



Strategies of Implementing Moral Legitimacy in SMEs in Crop Production Supply Chain in Zimbabwe

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To cite this article:

Thembanani Gaswa, Nothando Msipah, Josphat Manyeruke. Strategies of Implementing Moral Legitimacy in SMEs in Crop Production Supply Chain in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences*. Vol. 10, No. 6, 2022, pp. 405-415.

doi: 10.11648/j.ijefm.20221006.23

Received: October 18, 2022; **Accepted:** December 8, 2022; **Published:** December 28, 2022

Abstract: Today consumers are becoming aware of the contents of foodstuffs they eat and even various processes of production, packaging and distribution methods, which motivate many food industries to consider adopting moral legitimate practices in their value chains. SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe are struggling to come up with suitable strategies in their supply chains performance to satisfy their customers. This article aims to suggest and recommend the aspects of moral legitimacy strategies to address these SMEs challenges in crop production in Zimbabwe. The surroundings literature on ethical business practices in SMEs for developing countries was done on a number of journal articles and a survey was done using structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were distributed to SMEs in crop production in Mashonaland Central. Targeted respondents were small scale farmers with less than 100 employees, employees, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers and the general public. This study used descriptive quantitative research design and Gamma and Kendall tau-b analysis of data was used. A sample of 240 respondents was used. The study recognized that a good number SME's should come up with strategies that balance between organization, people, processes, procedures and management requirements. The research concluded with a call for further enquiry on particular areas which demand more time and precision.

Keywords: Crop Production, Moral Legitimacy, Strategy, Supply Chain

1. Introduction

Application of moral legitimacy in supply chains of SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe call for consideration of employability skills. Some of these skills are truthfulness, collaborative, considerate, respectful, self-importance in an individual work, willingness to discover new things, dependability, integrity and loyalty is vital [1]. Appropriate strategies to be implemented by these SMEs to increase their supply chain performance need well informed selection, confirmation and manipulation [2, 3]. Suggested three different strategies an organization can follow to increasing legitimacy. These strategies are, environment, compliant, selecting appropriate environment sand manipulating the environment Brinkerhoff, M. used the same three strategies but added a fourth: creation of the environment [4]. Again

environmental complicate and environment manipulation, just like Suchman does, but replaces selecting with informing [5]. This article use Suchman suggestion in this fast changing markets, competitive world and consumer quality compliance perception. To evaluate these strategies to increase supply chain performance, areas in financial, customer, innovative, people, environmental and social perspectives were used. It is important that organizations have strong strategies to put so as being ahead which might influence their present moral legitimacy [6].

In the present changing and uncertain environments, moral and socially accountable behaviour may help many businesses to increase support from different external stakeholder. Other researchers proffer the understanding of

institutional perspective and management of an organization (opinion of management identifying what they believe to be legitimate entity before the public [7]. Institutional theorists adopt viewpoints of society looking at legitimate in context of understanding and acknowledging public wants; management and acceptance rather than control, which is the approach adopted by this article. It is also suggested that substantive changes by SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe policies develop as a result of institutional pressures, as rendering publics' values which is dynamic, because of: developing social consciousness, organisational pressures and stakeholder pressures.

To be competitive, sustainable and grow, SMEs in agro-business should change their supply chains by the way they supply, manufacture, distribute and market their products. This will set alternative economic structure that bring transformed ways of organizing, working and thinking focused on increasing valid norms and values of the relevant communities. For SMEs, the moral punishment they may fail to endure is loss of reputation, guilt and social rejection [8]. It is also important that relevant organizations have strong strategies in place to forge ahead of changes which might affect their current moral legitimacy [9].

