

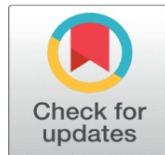
CSR PRACTICES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN THE CAMEROONIAN CONTEXT

Yves Mballa Atangana¹✉, Yayé Barouwa²✉, Armel Lewé Nguenpang³✉

¹CAMES Assistant Professor, Management Sciences, University of Yaoundé 2, Soa, Cameroon

²Doctor, Management Sciences, University of Yaoundé 2, Soa, Cameroon

³Doctoral Student, Management Sciences, University of Yaoundé 2, Soa, Cameroon



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Corresponding Author

Yayé Barouwa, yayebrouwa@yahoo.fr

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the deliberate and/or imposed incorporation of CSR practices by SMEs in the African context, focusing on the influence of these practices on the quest for performance by Cameroonian SMEs. The deployment of CSR practices is part of the utilitarian "social issue management" trend in an approach based on societal and environmental analysis. Based on the specificity of the African environment and on the theoretical division, the coexistence of the formal and informal sector with the predominance of the informal over the formal, our results reveal in priority a societal and environmental commitment in CSR practices, a guarantee of performance in terms of environmental protection, endowment of a social charter and increase of new market shares. The reputation of the SME is reinforced in its ecosystem, allowing it to transform itself and legitimise itself with the various stakeholders.

Keywords: CSR, Environmental Commitment, Societal Commitment, Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a societal debate and a research topic that has attracted the attention of researchers in economics and management. Long reserved for large companies, CSR is now a strategic issue for smaller organisations, especially SMEs [Boubakary and Moskolai \(2017\)](#). In this perspective, and in view of the declining involvement of the state in

its economic and social missions, CSR is far from being considered today as a strategic variable in the governance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) but as a reality that applies to any type of entity [Sangué Fotso \(2018\)](#). As a result, CSR should not be considered as a label for this category of companies, as it is about reconciling the different economic and financial, environmental, and social issues. Companies then hope to benefit from these actions in terms of image and reputation and especially in terms of performance. For CSR has not come to change the nature of the capitalist company in order to make profits, but to help it change its practices, to make them evolve in order to achieve its objective in the most responsible way possible [Jihad and Yaagoubi \(2019\)](#).

CSR is seen as an opportunity for each company to improve its governance, strengthen its societal commitment and limit its environmental impact [Manssori and El Hamri \(2022\)](#). Faced with this competitive rivalry, SMEs, in order to remain competitive, must more than ever integrate the CSR component into their strategic policy in order to meet the requirements of their partners, as its implementation requires significant material and immaterial investments [Abbassi and Saidi \(2019\)](#). Thus, according to [Abord and Bachelard \(2006\)](#), the aim of CSR is not limited to the economic and financial aspect, but also engages a renewal of the reflection on the objectives and functioning of the company. In this perspective, [Boubakary and Moskolai \(2017\)](#) refer to the lack of consensus on the perception of taking CSR practices into account within the SME, which gives rise to numerous debates in the scientific and business world. Many SMEs, in order to contribute to socio-environmental progress [Agbovoedo et al. \(2022\)](#), include social objectives to their profitability objectives and respect the principles and values in their management mode and that the financial performance of these companies finds its relevance mainly in the constraining reality of business [Abid \(2020\)](#). However, Cameroon is not on the fringe of this reality in the African or even global context, since SMEs represent 90 to 95% of the population of Cameroonian enterprises and employ 49.7% of the active population [Feudjo \(2006\)](#). It should be noted that the development of concerns related to social responsibility in companies remains marginal. Thus, [Wong and Yameogo \(2011\)](#) believe that Africa reflects realities that escape the traditional focus of Western approaches to social responsibility and are not the product of the same cultural history.

