

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Factors influencing the engagement in sustainable practices amongst
Pietermaritzburg small, medium and micro enterprises**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Commerce**

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2021

DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Almighty God for love, protection and for constantly being a source of light in my life.

In addition, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following individuals, each of whom have played an integral part in the completion of my research:

- Mr Nigel Chiweshe, my supervisor, for his holistic and endless support, feedback, and the great contribution he offered as a means of assisting me to complete the thesis. It was exceptional to conduct this research under your guidance. I can never thank you enough for making my journey seem bearable even at the darkest. Thank you.
- Xolani Ntinga, thank you for constantly encouraging, walking this journey with me and your infinite support.
- My loving mother and the rest of my family, for always believing in me and my abilities. Thank you.
- My respondents, thank you for your full and committed participation in my study.

ABSTRACT

Studies undertaken by various authors have explained what sustainability is and how big businesses engage in it. However, there is a limited body of literature on the factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. Therefore, this study investigated factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices to address this research gap. The specific research questions in this study asked to what extent do coercive pressure, normative pressure, mimetic pressure, and entrepreneurial values influence SMMEs owners in Pietermaritzburg to adopt sustainable practices; and what impact they have on entrepreneurs when applying sustainable practices. The primary data was gathered using online questionnaires distributed to 235 entrepreneurs, descriptive and inferential statistics were produced. The empirical data revealed that normative pressures had more influence when it comes to leading entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices, with 83% of the respondents revealing consumers as the most influential. The study clarifies and presents how there is a consistency in how SMMEs are influenced by isomorphic forces similar to large corporations in the adoption of sustainable practices. Since there's increasing demand for firms to become active in sustainable development aspects, this study calls for the SMME sector to place a stronger emphasis on knowledge sharing. Entrepreneurs must also become more proactive in driving internal innovation toward sustainable practices while also being realistic about what can be accomplished. The findings of this study offer a significant perspective as to what influences entrepreneurs to adopt sustainable practices in their businesses and therefore should not be generalised.

KEY WORDS: SMMEs, Sustainable practices, Entrepreneurs

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Consistent factors or pressures from the environment, laws, consumers, and social groups tend to lead companies to behave responsibly and engage in sustainable practices. There are well-founded arguments about the crucial role of companies on the route to environmental sustainability (Hillary, 2017). Rising investments in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and advertisement, sustainability reporting, mitigation requirements, carbon reduction, etc., are scientific proof of rising awareness of environmental considerations and sustainability (Yadav, Gupta, Rani & Rawat, 2018). This is commonly the situation with major corporations that have been progressive in their sustainable practices, such few business groups include Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata, & Godrej have proven environmental responsibility in their sectors (Yadav, Gupta, Rani & Rawat, 2018). Nevertheless, many studies suggest that small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs) are continuing to lag behind (Okreye, 2016).

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As has already been stated, the academic literature on sustainability practices is still at a preliminary phase and research that specifically focus on SMMEs and their engagement in sustainable practices is limited (Johnson, 2017). At the very same time, steps taken in the business sector through corporate responsibility and the adoption of sustainable programs gives just a portion of an approach to putting a sustainable approach into practice (Annan-Diab & Molinari, 2017).

Sustainability has turned out to be a fundamental part of business in the 21st century. Companies of all sizes and sectors face bigger expectations to certify that the world's social and environmental challenges are met, in keeping with the prescripts of Sustainable Development Goals (Annan-Diab & Molinari, 2017).

Responsiveness and information of sustainability perceptions is the first step in the direction of inspiring businesses to practice sustainability. It is recognized that SMMEs constitute a large proportion of businesses, and therefore, they should play a significant role in certifying that resources are utilised well for the sake of future generations (Chiliya, 2016).

Advancement in the direction of sustainable development still lacks in Africa. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in 2012, outlined the crucial concerns affecting the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Economic Commission for Africa, 2012). As Tikly, Joubert, Barrett, Bainton, Cameron & Doyle, (2018) report, one of several significant issues facing sustainable development in Africa is its fragmentary approach. Consequently, to tackle this weak point, this research explores the factors influencing the engagement in sustainable practices among SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. As this study seeks to explore the factors that lead entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices in their companies, this will generate critical knowledge as not much is known about entrepreneurial engagement in sustainable practices and the factors that drive them, particularly in South Africa.

1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Kolk, (2016) highlights that in the last decade, several companies have been on the path to sustainable development. Many multinational corporations already have sophisticated, sustainable development strategies that show an environmental level of awareness (Kolk, 2016). While awareness in society and the governments is increasing, small, micro and medium enterprises still lack. Their small size effectively prevents attention, while their small percentage presents the authorities with an enforcement challenge (Hillary, 2017).

A recent study in the UK has revealed that more United Kingdom enterprises, such as SMMEs, have already initiated adopting ecological management programs (Viviers, 2009). However, in South Africa, it is still not apparent how small, micro and medium enterprises engage in sustainable practices, how willing and how able they are to adapt or implement sustainable practices (Maziriri, 2018). There is limited research on how local SMMEs impact the natural environment or engage in sustainable practices. In addition, there is a limited amount of literature on the factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices in the South African context as most research about this

notion have been frequently undertaken in the first-world nations restraining the focus on developing countries (Yadav et al., 2018).

Therefore, this research proposes to resolve this discrepancy in knowledge through empirical research. Failure to conduct this study will remain unknown if SMMEs affect the environment and exercise sustainable practices. Thus, it is significant to empirically investigate the factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices, as this will provide evidence on how to implement and improve sustainability practices amid SMMEs.

1.4. RESEARCH AIM

The main aim of this research is to explore factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainability practices.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is underpinned by the following research questions:

- To what extent does coercive pressure influence SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to adopt sustainable practices?
- Does normative pressure have an impact on how SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg apply sustainable practices?
- How does mimetic pressure influence SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices?
- How do entrepreneurial values influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices?

1.6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

- To determine the influence of coercive pressures on SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices.
- To evaluate the impact of normative pressures on the application of sustainable practices by SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg.
- To examine how mimetic pressures influences SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage sustainable practices.

- To evaluate how entrepreneurial values, influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE/CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study contributes to making a global responsiveness around sustainable practices in SMMES in the South African context. Studies on factors that influence sustainable practices amongst SMMEs have commonly been undertaken in first-world nations with limited focus on the developing countries (Belz & Binder, 2017). Information on SMMEs' sustainable practices is still in its early stages; consequently, exploring variables that impact SMMEs' sustainable practices makes a theoretical addition to the expanding focus on sustainable practices in SMMES research (Belz & Binder, 2017).

1.8. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

A thorough research is one trustworthy way to investigate the elements impacting the engagement in sustainable practices among SMMEs, as there have been few studies on the subject under inquiry. If this study is not conducted, the variables that drive SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices would remain unknown, resulting in a gap in SMME knowledge on sustainability practices.

1.9. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design best suited for this study was selected exploratory based on the aims of this study to explore the factors that lead to the engagement of sustainable practices among SMMEs. Because little was known about the topic, the researcher used an exploratory research design. As a result, since there is little information, this method provided more details. This method allowed the researcher to collect data, identify and clarify any problems with the phenomenon.

In order to attain the research objectives, the study implemented quantitative research and data was collected using a structured online survey/questionnaire due to COVID 19. The research instrument used in this study was formulated following an extensive literature review process. The researcher used closed-ended questions to validate the relationship between the theory of this study and the phenomenon being investigated. In addition, a Likert scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used in the questionnaire.

The quantitative approach was applicable for this study because it was utilized to examine an existing theory (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The study used a quantitative research approach because it will be able to produce an exploratory understanding in accordance with the study objectives. The research was carried out in the city of Pietermaritzburg, which is located in the KwaZulu-Natal region. This study's population comprised of SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The target sample consisted of the owners of SMMEs. There were 234 SMMEs in the sample from various industry sectors. To select individuals from the population, a probability sampling technique known as simple random sampling was used.

The study ensured validity and reliability. The validity of the study was confirmed by experts in the field of management. Alpha was used to confirm the reliability of the study, also the participants completed a pre-test comprising two questionnaires. Cronbach's Alpha, a statistical measure, was also used to confirm the study's reliability. The data taken from the survey questionnaire data were analysed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software using descriptive and inferential statistics.

1.10. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of six chapters which are organised as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction

The first chapter presented the subject and the framework of the thesis. It offered a comprehensive description of the study, including its rationale, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions.

Chapter two: Literature Review

The second chapter includes a great amount of writing from a variety of authors. This chapter comprised an evaluation of the literature.

Chapter three: Research Methodology

Chapter three focused on the research methodologies that were deployed during the study. The study's main goal, the research design, the research methodologies deployed, the study site, the target

population, the sampling method used, the sample size, the data collection method, and how the data was analysed, as well as the data quality controls, were all covered in this chapter.

Chapter four: Presentation of empirical results

Chapter four presented the research findings based on the data gathered. The data was presented in accordance with the study's research objectives. The fourth chapter presented the research findings based on the data gathered.

Chapter five: Discussion of the results

Chapter five provided the findings acquired by the surveys and were discussed theoretically. The results were discussed in light of the study's research aim/objectives.

Chapter six: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The sixth chapter contains the research's study comprehensive summary. This chapter included suggestions for similar studies for future research.

1.11. CONCLUSION

The first chapter gave a brief outline of this study. The background of the research, problem statement, objectives of the research, the study's questions, significance of the study, research methodologies for the study, and dissertation structure were all covered in this chapter. The following chapter will provide an overview of the research study's literature.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter gave an introduction of the research. This chapter presents sustainable practices literature with a detailed reference to South Africa. The chapter highlights the dearth of research on factors influencing the engagement in sustainable practices amongst SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Although this chapter focuses primarily on research that is undertaken on SMMEs in South Africa, global literature on the topic was also investigated to determine how SMMEs in South Africa correlate to other SMMEs worldwide.

According to Brammer, Hoejmosé & Marchant, (2012) environmental sustainability is a big issue for small enterprises, and research has revealed that they are not highly concerned about issues of the environment than their larger competitors. At the same time, preliminary studies have rarely explored the involvement of SMMEs in a broad range of practices that encompass environmental protection (Masarira, 2014). In this study, the factors that lead SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices are explored. According to Masarira, (2014) environmental problems such as the change in climate, depletion of resource, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem integrity are expected to disclose many of the twenty-first century's most major and critical management difficulties.

In the light of the current relevance of environmental management, a significant body of research has investigated how corporations act in response to environmental problems, with the majority of existing research being targeted at large corporations (Hoejmosé & Adrien-Kirby, 2012). While large corporations are interested in environmental management, particularly considering their prominence in several of the most environmentally friendly sectors, the relative silence of existing environmental management research in SMMEs is disturbing considering their overall significance in several sectors of the economy (Leonidou, Fotiadis, Christodoulides, Spyropoulou, & Katsikeas, 2015). For instance, in the United Kingdom (UK) and most advanced economies, SMMEs accounts for more than 90% of all enterprises and hire almost 60% of the private sector workforce. SMMEs are thus important to most economies, as they form the foundation of the industrial system and are an integral part of a stable and successful market economy (Worthington, & Patton, 2005). Around the same

time, their economic value indicates that their environmental effects deserve greater consideration (Brammer, Hojmosse & Marchant, 2012).

Global leaders have given priority to the need for policies to encourage sustainable practices, sustainable environmental protection and biodiversity conservation (Wyness, Jones, & Klapper, 2020). Various causes that have caused ecological degradation, such as global warming, emissions, climate change, deforestation and rapidly endangered biodiversity, have given rise to recognition among the upstream and downstream players in the manufacturing sector, enabling companies to practice sustainable production and environmentally sustainable management (Beddington, Asaduzzaman, Bremauntz, Clark, Guillou, Jahn, Erda, Mamo, Van Bo, Nobre & Scholes, 2012). As a result, customers continue to grow their demand for goods produced from natural or organic resources, such as herbal medicinal products, rather than just chemical products. The sustainability issue puts a lot of pressure on small business owners to shift towards green practices and meet the growing demand for organic products produced in a sustainable environment. However, the literature on sustainable practices in the African context is still preliminary (Uhlenbrock, Sixt, Tegtmeier, Schulz, Hagels, Ditz, & Strube, 2018). Therefore, based on the literature above this research focuses on gathering information on the factors influencing SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices in a South African context.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: the definition of SMMEs, defining entrepreneurship, defining entrepreneurship in a South African perspective, the concept of sustainable development, the concept of sustainability, followed by the tree pillars of sustainability, the concept of sustainable practices is discussed followed by the theoretical framework underpinning the study and discussing the types of pressures that lead to entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices and lastly sustainable entrepreneurship is discussed in length.

2.2. DEFINING SMMEs

The World Bank has recognised more than 60 ways SMMEs are described in 75 countries (Amra, Hlatshwayo & McMillan, 2013). According to Berisha & Pula, (2015) the most widely ratified concept of SMMEs is the one offered by the European Union (EU). The EU interpretation accounts for the headcount classification of SMMEs using the number of employees and turnover. The mid-

sized company has fewer than 50 workers and an annual turnover of £10 million, whereas the micro-enterprise has fewer than ten employees and an annual turnover of less than £2 million (Mukwasi, 2013). In addition, in the European Union, an SMME is classified as an enterprise with a total workforce of fewer than 250 workers, with a maximum annual turnover of £50 million and a balance sheet of £43 million. Berisha & Pula, (2015) point out that the maximum financial turnover and the overall balance sheet for SMMEs have been raised to these recent amounts, considering the increased competitiveness within the Union.

SMMEs are perceived to be the backbone of most countries in Africa. However, the ambiguity in the absence of the unified, universally agreed definition of what constitutes an SMME still seems to be prevalent in Africa (Poole, 2021). The description of SMMEs differs throughout Africa, and a few African countries were selected randomly and are discussed herein. Firstly, SMMEs in Tanzania were classified in three categories that are different. The definition makes use of two quantitative criteria, which include the number of workers and the capital invested in disentailing SMMEs. The very first category of SMMEs in the Tanzanian perspective consists of micro-enterprises which employ up to five employees. As for the capital invested, micro-enterprises need to have 5 million Tanzania shillings (TZS) invested in machinery. Secondly, small businesses are expected to have between 5 to 50 employees and between TZS 5 to 2000 million. Finally, medium-sized enterprises can have between 50 to 100 employees and between TZS 200 to 800 million (Ndesaulwa & Kikula, 2016).

Various concepts of small enterprises have also been recommended in Ghana, but the most used method is the number of staffs in a business. One of the official sources, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) considers enterprises with less than 10 employees as small-scale firm and those with more than 10 employees as medium and large-sized enterprises. On the other hand, the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) of Ghana utilizes a two-pronged technique to describe SMMEs. The NBSSI utilizes fixed assets and the number of employees in its description. Accordingly, the NBSSI describes a small-scale firm as a firm of fewer than 9 employees that has plant and machinery (disregarding land, buildings and vehicles) of less than 10 million Ghanaian cedes ((Ayandibu, Kaseeram, & Ayandibu, 2021). However, the constant deterioration of the local currency was posing a definitional hurdle when the value of assets is being used. As such, Masocha (2019), argues that

one of the most commonly used definition is that offered by the EU, it utilizes the headcount of employees and turnover. In this respect, the US dollar (US\$) is used rather than the cedes of Ghana. On the basis of this criteria, a small-scale enterprise is characterized as having more than 5 employees but not more than 50 employees. The value of assets, excluding land, building and working capital should be less than \$US 30,000 and the annual income turnover should be between \$US 6,000 and \$US 30,000. On the other hand, a medium-sized enterprise is considered to be an enterprise of between 50 and 100 employees (Masocha, 2019).

The concept of SMMEs also differs in Nigeria. According to Saari, (2020), the Nigerian Small and Medium Sized Development Agency (SMEDAN) categorizes SMMEs as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. SMEDAN claims that a micro-enterprise consists of fewer than 10 employees with an annual turnover of less than 5 million Naira. In addition, SMEDAN states that a small firm is a firm with 10–49 employees with an annual turnover of between 5 to 49 million Naira. Finally, SMEDAN considers a firm to be a medium-sized company if it hires between 50 to 199 employees, with an annual turnover of between 50 to 499 million Naira.

In South Africa, the Department of Trade and Industry defines SMME as an enterprise with fewer than two hundred workers or no more than five hundred workers, with an annual turnover of fewer than five million Rands, capital assets or machinery of fewer than two million Rands, and the owner is actively engaged in the management of the enterprise (Seda, 2016). As such, quantitative criteria are used from the South African viewpoint in this review. South African Small Business Amendment Act, no 26 of 2003, defined SMMEs as the separate and distinct business entity, including cooperative enterprises and nongovernmental organisations, managed by one owner or more which, including its branches or subsidiaries, if any, which can be classified as a micro-, a very small, a small or a medium enterprise (Gazette, 2003; Chimucheka, 2013). Many of the SMMEs in South Africa initially take place in rural areas, where they function on small premises, and as time progresses, they transfer to large premises that are sustainable for their enterprise (Nxaba, 2014; Nieman, & Niewenhuizen, 2009).

The environmental factor of sustainability has not been a key part of African systems and has only lately begun to emerge slowly in a small number of Sub-Saharan African countries. South Africa,

Tanzania, and Uganda, for example, have fledgling environmental efforts. Many of these environmental developments, generally referred to as "sustainability," have resulted from the influence of numerous international organizations in African countries. The International Institute for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank, for example, have been highly significant in stimulating the sustainability approach, mostly through adding the environmental component to existing social and environmental policies (Gordon, 2021).

The new Namibian Public Procurement Act 15 of 2015, which took effect in 2017, is one of the few examples of acts that incorporate environmental issues alongside social and economic considerations. One of the act's objectives is to "promote, facilitate, and strengthen measures to implement the government's empowerment and industrialization policies," which includes "preferential treatment in the allocation of procurement contracts to Namibian registered businesses that promote environmental protection, ecosystem preservation, and promote sustainable use of natural resources" (Ibrahim, 2021). Nevertheless, there are no more details on how these

environmental factors are to be implemented in the regulations or guidelines released to aid the act's implementation. In these implementation documents, however, there is simply an emphasis on social concerns, such as the promotion of marginalized populations (Alamouh, Ballini, Ölçer, 2021). In Kenya, the 2015 Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act cites as a guiding principle in Section 3 where there is promotion of local industry, sustainable development, and environmental protection. However, the underlying implementation mechanisms are primarily concerned with social and economic concerns, and their implementation is typically inadequate. In Kenya, the incorporation of environmental considerations into public contracts is primarily limited to trial projects conducted by non-governmental entities (Montiel, Cuervo-Cazurra, Park, Antolín-López, & Husted, 2021).

