

Effect of Ecological Marketing on Survival of Small and Medium Enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The state of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) is deteriorating, and the environment is irrational in a way that has led to many businesses, especially SMEs, collapsing early in their existence. In this study, the survival of SMEs in the state of Anambra was examined in relation to ecological marketing. Descriptive survey methodology was used in the study. All SMEs in Anambra State make up the study's population, and 384 people were chosen for the sample through the use of a purposive sampling technique. As a result, respondents were asked to complete a structured questionnaire. Data analysis techniques used included multiple regression analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and Pearson's correlation. Technology, sociocultural factors, and economic factors all had a positive and significant impact on the study's findings regarding the survival of SMEs. However, in Anambra State, political factors have a significant and detrimental impact on SMEs' ability to survive. In light of this, the study came to the conclusion that ecological marketing significantly affects SMEs' ability to survive in Anambra State, Nigeria. Additionally, it claimed that businesses are on the verge of extinction if they don't recognise and act quickly on the new trends and problems in their environment. However, this study recommended strengthening the regulatory framework as well as providing adequate infrastructure facilities for SMEs to survive in Nigeria.

Keywords: Ecological Marketing, Technology, Socio-Cultural, Political, Economic, SMEs Survival.

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental concerns have spread rapidly throughout the world, affecting both business and everyday life (Alhaji & Muharram, 2019). People on the street are regularly aware of the threats posed by industrial activities, such as global warming, pollution, ozone layer destruction, scarcity of natural resources, etc. As consumer behaviour is impacted by factors like globalisation, economic development can be ensured while maintaining sustainability. Consumer awareness of the environment has grown significantly in recent years. Accordingly, Alabo & Anyasor (2020) asserted that as societies take issues relating to a healthy environment more seriously, businesses are paying attention and adapting their operations to reflect this widespread concern. As a result, environmental problems such as pollution and the resulting global warming have taken on a global dimension, and both consumers and marketers are starting to recognise the importance of switching to greener, safer products and services (Kolk, 2016). This marketing-driven shift towards ecology essentially entails altering ideas that are deeply ingrained in business cultures and conventional marketing strategies.

Every company that wants to preserve its environment is now using ecological marketing, also known as green marketing, environmental marketing, or sustainable marketing (Alabo & Anyasor, 2020). Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have started strategizing about how to create, develop, and market those products that can preserve the environment, satisfy customer demands, and generate profits. Numerous businesses in Nigeria have embraced the idea, which is reflective of how they conduct business, care for the environment, and how they want their clients to perceive them in terms of their role in preserving the environment. In contrast to conventional marketing, ecological marketing aims to raise consumers' environmental consciousness (Melovic et al., 2018).

Lawrence and Samuel assert that environmental issues are becoming more and more significant, affecting all human activities as awareness of them rises. Despite this, only a few academic disciplines have been able to incorporate environmental issues into their literature reviews. This is now a fact due to marketing's success in resolving these problems. Although ecological marketing is associated with small businesses, it is actually applicable to both large and small business scenarios. Because it is more visible and difficult to implement and maintain in large businesses, ecological marketing is frequently associated with SMEs (Melovic et al., 2017). Initially, ecological marketing was associated with small, resource-constrained businesses that were perceived as being less sophisticated. The innovative nature of ecological marketing has increased awareness in the modern era. Mort, Weerawardena, and Liesch.

The concept of ecological/green marketing is the production and marketing of goods and services with consideration for the environment in order to meet customer demands and organisational objectives (Alabo & Anyasor, 2020). According to Rex and Baumann (2007), it is the procedure and actions undertaken by businesses when offering environmentally friendly products or services to customers. According to Katrandjiev (2016), ecological marketing encompasses a wide range of activities, including creating products that are less harmful to the environment during their production, use, or disposal. In order to create products that are environmentally friendly, it is important to ensure that the production process, packaging, and advertising are all environmentally friendly. It can also be used to develop and enhance the costing, marketing, and distribution of environmentally friendly products (Pride & Ferrell, 2017).

Due to the growing importance of ecological marketing to contemporary marketing, businesses are reevaluating all of their product-related processes and promotional efforts. The analysis of a number of factors, including consumer awareness, cost and profit concerns, awareness of the issues, and competitive pressures is necessary to implement ecological marketing, according to Singh & Pandey (2012). According to Makudza (Makudza, 2020) ecology is the *"ability to meet the needs of present customers while taking into consideration the needs of future generations."* A sustainable business model includes procedures that work to maintain a firm's financial, environmental, and social resources over the long term and to improve those resources' performance.

The idea of ecological marketing is occupying the minds of academics, marketing professionals, and entrepreneurs as SMEs face more dynamic and intense competition. Today's business environment is evolving, and market conditions are shaped by chaos, fragmentation, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. As a result, a new ecological creative alternative is being introduced in place of the conventional marketing approach's planned, linear, and rational response (Fillis & Rentschler, 2010). Ecological marketing can therefore be viewed as a new paradigm that unifies key marketing and entrepreneurship concepts into a comprehensive idea where marketing becomes a process used by businesses to act ecologically (Melovic et al., 2017).

Ecological marketing is essential for raising public awareness of environmental issues and for conveying consumer demand for products that are more environmentally friendly. While many businesses use ecological marketing to highlight the value of sustainability and social responsibility, other businesses use it as a way to fleece uninformed consumers. It is getting harder to market products and services that are not environmentally friendly today. With the aid of technology and the internet, customers can access information from anywhere in the world. Customers are aware of the truth, and businesses have little to no choice but to transition to a more effective and efficient method of making environmentally friendly products.

To survive in a changing competitive environment, SMEs are constantly under pressure to find new and better ways to add value than the traditional ways (for example, better products or lower prices). Carter & Tamayo (2017) and Effiom & Edet (2018) claim that policymakers in Nigeria are aware of the importance of SMEs as significant economic drivers (e.g., they contribute about 45% of Nigeria's GDP and account for more than 50% of innovations seen in business and technological developments) and leading job creators (e.g., they account for about 70% of industrial employment). The high death rate of SMEs and the ineffective addressing of this issue are significant issues in Nigeria's SME sector. According to Gwadabe and Amirah, 85% of businesses in Nigeria fail before their fifth birthday despite efforts made by the

Nigerian government and other helpful agents. When the low percentage of people who survive past the fifth year of existence collapses between the sixth and tenth years of existence, 5–10% of the population is still alive (Gwadabe & Amirah, 2017). According to Ganyaupfu (2013), many developing countries, including South Africa and Malawi, also experience a high rate of small- and medium-sized business (SME) death.

SMEs have long been recognised for their contributions to the economic growth of both developed and developing countries (Shehu & Mahmood 2014). Ediri (2014) claims that SMEs can only maintain this position when a variety of strategies, such as the creation and implementation of suitable ecological marketing practises, are implemented at the appropriate time and in the proper proportion to have a positive impact on performance. Competition for SMEs has gotten tougher due to changes in the marketing environment's level of competition (Olannye & Eromafuru, 2016). Many academics, businesspeople, and staff members of ecological firms now seriously question the need for a proper understanding of ecological marketing strategies and their applicability to such firms. Numerous researchers have looked at how SMEs can be improved using ecological marketing's dimensions (Junde, 2014), but few, if any, have linked or explained how each ecological marketing aspect affects SMEs' survival in the state of Anambra.

According to Olaniyan et al. (2017), despite recent growth in research on SMEs marketing, current findings have not been reflected in marketing practises among SMEs in Nigeria. They stated once again that large organisational models applied to small firm settings have been criticised in the literature and that additional research is required to ascertain how marketing is carried out within the SMEs sector in Nigeria. Olannye & Edward (2016) also noted that despite the numerous challenges SMEs in Nigeria face, ecological marketing has not gotten much attention. A survey report from NBS/SMEDAN from 2018 that shows that the number of SME has decreased from 33 in 2010 to zero in 2018 is used to support this assertion. A prime example is the dearth of a sound and comprehensive theoretical framework that examines the connection between ecological factors and their effect on the survival of SMEs in the context of a typical developing nation like Nigeria. It's intriguing to learn that some SMEs are able to overcome the significant obstacles and difficulties they experience. Therefore, there is cause for hope that a solution exists. Unknown to many SME promoters must be some strategies for surviving. The objective of this study is to empirically explore how ecological marketing affects the survival of SMEs in the Nigerian state of Anambra. In this instance, the sociocultural, economic, political, and technological traits make up the ecological marketing attributes. The study is hypothesised below based on the aforementioned goal.

H₀: Ecological marketing attributes have no significant effect on the survival of SMEs in Anambra State

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ecological Marketing

Due to the unstable business environment, which forces companies to use non-traditional methods of business development, traditional marketing strategies must be modified for businesses with low levels of resources. As is the case for small and micro businesses, ecological marketing is well known to be more effective when resources are limited (Becherer & Maurer, 1997). As a result, ecological marketing investigates how environmental attitudes and behaviours can be incorporated into the development of marketing strategy and tactics (Janet & Ngugi, 2014). Ecological marketing can be characterised in a variety of ways, making it difficult to overstate how crucial it is. According to (Gbadeyan & Omelakan, 2015), ecological marketing refers to the advertising of products and services that are safe for the environment to use and consume. It also refers to the environmentally responsible marketing of goods and services. Ecological marketing, also referred to as "*green marketing*," examines how a product is modified, the entirety of the production process and its modifications, how the product is packaged and changes to packaging, as well as the core changes to its advertising (Alabo & Anyasor, 2020). The concepts of green marketing and holistic marketing are related, claim (Gelderman et al., 2021). This suggests that ecological marketing refers to the process of a good or service from conception to delivery to the final customer while also fulfilling its financial and environmental responsibilities. A company that understands the value of being environmentally friendly must be the one to develop a product from the beginning. Customers frequently link ecological marketing with phrases like "*phosphate free*," "*recyclable*," "*refillable*," "*ozone*

friendly," and "environmentally friendly". In this study, the operationalization of ecological marketing is based primarily on economic, sociocultural, political, and technological attributes. As a result, ecological marketing is defined in this study as all actions that enable any exchange meant to gratify human needs and wants while having as little adverse effect on the environment as possible.

2.1.1. Economic attribute

Economic attributes are essential to the existence of businesses and a larger society because they measure the level of national growth and development (Adeyori & Agbadudu, 2018). The phrase "*economic ecosystem*" refers to all external economic factors that have an impact on how customers and businesses make purchases and, consequently, how well a business performs. These traits, which can be either macro- or micro-scale in nature, are frequently beyond the control of a company. The macro factors include, among other things, things like employment/unemployment, income, inflation, interest rates, tax rates, currency exchange rates, saving rates, customer confidence levels, and recessions. The dependability of a company's distribution chain, or how successfully it delivers goods to customers, is one of the microeconomic factors. According to Etuk et al. (2014), additional microeconomic factors include the size of the market, customer demand for the company's products or services, competition, supplier availability, and supplier quality. In truth, a nation's economic characteristics or ecosystems affect how easy it is to conduct business there (Ayedun & Awoyemi, 2014).

2.1.2. Political attribute

In Nigeria, political attributes are crucial to the survival of business. The current political climate in Nigeria has made space for peace, security of people and property, a reduction in societal tension, and assistance in creating a political institution that is encouraging and stable and free from ongoing agitation, conflict of interest, and war (Ibrahim & Muritala, 2015; Obisi & Gbadamosi, 2016). On the contrary, the tension and unfavourable business climate that the citizens have recently experienced have been made possible by this environment. Examples include the resurgence of Boko Haram in the northeast geopolitical zone and banditry in the north-west and north-central geopolitical zone. All of these criminal organisations have political motivations for existing, and this has made the business climate in these areas unfavourable. To this, the numerous pro-secession demonstrations by the recently outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in southeast Nigeria were evidence of the unrest in the nation. The involvement of militants in the Niger-Delta region and the nefarious activities of Fulani herdsmen have also increased tension throughout the nation and negatively impacted business climates. Given this, it makes sense that fostering a calm and welcoming business environment is a strategic way to ensure the survival of SMEs in Nigeria. Political traits such as governmental practises, political stability, power transitions, security, taxation, privatisation, and deregulation are consequently important. These traits can all have a positive or negative impact on SMEs.

2.1.3 Socio-cultural attribute

The norms, beliefs, customs, attitudes, and religion practised in the community are all examples of the socio-cultural environment, according to (Abdullahi & Zainol, 2016). It also includes the social structure of the population. Unquestionably, the socio-cultural values of the society have an impact on the ability of SMEs to survive (Adeyori & Agbadudu, 2018). For example, the sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in some northern states of Nigeria while it is permitted in the southern states due to their cultural and religious backgrounds. As a result, compared to their counterparts in the South, industries operating alcohol plants in Northern communities may have a shorter lifespan. According to this study, the social-cultural environment refers to all conditions, elements, and influences that may have an impact on a person's attitudes, dispositions, behaviours, choices, and activities and thereby mould their personalities.

2.1.4 Technological attribute

Every new and existing business must now consider technology as a crucial component. Over the past few decades, technological use in business has increased dramatically. Because of the development of computers and the internet, small businesses are now making a greater economic contribution than ever before (Das et al., 2020). Technology in SMEs has tangible and intangible advantages that influence the

culture, relationships, and effectiveness of how their daily operations are carried out. By offering secure confidential information and a competitive advantage, technology has improved small business security and helped many companies survive the challenging business environment. According to Nguyen et al. (2017), businesses must develop asset maintenance and replacement strategies as well as secure and maintain technology if they want to remain competitive.

2.2 SMEs' Survival

The persistence of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) is a fundamental concept in research on entrepreneur activities. The survival and growth of any organisation are its main priorities in the competitive business environment of today. For the purpose of achieving objectives and gaining market dominance, every business aspires to differentiate itself from its competitors and be more aggressive. According to the Merriam-Webster Business Dictionary, survival is "*the act or fact of living longer than another person or thing.*" According to Gwadabe and Amirah's research, SME that endure for more than five years can be regarded as having survived the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment. Small businesses have a low survival rate primarily due to their inability to produce goods and services that satisfy customers' needs and desires. Some businesses provide top-notch products or services, but nobody wants to pay for them, or even worse, nobody wants to pay for products that won't bring in enough money for the company to make a profit. Research on the longevity of SMEs has shown that different countries measure SMEs' longevity in slightly different ways. For instance, Pasha et al. (2018) claim that the high failure rate of SMEs as a whole is caused by lending institutions' reluctance to financially support these businesses. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (Pasha et al., 2018), 50% of American SMEs survive for five years or less and about one-third survive for more than ten years. Similar findings were made in Cote d'Ivoire, where a study conducted between 1977 and 1997 found that formally registered businesses typically last six years. 2009 (Klapper & Richmond, 2009). Gwadabe and Amirah's (2017) study found that 85% of businesses in Nigeria fail before their fifth birthday, despite efforts made by the Nigerian government and other helpful agents. After the tiny portion of the population that survives past the fifth year collapses between the sixth and tenth years of its existence, approximately 5 to 10% of the population is still alive (Gwadabe & Amirah, 2017). The aforementioned statistics are comparable for countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Fewer statistics are readily available for emerging and developing countries, which typically rely on administrative data that only includes formally registered businesses. Pacha claim that the majority of businesses are unofficial and unregistered, placing these businesses in the minority. To comprehend survival over time, survey-based studies need to be replicated more frequently. Many micro and small businesses are additionally viewed as desperate or "*survivalist*" efforts for those unable to find formal employment. But according to the literature, micro and small businesses typically face much greater growth barriers than those found in industrialised nations, which has an adverse effect on their capacity to produce and survive.

3. METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study used a positivistic paradigm and a survey to gather opinions from SMEs managers in Anambra State's three major cities: Awka, the state capital, Onitsha, the commercial centre, and Nnewi, the industrial hub. The three largest cities in Anambra State were specifically chosen for the study. In order to geographically diversify the sample, each of the chosen cities represents a different senatorial zone in the (Central, South, and North) State. There are 177 communities spread across 21 local government areas in the state. The managers of SMEs in Anambra State make up the study's population. The number of SME's managers in the State is not known. This necessitated using Cochran's method to determine the proper sample size for the study. Cochran's formula is presented as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 Pq}{e^2}$$

Validation was,

Z = the result on the Z table with a 95% confidence level of 1.96;

e = sampling error at 5%; and

$p =$ the population's maximum variability at 50%. i.e. (0.5) (0.5)

$q = 1-p = 0.5$

Substituting,

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 0.5(0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$n = 384.116$

Three hundred eighty-four managers make up the sample size. One hundred and twenty-eight managers were chosen from Onitsha (Anambra North), Nnewi (Anambra South), and Awka (Anambra Central), in that order. The primary data was gathered from managers using a standardised questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Respondents are given a list of statements or questions, and are given a five-point Likert scale on which to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each. Internal consistency measured using Cronbach's alpha yielded a result of 0.781. After conducting a Pearson's correlation, exploratory factor analysis, and other preliminary investigations, the hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis to examine the effects of ecological marketing on SME's survival.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data generated from the managers of the sampled SMEs in Anambra State were presented, analysed, and interpreted. The rate of return and response to the questionnaire were analyzed as follows. A total of three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the managers of SMEs, out of which two hundred and thirty-six (236) copies were properly filled and found relevant to the study. This shows a response rate of 61.5 percent.

Analysis of results

The impact of independent variables on the dependent variables was examined using the multiple regression technique. The tables below present the findings using the exploratory factor analysis, multiple regression analysis and Pearson's correlation.

Table 1 Pearson's correlation between Ecological Marketing and SME survival

		Ecological Marketing	SME Survival
Ecological Marketing	Pearson's Correlation	1	0.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	236	236
SME Survival	Pearson's Correlation	0.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	236	236

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between ecological marketing and the survival of SMEs is shown in Table 1 ($r = 0.525$, $p < 0.05$). It is clear from the table of correlation coefficients that all ecological marketing characteristics are significantly and positively correlated with the dependent variable (SME survival). P is less than 0.05, and 0.525, or 52.5%, of the data are correlated. This level of significance indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between ecological marketing attributes (socio-cultural, economic, political, and technological attributes) and SME survival in Nigeria. The null hypothesis was rejected by this level of significance. However, there is a strong and positive relationship between the two variables that is not only significant. Following recognition of the link between ecological marketing and the survival of SMEs, additional tests utilising multiple regression analysis were conducted to determine the unique impact of each ecological marketing attribute on the survival of SMEs in Nigeria. The results of the EFA, which calculates the factor loading of each ecological marketing attribute, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Exploratory factor analysis of the measurement of ecological marketing

Item	Mean	SD	Factor loading	Item total correlation
Ecological marketing attributes				
Factor 1				
Technological attribute	4.14	1.672	0.974	0.531
Economic attribute	3.62	0.864	0.784	0.526
Socio-cultural attribute	2.63	1.232	0.721	0.474
Political attribute	2.49	0.653	0.702	0.413

KMO = .758; X² = 629.231; DF= 8; P < .002; Cronbach's α = .689; Percentage of variance explained = 53.21%.

The reliability of the various measurements used in the research construct was examined in this paper in order to determine their degree of internal consistency. Using IBM SPSS statistics version 27, the internal consistency of the components, or factors, and the corresponding items that resulted from the EFA measurement were examined separately. The technological attribute has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.683, followed by economic attribute (0.651), sociocultural attribute (0.682), and political attribute (0.601). While an internal consistency of 0.729 was produced by the SME survival factor. Since the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were above 0.600, no factor was excluded from the measurement model. The ecological marketing attributes in this study were examined using the multiple regression analysis/model measurement shown in Table 3 based on the outcomes of the EFA. Additionally, the outcome combines model summary, ANOVA, and coefficients in a sizable table to produce a clear, comprehensive picture.

Table 3 ecological marketing as predictors of SME survival

	R	R square	Adjusted square	R	F	Beta	t	sig
	0.671 ^a	0.635	0.546		22.677	----	-----	0.000 ^b
Socio-cultural attribute						0.163	2.624	0.001
Economic attribute						0.221	2.236	0.012
Political attribute						-0.175	-2.693	0.000
Technological attribute						0.237	3.672	0.002
(Constant)						---	6.378	0.007

a. Dependent Variable: SME survival
b. Predictors: (Constant) socio-cultural, economic, political, technology

According to Table 3, the regression model has a R square of 0.635 and an adjusted R square of 0.546. This means that 54.6% of the variations in the survival of SMEs in Nigeria are predicted by the model (ecological marketing attributes). This is significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating that the dependent variable (SME survival) and the independent variables (different ecological marketing attributes) have a significant relationship. These findings are consistent with the alternative theory that ecological marketing characteristics have an impact on SMEs' ability to survive. Notably, the standardised Beta and the corresponding P-values for socio-cultural attributes ($\beta = 0.163$, $p < 0.001$), economic attribute ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.012$), political attribute ($\beta = -0.175$, $p < 0.000$), and technological attribute ($\beta = 0.137$, $p < 0.002$), show that the technological attribute made the largest contribution, followed by the economic attribute, and then the other dimensions. In light of these findings, it can be concluded that sociocultural, economic, and technological characteristics all contribute to the prediction of SME survival in Nigeria, while political characteristics also made a distinctive contribution to SME survival in this study. Given this, it is reasonable to conclude that ecological marketing significantly affects SME survival in Nigeria.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULT

This study looked at how ecological marketing affected SMEs' ability to survive in Anambra State, Nigeria. The results demonstrate that ecological marketing has a favourable and significant impact on SMEs' ability to survive. A thorough investigation was conducted to confirm the extent to which these ecological marketing attributes contributed to the survival of SMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria, but it was discovered that the technological attribute had a major impact. This was consistent with the findings of Gado (2015) and Ayedun & Awoyemi (2014), who discovered that technological advancements are crucial to business survival. Adeyoriyu & Agbadudu (2018) found that technological attributes have a significant but unfavourable impact on MSMEs in Nigeria, but the study disagreed with their findings.

Insofar as making SMEs competitive and sustainable is concerned, the role of technology cannot be understated. This is especially true of the digitisation concepts that many businesses have adopted. Reexamining the technological climate in developing nations is highly pertinent in these circumstances. The impact of technology on the survival of SMEs is thus illustrated in this study, which shows that SMEs owners and managers have enjoyed adequate access to modern technology and equipment, good business networks and communications, easy access to credit facilities, low taxes, good market competitive advantage, high sales volume, as well as adequate access to information systems. Technology-based SMEs can now focus on thinking about expanding outside of national borders to enter intra-regional and international markets as well as compete with multinational corporations to capture a larger market share in the domestic market, according to Das et al. (2020). Many businesses have chosen to concentrate their efforts on differentiating themselves through capability development in recent years.

Once more, it is clear that economic factors play a positive and significant role in SMEs' ability to survive in Anambra State. This suggests that good market competitive advantage, high sales volume, low cost of raw materials, adequate infrastructure, minimal inflationary trends, moderate entry fees and charges, easy access to credit facilities, and low taxes are indeed some of the key economic factors that support SMEs survival in Anambra State. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Adeyoriyu & Agbadudu (2018), who found that economic factors affect MSMEs' ability to survive in Nigeria.

The study also discovered that socio-cultural characteristics significantly and favourably affect SMEs' ability to survive in Anambra State, Nigeria. That is to say, the operationalization and survival of SMEs in Anambra State are impacted by issues related to religious discrimination, customer beliefs and norms, corruption, and other social vices. Therefore, managers and owners of such businesses must take into account the strength of such environment if they want their SMEs to survive within the socio-cultural environment. This implies that the people's culture and traditions are still valued and taken into account when conducting business as usual. Therefore, the majority of SMEs in Anambra State have mastered the art of operating within the socio-cultural framework. This result supports the thesis put forth by Adeyoriyu & Agbadudu (2018) and Eze & Okpala (2015), according to which socio-cultural characteristics significantly and favourably affect the survival of SMEs in Nigeria.

However, the political attribute has a singular result in relation to its impact on the survival of SMEs. The study demonstrates that although political influence is important to SMEs' survival, it has a negative impact. This demonstrates the recent general political unrest felt in both the political and business spheres. Like the ineffective regulatory structure, numerous taxes, lack of security, and high crime rate implemented by politicians and which have continued to negatively impact the entire business community. Odunbakin, Alao, Dairo, and Oba-Abimbola (2017), Mark and Nwawu (2015), and Zonouzi, Hoseyni, and Khoramshahi (2019), Shin, Park, Choi, and Choy (2017), and Odunbakin, Alao, Dairo, and Oba-Abimbola (2017) all disagree with the conclusion that political factor has a positive effect on survival of SMEs.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study used empirical research to examine the impact of ecological marketing on the survival of SMEs in the Nigerian state of Anambra. According to the research's conclusions, sociocultural, economic, and technological factors have a positive and significant impact on SMEs' ability to survive in Anambra State. While SMEs are significantly and negatively impacted by political attributes. It is clear that ecological marketing plays a key role in predicting the survival of SMEs in Anambra State and Nigeria as a whole. The study also updated empirical literatures that have already been published and can be used in new studies.

The study also provides empirical evidence that can help SMEs and policymakers create a supportive business climate through existing business reforms like improving online portals to search for company names and understanding the impact of ecological marketing factors on the survival of small and medium enterprises. These reforms include strengthening access to credit facilities, protecting investors, and improving investor protection.

The following advice was given in light of the study's main conclusions :

1. SMEs need to be aware that the technological features of their operating environment have a significant impact on their ability to produce and provide services. Therefore, in order to keep up with the pace and trend of invention and technological advancement, business owners and managers should take a proactive approach.
2. The Nigerian government should ensure political integration and the stability of democratic institutions by avoiding frequent changes to its policies and programmes. These are necessary for business survival and growth in order to create a political environment that is stable and free of violence. In order to continuously assess the health or unhealthiness of their businesses, entrepreneurs and investors must continuously and routinely conduct environmental scanning that includes a proper analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

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