

Effect of Green Marketing Strategies on the Performance of SMES in Selected State in North Central Nigeria

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Sponsored and Funded by: The Tetfund Institutional Based Research (IBR) Scheme.

DOI [10.56201/ijebm.v10.no4.2024.pg215.233](https://doi.org/10.56201/ijebm.v10.no4.2024.pg215.233)

Abstract

The growing customer demand for sustainable goods and services as well as growing environmental concerns, had made green marketing strategy become increasingly important. Since small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have made a substantial contribution to the global economy, it is critical to comprehend how green marketing techniques affect their operations. The study's goal is to investigate the effects of green marketing techniques on SMEs' performance in a particular North Central Nigerian state. The objective was to examine sale of good quality products and services, relationship between customer's awareness and perception on sustainability initiative among others. The quantitative approach was used for the study. To choose the 373 SMEs from the chosen state in North Central Nigeria who would be study participants, a multi-stage selection technique was employed. The collected data were subjected to an inferential statistical approach for descriptive analysis on the effects of green marketing tactics on stakeholder perceptions, better stakeholder overall company performance, and environmental impact measurements. Results indicate that, among other things, sales of high-quality goods and services, SMEs' corporate image, customer satisfaction, and sustainability performance, as well as environmental impact measurements in green marketing strategy, have a positive and significant impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The study suggests, among other things, that SMEs integrate eco-friendly practices and products into their business strategies to increase performance.

Introduction

Environmental concerns and customer demand for sustainable products and services have led to a global shift in the importance of green marketing strategies in recent years. Given the significance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) to the global economy, it is imperative to appreciate the ways in which green marketing tactics impact their operations.

Green marketing techniques can significantly affect the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Nigeria, claim Sarka and Singh (2020). SMEs can gain long-term competitive benefits by implementing sustainable processes and promoting environmentally friendly products. These actions can also improve SMEs' reputation and draw in environmentally sensitive customers. First off, SMEs play a major role in global economic expansion and job creation, therefore adopting sustainable business practices is essential to reaching more ambitious environmental goals. Second, in order to improve their competitiveness and market positioning in light of consumers' growing environmental consciousness, SMEs must use efficient green marketing strategies.

Johnson et al. (2021) conducted a study in several nations and discovered that SMEs who adopted green marketing techniques saw improvements in their brand's reputation, a rise in consumer loyalty, and an expansion of their market potential. Zhang and Liu (2020) noted that increased sales, cost savings, and improved brand equity were some of the ways that green marketing tactics improved the financial performance of SMEs. In their investigation of green marketing strategies among SMEs, Fernandez-Perez et al. (2019) emphasized the favorable correlation between long-term financial success and sustainable marketing initiatives. Yamashita et al.'s (2022) study, which concentrated on Japanese SMEs, showed that using eco-friendly marketing techniques boosted competitive advantage and improved customer satisfaction. Green marketing techniques can significantly affect the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Nigeria, claim Sarka and Singh (2020). Putting sustainable practices into action.

Existing research indicates a beneficial association between green marketing tactics and SMEs' performance. Implementing sustainable practices and effectively conveying them to customers can result in higher revenue, customer loyalty, and brand reputation. Furthermore, green marketing methods can improve resource efficiency, reduce costs, and gain access to new markets, ultimately enhancing financial performance and competitiveness. Long-term benefits and sustainability of the link between green marketing and SMEs' success. Comparative studies are conducted across areas and sectors to gather diverse viewpoints and issues. However, further research is required to bridge the knowledge gap and provide valuable insights for SMEs aiming to thrive in a green economy. In terms of sales of green products and services, customer awareness of sustainability initiatives is crucial for SMEs as it influences their purchasing decisions, and the market share of green offerings has become a significant aspect for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Johnson et al. (2021) found a positive correlation between green product/service sales and SMEs' overall performance, with eco-friendly options leading to increased customer demand, higher sales volumes, and increased profitability. Further research is needed to bridge the knowledge gap and provide valuable insights for SMEs aiming to thrive in a green economy. In terms of sales of green products and services, customer awareness of sustainability initiatives is crucial for SMEs as it influences their purchasing decisions, and the market share of green offerings has become a significant aspect for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). However, the current situation

in Nigeria reveals a significant gap in the adoption and implementation of green marketing strategies by SMEs. Many SMEs in Nigeria continue to rely on conventional marketing practices that disregard environmental concerns. This lack of adoption is primarily due to limited awareness and understanding of the potential benefits of green marketing strategies, coupled with the perceived challenges of implementation.

To address this issue, a number of stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other institutions, have initiated projects to promote green marketing practices among Nigerian SMEs. These efforts include awareness campaigns, capacity-building programs, and financial incentives to encourage the adoption of ecologically friendly practices. However, the impact of these operations has been restricted due to a lack of cross-sector support, coordination, and integration.