Ghana's parliament passed a law that includes an environmental component as well as measures in regulations that require concretizations. The Ghanaian Public Procurement Act requires the purchase of energy-efficient products (air conditioning systems). These changes can be seen as a growing focus on the environmental dimension of sustainability. It remains to be seen whether and how quickly this becomes a new, widely accepted standard (Stoffel, Cravero, La Chimia, & Quinot, 2019).

With a significant percentage of SMMEs dominating the world economy, they are projected to account for almost 70% of global industrial waste emissions (Amra *et al.*, 2013; Green, (2016). They have to address pollution prevention and align their organisational policies with sustainable business practices. There is no denying the effort SMMEs need to exert in order to see their business ventures come to fruition. Adding the need for them to adopt environmentally responsible business practices makes their task even more demanding (Ilori, 2017). Despite this hardship, by adopting environmental practices, whether it is at every stage within their business or only in specific sections, the move towards sustainable practices and business framework has the potential to provide countless opportunities within which these entrepreneurs can grow and prosper (Ibidunni, Kolawole, Olokundun, & Ogbari, 2020). Although empirical research on environmental management in SMMEs particularly in Sub Saharan African countries is less in evidence than in bigger corporations (Jansson, Nilsson, Modig & Hed Vall, 2017). Despite this, some South African businesses are developing solutions to strike a balance between caring for employees, communities, and the environment while remaining profitable. The initiative is encouraged for companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange by new rules implemented in 2010 that compel corporations to integrate reports that include financial and sustainability reporting, among other things (Wadesango, 2021). There is, however a lack of research into the sustainability practices of SMMEs. This research study seeks to investigate the factors that lead SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. This is crucial in determining whether or not the government and other stakeholders should intervene more heavily in the operations of SMMEs in order to encourage sustainable practices.

2.3. DEFINING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is defined as the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of chances to bring new goods and services, organisational structures, markets, processes, and raw resources through previously unorganised efforts (Spapens, 2010). An entrepreneur is a person who is aware of potential trade prospects. The entrepreneur can find suppliers and customers and act as an intermediate, with the intermediary function generating profit (Spulber, 2009).

Innovation, opportunity recognition process, and growth in a firm, as well as the use of strategic management methods in the business, are the qualities that most significantly define entrepreneurs (Lumpkin, & Lichtenstein, 2005). Innovation entails the creation of a new product or concept almost for its own sake or to serve a purpose other than commerce (Phungwayo & Mogashoa, 2014).

Bramwell, Hepburn & Wolfe, (2012) state that SMMEs are frequently credited for pioneering new market opportunities and employing innovative business techniques. Through legislative programs and specified support mechanisms, the government has bolstered these beneficial economic externalities. Through value-creating funding behaviours, venture capital firms frequently galvanize innovative knowledge by entrenching and supporting emerging businesses (Herrington, Kew, & Kew, 2010). The venture capital business, in this way, financially supports entrepreneurial activity for economic growth while also governing and nurturing the growth of SMMEs. These examples demonstrate how the venture capital industry welcomes value-creating opportunities through reasonable collaborations with businesses with weaker track histories and less formal control mechanisms (Nelson, 2007).

Cohen & Winn, (2007) state that by establishing new markets, industries, technologies, new institutional forms, new jobs, and net advances in real productivity, entrepreneurship as a whole contributes to a society's social wealth. Entrepreneurship creates jobs, which leads to a more equitable distribution of money and greater living conditions for the general public. As a result, the government's resources increase, and the tax base expands (Cohen & Winn, 2007). Governments can use additional taxes to improve social services such as hospitals and schools, develop infrastructure, and maintain law and order. Entrepreneurship not only provides prospects for self-employment, but it also creates work for others, frequently better jobs. Self-employment provides more job satisfaction and workforce flexibility. Such employment creation programs make use of a country's people resources and assist in the development of natural talent (Benz & Frey, 2008).

Entrepreneurship is a common way for people who are looking for business chances to make money. These riches have a significant impact on a country's progress. If more individuals are employed, they will pay more taxes, resulting in more revenue for the government (Spapens, 2010). It also means that the country's crime rate will decrease, and the country will become a safer destination for tourists. More work opportunities will become accessible as tourism grows, and more people will be employed. Entrepreneurship has the potential to attract more foreign investment, resulting in more job possibilities (Lumpkin, & Lichtenstein, 2005).

More industries will be able to produce more at reduced costs. Entrepreneurship promotes the utilization of local materials to manufacture completed goods for both domestic and international consumption. Entrepreneurship allows the country to manufacture a greater number of items locally, so increasing its capacity and resources. The value of products can be increased by converting raw materials into consumable items, which means a higher price can be charged and create more jobs. A nation's resources can be used more effectively thanks to new inventions and technological advancements through entrepreneurship (Phungwayo & Mogashoa, 2014).

2.4. DEFINING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

Entrepreneurship, is explained by Hoppe, (2016) that it is the process of generating an innovative and helpful product or service while bearing in mind all of the components required to make the product or service accessible to the market. These components include financial, physical, and societal risks. Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, outlines who, how, and what will affect opportunities for creating, finding, evaluating, and exploiting potential commodities and services that will generate future products and services. The more complicated the opportunity, the more knowledge is required to obtain it (Carlsson et al. 2013). This provides firms with an additional period of time and expertise to accumulate resources to deal with increasingly complex situations. However, the pool of prospective opportunities does not remain static, but rather increases as skill and ability pools improve and the overall economic environment changes. Entrepreneurship, according to Hoppe, (2016) is a skill that must be learned rather than inherited.

Entrepreneurship, according to Lackeus, (2013) combines risk-taking with creativity and the initiative to produce new goods and services, resulting in organisational rejuvenation and the development of current SMMEs and the establishments of new ones. According to Berglund & Wigren, (2012) the first stage in entrepreneurship is recognising and assessing opportunities. Entrepreneurship, according to these authors, is the ability to capitalise on new chances, such as starting a firm or directing a project, in order to change the market and move it from a state of disequilibrium to one of equilibrium (Berglund, & Wigren, 2012). According to Carlsson, Braunerhjelm, McKelvey, Olofsson, Persson, & Ylinenpää, (2013) the complexity of the opportunity increases the rarity of the possibilities discovered. The more obvious opportunities are the ones that are noticed and exploited first.

In its new democracy, South Africa faces several economic, political, and social issues, one of which is vast and growing unemployment. This is especially visible among the nation's youth, who frequently lack the experience, skills, and education required to obtain employment in the professional sectors (Kelly, Sauer, Gold, & Seuring, 2021). These young people are compelled into creating their own opportunities and try to provide any sort of employment for themselves. Given the extra challenges that the young people encounter, such as a lack of financial or commercial resources, many young people are unable to obtain sustainable or legal employment (Ngcobo, & Khumalo, 2022). The increasing number of unemployed and more unemployable youth is putting an extra strain on a government budget that is already stretched thin. South Africa, in particular, must prioritise investment on key areas such as infrastructure and education (Brennan, & Fickett, 2011).

Education, training, and experience in any sector can help an entrepreneur succeed by allowing him or her to recognise opportunities, start a business, and manage it (Ngcobo, & Khumalo, 2022). A variety of training facilities and seminars are offered in South Africa to help entrepreneurs succeed. According to a study conducted by Ayankoya, (2013) on entrepreneurship education and the Role of Universities in Entrepreneurship, unemployment is a problem for many people, but it also helps in prompting some to become entrepreneurs and work on their skills in order to better themselves and become successful in what they do. The South African government recognises the importance and potential of entrepreneurship by establishing new small business development units and many support mechanisms for SMMEs (Atiase, Mahmood, Wang, & Botchie, 2017). Tertiary institutions, such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), have also taken a bold stand to support the government's goal of promoting and developing more entrepreneurs in the economy by instituting entrepreneurship education programs (Langa, 2016).

The formation of the national Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) in 2004 was another important signal of the government's commitment to improving the coordination of national support for small business development. SEDA was founded in December 2004 as an agency under the then-Department of Trade and Industry by the National Small Business Amendment Act – Act 29 of 2004. The Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency, the National Manufacturing Advisory Centre, and the Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) program were merged into the new entity. In April 2006, the GODISA Trust and the National Technology Transfer Centre joined with Seda to become the Seda Technology Programme (STP). In 2008, the South African Quality Institute's small

enterprise support function and the Technology for Women in Business's technology-related operations were merged with Seda Technology Programme. In 2009, Seda Technology Programme was fully merged into SEDA structures. Another sign of South Africa's strong policy commitment to SMME development is the establishment in 2014 of a dedicated Ministry for Small Business as part of government reform. The importance paid to SMME development in national economic development planning is more proof of SMMEs' vital function in South Africa.

South Africa continues to signify the importance of upgrading entrepreneurs and the SMME economy through reaffirming it in the National Development Plan (NDP), which provides a vision for 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2011). In its Vision for 2030, the NDP sets an ambitious objective of creating 11 million new job opportunities in South Africa, 90% of which are expected to be produced in the SMME industry. Business incubation is recognized by South Africa's national Department of Trade and Industry as a viable tool for assisting SMMEs in growing and becoming successful and internationally competitive entities with the opportunity to generate jobs, ameliorate poverty, empower previously marginalized people, and thus contribute to economic development of both local and national economic development (Masutha, & Rogerson, 2015).

What is now needed in South Africa as indicated by Francis, David, Webster, & Edward, (2019) is a dramatic change in current cultural mindset, it is required to inspire entrepreneurs to "conceptualise and develop solutions, products, and services that will elevate and change society for the better rather than to get rich quickly". Furthermore, the GEM report, (2018) stated that South Africa's entrepreneurial activity as a percentage of the population is around half of what it should be when compared to countries with comparable GDP and levels of economic activity, this then means there is a lot of work that still needs to be done.

2.5. THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY

The idea of sustainability tends to end up obtaining numerous definitions (Moldavska & Welo, 2017). Because the phrase is ambiguous, it may be used in a variety of discourses and activities. According to Roseland, (2012) diverse civilizations have exploited the concept of sustainability for each community's unique political and economic objectives. In all nations, whether industrialised or unindustrialised, market-oriented or centrally planned, the aims of each country's numerous political and economic interests must be articulated in relation to sustainability (Gupta, & Vegelin, 2016).

In the early 1980s, Lester Brown, an environmental analyst from the United States, provided one of the primary descriptions of the view of sustainability in the World Watch Institute (WWI). According to Lester, "a sustainable society is one that can meet its requirements without jeopardizing future generations' prospects of existence" (Barbosa et al. 2014). This notion that was used to define Sustainable Development began with the Brundtland Report in 1987. Many states, enterprises, and industries have "greened" their ventures and goods in order to preserve economic expansion while ignoring the image of conservation and environmental consciousness (Goods, 2014). According to Hesselbarth & Schaltegger, (2014) sustainability can only be viewed in terms of long-term possibilities and risks. They claim that in the past, sustainability was seldom called into question since anthropogenic activity had restricted the load and did not inflict significant harm, allowing nature to adjust quickly.

Sustainability is in jeopardy; the moment nature cannot resist and respond adequately to an excessive load. Increasing the level of change limits the capability of the system to respond and may no longer be viable (Goods, 2014). The more stable the environment remains, the greater its ability for stability. In this perspective, sustainability means maintaining or protracting existence, but Ploum, Blok, Lans, & Omta, (2018) believe that human civilisation cannot be maintained in a single state. They believe that it is extraordinarily highly adaptable and subject to change and interacts with another complex system.

According to Hesselbarth & Schaltegger, (2014) sustainability means the "possibility of obtaining conditions equal to a greater continuous life for a group of people and their successors in a given ecosystem". Cohen, (2016) endorsed the idea of limiting material progress and consumption, once seen as unlimited, by condemning the idea of constant growth without consideration of the future. Talan & Sharma, (2019) consider sustainability as a comprehensive definition that incorporates the procedures of transition and divides the term into five aspects: social, monetary, ecological, geographical, and cultural. However, on these aspects there is no agreement, which may be considered quite broad and permits a thorough examination of the idea of sustainability. Morioka, Bolis, Evans & Carvalho, (2017) dispute Talan & Sharma, (2019) perception, which focuses solely on environmental, economic, and personal sustainability. However, these two perspectives differ

extensively in terms of the concept of the environment, as Cohen, (2016) refer to the rational usage of resources, whilst Talan & Sharma, (2019) refer to the ability of ecosystems to recover from human aggression.

According to Schaltegger & Wagner, (2017) state that sustainability as a mechanism influences the dynamics of society, ranging from a worldwide context to everyday issues. Thus, diverse political positions and personal views on wider environmental issues can influence the sustainability mechanism. Other factors also influence the likelihood of reaching the sustainability goal. In this study, the term sustainability is also interpreted as a goal to be accomplished and a mechanism to achieve the goal either by being driven by other forces or not. This type of aim and method varies depending on each community's socio-economic and environmental background (Fleming, Wise, Hansen & Sams, 2017).

Sustainability can be achieved only by operating aggressively within these systems and their variables and limits, together with the lifespan of each element created. As a result, if just a few components of the whole system are sustainable, urban sustainability would change, and the optimal objective would be a process with a "closed" metabolic cycle (Kibert, 2016). Almost everything is recycled and reused throughout this cycle phase, and the introduction of innovative environmental characteristics is considerably restricted, resulting in low waste formation (Fleming et al., 2017).

2.6. THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The three-pillar conception of (social, economic, and environmental) sustainability, frequently denoted by three intersecting circles with overall sustainability at the centre, has become ubiquitous. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report notes that sustainability allows businesses to develop long-term economic, social, and environmental principles simultaneously (Langhelle, 2017; Leon, & Calvo-Amodio, 2017). As a result, businesses should use these principles (economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection) in their merchandise, strategy, and implementation to demonstrate sustainable development. The subsequent discussion offers an overview of the three aspects of sustainable practices (Borowy, 2013).

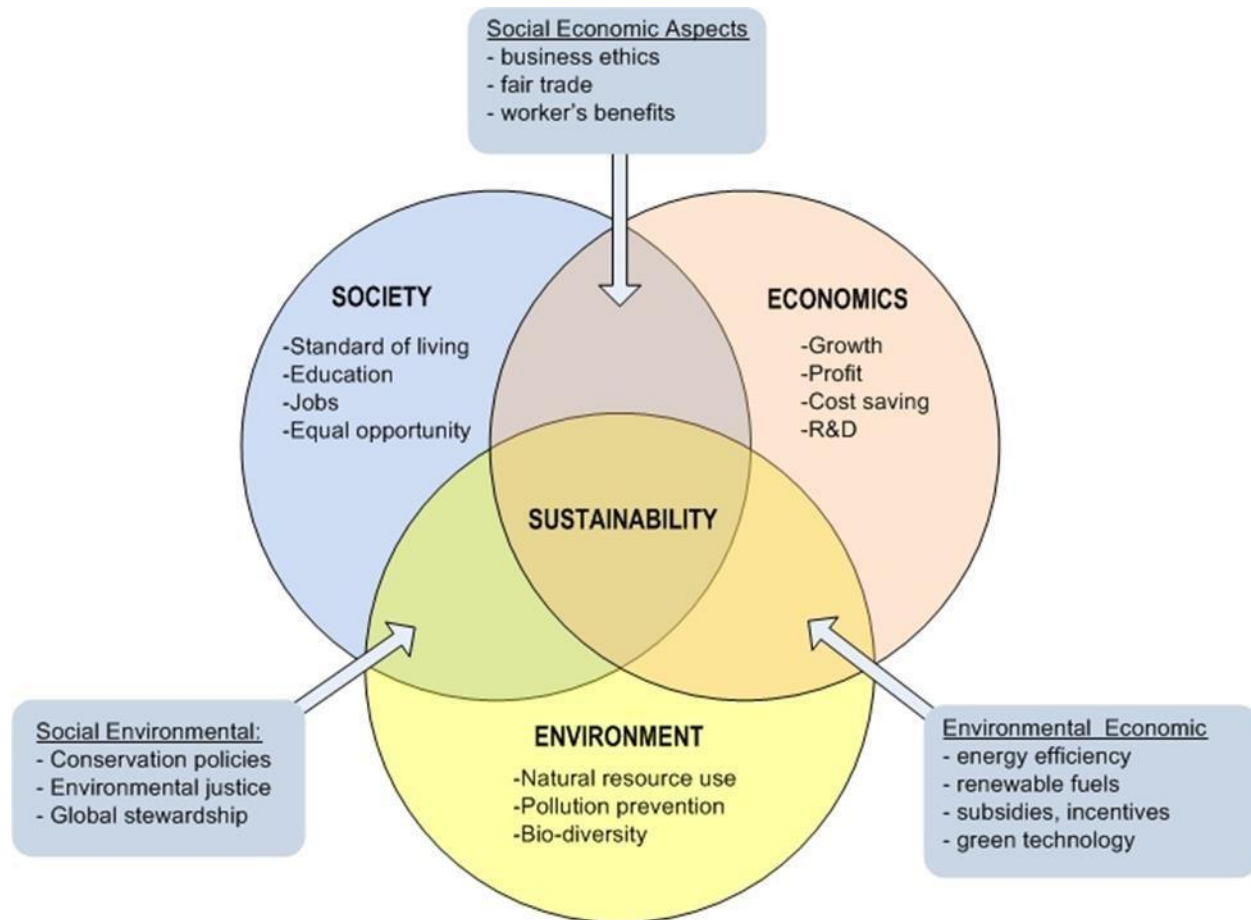


Figure 2. 1 Pillars of sustainability

Source: (Jackson, Boswell, & Davis, 2011)

2.6.1. Economic Sustainability

According to Zhang, Veltri, Calvo-Amodio, & Haapala, (2020) economic sustainability is defined as the reduction of operating expenses via methodical management, increased labour productivity, increased expenditure on development and research, and investment in training and other kinds of human capital. The commercial component is founded on the supply of limited resources (Sen, 2013). Economic sustainability is also linked to increased turnover or stability, tax payments to the government, increased payrolls, and increases in profitability, investment, and exports (Zhang et al., 2020). At the moment, maintaining a long-term sustainable competitive edge through innovative technologies or ideas, goods, efficiency, prices, and time is unachievable (Sen, 2013). Sen, (2013) explains that this is due to recurring competition periods induced by reactionary efforts, such as me-too items and differentiation attempts amongst rivalry organizations, which are invariably damaging.

In this context, Masocha & Fatoki, (2018) discovered that SMMEs prefer to adopt a non-isomorphic behaviour to react to changes in competitive environments.