These strategies should aim to promote human dignity, integrity, trust to the organization as well as convenience to stakeholders in most efficient and effective way for crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. The world is moving away from old ways of creating a need, to recognizing real need in their supply chains for customer satisfaction. Customers are more sophisticated than ever before. They expect and demand a high level of competency and responsibility from people whom they give their money. Businesses work according to what customers want, knowing consumer needs and doing something about it, create good relationships. However, SMEs should be particularly cautious to poise the goals of profits maximisation with values of both individuals and society through moral business practices [10]. Hence, businesses are expected to practice good ethical values for survival. Customers value businesses which do right things and when a business loses trust through being unfair in business practice, customers may seek alternatives at the detriment lost sales to competitors, or risk litigation process [11].

In the process, managers seek to make their organisations legitimacy through aligning their processes using acceptable institution or socially accepted image [12]. In an endeavour to conform to environment to fit to operate, the practices of an organisation adopts world- acceptable practice and SME owners should practice act of good faith as the basis for business commitment with stakeholders. This calls for business to take steps to be honest and sincere in an endeavor to act in harmony with personal agreements, acceptable moral standards in the particular industry and law itself [13].

As such the information generated from the study will potentially assist, SME owners managers, in the industry, can adopt the findings explained in this article to craft ethical policy guidelines to perk up their reputations for competitiveness.

2. Suggested Strategies

Management in SMEs crop production in Zimbabwe may use a several strategies to put on moral legitimacy, to increase supply chain performance. Some authors have categorized the following strategies, environment conformation, selection and manipulation, which corresponds with legitimacy in five distinct scenarios, depending on the issue at hand and strategic goals [14]. Again, some strategic goals which may direct moral legitimate strategies in SMEs crop production are [15].;

- 1) exhibits fit with social values;
- 2) non- violation of social values;
- 3) working with value challenges;
- 4) modification of social values.

2.1. Conform to Environments to Enhance Supply Chain Performance

The environment conforming strategies identify allegiance to social order, which result in a certain level of acceptance by an entity which show fit with social values. For an organization to display moral legitimacy, organizations acquire characteristics, practices, forms given by regulations, together with standards, or norms generated [16]. The adopted strategy also suggest that managers should not change a existing cognitive domain as implemented through meeting the needs of different audiences by using various communication medias being used by the firm [17]. For crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe moral legitimacy is gained when they value production for derived demand which limits food pollutants, use organic agricultural practices, regain and recover hard-up land, practice environmentally friendly farming, support inclusion and growing traditional and regional varieties so as to match to norms and values that increase citizenry. This in turn increase cost in supply chain, responsiveness, customer loyalty, reliability, and competitiveness which improved survival chances for the organization [18].

SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe, mostly as suppliers, are characterised by delays in receiving of the material; or variance for quantity supplied; or inferior quality material or damaged; or alteration and delaying supplies are very critical. The solution is to manage supply chain delays through managing supply chain risks in socially acceptable means. The availability of needed material at the right time and placing the orders for input materials at the right time and appropriate delivery date, right quantity and cost are usually agreed by the supplier well in advance according to the agreed norms and values. Nasi, J defined supply risk as, the propensity of occurrence of unacceptable incident in inbound supply chain failure by an individual supplier or supply chain market, in which the outcome results in inability of purchasing firm meeting customer demand or threats to customer life [19]. In using confirming strategy, entails complying with societal pressures of legitimacy, which appear highly similar to other organisations in the industry [20].

2.2. Select Among Environments to Enhance Supply Chain Performance

Selecting among environment entails, adopting internal policies and created in a bid to adapt to the external environment perspective [32]. If management intends to avoid categorisation or labelled according to the image of new activity, it has to move ahead of conformity and be proactive. This will creates double logics aimed to differentiate with external environments, which in turn is useful for improving long-term legitimacy [22]. For any emerging entity like SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe, the significance of deciding specific vision, goal and staying loyal to the ideal means appealing to the relevant audiences in their supply chain. It means devotion attention to ensuring that the specific elements in the supply chain have the strong understanding of the complete value chains. For moralisation aspect, real moral values are understood as specific by the company towards stakeholders as fit to expectations [23]. Demonstrating full knowledge and balancing with moral benefit over an alternative would invite strategically benefits for normative legitimacy [24].

