used to track, record and measure performance over time by identifying the responsible and relevant factors influencing small firms' gowth and entrepreneurial development at any time.

The Senegalese government via its Ministry of Industries formulates policies and implements development plans for monitoring small business and entrepreneurship progress on regular basis. United Nations Development Programs, the World Bank and ItvfF, African Development Bank (ADB), Aid Donating Countries, NGOs and other development institutions participate actively in the industrial and economic development of developing countries especially in Africa. These organizations mentioned would find the material from this research useful and relevant and could request for qualified consultation when a digestive study such as this, has been established. Evidence for this is when the United Nations Development Progam (UNDP) quoted previous work of the researcher in a report (in both English and French versions) from a similar research done on an Anglophone country in Africa (Nigeria). For more information on

this, (See: Enterprise: Issues Relating to an Enterprise Development Strategy; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: First Session, Geneva 20 January, 1997).

Also (See: Entreprises: Questions relatives A L 'elaboration D'une strategie de Developpment des Entreprises; Conférence des Nations Unies sur le commerce et le développment, Premiére session, Geneve, 20 Janvier, 1997). Furthermore, the findings of this research would useful for training, consultancy and organizing development programs for entrepreneurs and government officials in Senegal.

The research as intended will be conducted in three stages due to limitations on funds, time and other resources. Funding will be required and each separate stage of the research in order to acquire in-depth data information and material for the study.

Stage 1: The first stage will require data collection from a sample of 50 small firms in Senegal. After the data is analyzed, the move to,
Stage 2: At this stage data will be collected from other related institutions whose information will be used for cross-referencing of data acquired from the small firms to ensure triangulation of results.
Stage 3: Confirmation of results and completion of data collection from all other institutions will be possible and finalized at this stage.

This research is expected to be an in-depth study of the general factors pertaining to small business and entrepreneurship development in Senegal. It therefore requires that the study taking a systems approach, provide an overall picture of the inter-connection between different but related environments.

Names of Journals interested in receiving manuscripts based on the research project being proposed.

The following journals and publishers have accepted similar articles in the past and should be interested in receiving additional manuscripts for publication especially from the proposed research when completed:

- Journal of Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (Publisher: Taylor & Francis)
- Small Business Economics Journal (Publisher: Kluwer)
- Journal of Small Business Management (Global Perspectives): (Publisher: West Virginia University & ICSB) (ABI) (SSCI)
- Journal of Business Venturing (Elsiever) (ABI) (SSCI) - Journal of African Business (International Business Press)
- The International Journal of African Studies (CAS)
- Journal of Modern African Studies
- International Journal of Entrepreneurship (Publisher: IP Publishing)
- International Small Business Journal (ABI)
- Small Business Enterprise Development: An International Journal (Publisher: Intermediate technology Publications, UK)
- International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research (Publisher:MCB)

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- Small Business and Entreprise development (Publisher: Wiley)
- Journal of Entrepreneurship (Publisher, Sage Publications, India).
- Journal of Development Studies (Publishers: Franck Cass)

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