2.6.2. Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is the preservation of natural resources via the monitoring of human actions (the human footprint) on the natural environment (Petts, 2005). It entails the appropriate use of both renewable and non-renewable resources, as well as delimited emissions and waste absorption (Moldan, Janouková, & Hák, 2012). The idea of environmental integrity, which encompasses human behaviour that does not degrade the earth's land, water, and air resources, clearly defines the environmental sustainability component. However, the applicability, efficiency, monitoring, and assessment elements of sustainability have yet to be well examined in the literature (Tseng, Tan, & Siriban-Manalang, 2013). Adebanjo, The, & Ahmed, (2016) discovered that companies are influenced by coercive forces, particularly manufacturers, who are the top major contaminators and are accountable for plenty of the deterioration of resources more than their rival businesses; as a result, they are more vulnerable to outside pressure. Kumar and Rahman, (2015) discovered that coercive constraints impacted enterprises in Malaysia to implement environmental sustainability strategies in their working procedures. According to their findings, competitive and regulatory forces were the most influential in driving the adoption of ecologically friendly practices. On the other hand, the impact of isomorphic forces on the adoption of sustainable practices is becoming progressively important (Fatoki & Masocha, 2018).

2.6.3. Social Sustainability

Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, (2019) define social sustainability as an emphasis on social growth and development. Companies, as key organisations in society, are viewed as social justice instruments. As a result, organisations are obligated to grasp the legal, ethical, and social economics of all stakeholders, not just monetary interests. Companies must engage with clients, investors, the government, and workers in order to achieve social sustainability (Želazna, Bojar, & Bojar, 2020). Furthermore, the social sustainability branch enables businesses to operate their inside relationships by safeguarding employee engagement over actions that provide value to the business (Hopkins, 2012).

This is discussed in Onwunta & Casper's, (2020) study, "Understanding workers' perspectives towards furthering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in an organisational setting of SMMEs employees in Cape Town, South Africa". According to a study led by Joseph, Pilcher, & Taplin, (2014) indicate that there is a substantial positive association among social sustainability and isomorphism (known to be the pressures that impact institutions on their internal practices) imitation across Malaysian metropolises. However, social sustainability is strongly tied to coercive isomorphism, particularly as an effect of labour unions. Younis, Sundarakani, & Vel, (2016) discovered no association among isomorphism and the socially sustainable practices of enterprises in the Spanish electrical industry.

Companies need to implement an all-inclusive vision of sustainability in strategies, as achieving sustainability in a single or particular dimension will not succeed in the foreseeable future (Bibri & Krogstie, 2017). SMMEs are considered as small, medium and micro enterprises, but their overall contribution to the world is very significant and they are the foundation of economic development worldwide. As per International Finance Corporation, over than 90 % of businesses worldwide are SMMEs, responsible for more than half of all employment (Ayandibu & Houghton, 2017).

2.7. THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, most organisations and government speeches have utilised the term "Sustainable Development" (Biermann, Kanie, & Kim, 2017). Because the words "development" and "sustainability" have diverse explanations and can be used in dissimilar ways by societies through different radical and commercial agendas, the combination of the dual concepts frequently forms a confusing concept, because each country has a different interpretation of what a better or sustainable world is. The Brundtland Report of 1987, also known as "Our Common Future," formalised the communal idea of "development" and "sustainability" (Barbosa, Drach, & Corbella, 2014).

According to the Brundtland Report, extreme poverty is no longer inescapable, and that society's growth should focus on meeting everyone's fundamental requirements and providing opportunity for individuals to enhance their level of living. One of the primary issues addressed in the report was "equity" as a prerequisite for adequate community engagement in decision-making via democratic urban planning procedures. The Brundtland Report went on to discuss urban issues, the need to de-

regulate monetary and human resources, and the necessity for political authority to benefit towns on a local level. The report continued and specified that natural resources measures the biosphere's ability to absorb the effect of human actions and stated that poverty was already an environmental issue and a primary concern in the search of sustainability.

The notion of sustainable development was signed into Agenda 21, a document produced at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Trapenberg Frick, Weinzimmer, & Waddell, 2015), and has since been included into additional global development and human rights agendas. While society recognises the notion of sustainable development, it appears to be in its early stages, with a number of contentious narratives. Many scholars and important international organisations, like the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), have criticised the idea of sustainable development as unclear since it does not stipulate the time horizon for future generations (Emas, 2015). While it is an imprecise word that does not identify future demands, the Brundtland Report has focused the world's attention on the need to discover new means of economic growth that do not deplete natural resources or hurt the environment. In addition, the three core principles to be implemented were defined as economic development, environmental protection and social equity (Barbosa, Drach, & Corbella, 2014).

2.8. THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

Business practices that are economically feasible, socially responsible and environmentally friendly are generally considered sustainable (Turyakira, Venter & Smith, 2014). Companies that incorporate socially responsible and environmentally friendly policies as core principles of their development strategy also generate significant economic values (Bice, 2017). Businesses are thus pressured by the unrelenting ever-increasing expectations implemented by the global economy and marketplace to meet the needs of a broader spectrum of important stakeholders, including shareholders, consumers, employees, governments, and societies, both domestically and around the globe (Sharma, 2013). Therefore, this means that companies of all sizes have a vital role in promoting the sustainability agenda internationally, and thus South Africa is no exception (Cole, Bailey & New, 2014). When applied to the corporate sector, sustainable practices involve implementing policies that suit business needs and existing and future societal demands (Turyakira *et al.*, 2014).

Tukker & Tischner, (2017) find that sustainability practices are regarded as a business expense that is not transferable to consumers due to the competitive nature of the business environment. It supports the results of Puppim de Oliveira & Jabbour, (2017) study in which the owners/managers of SMMEs do not see any correlation between improved sustainability performance and financial gains. Puppim de Oliveira & Jabbour, (2017) found that SMMEs owners oppose the sustainability business case in favour of a more realistic view that environmental sustainability contributes to a rise in business costs that do not offer an adequate incentive to implement sustainability voluntarily. SMMEs cannot, therefore, be left to change their impact on the environment voluntarily. Government intervention, either through regulations or incentives, and education is required (Hardisty, 2010).

Chimucheka, (2013) argues that regulations and the need to provide good working conditions are key driving factors for SMMEs to invest in improving sustainability performance. A study by Bhattacharya, Oppenheim & Stern, (2015) that states stricter regulations are the best way of strengthening sustainability practices, provided that they are viewed as optional and expensive.

Gast, Gundolf & Cesinger, (2017) explain self-interest as an ineffective method for promoting sustainability practices in small firms. They claim that government interference is important to push companies to take socially and environmentally responsible action. Public, private, and community environmental education plays a crucial role in creating support and ideas that contribute to sustainable business (Liu, Ndubisi, Liu, Barrane, 2020). Education will increase understanding of sustainable lifestyles in the community and increase demand for environmental goods and services (Monitoring, 2018).

The above discussion illustrates that self-interest alone is insufficient to moving businesses along the route to ecological sustainability, more support from the government would aid businesses to engage in sustainability. Therefore, a much stronger commitment from the business community and the government is required to promote the adoption of sustainability standards (Salvioni, Gennari & Bosetti, 2016).

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.9.1. Institutional Theory

The institutional theory seeks to explain how consensus is formed around sustainability and how sustainability concepts or practices are formulated and diffused among organisations (Kauppi, 2013). Institutional Theory offers a theoretical framework through which researchers can recognise and analyse influential factors that facilitate the longevity and legitimacy of organisational practices, incorporating factors such as culture, the social environment, regulations including the legal environment, history and tradition, along with economic incentives, while noting that resources also are essential (Butler, 2011). Here legitimacy refers to the implementation of sustainable activities seen by stakeholders as acceptable and effective. According to Larrinaga, (2007) Institutional Theory is historically fascinated with how associations and organisations can maintain their roles and legitimacy through complying with the rules like regulatory systems, government bodies, legislation, courts, disciplines, contracts, and other social and cultural factors that impose pressure on compliance and institutional environmental standards (Iarossi, 2011).

According to Butler, (2011) the Institutional Theory highlights that external social, political and economic factors influence firms' strategies and corporate decision-making as firms try to follow legitimate practices or reinforce their actions from the viewpoint of other stakeholders. Further classifying the institutional context either into formal or informal, the institutional context can indeed be simplified as follows:

- a. The formal institutional context encompasses the business sector's laws and regulations and self-regulation (Gunningham & Rees, 1997).
- b. The informal institutional context covers personal and religious beliefs, societies, ethics, norms, traditions and principles (Beltran, 2000).

Extending the concept of sustainability necessarily leads to alternative routes in different sectors and nations. In other words, certain institutional arrangements within a specific nation/business sector can impact how an organization engages in sustainable practices, as well as the level and efficiency of involvement. According to Elliot, (2012) corporate engagement in sustainable practices in diverse socio-cultural contexts is contingent on the availability of isomorphic (pressures that influence the way a business does its internal practices) motivations such as coercive, normative, and mimetic ones.

According to Martnez-Ferrero & Garcia-Sánchez, (2017) these isomorphic forces might demonstrate why organizations must implement sustainable practices, for example, why the corporation should be socially responsible. Companies should behave reasonably, according to early institutional studies, whereas the widely held societal understandings are known to evaluate what it means to be rational (Glover, Champion, Daniels, & Dainty, 2014).

Institutional theory has developed as one of the most prevalent theories for studying an organization's social, environmental, and economic context. Where influences from outside the organization can lead to internal reforms. Institutional theory provides a theoretical framework that allows academics to separate and analyse the elements that force companies to adapt and comply to the business environment's social, environmental and economic norms (Frynas, & Yamahaki, 2016). Institutional theory provides a theoretical framework for assessing external impacts on an organization. The literature on institutional theory explains how changes in stakeholders' values, regulatory compliance, technological innovation, resource scarcity, competitor and customer actions can affect organizations' willingness to innovate their business model for a more sustainable one (Cai, & Li, 2018; Fernando, & Wah, 2017). Institutional theory outlines three types of drivers that conduce to isomorphism in an organisation. These are coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphic drivers. The following presents external drivers of businesses that were mentioned above that lead to the engagement of sustainability found in the literature reviewed. Drivers are discussed under the lens of institutional theory below.

2.9.2. Coercive Pressure

According to Masocha & Fatoki, (2018a) coercive isomorphic impacts occur as a result of enterprises' perceived reliance on their peripheral surroundings for resources that improve their survival. Businesses that have attained success are also those that can deal with external resource constraints. As a result, coercive isomorphism/pressures develop from external resource demands on which organisations rely. This pressure is mostly from governments and is a critical component in corporations implementing environmental management practices, and enterprises must comply with a variety of social and environmental rules and legislation. These external influences, which place pressure on enterprises to comply with the larger society's anticipated socio-cultural component, include, among other things, the state and credit providers as key determinants (Buchko, 2011). As

a result, coercive isomorphism is legally mandated. Organizations may perceive coercive pressures as a force, inducement, or invitation to participate into collaboration in the event of coercive isomorphism.

Companies may not be obliged to build such arrangements in this case, but there is a considerable inducement to do so. Inducements are also linked to financial resources, with governments providing subsidies and other monetary rewards in exchange for implementing such practices. Nevertheless, institutional philosophers argue that coercive practices almost never result in efficiency (Sarkis, Gonzalez-Torre & Adenso-Diaz, 2010). In contrast to industrialised nations, activities to examine the influence of coercive isomorphic pressures on sustainability policies have mostly been recognised, and South African societies are more substantial and elusive. Other nations' exploration has revealed that rules governing sustainable development are simpler and more effective. Policies have been put in place to ensure South Africa's environmental sustainability. Masocha, (2019) discovered that coercive pressures such as government pressures and other monitoring organisations had an influence on SMMEs pursuing commercial, ecological, and societal sustainability practices in Limpopo. Consequently, from the study's outcomes, there is robust indication that SMMEs owners/directors perceive that coercive pressures lead to partaking sustainable practices.

As a result, the majority of coercive authorities that may make sustainability functional are non-regulatory, such as supplier, intermediary, and other comparable demands. Manufacturers in Sweden, for example, must follow a slew of social and environmental rules and regulations, including the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS), the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Laws, and the Social Accountability 8000 International Standard (SA 8000) (Chen, Tang & Feldmann, 2015). Woolworths is a fantastic example of a big South African company that has adopted an active commitment to environmental sustainability (Naidoo & Gasparatos, 2018).

2.9.3. Normative pressure

Customers generate pressure, and customer demand for green goods is among the key influences that lead to engaging in additional sustainable approaches and practices in processes (Bohnsack, Kolk, Pinkse & Bidmon, 2020).

Masocha, (2019) investigated the level of normative configuration in the sustainable practices of South African SMMEs. Its empirical findings revealed that normative elements have a strong and positive relationship with economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable actions. It was revealed that normative isomorphic forces had a significant and positive impact on all sustainable development efforts in the investigation. This demonstrates that the more the normative pressure, the more enterprises may incorporate economic, environmental, and social sustainability strategies. Factors identified under normative pressure, such as sustainable development education, networks, training and development, professionalism, and ethics, are critical to making SMMEs more sustainable in their performance.

This suggests that normative considerations play a significant role in motivating SMMEs to adopt sustainable practices (Brammer, Hoejmose & Marchant, 2012). Contrary to the widely held belief that SMMEs are unwilling to engage in sustainable practices and concerns, a study by Glover, Champion, Daniels, & Dainty, (2014) reveals intriguing and novel findings. According to the findings, normative configuration is critical for SMMEs to apply sustainable development practices. The research continues to explain and illustrate how SMMEs are influenced by normative pressures in the adoption of sustainable practices in a consistent manner when compared to major corporations.

Every business seeks to serve its customers through a process that converts resources and information into a contribution of economic value on the market by addressing consumer needs, wants, and benefits and providing solutions to problems (Stafford-Smith, Griggs, Gaffney, Ullah, Reyers, Kanie, Stigson, Shrivastava, Leach, & O'Connell, 2017). When customers evaluate a company based on its sustainable practices, the firm is challenged to integrate sustainability principles into its operations in order to maximize market value. Many additional elements contribute to the application of business sustainability strategies in a firm.

According to Boons, Montalvo, Quist & Wagner, (2013) entrepreneurs have a positive attitude toward the intent to implement sustainable practices and agree that external sources such as consumers, servicers, stakeholders, and workers impact them to implement sustainable practices. According to the findings of their structural reckoning model research, personal norms or internal and external impacts are the greatest relevant elements in forecasting the probability of long-term

implementation. Various researchers have identified a number of aspects that influence sustainability. Previous research has generally focused on the fundamental drivers of sustainability by corporations, considering external pressures such as environmental legislation and government mandates (Boons, *et al*, 2013).

Another study by Caldera, Desha, & Dawes, (2019) discovered that enterprises are motivated by consumer demands and incorporate client necessities into product manufacturing. Effective communication via numerous ways (e.g., telephone, email, site visits, and meetings) is vital. Firms also stressed the importance of communication by defining a matrix with information on what should be conveyed to whom as part of their ISO 9001-Quality Management. Customers urged that resource efficiency in product manufacturing techniques be enhanced. For instance, in their study, Firm H's executive manager commented, "Some of our customers conduct quality audits as part of their quality accreditation or green credentials". "If we do not meet the requirements that they have set for us, they will no longer use us as a supplier" (Kelling, Sauer, Gold, & Seuring, 2021). Consumers are increasingly pressing businesses and governments to act on sustainability challenges. According to a 2007 Moxie Design Group study, consumer concern for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and eliminating deforestation has increased significantly. Only 40 % of the participants uttered concerns about what firms are undertaking in the name of profit. According to a 2007 New Zealand Business Council/Shape NZ online survey of 3088 participants, 7 over 10 indicated a business's environmental performance had a substantial influence on whether or not they would buy its goods (Yadav, Gupta, Rani, & Rawat, 2018).

Furthermore, Blundel, Monaghan, & Thomas, (2013) indicated that SMMEs in Denmark and Germany used professional consulting services and worked with their counterparts in the manufacture of innovative items. To promote economic efficiency, one technique that is now being adopted is to collaborate rather than compete with corporate rivals. Companies that do so develop regional clusters along social dimensions, where they pool resources, information, and skills, enhancing their chances of survival. Isomorphism denotes an evolutionary trend from variation to uniformity in organisational domains or enterprises. Masocha, (2019) study showed that isomorphic effects have an important impact in SMME sustainability strategies. As a result, according to the

conclusions of their analysis, small enterprises are more likely to utilize consistent methods since they are driven by common motivations.

2.9.4. Mimetic pressure

Imitation also plays a significant role in EU corporations engaging in more sustainable projects. Companies tend to imitate the actions of other companies' actions to minimise the risks correlated with dynamic environments (Bohnsack, Kolk, Pinkse & Bidmon, 2020).

According to Masocha & Fatoki, (2018b) mimicry, mimics, or mimesis is frequently the third mechanism that clarifies isomorphism from an institutional standpoint. Mimetic isomorphism has been intensively studied by academics as a paradigm for reacting to environmental uncertainty in institutional theory. Mimicry isomorphism argues that in order to look legitimate inside their institutional contexts, businesses frequently pursue routes of convergent changes. Companies will resemble respectable and successful rivals in their market to gain legitimacy through mimetic processes, resulting in institutional isomorphism (Samairat, 2008). Mimicry occurs through several processes and is commonly referred to as modelling; businesses model themselves after their rivals. Mimicking is accomplished by the recruitment of staff from other firms, the use of consultants, and participation in business bodies (Masocha & Fatoki, 2018b).

Imitation for legitimation may occur only if the mimicked firms are seen to be sufficiently effective in adhering to the field's ideals. Companies will copy other businesses in their field. However, the firms being mimicked must be similar in sophistication or be at the cutting edge (Samairat, 2008). When firms replicate one other, whether they are similar in sophistication or deemed cutting-edge – a nationwide culture is probable to develop. Isomorphism validity is culturally determined in the context of imitation. Mimetic isomorphism states that when a corporation faces uncertainty, it prefers to copy others in order to sustain competitiveness and prevent or lessen unpleasant and unforeseen events (Caravella, 2011).

According to Masocha & Fatoki, (2018b) mimetic isomorphism is categorised into three types: frequency-based imitation, trait-based imitation, and outcome-based imitation. To begin with, frequency-based imitation is the purest kind of mimetic isomorphism. This happens when a company

copies the strategies and approaches used by the prevalent of firms in the industry. Second, trait-based imitation, as opposed to frequent-based imitation, demands a high level of selection criteria. When an enterprise concentrates solely on mimicking the motions of organisations that share specific traits, such as size and communal significance, this is referred to as trait-based imitation. The fundamental premise underlying trait-based imitation is that the activities and methods used by organizations with such traits are typically advantageous and are anticipated to have the similar positive effects on the imitator.

