



Green Entrepreneurial Practices and the Sustainability of Manufacturing SMES in North Central Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the effect of green entrepreneurial practices on the sustainability of manufacturing SMEs in North Central Nigeria. The specific objectives are to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination, and green entrepreneurial marketing; on the sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research approach, using questionnaire administration for data generation from a sample of 327 employees of the selected manufacturing SMEs in North Central Nigeria. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The t-test and p-values from regression analysis (statistical package for social science, version 25.0) was used for test of hypothesis. Findings showed that green entrepreneurial initiatives (Beta = .786, T = 5.98, P = .022), green entrepreneurial innovation (Beta = .771, T = 7.03, P = .020), green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection (Beta = .765, T = 6.44, P = .035), green entrepreneurial inclination (Beta = .783, T = 5.88, P = .014) and green entrepreneurial marketing (Beta = .774, T = 4.55, P = .033); have significant and positive effect on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. The study concludes that green entrepreneurial practices (green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination and green entrepreneurial marketing) can be considered a veritable vehicle that has potentials for enhancing and sustaining innovativeness, competitiveness, growth and customer response in manufacturing SMEs. The study recommends, amongst others, that management of manufacturing small and medium enterprises should continuously attend to green entrepreneurial initiatives as an enabler, as it will enhance their business understanding towards delivering innovative products that are eco-friendly through natural resources related activities and keep the firm in a better sustained position.*

Key words: *Green Entrepreneurship, sustainability, growth, competitiveness, customer patronage, marketing.*

2.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Over the years, the population growth across the globe increased the production and consumption of goods and services leading to the depletion of natural resources and causing severe damage to the environment. Some of the serious repercussions of environmental damage include global warming, increased environmental pollution, and decline in the flora and fauna. In recent decades, environmental concerns of climate change have been globally intensified as its

disastrous consequences are now overwhelming and reported in almost every region in the world (Mitchalis *et al.*, 2022). In response to the need for environmentally sustainable growth, firms face constant pressures to care about the natural environment by taking proactive measures against environmental degradation and natural resources depletion. In this context, green entrepreneurship is considered a critical factor for firms' operation. Such strategy can support the development of new products and services that offer environmental benefits (Ataman *et al.*, 2018). These environmental benefits may include energy savings, reduced carbon dioxide emissions, water savings, improved recycling, and limitation of environmental pollution. Moreover, green entrepreneurship is considered a supportive strategy that has ability to develop an innovative, competitive and sustainable posture for manufacturing small and medium enterprises. More and more firms are focusing on proactive approaches towards environmental protection by adopting green entrepreneurship (Mitchalis *et al.*, 2022; Ataman *et al.*, 2022).

Meanwhile, various factors could affect the firm's sustainable performance, such as the approach firms take to operate in society, the technology adopted, the resources available, competent hands, and other variables (Chukwuka, 2018). Moreover, consumers' perceptions of the firm could significantly impact the firm's sustainability because activities targeted at promoting the well-being of humanity and society in general, endear people of such firms (Fadeyi and Maresova, 2020; Oyekanmi, 2020). Organizations are now using various approaches and practices to shape the consumers' perception of their products and brands (Peng *et al.*, 2018). For the green approach to saturate the economy for a positive effect, the importance of manufacturing SMEs and their essential role in national economic viability cannot be ignored (Pangarso *et al.*, 2022). Rajkamal *et al.* (2022) notes that businesses that offer green products or services are important economic players with the ability to change society's direction as well as growth-incubating companies that foster innovation and environmental responsibility. Therefore, managers must drive a sustainability strategy aligned with the trending green approach as a pivot to their economic activities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Green entrepreneurship is being increasingly considered as the future of business all over the world. Different views on green entrepreneurs are characterized by undertaking new business opportunities and ventures that are usually risky. Green entrepreneurs also get their motivation intrinsically and their business activities positively affect the natural environment, enhance economic sustainability and deliberately focus on a more sustainable future. Nevertheless, concerns for strategies or practices imbibed to drive home these approaches of green entrepreneurship for sustainability by manufacturing small and medium enterprises in Nigeria and North Central in particular is still lacking dearth of empirical studies. Several studies (such as Yin *et al.*, 2021; Yaseen *et al.*, 2022; Achaku *et al.*, 2022; amongst others) have examined green entrepreneurship practices in relation to performance and not sustainability; where a few has studied linking to sustainability (such as Hamza *et al.*, 2021; Abubakar *et al.*, 2022), there are still

no such study with the variables capturing initiatives, recruitment and selection, inclination, innovation, and marketing; in a single study and as well in North Central Nigeria. This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of green entrepreneurship practices on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of green entrepreneurship practices on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria, The specific objectives are: to

- vi. determine the effect of green entrepreneurial initiatives on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria.
- vii. evaluate the effect of green entrepreneurial innovation on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria.
- viii. examine the effect of green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria
- ix. assess the effect of green entrepreneurial inclination on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria
- x. ascertain the effect of green entrepreneurial marketing on sustainability of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in North Central Nigeria

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the theoretical framework, the conceptual review and review of related empirical works.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The following theories are reviewed as related to the variables used in this study, as well as related to the subject under study which are: Stakeholder theory and Resource Dependency theory.