Furthermore, to manage legitimacy, an organisations have to identify the stakeholders are and their needs or demands which held in answering the some relevant questions. First question may be posed as what groups exert more pressure on an organisation. Secondly, to what extent does the organisation believe these groups exact power to bestow or withdraw legitimacy, if [25] the description of stakeholder theory is used. Sutton, R. I, however concluded that managers according to the demands of the highly powerful stakeholders [26]. When the powerful alliance of most stakeholders becomes serious with particular issues which have the potential to destroy firm's legitimacy, a legitimacy gap emerges and the gap has to be reduced. Argument by Tedeschi, J. T, suggest that for management to attain certain ends, or be perceptual factor, managers pay certain attention to certain individual stakeholders [27]. For instance, small environmental group can have a legitimate status in society and may have legitimate protest over a organisation activities in the context of an environmental issue, but unless it posses the power to impose its will in that regard, it will not attain its aim, to take notice of its protests.

Specific characteristic of moral legitimacy SMEs in crop production facilitate trust, approachability, openness and transparency in communication, democracy with mutual respect in the supply chain. Creation of frank relationships which translate to self evaluation regarding to answer why and how things should do for the cost benefit of whole, particularly in trying times, such as economic depression and drought. Many study findings indicate positive relationship between reputation and social responsibility profitability over a long period of time, which usually results in future competitive advantage and future return on investment. The crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe have to coordinate, and collaborate with relevant parties both along and laterally the supply chain in the context of supplies, manufacturing,

distribution, storage, and logistics. Furthermore, to improve performance of their supply chains, they should extend and maintain fast delivery and improve their lead times to customers whose interests are to receive products on schedule [28]. Finally, they should maintain supply chain visibility into production cycle ie movement of raw materials to finished goods as assurance of efficiency in their manufacturing processes.

Selecting appropriate strategies among the environment for SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe should mean transforming their supply chain to be efficient, customer-satisfying. Where the effectiveness of the complete supply chain is more significant than success of each individual department, call for more transformation than ever before. Today, several customers demand reputation and ethical practices than ever, and companies are scrambling as a chain to meet their customers demand for different tastes, features, order fulfilment together with fast delivery [29]. In addition, customers nowadays demand more quality, appealing designs, innovation, convenience and high customer service, altogether spending less money and effort, time and risk in their purchase as explained by [15].

2.3. Manipulate Environments to Enhance Supply Chain Performance

It appears as if most organisations grow their legitimacy through environmental conformity and selection. In other circumstances these techniques may be insufficient. In other instances, if an organisation may plan to do something innovative without established social values in place, suspicion and distrust may arise [31]. In an example of environmental manipulation an organisation may be forming a precise industry relationship to give legitimacy to new form of production practices it would be planning to use. The design of the association in sometimes legitimises the new practices. The adopted strategies would comprise educating the public concerning new practices, vision and enhancing the idea formed. The association ensures that there should be external sources taking care of society's welfare.

Noyce O. C., (Intel Computer founder) argues that to gaining legitimacy, firms with acceptable reputation can, charge premium prices, obtain capital markets, attract investors easily, and at times, gain lower interest rates [32]. The intention of adopting manipulation strategy could be to entice the conferring public to know that the concerned organisation has support of reputable institutions. Presumably, the reputable institutions have power, authority and themselves legitimate. Their reputation comes from being socially responsible in the area of their concern to society (environment groups). In some instances, these institutions are held high by certain sections of society, because of their practices followed by gaining legitimacy. Manipulation of the environment calls for innovation which differs from old practices and adoption of the most appropriate new forms. The moral legitimacy is gained through performance demonstrations by collaboration and integration lobbying in the supply chain. SMEs in crop

production in Zimbabwe should learn to collaborate with each other. The most appropriate way to do so is to have strategic alliances. Such strategy may help them in learning about challenges with best practices. Working as associations may also help to promote blond business practices, ultimately enhancing supply chain performance [5].