The economic fabric of Cameroon presents nearly 80% of small entities with a family connotation where the role of the manager is intertwined with that of the company [Sangué Fotso \(2011\)](#). As a result, the values of the manager are at the heart of the managerial philosophy promoted within the company. These entities evolve in a restrictive environment where their source of financing remains tontine and self-financing, which are also insufficient. In order to maintain their position in their highly competitive market, these entities operate in defiance of all ethical and social codes. In this perspective, the strong mobilisation of certain international organisations on the issue of ethics and respect for the environment reflects the urgent need for reflection. The popularisation of the "social responsibility" function is still lagging behind in African SMEs, particularly in Cameroon. Perhaps they do not measure the stakes or the inherent gains [Djoutsa Wamba and Hikkerova \(2014\)](#). Research has focused on characterising the company's ability to control its social commitment and achieve satisfactory results. However, the notion of performance inherent in socially responsible enterprise remains at the heart of the concerns of researchers in Cameroon.

Indeed, much research has been carried out to verify the influence of CSR on performance, but most of them do not address the societal and environmental dimension. Indeed, research by [Ondoua Biwolé \(2012\)](#) shows that empirical results

in the field of CSR are inconclusive and highly divergent. From this observation, research on CSR seems important, in the case of SMEs, to continue investigations in this area, in order to identify the type of CSR practiced and the motivations so that a consensus can emerge regarding the conceptualization of CSR [Sangue Fotso \(2018\)](#). The latter attempts to apprehend the perception that SME managers have of CSR in a given territory and, in an environment, marked by institutional turbulence with 22 SME managers. Its results show that the practice of CSR is dependent on acts of profit and paternalism and is a tool for employee loyalty. In this respect, social responsibility is certainly in many ways a fiction. It remains in part a rhetorical platform devoid of effectiveness.

The objective of this research is to question the influence of CSR practices on performance via a societal and environmental analysis of SMEs in the Cameroonian context. From this problematic, the following main question emerges: *what is the impact of taking into account CSR practices in their societal and environmental dimension on the performance of SMEs in the Cameroonian context?* To do this, we first present the framework of the adoption of CSR practices in its perfective vision of the performance of SMEs. We then elucidate our methodological approach. Finally, we present and discuss the results obtained.

2. FROM THE ADOPTION OF CSR PRACTICES BY SMES TO PERFORMANCE

Many authors [Quairel and Auburger \(2005\)](#), [Paradas \(2006\)](#), [Worthington \(2006\)](#), [Spence \(2007\)](#) agree that the CSR deployed by SMEs cannot be treated in the same way as the CSR of large companies. Indeed, SMEs are generally characterised by a hierarchical distance and even informal working relationships. This organisational flexibility facilitates adaptation to changes in the environment, more than it provides access to sources of information and new ideas [Abbassi and Ouriqua \(2018\)](#). However, in a controversial debate at the heart of the apprehension of the concept of SME performance, [Ajzen et al. \(2016\)](#) find it deeply polysemic and unstable in the SME literature and can be complemented by a whole series of qualifiers that attempt, more or less, to distinguish different forms of it, thus conferring on performance a polymorphic character. Thus, in their work, the authors identify in the literature nine major qualifiers of performance: social, organisational, operational, environmental, economic, financial, accounting and stock market, human, commercial and productive and global or unqualified.

2.1. THEORETICAL ANCHORING OF THE PERCEPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SME

The primary responsibility of the company is economic and consists of meeting the expectations of its shareholders [Rajan and Zingales \(1998\)](#). However, this original conception has gradually developed and broadened over time. The actions and pressures of other stakeholders and the institutional framework in which the company operates are now changing the situation with regard to environmental commitment and responsibility. We will draw on stakeholder theory and neo-institutional theory.

2.1.1. STAKEHOLDER THEORY

According to [Renaud \(2009\)](#), the stakeholder theory (TPP) places the company at the centre of all relational concerns with its third parties, who are no longer just providers of capital, but actors interested in the company's activities and decisions [Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelee \(2007\)](#). This theory attempts to explain why the entity must reconcile the contradictory logics of the individuals affected by the project [Freeman \(1984\)](#), [Carroll \(1989\)](#), [Pesqueux \(2007\)](#), [El Abboubi and Cornet \(2012\)](#), [Ballet et al. \(2011\)](#), [Flanchec and Uzan \(2012\)](#). This vision, contrary to the neoclassical theory of [Friedman \(1971\)](#) which shows rather that the purpose of the profit-making entity is exclusively linked to the maximisation of profit, and that social responsibility is only exercised for the benefit of the contributors of capital, the stakeholder theory remains much more demanding. According to [Renaud \(2009\)](#), this theory shows that the role of the manager goes beyond profit maximisation. Indeed, managers seek to achieve a balance between the different groups of people who have shares in the company [Bidi \(2021\)](#).