2.1.1 Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory by Edward Freeman (1984), is a theory of organizational management and business ethics that accounts for multiple constituents impacted by business entities like employees, suppliers, local communities, creditors and others. The theory holds that anyone affected by the company and its workings is a stakeholder. Freeman notes that if you can get all your stakeholders to swim or row in the same direction, you have got a company with momentum and real power.

The tenet of this theory holds that managers' central duty is not just taking care of the shareholders of the business only; managers should also be impactful, effective and accountable to the internal (employees and shareholders) and external stakeholders (customers, suppliers, community, and non-government organizations) (Moneva and Pajares, 2018). This theory was adopted for this study because it exhaustively explains and illustrates the crux of this study. Thus, to achieve organizational sustainability, manufacturing firms must look internally and externally to understand how their activities impact on the environment, immediate communities and tailor

their recruitment and selection practices towards ameliorating these effects by using strategies and policies for ensuring sustainability by the organization.

2.1.2 Resource Dependence Theory

Organizational success in the resource dependency theory is defined as organizations maximizing their power (Pfeffer, 1981). The resource dependency theory proposes that actors lacking in essential resources will seek to establish relationships with others in order to obtain needed resources. Organizations also minimize their own dependence on others or increase the dependence of other organizations on them. Within this perspective, organizations are viewed as coalitions alerting their structure and patterns of behavior to acquire and maintain needed external resources. The resource dependency theory assumes that organizations work toward acquiring control over resources that minimize the dependence of other organizations on themselves.

This theory is significant to this study because it suggests that through green entrepreneurship a firm is able to gain independence from other organizations through actions like pollution control, call center based business services and renewable green recyclable projects, for instance bio-compression technology, bio-ethanol technology, algae for biodiesel production, biogas plants, improved cooking stoves, solar thermals, solar lanterns and thermo chemical technologies. This then can explain the behavior of enterprises toward green business based on how they feel they can gain power and independence by participating in green business.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The relevant concepts and their dimensions as relating to this study are carefully defined and reviewed.

2.2.2 Concept of Green Entrepreneurship

The concept of green entrepreneur rises from environmental concerns such as global warming, pollutions, scarcity of natural resources, ozone layer depletion, climate change and other disasters caused by the disruption of the ecosystem. The term green entrepreneur is a combination of two words i.e. environment and entrepreneur (Sharma and Kushwaha, 2015). Green entrepreneurship is therefore seen as the application of creativity and innovation in the domestication of plants and animals by committing the required human and material resources assuming the associated measurable risks and receiving the rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction as well as independence in an environmentally friendly manner thereby leading to attainment of sustainability (Pejman and Seyed, 2017). Green entrepreneurship therefore means that entrepreneurs identify and practice entrepreneurial activities with the view to providing solutions to climate change, global warning as well as environment solution (Audu, 2022). Green entrepreneurs therefore serve as variable tools towards enhancing the socio-economic conditions of nations specifically Nigeria and North Central Nigeria in particular. This is due to the fact that green business practices create opportunities to cater for the dynamics of market, thus resulting to product design, process design, concept development and innovative marketing practices (Habib *et al.*, 2020).

2.2.3 Dimensions of Green Entrepreneurship

Green entrepreneurship is measured by using the following indices: green entrepreneurial initiative, green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination, green entrepreneurial orientation, green entrepreneurial jobs, ecological economy and carbon economy (Chukwuka and Eboh, 2018). These dimensions have been used by several studies including that of Ataman *et al.* (2018), Musa *et al.* (2021), Fapohunda *et al.* (2022); amongst others. This study adopts and utilizes the following as been peculiar for this study and in the study area; they are green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial inclination, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, and green entrepreneurial marketing.