The highly competitive scenery of today's business settings, require enterprises to incessantly seek ways of decreasing operational costs, providing satisfying customer service, and reduce existing and unforeseen disruptions. This can be done by designing and organising efficient supply chains. Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, should accept orientation towards increasing long-term vision vs short-term objectives as an attempt to manipulate their stakeholders. These two are linked for growth of business as well as benefiting the community [16]. In such instances, Riley, J. recommends, the understanding of what every customer wants and reasons, as every customer can have specific requirements [35]. Communication internally and working together minimise internal logistics cycle lead time, in procurement, manufacturing, customer order process and shipping. To have products ready and accessible for delivery to the customer also increase supply chain performance.

Manipulation strategy in the supply chain entails, developing and communication to suppliers what is being done, why it is being done and to what extent. Learning their processes also help to design the most appropriate one and subsequently learn supplier's operations together with logistics cycle time.. This minimise inventory levels, which is certain, even they are raw materials, packages, MRO, work-in-process and finished goods. Inventories marry working capital and capital with alternative uses for the benefit of the company. Furthermore, planning and organising legitimacy, use of impression management theories, focus on how personal legitimacy is managed by identifying roles, social affiliations displays and verbal explanations of attitudes following threatening image events [36]. Significantly, qualitative researches support the notion that individuals and organisations use impression management techniques to guard their image [7].

As for the SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe, owners must cease doing unfair treatment of employees, customers, and other relevant stakeholders to legitimise their supply chain operations. After all, these SMEs appreciate that practicing business operations require exercising good faith with honouring promises. When carrying out good faith responsibilities to customers and stakeholders they increase goodwill and intentionally increase performance in their supply. When signing contracts and other agreements, it is recommended that the crop production SMEs owners must truthfully represent products and services they sale, again exercise honest transactions..

Another appealing approach so as to legitimise an organisation may to focus at those with resources. Resource dependence theory assert that large organisations with important resources usually are less vulnerable to outer social control compared to other less resourceful organisations [17].

This suggests that, organisations are inhibited by, and much dependent on, other organisations and institutions which control crucial resources. At the same vein, organisations try to manage uncertainty and dependencies on other external groups in a bid to acquire more independence and freedom [23]. The control of resource influence makes powerful legitimate stakeholders significant to management, especially in double-edged view of legitimacy. Similarly that power being is also transferable between administration and powerful stakeholder groups.

2.4. Maintaining Moral Legitimacy to Enhance Supply Chain Performance

Generally, the chore of legitimacy maintaining is thought to be easier than gaining and repairing it. The challenge for much management in different organisations, in maintaining legitimacy is through identifying audience needs and wants which change over time [33]. Legitimacy represents relationship with relevant stakeholders that the organisation must maintain current. Organisations have to observe, and even anticipate change in order to protect past undertakings so as to maintain their legitimacy. In seeing change, organisations must guard against viewing potential problem as if is not real or not serious to warrant their attention. Some of the techniques management may use here are those of bridging. These strategies transmit to watchfully deal with stakeholders' views and looking at disclosure strategies. Reflecting those views, checking on what information to disclose by an organisation is important. Nevertheless, potential problems arise if one wants to test maintenance of legitimacy from a perspective of management [34]. A peculiarity should be made between organisations which posses different levels of legitimacy to maintain. For instance, if an organisation is perceived as a good corporate citizen and acts responsibly or even in an upbeat manner with regard to social issues, expectations of the general public with regards to the organisation maintaining a criterion of legitimacy may be higher [35].

Through using maintenance of legitimacy strategy by communication crop production SMEs in, Zimbabwe, should highlight social media on the importance of providing high-quality products, instead of influencing consumer behavior. Furthermore, social media raise consumers' expectations concerning product quality, but also able amplify damages caused in product recalls. Both organizations and members of society are able to sway concerns linked to legitimacy through mediums [36]. Thus, crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, are increasingly pressurised to produce high-quality products and produce them consistently. The only possible way is through addressing quality in every level of their supply chain, particularly in procurement of raw materials, manufacturing operations, packaging, logistics, and material handling. Legitimacy influences organizational survival, through social performance and economic exchange -financial performance [36].