2.1.2. NEO-INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

According to neo-institutional theory, environmental commitment is influenced by various pressures from the socio-institutional context in which it takes place. Neo-institutionalism is a school of thought that developed from the 1970s onwards in the sociological analysis of organisations. Neo-institutional theory suggests that the motivations of organisations go beyond economic optimisation to social justifications and a quest for legitimacy [Gond and Mullenbach \(2004\)](#).

It should also be noted that among the many approaches that have been used to study CSR to date, many have sought to determine the influence of CSR on firm performance [Orlitzky et al. \(2003\)](#), [Allouche and Laroche \(2005\)](#), sometimes arguing that CSR distracts firms from their true purpose, thus undermining their performance [Friedman \(1970\)](#), and sometimes that it actually improves firm performance [Jackson and Nelson \(2004\)](#). It is noted that corporate environmental commitment positively influences corporate performance. This literature allows us to refine the following hypothesis:

H1: Environmental commitment has a positive and significant influence on the performance of SMEs.

2.2. THEORETICAL ANCHORING OF THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIETAL COMMITMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SME

Purely financial, quantitative, or one-dimensional conceptualisations of performance reduce the benefits that can be derived from the societal approach. We note here that societal engagement does not focus only on financial benefits but extends to other operational and competitive benefits. Here we will mobilise the theory of competitive advantage and the theory of resource dependency.

2.2.1. THE THEORY OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

According to many authors, companies can use their charitable efforts to improve their competitive environment [Porter and Kramer \(2002\)](#), [Mcalister and](#)

[Ferrel \(2002\)](#). Using philanthropy to improve the environment helps to reconcile social and economic objectives and improve the long-term prospects of the company. This is particularly relevant in a developing economy where the social needs of people must be addressed in order to stabilise the economy and communities. Once economic stability is achieved, the loyalty and trust of the people served by philanthropy can translate into future consumers and employees for these businesses. Not all corporate spending will bring benefits, and not all social benefits will improve competitiveness, but at some point, there will be a convergence of interests that will result in social and economic benefits [Porter and Kramer \(2002\)](#). Moreover, CSR appears to bring substantial gains, both economically and for the company's key stakeholders. However, these gains are not a factor of competitive advantage [Crest \(2019\)](#). In his study, [Barić \(2017\)](#) raises the importance of the relationship between organisations and their stakeholders and that the quality of this relationship represents a key factor on success and differentiation from competitors.

2.2.2. RESOURCE DEPENDENCY THEORY

This theory emphasises the dependence of the firm on actors in its environment and argues that the sustainability of the firm depends on its ability to manage the demands of different groups. Firms need the consensus of the society in which they operate and in particular of the groups that provide them with key resources. Resource dependency theory places CSR within the traditional economic view of corporate objectives. Firms engage in CSR when forced to do so in order to meet the pressures and expectations of resource providers. This study aims to contribute to the previous literature on a possible relationship between corporate social performance and financial performance by analysing a sector that has not yet been explored, namely the food industry and retailers. Knowing that *'engaged consumption seems to be more of a sustainable consumption trend than a fad'*, it is clear that food companies have generally invested in societal issues. This allows us to formulate the second hypothesis, which is the following:

H2: Societal commitment has a positive influence on the performance of SMEs.

3. METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES OF THE RESEARCH

This section explores the fundamentals of this research, from the presentation of the sample, through the identification of variables based on the study hypotheses presented above to the choice of the analysis model.

3.1. SAMPLING

In the context of our study, data were collected through questionnaires administered to the managers of SMEs selected using the probabilistic simple random sampling method of the National Institute of Statistics of Cameroon. To this end, 290 questionnaires were administered in three cities representative of the Cameroonian economy, namely: Douala (124 enterprises), Yaoundé (107 enterprises) and Bafoussam (59 enterprises) for a return of 143 usable questionnaires. It should be noted that the choice of the questionnaire is due to the advantage it offers to respondents in terms of the availability of the time needed to gather the information to be provided. Indeed, we have emphasised the heterogeneity of the sectors in order to favour the richness of the data collected.

