

The Implementation of Sustainable Business Model among Industries in Cameroon

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Abstract: In the recent times, there has been a paradigm shift in the public expectation on what industries should offer to themselves and other community stakeholders. Industries are not only required to act socially responsible but also to act sustainable in order to meet stakeholders' expectations and promote inclusive growth. The paper examines the implementation of sustainable business model among industries in Cameroon. Our sample consists of 335 industries from the last Censure Survey of Enterprises in Cameroon. The study adopted exploratory and systematic analysis through Adjusted Residual Test and the Phi and Cramer's V Tests. Our findings reveal that the implementation of sustainable business model is still at basic level in Cameroon. We conclude that a shift to a more sustainable business model is yet to be recognized as a concrete value and competitive advantage among industries in Cameroon. Therefore, industries should implement holistic sustainable business practices rather than being selective. Sustainable business model should be integrated into the development, policy and practice of industries to complement efforts of governments and civil societies on achieving sustainable development.

Keywords: Brown Growth, CSR matrix, Externalities, Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Practice.

Introduction

The growing awareness on the benefits of pursuing sustainable development goals has turbo-charged increased attention being directed towards the *modus operandi* of industries across the world – the question of implementing sustainable business practice. In other words, the rising need for sustainable development has increased public expectations on industries' engagement in economic, social and environmental spheres. In the recent times, industries are not only required to act socially responsible but also to act sustainable in order to meet stakeholders' expectations and promote inclusive growth. While some industries mainly focus on implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) to satisfy the requirements of laws, a greater number of others have viewed environmental initiatives as a concrete value and competitive advantage.¹ In addition, contrary to viewing environmental issues as a problem, the implementation of sustainable business model has become added value to industrial performance in some developed countries where citizens' awareness about CRS goes beyond voluntarism². Thus, there has been a paradigm shift in the approach to which environmental concerns are addressed among industries in the recent times.

Increasingly, the advancement in technology innovation and globalization has deepened the impact of industrial operations on the environment and natural capital assets. A shift from labour intensive to capital intensive operations to increase production capacities and meet increasing demands have led to employments of automations that pose more devastating consequences to the environment and natural capital assets³. Nevertheless, modern societies have

¹ Mandl, I. & Dorr, A. (2007), CSR and Competitiveness European SMEs' Good Practice, *Consolidated European Report*, KMU Forschung, Austria

² In the recent times, industries have taken responsibility of sustaining environment and natural capital assets. Hart, & L, S. (2000). *Beyond Greening in Harvard Business Review on Business and the Environment*. Boston: HBD Press. See also WB (2002).

³ Forstater, et al, 2010

discovered that economic performance does not necessarily drive to human wellbeing and therefore clamour for human welfare. According to Bucholz (1996), there has been the reawakening of conscience that economic performance does not result to well-being in society. In addition, Oginni (2015) opines that the metric of a country's performance should go beyond the Gross Domestic Product (brown growth) that fails to account for non-degradable natural capital assets and preserve the environment that sustain those activities⁴.

Focusing on achieving sustainable development via industrial contributions, a group of practitioners from five Africa countries⁵ and China observed that industries have a significant role to play in the Africa's sustainable development by implementing sustainable business model (Forstater, et al, 2010). According to Tene (2004), 73% of the industries in Cameroon have neither sustainable business model nor CSR division; while 57% of them are completely unaware of the ISO 26000 standard.⁶ Meanwhile, a vast majority of industries that participated in the study admitted that the implementation of ISO 26000 and other frameworks would improve their performance. Furthermore, in the recent research carried out by Jator (2015) on the public perception of CRS in Cameroon, it was established that 10 out of 55 companies selected were classified as 'CSR Best Practice' and most of these companies were telecommunication and energy companies⁷ which correspond to the findings of Oginni & Omojowo (2015a) which observed that companies with larger capital base implement best CSR practice than the smaller ones in most of the Sub-Saharan Africa countries. However, the previous studies on CSR have failed to examine the level of engagement of industries in sustainable business practices. Thus, this paper seeks to accomplish this by examining the implementation of sustainable business model among industries in Cameroon. .

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) constituted theme in the field of environmental economics, most especially at the beginning of the third millennium when sustainable development goals⁸ gained increased attention among world leaders, national, international organisations and scholars. Several conferences and summits were held to consolidate sustainable development agenda: the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth summit that paved the way for the adoption of two Texts "the Rio declaration on environment and development" and "the XX century Agenda" known as Agenda 21; the 2002 Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2012 Rio Summit known as the Rio+ 20. Among issues addressed during these conferences and Summit included the concerns on damages to the environment from unsustainable operations of industries globally.

Broadly, CSR can be designated as a reflection of voluntarism that defines new economic rules, social order and environmental dimension, implemented by business enterprise in the course of production and consumption of goods and services. Although CSR is mostly implemented by business enterprise, all stakeholders are expected to have inputs in the designing and formulation of policy on CSR. According to Imurana (2014), consultative engagement of community stakeholders directs policy to the satisfaction of receiving locality. Interactions between business enterprises and community stakeholders should be in continuum and not only when policy is to be implemented. Therefore, CSR is conceived as the appropriate policies, strategies and plan of actions orchestrated by business enterprises to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interaction with stakeholders on a voluntary basis.⁹

Factually, sustainable development is significantly more than just protecting the environment against harm. Each successive process that leads to overall achievement of sustainable development should be viewed holistically and progressively as part of the operations of industrial enterprise. Impliedly, a shift from econometric approach that

⁴ Oginni, S. O (2015). Fiscal Policy Reforms and Environmental Sustainability in Africa: Towards a Greening Economy. A paper submitted for presentation at the *Africa Economic Conference* Nov. 2015 (AfDB), Kinshasha: Congo.

⁵ The five countries include Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Uganda and South Africa.

⁶ ISO 26000 is the designation of the future international standard giving guidance on social responsibility and therefore cannot be used as a certification standard like ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:2004

⁷ https://cameroon-tribune.cm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=89364:corporate-social-responsibility10-best-companies-selected&catid=4:societe&Itemid=3

⁸ Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; Development means: Improving peoples' wellbeing
Sustainable development means : Extending progress without exhausting resources

⁹ European Union (2002).

combines only economic and social dimension (brown growth) to an inclusive growth would mean value addition through value addition and further inclusion of the environmental component in the business-as-usual operation while pushing for technology innovation that enhances efficient resource and energy utilization. Also, the combination of social and environment would only lead to innovation as a result of social interactions and learning process but cannot exist without economic orientation which is the rationale for the existence of any business enterprise. Hence, the implementation of sustainable business model would align CRS practices of industries to sustainable development (See Figure 1).

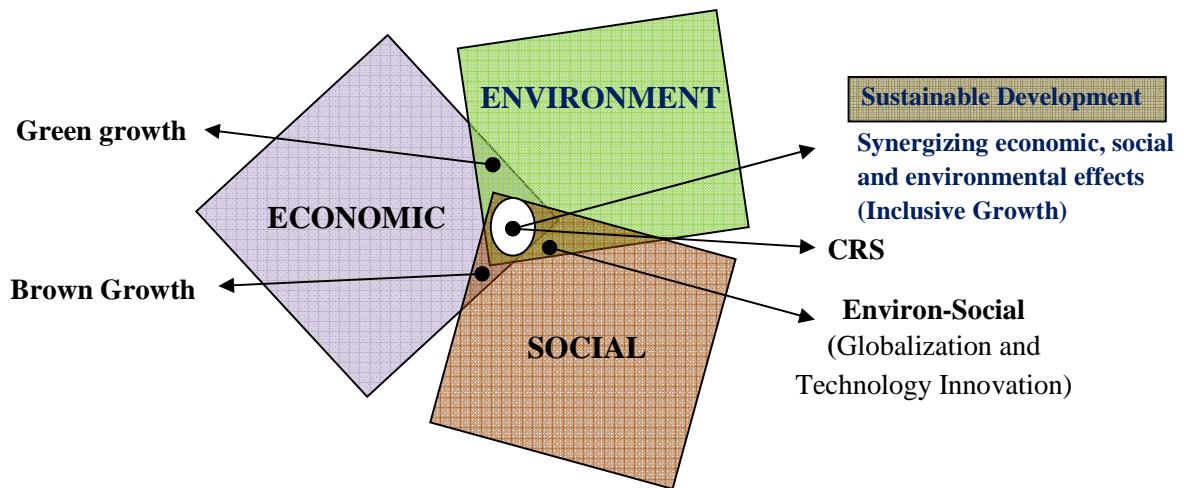


Figure 1: Sustainable Business Model vis-a-vis CRS
Source: Authors (2015).

The conceptualization of sustainable development vis-à-vis industrial engagements revolves around *theory of externality* as well as *its cost and benefits analysis*. Practically, sustainability is reflected in the proper management of externalities generated during industrial operations which are most often neglected or covered up by directing CRS activities to a particular area where community stakeholder considered mostly affected but not necessarily towards sustainable means. For example, the activities of oil companies in the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria have posed lots of damages to the sustainability of its environment but the community stakeholders especially the youth are much more concern about monetary compensations than implementing sustainable operations¹⁰. Generally, externalities arise when industrial activities have unintended external effects on community stakeholders. Sankar (2014) classifies externalities into positive and negative; a technological spillover is a positive externalities and it occurs when enterprise's innovation benefits entire society while negative externalities are destructive effects of an external operation such as industrial emission of carbon oxide (CO₂).

Externalities accounts for both social cost and benefits. When social cost is more than social benefits, then it is negative externalities but when social benefits is more than social costs, it is positive externalities. The neoclassical economists considered presence of externalities as indication of market failure because market prices fail to account for cost and benefit of externalities (Marshall, 1890). Other scholars analyzed externalities in terms of divergence between private cost and public cost¹¹ (Pigou, 1920; Coase, 1960; Baumol & Oates; 1988). Dunfee (2008) observed that externalities can be caused by community stakeholders¹² who have authority and power to influence the objectives of business enterprise. To analyse sustainable business practice, cost is classified into sunk, recurrent and

¹⁰ Klein, J., Jochad, P., Richter, H., Bachmann, R., & Hartmann, S. (2013). *Environmental Fiscal Reforms. Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development*. Germany: Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

¹¹ Pigou, 1920; Coase, 1960; Baumol & Oates; 1988)

¹² a stakeholder is any group of persons who can influence or be influenced by the organisational objectives

opportunity cost¹³. For example, the relatedness of cost incurred in the acquisition of new environmental friendly equipment, improvement of energy use, equipment update and maintenance, etc portrays the degree to which sustainable business practice is implemented to enhance green production and consumption process. By implementing sustainable business model which takes cognizance of cost and benefits of externalities, business enterprises integrate the concerns of all stakeholders to produce an overall positive impact on society (Meehal *et al.*, 2006).

Principally, industries engage in economic activities to meet society's needs in order to make gains. Profit motives of industries are realizable when their engagements meet the social, economic and environmental needs of society. Windsor (2001) opines that social responsibility is achieved when the corporation conforms to the prevailing norms and expectations of social performance in a given society. Elsewhere, it was argued that modern business is an integral part of society and its actions, and that businesses must participate in society in a responsible and ethically symbiotic way (Joyner *et al.*, 2002). Cabagnols and Le Bas (2008) identify pressure, incitation and motivations as three factors to determine the dimension of CSR implementation while Banerjee *et al* (2003) identifies four factors: interest of the public, regulation, the possibility to construct a competitive advantage and the engagement of top management of enterprises. Murray and Hazellett (2011) argues that industries' approach to CSR can fit into four quadrants which portray strategy and integration of CSR activity, ethical consideration of the activity, benefit derived from the activity by the industries and other stakeholders. Therefore, Murray *et al.* (2011), developed a 2 x 2 matrix to illustrate many ways industries implement CSR (Figure 2), conclude that industries can be socially responsible in a strategic manner that produce significant benefits to both industries and societies but no industry has reach this level of CSR.

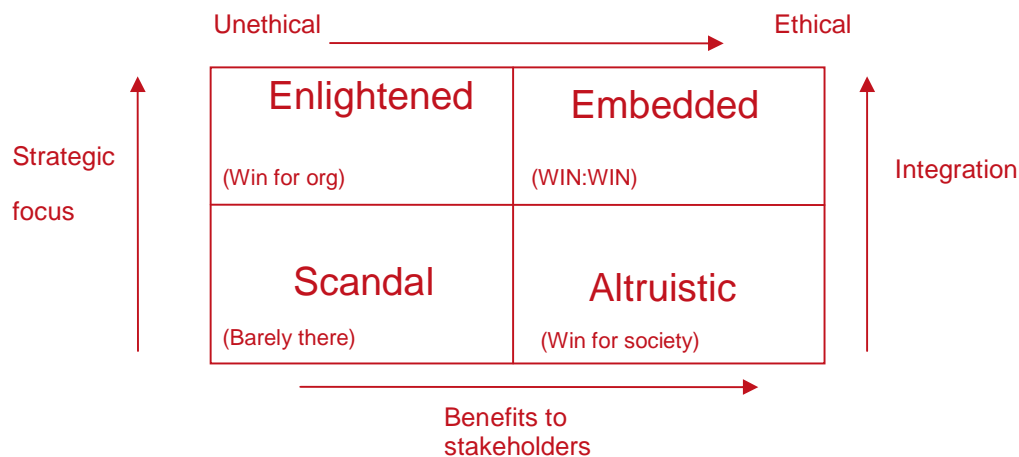


Figure 2: 2 x 2 CSR Matrix
Source: Murray & Hazelett (2011).

From the review of literature, it seems that the implementation of sustainable business model present lots of competing interests in terms of profitability of industries, cost and benefits of externalities as well as overall benefits to the society. These interests reflect in the approach to which industries implement CSR and engagement in those activities which sustain the environment of operations beyond monetary compensation and project implementation that are being employed to silence community stakeholders in lieu of the damages done to the environment of industrial operations. However, greater public awareness on the consequent environmental hazards posed by unsustainable industrial operations is forcing industries to implement best sustainable practices in a competitive advantage over others.

¹³ GIZ, 2012.

Study Methodology

The study employed a systematic analysis to examine the implementation level of sustainable business model among industries in Cameroon. A sample of 335 industrial enterprises was drawn from the last Census Survey of Enterprises in Cameroon. The 335 industrial enterprises were selected based on availability of data on the three dimensions of sustainable development namely, economic, social and environmental components (*dependent variables*). The data were obtained from the publications of the National Institute of Statistics, Cameroon from 2009-2015. Adjusted Residual and Phi and Cramer's V tests were performed on the sourced data through SPSS version 21.

The independent variables of the study include: legal form, activity sector, localisation, syndicate, sector of activity, the presence of a classified installation for the protection of the environment, the studies realised in order to protect the company from harmful effects of her activity on the environment, the presence within the enterprise of a structure in charge of the environment, gender, nationality, level of education, social capital, turnover, value added, total number of permanent workers, and total number of temporal workers. In addition, the dependent variable of the engagement level in sustainable business practice through CSR is an ordered polytomic modality. The characteristic of this model is presented in the Table 1. The engagement model helps to estimate the impact of one or several exogenous variables on the hypothesis that an enterprise can be situated at different level of engagement in CSR. The estimated coefficient indicates the effect of the exogenous variables on the probability of presenting intensity on the superiority of CSR level of engagement. Therefore, the positive estimated coefficient indicate, *ceteris paribus*, an increase in the value of the variable studied, makes more probable the event ($Y=4$) and less probable the event ($Y=0$) and inversely in the case of negative coefficient.

Table 1: Industries' Implementation of Sustainable Business Model via CSR

Dependent variable	Codification	Number of enterprises	Proportion (%)
No engagement	1	10	3
Weak engagement	2	171	51
Average engagement	3	138	41
Strong engagement	4	16	5
Total	-	335	100

Source: Authors' Compilation

Model Specification

Adjusted Residual and Phi and Cramer's V were employed to examine the implementation of sustainable business practices among industries in Cameroon. The adjusted residual test is a test helps to analyse relationship between the modalities of two variables. If the value of the adjusted residual, in absolute number, is greater than 1.96, then there exists a relation between the modalities of the variables tested. On the other hand, if the value is less than 1.96, it demonstrates that there is no relation between the modalities of the two variables tested. Also, Rakotomalala (2008) used this test to explain the relationship between housing and job held by an individual from the data German credit. The adjusted residual is built from the relationship as follows:

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$$res_k = (o_k - e_k) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$rstd_{lc} = \frac{(o_{lc} - e_{lc})^{14}}{\sqrt{e_{lc}}} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$radj_{lc} = \frac{o_{lc} - e_{lc}}{\sqrt{e_{lc}(1 - f_i)(1 - f_c)}} \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

By construction, $\sum_k res_k = 0$ but the interest of the study is the sign of residual $sgn(res_k)$ that indicates the direction of the association: attraction between characters (>0) or repulsive (<0). If the residual values are not comparable, it would be normalized by their theoretical numbers to put them on an equal footing: this is a standardized residual. When $|radj_{lc}| > 1.96$ the relation between the modalities of the variables are attractive ($radj_{lc} > 0$), and very well repulsive when ($radj_{lc} < 0$).

Cramer's V (sometimes referred to as Cramer's Phi and denoted as ϕ_c) is a measure of association between two nominal variables, giving a value between 0 and +1 [inclusive] (Cramer, 1946). Hence, ϕ_c is the inter correlation of two discrete variables and may be used with variables having two or more levels. Also, ϕ_c is a symmetrical measure that does not matter which variable we place in the columns and rows. However, the order of rows/columns does not matter, so ϕ_c may be used with nominal data types or higher (ordered, numerical, etc).

$$V = \frac{\sqrt{\chi^2}}{\sqrt{n \times \min(L - 1 : C - 1)}} \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

Analysis and Discussions of Findings

To assess the level of implementation of sustainable business model, the level of engagement was classified into four parts: no, weak, average and strong engagement with (no=0), (weak=1), (average=2), (strong=3). The words “repulsion” means less implication while “attraction” means high implication and can be recognise by a - & + in front any adjusted residual value whose value is superior to 1.96. Table 2 presents the result of Phi and Cramer's V test. The tests established degree of association of independent variables under issues being examined. The result revealed that *installation of environmental friendly equipment; research and development for environmental protection* and *established structure for the protection of environment* are relevant and significant at 5% and 1% for measuring implementation of sustainable business practices. Phi and Cramer's V test was confirmed by adjusted residual which indicate that syndicate has not relation to the implementation of sustainable business practices.

Table 2: Result of the association test: Phi and Cramer's V test (Independent Variables).

Variables	PHI			Cramer's V	
	Value	Approx sig	ϕ_{max}	Value	Approx sig
Nationality	0.148	0.290	1.4	0.105	0.290
Legal form	0.145	0.632	1.73	0.084	0.632

¹⁴*rstd_{lc}*= standardise residual for row l and column c; *o_{lc}*= observed numbers, row l, column c; *e_{lc}*= theoretical numbers of row l and column c

Gender	0.105	0.293	1	0.105	0.293
Level of education	0.164	0.697	1.73	0.095	0.697
Syndicate	0.089	0.452	1	0.089	0.452
Environmental Friendly Equipment	0.255	0.000***	1	0.255	0.000***
Activity sector	0.150	0.819	1.73	0.087	0.819
Localisation	0.223	0.055	1.73	0.129	0.055
Type of enterprise	0.165	0.424	1	0.095	0.424
Research and Development for Environmental Protection	0.336	0.000***	1	0.236	0.000***
Established Structure for Environmental Protection	0.264	0.001***	1	0.186	0.001***

Source: Authors. *Meaning : val = value , App sig = approximate significance, $p=0.01$ ***, $p=0.05$ ** , $p=0.1$ **

Based on the result of adjusted residual cross-table (Table 3), syndicate industries have no engagement in all three dimensions of sustainable business practices since 0.2, 1.6, 1.4 and 0.4 are less than 1.96 at 5% significant level while industries with no syndicate have a weak engagement (2.2*) and strong engagement (-4.0*) which are attractive and repulsive respectively. This implies that sustainable business practice is not implemented based on whether an industry is syndicate or not. However, a weak engagement (2.2*) implies that non-syndicate industries implements one of the three dimensions of sustainable business practices while a strong engagement level implies that although non-syndicate industries implement all three dimensions of sustainable business practices (economic, social and environmental) but at very basic or insignificant level. The result corresponds to the summation of Murray et al (2011) which conclude that no industry has reached ideal level of sustainable business practice.

Table 3: Industries' Implementation of Sustainable Business Practices
(Adjusted Residual Cross-table)

Variables	Level of engagement			
	No engagement=1	Weak engagement=2	Average engagement=3	Strong engagement=4
Syndicate				
yes	2 (-0.2)	45 (1.6)	26 (-1.4)	3 (-0.4)
No	10 (1.9)	135 (2.2)*	97 (-1.2)	5 (-4.0)*
Total	10	171	138	16
Environmental Sustainable Equipment				
Yes	0 (-1.9)	36 (-2.2)*	41 (1.2)	11 (4.0)*
No	10 (1.9)	135 (2.2)*	97 (1.2)	5 (-4.0)*
Total	10	171	138	16
Research And Development For Environmental Protection				
Yes	-1	-3.8*	1.5	5.4*
No	-1	3.5*	-1.3	-5.3*
Established Structure for Environmental Protection				
Yes	-1.3	-2.9*	1.7	4.0*
No	1.4	2.9*	-1.7	-3.9*

Discussion

Industries with classified installation for the protection of environment present identical but inversed results with the industries with no classified environmental friendly installation. A weak (-2.2*) but repulsive engagement was obtained for industries with classified environmental friendly installations. The reverse was obtained for industries without classified environmental friendly installations. Impliedly, few industries with classified environmental friendly installations engage trivially in one dimension of sustainable business practices while most others significantly engage in one dimension of sustainable business practices. In addition, 16 industries engaged in all the three dimensions of sustainable business practices but only 11 industries with classified installation for protecting environments that considerably implement sustainable practices. In reality, strong implementation of all dimensions of sustainable business practices is dependent on highly classified environmental friendly installations. When industries incorporate sustainable business practices into their entire operations, such would be reflected in all dimensions of sustainable practices including acquisition of equipment. This confirmed the GIZ (2012) which argues cost classification as one part of motivation for implementing sustainable business practices for all stakeholders of an industry..

Furthermore, industries committed to research and development on environmental protection has strong engagement (5.4*) in all three dimension of sustainable business practices while industries without research and development for environmental protections have strong but repulsive engagement (-5.3). By implication, industries committed to research and development on protecting environment from industrial hazards seem to have elaborate policies that take accounts the interest of all stakeholders as well as their impacts on the society. However, industries without research and development might have classified environmental friendly installations which increase their engagement level but not significant enough to enhance sustainable business practices. In examined the established structure for environmental protection among the industries, the result shows average engagement (-2.9*, 2.9) in sustainable business practices. Industries with established structure for the protections of environment have strong engagement in all the three dimensions of sustainable business practices than industries without established structure. Practically, industries with established structure for protecting environment seem to emphasize sustainable practice at each production and consumption process. Industries with established structure set criteria for the acquisition of equipments, waste discharge, etc and incorporate them as part of normal operations.

Conclusion

The growing need for sustainable development has increased public expectations on industries' engagement in economic, social and environmental spheres. In the recent times, industries are not only required to act socially responsible but also to act sustainable in order to meet stakeholders' expectations and promote inclusive growth. While some industries mainly focus on implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) to satisfy the requirements of laws, a greater number of others have viewed environmental initiatives as a concrete value and competitive advantage. Therefore this study examined the implementation of sustainable business practices among 335 industries in Cameroon. These industries were classified into syndicate; industries will environmental friendly equipments/installations, industries investing in research and development for environmental sustainability and industries with established structure for the protection of environment.

Findings reveal that there is no difference between syndicate and non-syndicate industries at different levels of engagement in sustainable business practices. However, industries in possession of environmental friendly equipments, established structure for environmental protection, and invest in research and development leading to environmental sustainability implement best sustainable business practices compared to others with one of the measuring variables. Confirming the findings of Murray *et al* (2011) that no industry has reached an ideal of sustainable practices, the implementation of sustainable business practices among industries in Cameroon is at basic level. Most industries with classified environmental friendly installations have not established structure for environmental protection while those invest in research and development have not integrated the results into their operations. A shift to a more sustainable business model has not been recognized as a competitive advantage among industries in Cameroon. Therefore, industries should implement holistic sustainable business practices rather being selective. Sustainable business model should be integrated into the development, policy and practice of the industries so as to complement efforts of governments and civil societies on achieving sustainable development.

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