IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES: EVIDENCE FROM NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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This paper examines the impact of socio-economic characteristics on the performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Niger State. Data on socio-economic performance indicators of 307 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises domiciled in two Local Government Areas (Bosso and Chanchaga) were obtained from the field using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics; frequency, mean, min, max and standard deviation was used to analyze the socio-economic factors impacting on the performance of Small and Medium Scale concerns in the study area. Analysis reveals that gender, age, professional skills/training and educational qualification, value of assets, annual turnover, security and safety have significant influence on the performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in the study area. The paper suggests interconnected approach to capacity building and development of sustainable Small and Medium Scale Enterprises.

KEYWORDS: Performance, SMEs, Socio-economic, North Central and GIZ

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) contribute to the economic development of most countries of the world (Abor & Quaertey, 2010; Fatoki, &Asah, (2011). For example, an array of studies has shown that SMEs provide job opportunities, create wealth and help reduce poverty and by extension, instrumental to health, economic growth, social stability, equity and viable economy (Aworemi *et al*, 2010: Kelley *et al*, 2012: Kraja, and Osmani, (2013).

Globally, the capability of SMEs to advance domestic-drove growth in new and existing enterprises and to reinforce the flexibility of the economy in an aggressive and testing condition is inarguable. As per the Department of statistics of Malaysia, the financial growth in developed nations, for example, Korea, Japan, Taiwan and numerous others, was essentially produced by SME exercises. The SMEs has constructive effect on the economic development through work creation, fare of household products, upgrades pay level of people groups that at last expanded general GDP in the nation. Also, it has coordinate association with financial development in Iran economy and revealed that in Iran economy 94% of modern unit are occupied with SMEs area, which contributed 43% of mechanical work in the nation (Subhan*et al.*, 2013:Johari, 2012).

In Nigeria small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) constitute a greater percentage of all registered companies in Nigeria. Most of the small-scale industries developed from cottage industries to small enterprises and from small scale, to medium and large scale enterprises and is currently estimated at absolving over 55million people (Akinyemi *et al,* 2017: Ayozie *et al*, 2013: Keskġn *et al.*, 2010: Taiwo, Ayodeji and Yusuf, 2012).

SMEs constitute the ground of the national economy as far as advancement of nearby innovation, incitement of indigenous enterprise, preparation and usage of local reserve funds, business creation, auxiliary adjusting of vast and little industry segments in both country and urban ranges, supply of brilliant middle items consequently reinforcing the international aggressiveness of producer's merchandise, empower mechanical advancement and developments,

give the ability to grow send out plausibility and substitute import successfully. Revelation has additionally demonstrated that the normal part commitment by the substantial scale undertaking to the economy regarding change in the GDP, business age, expanding nearby esteem included, mechanical improvement among others are been settled by SMEs (Opafunso and Omoseni, 2014).

Small and medium scale enterprises include a variety of firms such as; agro-allied producer/sellers, restaurants, village handicrafts makers, fruit sellers, small machine shops, food vendors and computer software firms etc. that possess a wide range of sophistication and skills and operate in very different markets and social environments. Although the operations of these enterprises are not always reflected in the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP),their operations are not necessarily negative; micro-enterprises steadily and regularly contributed significantly to economic growth, social stability and equity (Kelley *et al*, 2011; Keskin and Senturk, 2010).

In Nigeria, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises(MSMEs) are an important part of Nigeria's economy and are expected to increase their contribution to economic growth, income generation, and employment as the country pursues its ambitious development targets(EBS, 2012), but the socio-economic position of the Nigeria has reasonably affected the functionality and development of certain sectors such as SMEs. Recently, government of Nigeria have adopted and introduced a number of strategies such as technical and innovative and agricultural programmes in order to address the deterioration economic situation of SMEs (Aworemi *et al*, 2010).

The fundamental problems which are socio-economic in nature peculiar to Small and Medium scale enterprises irrespective of the country are; management staff, Low level of technology, Poor market information, Lack of capital, High labour costs, Low productivity/efficiency, Low level of standard compliance etc.

Several articles have examined socio-economic effects of the performance of SMEs in international literature (Rekik and Bergeron 2017). However, at local scale, such evidence is fairly scare and of regional focus (Aworemi, *et al*,2010 and Ozioma-Eleodinmuo, 2015).

The current study attempts to examine the impact of socio-economic factors on the performance of SMEs with specific reference to Minna in the Northern part of the Country.

