

The Impact of External Drivers on Women Entrepreneurs Perception towards Supplier Performance in Nigerian SME Practices: The Mediating Effect of Enforcement Mechanisms

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the influence of government policies, customers, competitors as a driver and to some extent interventions to women entrepreneurship motivation in relation to its impact on social enforcement mechanism and supplier performance. The environment where women embark on entrepreneurial activities was articulated as one of the conditioned factors. Coupled with the harsh credit facilities and segregated opportunity prevailing itself to curtailed the untold hardships faced by women entrepreneurs for the success of their respective businesses which is not far from SME. This in turn influences the women entrepreneurs towards utilization of the available governance mechanism in nurturing their channel network relationship in achieving supplier performance. Even with burgeon of empirical investigation of the impact of institutional pressures on environmental practices, how these drivers affects social assets towards realization of supplier performance remains unclear. Social enforcement is seen as one of the alternatives used to curtailed supplier opportunism in realization of superior supplier performance. How does the social enforcement enhance supplier performance as a result of institutional pressures in the Nigerian women's micro, small and medium scale enterprise is still novel and unexplored?

Keywords: *External Drivers, Social Enforcement Mechanism, Supplier Performance, Women Entrepreneurs*

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the intervention policies and personal support measures adopted by women entrepreneurs towards supplier performance improvement domain has long been an area of interest to academic and practice world. In recent times, the emerging trend of social, contractual and internationalization enforcement mechanism have been widely debated for (Subramani and Venkatraman, 2003; Kiss and Danis, 2008) to curb opportunistic behaviour. In turn an examination of the external drivers (pressure) on women entrepreneurs and how they utilized such exerted pressure to influence supplier performance in their separate and collective business world has become a point of concern. The role of various government and established institutions or agencies play in motivating and enforcing laws encourage entrepreneurship and international business opportunities through social context to achieve supplier performance is novel, unexplored unclear. Some

scholars notably posits that economic, social and political pressures influencing most firms is a consequent of institutional theory (Scott, 2001) and collaborative buyer-supplier goal congruence via integration of limited resources to social capital results to performance (Krause *et al.*, 2007; Lawson *et al.*, 2008)). In contrast however, evidence from the extant literature also notes that the pressure of institutional theory varies across nations (Lau *et al.*, 2002; Zaheer and Zaheer, 2006; Luk *et al.*, 2008). Commercial laws and regulations checkmate opportunism and inconsistencies, which may result in trust among exchange partners and in turn trust influences dynamic information sharing and mutual planning (Cai *et al.*, 2010). Firms are worst hit with liability of newness and smallness hence dissuade chance for expansion and survival (Stinchcombe, 1965; Aldrich and Auster, 1986).

Debate on the role of isomorphic pressures gravitate towards social networks and foster simultaneous new practice adaptation (Cheng, 2010). Therefore from the stand point of social enforcement lens of institutional theory proactive measures were taken for successful contract execution by the exchange parties. It can be claim that a “general approach to managing the problem caused by specific investment is to design an incentive structure that discourages opportunistic behaviour by the other party” (Stump and Heide, 1996, p. 432). Although, literature make statement drawing observations on how firms IT investment decisions and financial positions are influenced by institutional pressures (Ravichandran *et al.*, 2009). That shows that firms should avoid homogeneous strategies implementation due to its adverse negative effect on performance (Gimeno and Woo, 1996). Therefore firms should proactively emphasized on measures that reduced supplier inconsistency, lower inventories, a lesser amount of overtime, dependable planning and lower cost achievable only through implementing feasible strategic standards (Kannan and Tan, 2002; Prahinski and Benton, 2004). This is the basic tenets to improve supplier performance and mutual relationships (Hahn *et al.*, 1990; Vonderembse, 1999; Krause and Scannell, 2002). Thus, in course of finding a long-term solution to supplier capabilities improvement anecdotal evidence uncovered that external institutional pressure encourage corporate image building and effective interorganisation information exchanges (Rogers *et al.*, 2007). However, the questions still remains that how do managers handling external institutional pressures relative to ‘operating competently and demonstrating symbolically’ (Ketokivi and Schroeder, 2004).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section, Section 2, delineated an overview of earlier empirical studies on institutional pressures, supplier performance, social enforcement and hypothesis development. Followed by Section 3, which presents the research methodology employed in this research as well as measurement scales, validity and reliability and results of descriptive statistics, correlations, regressions and mediation analysis, Section 4 buttressed on summary of empirical findings, paper conclusion and recommendations for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Institutional theory emphasized on the role of the multitude of, economic cultural and social pressures exerts on the way and manner organizations conduct their practices and structures (Scott, 1992) and those drivers influences firms performance due to the perceptual impacts of the drivers on the policy and decision makers (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983; Delmas and Toffel, 2004).