i. Green Entrepreneurial Initiatives: Green entrepreneurship initiative refers to an accumulation of natural resources related activities which requires application of innovative drive towards improved value creation for the immediate and strategic benefits of the clients (Shakeel, *et al.*, 2019). Green entrepreneurial initiatives seek to raise awareness of environmental issues among decision makers and promote new projects that are environmentally friendly (Habib *et al.*, 2020). Green entrepreneurial initiatives is the ability intended to help protect the environment in turning ideas into action through creativity, innovation, and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects that protects natural resources (Hamzah *et al.*, 2021).

ii. Green Entrepreneurial Innovation: Green entrepreneurial innovation, also viewed as eco-innovation (environmentally friendly innovation green innovation or sustainable innovation), is often used to locate those innovations that bring about sustainable environment through ecological improvements (Olalekan *et al.*, 2020). It consists of completely new or perhaps modified procedures, methods, and items that benefit the environment and additionally play a role in environmental sustainability (Li *et al.*, 2018). Seman *et al.* (2018) avers that bringing together green innovation practices is key to survival and maintenance of manufacturing companies in improving and sustaining their capabilities and performance.

iii. Green Entrepreneurial Inclination: The firms' inclination to green entrepreneurship can be defined by the tendency for the firm to adopt green practices (Habib, 2020). Green entrepreneurship inclination relates to the concept of self-efficacy or self-confidence, which highlights the individual's self-perception regarding their abilities and skills (Ahmad *et al.*, 2015). It reflects the individual's deep judgment on whether they have the capabilities to undertake essential tasks or the belief that they would be able to effectively transform their skills into cohesive outputs; hence an individual with a high self-efficacy is more likely to believe in an actionable green entrepreneurship notion (Soomro *et al.*, 2019), which also play a contributory role to nurture green entrepreneurship business that could promote sustained manufacturing business.

iv. Green Entrepreneurial Recruitment and Selection: This is a procedure by which management attract and hire candidates with attitude, behavior, knowledge and skills that adheres with

managing the environment of an organization (Ullah, 2017). As submitted by Saini and Shukla, (2016) under this form of recruitment pattern, mediums such as online portal, online application forms like Google forms, telephone or video-based interviews are employed in minimizing travel-related environmental impact. The means of recruitment refers to the process where potential applicants are scheduled for, and then encouraged to apply for an actual or anticipated vacancy. Selection is the process of hiring employees among the shortlisted candidates and providing them a job in the organization (Fapahunda *et al.*, 2022).

v. Green Entrepreneurial Marketing: Green marketing is considered as a tool for monitoring, seeking and fulfilling consumer needs and desires in the context of environmental responsibility (Akehurst *et al.*, 2012 as cited in Obafemi and Ihunwo, 2022). Green marketing practices entail a serial of organization functions, including environmentally friendly products and logistics, promotion and pricing and green consumption (Zhanglan, 2016).

2.2.4 Sustainability

Sustainability as a concept gained prominence from the report submitted by the Brundtland Commission in 1987; and since then, it has become widely accepted especially in the assembling sectors as it was viewed as an essential administrative and leadership tool (Fapohunda *et al.*, 2022). Organizational sustainability as described by Wales (2013) is a process through which management of an organization keeps its business activities running. In the same vein, Diri (2021) averred that sustainability is the achievement recorded by an organization in meeting its current needs without compromising its future needs. Genty, (2021) asserted that organizational sustainability implies having in place the right leadership style, talents, global awareness/intuition and the action plan required in combating threats being faced by modern organizations. The above position is in agreement with Gehman and Lefsrud (2018 cited in Diri, 2021) where the authors opined that one of the major ways by which firms contribute towards sustainability is through their mode of operation and practices.

2.2.5 Measures of Sustainability

Different views have been held by different authors on what constitutes organizational sustainability dimensions or indicators or characteristics with major focus on measuring forms. Lawal *et al.* (2016), the sector a firm belongs, the size of the firm, ownership structure and degree of innovative orientation, determines the extent to which sustainable business behavior is exhibited. They went further to note that the key dimensions are the extent of growth of an organization, innovativeness of the organization, competitiveness, and customer patronage.

i. Growth: According to Zatoni *et al.* (2015) an organizational growth constitute economic indicators such as profit-loss-ratios, sales figures, asset values, revenue, share value, market share, overall value of production and various financial indicators such as liquidity, equity, leverage or debt ratio. They pointed out that when a firm increases the added value of its

production as the case may be, it also increases its stock market value. They added that amongst all the indicators mentioned, not all of them react so quickly to external or internal changes.

ii. Competitiveness: Competitiveness is seen as a state in which organizations address dynamism in the external environment and continue to provide satisfactory products/services to customers which are better than the products offered by other players in the industry (Li and Liu 2014; Kaur and Metha, 2016). Kokemuller (2017) stated that one of the most critical factors in family owned businesses is competition. Business owners/ managers are forced to know their competitors, should the business be operating in a concentrated industry with less competitors or a huge industry with lots of competitors, still as a business manager it is your responsibility to know the business competitor so that you can sustain the business.

iii. Customer Response: Customer response refers to the ability to respond to the needs and wants of customers, including response to satisfaction (Sungyuan and Ussahawanitchakit, 2015). However, Rehrsson's study (2011 as cited in Sungyuan and Ussahawanitchakit, 2015) found that a firm's focus on customer responsiveness and its financial performance will positively reinforce the firm operation in the growth market. Customer response refers to the results from a firm's competency in response to customer demand/need and delivers superior value to customer (Sungyuan and Ussahawaitchakit, 2015).

2.2.6 Small and Medium Enterprises

Small and medium-sized businesses can be judged on their effectiveness, profitability, productivity, market share, revenue, cost, and liquidity dynamics, as well as their achievement of goals, leadership style, employee behavior, and customer happiness (Zimon, 2018). A set of 14 indicators is used to evaluate the performance of small and medium-sized businesses, including public image, productivity, staff morale, earnings, sales, on-time order delivery, appropriate work capital, effectiveness in production operations, quality of products, achievement of targets, clientele, ease of supervision, cost reduction, and product diversification (Sheehan, 2014; Gopang *et al.*, 2017). In addition, macroeconomic factors and the internal environment (business characteristics and strategy) are significant drivers of small and medium-sized firm performance (Ipinnaiye *et al.*, 2017).

2.3 Empirical Review of Related Studies

Alshebami (2023) study aimed to explore the necessary antecedents contributing to developing innovative green products and services among small enterprises in Saudi Arabia. The study targeted a sample of 284 small entrepreneurs across various regions of Saudi Arabia. The responses were collected with a convenience sample through an online questionnaire. The data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings revealed that both green entrepreneurial self-efficacy (GESE) and green entrepreneurial orientation (GEO) have a positive relationship with green innovation (GI). The findings also reported that green innovation mediates the relationship between green entrepreneurial self-efficacy, green entrepreneurial orientation and economic performance (EP).

Alfandi and Bataineh (2023) study investigated the mediating influence of knowledge management on the link between Green entrepreneurial orientation and sustainable performance. A quantitative approach was adopted. Through a self-administered questionnaire, 108 questionnaires were collected from five-star employees in managerial positions. The gathered data was analyzed using structural equation modeling to assess the link between our research variables. According to the findings of structural equation modeling, Green entrepreneurial orientation has a beneficial impact on knowledge management and sustainable performance. Furthermore, the knowledge management has a favorable effect on the sustainable performance. The outcome also revealed that knowledge management partially mediates between Green entrepreneurial orientation and sustainable performance, suggesting that the favorable effects of Green entrepreneurial orientation on sustainable performance may be amplified by knowledge management's mediating action. The findings have implications on the Jordanian's tourism and hospitality industry.

Obafemi and Ihunwo (2022) study examined the relationship between green market practices and business wellness in the Nigerian food and beverages firms in Rivers State. The target population of the study was 12 food and beverages firms with 60 respondents drawn from the management of the sampled firms. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents, and data obtained were accordingly analyzed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient Statistical Tool to test the hypotheses with the aid of SPSS version 20.0. Results revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between green marketing practices and business wellness of Nigerian food and beverages firm; while innovativeness moderates the impact on green marketing practices and business wellness. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable (one major green entrepreneurial practice, ie entrepreneurial green marketing) and dependent variable (an aspect of sustainability), as well as same manufacturing sector. The difference exists in terms of the geographical location and scope.

Abubakar *et al.* (2022) examined the strategic integration effect of green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial behavior and information systems on sustainable business performance and competitiveness in Nigeria. The relationships between the constructs were discussed in terms of long term developments and post pandemic business trends. Data were collected from 221 owners/managers of small and medium sized enterprises in Kano using structured questionnaire, while structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. All the hypotheses were supported, and the results revealed that there was significant influence of green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial behavior and information systems on sustainable business performance and competitiveness. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable, as well as having the same subsector under study. The difference exists in terms of tools of analysis and in the geographical scope.

Achaku *et al.* (2022) investigates the effect of green entrepreneurship on the performance of SMEs in North-Central Nigeria and the federal capital territory. A pre-test was conducted, and a descriptive cross-sectional questionnaire was used. The study examined 1,233 consenting randomly chosen respondents from six states and Abuja City in North-Central Nigeria. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that green entrepreneurship can decrease the negative impacts of business activities on the environment and also ensure profitability. Moreover, green entrepreneurial innovative production and green entrepreneurial inclination significantly impact competitive edge ($\beta = 0.806$, $t\text{-value} = 49.648$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) and customer spending ($\beta = 0.976$, $t\text{-value} = 51.315$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$), respectively. The study offers useful public information and experimental confirmation of environmental sustainability engaged in viable business activities. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and in the geographical scope, as well as having the same subsector under study. The difference exists in terms of dependent variable.

Fapahunda *et al.* (2022) study examines the effect of green recruitment and selection practices on organizational sustainability in the Nigerian manufacturing sector with the objective of examining the effect of developing green job description on economic sustainability; examining the effect of usage of green information technology on environmental sustainability; and examining the effect of short-listing of applicants with environmental awareness on social sustainability. The study adopted a descriptive design in which questionnaires were administered for data collection. Data was collected from 155 and the hypotheses for the study were tested with regression and correlation analysis. Findings from the study illuminated that green recruitment and selection practices significantly affect organizational sustainability. The study concluded that since green recruitment and selection practices significantly affects organizational sustainability, then manufacturing Firms must uphold and incorporate these practices into their corporate agenda to promoting their sustainability. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable, but differs in the subsector under study. The difference also exists in terms of geographical scope.

Bolaji *et al.* (2022) study investigated the impact of green supply chain management on organizational performance. This study is a conceptual review based on existing literatures in the area of green supply chain management. Efforts were made to examine the impact of reverse logistic, green procurement, green distribution as a component of GSCM on organizational performance in the area of manufacturing and logistics firms in Nigeria. Based on critical literature review conducted, the existing literature on the effects of green supply chain management practices on firm performance provides support for the idea that there is a positive relationship between GSCM practices and firm performance. They also enhance the understanding of how different types of GSCM practices are related to financial, operational and environmental performance in manufacturing and logistics. The empirical results suggest that while internal GSCM practices have the strongest effect on environmental performance, environmental collaboration with customers seems to be the most effective way to improve

financial performance. In terms of operational performance, most findings were more mixed, suggesting that the operational performance of firms is more likely to be affected by firm characteristics than by the choices they make regarding their environmental collaboration. The similarities shared by this study and the current one exist in terms of having a subset of green entrepreneurship practice and in manufacturing sector. The difference exists in terms of dependent variable and in the geographical scope.

Michalis *et al.* (2022) examines both the relationship between green innovation and green entrepreneurship and the mediating role of firm strategies in the relationship between green entrepreneurship, green innovation, and competitive advantage. A total of 225 managers responsible for the environmental strategy of medium and large-sized firms operating in Greece were used as a sample for the study. To measure the research variables, a structured questionnaire was used. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inductive statistics, including principal components analysis, correlation analysis, a multivariate generalized linear model, and a structural equations model. The empirical results indicate a positive influence of green entrepreneurship in green product innovation and green process innovation. Furthermore, the mediating role of firm strategies in the relationship between green entrepreneurship, green innovation, and competitive advantage is confirmed. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable and dependent variable. The difference exists in terms of the size of firms studied and in the geographical scope.

Yaseen *et al.* (2022) assess the effects of green marketing practices on competitive advantage and business performance in Malaysia. A quantitative approach was used to obtain data from a survey (questionnaire) consisting of 33 items with a five-point Likert scale. The unit of analysis is small and medium companies in Malaysia. The respondents in this paper are the managers of departments. Smart PLS 3.2.9 was used to analyze the results. The findings of the path analysis of partial least squares (PLS) support variables in their hypothesized direct relationships with business performance. The analysis results suggest that competitive advantage partially mediates the relationship between green marketing practices and business performance. The paper provides many suggestions that are helpful both for researchers and policymakers to undertake more research in this area as well as to enhance the competitive advantage and business performance of institutions in the future. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable (green marketing practices which is one of the green entrepreneurial practices) and dependent variable (competitiveness, which is one of the measures of sustainability). The difference exists in terms of the geographical scope and tool of analysis.

Ramayah *et al.* (2022) examined and tested an integrative, multi perspective framework towards green entrepreneurial inclination among University students in Malaysia. The main objective was to determine the significant predictive role of a range of University support, institutional support, family support, and acquaintances support for green entrepreneurial inclination. Cross sectional

survey was directed through structured questionnaires among the University students. Partial least squares method adopted using the smart PLS 3.0 software to analyze the data from 1000 respondents. The findings reveal that perceived educational, business development, institutional support along with perceived family and acquaintances support play a significant role for green entrepreneurial inclination. This study shares similarity with the current one as they both have the same independent variable (green entrepreneurial inclination which is one of the green entrepreneurial practices) though difference exist in the dependent variable and in terms of the geographical scope and tool of analysis.

3.0

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the survey research design, the study area is North Central Nigeria, comprising of Benue State, Kogi State, Kwara State, Nasarawa State, Niger State, Plateau State and the Federal Capital Territory. The population of the study was 1784 with a sample size of 327 generated scientifically using Yamen's Formula. The study made use of questionnaire with a validity and reliability index of .802. The model employed for this study is multiple regression analysis model which involves the independent variable (green entrepreneurship practices), and the dependent variable (firm sustainability). Therefore the following model specifications to test the formulated hypotheses are as follows:

The model for this research is given as

$$FS = \beta (GEP) = (INI, INV, RSE, INC, MKG)$$

Where

FS = Firm Sustainability

GEP = Green Entrepreneurship Practices

INI= Green Entrepreneurial Initiatives

INV = Green Entrepreneurial Innovation

RSE = Green Entrepreneurial Recruitment and Selection

INC = Green Entrepreneurial Inclination

MKG = Green Entrepreneurial Marketing

The regression model, thus is given as

$$FS = x + \beta_1 INI + \beta_2 INV + \beta_3 RSE + \beta_4 INC + \beta_5 MKG + e \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where

x = Intercept of the regression

$\beta_1 - \beta_5$ = parameter estimates

e = error term

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data to evaluating the effect among the variables. Inferential statistics that was used is regression analysis, to analyze data in order to determine the effect of green entrepreneurship practices on sustainability of manufacturing SMEs in North Central Nigeria. The hypotheses formulated for this study were tested using

student t-statistics generated from the regression model. The level of significance for the study is 5%, for a two-tailed test. The decision rule was that we accept the null hypothesis if the critical/t-value (± 1.96) is greater than the calculated value, otherwise, we reject the null hypothesis. That is, using the student *t*-test (*t*-statistic), we say that a variable is statistically significant if t^* (*t*-calculated) is greater than the tabulated value of ± 1.96 under 95% (or 5%) confidence levels and it was statistically insignificant if the t^* is less than the tabulated value of ± 1.96 under 95 % (or 5%) confidence levels. Thus;

$H_0: \beta_0 = 0$ (Null hypothesis)

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$ (Alternative hypothesis).

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data analysis, test of hypotheses and discussion of findings based on the objectives of the study, the corresponding research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

4.1 Data Presentation

In other to have the 327 return rate of the questionnaire, an additional 10 % were added which totaled 360 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the manufacturing small and medium enterprises chosen for this study, out of which three hundred and twenty seven (327) were successfully filled and returned in analyzable form, recording a 100.0 % return rate.

Table 1: Test for Normality using Skewness/Kurtosis

Variable	Obs	Pr(Skewness)	Pr(Kurtosis)	adj chi2(2)	Prob>chi2
Sustainability	327	0.2111	0.7877	1.94	0.2009
Initiatives	327	0.2929	0.7898	2.01	0.3010
Innovation	327	0.2212	0.8877	1.89	0.3300
Rec. and Selec.	327	0.2339	0.5654	2.04	0.3411
Inclination	327	0.2298	0.6550	1.98	0.2987
Marketing	335	0.4112	0.4948	2.02	0.4322

Source: SPSS printout (Version 25.0 for windows output), 2023

Considering regression analysis was the principal inferential statistics to show the causal relationship between selected factors of green entrepreneurial practices and sustainability, normality test was paramount owing to that regression analysis is based on normality of variables under investigation. Accordingly, the data is normally distributed if the p value is greater than

0.05 otherwise there is some departure from normality. Results in Table 1 revealed that all the variables were normally distributed.

4.2 Test for Multicollinearity Using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor

Multicollinearity refers to the presence of correlations between the predictor variables. Multicollinearity was assessed in this study using the variance inflation factors (VIF). Accordingly, VIF values in excess of 10 and tolerance value less than 0.2 are an indication of the presence of Multicollinearity.

Table 2: Test for Multicollinearity Using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor
Collinearity Statistics

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Initiatives	0.535	6.939
Innovation	0.422	5.878
Rec. and Selec.	0.509	5.333
Inclination	0.661	4.909
Marketing	0.556	4.222

Source: SPSS printout (Version 25.0 for windows output), 2023

Results in Table 2 shows that all the tolerance values were above 0.2 and VIF less than 10 and thus, there were no collinearity among the independent variables.

4.3 Regression Analysis

The model used to test the hypotheses designed for this study, explores the effect of green entrepreneurial practices on small and medium manufacturing firms sustainability in North Central Nigeria.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adj.R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.888^a	.789	.785	0.9001	2.04

a: Predictors (constant), initiatives, innovation, recruitment and selection, inclination, marketing.

b. Dependent variable: Firm Sustainability

Source: SPSS printout (Version 25.0 for windows output), 2023

Table 4: ANOVA^b for the overall significance of the model

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	255.460	5	51.092	13.08	.000 ^a
Residual	190.867	321	0.5946		
Total	446.327	326			

a. Predictors: (constant); initiatives, innovation, recruitment and selection, inclination, marketing

Dependent variable: Firm Sustainability

Table 5: Regression Coefficient Result

Model	Beta	T	Sig
1 (Constant)	1.099	10.88	.000
Initiatives	.786	5.98	.022
Innovation	.771	7.03	.020
Rec. and Sel.	.765	6.44	.035
Inclination	.783	5.88	.014
Marketing	.774	4.55	.033

Dependent variable: Firm Sustainability

Source: SPSS regression print out (version 25.0 for windows output), 2023.

In the model, green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination, and green entrepreneurial marketing; were used to predict the firms' sustainability. The F-statistics of regression model showed that the result is significant, as indicated by a value of the F-statistic, 13.08 and it is significant at the 5.0 percent level. The coefficient of determination (R-square), indicates that the model is reasonably fit in prediction, that is, 78.9 % change in manufacturing small and medium enterprises sustainability was jointly due to green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination, and green entrepreneurial marketing, while 21.1 % unaccounted variations was captured by the white noise error term. It showed that green entrepreneurial

initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination, and green entrepreneurial marketing; had significant effect on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria.

4.4 Test of Hypothesis/Discussion of Findings

In this section, we discussed the research findings based on the data analyzed and hypotheses tested. The discussion revolved around the objectives of the study as presented in chapter one. The findings made in this present study were compared with empirical evidence made in other related previous studies, as to whether the present research findings support or refute the theoretical postulation reviewed in this study. The discussions of the findings were presented in tandem with the objectives this research set out to accomplish.

The analysis of research question one was to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial initiatives on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. From table 17, the (R^2) statistic was 0.789. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in sustainability, from table 18, the beta value for green entrepreneurial initiatives was 0.786. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of green entrepreneurial initiatives had a positive effect on sustainability (t-computed 5.98 > t-critical 1.960, $p=0.022 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with that of Alfandi and Bataineh (2023), Audu (2022), Hamza *et al.* (2021), Yin *et al.* (2021), Ihemeje *et al.* (2020), Habib *et al.* (2020), Chukwuka and Eboh (2018) amongst others; who all avers that green entrepreneurship practice as an initiative is aimed at achieving eco-innovation that would enhance firms' competitive advantage, as ecological aspect of our environment has strategic contribution to economic long-term growth sustainability.

The analysis of research question one was to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial innovation on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. From table 17, the (R^2) statistic was 0.789. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in sustainability, from table 18, the beta value for green entrepreneurial innovation was 0.771. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of green entrepreneurial innovation had a positive effect on sustainability (t-computed 7.03 > t-critical 1.960, $p=0.020 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings of this investigation also agree with that of Abubakar *et al.* (2022), Achaku *et al.* (2022), Nwankwo (2022), Michalis *et al.* (2021), Yin *et al.*, (2021), Olalekan *et al.* (2020), Pejman and Seyed (2017) amongst others; who all avers that the focus of green innovation is the creation of environmentally friendly products and processes through creative means supported by its dynamic green abilities, can enhance and expand organizational capacities and maintain their competitiveness in a dynamic market.

The analysis of research question one was to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. From table 17, the (R^2) statistic was 0.789. Taking into the record the

contribution of the explanatory variable in sustainability, from table 18, the beta value for green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection was 0.771. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection had a positive effect on sustainability (t-computed 5.88 > t-critical 1.960, $p=0.035 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with that of Achaku *et al.* (2022), Audu, (2022), Fapahunda *et al.* (2022), Musa *et al.* (2021), Abdullahi *et al.*, (2020), amongst others; who all avers that hiring employees who possess requisite skills and knowledge on environmental conservation and are acquainted with the basics of environmental sustainability such as recycling, reusing, reducing and creating a logical atmosphere, enhances sustaining of the enterprise.