The current amount of literature on the impact of green marketing techniques on the performance of SMEs in Nigeria is significantly restricted. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, few studies were conducted across the state under consideration. The majority of studies on green marketing performance of SMEs were conducted in developing countries and other parts of Africa and Nigeria by authors such as Rajanikanth et al 2021; Ansar etc 2019; Sumaora et al 2017; Krizanova et al, 2016; Kiran etc et al 2021; Mabump et al 2018; Firdiansyan et al 2021; Eneizan and Kalsom 2016; Maravelkova et al 2017 etc. Given the foregoing, this study investigates the effect of green marketing on the performance of SMEs in a selected state in north central Nigeria. In light of the aforementioned issues, the following questions were developed to guide this research: how do sales of good quality products and services, customer awareness and perceptions of sustainability initiatives, market share of green offerings, and environmental impact measurements in green marketing strategies affect the performance of SMEs in a selected North Central state of Nigeria? This encompasses Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa states, and the federal capital territory.

It is on this premises the following objective were established for the study.

1. Assess the effect of sales of good quality products and services in green marketing on small and medium scale enterprise (SMEs) performance in selected North central state, Nigeria.
2. Examine the relationship between customer's awareness and perceptions of sustainability initiatives in green marketing strategies on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in selected North central state Nigeria.
3. Measure the extent and nature of market share of green offerings on the performance of SMEs in selected North central state, Nigeria.
4. Measure the extent of environmental impact measurements in green marketing strategies on the performance of SMEs in selected north central state. Nigeria.

The following null hypotheses were tested: there is no positive significant relationship between the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a selected north central state of Nigeria and the sales of high-quality goods and services, customer awareness and perceptions of sustainability initiatives, market share of green offerings, and environmental impact measurements.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification of SMEs

SMEs, which stands for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, refer to enterprises that fall within a specified size range in terms of their staff count, annual income, or asset worth. However, the exact definition of SMEs may change depending on the country or organization employing it. From a conceptual standpoint, SMEs are distinguished by their comparatively lower size in relation to multinational firms or huge enterprises. They play a pivotal role in the economy by making a substantial contribution to innovation, employment creation, and general economic expansion. Quantitative factors like the number of employees, annual turnover, or balance sheet total are frequently used to categorize SMEs. These standards may vary from nation to nation, but in general, they seek to distinguish small and medium-sized businesses from larger corporations.

SMEs can take many different forms, such as partnerships, privately held businesses, and sole proprietorships. They work in a variety of areas, from technology and the creative to manufacturing and services. Owing to their small size, SMEs frequently display traits like agility, adaptability, and a close-knit organizational structure, which facilitates quick decision-making and quick adaptation to changes in the market.

SMEs are significant for reasons other than just their financial bearing. They act as a fertile ground for entrepreneurship, encouraging competition and innovation. SMEs frequently serve local communities, satisfy niche markets, and advance regional development. They can also offer chances to anyone looking for self-employment or a more customized work environment.. SMEs have many advantages, but they also have unique difficulties. Small and medium-sized businesses frequently encounter obstacles such as scarce financial resources, restricted access to financing, and challenges in scaling up their operations. They might also run into issues with market competition, regulatory compliance, technological advancements, and luring and keeping qualified personnel.

Concepts of Strategy

A collection of decisions and actions taken by an organization to accomplish its long-term goals and objectives is referred to as its strategy, which is a basic concept in the field of management. It entails choosing how to allocate resources, recognizing competitive advantages, and figuring out where to put the company in relation to its competitors. Several writers have defined and discussed strategy, providing insightful information on this idea.

Porter (1996) describes strategy as "the creation of a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities." Porter defines strategy as the intentional selection of a unique and long-lasting market position that distinguishes the company from its rivals. In order to get a competitive edge, he stresses the significance of making trade-offs and choosing actions that complement the selected stance.

A more comprehensive perspective on strategy is offered by Mintzberg (1978). Strategy, according to him, is "a pattern in a stream of decisions." According to him an organization's strategy develops through the collective patterns of decisions and behaviors made by its members. He contends that strategy can come from emergent acts, learning, and adaptability in addition to being a conscious plan.

A strategy professor named Rumelt (2011) describes strategy as "a cohesive response to an important challenge." According to Rumelt, strategy entails using a cogent and integrated approach to handle important issues or challenges that a business faces. He stresses the significance of concentrating on the core issues and creating solutions that offer a competitive edge.

Concepts of Green Marketing Strategy

The term "green marketing strategy," which is also used to describe sustainable marketing strategy, environmental marketing strategy, and other techniques and initiatives used by companies to promote goods and services with little to no adverse environmental impact. To fulfill the increased demand for ecologically friendly solutions, it entails adding environmental factors into the marketing mix, including product design, packaging, distribution, and communication. The significance and ramifications of green marketing strategy have been clarified by a number of writers' definitions and points of view.