In addition, quality product often works with compliance. Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, have to ensure that

they convene with international and local regulatory standards when manufacturing, labeling, packaging, handling, and shipping their products as explained in National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), agriculture sector. Besides passing standard quality control together with safety tests, organisations are also obliged to make compliance documents, such as permits, licenses and certification which can engulf them in their supply chain systems.

A second strategy in the context of maintaining legitimacy is, the organisations must protect the legitimacy already acquired. Shocker, A. D argue that this technique boils down to three responsibilities; first, prevent miscues; second, curtail highly evident legitimation efforts, and thirdly, developing a stash of helpful beliefs and attitudes [7]. Each of the above tasks may, sometimes, need to be communicated to relevant stakeholders in public forum, to maintain legitimacy. If stakeholders' suspect that the organisation is continues doing business as usual, then the enterprise may not want proceedings to occur for scrutiny. In avoiding miscues, the organisation should try to give stakeholders proof of its environmental performance with consistent disclosures along supply chain as usual. These disclosures usually eliminate uncertainty and prompt a stakeholder control.

Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, before global operations, global market expansions, and very strict quality and accepted regulatory pressures, enterprises are overwhelmed by large amounts of information. These different information come from different suppliers and customers in different geographic locations which need to properly management. The management includes data from every stage of SMEs supply chain such as the way to price direct, indirect materials, rental contracts, labor agreements, tax documents, compliance certificates and freight bills among many others. Doing so will increase their supply chain performance. It a well known business idea that an organisation that dependent on public support for survival need to conform extra to the institutional pressures or, be, be innovative in the way to convince the public of its continued legitimacy.

As the notion globalisation strive, the fast-changing consumer souk also brings supply chain challenges as far as crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe are concerned. Categorically, products life cycle is now shorter due to rapidly changing souk demands. Many small enterprises are pressurised to be abreast with the latest trends and be innovative through introducing new products in the markets. They should also endeavour to keep their total

manufacturing costs low to understand trends which normally will not last for quite a long time. Maintaining social norms and acceptable standards, demands flexible supply chain that can be used for manufacturing and improve future projects. All these endeavours' beg for innovative manufacturing, distribution, order picking, packaging and material handling of goods in their supply chains. The example also demonstrates that moral legitimacy needs to be maintenance over time. Strategies need to embrace the incident of external threats or even changes in public moral perception [37]. SMEs enterprises in supply chain also must constantly update their product features. Enhancing product texture requires enterprises to design their supply chain so as to accommodate product changes, which in turn improve performance of the supply chain. Research proved that innovation herald challenge in demand forecasting for new products. Constant innovation brought about by fast-changing markets also indicates SMEs should constantly have to anticipate demand for new products. Enterprises need to maintain and create a flexible supply chain that can respond well to sudden call and dips in demand with production needs.

3. Methodology

3.1. Response Rate

Out of the 240 questionnaires posted, only 102 replies were received through mail. The remaining respondents were telephoned in a space of two weeks later, and 23 responses were recorded via whatsapp platform. The outcome increased the complete response rate to 52%. Organisations from crop farming sector accounted a quarter of the sample, however a some disproportionately small responses were received from distribution and retailing sector, which amount less than 4% via both email and whatsapp platforms. Manufacturing (mostly millers and food processors) accounted for over one half of respondents. Because of this, the data for examination of results is now only able to represent, SMEs farm crops suppliers, millers, manufactures, distributors wholesalers and retailers.

3.2. Data Presentations

Hypothesis Testing

H_0 : There is no significance agreement among the respondents on the ranking of moral legitimacy strategies.

H_1 : There is significant agreement among the respondents on the ranking of moral legitimacy strategies.

Table 1. Conform to environment increase reliability.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.073	.074	-.981	.326
	Gamma	-.095	.096	-.981	.326
N of Valid Cases		125			

Conform to environment increase reliability * What is your age

Table 2. Conform to environment increase compliance.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.023	.070	.326	.745
	Gamma	.029	.089	.326	.745
N of Valid Cases		125			

Conform to environment increase compliance * What is your age

Table 3. Conform to environment increase responsiveness.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.080	.070	-1.137	.256
	Gamma	-.105	.091	-1.137	.256
N of Valid Cases		125			

Conform to environment increase responsiveness * What is your age

Table 4. Conform to environment improves customer service.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.086	.069	1.235	.217
	Gamma	.113	.091	1.235	.217
N of Valid Cases		125			

Conform to environment improves customer service * What is your age

The data show negative monotonous agreements of association in the way conforming to the environment to increase reliability, responsiveness strategies and ages of respondents, although Kendall's tau^b values are stronger than Gamma values. Sig $|T^b| > 0.05$. There is reason to reject the null hypothesis, there is association between the mentioned strategies and ages of respondents in agreeing with the strategies, although the agreement is discordant. On the other hand there were also positive agreements of association

conforming to the environment to increase compliance, improve customer service strategies and age groups of respondents. Kendall's tau^b and Gamma values showing weak positive monotonous association, just less 0.13. As Kendall tau has less standard error than Gamma, the significance levels are equal Sig $|T^b| > 0.05$, reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1) as the agreement is concordant.

Table 5. Selecting among environments increase responsiveness.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.056	.070	.802	.423
	Gamma	.073	.090	.802	.423
N of Valid Cases		125			

Selecting among environments increase responsiveness * What is your land tenure

Table 6. Selecting among environments increase profitability.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.115	.072	-1.594	.111
	Gamma	-.150	.094	-1.594	.111
N of Valid Cases		125			

Selecting among environments increase profitability * What is your land tenure

Table 7. Selecting among environments enhances customer satisfaction.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.078	.067	-1.164	.245
	Gamma	-.101	.087	-1.164	.245
N of Valid Cases		125			

Selecting among environments enhances customer satisfaction * What is your land tenure

The data shows that there was negative monotonous agreement between selecting among the environment increase profitability, enhances customer service and land tenure. The values of Kendall tau-b and Gamma are approximately equal, but it is assumed that Kendall tau had less standard error than Gamma. $\text{Sig } |T_b| > 0.05$, then its reasonable not to reject the null hypothesis, as the association

is discordant. For selecting among the environment to increase responsiveness both Kendall and Gamma values show positive monotonous relation of rankings with land tenure and $\text{Sig } |T_b| > 0.05$, which was the same as the ranking of selecting among the environment increase profitability, enhances customer service. The association was concordant.

Table 8. Manipulation of the environments increase productivity.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.042	.073	.571	.568
	Gamma	.054	.094	.571	.568
N of Valid Cases		125			

Manipulation of the environments increase productivity * What is your productive home asset

Table 9. Manipulation of the environment calls for innovation.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.090	.070	1.287	.198
	Gamma	.117	.091	1.287	.198
N of Valid Cases		125			

Manipulation of the environment calls for innovation * What is your productive home asset

Table 10. Manipulation of the environments increase efficiency.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.138	.073	-1.885	.059
	Gamma	-.179	.094	-1.885	.059
N of Valid Cases		125			

Manipulation of the environments increase efficiency * What is your productive home asset

Table 11. Manipulation of the environments increase flexibility.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.054	.075	-.716	.474
	Gamma	-.071	.099	-.716	.474
N of Valid Cases		125			

Manipulation of the environments increase flexibility * What is your productive home asset

The association of the manipulation of the environment increase profitability, calls for innovation and productive home asset show positive monotonous relation for both Kendall's tau^b and Gamma although there were some slight differences. The data showed concordant agreement. $\text{Sig } |T^b| > 0.05$, therefore its not wise to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) in

favour of alternative hypothesis (H_1). But manipulation of the environment to increase efficiency and flexibility the values were negative, which denoted that the association of these variables and productive home asset was discordant. $\text{Sig } |T^b| > 0.05$ although slightly. The final conclusion was not to reject the null hypothesis for an alternative one.

Table 12. Informing stakeholders increase collaboration.

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.052	.071	-.737	.461
	Gamma	-.069	.093	-.737	.461
N of Valid Cases		125			

Informing stakeholders increase collaboration * What is your highest level of education

Table 13. *Informing stakeholders enhance customer loyalty.*

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.131	.079	-1.653	.098
	Gamma	-.170	.102	-1.653	.098
N of Valid Cases		125			

Informing stakeholders enhance customer loyalty * What is your highest level of education

Table 14. *Informing stakeholders increase reputation.*

Symmetric Measures		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.131	.079	-1.653	.098
	Gamma	-.170	.102	-1.653	.098
N of Valid Cases		125			

Informing stakeholders increase reputation * What is your highest level of education

The association of informing stakeholders increases collaboration, customer loyalty and reputation with level of education showed weak relation, all Kendall's tau and Gamma values slightly less than -0.2. The relation can be regarded as discordant with Sig $|T^b| > 0.05$. No reason to reject the null hypothesis.

4. Discussions and Implications

The statistical output analysis shows; all the constructs analysed in the study in order to identify the associations of the variables under study. The moral legitimacy strategies were tested against ages, land tenure, productive homes assets and level of education of respondents. Most of the associations were discordant. This may justify the notion that crop productions SMEs in Zimbabwe have little knowledge about the essence of moral legitimacy in their business practices. The suggestion to crop production SMEs policy makers to emphasis more on education concerning moral legitimacy which involves environmental evenness or harmonization and consistency in terms of supplier- buyer operation information, monetary and material flows. This may achieve better management and supply chain transparency. In addition, help will be obtained in groping suppliers conforming to the environment to increase reliability, compliance, responsiveness and improving customer service. Selection of the appropriate environment would enhance customer satisfaction and increase profits accordingly. Supply chain performance would be realised through supplier-buyer continuous control and monitoring and periodic audits of the operational environments which results in improve productivity, increase efficiency and flexibility.

Thus the finding suggests crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, should formulate effective strategies and techniques adaptable or acceptable by all supply chain associates and also make standardised policies together with KPIs, in recognition of age groups, land tenure, assets used and level of education of land reform beneficiaries. Legitimacy influences organisational survival, performance, social and economic exchange, which enhance financial

performance [38]. Intel Computer chip founder, argues that, companies with good reputation can, among other things, charge premium prices, access capital markets, attract investors more easily, and usually obtain lower interest rate thereby gain legitimacy [40].

For an organization to appear moral legitimate, it has to adopt the, practices, characteristics and forms given by regulations, with standards, or norms it generateds [41]. For crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe, they need to conform to environment in line with international and local regulatory standards and norms to be socially acceptable, improve business reliability, compliance and improve customer service. Most of the people occupying new settlements are now aged and do not consider standards of farming as internationally acceptable norms as compared to their landless young generation.

Selecting among environment strategies entails, creating new internal policies in order to adapt to the environment towards external perspective [42]. This helps to gain visibility and transparency amongst the members of whole supply chain. For any emerging entity like SMEs in crop production in Zimbabwe, it is important make decisions specific to organisational vision and goal so as to stay loyal to the ideal means appealing to the relevant audiences in their supply chain. This study showed that there were various perceptions concerning selecting appropriate environment as regard to land tenure and crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. Policy makers are encouraged to change the mind set of new farmers, so that they equate land tenure with, business positioning to gain customer satisfaction and increase profitability.