Governments around the world have responded in a variety of ways to assist SMEs in particular, policymakers' attention has focused on supporting working capital, easing access to finance, implementing a better regulation agenda, intervention by development partners and encouraging SME investment in new technologies or markets.

Evidence also shows that when SMEs become internationalised, particularly when they start exporting to foreign markets, their contribution to their home economy increases. For this to happen, substantial barriers need to be overcome. SMEs can face difficulties in financing international activity, identifying opportunities and making SMEs appropriate contacts in their target markets (Al-Hyari *et al*, 2012: Aworemi, *et al*, 2010).

Furthermore, MSME in developing countries are however confronted with several drawbacks and challenges they have to overcome in order to operate successfully. Major obstacles include for example access to finance (credit) competition, absence of Research and Development, little or no training and development for their staff, poor documentations of policy, strategy, financials, plans, info & systems, low entrepreneurial skills, inadequate educational or technical background, lack of adequate financial record keeping, poor management of financial resources and inability to distinguish between personal and business finance, high production costs due to inadequate infrastructure and wastages, market access, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as lack of infrastructure, discriminating legislation, poor access to land, appropriate technology and access to raw materials (EBS, 2012). In light with the above, while voluminous body of research exist on the problems and performance of the Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs)in Nigeria, such evidence on the socio-economic characteristics as it impacts on performance of SMEs within the North Central geopolitical zone remains relatively scanty.

The broad aim of this study is to examine the impact of socio-economic characteristics on the performance of Small and Medium Scale

Enterprises in Minna with a view to increase their overall contribution to the economic base of the Niger State.

The specific objectives of the study are to:
To assess the socio-economic characteristics of the SMEs owners

The research question is as follows;
What are the socio-economic characteristics that distort the advancement of SMEs in the study area?

Based on the illustrated relationships, this study projects this hypothesis and posits that: H_{01}: Socio-economic characteristics have equal impacts on the performance of SMEs in the study area. The is paper consist of background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and research hypothesis in the introductory part.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Definition of SMEs

On a global scale, the MSMEs of the World Bank Group proposed the following definitions: Micro Enterprises: Employment, 10 or less, Total assets; $100,000 or less, and turnover; $100,000 or less. Small Enterprises: Employment, 10 – 50, Total Assets; $100,000 - $3m, and Turnover; of $100,000 - $3m. Medium Enterprises: Employment; 50 – 300 staff, total assets; of $3m - $15m, and Turnover; $3m - $15m (Jones, 2007).

According to (Syed*et al*,2012) defined SMEs based on how different organizations may be allowed a two-year time frame to harmonize their existing SME definition in line with the SME Definition proposed in this Policy (Wright, 2007). See table 1.1 below

1.1 SME Definition Recommended by SME Policy 2007

Enterprise Category	Employment Size	Paid Up Capital	Annual Sales
Small & Medium Enterprise (SME)	Up to 250	Up to Rs. 25 Million	Up to Rs. 250 Million

In Nigeria, on the other hand, (EBS, 2012)Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises(MSMEs) are an important part of Nigeria's economy and are expected to increase their contribution to economic growth, income generation, and employment as the country pursues its ambitious development targets. Nigeria's national policy on MSMEs defines each enterprise size category as indicated in Table 1.2 below.

1.2 Definition of Enterprise Size Groups

SIZE CATEGORY	EMPLOYMENT (number of staff including unpaid family members etc.)	ASSETS (in million Naira - excluding land and buildings)
Micro enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 10
Small enterprises	10 - 49	10 - less than 100
Medium enterprises	50 - 199	100 - less than 1,000
Large enterprises	200 and above	1,000 and more

Source: Enterprise Baseline Survey, (2012)

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Measuring Performance of SMEs

Concept performance is a subject open to wide variation as it is a somewhat open ended word when it is placed to play a role as a placeholder in research (Sorooshian *et al.*, 2016). The lack of consensus on the meaning generates misperception and obviously limits the potential for overview and comparability of studies in the area (Sorooshian *et al.*, 2016). For instance, firm performance, performance measurement, performance assessment, or performance evaluation are used interchangeably. Dictionary of management sciences defines performance as the accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed (Al-Dhaafri and Al-Swidi, 2016: Sorooshian *et al.*, 2016).

Various studies have shown that personality factors such as age, and marital status, have significant influence on the sustainability of businesses (Sarwoko and Frisdiantara, 2016: Sidik, 2012: Rauch and Frese, 2007). Female business owners facegreater challenges when compared to male business owners, hence are less likely to sustain their businesses in the long run (Robinson, 2007: N cube and Wasburn, 2010:Stock & Watson, 2003: Bergmann and Sternberg,2007). Besides,

the significant factors affecting female business owners are significantly different from males (Omole, *et al*, 2014). Educational qualifications also influence business performance (Woldie, *et al*, 2008: Muthini, 2015: Baron, 2007). Educated business owners plan and organize their businesses well. They go for training and observe market trends. They keep good accounting records, set organizational standards, and monitor their businesses closely and achieved better performance. In Nigeria, evidences from various studies show that socio-economic factors influence the productivity and performances of Small Scale Enterprises. Ogunsiji (2013) identified age as the most outstanding demographic factor that influenced the performances of small-scale enterprises in Oyo State, followed by socio-economic status. Aworemi *et al*, (2010)identified gender, age, and educational qualification as the three most significant factors affecting small-scale enterprises in Osun State. Omole, *et al*, (2014) examined the gender differentials in factors affecting the performance of small-scale enterprises, and showed that the significant factors for males were different from the females. For Medium Scale Enterprises, Adegbite *et al*, (2007) examined the impacts of entrepreneurial characteristics on performance and found that personality factors, sales revenue, number of years in business, and working experience had impact on SMEs performance. But do these factors affect SMEs equally?

3.0 Methodology

SMEs have immense potentials for economic development through innovation, fundamental source of materials, ideas, process/service, competiveness, entrepreneurship and the foundation of a successful innovation framework for developing nations such as Iran where 94% of modern unit are occupied with SMEs area, which contributed 43% of mechanical work in the country (Subhan *et al.*, 2013: Keskġn *et al.*, 2010: Johari, 2012).

Combs *et al*, (2005) distinguished between organizational and operational performance. Organizational performance was described in terms of monetary outcomes while operational performance involves all non-financial outcomes of organizations. On this basis, four organizational performance dimensions were identified namely: profitability, growth, liquidity, and stock market performance. For this study, growth is adopted because of the kind of organizations involved;

these are small and medium scale enterprises that are not involved in the stock market. Growth was described in terms of profitability, working capital, and turnover, level of technology, business size and number of employees. The Theory of Performance postulates six foundational factors that determine performance. They are personality factors, level of knowledge, levels of skills, context, level of identity, and fixed factors (Fliessbach*et al*, 2007). This is where the research hypothesis is formulated: -H_{01}: Socio-economic characteristics have equal impacts on the performance of SMEs in the study area

3.2 Design

These research involve different steps in accomplishing its aim and objectives and this include: initial downloading of texts and preliminary review of various related literature on impact of socio-economic characteristics on the performance of SMEs, sampling of the population and sampling technique, designing/authentication of instrument for data collection, field survey through administration of questionnaires, methods adopted for data analysis was descriptive statistics; frequency, mean, min, max and standard deviation and making of recommendations.

3.3 Population

The population consist of 307 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. The study was domicile in two Local Government Areas (Bosso and Chanchaga,) based on secondary data extracted from the data base of German Agency for International Development (GIZ) in Nigeria.

3.4 Sample Frame and Sample Size

The sample frame for this study is SMEs in the geographical boundaries within Bosso and Chanchaga Local Government Areas of Niger State.

The population is drawn from the table 3.1 above. The population of the formal SMEs as at 2012 is 307. Going by the Central Bank of Nigeria's growth rate for SMEs of 2.7% in 2019. Also, according to Jinadu, (2004) projection formula as stated below;

$$P_T = P_o\left(1 + \frac{r}{100}\right)^n \quad \text{.....equation 3.1}$$

The projected sample size is 370.

According to Krejcie and Morgan, (1967) as sited by Kotrlik and Higgins, (2001), who states that "when a population is less than 500, the entire population is considered as the sample for the study".Also, a 30% return rate was added to the sample size which was (30% of 370 = 111 + 370 = 481). Therefore 481 questionnaires were administered for the study

3.5 Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was adopted for the study due to heterogeneous characteristics of the population. The population is divided into strata and questionnaires were administered in each. Each strata consist of about 25 to 30 SMEs on which the questionnaires were administered.

3.6 Sources and Method of Data Collection

Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study includes both primary and secondary sources:

This research made use of a well-structured questionnaire to obtain relevant information from the respondents. The questions were designed and administered in such a way that owners of SMEs were be considered. The reason for this is to obtain the real life situation of how SMEs in the study area.

This research work collected information from published and printed journals, textbooks, magazines, seminars periodic articles and recognized websites.

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient Test was used to test the reliability of the items on the questionnaire and the result was 1.2. Of course the rule of thumb required alpha to 0.7 and above before respondents' opinions are said to have maintained internal consistency

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

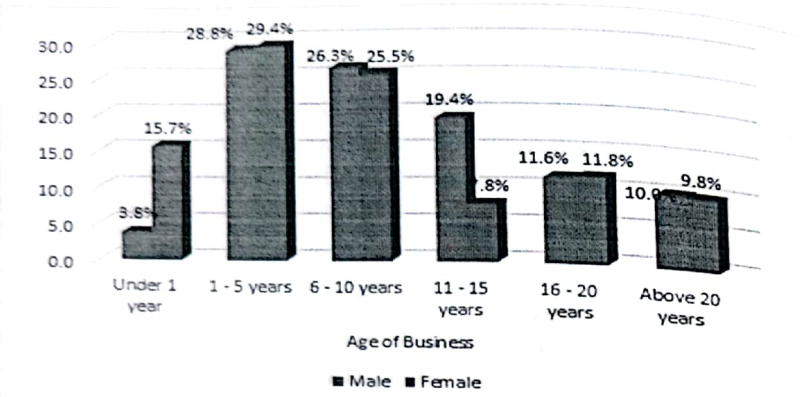
In this section, the results of the research are presented, analyzed and discussed. The objective of the study was to assess the socio-economic characteristics of the SMEs owners in Bosso and Chanchaga LGAs, Niger State. Data collected in the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the 481 questionnaires which had been presented for administration to the respondents, 370 were filled and returned for data analysis. Therefore, the study achieved a high questionnaire return of 92 per cent. According to Linder and Wingerbach (2002), questionnaire return of above 50 per cent is considered for a study. The author's further state that surveys that have a high response rate provides a measure of assurance that the findings can be projected to a population from which the sample is drawn. The research of this high response can be attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents.

4.3 Age of the businesses by Gender of the owners

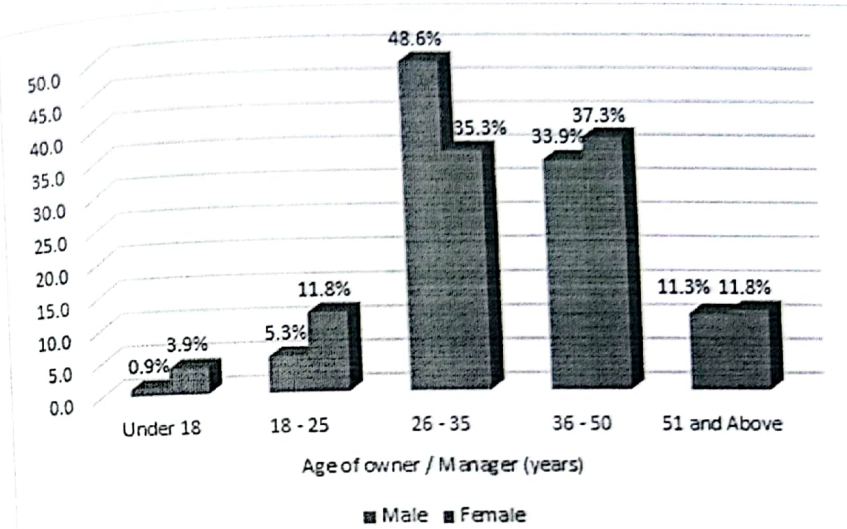
The cross tabulation of age of the business by gender of the owners, 28% of males and 29% of females were between 1 – 5 years, 26% of males and 25.5% of females were between 6 – 10 years, 19% of males and 7.8% of females were between 11 – 15 years and so on. The economic implications of Figure 4.1on the economy of the Local Government Areas were that majority of the SMEs owners were below 20 years which signifies that there are tendencies that many of the SMEs might fail (Kuratko and Hudges, 2009). The consequences of these is that there will be decrease in the production/service sector of the SMEs that failed thus decrease in the revenue coming into the state.



Age of the Businesses Figure 4
Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.4 Gender of the SMEs Owners

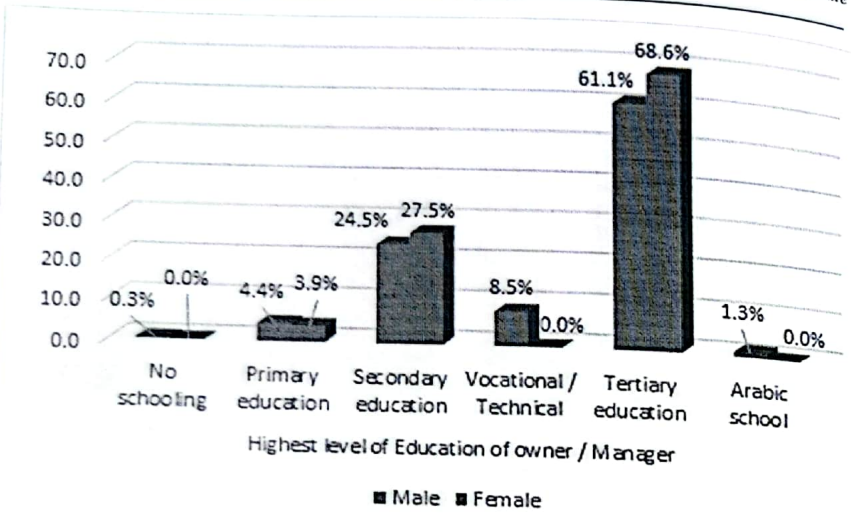
Figure 4.2 is a cross tabulation of the age of business owners/manager and their gender. The age range between 25 – 35 years where 48% were males and 35% were female, for ages between 36 – 50 years, 33.9% were males and 37% were female and so on. Traditionally in the Northern part of the country. Females are dominated by the males in virtually all facets of life and this have economic impacts on their businesses; religion and tradition have a negative effect on the SMEs; it restricts their movement and number of hours they could spend on their businesses because of the domestic responsibilities. Also, the active age for both males and females is between 26 – 50 years where many of the SMEs fall which implied that these SMEs were at their peak of productivity.



Gender of the Business Owners Figure 5
Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.5 Level of Education of the SMEs Owners

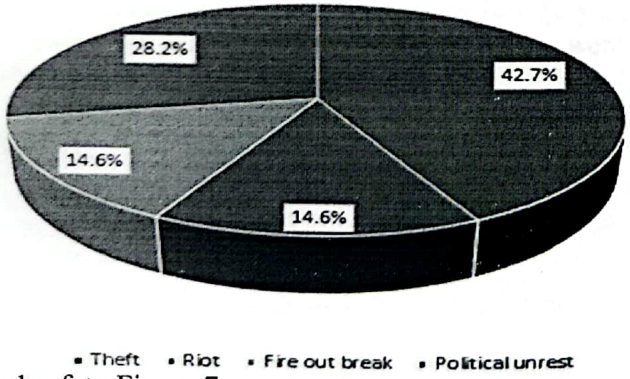
On the level of education, Figure 4.3 illustrated on a cross tabulation of the level of education and gender of owners,. 61% of the males and 68% females had tertiary education, 24% of males and 27% of females had secondary education and so on. This implied that majority of the SMEs were educated this enhanced their registration with relevant authorities, business structure and level of awareness



Level of Education of the business owners Figure 6
Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.6 Security/ Safety Matter

On security and safety, Figure 4.4 revealed that 42% of the SMEs had experienced theft of their properties in their offices/shops, 28% had experienced political unrest and 14% had experienced riot and fire outbreak. Security/safety is a very critical and sensitive issue which encourage or discourage investment in the society. A secured society will encourage investment and vice-versa.



Security and safety Figure 7
Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.7 Management Trainings Undertaken in the past

Capacity building is of utmost importance to successful businesses. Table 4.2 below illustrates that 79.7% of the owners of SMEs had training on entrepreneurship improvement, 21.6% had on business management, and 16.8% had on occupational health and safety. This implied that SMEs owner were aware and know the importance of capacity building as a panacea for improvement/betterment of businesses.

Table 4.2 Management Trainings Undertaken in the past

Training taken	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Occupational health and safety	62	16.8
Cost Calculation	19	5.1
Business management	80	21.6
Accounting	22	5.9
Marketing	33	8.9
Law and regulations	18	4.9
Quality management	27	7.3
Business finance	13	3.5
Entrepreneurship improvement	295	79.7

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.8 Modules to improve employees' performance

Table 4.3 shows that 56.5% of the owner/manager of SMEs use training modules to train their staff on writing of business plan, 48% on marketing management, 37% on operational and machinery tools, 28% on financial management. This implied that owners/managers of SMEs were aware that training/capacity building for their staff on these areas would increase productivity thus increase income for the businesses.

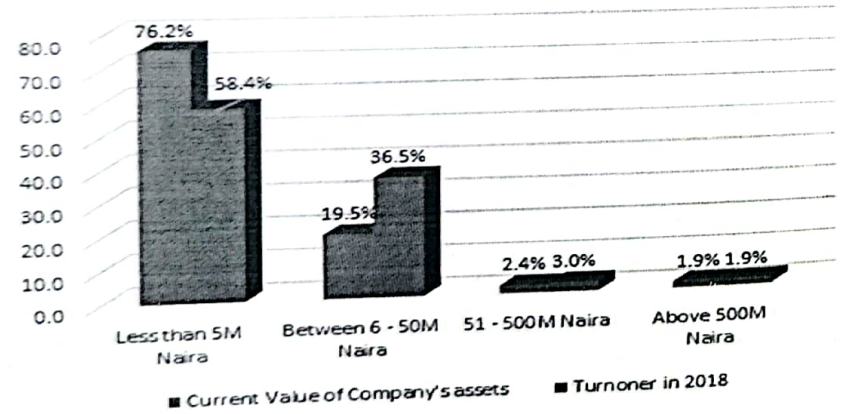
Table 4.3 Training modules

Modules	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Writing of Business plan	209	56.5
Financial management	104	28.1
Marketing management	178	48.1
Legal framework for doing business	36	9.7
Information management	34	9.2
Operational and machinery tools	137	37.0
Technology management	40	10.8
Personnel Management skills	207	55.9

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.9 Current Value of Assets and Annual Turnover 2018

Figure 4.5 reveals that 76% of SMEs had their current value of asset and 58% annual turnover to less than 5 million naira, 19% had their current value of asset and 36.5% annual turnover were between 6 – 50 million naira and so on. This implied that majority of the SMEs were into production and trading activities but only few were into semi and major production of products.



Value of asset Figure 8
Source: Author's field survey, 2019

4.10 Number of Staff of the SMEs

The table below illustrates the number of staff and apprentices of the SMEs in the study area. The number of staff at the business startup; the mean number of staff was 4.82, minimum number of staff was 1, maximum number of staff was 47 and the standard deviation was 5.5. Current number of staff; mean was 7.78, minimum was 1, maximum was 84 and standard deviation was 9.7. Number of staff at the peak of business; mean 4.5, minimum 1, maximum 60 and standard deviation was 7.3. While the number of apprentices; mean was 1.06, minimum was 1, maximum was 17 and standard deviation was 2.01. This implied that there was increase in the number of staff as at when the businesses were starting up and currently thus increase in performance and improve the socioeconomic factors of the SMEs.

Table 4.4 Number of Staff of the SMEs

Staffing	Mean	Min	Max	Standard Dev.
No of staff at biz start up	4.82	1	47	5.35
Current no of Staff	7.78	1	84	9.69
No of staff at peak of Business	4.52	1	60	7.31
No of Apprentices	1.06	1	17	2.01

Source: Author's field survey, 201

5.0 Conclusion

Socio-economic characteristics are very critical to SMEs owners in Bosso and Chanchaga LGAs, Niger State. From the findings it was revealed that socio-economic factors such as age, gender, level of education of the owners, capacity building/training for owners/employees, investment plan, security/safety, current value of assets and annual turnover had significant and positive impact on the performance of the SMEs. There is a relationship of socio-economic characteristics and SME growth. Also, females are dominated by the males in virtually all facets of life and this have economic impacts on their businesses; religion and tradition have a negative effect on the SMEs; it restricts their movement and number of hours they could spend on their businesses because of the domestic responsibilities.

Also, the active age for both males and females is between 26 – 50 years where many of the SMEs fall which implied that these SMEs were at their peak of productivity.

From the findings of study carried out, it was recommended that;

i. The federal government should create an enabling environment for obtaining loan by the SMEs.

ii. Nigerian University commission should further encourage entrepreneurship development by supporting university graduate to venture into small scale business most especially in the manufacturing sector.

iii. Government policy initiative be sensitive and responsive to the different hitch and potentials of SMEs in Nigeria.

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