The analysis of research question one was to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial inclination on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. From table 17, the (R^2) statistic was 0.789. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in sustainability, from table 18, the beta value for green entrepreneurial inclination was 0.771. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of green entrepreneurial inclination had a positive effect on sustainability (t-computed 5.88 > t-critical 1.960, $p=0.014 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with that of Alshehemi (2023), Guo (2022), Achaku *et al.* (2022), Ramayah *et al.*, (2022), Bolaji *et al.* (2022), Hamzah *et al.* (2021), Habib *et al.* (2020), Soomro *et al.* (2019), amongst others; who all avers that the tendency for the firm to adopt green practices are consistent in attracting customers patronage based on their direct involvement in green production practices.

The analysis of research question one was to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial marketing on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. From table 17, the (R^2) statistic was 0.789. Taking into the record the contribution of the explanatory variable in sustainability, from table 18, the beta value for green entrepreneurial marketing was 0.774. The beta value apparently indicated that the predictor variable of green entrepreneurial marketing had a positive effect on sustainability (t-computed 4.55 > t-critical 1.960, $p=0.033 < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings of this investigation also agree with that of Obafemi and Ihunwo (2022), Nwankwo (2022), Bolaji *et al.* (2022), Yaseen *et al.* (2022), Maziri (2020), Habib *et al.* (2020), Cross (2019) amongst others; who all avers that reaching customers' needs and expectation towards green products is a beneficial and sustainable approach, that considers the consumer concerns about promoting preservation and conservation of natural resources.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2 Conclusion

The study contributed to the literature pertaining to the effect of green entrepreneurial practices have significant and positive effect on sustainability of manufacturing small and medium

enterprises in North Central Nigeria. The study provided the basic knowledge and understanding of the dimensions of green entrepreneurial practices of green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination and green entrepreneurial marketing; on sustainability. Green entrepreneurial practices have been identified as an important/veritable factor that significantly influences the sustainability of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in North Central Nigeria. Consequently, this study concludes that green entrepreneurial practices (green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, green entrepreneurial inclination and green entrepreneurial marketing) can be considered a veritable vehicle that has potentials for enhancing and sustaining innovativeness, competitiveness, growth and customer response in manufacturing small and medium enterprises.

5.3 Recommendations

Sequel to the findings and conclusions above, the following recommendations are made:

- vi. Management of manufacturing small and medium enterprises should continuously attend to green entrepreneurial initiatives as an enabler, as it will enhance their business understanding towards delivering innovative products that are eco-friendly through natural resources related activities and keep the firm in a better sustained position.
- vii. Management of manufacturing small and medium enterprises should focus on green entrepreneurial innovation through the use of eco-friendly technologies that have no detrimental influence in environment; as this will help improve and enhance organizations responsiveness and boost their competitiveness.
- viii. Manufacturing small and medium enterprises management should be resolute in their show of concern in the green entrepreneurial inclination through self-efficacy and confidence in adapting to green practices; as this will assist to improve the enterprise response to clients' needs promptly hence sustain the enterprise.
- ix. Manufacturing small and medium enterprises management should be decisive in their resolve of continuous green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, as this will help attract and hire candidates with attitude, behavior, knowledge and skills that adhere with managing the environment of an organization thus creating a steady state of enhanced growth.
- x. Manufacturing small and medium enterprises management should engender more concerns for green entrepreneurial marketing by considering consumers concerns about promoting preservation and conservation of natural resources in advertising and packaging; as this will enhance sustaining the enterprise.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

There is no research without its inherent limitations, thus this research is not an exception. The following limitations are briefly examined as follows: this study was conducted using primary

data. Thus, the findings were influenced by inherent problems with the use of primary data such as negative attitude of the respondents which culminated in poor response rate from respondents, loss of questionnaires and insincere responses from the respondents. However, the research was able to overcome these challenges by printing and issuing the questionnaires slightly above the determined sample size for the study. To make this study a very viable one, some vital information were requested from firms' employees which the management were not willing to release since they consider such information as being sensitive. However, the researcher through her persuasive ability was able to get some vital information needed for the study.

5.5 Contributions to Knowledge and Suggested Areas for Further Studies

This study has contributed to knowledge as it has showcased that green entrepreneurial practices through the instrumentality of green entrepreneurial initiatives, green entrepreneurial innovation, green entrepreneurial inclination, green entrepreneurial recruitment and selection, and green entrepreneurial marketing; contributes to enhancing firms' sustainability in innovativeness, competitiveness, growth and customer response; in manufacturing small and medium enterprises.

This study suggests the following for future researchers who might be interested to research along this path: The research limited itself to only four dimensions of green entrepreneurial practices; further studies could look at other additional dimensions as they affect the sustainability in manufacturing small and medium enterprises in other locations. This study sought to determine the effect of green entrepreneurial practices on sustainability in manufacturing small and medium enterprises. The researcher suggests that such study be extended to other sectors in North Central Nigeria.

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