Kotler, (2010). The definition of green marketing strategy, according to a well-known marketing expert, is "the design, development, promotion, and distribution of products that do not harm the environment." He highlights how important it is for companies to tell customers about the environmental advantages of their products and take environmental concerns into account at every stage of the product life cycle, from the procurement of raw materials to disposal.

Expert in sustainability and green marketing Ottman (2011) emphasizes the tactical benefits of using a green marketing strategy. She contends that by satisfying the growing demand from customers for eco-friendly goods and services, companies can obtain a competitive advantage. In order to generate long-term value, he stresses the significance of incorporating sustainability into the fundamental company strategy and value proposition.

Jones (2010), an expert in environmental marketing, talks about the strategic issues and difficulties surrounding green marketing strategy. It is imperative, he says, for companies to move beyond mere "greenwashing" and make sure that their environmental claims are authentic and supported. For a green marketing plan to be successful, he emphasizes the significance of stakeholder engagement, consumer education, and openness.

Performance of SMEs

The evaluation of SMEs' (small and medium-sized enterprises) accomplishments, results, and efficiency in accomplishing corporate objectives is referred to as their performance. It entails assessing a number of factors, including market share, customer happiness, productivity, growth, profitability, and financial performance. Numerous writers have offered definitions and their opinions on how well SMEs work, giving insightful information on this subject.

The definition of SME performance, according to Devinney, Torben, and Tihanyi (2020), is "the extent to which a SME accomplishes its strategic objectives, measured in terms of financial and non-financial metrics." They stress that in order to provide a complete picture of SME performance, performance evaluation must be in line with strategic objectives and take into account both financial and non-financial metrics.

Stam, Audretsch, and Meijaard (2008) emphasize how SME performance is multifaceted. They contend that economic, social, and innovative factors ought to be taken into consideration when evaluating success. They highlight the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in SME

performance and recommend that a thorough assessment take into account not only financial indicators but also the generation of jobs, knowledge, and societal effect.

McGee (2016) talks about the variables affecting SMEs' performance. He emphasizes the importance of both external and internal elements, including market conditions, regulatory settings, management capacities, and resource accessibility. It is highlights that a variety of factors that affect SMEs' success or failure must be taken into account when assessing their performance.

Sales of Good Quality Products and Services

The practice of promoting and selling ecologically friendly goods and services that satisfy customer needs for sustainable and eco-friendly solutions is referred to as the sales of high-quality goods and services in green marketing methods. The promotion and sales of goods and services with little to no adverse environmental impact are the main goals of this part of green marketing. Numerous writers have offered definitions and their opinions on the selling of high-quality goods and services in green marketing methods, giving insightful information on this subject.

Expert in sustainability and green marketing Ottman (2011) highlights the significance of sales in green marketing plans. In the context of green marketing, she describes sales as "the process of persuading consumers to purchase and adopt environmentally friendly products and services." With emphasizes on how value proposition, customer education, and efficient marketing communications all contribute to the growth of green product sales. She contends that in order for businesses to succeed in sales, they must comprehend and appeal to the sustainability-related values and motives of their customers.

Dinsmore (2011), a specialist in environmentally conscious customer behavior and sustainable marketing, talks about how crucial sales are to green marketing initiatives. He underlines that successfully communicating the value propositions and environmental advantages of green goods and services is essential to the success of green marketing strategies. Dinsmore contends that in order for firms to succeed in the green market, they must match their marketing messaging to the values and motives of their target audience and establish credibility and trust. On sustainable innovation and green marketing, Charter (2013), addresses the difficulties that companies confront as well as the function of sales in green marketing. He emphasizes how companies should incorporate sustainability into their sales plans, taking into account things like customer involvement, retail alliances, and distribution networks. In order to increase sales, Charter stresses that companies must actively inform customers and other stakeholders about the environmental advantages of their green products.

Customers Awareness and Perceptions

In green marketing tactics, customer awareness and perceptions relate to the degree of customers' knowledge, comprehension, and attitudes regarding eco-friendly products and initiatives. It entails evaluating consumers' attitudes toward sustainability, their appreciation of green products, and their propensity to support and buy eco-friendly goods. Numerous writers have contributed definitions and exchanged opinions regarding consumer awareness and perceptions of green marketing tactics, giving insightful information on this subject.

On sustainability and green marketing. Ottman (2011) emphasizes how crucial consumer perception and awareness are to the success of green marketing campaigns. "The extent to which consumers are knowledgeable about environmental issues, understand the

environmental impacts of products and services, and value sustainability in their purchase decisions," is how she describes customer awareness and perspectives. Ottman highlights that in order for businesses to effectively explain the environmental benefits of green products and create value for customers, they must understand consumer motivations, beliefs, and attitudes towards sustainability.