Lastly, the outcome-based method is comparable to trait-based imitation in that it includes adopting policies and practices that result in favourable results preferentially. As a result, outcome-based imitation is labelled as what occurs when activities that appear to be associated with triumph are replicated. More precisely, trait-based imitation is seen to be emulating organisations with particular desired features, whereas outcome-based imitation is thought to be mimicking companies with bad attributes (Yang & Hyland, 2012). The majority of institutional theory research focuses on frequency- and trait-based imitations. They conclude, however, that outcome-based imitation can be crucial, especially in the early phases of strategy implementation. Mosocha & Fatoki, (2019a) revealed considerable evidence that most environmental, economic, and social sustainability practices among SMMEs come from imitation of their company peers. As a result, the extent to which SMMEs incorporate sustainable practices into their business processes is influenced more by mimetic forces. In terms of sustainability, small firms may be mimicking giant corporations and their successful equivalents.

2.9.5 Entrepreneurial values

Entrepreneurial values are necessary prerequisites for entrepreneurial behaviour. Creativity, risk-taking, inventiveness, four-dimensional achievement, ambition, and independence are all the required characteristics for entrepreneurial values. Values in business include a consideration element that forms a personal or social person's views, so it is chosen over the form of behaviour or the final form of the existence (Barba-Sánchez, Mitre-Aranda, & del Brío-González, 2022). Values serve as the foundation for understanding attitudes and motivations, and they can impact views of behaviour in running a business. Entrepreneurs are individuals who own their own businesses, they are individuals who take the risk of establishing their own company. A person's nature and character

have a major impact on their attitudes and behaviour and the way they conduct business (Zulfikri, & Iskandar, 2022).

People who have a deep concern for environment also have the desire to convey these values, act in accordance with them and engage in actions seeking to provide remedies to ecological problems. These circumstances shape environmental consciousness, which naturally leads people to take a proactive approach to sustainability. This association has been examined from an entrepreneurial standpoint, and the conclusion has been the same: people who care deeply about the environment also have a strong desire to influence the future, making the existing world a better place for everyone (Barba-Sánchez, Mitre-Aranda, & del Brío-González, 2022). They perceive themselves as change agents and take a proactive approach to developing new activities with the primary goal of creating a social or environmental benefit for a community especially the one they operate under. In addition, they see a neglected problem as a business opportunity to solve it (Thelken & de Jong, 2020).

Entrepreneurs who operate as transformational leaders are motivated by a high level of environmental consciousness to act in a financial and social way, with a focus on the ultimate economic, social and environmental results. These reasons are much more significant to today's generation than past generations because they see themselves to be more innovative and environmentally conscious, and they seek more than simply monetary satisfaction at work. Some authors have discovered a link between environmental awareness and the desire to start a business that is centred on sustainability (Barba-Sánchez, Mitre-Aranda, & del Brío-González, 2022). Similarly, other authors have discovered that attitudes and values associated are with sustainability (i.e., environmental awareness) and they motivate entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices and that positively impact their intention to put sustainability as fundamental in their businesses (Thelken & de Jong, 2020).

2.9.6. APPLICATION OF THE THEORY

Institutions establish standards that define legitimate acts for companies and also establish the logic by which legislation, rules, and behavioural expectations that have been implemented seem logical and consistent (Zucker, 1977, 1987). The Institutional Theory enables the emphasis to be on the role of conservatism, regulatory and factors in influencing organisational behaviour (Butler, 2011). This is effective for the study as it investigates the factors that impact SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. The institutional theory provides a valuable lens for describing the sources of pressure that

influence a business's sustainability practices. Models established from institutional theory can be used as a framework to examine the various responses a company takes to turn institutional pressure into specific sustainability measures. Furthermore, institutional theory, which has had limited applicability to this phenomenon until recently, may provide a complementary lens for understanding how entrepreneurs implement sustainability practices. The aim of this research is to shed light on whether institutional factors that were discussed above have an influence on entrepreneurs' engagement in sustainable practices.



Figure 2. 2 Institutional Theoretical Framework
Source: (Selznick, 1948)

2.10. DEFINING SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sustainable entrepreneurship is a novel area of study in the world of entrepreneurship research (Belz & Binder, 2017). It derives from Sustainable Development, which is defined as "development that meets the demands of the present without jeopardizing future generations' ability to meet their own needs" (Jämsä, Tähtinen, Ryan, & Pallari, 2011). Facilitating Sustainable Development necessitates altering interfaces in three dimensions of sustainability: social, environmental, and economic. As a result of the convergence of Sustainable Development and entrepreneurship, Sustainable Entrepreneurship has emerged (Belz & Binder, 2017). There appears to be no agreed definition of Sustainable Entrepreneurship (Lüdeke-Freund, 2020). Furthermore, Sustainable Entrepreneurship is defined as "the focus on maintaining nature, life support, and community in the pursuit of perceived chances to bring into existence future products, processes, and services for gain, where gain is broadly considered to include economic and non-economic benefits to people, the economy, and society" (Anand, Argade, Barkemeyer & Salignac, 2021).

Furthermore, Cohen & Winn, (2007) defined Sustainable Entrepreneurship as "the process of recognising, analysing, and capturing entrepreneurial opportunities that minimise a venture's impact on the natural environment, creating advantages for humanity as a whole". According to Gast, Gundolf & Cesinger, (2017) description of Sustainable Entrepreneurship, incorporates "people, planet, and profit.". This means that entrepreneurs must stabilise the social, environmental, and economic sustainability aspects when engaging in entrepreneurial activities. This move towards greener and sustainable practices is necessary for providing economic opportunities, which start-ups can exploit, but the adoption and action of these practices will set the trend for other businesses to embrace (Muo & Azeez, 2019). The government cannot be relied upon to put specific legislation into action, so by adopting responsible action towards establishing greener practices, SMMEs will be given a chance to lead by example (Marks & Hidden, 2017).

SMME managers do transfer sustainability ideas into management practices, and they have favourable attitudes about environmental challenges, owing to the fact that SMMEs often create strategically powerful links with their communities in comparison to larger enterprises (Jansson, Nilsson, Modig & Hed Vall, 2017). Furthermore, they appear to have little or no concern for the environment and their 'ecological footprint'. Many SMME managers argue that the government should play a proactive role in environmental management rather than concentrating on their behaviour. Salimzadeh, Courvisanos & Nayak, (2013) state that since SMMEs are conditioned by their size and culture and function in various fields, it is very difficult to identify barriers of SMMEs in engaging in environmental management. However, a significant body of research literature has identified a series of barriers SMMEs that represent the challenges they face in resolving environmental issues effectively (Bvuma & Marnewick, 2020).

Current evidence has revealed that environmental management practices in SMMEs are limited, mainly because smaller businesses appear to be heavily concentrated on day-to-day operations that are perceived as somewhat peripheral to environmental issues and partly because their resources are also constrained to concentrate on issues that are at the heart of the company (Bhorat, Asmal, Lilenstein, & Van der Zee, 2018). There is a consensus view that, contrary to their larger counterparts, small businesses have relatively reactive CSR and environmental management strategies (Jenkins, 2006).

According to Scagnelli, Corazza, & Cisi, (2013) states that SMMEs appear to not comply with external pressures only for two reasons. Firstly, SMMEs lack the necessary tools and expertise to implement sustainable practices; secondly, managers/owners struggle to justify investment in environmental sustainability from an economic and competitive standpoint, because most consumers are unwilling to pay for environmentally friendly products and procedures and find it extremely difficult to publicise their initiatives. However, the topic of whether SMMEs have a competitive disadvantage in adopting CSR and environmental management remains unanswered. The following are some of the most significant issues that entrepreneurs confront while implementing sustainable practices.

2.10.1. Main challenges faced by SMMEs in adopting sustainable practices

2.10.1.1. Financial constraints

The biggest issue that SMMEs encounter is financial constraints. As a result, SMMEs fail to hire people who can provide guidance and fail to invest in skill training initiatives for their workers (Gelbmann, 2010). SMME entities without financial resources seem to be critical on how they could implement responsible and sustainable management practices. Furthermore, the expansion and survival of SMMEs in many countries are dependent on financial access because they have difficulties in obtaining financial support, particularly from investors and commercial banks (Lee, Herold, & Yu, 2016). In South Africa, many entrepreneurs start small businesses with little or no financial backing. Because of the limited funds available to SMMEs in the country, SMMEs rarely receive adequate financial help from the South African government and the South African Venture Capital Association (Fairlie, 2020).

The shortage of financial resources accessible to SMMEs in the formal sector in South Africa is a result of the country's struggling economy. As a result, financial institutions are forced to increase lending capital charges, making it even more difficult for SMMEs to borrow money (Masocha & Fatoki, 2018). Even when SMMEs are able to obtain financial support, they find it challenging to manage their debts. According to Zou, Liu, Ahmad, Sial, Badulescu, Zia-Ud-Din, & Badulescu, (2021) because SMMEs lack resources, how they adopt and implement responsible and sustainable management practices is critical.

Aspeling, & Mason, (2016) state that SMMEs that believe they do not have enough money are unlikely to think favorably about these practices. Aspeling, & Mason, (2016) they go on and say that SMMEs frequently struggle from a deficit of financial capital and therefore are reluctant to devote funds to environmental practices. This is worsened by the COVID-19 Pandemic, as SMMEs were mostly hit. According to Carlitz, & Makhura, (2021) many South African small businesses have seen their earnings collapse as a result of the lockdown measures, and the majority have been forced to lower down on business spending to keep afloat. This is owing to the fact that they frequently have lower financial reserves, client bases, and commercial pressure management capabilities when compared to larger firms. From April 2020, the South African government provided a lenient loan facility intended at supporting prevailing SMMEs that were impacted in order to keep them afloat throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic for period of 6 months (Khan, 2021).

2.10.1.2. Inadequate human resources

According to Haider, Rasli, Akhtar, Yusoff, Malik, Aamir, & Tariq, (2015) employees play a critical role in the successful development and implementation of responsible and sustainable practices. Lack of adequate human labor is frequently the cause of failure to carry out the practices. Financial constraints also mean that SMME owners are unable to hire and compensate suitably highly skilled workers, produce quality products/services, and carry out the required daily operations needed for business growth. SMMEs have a problem with having qualified and capable people in their organizations (Haider, *et al*, 2015).

Employee disengagement can be difficult to cope with when organizations lack proper HR practices, the purpose of human resources in SMMEs is administrative and generally follows a top-down hierarchical approach, which is likely to have an adverse impact on sustainable practices management; therefore, these initiatives are easily neglected (Vo, & Stanton, 2011). The shortage of skilled people in South Africa is a concern for many organizations' long-term operations. In order for SMMEs to accomplish responsible and sustainable goals, a low level of employee perception can diminish the likelihood of effective implementation (Oginni & Omojowo, 2016). Zaid, Jaaron, & Bon, (2018) goes on to say that employees' abilities, dedication, and motivation to support responsible and sustainable practices can be used as a tool for proactive practice adoption.

2.10.1.3. Lack of management skills

Financial constraints have an impact on sustainable management practices. According to Igbinakhase, (2017) the majority of African SMMEs fail due to a lack of managerial capacity. Due to a lack of management skills, SMMEs do not fully comprehend the long-term benefits of engaging in responsible and sustainable management practices (Igbinakhase, 2017). The term "lack of management skills" refers to SMME owners or managers who do not see the value and necessity of employee training and development programs (Fatoki, 2014). Management concerns in SMMEs include obstacles stemming from organizational structure and resource allocation issues, as well as managers' lack of expertise of how to manage employees and the everyday demands of the business.

Lack of managerial abilities is also viewed as a strategic restriction, as is a lack of capacity to connect business products and services with business environment expectations (Farsi & Toghraee, 2014). Lack of strategic vision will have an impact on the growth of the SMME and will limit the firms' ability to invest in sustainable practices that will improve their performance (Cohen & Winn, 2007). Furthermore, due to the uniqueness of SMMEs, owners and managers must do numerous tasks that necessitate managerial abilities in order to maintain a balance between day-to-day business operations and sustainable practices. SMME owners and managers are typically the administrators of the organizations, and they frequently lack the abilities required to manage and lead the businesses. The capacity to engage with other enterprises requires significant abilities that aid owners and managers of SMEs with the ability to contribute and tap into the business ideas that come from sustainable practices (Del Giudice, Khan, De Silva, Scuotto, Caputo & Carayannis, 2017).

2.10.1.4. Lack of information and time

According to Halme & Korpela, (2014) SMMEs struggle to turn responsible and sustainable practices into a competitive advantage due to a lack of understanding on the value of these activities. Lack of information has had a negative impact on how SMMEs apply these practices. According to Ates & Bititci, (2011) SMMEs are primarily preoccupied with the day-to-day operations of the business, and as a result, they do not have time to seek out relevant information on how to sustain the business. In emerging economies like South Africa, SMMEs have insufficient information and knowledge of the target markets' product/service requirements and operational standards. This issue has a substantial impact on SMMEs' economic, social, and environmental activities.

Masocha & Fatoki, (2018) indicate that the owners and managers of SMMEs are aware of environmental concerns, but they have limited knowledge of the expertise required for formal processes in assuring social and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, managers/owners of SMMEs believe that sustainable practices burden operations and increase costs. Lack of knowledge and information might lead to a poor comprehension of the practices and, as a result, a reduction in their adoption. SMMEs owners and managers are frequently preoccupied with the day-to-day operations of the business, therefore they do not have time to hunt for relevant information on how to survive and build the firm (Ates & Bititci, 2011). They usually juggle a variety of duties, leaving them with little time to investigate long-term solutions for their organizations.

Another significant gap between large and small businesses, which poses a major challenge to the adoption of environmental practices among SMMEs, is that sustainability practices are strongly dependent on the involvement of the employees (Chimucheka & Mandipaka, 2015). Scholars have repeatedly argued that adopting sustainable practices involves a comprehensive alignment of human and technological capital and expertise (Bennett, Whitty, Finkbeiner, Pittman, Bassett, Gelcich & Allison, 2018).

Similarly, Klapper & Beinker, (2017) suggest that SMMEs control less labour and financial resources to engage in environmental management when compared to larger companies in terms of their involvement in environmental and social concerns. They rarely have codified social or environmental policy and tend to partake in less formal environmental and social conduct than larger businesses. SMMEs owner's also have more freedom of decision-making than managers in a big company, and their personal responsibilities and motives are important in the strategic course of business, which may contribute to greater dedication to social and environmental concerns. On the other hand, Turyakira, (2018) states that SMMEs are often heavily dependent on a limited number of consumers and are assumed to experience more restraints from financial and managerial resources.

The environmental industry is currently experiencing social changes that demand enterprises to devote greater resources to developing services, processes, and products that meet strict statutory standards, resulting in greener production, a cleaner environment, and a more sustainable world (Leonidou, Christodoulides, Kyrgidou & Palihawadana, 2017). Simultaneously, businesses must

compete with more competitive markets in which innovation is considered as a must for existence (Teece & Linden, 2017). As a result, there is an urgent need to consider innovative new methods for assuring the intensive sustainability operations in response to pandemic and climate change.

Covid-19, according to He & Harris, (2020) established a tough situation in which managers must deal with unique situations quickly while aiding their workers in adapting to substantial changes in the professional and social environment. Employees who used to operate exclusively within their organization's actual physical bounds, for example, must now adapt quickly to distant work settings, according to Kramer & Kramer, (2020). This circumstance, according to Kramer & Kramer, (2020) led in a modest separation between work and home life, which culminated in more serious difficulty "unplugging" from work obligations.

According to Kramer & Kramer, (2020) job losses during COVID-19 were disproportionately distributed among low-income earners, compounding already severe disparities despite the government's decisive and pro-poor reaction with transfer programs that alleviated the pandemic's harmful consequences. Low-wage earners lost approximately four times the number of employments as high-wage earners. According to the report by Masenya, (2021) entrepreneurship and self-employment provide the greatest chance for job creation in South Africa, particularly with the growing number of start-ups, notably in the digital sector, which has the potential to become a future engine of job growth.

Darnall & Edwards, (2006) also found that implementing sustainable practices systems in SMMEs involves more capital than predicted in terms of expenses, time and skills. Furthermore, adopting such processes has had an enormous negative effect on resources, as many SMMEs often found it impossible to incorporate ecological processes into current manufacturing and quality processes. Nulkar, (2019) states that SMMEs can achieve substantial competitive benefits from sustainable practices, but SMMEs are often unwilling to make the required investments because they assume that net cost savings are minimal. The cost of implementing sustainability practices in SMMEs is high, particularly in the manufacturing and primary resource sectors. It is difficult for SMMEs to produce low environmental impact products.

Nulkar, (2019) further explains that due to the competitive nature of the business environment, the cost of sustainability initiatives could not be passed on to the consumer by SMMEs because they are considered business costs. In other words, firms must simultaneously make operational changes that result in reduced costs and progressive environmental performance. Cost efficiency rather than environmental responsibility continues to be a motivating factor in SMMEs (Graafland & Gerlagh, 2019). According to a survey conducted by Font, Garay & Jones, (2016) states that around 900 tourism companies in 57 European protected areas, small businesses are now more engaged in taking responsibility by being more sustainable than formerly known, these include eco-savings associated with operating practices, but also reporting a extensive range of social and economic responsibilities and actions.

SMME studies in the United Kingdom (UK) illustrate that government legislation is the primary motivator of environmental practices in UK SMMEs. Moreover, these studies demonstrate that self-regulation among UK SMMEs is unlikely to function well; UK SMMEs tend to have no desire to increase their environmental performance above the minimal legal requirement (Wilson, Williams, & Kemp, 2012), and (Quader, Kamal & Hassan, 2016). There are numerous reasons for this result, including lower per capita spending by the UK government in environmental investment compared to the Netherlands (Uhlaner, Berent-Braun, Jeurissen, & de Wit, 2012), and the resulting belief among several SMMEs that they will normally be ignored in compliance efforts. In addition, UK SMMEs appears to view environmental management as an expense rather than a competitive advantage (Quader, Kamal & Hassan, 2016).

The Dutch SMMEs, on the other hand, display a wide variety of environmental management motivations. In a survey of 1,662 SMMEs in the Netherlands, Hori, Chen & Cheng, (2011) showed that half of the businesses that consistently support sustainable policies seek to create more eco-innovative goods and services. In addition, more than half of the surveyed firms insist on talking more about sustainability, while the one-quarter plan to report on sustainability. These findings tend to indicate that Dutch SMMEs are highly market-driven in their approaches to sustainability.