3.1.1. OPERATIONALISATION OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES

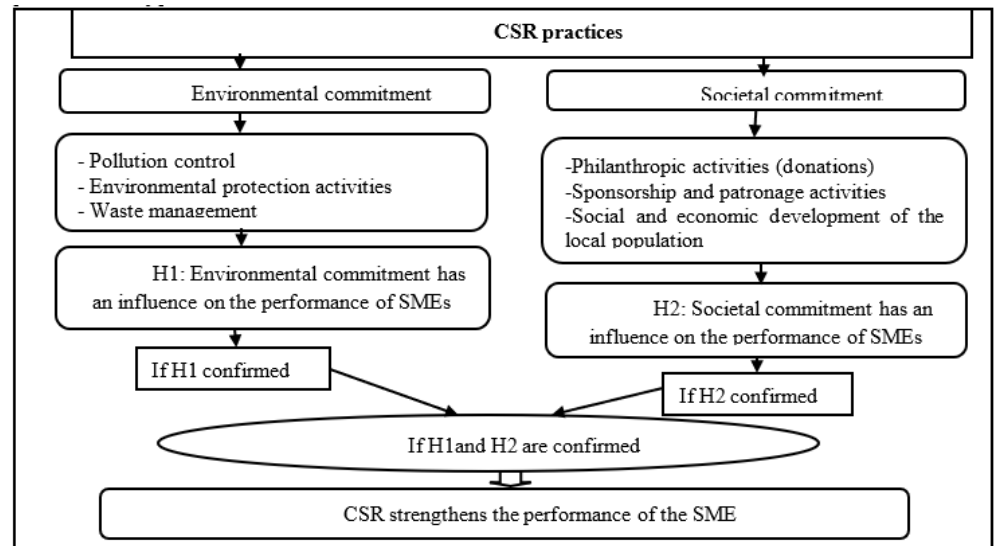
For a thorough analysis, it is first necessary to operationalize the concepts of our research. [Table 1](#)

Table 1

Table 1 Identification of the Dimensions of the Explanatory Variables and Operationalization of the Items			
Concept	Dimension	Indicators	Number of items
Corporate Social Responsibility	Social commitment (The company internally)	Social climate in companies	1
		Gender parity	1
		Employee remuneration	1
		Working and safety conditions	1
		Career process	1
		Employee training	1
	Societal Commitment (The company with the rest of society)	Social and economic development of the local population	1
		Philanthropic activities (donations)	1
		Sponsorship and patronage activities	1
		Combating pollution	1
		Environmental protection activities	1
	Environmental	Environmental protection activities	1
	Commitment	Waste management	1
		Environmental risk prevention and management policy	1
	Economic responsibility	The enterprise is qualified here as an institution that produces goods or services to be sold on a market.	1

This research aims to demonstrate the influence of CSR practices on the performance of

SMEs. The study is structured around hypotheses that we seek to test in the field. [Figure 1](#) below present the hypotheses of this research.

Figure 1**Figure 1** Summary of Research Hypotheses

3.1.2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE VARIABLE TO BE EXPLAINED

Performance in African SMEs is measured using a number of indicators such as growth in turnover, market share and growth in net profit Feudjo (2006). In this research, we focus on the evolution of market share and turnover growth as illustrated in the following table: Table 2

Table 2**Table 2 Highlighting of the Variable to be Explained**

Variables to be explained		
Variables	Modality of the couple (Market share and turnover)	Perf
Market shares (Pm)	One-dimensional variable	~ 1
Turnover (CA)	One-dimensional variable	~ 1

We assume that the socially responsible SME is more successful than its counterpart that does not display the responsibility dimension in its management function.