The tense competitive environment of today's business environment, require enterprises to continuously look for ways to minimise operational costs, altogther providing satisfactory customer service, and reducing existing and unforeseen disruption. These risks may be reduced through designing and integrating efficient supply chain. Environmental manipulation strategies may be achieved through forming a specific industry association to render legitimacy new type of production process planned [32]. Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe may establish

associations to reduce cost through sharing of resources for farming, processing, distribution and transportation to increase productivity and flexibility. This study showed that the association of manipulation of the environment and those owning different types of productive home asset is discordant. Those using hoes and tractors or combined harvesters seemed to see the same. In a number of situations, system integration facilitated supply chain collaboration [43]. This implies better communication among supply chain buddies and indirectly enhances productivity and flexibility according to this study.

Challenge in managing legitimacy maintenance strategies is to identify listeners' needs and wants and their change over time [44]. Legitimacy represents relationship with relevant stakeholders that an organisation must keep current. This study established that crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe have a mandate to observe and, anticipate change to protect past accomplishments in order to maintain their legitimacy in their place of operation. In colleges and universities, there is a need to educate would be farmers or agro- business entrepreneurs to understand that maintenance of legitimacy strategy increase collaboration, customer loyalty and organization reputation. This can be achieved through communication with other SMEs in crop production, at other note, instead of influencing behavior of consumer,. Also to note is that social media attracts the importance of having high-quality products. But this study showed inconsistent of crop production SMEs in the way they perceive informing stakeholders to increase productivity and customer loyalty with level of education.

All moral legitimate strategies suggested in this research indicated that there are some agreements on some strategies in terms of age categories, land tenure, used home assets and levels of education. Positive monotonous relation effects were represented by the respective coefficients in conforming to the environment to increase compliance and customer service. However some negative relations were noticeable in manipulation of the environment to increase efficiency on productive home assets, as some examples. The concordant and discordant agreements demonstrate, misunderstanding of the importance of moral legitimacy to increase supply chain performance in most crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. This may signify that knowledge on moral legitimacy is lacking in these SMEs to improve supply chain higher trust, visibility, timely and well organized information flow.

This study has helped all stakeholders in the crop production SMEs supply chain in Zimbabwe understand that, enabled-best practice utilisation by all members of the supply chain may positively influence trust which leads towards encouraging supply chain performance. The positive effects of implementation of moral legitimate strategies can further be enhanced by encouraging more education and adaption of formal standards through supplier development association formulation programs. Furthermore, effective information dissemination among supply chain partners ends in better decision making and encouraging supply chain performance outcomes [23].

5. Conclusions

It's a proven fact that, no business enterprises without some business ethical strategies. Crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe are characterized by failures through closures or bankruptcy, because of lack of implementing appropriate sustainable strategies. This, in turn adversely affected these SMEs' reputation and survival, particularly in economic downturns. Crop production SMEs organisations and managers need to identify and implement morally acceptable strategies to protect their own business interests. In addition, if these SMEs are to remain competitive owner managers and their employees must become more educated and more aware of the need for designing moral legitimate strategies in business. They need to understand what moral legitimacy strategies mean and design key tools for implementing moral legitimacy in their businesses. The suggested strategies should convert societal values into exact commitments to expected behaviour in accordance to the organization's stakeholders. It's a presumed intention that this article has added more knowledge to the existing body of knowledge on moral legitimate practices of SMEs in developing countries. As such, SME owners and independent managers, as well as captains of the industry, can use the findings of this article to formulate appropriate framework policies and guidelines so as to improve their reputations, sustainability and competitiveness.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The focus of this article was mainly on moral legitimate strategies implementation by crop production SMEs in Zimbabwe. Its limitation is that it does not give current view of moral legitimate practices of SMEs in association with large companies. Future scholars and researchers should conduct more empirical studies covering both SMEs working with large companies globally. With regard to moral legitimacy strategies implementation, business practices and dilemmas should be viewed concurrently to increase or improve supply chain performance laterally and longitudinally.

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