Dutch SMMEs also show clear ethical motives for sustainability, as shown by Uhlaner *et al.*, (2012) in their study of 111 SMMEs in the Netherlands concludes that CSR is commonly treated as a "moral

duty towards society" irrespective of the size of the firm. This perspective is in marked contradiction to the conclusions of SMMEs in the United Kingdom, which primarily consider market results, economic prospects and legal enforcement as reasons for environmental action.

Another valuable aspect of the Dutch SMMEs is their extensive participation with their local societies and local trade associations to identify and uphold environmental standards. In a larger sense, this collaborative approach to problem-solving and policy formulation has been referred to as the "polder" model and underlines the significance of civil society institutions in the Dutch political economy (Uhlener *et al.*, 2012). The Dutch situation can be enlightening for several countries, provided its variety of strong federal legislations and environmental perceptions among SMME owners (Muriithi, 2017). According to Cohen & Winn, (2007) entrepreneurial actions have resulted in numerous environmental issues. Market failure, for example, resulted in environmental degradation. Pollution, deforestation, and the abuse of nonrenewable resources are all directly linked to economic activities. Entrepreneurs are being asked to take a more active role in resolving environmental issues, knowing that they can have a terrible impact on people's lives. As a result, sustainable entrepreneurship was offered as a viable solution to environmental problems (Dean & McMullen, 2007). Many small and medium-sized businesses have discovered that going beyond environmental compliance makes good commercial sense and can benefit a company's long-term performance. By addressing client needs for sustainable business practices, companies can decrease costs, enhance efficiency, and expand company opportunities by reducing energy usage, avoiding waste, using raw materials more efficiently, and preventing pollution.

2.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter looked at the contemporary discussion about sustainable practices, as well as related phenomena and theory. It revealed the scarcity of studies that looked into sustainable practices in South Africa and elsewhere. In addition, breaches in the literature have been identified, and the study has been put in the present conversation, emphasizing its significance. The methodology utilised to attain the study objectives is discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed literature that is pertinent to the study as well as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. This chapter explains how the research was conducted to achieve the objectives of the study. This chapter describes the reasons why the chosen research methods were appropriate for this study. This chapter consists of coverage of the problem statement, research questions and objectives, research design and approach, sampling techniques, methods of data collection, validity and reliability of research tools, ethical considerations, and limitations concerning the carrying out of the actual research.

3.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is limited research on how local SMMEs have an impact on the natural environment nor how they engage in sustainable practices. In addition, there is limited amount of literature on the factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices in the South African context as most research around this concept have been frequently undertaken in the first-world countries limiting the emphasis on developing countries (Yadav et al, 2018). To fill this research gap, this study investigated the factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices.

3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that underpinned the study are as follows:

- To what extent does coercive pressure influence SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to adopt sustainable practices?
- Does normative pressure have an impact on how SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg apply sustainable practices?
- How does mimetic pressure influence SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices?
- How does entrepreneurial values influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices?

3.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key intention of this research was to explore factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainability practices. This research was underpinned by the subsequent research objectives:

- To determine the influence of coercive pressure on SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices.
- To evaluate the impact of normative pressure on the application of sustainable practices by SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg.
- To examine how mimetic pressure influences SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices.
- To evaluate how entrepreneurial values, influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices.

3.5. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Kuehl & Kuehl, (2000) the research design is a strategy and a procedure that is used to collect and analyse research data and further describes this concept as a conceptual road map for research. The following research designs have been discussed underneath:

3.5.1 Case study

Case studies are used to gather information about a specific occurrence or action, such as a corporate unit or organisation. The case study notion is that in order to have a thorough knowledge of the issue, the real-life condition must be analysed from many viewpoints utilising multiple data collecting approaches (Loeb, Dynarski, McFarland, Morris, Reardon & Reber, 2017). For the reasons stated above, this study did not use a case study research approach.

3.5.2. Explanatory study

Explanatory research attempts to establish causal explanations for phenomena (Beach, 2020). Explanatory studies might be challenging to obtain appropriate findings from. This is due to the influence of several elements and variables on the social environment. In other words, while fatality might be contingent, it cannot be routinely demonstrated with high reliability (Kuehl & Kuehl, 2000). This approach was not chosen for the reasons stated above.

3.5.3. Descriptive study

Descriptive studies focus on simply describing phenomena, whether through narrative type descriptions, categorisations, or measuring relationships (Loeb, *et al*, 2017). It was for this reason that no consideration was given to this type of research design.

3.5.4. Exploratory study

Exploratory approaches are used to do exploratory studies in areas of inquiry that are mostly unknown (Ghauri, Grnhaug, & Strange, 2020). When little is known about the topic at hand, or when there is no knowledge accessible about how comparable problems or research concerns have been addressed in previous times, an exploratory study is done (Beach, 2020). In these cases, exploratory studies are commenced to better understand the nature of the problem because there aren't many alternative research studies that might be conducted in that area (Pavot, Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2018). When there is no or limited understanding about a topic, an exploratory research design is applied. An exploratory design is a method of gaining new understanding about a subject (Swedberg, 2020).

An exploratory research approach was utilised to evaluate the factors that impact sustainable practices among SMMEs in order to attain the study's aim and objective. An exploratory research design was used in this study. When there is little evidence, this strategy can assist give meaningful information. This unique study strategy collects data and re-enacts difficulties associated with these phenomena. The primary goal of using an exploratory study methodology was to get a scientific knowledge of the factors that drive SMMEs to engage in sustainable activities. The argument for using an exploratory research approach was that it focuses on an under-researched subject.

3.6. RESEARCH APPROACH

There are three primary research methodologies, according to Johnson & Christensen, (2019) these include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches. Respectively these methods are explained more underneath:

3.6.1. Qualitative approach

Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, (2020) explains that qualitative research seeks to tell a story about the perspectives of a specific group in their personal words and therefore relies mainly on narration, whereas quantitative research focuses exclusively on statistics.

3.6.2. Mixed method approach

Johnson & Christensen, (2019) define mixed methods research as "research including the collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study or in numerous studies exploring the same research subject". A mixed-method tactic takes time (Gibson, 2017; Maruster, 2013). Based on the short time available to business owners, this strategy was deemed insufficient for this study.

3.6.3. Quantitative approach

This method is a type of instructive research in which the researcher chooses what to examine, enquires precise focused questions, gathers measurable information from respondents, analyses the quantitative information using statistics, and conducts an impartial, authentic examination (Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

Most research studies using the Institutional Theoretical Framework affirm this decision of using quantitative approach when incorporating the theory to sustainability (Jennings & Zandbergen, 1995). Quantification makes it so much easier for the data to be collected, compared and summarized and allows for statistical analysis. These are all key outcomes when evaluating Selznick theory of institution. According to Vejvar, Lai, Lo, & Fürst, (2018) studies following the Institutional Theory often use quantitative methods for collecting data and analysing it. Hence it was for this reason that this research adopted a quantitative research method.

3.7. STUDY SITE

This research was carried out in the CBD of Pietermaritzburg, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Pietermaritzburg is South Africa's regional capital and the second biggest city in KwaZulu-Natal. It is a regionally significant industrial centre that manufactures timber, aluminium, and dairy products. Pietermaritzburg is the legislative and administrative provincial capital of KwaZulu-Natal, which boosts investor confidence and contributes to major economic growth in the Pietermaritzburg region (Hill & Hlahla, 2018).

3.8. TARGET POPULATION

The entire number of study participants who meet the requirements is referred to as the target population; this denotes to a group of people that the researcher hopes to infer when the research is concluded (Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). This study's target population comprised of SMME owners in Pietermaritzburg. Respondents had to be Pietermaritzburg-based SMME founders/owners in order to participate in the study, and if not, they were excluded in the study. The target sample consisted of SMME founders from the following industries:

1. Agricultural Sector
2. Mining Sector
3. Manufacturing Sector
4. Electricity, gas, and water Sector
5. Construction Sector
6. Trade and Accommodation Sector
7. Transport and Communication Sector
8. Finance and Business Services Sector
9. Community Sector
10. Other

3.9. SAMPLING METHOD

Sampling entails selecting a subset of the general public that signifies the target people in order to collect data on the topic being examined (Alvi, 2016). Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two systematic approaches of sampling.

3.9.1. NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

Non-probability sampling does not try to select a casual sample from a preferred populace. Instead, subjective approaches are utilised to choose which components should be comprised in the sample (Shields, 2019).

3.9.1.1. Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling strategy that depends on data gathering from associates of the population who are readily obtainable to partake in the research (Mujere,

2016). It necessitates locating respondents anywhere they may be found by a researcher, which is generally wherever it is convenient. The advantages of utilising such a sampling strategy include the ability to collect data in a short period of time (Shields, 2019; Levy & Lemehow, 2013).

3.9.1.2. Judgment / purposive sampling

In the case of judgment / purposive sampling, the researcher chooses participants based on his or her judgment while keeping the study's goal in mind (Mujere, 2016). This kind of sampling is utilized in exploratory or arena testing. The researcher has little idea if the examples picked reflect the overall population when using purposive sampling (Alvi, 2016).

3.9.1.3. Quota sampling

Quota sampling is a form of sampling technique that includes selecting infinitely small groups to be included in the sample and afterwards establishing quotas for members to be sampled from each group (Etikan & Babatope, 2019).

3.9.1.4. Snowball sampling

This strategy is beneficial when it is difficult to find members of a certain demographic. For instance, homeless individuals, migratory laborers, and so forth. It commences with the collecting of information from one or more associates identified to the data collector. Following the data collecting procedure, the data collector requests that respondents supply contact information for further possible participants. These potential participants are approached, questioned, and then requested for more contact information. This procedure is repeated until the researcher's objective is met (Flick, 2015).

3.9.2. PROBABILITY SAMPLING

This type of sampling states that each sample has the same chance of being selected. This sampling strategy increases the possibility that the sample is illustrative of the entire populace (Alvi, 2016).

3.9.2.1. Systematic sampling

Systematic sampling is an approach that obtains a sample by choosing every n th member from a list that comprises the whole population after a random beginning point (Flick, 2015).

3.9.2.2. Stratified sampling

In situations when the population is divided into sub-groups or strata, stratified sampling is employed to create a better degree of representativeness. To ensure that the relevant strata are correctly represented, the sample is drawn at random or systematically from the population or sampling frame as a whole, rather than from each of the strata individually (Lane, Scott, Hebl, Guerra, Osherson & Zimmer, 2017).

3.9.2.3. Cluster sampling

This kind of sampling is obtained in groups that are preferably the normal total of the population. The target population is initially divided into clusters in order to do cluster sampling. Then, a random sample of clusters is chosen, and the sample includes either all of the elements or a subset of the elements from each chosen cluster (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

3.9.2.4. Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling was utilised in this study because it allows variance of components in the population to have the same likelihood of being picked as participants in the study; it also considerably decreases the possibility for bias sampling. This technique was judged adequate for this study because the sampling strategy included finding a list of the entire Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) associated SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg. The list was attained through the approval of the SEDA Chief Executive Officer. The researcher then utilised a random number producer to generate numbers randomly, each related to the name of the organisation. After that, the selected entrepreneurs through randomization were then called and informed about the study in detail and those that were interested gave their consent to participate.

3.10. SAMPLING SIZE

The sample size is the entire number of elements selected as a sample to represent the target population. According to the SEDA, 600 SMMEs are presently associated with them (Khumalo, 2019). SEDA assists small businesses with business growth and support. SEDA provide small businesses with all of the information they need in order to start a business, including how to draft a business plan, as well as how to grow an existing business (Skinner, Barrett, Alfors, & Rogan, 2021).

Because there are 600 SMME identified under SEDA, the representative sample size of this population was 234 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The sample size was therefore 234 SMMEs. Beneath is the formula which was used to calculate the sample size of the study:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Size of the sample

N = Size of the population

e = Level of Accuracy

3.11. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

There are a variety of methods of gathering data that researchers can use throughout the data collection process. Such approaches include interviews, questionnaires and observational studies (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018).

3.11.1 Interviews

Interviews are research instruments that have a specific role to play. They are used to investigate and collect data on attitudes and experiences (Mohajan, 2018; King, 2018). For this study, this approach was not suitable, and it is a qualitative method for collecting data, it is perceived to be too expensive and time-consuming since business owners have little time to deliver. The researcher also needs to take into consideration that such an approach is difficult to standardize and interpret, and could trigger interviewer bias (Josselson, 2017).

3.11.2. Observation

Observation includes organised observation, documenting, interpretation and analysis of behaviour and attitude, motives or events (Lee & Lee, 1999). Observational studies, however, were deemed inappropriate for this study because they are inept (Wright, 2012). This approach does not allow the researcher to accurately gather data on the fundamental subject.

3.11.3. Questionnaire

Questionnaires are typically used to collect significant volumes of quantitative data. They can be handed out in person, disseminated online to the research participants. Questionnaires are often less

expensive and less time-consuming than observations and interviews, but they frequently have a higher likelihood of non-response and mistakes from non-responses (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Kraut, Olson, Banaji, Bruckman, Cohen, & Couper, 2004).

A questionnaire was used as a data collecting tool for the research based on the objectives of the study. A structured questionnaire was used for this study because it allows for more convenient information processing and data coding than an unstructured questionnaire (Appendix B). Structured questionnaires are often associated with a better degree of dependability, as well as being more functional and less time-consuming for participants to complete (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The questionnaire design requires the inclusion of a number of guarantees that validate the instrument used and the collected items. These include an exhausted revision of the literature and the use of the experience acquired with regard to SMMEs engagement in sustainable practices research. Likewise, efforts have been made to be accurate when explaining the variables in order to minimize ambiguity (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989).

A questionnaire is an effective approach for gathering vast amounts of data in exploratory research since it permits the researcher to obtain correct information and seek out alternative viewpoints on occurrences. To reduce participant tiredness, the questionnaire in this study comprised of easy questions and directions. Participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a specific statement using a five-point Likert scale. A key disadvantage of Likert scales is that true attitudes cannot be measured adequately because of the restricted number of replies, there is no elaboration on the debate, and if new questions alter the answers to any subsequent questions, participants prefer to disregard these. However, the scale was chosen because it allowed the researcher to statistically use the data and apply various approaches to analyse it (Shayamunda, 2015).

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, data collection was non-contact based, questionnaires were sent out electronically, there was no physical contact between the researcher and the participants. All respondents were able to access the questionnaire electronically. The researcher used an online platform called Google Forms to create an online survey that was hosted by the researcher. The link to the questionnaire was sent to participants via Email/WhatsApp and the participant had access to it for a period of 5 days. Basically, the questionnaire was available online for a period of 5 days for the participant to complete once it has been started. Before participants participated in the study, the

researcher ensured that the participants understood the questionnaire and informed consent. This was done by giving the participant a link that contained the information sheet, consent form and the questionnaire, all in one link. For the researcher to ensure that the participants understood the above mentioned, there was a 5 Yes/No question quiz that included questions of potential risk and benefits, voluntary nature of their participation, and confidentiality measures to protect their participation. This quiz was answered before the questionnaire as it was to help with ensuring that participants really understood the questionnaire and informed consent. Contact details of the researcher and the supervisor were provided for the participants if they needed any additional information.

The data was gathered within a short period of time given the limited time available that business owners have to offer. All the participants completed the questionnaire before the July 2021 riots that happened in KZN and Gauteng where most business properties were looted. Online questionnaire was deemed appropriate for this study because of the overall need to minimize time consumption and to obtain honest answers, and the fact that this study was conducted during the COVID 19 under strict level 5 lockdown. According to Michalski & Staniów, (2018) it is acknowledged that participants tend to answer electronic questions more truthful, honest and complete, this is because the participants answer these questions alone and in their own space without the researcher being physically there.

3.12. STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire that was administered for collecting data comprised of five key sections which are explained underneath:

3.12.1. SECTION A: Demographic information

Section A of the questionnaire asked about the participant's race, gender, nationality, level of education, industrial setting, type of business, number of employees in the firm, and motivations for starting the business. This information is vital for this study since it permits the researcher to comprehend the characteristics of the population.

3.12.2. SECTION B: Investigating how coercive pressure influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices

Section B of the questionnaire collected data on coercive factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. Coercive pressure is the form of pressure that comes mostly from governments and is a critical component in corporations implementing environmental management practices. Companies must comply with a variety of social, environmental, and legal requirements. Participants were asked questions based on the drivers of coercive pressure to find out how influential they are on them engaging in sustainable practices. These factors of coercive pressure were; environmental laws, governmental pressure, labour laws, and government incentives.

3.12.3. SECTION C: Investigating how normative pressure influences SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices

Section C of the questionnaire collected data on characteristics that assessed the degree to which normative pressures influences SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. Consumers are the source of this pressure. It is one of the primary drives that leads to a more sustainable attitude and practice in operations, where customer demand for green products is one of the key influencers. This was measured in order to determine how customers inspire enterprises to engage in sustainable practices. This was measured based on these drivers: growing sustainable demand from customers, producing environmentally friendly products/services, customer satisfaction, and periodically reviewing products.

3.12.4. SECTION D: Investigating how mimetic pressure influences SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices

Section D of the questionnaire collected statistics on the variables that were used to examine whether mimetic pressures have an influence on how SMMEs engage in sustainable practices. Mimetic pressure is where firms tend to mimic the actions of other businesses in order to minimize the risks correlated with dynamic environments. This pressure was measured to find out how it influences the engagement of sustainable practices amongst SMMEs, it was measured based on these variables: competitive advantage, competitors leading by moral case, investors, having all the required resources, and sharing of information.

3.12.5. SECTION E: Investigating how entrepreneurial values influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices

Section E concentrated on gathering data on the entrepreneurial values to find out how they influence entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices. Entrepreneurial values are driven by these constructs, namely: perceptions on the importance of sustainable practices, improving the society operating under, understanding corporate social responsibility as meeting customer, worker, and societal needs, periodically training staff, willingness to put extra effort into sustainable practices.

3.13. DATA QUALITY CONTROL

The data collection system must use excellently defined processes and procedures that apply data control measures to guarantee data quality. There are two core criteria used to analyse the measurement tool; this is identified as reliability and validity (Lane *et al*, 2003).

3.13.1. RELIABILITY

Reliability is defined as “the dependability of a measurement instrument, that is, the amount to which the instrument provides the same results on repeated trials” (Clark-Carter, 2010). There are various methods for determining a questionnaire's reliability. The approach of calculating inter-item consistency is the most regularly used technique by quantitative researchers. Cronbach's alpha was used by the researcher to calculate the internal consistency of the items used in the questionnaire. According to Clark-Carter, (2010) Cronbach's alpha is a regularly used measure of internal reliability that is used with surveys based on a Likert scale.