3.2. DATA ANALYSIS MODEL: METHOD AND INSTRUMENTS

The Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) used in the processing of the data requires that the variables retained be dichotomised to facilitate the interpretation of the results. Indeed, the logistic regression model, which offers the possibility of obtaining the probability of an event, allowed us to measure the influence of the explanatory variables on the performance of the SMEs in our sample. This estimation of the model from the sample of observations under study was done by the maximum likelihood principle. This means that at each step the variable with the worst significance is excluded from the next model according to the Wald test. This process will be repeated until a model is obtained where all variables have a significance of 5% or less. Moreover, the estimation of the coefficients is preceded by the determination of some parameters of the model, namely the Lambda likelihood ratio statistic (-2log-likelihood), the associated critical probability (P

(>chi. 2)). As a result, the Lambda likelihood ratio statistics give 63.05 for Corporate social climate, 62.37 for Working conditions and safety, 60.04 for Employee training, 69.482 for Philanthropic activities, 55.07 for Sponsoring activities, 59.23 for Pollution control, 67.32 for Environmental protection activities and 55.58 for Economic responsibility with associated critical probabilities of 0.00.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

CSR practices are a juxtaposition of traditional values, and the manifest will of managers in Cameroonian SMEs. With regard to the objectives of this research, the results of the analysis are grouped into three points addressed successively.

4.1. APPRECIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES IN SMES

Figure 2 below summarises the descriptive characteristics of the perception of CSR practices by the managers of the SMEs that voluntarily participated in the study.

Figure 2

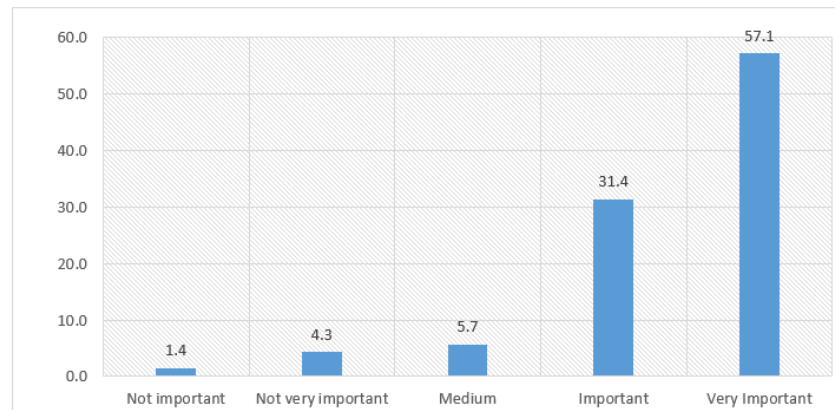


Figure 2 Perception of CSR in SMEs

With regard to the evaluation of CSR practices relating to environmental issues within these companies, the results show that out of 70 individuals interviewed, 57.1% perceive these practices as "very important", 31.4% consider them to be "important", 5.7% give an "average" opinion, 4.3% declare these practices to be "not very important" and finally 1.4% of our sample consider them to be "not very important". The majority of SME managers surveyed consider CSR practices relating to environmental issues to be very important within SMEs in the Cameroonian context.

Table 3

Table 3 Environmental Commitment

	Yes	No	Commentary
Do you allocate a budget to environmental issues in your company?	35,7 %	64,3 %	64.3% refusal on the question
Has an environmental structure been created in the company?	38,6 %	61,4 %	61.4% refusal on the question
Is there a mechanism for environmental protection?	58,6 %	41,4 %	58.6% positive on the question

Do you have a recycling or waste treatment facility in your company?	62,9 %	37,1 %	62.9% positive on the question
Are you ISO certified within your organisation?	17,1 %	82,9 %	82.9% refusal on the question
Have you taken steps to reduce your water consumption?	38,6 %	61,4 %	61.4% refusal on the question
In your organisation, have you taken measures to reduce your electricity consumption?	48,6 %	51,4 %	51.4% refusal on the question
Within your organisation, have you taken measures to reduce your polluting emissions (greenhouse gases, noise, odour) etc.?	62,9 %	37,1 %	62.9% positive on the question
Does your company have a social, ethical or environmental code or charter?	17,1 %	82,9 %	82.9% positive on the question

This section provides us with information on the elements or indicators of the descriptive statistics on social commitment as illustrated in the following [Table 4](#):

Table 4

Table 4 Elements or Indicators of Descriptive Statistics on Societal Engagement				
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Do you have specific policies against gender discrimination?	20,0 %	80,0 %	0 %	80.0% refusal on the question
Have you ever had to recruit disabled people of any kind into your company?	38,6 %	61,4 %	0 %	61.4% refusal on the question
Has your company put in place measures for the forward-looking management of jobs and skills (GPEC)?	75,7 %	24,3 %	0 %	75.7% positive on the question
Does your company have a QHSE (Quality, Health, Safety and Environment) policy	82,9 %	17,1 %	0 %	89.9% positive on the question
Does the company engage in philanthropic activities (<i>donations</i>)	28,6 %	34,3 %	37,1 %	37.1% positive on the question
Does the company engage in patronage, sponsorship (<i>sponsorship of events</i>)	21,4 %	58,6 %	20,0 %	58.6% refusal on the question
Does the company participate in the socioeconomic development of the local population?	30,0 %	37,1 %	42,9 %	42.9% affirmative on the question

From these two tables, we notice that organisational behaviour is an important prerequisite for the implementation of CSR practices in SMEs [Sangue Fotso \(2018\)](#). However, it does not show the priority of social commitment due to the dominant role of the manager which is linked to his personal values. Yet, the awareness of managers in SMEs on the issues related to their activities leads them to reconcile social and economic, environmental, and cultural logics.

4.2. REGRESSION RESULTS

The tables of the different estimates according to the selected financial performance variables are presented below. The abbreviations of the different

variables in these tables read as follows: CSE1=Corporate Social Climate, CTS2=Corporate Safety and Working Conditions, FEm3=Employee Training, APh4=Philanthropic Activities, ASp5=Sponsoring Activities, LCP6=Light Pollution Control, APE7=Environmental Protection Activities and REc8=Economic Responsibility.

Table 5

Table 5 Estimation of the Coefficients of the "Market Share" Model

Variables	B	E.S.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
SSC1	2,371	1,179	4,046	,044	10,712
CTS2	-2,015	,801	6,330	,012	,133
ASp5	3,201	1,432	9,982	,003	65,111
FEm3	1,920	,719	7,130	,008	6,824
REc8	4,241	1,264	11,249	,001	69,480
APh4	-1,604	,754	4,518	,034	,201
LCP6	2,354	,745	9,234	,034	6,675
APE7	3,654	,312	10,003	,007	67,345
Constant	-3,800	1,223	9,647	,002	,022

All the explanatory variables finally retained in the above table are significant at most at the 5% level. The difference in the signs of the coefficients means that some (CTS2 and APh4) have a negative influence on the performance represented here by the company's market shares. However, the other variables (CSE1, ASp5, FEm3, REc8, LCP6; and APE7) tend to act in the opposite direction. In addition, all these variables show their capacity to justify the behaviour of the SMEs studied in their commitment and in the deployment of CSR practices in the utilitarian current.

The results of the field survey show that CSR practices on the social, societal, and environmental levels are taken into account in the managerial choices of SME managers in Cameroon. The latter perceive the validity of CSR because it implies that a company must not only be concerned about its profitability, but also its environmental and social impacts. As a result, they must be more attentive to the concerns of their stakeholders. There can be no sustainable happy shareholders without satisfied customers, motivated and valued employees.

Table 6

Table 6 Estimation of the Coefficients of the Turnover Model

Variables	B	E.S.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
SSC1	1,77825	,920	10,739	,04928	,17
CTS2	-1,51125	,625	5,851	,00392	,22
ASp5	-3,18075	,986	10,408	,00116	,04
FEm3	1,133	,488	5,406	,020	3,11
REc8	2,386	,769	9,621	,002	,09
APE7	1,604	,754	9,518	,034	,201
LCP6	2,138	,744	8,251	,003	,12
Constant	1,203	,588	4,184	,03944	,30

The behaviour of performance through turnover reveals the same influencing variables as in the previous table, with the only difference being the variation in the signs of influence observed at the level of the variables CTS2 and ASp5. In other words, the analysis of the coefficients of the variables relating to the social climate in companies (CST1), employee training (FEm3), economic responsibility (REc8), environmental protection activities (APE7) and the fight against pollution (LCP6) reveals their contribution to the improvement of the turnover of the SMEs that deploy CSR practices. On the other hand, working conditions and safety (CTS2) and sponsorship activities (ASp5) act in the opposite direction. This can be seen in their negative coefficients, which are of the order of (-1.51125) and (-3.18075), significant at the 5% threshold (with Prob=.00392 and Prob=.00116) with the value 0 for the decrease in turnover, and the value 1 otherwise, hence the tendency for SMEs to limit social security expenditure and sponsorship activities which have a negative influence on their visibility in this highly competitive market.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Overall, our results show that the influence of environmental commitment on performance is positively and significantly correlated with performance. This would be in line with the work of [Porter and Van der Linde \(1995\)](#), which led to the idea that pollution is a form of waste and reflects inefficient procedures. The environment can serve productivity, and pollution control (sometimes mandatory) encourages companies to find new and more economical production processes. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the work of [Barić \(2017\)](#), according to which CSR has a positive impact on environmental practices.

With regard to societal commitment, we note that the reputation in terms of societal responsibility remains an asset that generates future income [Jouidi et al. \(2022\)](#). The reputation and trust generated by the company requires the enhancement of its external image among its stakeholders. Indeed, the mobilisation of external stakeholders around shared values, strategic projects and greater openness to the outside world makes it possible to reduce social risk and create a dynamic of progress [Saghroun and Eglem \(2008\)](#). Thus, we note that extra-economic activities (environmental and societal) remain the possible lever for creating financial value for the Cameroonian SME. Moreover, engaging in a CSR approach can be a way of obtaining a better local anchoring, which can promote customer loyalty. Thus, Cameroonian SMEs find their customers directly in this community of proximity, which allows them to make sales most often on a local or regional scale. The reputation is thus strengthened in its ecosystem.

6. CONCLUSION

The issue of socially responsible business, whether it is more specifically related to societal aspects or environmental issues, has received a lot of attention and is regularly in the spotlight. By placing social issues at the heart of the SME vision, stakeholder theory provides the theoretical framework for both the search for a positive link between societal and environmental engagement on performance. The disclosure of the company's commitment to responsible business practices through the installation of environmental and recycling systems and the provision of a social charter will indeed reduce information asymmetry and legitimise the company in the eyes of its stakeholders. The objective of this research is to question the influence of CSR practices on performance through a societal and environmental analysis of SMEs in the Cameroonian context. In addition, it attempted to shed light

on the relationship between the environmental and societal commitment of SMEs and their ability to remunerate residual creditors.

Societal commitment through the implementation of specific policies against gender discrimination, the recruitment of people living with disabilities and the altruism of SME managers to meet the expectations of different stakeholders, improves the image of these companies in the eyes of the general public. Moreover, satisfying the legitimate interests of stakeholders helps to ensure the company's performance and survival objectives in terms of increasing its market share and turnover. In this respect, it is interesting to note that despite the craze for the notion of sustainable development, it does not yet seem to be really reflected in the eyes of Cameroonian SME managers in the evaluation of the company's performance. Finally, the results also suggest a more important role for quantitative information, with general information having less impact on financial performance. The results of the survey show the extent of the dimensions favoured by SME managers as well as their perception of CSR, which cannot be understood without taking into account its economic consequences. Our results highlight that CSR is biased by the values of the leader, his or her managerial cognition and personal purpose. These need to be rethought to incorporate the consequences of possible instrumental and substantive conflicts.

Thus, from a managerial point of view, the conclusions of this research can serve as a framework for reflection for business leaders, managers, and researchers. They will have at their disposal strategic management tools adapted to the African context. This will enable them to improve the relevance and effectiveness of their performance measurement system. In particular, if they want to improve their performance, companies should become "*citizens*" by taking into account all social, societal, and environmental concerns.

Nevertheless, the qualitative nature of the variables selected does not help us to categorically assert the contribution of CSR to performance. Also, we were only able to test probabilities of achievement, contrary to the general trend, according to which the relationship between CSR and performance is usually tested through panel data. On the one hand, the measurement instrument does not seem to cover all theoretical dimensions of the concepts due to the use of closed and semi-open questions. This implies that the approach is not immune to subjectivity. Thus, further research at the international level, taking into account religious, cultural, and socio-cultural factors, may further explain the differences observed within companies in the operationalization of CSR.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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