Polonsky (2011), a renowned scholar in the field of green marketing, addresses the significance of consumer awareness and perceptions in the acceptance of environmentally friendly products. He highlights that consumers' views, morals, and environmental knowledge all have a big impact on what they decide to buy. Polonsky contends that in order to foster trust and improve consumer views of green offers, firms should engage in customer education and communication about the environmental effects of their goods and services..

Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Guzmán (2009) investigate how consumers view and feel about green marketing tactics. They draw attention to how companies must answer customer doubt and prove the veracity of their green claims. Customers' awareness and perceptions, according to Lindgreen et al., can be impacted by things like corporate social responsibility programs, product labeling, and marketing communications. They stress that in order to promote positive perceptions of green offerings, it is crucial to establish trust and a strong emotional connection with clients.

Markets Share of Green Offerings

The fraction of the overall market that is devoted to ecologically friendly goods and services is known as the "market share of green offerings." It stands for the competitiveness and effectiveness of green products in the market as a whole. Numerous writers have contributed definitions and their opinions regarding the market share of environmentally friendly offerings, giving insightful information on this subject.

Ottman (2011) highlights the significance of market share for green offerings. "The proportion of the total market demand for environmentally friendly products or services that is captured by a specific green brand or company" is how she defines market share of green offerings. In the context of the green market, emphasizes was on the importance of market share as a metric of performance and advantage over competitors. She contends that in order to spur industry-wide sustainability initiatives, companies should concentrate on growing their market share.

The dynamics of the market share of green offerings and associated challenges are covered by Arnould, Thompson, and Kennett (2005). They contend that elements including customer attitudes, tastes, and the competitive environment have an impact on market share in the green industry. According to Arnould et al., companies that want to grow the market share of green offerings should take into account the complexity of consumer decision-making processes as well as societal norms and cultural settings

Polonsky (2011) addresses the market share of green offerings from a strategic angle. He emphasizes how variables like consumer demand, rival positioning, and marketing efficacy affect market share. To gain market share in the green industry, Polonsky contends that companies must set themselves out with their eco-friendly products, explain their environmental advantages clearly, and cultivate customer confidence.

Environmental Impact Measurements

The examination and evaluation of the beneficial or detrimental effects that green marketing initiatives and activities have on the environment is referred to as environmental impact

measurement of green marketing techniques. The process entails assessing and calculating the environmental consequences that arise from the adoption and execution of environmentally conscious marketing tactics. Definitions and opinions of how green marketing methods affect the environment have been expressed by a number of writers.

The importance of quantifying environmental impact in green marketing initiatives is emphasized by sustainability and green marketing specialist. Ottman (2011). According to her, measuring environmental impact is "the process of quantifying the positive or negative effects that green marketing initiatives have on the environment." In order to determine the efficacy and sustainability of their green marketing initiatives, Ottman emphasizes the necessity for firms to monitor and evaluate important environmental indicators, such as carbon emissions, energy consumption, trash generation, and resource usage.

The measurement of environmental impacts in green marketing strategies is covered by renowned researcher in green marketing, Polonsky (2011). He highlights that in order for enterprises to fully understand the amount of their environmental impact, they must take into account a wide range of environmental indicators and measures. To get a comprehensive picture of their environmental performance, Polonsky advises organizations to evaluate not just their direct impacts but also their indirect affects within the product life cycle, supplier chain, and total value chain.

In the framework of sustainability programs, environmental management specialist Grant (2012) addresses the measurement and evaluation of environmental consequences. He stresses that while analyzing environmental consequences, firms must adopt a life cycle view and take the full value chain into account. Grant recommends that companies measure and contrast the environmental effects of various goods, services, or marketing approaches using standardised techniques such life cycle assessment (LCA).

The Relationship between Green Marketing Strategies and SMEs Performance.

Researchers and industry practitioners have been interested in the relationship between green marketing strategies and the success of SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises). Green marketing tactics, which emphasize the promotion of eco-friendly goods and methods, have the capacity to affect a number of SME performance factors. The relationship between the performance of SMEs and green marketing strategies has been clarified by the opinions and research of several authors on this subject.

Devinney, Pedersen, and Tihanyi (2020) talk on how the performance of SMEs is affected by green marketing tactics. They contend that SMEs can get access to new markets, boost sales, improve customer loyalty, and improve their reputation by embracing and putting into practice green marketing tactics. According to Devinney et al., SMEs may benefit from green marketing as a source of competitive advantage that improves their long-term sustainability and performance.

Using empirical research, Jönbrink, Marell, and Elg (2011) investigate the connection between green marketing strategies and the performance of SMEs. They discover that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who use green marketing techniques typically see improvements in a number of performance metrics, including profitability, sales growth, and market share. According to Jönbrink et al., green marketing can boost the financial success and competitiveness of SMEs..