The reliability of the questionnaire for this study was projected to be confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 (Coolican, 2017) and the closer to 1 the better because high internal consistency would mean that the items were all measuring the same construct or idea. The criteria for reliability coefficients vary for the different types of tests. Much higher reliability coefficients are found (and demanded) for achievement and ability tests than for personality or attitude scales. However, the purpose of a test or scale is also a factor in deciding whether the level of reliability is adequate. Coolican, 2017 State that that if the scale is to be used to associate groups of people, then a reliability of 0.65 is sufficient. However, if an individual's score is to be compared with another, or against a set of norms, then the reliability should be at least 0.85. Drost, (2011) makes the

distinction between scales used for basic research and those for applied purposes. The higher values, typically above +.80, are desirable because they indicate greater consistency. The reliability scores for four measures/ scales of this research exceeded the recommended Cronbach's alpha value. This indicates a degree of acceptable, and consistent scoring for these sections of the research.

3.13.2. VALIDITY

Aside from reliability, the researcher made certain that the questionnaire utilised in this study was legitimate. The validity of a measure relates to whether it is true or actual (Jackson, 2012; Mohajan, 2017), or if the questionnaire measures what it claims to measure. Various types of validity are frequently assessed in a research project. Two significant ones that are pertinent to this study are:

3.13.2.1. Face validity

Describes how well the test appears to evaluate the applicable idea at face value (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1996). This is about whether the questionnaire appears to measure what it needs to assess on the surface. According to Stead, (2001) if the questionnaire lacks face value, study participants may doubt the objective of carrying out the questionnaire. The three PhD candidates and five small company owners who were invited to test the instrument for this study all agreed that it seemed to measure what it claimed to assess.

3.13.2.2. Content validity

Jackson, (2012) defines this as the degree to which a measuring instrument covers a representative sample of the domain of factors to be assessed. Different questions were utilised in this study to assess the extent of influence of various factors on SMMEs' engagement in sustainable practices. A traditional technique of evaluating the content validity of a questionnaire is to have it examined by a panel of expert judges in the topic of inquiry. This was done by three PhD candidates in the management faculty who also validated the face validity of the questionnaire used in this research.

3.14. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis include editing, coding, processing, and translating empirical data using statistical methods, as well as transforming the results into useful information (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; McHugh, 2013). To obtain quantitative data from the study participants, an online

survey/questionnaire was employed as a measuring tool in this research. The data from the surveys was collected and then transferred for analysis using a commonly used statistical tool known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The researcher chose SPSS as an analytical tool to analyse the findings since it can handle huge amounts of data, analyse it, and adjust it diplomatically. SPSS may also organize the obtained data into a suitable manner that can be simply presented conceptually. Data was cleaned filling up for any missing data, thereafter descriptive statistics were produced for the entire variables in the data set. After that, inferential statistics were conducted on all variables of interest as per response to the research questions. Chi-square of association and binary logistic regression was used for inferential statistics. Inferential analyses were used to identify the factors impacting SMMEs' participation in sustainable practices. In this study, Binary Logistic Regression was used to assess the association between each selected element (as independent variables) and the SE score (as the dependent variable).

3.14.1. Binary Logistic Regression

The link among one or more independent (predictor) variables and a single dichotomous dependent (outcome) variable is examined using binary logistic regression. The aim of the analysis in this research was to use the independent variables to estimate the probability that a case is a member of one group against the other (e.g., whether an entrepreneur engages in sustainable practices or not). To forecast the log-odds of the dependent variable, binary logistic regression generates a linear grouping of all the independent variables. In this analysis, the overall significance of the regression model was verified by computing the χ^2 statistic, which was used with the df to calculate the p-value (i.e., significance level). A significant overall model means that the set of independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable. If the overall model is substantial, the significance of each independent variable is assessed. An odds ratio (*OR*) is computed for each independent variable and shows the extent that each independent variable affects the probability that a case is a member of one outcome group versus the other. In order to conduct a binary logistic regression, the dependent variable must be dichotomous (i.e., there are only two possible outcomes), the observations must be independent of each other, and the association among the independent variables and the logit-transformed dependent variable must be linear.

3.14.2. Degrees of Freedom (*df*)

Determined by multiplying the (number of rows – 1) \times (number of columns – 1).

3.14.3. Dummy-Code

Done to add a nominal or ordinal independent variable to a regression model; converted a single variable into a series of dichotomous "yes/no" variables, one for each category; one of the categories is left out of the regression as the reference group that all other categories are associated to.

3.14.4. McFadden R2

The goodness-of-fit of the model was measured. It was more conventional than the R2 values used in linear regression models. McFadden R2 values of .2 or higher suggest a good model fit.

3.14.5. Multicollinearity

A situation characterized by extremely strong intercorrelations or inter-associations between a group of variables.

3.14.6. Odds Ratio (OR)

Provides the factor growth in the chance of the dependent variable happening for every one-unit increase in the predictor; sometimes labelled in statistical output as $\text{Exp}(B)$.

3.14.7. P-value

P-value is the probability of obtaining the experimented results if the null hypothesis is true (the frequency of observations is equal across groups). The lower the P-value, the greater the statistical significance of the observed difference. For this study, results were considered to be statistically significant if the P-value was $p < .05$.

3.14.8. Reference Category

The category of the dependent variable against which the probability of the other group is assessed.

3.14.9. Standard Error (SE)

The amount by which the B is predicted to change.

3.14.10. Unstandardized Beta (B)

The predictor's slope in relation to the dependent variable's log-odds.

3.14.11. Variance Inflation Factors

A metric for assessing the extent of multicollinearity in regression analysis.

3.14.12. Chi-square test of independence

The link between two nominal variables was investigated using a chi-square test of independence. It analyses the cell counts for each variable combination and compares the count to the predicted value for that cell. The expected value is the value that the cell would have if there were no relationship between the variables. If the significance is discovered, it means that there was a substantial difference between the observed and predicted numbers.

3.14.13. Chi-Square Test Statistic (χ^2)

Used with the df to calculate the p -value.

3.15. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An application was filed to the University of KwaZulu-Ethical Natal's Approval Committee to gain ethical clearance for this research. The study was approved, and a copy of the Ethical Clearance is included as an appendix (Appendix C). In order to participate in the study, the researcher ensured that informed consent was obtained by the participants. Before the participant granted their consent, the goal of the study was completely stated in the information sheet and was also given in the language that the person was comfortable with. The researcher described all of the study's benefits and risks, as well as ensuring anonymity. Participants took part voluntarily and were free to leave the research study at any time. Because the study used an online survey to gather data owing to Covid-19, there were five follow-up questions before the participants signed the consent form to verify that they completely understood the explanations and the study as whole. The contact information for the Research Ethics Office was also included on the informed consent form for participants to use if they had any questions. The researcher also gave the individuals opportunity to ask questions and ensured anonymity before asking them to sign the consent form.

3.16. CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research methodologies employed in this study. This chapter concentrated on the foundations of research, such as study design, research strategy, sample location, sample size, data collection techniques, and data analysis. This chapter further explained and verified the methodology and measurements employed in this research, as well as how validity and reliability

problems were handled in this study. Moreover, ethical considerations were considered. The following chapter describes and shows the systematic conversion of raw data into relevant information.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter offered and discoursed the research methodology of this study. This chapter presents the results of this study. The results are presented in two sections; firstly, the presentation of the demographic characteristics of the sample. The second section will present the results in relation to first objective, which is focused on the different types of coercive pressures that influence SMME's to engage in sustainable practices; followed by the presentation of the second objective focused on which types of normative pressures influences SMME's to engage in sustainable practices; then lastly the presentation of the third and fourth objectives which are types of mimetic pressures and entrepreneurial values that influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices. For each section; significant values of statistical tests such as Chi-square, Binary Logistic Regression and Correlation will be presented. Tables and graphs will be used to provide an accessible view of the results. This chapter ends with a conclusion whereby key findings will be summarised.

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

This section provides background information about the respondents. This includes the participants' race, age, gender, nationality, level of educational, engagement in sustainable practices, reasons for starting the business, amount of years in current position, business setting to which they belong, age of their enterprise in years, the type of occupation, and the number of employees. The empirical findings are shown below.

Table 4. 1 Race of the participants

Race	N	%
Black	113	48.09
Coloured	30	12.77
Indian	78	33.19
White	11	4.68
Other	3	1.28

Table 4.1 presents the different races of the total respondents (235). (48.09%), of the entrepreneurs who were recruited indicated that their race was Black, followed by Indian with (33.19%) and Coloured, White and other accounting for the remaining (18.73%).

Table 4. 2 Age category of the participants

Age range	N	%
18-20	3	1.28
21-30	56	23.83
31-40	59	25.11
41-50	47	20.00
51-60	55	23.40
61 years and over	15	6.38

Table 4.2 above presents the age group of the respondents. Age was categorised into four age groups: 31 – 40years was the most age category that was highly represented with (25.11%). Followed by 21-30years with (23.83%). 51 – 60years comprised of (23.40%) respondents. This is followed by 41 to 50years with (20.00%). The least represented was 61years and above with (6.38%) and 18 – 20years with (1.28%).

Table 4. 3 Gender of the respondents

Gender	n	%
Females	106	45.1
Males	128	54.5
Other	1	.4

Of the total sample, (45.1%) were females and (54.1%) were males that participated in this study, with (.4%) indicating other. Table 4.3 above visually shows these details.

Table 4. 4 Nationality of the respondents

Nationality	n	%
South African	226	96.17
Other	9	3.83

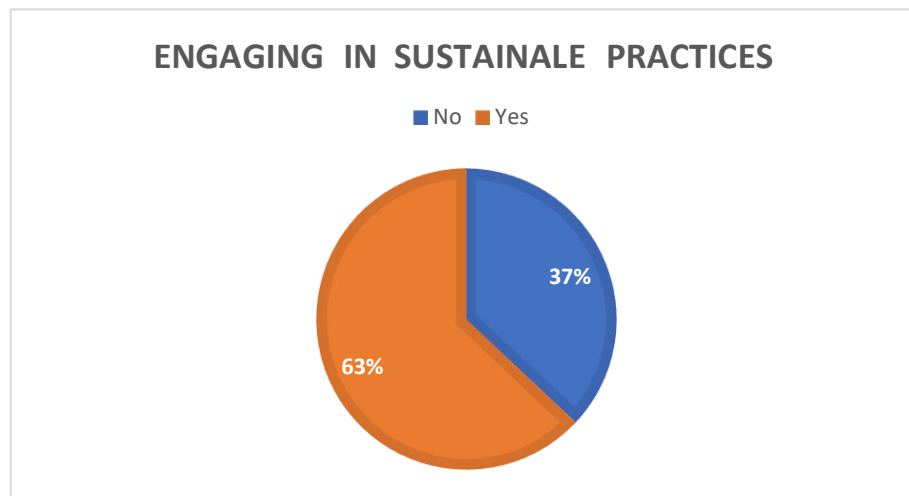
Table 4.4 above shows the distribution of the respondents according to their nationality. The majority of the entrepreneurs (96.17%) were South Africans and (3.83%) were other nationals.

Table 4. 5 Level of education

Highest Qualification	n	%
Matric	119	50.64
Bachelor's Degree	50	21.28
Honour's Degree	19	8.09
Master's Degree	8	3.40
Other	39	16.60

The distribution of entrepreneurs according to their highest level of education is shown in Table 4.5 above. It shows that the majority of entrepreneurs (50.64%) had Matric followed by those that had a Bachelor's degree (21.28%). A total of (16.60%) entrepreneurs indicated they had other qualification not listed. (8.09%) indicated they have Honour's Degrees, only (3.40%) respondents had attained Master's degree.

Figure 4. 1 Engagement in sustainable practices



Regarding engaging business engaging in sustainable practices, the majority of entrepreneurs (63%) indicated that their business engaged in sustainable practices with (37%) indicating that their business did not engage in sustainable practices. Figure 4.1 above presents these results graphically.

Table 4. 6 Reason for starting a business

Reason for starting a business	N	%
Inherited/ family tradition	18	7.66%
Inadequate income from the other source	47	20.00%
I have the equipment for this business	26	11.06%
Unemployed/have no alternative income source	69	29.36%
I like the activity	55	23.40%
Activity brings high income	38	16.17%
Retrenched	33	14.04%
I have the skills for this business	71	30.21%
Small investment needed	19	8.09%
Unhappiness with previous work	12	5.11%

Entrepreneurs were asked reasons for opening their business (30.21%) of the entrepreneurs indicated that they started their business because they have the skills for the business, followed by (29.36%) entrepreneurs who indicated that they started their business because they were unemployed/have no alternative income source. A total of (23.40%) of entrepreneurs started their businesses because they liked the activity. Only (20.00%) of the entrepreneurs that participated indicated that they started their business because of inadequate income from the other source. This is followed by (16.17%) of

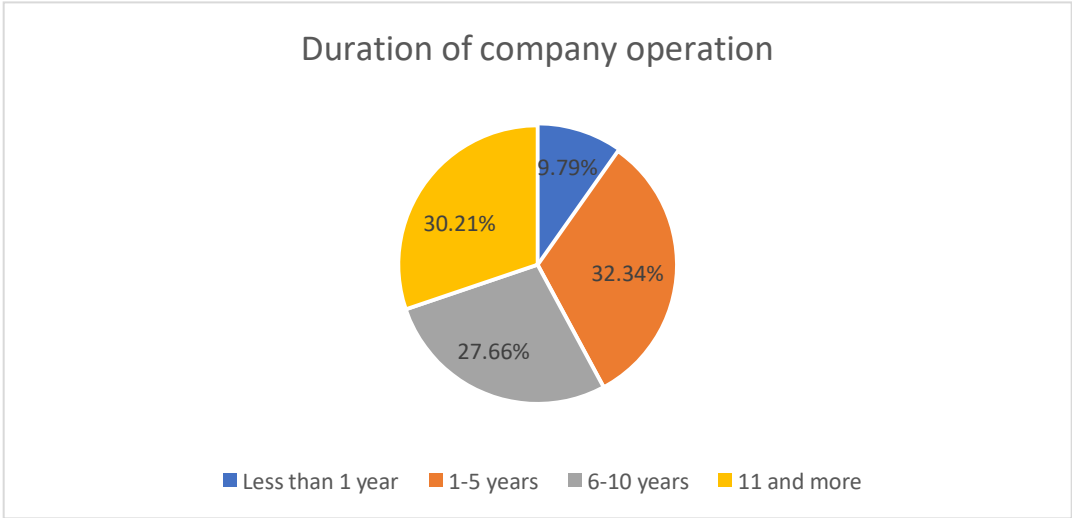
entrepreneurs who started their business because the activity brings high income. (14.04%) of entrepreneurs indicated that they started their business because they were retrenched. (11.06%) of entrepreneurs indicated to have started their business because of having the equipment for the business. This is followed by (8.09%) who indicated to have started their business because they needed a small investment. Only (7.66%) of entrepreneurs inherited their business. This is lastly followed by (5.11%) of entrepreneurs indicating to have started their business because of unhappiness with previous work. Table 4.6 above visually illustrate the reasons given by entrepreneurs for starting their business.

Table 4. 7 Reasons for starting a business and engaging in sustainable practices

Reason for starting a business	Engaging in sustainable practices	
	No (%)	Yes (%)
Inherited/ family tradition	5 (6%)	13 (9%)
Unemployed/have no alternative income source	40 (46%)	29 (20%)
Retrenched	14 (16%)	19 (13%)
Inadequate income from the other source	14 (16%)	33 (22%)
I like the activity	15 (17%)	40 (27%)
I have the skills for this business	19 (22%)	52 (35%)
Small investment needed	10 (11%)	9 (6%)
Activity brings high income	9 (10%)	29 (20%)
I have the equipment for this business	3 (3%)	23 (16%)
Unhappiness with previous work	5 (6%)	7 (5%)

To understand whether people’s reasons for starting a business had a link to their willingness to engage in sustainable practices descriptive statistics were conducted to find out engagement in sustainable practices based on reasons for starting the business. The results showed that (35%) of the entrepreneurs who engaged in sustainable practices are those who reported to have started their business because they have the skills for the business, they were followed by (27%) who reported to engage in sustainable practices, and they started their business because they like the activity. Table 4.7 above visually presents these results.

Figure 4. 2 Duration of company operation



To understand the entrepreneurs in the study in terms of their years in operation, entrepreneurs were asked the duration of their companies operating. Figure 4.2 above shows that (32.34%) of the entrepreneurs’ businesses have been in operation between 1- 5 years. Those who have been in operation for 11 and more years were (30.21%). Business that have been in operation between 6-10 years were (27.66%) and only (9.79%) of the entrepreneurs reported their business being in operation for less than 1 year.

Table 4. 8 Duration of business operation and engaging in sustainable practices

Duration of business operation	Engage in sustainable practices	
	No	Yes
Less than 1 year	18 (21%)	5 (3%)
1-5	36 (41%)	40 (27%)
6-10	24 (28%)	41 (28%)
11 and more	9 (10%)	62 (42%)

Note. Due to rounding error, percentages may not sum to 100

To understand which business were likely to engage in sustainable practices based on their duration in operation, descriptive statistics were produced. It is not surprising that majority (42%) who engaged in sustainable practices, had been operating their business for 11 years or more, followed closely by 1-5 years and 6 – 10 years with (28%) and (27%) respectively. With businesses who have been operating for less than a year only (3%) reported engaging in sustainable practices. Table 4.8 above visually show these results.

Table 4. 9 Pearson's correlation Test: Duration of company operation and engagement in sustainable practices

		A9. How long have you been operating your company	Sustainable practices
A9. How long have you been operating your company	Pearson Correlation	1	.395**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	235	235
Sustainable practices	Pearson Correlation	.395**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	235	235

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

Table 4.9 above shows a Pearson correlation coefficient that was performed to assess the relationship between the duration of how long the entrepreneurs’ have been operating their company and whether they engage in sustainable practices or not. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.395$, $n = 235$, $p = 0.000$. Since the P value is less than 0.005, this test implies that an increase in the number of operational years variable results in an increase in the engagement in sustainable practices. This means there is a positive relationship between these two variables.

4.3. RESULTS IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This section presents findings from the four scales used in this study according to each objective to understand the influence of different types of pressures on SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. Four scales were administered namely; coercive pressure scale, normative pressure scale, mimetic pressure and entrepreneurial personal values. Participants were given a five item Likert scale questions with responses ranging from (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The 5-point Likert scale data was converted to binary for the purpose of analysis, with strongly agree and agree being coded as agree, and neutral, disagree and strongly disagree being coded as disagree (Jeong & Lee 2016).