2.1 External Drivers and Supplier Performance

Dearth of literature have explored the effect of governmental, stakeholders and competitors intervention mechanism to curtailed or protect local, domestic or indigenous micro, small and medium scale enterprises. This policy implementation are not unconnected with poverty alleviation and gender based isolation (Remi-Alarape, 2009), networking support, opportunity for training, credit and IT facilities (Mordi *et al.*, 2010) as well as pragmatic support to formal and informal economic development (Aderemi *et al.*, 2008). The argument was these drivers can influence sustainable supply chain practices, aid knowledge transfer and collaborative buyer-supplier relationship (Zhu and Geng, 2013). Following (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983) institutional theory such as coercive, mimetic and normative may exert a reasonable pressure towards shaping organizational response to economic, social and political outcomes. Such pressures were exerted either by legislations, competitors, suppliers or customers (Dimaggio and Powell, 1983; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998b).

Accordingly, firms operating within a particular business environment with enforced legal system tend to perform more responsibly and honestly than those without (Frías-Aceituno *et al.*, 2013). Because, substantial entrepreneurial activities is economically, socioculturally and legally embedded within the confine of transactional surroundings (Baughn *et al.*, 2006). Thus, normative drivers were found to be associated with women entrepreneurial attitudes and segregation (Baughn *et al.*, 2006), due to the fact that organizations were socially integrated based on the context of institutional theory view. While a study also showed that socio-economic factor is significantly related to SME performance (Remi *et al.*, 2010). And entrepreneur SME

performance is dependent on age, education and ethnicity (Kimuyu and Omiti, 2000) while overcoming deficient entrepreneurial skills, education, R&D capacity and traditional practices (Al-Hassan, 2012), further evidence showed that government financial intervention leveraged the overall performance of a firm (Sheu and Chen, 2012). Nevertheless, prior study pointed out that investor's network is associated with performance (Ljungqvist *et al.*, 2007) and a positive impact of completion on firm performance (Johnson *et al.*, 2013).

H1: Coercive (1a), normative (1b) and mimetic drivers (1c) has a significant relationship with supplier performance

2.1.1 Coercive Driver and Social Enforcement

In particular coercive driver influences the women entrepreneurs to formed several social alliances (networks) in order to over the pressure exerted on them from the public regulatory bodies which will in turn shaped how they monitor and influence suppliers for improved performance. Therefore in a related study social capital is categorized base on structural, relational and cognitive ties of the exchange individuals (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998a) in a relationship. Thus a well coordinated alliance of informational and interpersonal collaboration ensures consistent goal congruence (Bechky, 2006). Besides, social capital was recently been regarded as an integral driver of learning and innovation performance that firms need to adopt for sustainable and successful project output delivery (Maurer *et al.*, 2011). Provide relevant contribution for a study that supports significant relationship between government regulations, supplier pressure and logistics social responsibilities (Miao *et al.*, 2012).

It is however not visible for studies which explores the effect of external drivers from the perspective of Nigerian women entrepreneurs. Some surveys conducted on the use of coercive power in exporter-importer relationship have pointed out the existence perceptual increase in economic and social cost more than the value adding in the alliances over time (Ramaseshan *et al.*, 2006). The study conducted in Taiwan's textile and apparel manufacturing shows that regulatory pressure has a positive moderating effect in the relationship between green supply chain management (GSCM) drivers and practices specifically on the current and potential drivers influencing social enforcement (Wu *et al.*, 2012). Nonetheless it was demonstrated that coercive pressure exerts varied influence on different focal firms (Hoffman, 2001).

A relation was found to be existing between government pressure to have an influence on the firms social responsibility and environmental performance (Tang and Tang, 2012), it was inherently conceived that, economic and social factors influenced regulatory and normative outcomes (Baughn *et al.*, 2007), while further study differentiate between international institutional and domestic institutional pressures, in which it was argued that international pressures lead to adoption of ISO practices than domestic pressure and in turn aid in maintaining international customers and partners (Zhu *et al.*, 2013). In particular for high entrepreneurial performance to be feasible there must be interplay of regulatory mechanism in the business environment (Stenholm *et al.*, 2013). Therefore this paper has provided a significant insight on how novel the need to understand the effect of external institutional drivers on Nigerian women entrepreneurial effort was relative to supplier performance improvement.

H2a: Coercive driver has a significant relationship with social enforcement

2.1.2 Normative Driver and Social Enforcement

Some authors interestingly emphasized on the impact of normative driver on social informational influence believed to be an integral tool in exerting pressure and shaping behavior in the transport industry (Bartle *et al.*, 2013). In particular online cyclist information guide, which indicate that relational trust as a result of interpersonal interaction and first hand experiences do play a major role in changing the attitudes of those within the social network through the word of mouth referral. As previously evidenced from the investigation of mechanisms facilitating women entrepreneurial social and economic empowerment (Sanya, 2009), thus shows how normative influence among several other attributes molded the behavioural outcome of women towards collaborative venturing in order to be socially, economically sustainable. However, one study found that external institutional pressures do redirect the behavior of the decision makers towards operational and strategic commitment to investment plans (Masini and Menichetti, 2013). Basically, some authors examine the embeddedness of institutional pressure that enforces social interactions to achieve a targeted investment goal (Tsa *et al.*, 2013). In particular global North ensures a formidable alliances and strongly demonstrate how institutional isomorphism confined decision makers compliance. Global North are in charge of corporate social responsibility framework which also has a normative pressure on most firms in developing nations (Beckfield, 2003; Lim and Tsutsui, 2012) for them to be committed to CSR.

Unlike many other scholars (Chang *et al.*, 2013) shows how taking into cognizance availability of experts by the operators of firms facilitate consistent transfer of knowledge. However, firms with homogeneous characteristics

have been assumed to be influenced in the same manner (Jennings and Zandbergen, 1995), as such some extant literatures synthesizes the notion that normative pressure exerted on firm decision makers does not in real sense have any effect on corporate social performance (David *et al.*, 2007). This is in effect was as a result of registering no inverse effect of such pressures on the corporate social policies. Nevertheless, a more holistic view of coercive power in cross boundary relationships subsumed that it yielded no benefit to the exchange parties other than a weaker state of trust, less commitment and generate intense conflict (Leonidou *et al.*, 2008). Invariably delving into factors underlying women utilization of external pressure to enhance supplier performance outcome and value creation should not be undermine because, it is worthy of investigation. Some extensive studies undertaken in china have partially supported the fact that normative driver did have an impact on sustainable supply chain implementation activities (Zhu and Geng, 2013).

H2b: *Normative driver has a significant relationship with social enforcement*

2.1.3 Mimetic Driver and Social Enforcement

Essentially the argument contends that, an imitative diffusion of competitors innovative positions and practices (Ansari *et al.*, 2010; Hillebrand *et al.*, 2011), through a cost and benefit analysis. Mimicry occurs irrespective of economic, technical or social benefit derivable by the focal firm (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Accordingly an examination of whether mimetic driver has an influence on supply chain practices by manufacturing companies in emission reduction policy established a significant positive relationship between mimetic driver and sustainable purchasing and customer cooperation (Zhu and Geng, 2013). In contrast to the view that perceptive states that it induces negative effect on firms value creation relative to relational management (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2011). Multitude of competitive complexities such as mimicry triggers firms strategic transformation (D'anno *et al.*, 2000). Similarly, by depiction on a common good of most firms, the corporate approach to business world views which emanate and the keep fit strategy is to be watchful of their competitors at all the time. The more a firm mobilizes both tangible and intangible assets the interconnectivity between the operators and the change agents would be fruitful for sustained competitive collaborative advantage.

However, within this ambit mimicry, normative and coercive pressure is found to be significantly associated with top management attitude (Ye *et al.*, 2013). Most of the explanations mimetic gravitate towards forces exerted on firms to adopt new practices (Westphal *et al.*, 1997) and some scholars noted that mimetic pressure is the most noticeable source of isomorphism (Lu, 2002). Firms that did not make rigorous effort to synthesized isomorphic involvement propensity with respect to competitive environment may likely record failure (Kraatz, 1998). Business environment is characterized by high degree of uncertainty in that appropriate evaluative process in an effort to discovering embedded idiosyncrasies in the collaboration may translate to sustainable competitive advantage. Nevertheless, firms may ascribe on propensity to profuse feasible competitive strategies utilization as seen from the market completion (Zsidisin *et al.*, 2005). Within the precepts and perfunctory basic tenets emphasis was made on how mimetic pressure aid in curtailing potential risk and ensure adoption to practicing authentic business operations (Grewal and Dharwadkar, 2002). Firms should henceforth be proactive to imitating successful with whom they have socialization platform for knowledge transfer (Galaskiewicz and Wasserman, 1989)

H2c: *Mimetic driver has a significant relationship with social enforcement*

2.1.4 Social Enforcement and Supplier Performance

Social enforcement is defined as the extent to which parties shared expectations and norms serve as an enforcement mechanism in a manufacturer-reseller relationship” (Osmonbekov, 2010). Whereas, differential firm performance is as a result of resource availability and value, rarity, inimitable and costly transcends to competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Some supply chain scholars noted that (Herna Ndez-Espallardo *et al.*, 2010), most opportunistic behavior are contended to be significantly related with trust as a means of social control mechanism utilized by the buyer firms. However, social network is believed to have been the pivot in supply chain procurement network (Harland *et al.*, 2001) and is categorized into material flow and contractual relationship supply network (Kim *et al.*, 2011). A superior chain performance relative to perennial competitive edge is as a result of efficient channel network (Dyer and Nobeoka, 2000); (Kotabe *et al.*, 2002)). Hence, “the mutual orientation among firms is principally a mutual orientation among individual actors in those firms” (Johanson and Mattsson, 1987).

Within the precepts of social network it has been opined to impact on firm performance (Jensen, 2003; Rowley *et al.*, 2005; Ahuja *et al.*, 2009), thus social networking is characterized as highly instrumental in exploring behavioural mechanism (Borgatti and Li, 2009). Somewhat, literature builds up some basic tenets within which social network can be buttressed by depicting degree centrality perspective (nodes having multitudes of other nodes) fostering proactive easy access (Marsden, 2002). Followed by the propinquity of one node with another in the network (closeness centrality) and the extent to which one node is frequently access enroute the network

(betweenness centrality) ensures successful interconnectivity between the operators (Freeman, 1979). While other scholars conceptually suggest the need to examine the impact of density, distance and centrality on social network in relation to firms behavioural outcomes within the network (Vandenbroucke *et al.*, 2009). Some scholars emphasised that possessing required capabilities in proportion to network responsibilities is inevitable for central focal organizations (Kim *et al.*, 2011) and it influences supplier selection and performance evaluation. In contrast with the aforementioned, some scholars attribute failure of social network to enhance internationalization as a result of legitimacy in operations and conformance to certain market strategies and norms (Bianchi and Ostale, 2006). And so was the survey conducted on software companies substantiates that social enforcement impact on technology fit and in turn influence e-business adoption (Osmonbekov, 2010). In addition, it was also established that compromising to developmental pressures does not in effect influence financial performance (Rugman and Verbeke, 1998).

H3: *Social enforcement has a significant relationship with supplier performance*

3. METHOD

The study has a targeted total population of 300 women entrepreneurs selected from 6 local government areas that participated in the Second National Fadama project in Adamawa state of Nigeria formed the population of the study. Those women entrepreneurs from the benefiting local government areas were first level customers and the supply base of their animal feeds, medicines, implements, support services, post harvest handlers and agricultural marketers were the key suppliers. Of the 300 questionnaires sent out, 177 were returned, out of which 34 were exempted for analysis due to incomplete responses and left with 48% usable response rate. Thus, the sample size of the study is one hundred and forty three (143) usable surveys were completed by the women entrepreneurs. Data were collected within a span of 10 weeks period via personal administration. Non response bias was checked after the first 5 weeks and last 5 weeks, based on the early and late responses of returned questionnaire and found no significant differences.

3.1 Measurement

Coercive Driver. We adopted the four item scale of (Wu *et al.*, 2012; Zhu and Geng, 2013) and modified to suit the present purpose using 5 point likert scale in assessing how corporate policies, plans and decisions of our firm will be influenced by central government's environmental regulations, by regional resource savings and conservation regulations, potential conflicts between products and environmental regulations will affect our firm's strategic environmental management.

Normative Driver. Items were adopted from (Wu *et al.*, 2012; Zhu and Geng, 2013), "Environmental requirements tendency from indigenous customers will influence our firm exportation capacity, Environmental awareness and protection of Nigerian customers will influence our firm sales to foreign customers, the influence of news media on our industry image is significant, the influence of public environmental awareness, community, NGO on our firm is extremely important.

Mimetic Driver. Is a five measure item scale adopted and modified from (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2011; Wu *et al.*, 2012; Zhu and Geng, 2013) "The corporate policies, plans and decisions on environmental management of our firm will be affected by competitors' environmental protection strategy, Corporate policies, plans and decisions on environmental management of our firm will be affected by professional environmental protection groups, To maintain the competitive advantage of environment-friendly products will influence our firm's corporate policies, plans and decisions on environmental management, Our organization has implemented corporate policies, plans and decisions in response to what informal pressure militants requirements, Our preference to employ CRM was strongly motivated by what others were doing in the industry".

Social Enforcement. Were measured using three item scale based on how series of actions and functions influenced familiarity and frequency of contact between buyer-supplier. The design scales captured Promises were kept to each other because we value our partnership, our shared expectations serve to enforce our business agreements; the strength of our relationship ensures transparency and honesty between the parties (Heide, 1994; Gilliland, 1997; Osmonbekov, 2010).

Supplier Performance. Four items scales were used to assessed supplier performance; Significant improvement in supplier product quality, Supplier delivery time improves, Schedule flexibility without cost or time penalty and improvement in cost control (Narasimhan *et al.*, 2004; Carr *et al.*, 2008).

Control. We control for several plausible constructs such as firm size, ownership, length of relationship, (Cousins, 2008; Pauraj *et al.*, 2008; Ye *et al.*, 2013).

3.2 Measurement validity and reliability

After data collection we will run for demographic frequency to confirm for missing values to be sorted out corrected after a repeated running, and also to determine variables with lower than 1 or greater than 5 scales. Verification of dimensionality and reliability of the survey, for critical purification of the data, factor analysis, correlation analysis, coefficient alpha and regression analysis were conducted to have a feel and examine

relationship. The key informant approach was adopted by collecting data from experts or knowledgeable individuals from each firm in order to have an in-depth understanding about the investigating phenomena at hand. Normality test of the data were conducted using the skewness and kurtosis, histogram and P-P plots test to establish normality. It was streamline based on the determination of the data set via skewness and kurtosis to check if there is any deviation from normality distribution between ± 1.0 . Consistent with the validation and reliability of the instrument, a principal component factor matrix with varimax rotation method with Kaiser Normalisation was employed to determine the suitable factors with an eigenvalue of greater than 1.

Analysis ensures that each factor loadings is greater than 0.7 with an approximate difference of items loadings between factors of greater than 0.5 for convergent and divergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2006) to be established. Inherently, reliability analysis demands that the item to total correlation must be greater than 0.5 with a cronbach alpha (α) of greater than 0.6 respectively (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Cronbach alpha should have a value above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Because this will serve as a check to the internal consistency of the items used in the scales by examining how well the individual items in the scales represents the common underlying constructs (Spector, 1992). Therefore 20 items were subjected to varimax rotation to check how the items were loaded on the factors and the characteristics root (Eigenvalue) ≥ 1 was adopted in order to determine the number of factor to retain (Hair *et al.*, 1995); (Sharma, 1996).

3.3 Results

Table 3.1 demonstrates the disposition of the mean, standard deviations and loadings among the variables, with their corresponding Alpha-values. In general the descriptive statistics of the respondents demographic characteristics indicates that of the 143 respondents, the age category falls between less than 25 years 6%, 36 is 26%, 48 is 44%, 60 is 20% and above 60 years 4% respectively. Majority of the respondents are married 61%, 13% are divorced, 11% are widows and 15% are singles. However, the respondents were found to have possessed some level of education ranging from primary 51%, secondary education 20%, tertiary 11% and non formal education 18% accordingly. However the results also showed that 54% of the women were livestock breeders, 17% were post harvest handlers and 29% are agricultural marketers that mediate between the breeders and post harvest bulk buyers. The initial analysis of the results Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measures of Sampling Adequacy reveals a relatively high value of 0.729. And also Bartlett's Test of Sphericity 4613.76 at $p < 0.001$, indicating the reliability of the data for factor analysis.

Table 3.1: Items Measurement of Mean, SD and Loadings

	Mean	SD	Loadings
<i>Coercive Driver (0.847)</i>			
Regional resource savings and conservation regulations	3.67	1.12	0.52
Conflicts between products and environmental regulations	3.49	1.17	0.92
Environmental regulations and cost of pollution preventions			
<i>Normative Driver (0.819)</i>	3.43	1.32	0.70
Environmental awareness and protection of Nigerian customers			
The influence of news media on our industry image is high			
The impact NGO on our firm is extremely important	3.46	1.13	0.44
<i>Mimetic Driver (0.791)</i>			
The corporate policies, plans is affected by competitors	3.61	1.32	0.70
Firm is affected by professional environmental protection groups			
Policies in response to informal pressure militants requirements	3.22	1.38	0.57
Competitive advantage of environment-friendly products			
Preference for CRM was motivated by what others were doing	3.64	1.22	0.53
<i>Social Enforcement (0.810)</i>	3.77	1.11	0.67
Promises were kept to because we value our partnership			
Our shared expectations serve to enforce our business agreements	3.45	1.33	0.46
Strength of our relationship ensures transparency and honesty			
<i>Supplier Performance (0.796)</i>	3.52	1.29	0.90
Significant improvement in supplier product quality			
Supplier delivery time improves	3.52	1.16	0.92
Schedule flexibility without cost or time penalty			

Improvement in cost control	3.55	1.33	0.51
	3.66	1.22	0.60
	3.13	1.40	0.62
	3.68	1.24	0.64
	3.52	1.29	0.90
	3.52	1.16	0.80
	3.42	1.13	0.92
	Overall Cronbach`s Coefficient Alpha	0.860	

The Correlated variable results shows that all measures were correlated with each other and are positively and significantly related at (p>0.01). And all items have significant factor loadings with all items loaded on each predicted factor except for two items that were dropped after testing for reliability of the scales, based on that the scale reliability increases from 0.852-0.860 as evidenced in Table 3.1. The Cronbach alpha of all the five constructs reliability was adequately varied well between 0.76 and 0.860 which are well above 0.70 primary cutoff points which indicate internal consistency and is accepted for further regression analysis. Table 3.1 also revealed that of all the 18, item by item mean scores indicate the level of importance of the dimensional items in measuring each factor in the determination of the hypothesized relationship in this study. Thus the means scores testify the absolute agreement of the respondents that attached importance and in turn the standard deviation scores equally highlighting the perceptions of the respondents with respect to implication of the measuring factors.

Table 3.2: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. <i>Coercive</i>	3.50	.65	1.00					
2. <i>Normative</i>	3.43	.91	.417**	1.00				
3. <i>Mimetic</i>	3.58	.72	.375**	.585**	1.00			
4. <i>Social Enforcemen</i>	3.45	.97	.445**	.531**	.649**	1.00		
5. <i>Supplier Performa</i>							1.00	
6. <i>Firm Size</i>	3.54	.79	.473**	.541**	.732**	.555**		1.00
7. <i>Ownership</i>								
8. <i>Length of Rel.</i>	3.58	1.36	.195**	.288**	.368**	.286**	.066	-
	1.64	.48	.105	.180*	.205*	.230**	.504**	.071
	3.62	1.52	.213**	.300**	.310**	.111		

Correlation in bold are not significant, at ** is at p<0.001, * is at p<0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlation of all the variables was determine as presented in Table 3.2 based on the data elicited from 143 respondents and regression analysis was also run concurrently to determine the relationship between the variables of interest observing the behavior of P – value, r – value and n as in Table 3.3. Even though the analysis shows that correlation coefficient of most factors did indicate significant level of relationship except for between controls (coercive driver and ownership, supplier performance and ownership and length of relationship and social enforcement). Hence, acknowledging the notion that institutional pressures do influence social ties and network engagement of women entrepreneurs and in turn impact on supplier performance. Multiple regression analysis was employed to investigate the relationship between two or more independent variable and the single dependent variable as this will give support for further confirmation of the relationship between the variables. And also to observe the behavior of the models coefficient of determinations were based on, (R, R² Adjusted R² to indicate the number of predictions in testing the hypothesis). Mediation analysis was conducted via Hierarchical regression to check the theoretical grounds, causal relationship and contribution of each independent variable in predicting dependent variable following (Baron and Kenny, 1986) steps.

Table 3.3: Hypothesized Regression of TR

Path	Standardized estimate	T-value	Sig.
CO, Norm, Mim, predicting S performance (R .768; R² .589)			
Coercive→Supplier Performance	0.205	3.38	.001
Normative→Supplier Performance	0.110	1.59	.114
Mimetic→Supplier Performance	0.591	8.67	.001
CO, Norm, Mim predicting Social Enforce (R .697; R² .486)			
Coercive→Social Enforcement	0.195	2.87	.005
Normative→Social Enforcement	0.172	2.21	.029
Mimetic→Social Enforcement	0.475	6.24	.001
SoE predicting Supplier Performance (R .555; R² .308)			
Social Enforcement→Supplier Performance	0.555	7.91	.001

Explicitly Table 3.3 is concern with the relationship between coercive (CO), normative (Norm), mimetic drivers (Mim) predicting supplier performance (Sperf), social enforcement (SoE), as well as social enforcement predicting supplier performance respectively. Perhaps it shows that, each measure portrays different patterns of association which was satisfactorily delineated in the later section. Therefore, the results of the antecedents factors relating to job performance were statistically noteworthy for some hypothesized relationships, in particularly; **H1a** = coercive pressure-supplier performance (b=0.205; t=3.38; p<.001). Consequently for the path **H1b**, normative (b=0.110; t=1.59; p>.05) and not significant. Whereas, **H1c** mimetic pressure leading supplier performance is (b=0.591; t=8.67; p<.001) is significant all accounted for 59% variance explained. Nevertheless, the result demonstrate that **H1a** and **H1c** were accepted while **H1b** was rejected, illustrating that of the 3 predictors only coercive and mimetic drivers seems to have influence supplier performance.

Somewhat, significant indirect effect of coercive pressure was also found through social enforcement to supplier performance (b=0.195; t=2.87; p<.05), normative to social enforcement (b=0.172; t=2.21; p>.02) and mimetic (b=0.475; t=6.24; p<.001) to social enforcement with prediction precision of 49% variance accounted in explaining social enforcement. Hence, **H2a**, **H2b** and **H2c** is supported. Thus, revealing the fact that the main independent variables are positively significant to social enforcement. Similarly, for the direct effect of social enforcement to supplier performance is significant at (b=0.555; t=7.91; p<.01) based on the 31% variance explaining supplier performance was recorded. Thus, **H3** is supported. For the three control variables the path between size and supplier performance (b=0.453; t=5.14 p<.01), to social enforcement (b=0.300; t=3.27, p<.01) and mimetic (b=0.295; t=3.00, p<.05), while ownership to social enforce reveals (b=0.214; t=2.70, p<.05), while between length of relationship and mimetic drivers (b=0.190; t=0.06, p<.05) respectively was found to be significant.

3.4. Results of Mediation Analysis

For testing the mediation effect of social enforcement, this paper utilises hierarchical regression analyses was performed as indicated in the summary results of Table 3.4. This is in line with the steps of (Martin and Grbac, 2003a) by taking into cognizance of (Baron and Kenny, 1986) steps. Similarly, coercive, normative and mimetic drivers were entered as the first block for the analysis in predicting supplier performance. While, coercive (CO), normative (Norm), mimetic (Mim) drivers and social enforcement (SoE) were entered to predict supplier performance (SPerf) presented as the second block respectively.

Table 3.4: Summary of Results of Multiple Regressions with Hierarchical Steps

Step	Model	B	R	R ²	R ² Δ	P-value
1	CO, Norm, Mim→SPerf	0.906	.768	.589		.000
2	CO, Norm, Mim→SoE	0.842	.697	.486		.000
3	SoE→SPerf	0.555	.555	.308		.000
4	Block 1	0.871	.768	.589	.580	.000
	Block 2	.768	.042	.590	.578	>.05

The results of the mediation analysis shows a reduced effect of the predictors towards the dependent variable though at a significant level from step 1-3, based on the individual items interaction effects. Whereas, the path

with the interaction of the antecedent independent variables (coercive, normative and mimetic) with social enforcement predicting supplier performance ($b=0.042$; $t=0.55$; $p>.05$) in block 2 indicating a situation of full mediation from the path. However, it should be concluded that H4 is partially supported because social enforcement mediate the relationship between coercive, mimetic and supplier performance. Therefore it should be concluded that social enforcement mediate the relationship between some external institutional pressures (CO, Mim) and supplier performance albeit women entrepreneurs perception and in Nigerian context from the perspectives of livestock breeders.

4. CONCLUSION

This study was designed to explore the effect of external institutional pressure on women entrepreneurial social perception mechanisms towards superior supplier performance. Because, little prior research attempted to link the two to supplier performance improvement and to marketing practice in particular (Hillebrand *et al.*, 2011) while specifically the effect of normative pressure have been singled out deserving empirical assessment of its impact on firm performance (Delmas and Toffel, 2004). Therefore, differentiated institutional pressures say for instance coercive influence has some level of impact on heterogeneous industries (Hoffman, 2001). The findings of this study provide partial support for the hypothesized effect of institutional pressure on supplier performance with only an instrumental influence of coercive and mimetic pressure on performance depicts stronger impact. Therefore this finding implies that, women entrepreneurs' utilization of the external pressures within the business environment triggers strong hold to social exchange network and in turn sieves out non performing suppliers for valuable potential economic transactions. This in some ways answers how institutional pressures and network of resources impact on quality improvement (Lai *et al.*, 2009).

However, it can be buttressed further that interestingly all the three institutional factors seems to have had an effect on social enforcement supporting the hypothesized relationship. By way of summary, we find that social enforcement have a significant impact on supplier performance. Thus, targeting socialization in this study was influenced by the excellent works of previous scholars that justifies its efficacy towards achieving performance (Sparks and Hunt, 1998); (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2000); (Cousins *et al.*, 2006b); 2008; (Petersen *et al.*, 2008)). It is worth mentioning that buyer-supplier paradigm is a multidimensional nested relationship that ought to be treated with caution, skills and expertise by the managers and researchers relative to glaring outcomes. Therefore this paper contributes to the body of knowledge by virtue of providing conceptual theoretical framework of the extended sensitivity institutional pressures on socialization in determining supplier superior performance. The results suggest that government, competitors and customers have significant positive influence on women's entrepreneurs' perception of how to mould social exchange and supplier performance.

The third key empirical finding partially supports the hypothesis that social enforcement mediates the relation between external drivers and supplier performance. Thus, given the evidence that social enforcement only mediate the relationship between coercive and mimetic pressures but not normative. It is clear in this regard that government and customers to a larger extent determine the success and failure of a firm with a little moderated effect of competition.

The findings of this study are subjected to several limitations; first, in line with the study objectives, cross-sectional data is limited in ability to study concept such as social enforcement due to its complexities and most firms not been aware of its relevance in value creation and sustainable competition. It is important to also note the fact that selected sample size of the study may not be reflective of all the firms in other industrial sectors. Therefore, this limits the generalisability of the study results in other regions or all industrial sectors. Second, differences in socioeconomic characteristics such as educational level and age for instance may limit consensus in agreement of the respondent perceptions in world views. Other factor may still explain the relationship in the model that were not yet explored, future research could take into cognizance other factors not accounted for in this study due to its limitation in scope and coverage. Future research could prolifically be built by extending this study in different context and philosophical perspectives.

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