McGee (2017) examines the possible advantages and difficulties of a relationship between green marketing tactics and the performance of SMEs. He contends that although implementing green marketing techniques might improve company image and help SMEs attract environmentally conscious consumers, they can also come with extra costs and complications for those with little resources. McGee advises SMEs to thoroughly weigh the possible advantages and disadvantages of green marketing techniques to make sure they complement their overarching corporate goals. Prominent authors' opinions and research suggest that SMEs can benefit from using green marketing tactics. They contend that improved reputation, client loyalty, increased sales, and entry into untapped areas can all be facilitated by green marketing. It is imperative that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) thoroughly evaluate the possible advantages and expenses linked with environmentally conscious marketing tactics to guarantee congruence with their corporate goals and resource limitations

Theoretical framework

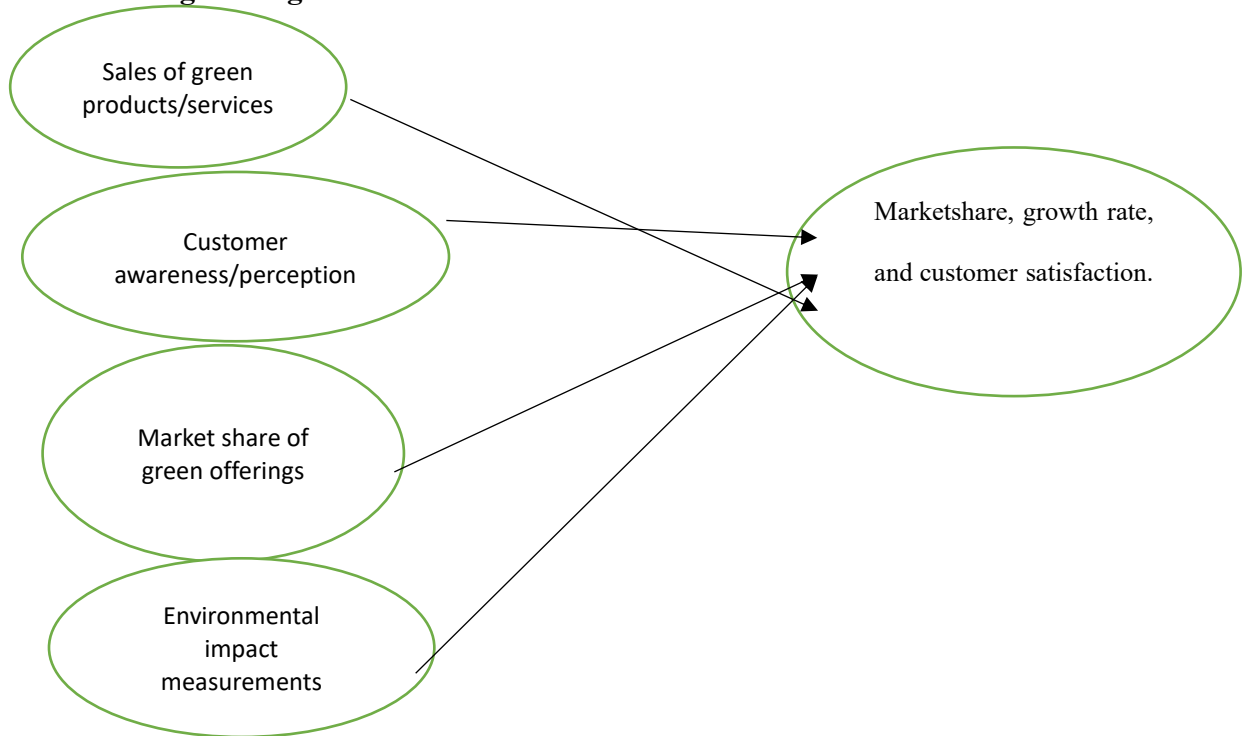
The diagram below show the framework of the study based on researcher design

Independent variable

Green Marketing Strategies

Dependent variable

SMEs Performance



Source : Framework by Researcher, 2023
Empirical Review

Ogohi (2020) studied the role of green marketing in small and medium-sized businesses and discovered that the environment is a hot topic these days because almost everyone, the government, and society have started to become more conscious of these issues. This has led to a trend of using green marketing by businesses as one of the strategies in order to gain profit and protect the tools of the marketing mix of green business. In addition, this paper will discuss small and medium-sized businesses, eco labels, and branding as this will draw in more customers. Finally, a firm will stand to benefit once green marketing strategy is implemented. According to Ekeh's (2023) research, product innovation has a significant positive impact on the growth of medium-sized businesses in North Central Nigeria. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics, namely regression analysis and correlation, to analyze the data. The regression result showed that product innovation had a significant positive impact on the growth of medium-sized businesses in North Central Nigeria. The study concluded that the practice of product innovation had a significant positive impact on the growth of medium-sized businesses in North Central Nigeria. Among other recommendations made by the study were that medium-sized businesses in Nigeria should prioritize creating unique products through extensive research and development through teamwork as the most potential to improving the medium enterprises growth in Nigeria.

In 2023, Shagun carried up a study on green business, examining Indian consumers' perceptions and desires. via the use of survey questions. 25 students and company owners received the questionnaires. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, which was also utilized to provide graphical replies. According to the survey's findings, the great majority of participants were aware of eco-friendly solutions and willing to learn more about them. A green business initiative also offers great long-term viability and financial success potential. The overwhelming majority of respondents believe that more people would become aware of the need to reduce pollution levels if more businesses adopted green business practices. This helps the company utilize its commodities and resources as efficiently as possible.

A study on "Green Business Sustainability: SMES Strategy to Increase Business Performance and Save the Environment" was conducted in 2023 by Dinalestari, Widiartanto, and Robetmi. SEM PLS is used. The impact of tactics like ethical, innovative, and green marketing on business success is measured using path analysis. There were twenty-five respondents in all that made up the study's sample. The study's research model, which was tested using the Structural Equation Model (SEM), demonstrated that it strengthened theoretical notions in the field of management. Other academics may use the idea as a reference. It is envisaged that these results will lead to the realization of management research that benefits the organization in a mutually sustainable and synergistic way by helping the improvement of business performance.

To attain MSME sustainability performance, Wahjuni and Noorlailie (2023) studied waste management and environmental accounting strategies. PLS-SEM is used. It was established by the study's findings that MSME waste management mediated the relationship between the environmental accounting strategy and MSME sustainability performance. The environmental accounting strategy of MSME was discovered to have an impact on sustainability performance. The development of research instruments that integrate data from previous studies, GRI standards, and Indonesian government regulations is what makes this research unique. It allows

researchers to contribute to the literature on environmental management accounting and provide useful insights for MSMEs and related institutions in identifying sustainability performance strategies..

Goal number 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forward by the Indonesian government is supported by the findings of this research: responsible consumption and production. To address environmental issues, the government must implement a waste management policy. Future research implications could gather more data and compare MSMEs across emerging nations. Moreover, MSMEs must implement strategic environmental accounting in order for it to influence sustainability performance.

A study by Bahari, Ahmad, Raihani, Nur, and Mohd (2023) examined the relationship between the market orientation of Malaysian SME owners and their firm performance. 7-point Likert scale is used. The study found that market orientation (MO) acts as a partial mediating factor in the association between need for cognition (NFC) and firm performance (FP). In other words, MO plays a role in mediating some of NFC's choices on FP. It is strongly encouraged that before choosing to use MO as their strategy direction, business owners with NFC may have carefully studied its benefits. Actually, the organization prioritizes and promotes assignments that call for coming up with novel solutions to problems. They are also quite good at resolving complex problems. The study helps us understand the critical success variables and obstacles faced by entrepreneurs, as well as the personality qualities and strategic orientation that these individuals require. This finding could be used as a benchmark for implementing strategic orientations in any kind of organization. In a collectivist country such as Malaysia, the selection of an appropriate business orientation is critical since the employer-employee relationship is seen as a "family link" where trust between the two sides is vital and stimulates initiative at work.

Theoretical Framework

A management paradigm known as the resource-based view (RBV) theory places emphasis on a company's internal resources and competencies as sources of long-term competitive advantage. It implies that a company's performance and success may be influenced by its distinct combination of material and immaterial resources, including real estate, human capital, expertise, and brand recognition. Since the RBV hypothesis has been developed and improved upon over time by numerous experts, it does not have a single author or year of inception. But in the 1980s and 90s, it became quite popular, thanks in large part to the work of researchers like Jay Barney and Porter.

The RBV theory can be very applicable when discussing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and how well they perform under green marketing strategies. When SMEs adopt green marketing strategies, they can take advantage of their resource advantages to gain a competitive advantage. For instance, a SMEs that places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability may have unique resources like eco-friendly manufacturing processes, a workforce that is skilled in sustainable practices, or connections with local suppliers of green materials. SMEs frequently face resource constraints in comparison to larger firms. These assets can set the small business apart from rivals and draw in eco-aware customers that respect sustainability. SMEs can improve their performance in a number of ways by coordinating their internal resources with green marketing tactics. First of all, they can satisfy the growing demand from customers for environmentally friendly goods and services, which might boost

revenue and foster a sense of loyalty. Second, SMEs can improve their market positioning and establish a strong brand reputation by showcasing their dedication to sustainability. Long-term profitability and a competitive edge may come from this

Methodology

This study looked at how SMEs in the chosen North Central Nigerian states performed in relation to green marketing strategies: The study's primary focal areas were environmental effect measurement, market share of green offerings, customer awareness, and sales of green goods and services. SMEs' performance was centered on their operational, or non-financial, performance. in Nigeria, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Federal Capital Territory of Abuja were the states chosen. 5315 medium and 507 medium, or 5822 SMEs (registered small and medium scale enterprises as collected in SMEDAN from Bureau of Statistic, 2017), make up the entire population. Purposive sampling was used to choose the SMEs. These SMEs were chosen because they engage in a variety of economic activities and are part of the expanding ecosystem of SMEs that have been managed by entrepreneurs for the previous five years till date. **Table 3.1: The Population Distribution**

S/NO	State	Small	Medium	Total
1	Benue	1146	22	1168
2	Kogi	827	17	844
3	Nassarawa	1098	22	1120
4	FCT Abuja	2244	446	2690
Grand Total		5315	507	5,822

Source. Researchers Computation, 2023 (SMEDAN 2017)

Taro Yamani (2004) was used to calculate the sample size from the overall population of 5822, arriving at 373 participants for the final study, which was based on convenience sampling technique. This method was chosen since the study only included respondents who were accessible and willing to take part at the time of data collection. A questionnaire was used in the study as the data gathering tool. Since there is still much to learn about the field of green marketing research, the questionnaire was modified from several authors.

The multiple regression model is stated as follows:

$$SMP = f(SGS + CAP + MGO + EIM) \dots\dots\dots 1$$

Where: the regression form of the equation is expressed as

$$SMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SGS + \beta_2 CAP + \beta_3 MGO + EIM + \mu \dots\dots\dots 2$$

SMP = Composition of SMEs performance

β_0 = Constant

β_1 = Regression coefficients

SGS= Sales of goods and service

CAP = Customers awareness and perceptions

MGO = Markets share of green offering

EIM = Environmental impact measurements

μ = Error term

Data presentation and analysis

The following hypotheses were tested:

Table 4.15: Model summary of effect of green marketing strategy on SMEs performance in Nigeria

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	T-Values	P-Values	Hypotheses
(Constant)	37.973	3.129	12.136	.000	
SGS	.369	.073	4.409	.000	Rejected
CAP	.311	.074	5.402	.000	Rejected
MGO	.277	.132	5.139	.000	Rejected
EIM	.141	.108	1.729	.005	Rejected
R	.570				
R ²	.325				
Adjusted R	.317				
F-Stats	43.055				

a. Dependent Variable: SMPs

(Source: Computed using SPSS 21. 2023)

The summary of the regression model on the impact of green marketing techniques on the performance of SMEs in a chosen state in north central Nigeria is displayed in Table 4.15. The bivariate association between the independent and dependent variables is robust and positive, as indicated by the Person correlation result ($r = 0.57$). According to the values of the coefficient of determination (R-Square) taken from the summary of the regression model, diversity management accounts for almost 57% of the variation in organizational performance, with the remaining approximately 43.0% being assigned to factors that were not included in this study's model. The goodness of fit of the model is shown by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results, which are statistically significant ($F_{4, 362} = 43.055$, $P < 0.05$), suggesting that the variables in the model have jointly predicted the SMEs performance

One unit increase in diversity management accounts for 37.973 units of increase in the level of organizational performance, according to the regression for the individual contributions of the independent variables, as represented by the unstandardized beta-value of 37.973. The relationship is significant at the 1% level of significance. Thus, we draw the conclusion that the performance of SMEs in a chosen state in north central Nigeria has been significantly improved by green marketing approach.

H₀₁: The hypothesis aims to determine the impact of sales of good products and services in green marketing strategy on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a selected north central state, Nigeria. The results of the regression model in table 4.16 revealed that SGS has a significant and positive effect on SMEs performance (

= 0.369, $t = 4.409$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that SMEs performance is expected to increase by 0.369 units when there is a unit increase in SGS. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis, which asserts that there is a significant effect of sale of good and services in green marketing

H02: The performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a particular north central state of Nigeria is not positively impacted by customers' awareness of and views of sustainability measures in green marketing tactics. According to table 4.16's regression model results, which assess the influence of consumers' awareness and perception of sustainability efforts (CAP) on SMEs' performance, CAP significantly and favorably affects SMEs' performance ($\alpha = 0.311$, $t = 5.402$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that the performance of SMEs should rise by 0.311 units for every unit increase in CAP. As a result, the alternative hypothesis—which contends that customers' awareness of and perception of sustainability initiatives (CAP) have a major impact on SMEs' performance—is supported and the null hypothesis is rejected.

H03: The size and makeup of the market share of green offerings have no discernible positive impact on the performance of SMEs in a particular Nigerian north central state. According to table 4.16's regression model results, which assess the impact of the size and type of market share of green products on SMEs' performance, MGO significantly and favorably affects organizational performance ($\alpha = 0.277$, $t = 5.139$, $P = 0.000$). This suggests that the performance of SMEs should rise by 0.277 units for every unit increase in MGO. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis—which contends that the size and makeup of the market share of green solutions have a substantial impact on SMEs' performance—is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

H04: The performance of SMEs in a chosen north central state is not positively impacted by the extent of environmental impact measurements in green marketing strategies. Nigeria. This hypothesis assesses how much the performance of SMEs in a chosen north central state is impacted by environmental impact measures in green marketing strategies (EIM). According to Nigeria and the regression model's findings in table 4.16, EIM significantly and favorably affects SMEs ($\alpha = 0.141$, $t = 1.729$, $P = 0.000$). This suggests that the performance of SMEs should rise by 0.141 units for every unit increase in EIM. As a result, the alternative hypothesis—which contends that the extent to which environmental impact measurements are included into green marketing strategies has a substantial impact on performance of SMEs in selected north central state Nigeria is accepted .