4.3.1. RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Table 4. 10 Reliability coefficients of the measures employed in this study

Types of pressure influencing SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Coercive Pressure	5	.146
Normative pressure	8	.945
Mimetic pressure	10	.880
Entrepreneurial Values	17	.971

Reliability coefficients of 0.70 are adequate for research instruments, while coefficients of 0.90 should be the minimum criteria for applied instruments. The reliability scores for three measures exceed the recommended Cronbach's alpha value. This indicates a degree of acceptable, consistent scoring for these sections of the research. Table 4.10 above shows the reliability coefficients for the 4 measures used in this study. For future research, these scales/constructs would be significant for use as their coefficients were measured and gave highly reliable results.

4.3.2. OBJECTIVE ONE: TO DETERMINE THE INFLUENCE OF COERCIVE PRESSURES ON SMMEs IN PIETERMARITZBURG TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This objective gives the outcomes of the analysis to see which coercive pressures influences SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices.

Table 4. 11 Coercive pressures influencing SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices

Coercive Pressures influencing SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices	<i>n</i>	%
My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from the government	141	60.00
The government provides us with incentives to engage in sustainable practices	83	35.32
My company’s social obligation is to comply firmly with the labour and environmental laws	134	57.02
My company is fully aware and well informed that there are environmental laws and legislations that needs to be followed	167	71.06
We periodically review our products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental laws	140	59.57

The results, visually depicted in Table 4.11 above indicate that (71%) of the entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable practices because they are aware of environmental laws and influencing them to engage in sustainable practices, followed by (60%) entrepreneurs who reported to engage in sustainable practices because of the pressure exerted to them by the government. Only (59%) entrepreneurs reported that they engage in sustainable because they periodically review their products to make sure they are in line with the environment laws and regulations. Entrepreneurs who reported to engage in sustainable practices because their businesses firmly comply with environmental laws were (59.57%). Very few (35.32%) entrepreneurs reported to engage in sustainable practices because government provided them with incentives to engage in sustainable practices.

Table 4. 12 Chi-square for coercive pressures

Coercive pressures	Engaging in sustainable practices		χ^2	df	p
	No	Yes			
My company is fully aware and well informed that there are environmental laws and legislations that needs to be followed	29[61.83]	138[105.17]	95.70	2	< .001
My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from the government	10[52.20]	131[88.80]	139.07	2	< .001
The government provides us with incentives to engage in sustainable practices	3[30.73]	80[52.27]	62.10	2	< .001
We periodically review our products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental laws	11[51.8]	129[88.2]	130.122	2	< .001

Note. Values formatted as Observed [Expected].

A chi-square test was conducted to find out if there were significant associations between the types of coercive pressures and engagement in sustainable practices. The variables were significant based on an alpha of .05.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

Ho: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Ho: There is no association between the engagement in sustainable practices and types of coercive pressures

H1: There is an association between the engagement in sustainable practices and types of coercive pressures

The P value coefficient of this association is $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with coercive pressures.

Entrepreneurs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices if they were fully aware and well informed that there are environmental laws and legislations that needs to be followed 0.05, $\chi^2(2) = 95.70$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and company being aware of environmental laws are related to one another. Entrepreneurs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices because of the pressure they receive from the government were 0.05, $\chi^2(2) = 139.07$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and pressure from the government are related to one another. Entrepreneurs that periodically reviewed their products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental laws were also more likely to engage in sustainable practices were 0.05, $\chi^2(2) = 130.22$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and reviewing products/services to make sure they are in line with the environmental laws are related. The least number of entrepreneurs that were likely to engage in sustainable practices because government provided them with incentives to engage in sustainable practices were 0.05, $\chi^2(2) = 62.10$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and government providing incentives to engage in sustainable practices are related. Table 4.12 above visually shows the results. Chi-square could not be conducted using the social responsibility variable due to insufficient observations beyond descriptive statistics.

Table 4. 13 Binary logistic regression results with coercive pressures predicting engagement in sustainable practices

Coercive pressures	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% CI
(Intercept)	3.89	0.76	26.23	< .001	-	-
My company is fully aware and well informed that there are environmental laws and legislations that needs to be followed	-1.40	0.70	3.94	.047	0.25	[0.06, 0.98]
My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from the government	-2.65	0.64	17.08	< .001	0.07	[0.02, 0.25]
The government provides us with incentives to engage in sustainable practices	-1.55	0.82	3.55	.059	0.21	[0.04, 1.06]
We periodically review our products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental laws	-3.16	0.62	26.39	< .001	0.04	[0.01, 0.14]

Note. $\chi^2(8) = 206.90, p < .001, \text{McFadden } R^2 = 0.67$

A binary logistic regression was conducted to examine which coercive pressure predicts engagement in sustainable practices. The reference category for engagement in sustainable practices was Yes. The model was evaluated based on an alpha of 0.05. The overall model was significant, $\chi^2(8) = 206.90, p < .001$, suggesting that coercive pressure had a significant effect on the odds of engaging in sustainable practices. McFadden's R-squared was calculated to examine the model fit, where values greater than .2 are indicative of models with excellent fit (Louviere et al., 2000). The McFadden R-squared value calculated for this model was 0.67. Company awareness of environmental laws was significant, $B = -1.40, OR = 0.25, p = .047$, indicating that people who are aware and well informed about environmental laws and regulations that need to be followed have decreased odds of not engaging in sustainable practices by 75% relative to people who are not fully aware and well informed that there are environmental laws and legislations that needs to be followed. Pressure from government was significant, $B = -2.65, OR = 0.07, p < .001$, indicating that entrepreneurs who report to receive pressure from the government have decreased odds of not engaging in sustainable practices by approximately 93% relative to participants who do not receive pressure from government to engage in sustainable practices. Periodically review products was

significant, $B = -3.16$, $OR = 0.04$, $p < .001$, indicating that entrepreneurs who periodically review products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental laws have decreased odds of not engaging in sustainable practices by approximately 96% relative to those who do not periodically review products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental law. Table 4.13 above presents the results visually.

4.3.3. OBJECTIVE TWO: TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF NORMATIVE PRESSURES ON THE APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES BY SMMEs IN PIETERMARITZBURG

This objective gives the outcomes of the analysis to determine which normative pressures influences SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices.

Table 4. 14 Normative pressures that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices

Normative pressures	<i>n</i>	%
My company engages in Sustainable Practices to meet the growing demand for sustainable consumption from our customers	193	82.13
The society expects my company to produce environmentally friendly products/services	182	77.45
My company now provides environmentally friendly products/services that were not provided before	140	59.57
My company is interested in finding out if customers are satisfied with the current products/services	200	85.11
We periodically evaluate our products on a regular basis to ensure they meet the needs of our clients	195	82.98
My company engages in sustainable practices to attract more customers	194	82.55
My company thinks manufacturing green products is a smart idea	195	82.98
My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from customers	184	78.30

The results, presented in Table 4.14 above indicate that (85.11%) of the entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable practices because they are interested in finding out if customers are satisfied with the current products/services, followed by (82.98%) and (82.98%) respectively who indicated that they engaged in sustainable practices because company thinks manufacturing green products is a smart idea and periodically evaluate products to ensure that they meet the needs of clients. A total of (82.55%) of the entrepreneurs indicated that they engage in sustainable practices to attract more customers. (82.13%) of the entrepreneurs reported to engage in sustainable practices to meet the growing demand for sustainable consumption from their consumers. This is followed by (77.45%) of entrepreneurs reporting to engage in sustainable practices because the society expects their company to produce environmentally friendly products/services that were not provided before. With the least (59.57%) entrepreneurs reporting to engage in sustainable practices because company now provides environmentally friendly products/services that were not provided before.

Table 4. 15 Chi square for normative pressure

Normative pressures	Engaging in sustainable practices				
	No	Yes	χ^2	df	p
My company engages in Sustainable Practices to satisfy our clients' rising need for sustainable consumption	52[71.45]	141[121.55]	47.77	2	< .001
The society expects my business to produce environmentally friendly products/services	47[67.38]	135[114.62]	43.44	2	< .001
My company now provides environmentally friendly products/services that were not provided before	37[51.83]	103[88.17]	20.40	2	< .001
My company is interested in finding out if customers are satisfied with the current products/services	57[74.04]	143[125.96]	41.98	2	< .001
We evaluate our products on a regular basis to guarantee that they meet the needs of our clients	54[72.19]	141[122.81]	42.96	2	< .001
My company engages in sustainable practices to attract more consumers	55[71.82]	139[122.18]	36.01	2	< .001
My firm believes that producing green goods is a smart idea	54[72.19]	141[122.81]	43.34	2	< .001
My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from customers	51[68.12]	133[115.88]	31.96	2	< .001

Note. Values formatted as Observed [Expected].

A chi-square test was conducted to find out if there were significant associations between the types of Normative pressure and engagement in sustainable practices. The variables were significant based on an alpha of .05.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H₀: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H₁: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

H₀: There is no association between the engagement in sustainable practices and types of normative pressure

H₁: There is an association between the engagement in sustainable practices and types of normative pressures

The P value coefficient of this association is $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with normative pressures.

SMME owners were more likely to engage in sustainable practices to meet the growing demand of sustainable consumption from their consumers, $\chi^2(2) = 47.77$ which means that there is significant association between engaging in sustainable practices and wanting to meet the rising need for sustainable consumption from clients.

The owners of SMMEs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices because the societies they operate under expect their companies to produce environmentally friendly products/service, $\chi^2(2) = 43.44$, meaning that there is a relationship between engagement in sustainable practices and society expecting company to produce environmentally friendly products/services. Entrepreneurs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices because their company thinks manufacturing green products is a smart idea, $\chi^2(2) = 43.34$, meaning that engaging in sustainable practices and thinking manufacturing green products is good are associated. Entrepreneurs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices their company periodically reviewed products on regular basis to guarantee that they meet the needs of their clients, $\chi^2(2) = 42.96$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and finding periodically reviewing products to guarantee they meet clients' needs are associated.

Entrepreneurs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices because their company is interested in finding out if customers are interested with the current products, $\chi^2(2) = 41.98$, meaning that there is an association in engaging in sustainable practices and finding out if customers are interested with new products. Entrepreneurs engaged sustainable practices because they wanted to

attract their customers $\chi^2(2) = 36.01$, this means that wanting to attract customers and engaging in sustainable practices is associated. Entrepreneurs were likely to engage in sustainable because of the pressure they received from customers $\chi^2(2) = 31.96$, which means there is an association between pressure received from customers and engaging in sustainable practices. Entrepreneurs were less likely to engage in sustainable because of new environmentally friendly products that they provide which were not provided before $\chi^2(2) = 20.40$, stating that there is minimal association between engaging in sustainable practices and providing new products that were not provided before. Table 4.15 above visually shows the results.

4.3.4. OBJECTIVE THREE: TO EXAMINE HOW MIMETIC PRESSURES INFLUENCES SMMES IN PIETERMARITZBURG TO ENGAGE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This part of the chapter presents the results of the analysis to determine which mimetic pressures impact SMMEs to apply sustainable practices.

Table 4. 16 Mimetic pressures that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices

Mimetic pressures	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
My company engages in sustainable practices because it forms part of our main business	111	47.23
We implement sustainable practices because it is our source of competitive advantage	169	71.91
We implement sustainable practices because our competitors are leading by a moral case	135	57.45
My company engages in sustainable practices to gratify the needs of our stockholders	145	61.70
Society expects my firm to provide goods and services in an ecologically friendly manner	166	70.64
Implementing socially responsible activities generates a competitive advantage for my business	176	74.89
We have all the necessary resources to implement sustainable practices	114	48.51
The company budget enables us to engage in sustainable practices	113	48.09
We share information with competitors regarding environmental laws and regulations	119	50.64
The lack of information about how to adopt sustainable practices makes it hard for me adopt them	80	34.04

The results, presented in Table 4.16 above indicate that (74.89%) of the entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable practices because implementing socially responsible activities generates a competitive advantage for the company, followed by (71.91%) entrepreneurs who reported to engage in

sustainable practices because it is their source of competitive advantage. Entrepreneurs reported to engage in sustainable practices because the society expect their companies to engage in environmentally friendly products/services (70.64%). Entrepreneurs who engage in sustainable practices to satisfy the needs of their stakeholders were (61.70%). Entrepreneurs who reported to engage in sustainable practices because their competitors are leading by a moral case were (57.45%). (48.51%) and (48.09%) of entrepreneurs respectively reported that they engage in sustainable practices because they have all the capital required and their company budget allows them to engage in sustainable practices. Only (47.23%) of the entrepreneurs engage in sustainable practices because it forms part of their core business. With lack of information regarding how to engage in sustainable practices makes it difficult for them to implement them being the least represented with (34.04%) responses.

Table 4. 17 Chi-square of mimetic pressures

Mimetic pressures	Engage in sustainable practices		χ^2	df	p
	No	Yes			
My company engages in sustainable practices because it forms part of our core business	15[41.09]	96[69.91]	50.96	2	< .001
We engage in sustainable practices because it is our source of competitive advantage	38[62.57]	131[106.43]	55.14	2	< .001
We implement sustainable practices because our competitors are leading by a moral case	21[49.98]	114[85.02]	62.75	2	< .001
My company engages in sustainable practices to gratify the needs of our stockholders	25[53.68]	120[91.32]	64.71	2	< .001
Society expects my firm to provide goods and services in an ecologically friendly manner	38[61.46]	128[104.54]	50.45	2	< .001
Implementing socially responsible activities generates a competitive advantage for my company	44[65.16]	132[110.84]	43.57	2	< .001
We have all the necessary resources to engage in sustainable practices	10[37.02]	90[62.98]	54.74	2	< .001
The company budget allows us to engage in sustainable practices	10[37.76]	92[64.24]	57.89	2	< .001
We share information with competitors regarding environmental laws and regulations	7[36.65]	92[62.35]	66.10	2	< .001
The lack of information about how to adopt sustainable practise makes it hard for me adopt them	63[45.17]	59[76.83]	26.18	2	< .001

Note. Values formatted as Observed [Expected].

Table 4.17 visually displays a chi-square test that was conducted to find out if there was a significant association between the types of Mimetic pressures in the engagement of sustainable practices. The variables were significant based on an alpha of .05.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H₀: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H₁: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

H₀: There is no association between the engagement in sustainable practices and mimetic pressures

H₁: There is an association between the engagement in sustainable practices and mimetic pressures

The P value coefficient of this association is $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with mimetic pressures.

Entrepreneurs who shared information about environmental laws and regulations were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 66.10$. Entrepreneurs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices because they wanted to impress their stockholders $\chi^2(2) = 64.71$. Entrepreneurs who engaged in sustainable practices because their competitors are leading by a moral case were $\chi^2(2) = 62.75$. Entrepreneurs who believe that implementing socially responsible activities generates a competitive advantage for the company were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 43.57$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and that implementing socially responsible activities generates a competitive advantage for the company are associated. Entrepreneurs who engaged in sustainable practices because the company budget allows them to do so were $\chi^2(2) = 57.89$.

Table 4. 18 Logistic regression results of mimetic pressures predicting engagement in sustainable practices

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% CI
(Intercept)	0.57	0.53	1.15	.284	-	-
My company engages in sustainable practices because it forms part of our core business	-0.12	0.60	0.04	.846	0.89	[0.27, 2.89]
We engage in sustainable practices because it is our source of competitive advantage	-1.47	0.71	4.22	.040	0.23	[0.06, 0.94]
We implement sustainable practices because our competitors are leading by a moral case	0.58	0.84	0.48	.488	1.79	[0.34, 9.29]
My company engages in sustainable practices to satisfy the needs of our stockholders	-1.91	0.90	4.54	.033	0.15	[0.03, 0.86]
Society expects my firm to provide goods and services in an ecologically friendly manner	-0.73	0.95	0.59	.443	0.48	[0.08, 3.10]
Implementing socially responsible activities gives my organization a competitive advantage	1.41	0.90	2.45	.118	4.09	[0.70, 23.87]
We have all the necessary resources to engage in sustainable practices	1.28	1.57	0.67	.415	3.59	[0.17, 77.30]
The company budget allows us to engage in sustainable practices	-1.39	1.55	0.80	.371	0.25	[0.01, 5.20]
We share information about environmental laws and regulations with my competitors	-1.71	0.88	3.73	.054	0.18	[0.03, 1.03]
The lack of information about how to adopt sustainable practise makes it hard for me adopt them	1.09	0.52	4.32	.038	2.96	[1.06, 8.26]

Note. $\chi^2(20) = 119.17, p < .001, McFadden R^2 = 0.38.$

A binary logistic regression was conducted to examine which mimetic pressures predicted engaging in sustainable practices. The reference category for engaging in sustainable practices was Yes. The model was evaluated based on an alpha of 0.05. The overall model was significant, $\chi^2(20) = 119.17, p < .001,$ suggesting that mimetic pressures had a significant effect on the odds of engaging in

sustainable practices. McFadden's R-squared was calculated to examine the model fit, where values greater than .2 are indicative of models with excellent fit (Louviere et al., 2000). The McFadden R-squared value calculated for this model was 0.38. The Source of competitive advantage was significant, $B = -1.47$, $OR = 0.23$, $p = .040$, indicating that engaging in sustainable practices because its source of competitive advantage decreases the odds of not engaging in sustainable practices by approximately 77% relative to the those who do not view engaging in sustainable practices offers them a source of competitive advantage. Satisfying the needs of stockholders was significant, $B = -1.91$, $OR = 0.15$, $p = .033$, indicating that entrepreneurs who engage in sustainable practices to satisfy the needs of investors decrease the odds of not engaging in sustainable practices by approximately 85% relative to those who do not have to satisfy the needs of investors. Lack of information was significant, $B = 1.09$, $OR = 2.96$, $p = .038$, indicating that entrepreneurs who lacked information regarding how to start sustainable practices and also found them difficult to implement increases the odds of not engaging in sustainable practices by approximately 196% relative to those who did not lack information regarding how to start sustainable practices. Table 4.18 above visually shows the results of the regression model.

4.3.5. OBJECTIVE FOUR: TO EVALUATE HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL VALUES, INFLUENCE SMME OWNERS TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This section of the chapter offers the results of an investigation into which entrepreneurial values drive entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices.

Table 4. 19 Entrepreneurial values that lead to entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices

Entrepreneurial Values	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
My company understands business social responsibility as meeting consumer, employee, and community needs	190	80.85
My company is willing to decrease its consumption to aid protect the environment	166	70.64
My company derives pleasure in environmentally sustainable products/services	170	72.34
My company believes that sustainable practices will decrease pollution	186	79.15
My company thinks it is important to engage in sustainable practices	184	78.30
It is important for my company to work in an environmentally responsible way	181	77.02
My company engages in Sustainable Practices to improve society	164	69.79
My company has a comprehensive sustainability business plan	110	46.81
My company engages in Sustainable Practices as part of its business case	108	45.96
My employees/colleagues think I should adopt sustainable practices into my company	137	58.30
My company periodically train workers in order to present changes in the goods/services we sell, or how we do business	183	77.87
I started my current business because I wanted to advance the welfare in my local community	164	69.79
As an entrepreneur, sustainable practices are important	183	77.87
As an entrepreneur, I feel a strong obligation to have sustainable practices in my company	140	59.57
As an entrepreneur, I am willing to put additional effort into sustainable	144	61.28

practices in my company regularly		
As an entrepreneur, I feel guilty when my company does not implement sustainable practices	136	57.87

Table 4.19 above visually shows that (80.85%) engaged in sustainable practices because their company understands business social responsibility as meeting consumer, employee, and community needs, followed by (79.15%) entrepreneurs who reported to engage in sustainable practices because their company believes that sustainable practices will reduce pollution. This was followed by (78.30%) of entrepreneurs indicating that they engage in sustainable practices because their companies think it is important to engage in sustainability. A total of (77.87%) of the entrepreneurs reported to engage in sustainable practices because their company periodically train staff in order to introduce changes in the goods/services they sell, or how they do business; and they believe sustainable practices are important. Entrepreneurs that indicated that they engage in sustainable practices because it is important for their company to operate in an environmentally responsible way were a total of (77.02%). Entrepreneurs that were a total of (72.34%) indicated that engage in sustainable practices because their company derives pleasure in environmentally sustainable products/services.

Only (70.64%) of SMME owners engage in sustainable practices because their companies are willing to reduce consumption to help protect the environment. A percentage of (69.79%) of the entrepreneurs reported that their companies engage in sustainable practices to improve society; and they started their current business because they wanted to improve the welfare in their local community. Only (61.28%) of the entrepreneurs indicated to engage in sustainable practices because as entrepreneurs, they are willing to put extra effort into sustainable practices in their companies' regularly. A percentage of (59.57%) of entrepreneurs reported that they engage in sustainable practices because as entrepreneurs, they feel a strong obligation to have sustainable practices in their companies. Only (58.30%) of the entrepreneurs engage in sustainable practices because employees/colleagues think they should implement sustainable practices into their organisation. Entrepreneurs indicated that as entrepreneurs, they feel guilty when their companies do not engage in sustainable practices (57.87%). This was followed by (46.81%) of the entrepreneurs indicated that

their companies have a comprehensive sustainability business plan. Only (45.96%) of the entrepreneurs indicated their companies engages in sustainable practices because it is part of its business case.

Table 4. 20 Chi-square of Entrepreneurial Values

Entrepreneurial Values	Engaging in sustainable Practices		χ^2	df	p
	No	Yes			
My company understands business social responsibility as meeting consumer, employee, and community needs	50[70.3]	140[119]	52.915	2	< .001
My company is willing to decrease its consumption to aid protect the environment	40[61.5]	126[104.5]	53.229	2	< .001
My company derives pleasure in environmentally sustainable products/services	37[62.9]	133[107]	62.185	2	< .001
My company believes that sustainable practices will decrease pollution	47[68.9]	139[117.1]	55.577	2	< .001
My company thinks it is imperative to engage in sustainable practices	45[68.1]	138[115.9]	55.893	2	< .001
It is important for my company to operate in an environmentally responsible way	44[67.0]	137[114.0]	54.698	2	< .001
My company engages in sustainable practices to improve society	34[60.7]	130[103.3]	62.287	2	< .001
My company has a comprehensive sustainability business plan	133[40.7]	97[69.3]	57.234	2	< .001
My company engages in sustainable practices as part of its business case	14[40.0]	94[68.0]	50.725	2	< .001
My employees/colleagues think I should adopt sustainable practices into my company	23[50.7]	114[86.3]	59.201	2	< .001
My company periodically train staff in order to present changes in the goods/services we sell, or how we do business	46[67.7]	137[115.3]	60.683	2	< .001
I started my current business because I wanted to improve the welfare in my local community	39[60.7]	125[103.3]	42.987	2	< .001
As an entrepreneur, sustainable practices	45[67.7]	138[115.3]	59.615	2	< .001

are important					.001
As an entrepreneur, I feel a strong obligation to have sustainable practices in my company	23[51.8]	117[88.2]	63.048]	2	< .001
As an entrepreneur, I am willing to put extra effort into sustainable practices in my company regularly	26[53.3]	118[90.7]	59.066	2	< .001
As an entrepreneur, I feel guilty when my company does not engage in sustainable practices	22[50.3]	114[85.7]	60.418	2	< .001
Overall sustainable practices have reduced my company's operational costs	17[41.5]	70[148]	45.496	2	< .001

Note. Values formatted as Observed [Expected].

A chi-square test was conducted to determine if there was a significant association between the entrepreneurial values and engagement in sustainable practices. The variables were significant at an alpha of .05 level.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

Ho: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H1: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

H₀: There is no association between the engagement in sustainable practices and types of entrepreneurial values

H₁: There is an association between the engagement in sustainable practices and types of entrepreneurial values

The P value coefficient of this association is $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with entrepreneurial values.

Entrepreneurs whose company understands business social responsibility as meeting consumer, employee, and community needs were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 52.915$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and company understanding business social responsibility as meeting consumer, employee, and community needs are associated. Entrepreneurs whose company believes that sustainable practices will reduce pollution were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 55.577$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices company believing that sustainable practices will reduce pollution are associated. Entrepreneurs whose

company thinks it is important to engage in sustainable practices were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 55.893$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and company believing that it is important to engage in sustainable practices are related.

Entrepreneurs who believe that as an entrepreneur, sustainable practices are important were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 59.615$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and entrepreneur believing that sustainable practices are important are related. Entrepreneurs whose company periodically train staff in order to introduce changes in the goods/services we sell, or how we do business were more likely to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 60.683$, this suggest that engaging in sustainable practices and company periodically training staff in order to introduce changes in the goods/services they sell are associated. Entrepreneurs who feel guilty when their company does not engage in sustainable practices were the least represented to engage in sustainable practices $\chi^2(2) = 60.418$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and entrepreneurs feeling guilty when their company does not engage in sustainable practices is related. Entrepreneurs who indicated that sustainable practices have overall reduced their company's operational costs $\chi^2(2) = 45.496$, suggesting that engaging in sustainable practices and company having reduced costs because of sustainable practices are related. Table 4.20 visually shows the results.

A binary logistic regression was conducted to examine which entrepreneurial values had predicted engagement in sustainable practices, but the model was not significant. Reliability of the scale was checked, it was low and "if item deleted" but the reliability coefficient did not increase.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Finally, this chapter provided and discussed the study's findings. The demographics of 235 entrepreneurs were provided. Male entrepreneurs outnumbered female entrepreneurs in this research. The findings for study objective one demonstrated a statistically significant association among sustainable practices and all recognized coercive pressures. There was a strong significant association with entrepreneurs engaging in sustainable practices because of being fully aware and well informed that there are laws and legislations that needs to be followed. Another significant

association in coercive pressures that mostly influenced entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices was periodically reviewing products and services to ensure they are in line with environmental laws. Furthermore, there was a small percentage of entrepreneurs who reported to have started their business because of unemployment; and another small percentage of entrepreneurs reported that they receive incentives from the government to engage in sustainable practices. This means that the government still needs continue to establish communication channels to encourage participation in sustainable practices and contribute to employment development. The results of this study for research objective two demonstrated a statistically significant link between normative pressures and entrepreneurs' participation in sustainable practices. There was a strong significant relationship among entrepreneurs that participate in sustainable practices because they wish to fulfil their consumers' rising need for sustainability. Another important relationship was in entrepreneurs participating in sustainable practices because they want to ensure that their products/services are examined on a regular basis to ensure that they are in line with what their consumers desire. A significant association was also on entrepreneurs engaging in sustainable practices because their companies think manufacturing green products is a good idea. Findings for research objective three, revealed a statistically significant association between the mimetic pressures leading to the engagement of sustainable practices by entrepreneurs. There is a significant relationship between the engagement in sustainable practices because of sharing information about environmental laws and regulations with competitors. Another notable link was between entrepreneurs who engage in sustainable practices in order to attract investors. There was a significant association between entrepreneurs participating in sustainable practices because competitors are led by a moral case. The results of the study's objective four demonstrated a statistically significant association among entrepreneurial value pressures and participation in sustainable practices. There was a significant association between involvement in sustainable practices and an entrepreneur's understanding of business as social responsibility in fulfilling the needs of consumers, workers, and the community. Another significant association was between entrepreneurs engaging in sustainable practices because they believed sustainable practices will reduce pollution. The following chapter will present a thorough discussion of the results that were presented in this section.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL STUDY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter provided a thorough review of the conclusions based on information received from Pietermaritzburg small business owners. The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical discussion of the results obtained from the questionnaire. The theory was applied to discuss the findings in order to achieve the study objectives. The study's findings are discussed and contextualized in relation to prior chapters' assessments of relevant research publications and the greater literature. Implications generated from the study's findings are also an important aspect of the discussion.

5.2. OBJECTIVE ONE: TO DETERMINE THE INFLUENCE OF COERCIVE PRESSURES ON SMMES IN PIETERMARITZBURG TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The main drive of this objective was to explore how coercive forces such as government pressures and other supervisory bodies impact SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices. According to the Institutional theory that was used as a lens to this study elucidates that this pressure comes primarily from governments, and it is a crucial factor in businesses implementing sustainability practices, companies must abide by a range of social, environmental laws and legislation. In this study the coercive pressure had a reliability coefficient of .146 which indicates a degree of acceptable alpha value. The P-value coefficient of this association was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This imply that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with coercive pressures.

Most of the entrepreneurs 167 (71%) reported that they engage in sustainable practices because they are aware of environmental laws and those laws influence them to engage in sustainable practices, followed by 141(60%) participants who conveyed to engage in sustainable practices because of the pressure enforced to them by the government. These results illustrate that SMMEs are aware of the laws and regulations pertaining the environment, this shows that the South African government plays a role into bringing all types of businesses to engage in sustainable practices by enforcing laws that

protect the environment. The outcomes of this research are consistent with the findings of Mosocha, (2019) in a study of SMMEs in South Africa, Limpopo where SMME owners reported engaging in sustainable practices because of the pressure they received from the government and from the country's laws and regulations.

A total of 140(59%) entrepreneurs reported that they engage in sustainable practices because they periodically review their products to make sure they are in line with the environment laws and regulations. This shows that SMME owners periodically check their products to ensure that they are in accordance with the environmental laws and regulations. Findings from the literature review revealed that SMME in the United Kingdom (UK) illustrate that government legislation and laws are the primary motivator of environmental practices in UK SMMEs. However, these studies clearly demonstrate that self-regulation among UK SMMEs is unlikely to function well (Wilson, Williams, & Kemp, 2012), (Quader, Kamal & Hassan, 2016). The results of this research convey an improvement and changes the narrative of how SMME owners were viewed when it comes to conducting their daily business operations as most of the literature outlined that SMMEs rarely engage in sustainable practices as they lack financial capital and funds from the government to help them engage in sustainable practices and therefore are reluctant (Lewis & Cassells, 2010).

Very few 83(35.32%) entrepreneurs reported engaging in sustainable practices because the government provided them with incentives to engage in sustainable practices. These results show that there is diminutive funding from the government to support SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices and the very few participants that reported to receive incentives from the government are those that have been in operation for a long time. As this research was steered through the COVID-19 Pandemic a lot of businesses closed down, there was high job loss and plenty of people ventured into small businesses which the result of this study proving with 69(29.36%) entrepreneurs reporting to have started their business because of unemployment, this means that a lot of entrepreneurs are still new in the business. Due to negative hit of the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa's economy and businesses, the South African government provided a debt relief finance scheme for SMMEs which are damagingly affected, directly or indirectly, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This facility is a soft-loan facility designed to assist existing SMMEs in order to keep them afloat during the Covid-19 pandemic for a period of 6 months from April 2020 (Khan, 2021). As the majority of the participants reported to be not receiving any incentives from the government it is because

economically South Africa is not in a good state and the government only provided incentives through loans and there is a criterion that needs to be met, those who do not meet the criteria do not get the funding. The few entrepreneurs 83(35.32%) who indicated to receive incentives from the government are entrepreneurs who have been in the business for a long time, and they qualify for most of the government funding. Puppim de Oliveira & Jabbour, (2017) have found that SMME owners oppose the sustainability business case in favour of a more realistic view that environmental sustainability contributes to a rise in business costs that does not offer an adequate incentive to implement sustainability voluntary. Therefore, these results contradict with a report by Vuk'zenzele, (2017), an initiative of the Department of Trade and Industry, is accessible to provide advices and guidance to entrepreneurs and support with the procedures required to access funds concerning sustainable practices. Moreover, SEDA offers information, counselling, and business support services for SMMEs from all sectors regarding funding, how to start up a business, to information regarding how to start sustainable practices in a business enterprise (SEDA, 2012). The perceived lack of government support for the implementation of sustainable practices is concerning, given the plethora of such initiatives at a local, provincial and national level. A greater level of marketing and awareness-building is required from all spheres of government.

5.3. OBJECTIVE TWO: TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF NORMATIVE PRESURES ON THE APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES BY SMMES IN PIETERMARITZBURG

This objective focused on determining whether normative pressures influenced SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. As the Institutional theory that was adopted in this study state that isomorphic pressures can illustrate why organisations have to adopt sustainable practices. The degree to which SMMEs adopt sustainable practices in their business practices depends to a larger extent on the normative pressures. The P value coefficient of this association was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with normative pressures. The results revealed that normative factors have a significant and positive impact on the engagement of sustainable practices with an alpha value of .971.

This means that the more normative pressures existed, the more entrepreneurs were bound to adopt sustainable practices. The results indicated that 200 (85.11%) of the entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable practices because they were interested in finding out if customers are satisfied with the current products/services, this is not new in business where customers' perspectives influence the operation of the business. These results align with other studies where entrepreneurs indicated that they are mostly driven by customers' needs and they like to incorporate customer requirements on the manufacturing of products, through clear communication using multiple networks e.g.: telephone, email, site visits and meetings (Caldera, Desha, Dawes 2019).

Entrepreneurs in this study 195(82.98%) and 195(82.98%) also reported that they engaged in sustainable practices because their companies believe that producing green products is a smart idea and that they review products on a consistent basis to guarantee that they are in line with what customers want. Customers have been frequently explored in the literature as one of the most important drivers of sustainable operations. These discoveries are consistent with previous research in which entrepreneurs exposed an optimistic link in their boldness in the direction of the intention to implement green practices and approved that external factors such as customers encourage them to embrace green practices. Entrepreneurs noted in another research by Caldera, Desha, & Dawes, (2019) that "some of our customers do quality evaluations as part of their quality approval or green credentials'. If we don't reach the standards, they necessitate from us they won't continue to use us as the supplier".

A total of 140 (59.57%) of the entrepreneurs reported to be engaging in sustainable practices because their company now provides environmentally friendly products/services that were not provided before. These results align with the literature review in a study by Blundel, Monaghan, & Thomas, (2013) reported that SMMEs in Denmark and Germany used professional consulting services and collaborated with their counterparts in the production of new goods. Currently, one of the approaches used is to partner rather than compete with business rivals as a method of achieving economic efficiency. By doing so, companies form regional clusters along social dimensions, where they share resources and knowledge and skills, thus increasing their survival. Caldera, Desha & Dawes, (2019) also indicated that firms are driven by customer's needs and integrating customer feedback for the manufactured products. Boons, Montalvo, Quist & Wagner, (2013) state that when consumers

evaluate a company based on sustainable practices, companies are then challenged to integrate sustainability practices into company operation in order to maximise market value. This significantly prove how much of an impact consumer have on businesses and on the production process.

5.4. OBJECTIVE THREE: TO EXAMINE HOW MIMETIC PRESSURES INFLUENCES SMMEs IN PIETERMARITZBURG TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This objective examined how mimetic pressure influences SMMEs to engage sustainable practices. The institutional theory state that based on mimetic processes, companies tend to imitate legitimated and/or successful competitors in their market so as to be legitimised as well, thus engaging in institutional isomorphism (Samairat, 2008). This measure had a reliability coefficient scale of .880 which indicated consistency. The P value coefficient of this association was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with mimetic pressures.

The results indicated that 176 (74.89%) of the entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable practices because applying socially responsible activities creates a competitive advantage for their companies, followed by 169 (71.91%) participants who reported to engage in sustainable practices because it is their source of competitive advantage. These findings reveal that most businesses that apply socially responsible activities are driven by profit, they all want to mostly maximise profit as they reported that they engage in sustainable practices because it creates a competitive advantage for them. This is in line with the body of literature where in a survey of 1,662 SMMEs in the Netherlands, Hori, Chen & Cheng, (2011) showed that half of the businesses that consistently support sustainable policies are seeking to create more eco-innovative goods and services. In addition, more than half of the surveyed firms insist on talking more about sustainability, while one-quarter plan to report on sustainability. These findings tend to indicate that Dutch SMMEs are highly market-driven in their approaches to sustainability which is similar to South African SMMEs as the results of this study conveys. This shows that competitive advantage is one of the major forces that pushes entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices. Nulkar, (2019) stated that SMMEs can achieve substantial competitive benefits from sustainable practices, but SMMEs are often not willing to make the required investments because they assume that net cost savings are minimal, the results established in this study

demonstrates that currently SMMEs are willing to make all the required investments in order to engage in sustainable practices.

A total of 114 (48%) of the entrepreneurs reported that they have all the required resources to engage in sustainable practices, this small percentage of entrepreneurs reporting to have the resources to engage in sustainable practices shows how much SMMEs lack when it comes to having resources and finances. This is in line with the body of literature where Borat, Asmal, Lilenstein, & Van der Zee, (2018) stated that smaller businesses appear to be heavily concentrated on day-to-day operations that are perceived as somewhat peripheral to environmental issues and partly because their resources are also constrained to concentrate on issues that are at the heart of the company. Prior research by Rogerson, (2008) also indicated that lack of resources is a major obstacle to the adoption of environmental policies among SMMEs, including deficit in financial resources, skills and time.

A response rate of 80 (34.04%) from entrepreneurs reported that they lack information regarding how to engage in sustainable practices makes it difficult for me to implement. This shows that entrepreneurs are aware of sustainability and have the information on how to adopt it as most of the population disagreed to this question. This aligns with the study that was conducted by Amaeshi, