

**TOWARDS EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS BOTTLENECK FOR SUSTAINED  
GROWTH AND PROFITABILITY IN NIGERIA**

**Sani Alfred Ilemona**

Department of Accounting, Federal University Kashere. Gombe State

**Email:** saniilemona@gmail.com

**Abstract**

The issue of organizational constraints especially resource limitation and the effects at the micro and macro level of the Nigerian economy attracting researchers. The paper examined various literature and empirical as well as theoretical studies on resource constraints in the domain of management accounting and the effects the economy from the literature reviewed, it was discovered that a relationship exists between growth, profitability and business resources through scarce but can be efficiently managed through managerial acumen (endogenous growth and profitability factor). However, in Nigeria, the absence of other factors such as the right infrastructure and security (exogenous growth and profitability factors) has compounded the growth and profitability of businesses in the country. The study recommends among others that entrepreneurs should invest more in resource procurement with increased local content and the government should do more in creating a secured and friendly environment for businesses to thrive.

**Keywords:** Resources, Constraint, Business, Growth, Profitability.

## INTRODUCTION

The essence of any business organization is to survive and grow with sustained profitability .and therefore; the organization must perpetually deliver goods and services that satisfy the contemporary needs of their customers in terms of both quantity and quality. The quality and quantity of the goods and services delivered depend to a large extent on the number of resources committed by the business to their delivery. The quality, quantity, timely delivery and satisfaction derived by consumers from consumption of the goods and services are some of the yardsticks used in measuring organizational performance. These performance variables are critical evaluation factors especially for manufacturing enterprises on which patronage, sales, growth and profitability rotate (Kwalti, 2017).

Normally, organizations need resources and are to be obtained in the right/desired quantity and quality to be able to deliver to customers, goods and services that satisfy their needs (Maxwell 2015). Anything short of adequate provision and availability of the needed resources will impede the quality, quantity, patronage, sales, survival and profitability of an enterprise. The word 'desired quantity' is apt in terms of resource availability because no organization can have all the needed resources to deliver its mandate to consumers of its products. An organization may have two or more products to produce or deliver but the resources are always scarce (Edomen, 2017). The survival, growth and profitability of an enterprise, therefore, to a large extent depend on how efficient it can manage the resources at its disposal. At the beginning of any financial year, enterprises/organizations normally state in both quantitative and qualitative terms the number of goods and services to deliver in the course of operation. The resources needed by business enterprises for operation are generally made up of four basic components namely; men, machine/tool/technology, money and materials (Edomen, 2017). These resources have to be efficiently managed and allocated by managers as businesses in most times have to contend with their scarcity (Lewis & Edna, 2020). Efficiency and prudent allocation of resources are critical to business operation as the success of any enterprise largely depend on resource availability and prudent utilization in face of scarcity and constraints in obtaining them (Margma & Wilson, 2019). Scarcity of resources slows down the rate of business operation and constitutes an impediment (bottlenecks) to the survival, growth and profitability of any enterprise. The maximum capacity or performance of any business is a function of the capacity of its bottlenecks especially for manufacturing enterprises as bottlenecks are reasons why business activities are costly and slow (Margma & Wilson, 2019).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scarcity of resources is a general problem constraining enterprises from achieving their goals (Erhii, 2016). The issue of limited availability of resources is so severe in Nigeria that the rate at

which businesses in is to operate for growth and profitability is negatively affected (Olobi & Kuta, 2019). Collaborating Olobi and Kuta (2019), Eniola and Agadu (2020) viewed that limited resources and inefficient management of available ones have constrained productivity, growth, expansion, output quality, patronage for made in Nigeria goods and services and profitability of enterprises in Nigeria. The negative effect of resources availability and allocation problem (business bottlenecks) in the country is multidimensional as businesses are unable to operate at maximum capacity, expand and employ people (Okey & Helson, 2020). The micro and macro socio-economic negative effects of sub-optimality in business operation in the Nigerian economy are loss of revenue, inability to grow and employ, unemployment and poverty with all the negative consequences of arson, robbery, kidnapping etcetera that continue to rise in Nigerian society (Omeno & Clement, 2015; Taiwo & Garba, 2016 and Nashma & Unumba, 2019).

## CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

**A bottleneck:** According to Ronald (2016), a bottleneck is a phenomenon where the performance or capacity of an entire system is limited by a single or limited number of contents or resources. A bottleneck in business operation is one process in a chain of processes such that its limited capacity reduces the capacity of the whole chain. In a manufacturing outfit, for example, a bottleneck in operation occurs in sequential .production processes when a backup happens in one step of the sequence (Neil & Churchill, 2017) For example if there are six (6) machines on an assembly line and the first and last can produce one hundred and fifty (100) units per hour but the second machine can produce only seventy-five (50) per hour, the inability of the second machine to produce enough units to keep pace with other machines will slow down the entire process and therefore a bottleneck to the growth of the enterprise. A constraint/bottleneck is anything that prevents an organization from attaining the stated goal or goals (Wunanas & Richard, 2016). For business organizations, resources availability and their efficient allocation are critical to growth and profitability whereas, scarcity and inefficient management/allocation of the resources constitute bottlenecks with a severe consequence on growth and profitability (Opatu & Iman, 2017; Edward & Patrick, 2018).

**Business Growth:** Business growth is that stage where a business reaches the point of expansion and seeks additional options to generate more profits (Fitcher & Kelly, 2015) For the expansion, the amount of resources available for operation is critical as no meaningful activity can take place without the needed resources. Martyl and Arlda (2017) viewed the growth of business as the process of using enterprises resources to boost the top line of revenue with greater product sales or service income or by increasing the bottom line or profitability of the

operation via cost minimization. A growing business is an enterprise experiencing expansion in all areas of its operation with improved input and output quality. In business, the critical drivers of growth are the resources and their efficient allocation/ management (Martyl & Arlda, 2017).

**Profitability:** It is the degree/rate at which a business yields financial gain (Corlnet & Shyme, 2015). It is a business's ability to yield or produce a return on investment or its input/resources. Profitability is the major objective of an enterprise/business with many related names like lucrative, beneficial, rewarding, successful etcetera. Profit occurs in a business when the enterprise generates more income than expenses (Irlion & Norly, 2017). To a layman, a business is profitable when more money comes in than it goes out. In accounting terms, profitability arises in a business when the aggregate amount of revenue is greater than the aggregated amount of expenses in a reporting period (Tseul & Leon, 2016). Profitability is one of the yardsticks used to derive the valuation of a business measured with the net profit ratio and earnings per share ratio compares after-tax profit to revenues, the earnings per share present on a per-share basis.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In literature, business activity and the role resources play in attaining objectives has attracted the attention of researchers. For instance, Eniang and Victor (2018) found a significant relationship between business resources and output. The findings suggest that business output both in quality and quantity is a function of the availability of resources. By finding, implies that the ability of a business to deliver its output for profitable operation depend largely on available resources, Sulaye and Paul (2018) examined the impact of resources available on the performance of manufacturing firms in Lagos and Ogun States – Nigeria. It was found that the performance of a business is a function resource. Further, the authors discovered that firms with more resources perform better than those with fewer resources. The findings of the studies confirm the critical role of resources in profitability attainment – a key objective of the business.

Osudumi and Laimo (2019) also provided evidence on the impact of resources on the growth and performance of the business operation. The study investigated the impact of resources on the performance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Using six (6) cottage businesses in Ibadan, Findings from responses of fifty respondents descriptively analysed comprising owners and managers of the enterprises suggested that the performance of the business is a function of resources. Mnola and Bukola (2018) provided a comprehensive study that incorporate resources maximization in addition to resource availability. Findings from the study suggested that resource maximization through prudent management is also key to the attainment of

objectives. The findings further indicated that the availability of resources that are ever scarce and so, efficiently in their management is also critical to the growth and profitability of the business endeavour.

On resource scarcity as a bottleneck limiting business objective of profitability, Bule and Solie (2019) did a study on the effect of resource constraints on the performance of businesses in Nigeria. Findings from seventy (70) literature reviewed indicated that resource scarcity especially finance has limited operation and profitability of businesses in Nigeria. The findings of Bule & Solie (2019) is consistent with that of Lawal and Tiawo (2018) that examined factors contributing to hindrances to the attainment of business objectives in Nigeria, found out from the descriptive analysis of responses gotten from business owners in Osun and Ondo states that finance is a major resource factor constraining growth and profitability of businesses in Nigeria. Morroco, Zamlan and Ouzlu (2019) investigated the relationship between material and human resources (explanatory Variables) and business growth (dependent variable). The research was conducted among selected manufacturing enterprises in Morocco. Firstly, it was found that a positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable was. Secondly then found evidence that limited resources constraints the extent to which a business can attain growth and profitability.

In Kenya, Teddy, Morgan and Nelson (2019) had a similar result with that of Zamlan and Ouzlu (2019) was in a study on the impact of human resources on the performance of tea manufacturing businesses in Kenya, found out that human resources of the right quality have a significant impact of business performance.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study anchored on the Theory of Constraint (ToC). The Theory is an approach developed by Goldratt in 1990. The theory assumes that organizations or systems have constraints that can impede the attainment of objectives and that the secret to success lies with the ingenuity of management in terms of efficiency in resource sourcing and allocation for survival, growth and profitability

As part of management efficiency, the theory advocates a continuous improvement process that enables organizations to focus on the bottlenecks/constraints for improved performance (Goldratt & Cox, 1984). The theorist further observed that growth and profitability that managers are obsessed with actually mattered very little unless the resource that largely determines the quality and quantity of output become a problem regarding sourcing and availability in the right quality and quantity. The assumption of the theory is particularly relevant to enterprises in Nigeria as its emphasis is on resource management for the growth and profitability of businesses. Profitability of enterprises of interest to entrepreneurs, people

and government of the country and indeed any nation as the multiplier positive impacts of business success is of multiple facets.

## **METHODOLOGY**

It is an exploratory study that made use of relevant literature on the nature, types and effects of business bottlenecks on the economy particularly that of Nigeria. To that extent, a total of ninety (90) empirical as well as theoretical studies were accessed on the internet using Google scholar.

### **Types/Classification of Organizational/Business Resources**

The resources used by organizations are broadly divided into five (5) namely (i) Financial Resources (FR) (ii) Physical Resources (PR) (iii) Information Resources (IR) (iv) Intellectual Resources (IRS) and (v) Machine/ Technology (vi) Human Resources (HR) (Pekki, 2015).

FRs are the funds at the disposal of the enterprises and intended for implementation of the operational cost necessary for expanded reproduction, fulfilment of financial obligations and economic incentives of employees (Martin & Yessun, 2016). The resources are used to carry out business operations like buying goods and services and also to carry-on long-term investment. FRs helps in determining business strategy and direction as well as contributing to the overall objectives of any business concern. No business can operate without money as it is the lifeline of any enterprise with which to run operations, pay for the employment of both human and material resources and with which an organization can take all available opportunities (Kennel & Ronparter, 2018).

PRs are all the tangible resources owned and used by a company (Swmon & Angella, 2016). Examples of PRs include land, building, manufacturing and equipment, Production facilities, Vehicles etcetera. The resources are necessary to facilitate the delivery of goods and services for continued operation and profitability (Orioto & Bird, 2017). The resources also include materials required for production. For those businesses into manufacturing, materials are required for processing into new products by either mechanized or chemical process. The quality and quantity of the outpost (the new products) largely depend on the quality and quantity of the materials processes. The competitiveness of output of a manufacturing industry whether the primary, secondary or tertiary industry is a function of materials of the right quantity and quality (Shola & Nurudeen, 2016).

InFRs refers to media, Instruments and methods for planning, collecting, processing, transmitting and storing data and information (Walter & Japel, 2017) Information is a resource just like other resources of a business contributing to profitability because it has value costs to collect, store, process and disseminate.

IRs are intangible assets that contribute to a company's bottom line (Koofla & Mabel, 2018). These assets include the expertise of employees, organizational processes and sum knowledge contained within the organization including brand name, logo and URL (Koofla & Madel, 2018). It also includes original creative works such as album covers, artwork or inventions such as productivity and gaming software. Generally, IRs is the collective Know-how even beyond the capabilities of individual employees that contribute to both short- and long-term objectives of a business (Hortler & Dogma, 2019).

In terms of Machine/ Technology, the resources are required for enterprises to function. In production, machines/tools and modern technology have aided quality, quantity and timely delivery of goods and services (Kwalti, 2017). With modern tools and technology, businesses can better understand their target markets, increase their production efficiency and compete effectively locally and globally. Technology in production is a vital resource leveraged by advanced countries of the world to improve their global productivity and competitive advantage (Wallday & Santia, 2019)

The last but certainly not the least of the six (6) classifications, is HR. HR play key roles in developing, refining and changing the culture of an enterprise. The resources are responsible for the utilization of the other four (4) factors for attainment of business objectives (Dush & Bor, 2015) Thus Wallday and Santia (2019) stated that HR is responsible for strategic planning of organizational objectives, projecting the right culture and image of a business. Equally, the resources are important because enterprises mostly depend on them for their skills, technology expertise, thinking and knowledge to change the national substances (materials) into valuable resources (Oklan & Kova, 2016). Thus, Murray (2019) remarked that HR is superior to other resources because they make use of other resources and provide insight into other resources' availability. The insight into the quantum of the resources available helps to improve timeline projections of a business necessary for better delivery on objectives (Morgan, 2017).

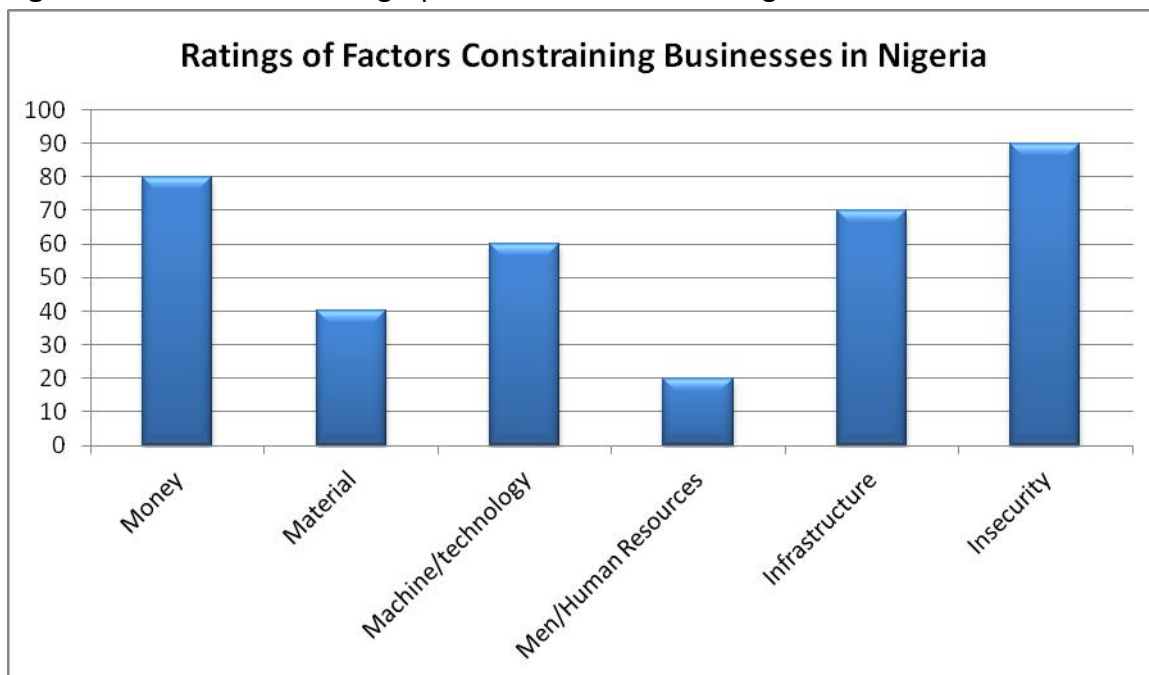
However, no better delivery on objectives can occur without the right infrastructure and friendly business environment. It is interesting to note that while the provision of the resources is endogenous policy based on the business acumen of entrepreneurs, issues of infrastructure and security are critical exogenous resources the provisions of which are largely outside the preview of entrepreneurs. It is with the understanding of these critical endogenous resources of the business that governments in advanced nations spend billions of dollars annually to provide security and critical infrastructure (water, electricity, road) for the smooth operation of businesses (Osill & Tony, 2019). Friendly business environment in terms of infrastructure of the right quality and quantity coupled with security bear much on of the quality and quantity of goods and services an enterprise can deliver (Morgan, 2017). Thus Kwalti (2017) opined that

the performance of any business enterprise is function of the presence of both internal and external factor and their absence or partial presence constitute constraints/bottlenecks to business survival and profitability.

### Effects of Business Bottlenecks on Nigerian Economy

Many business enterprises are going through a series of operational difficulties in Nigeria due to a lack of resources and the unfriendly nature of the operating environment (Tola & Ojola, 2020). The problems/ bottlenecks are in varying degrees of magnitude rated in percentages (%) as depicted in the bar chart below:

**Figure 1:** Factors Constraining Operations of Business in Nigeria Rated on the Bar Chart below

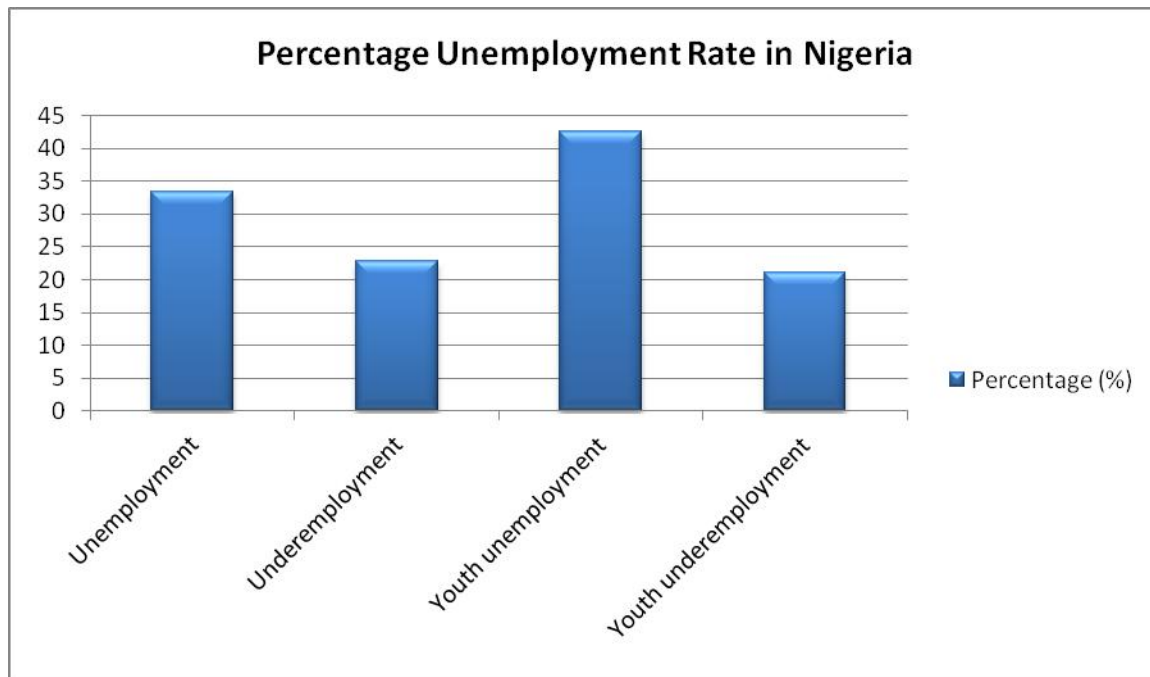


Source: Field survey 2021

The multiplier effect of the constraining factors is operational difficulties as many of the businesses in Nigeria have either out rightly closed down or have drastically cut down their operation (Tola & Ojoade, 2020). The ultimate negative effect of the closure and reduced scale of operation of business activities is the growing rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigerian society (Tola & Ojoade, 2020).

The figure below depicts the rate of unemployment in Nigeria as of Q3 2021.





Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

### Finding and Discussions

Scarcity of resources is an issue (bottleneck) contributing significantly to difficulties that manufacturing businesses face in Nigeria (Omeno & Clement; 2015: Taiwo & Garba, 2016 Nashma & Unumba, 2019). The issue has limited the operation, growth, expansion and profitability with many of them closing down or has drastically reduced the scale of activities (Tola & Ojoade, 2020). While 25% of operational difficulties (bottlenecks) faced by manufacturing businesses are attributable to lack of finance (money) 20%, 15%, 5%, 20% and 15% are on account of lack of materials of the right quality and quantity, machine/technology, human resources infrastructure and insecurity (Figure 1). The negative consequence of the reduced scale of operation and outright closure of manufacturing enterprises in Nigeria is the ever-rising rate of unemployment and poverty in society (Tola & Ojoade, 2020). The multiplier effect of unemployment and poverty are robbery, arson, kidnapping and insurgency that threaten the existence of Nigeria as a nation.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is an exploratory review of literature on the nature and effects of bottlenecks on the operation of manufacturing organizations/businesses. Findings indicated that lack of resources has been the issue limiting the scale of manufacturing businesses in Nigeria in addition to insecurity (Exogenous factor). The study, therefore, recommended that businesses in the

country particularly manufacturing ones should; invest more in resource procurement with an increase in the local content, invest more in new machines.

- (1) Invest more in resources procurement with an increase in the local content. It will reduce dependence on foreign sources and exchange.
- (2) Invest in new/ modern machines and technology. The investment will increase efficiency, improvement in the quality and quantity of output, patronage sale, and profitability of manufacturing enterprises in Nigeria.
- (3) Investment in human resources through training and retraining. The training will improve their efficiency in resource management and production of quantity output using new technology
- (4) Government should invest more in infrastructure and create a safe and secured environment for businesses to thrive in the country.

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