Discussion of Findings

The results showed that, in a particular north central state in Nigeria, the performance of SMEs is significantly and favorably impacted by high-quality goods and services. According to the research, SMEs which actively pursued green marketing strategies outperformed their competitors in terms of profitability, sales growth, and market share. The beneficial effects of green marketing on SMEs' financial performance and market results were highlighted by the study. The results showed that, in a particular north central state in Nigeria, the performance of SMEs is significantly and favorably impacted by high-quality goods and services. According to the research, SMEs which actively pursued green marketing strategies outperformed their competitors in terms of profitability, sales growth,

and market share. The study highlighted the beneficial effects of green marketing on SMEs operational performance and market outcome.

This is consistent with the results of a study conducted in 2019 by Muhammad Imran Qureshi, Shams Ur Rahman, and Alam, which found a favorable correlation between green marketing strategies and the market, financial, and customer loyalty performance of SMEs. The study placed a strong emphasis on how green marketing may raise SMEs' competitiveness and overall performance.

In a further step, the results of this investigation agree with those of Samaha and Liu (2019). The results showed a favorable correlation between green marketing strategies and the sustainability performance, customer satisfaction, and corporate image of SMEs. The research underscored the role that green marketing tactics have in enhancing stakeholder perceptions and augmenting overall business performance.

Ottman (2011) highlights the significance of sales in green marketing plans. In the context of green marketing, she describes sales as "the process of persuading consumers to purchase and adopt environmentally friendly products and services." Ottman emphasizes how value proposition, customer education, and efficient marketing communications all contribute to the growth of green product sales. She contends that in order for businesses to succeed in sales, they must comprehend and appeal to the sustainability-related values and motives of their customers.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Smith et al. (2018), who found that adopting green marketing techniques and providing high-quality, environmentally friendly products enhanced brand reputation and boosted customer loyalty. They also demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between the performance of SMEs and providing good products and services. Furthermore, this result aligns with the conclusions of Shagun's (2023) study on green business, which examined Indian consumers' perceptions and preferences. The results of the poll indicated that most participants were aware of eco-friendly solutions and willing to learn more about them.. In addition, a green company venture has excellent long term viability and potential for financial success. The vast majority of respondents think that by adopting green business practices, more people would become aware of the need of lowering pollution levels. This aids the business in making the most efficient use of its materials and resources. Shows also a positive significant relationship between Customer's awareness and perceptions of sustainability initiatives in green marketing strategies and SMEs performance.

The study conducted by Ogohi (2020) found a favorable and substantial association between the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the level of environmental effect measurements in green marketing strategies. I discovered that environmental issues are becoming quite popular these days since society, the government, and almost everyone is starting to take them more seriously. This gives rise to a trend in which businesses utilize green marketing as one of their methods to make money and safeguard their investment in the marketing mix's instruments.

Additionally, according to the findings of Gusti, Rizky, Puput, Eka, Suharsono, and Purnomo (2023), this study found a statistically significant positive coefficient regulating the association between eco-innovation and financial success. This research is new because

it focuses on how eco-innovation and environmental cooperation affect small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) performance during the COVID-19 epidemic, especially in developing nations like Indonesia. This result is consistent with the study's findings, which show that the performance of SMEs is positively correlated with the degree to which environmental impact measurements are used in green marketing plans.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus, it can be said that the application of green marketing methods can have a substantial impact on the performance of SMEs in the chosen state in North Central Nigeria, as evidenced by the study's findings. In light of these observations, it is suggested that:

1. In order to increase their competitiveness, SMEs should integrate eco-friendly activities and products into their overall business plan.
2. Concentrate on creating technologies that are ecologically sustainable in order to satisfy markets and ensure long-term success.
3. Implements green marketing strategies in collaboration with stakeholders to increase impact and support sustainability initiatives.
4. Use persuasive marketing to actively inform customers about the environmental advantages of products in order to foster a sense of confidence and increase sales.

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Acknowledgment

We wish to acknowledge and appreciate the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) for providing us with the financial support undertake this research under the Institution Based Research (IBR) grant with the grant number TEFT/DR&D/UNI/MUBI/RG/2023VOL 1. We also wish to appreciate the Management and the Directorate of Research and Innovations, Adamawa State University for their immense support during this research.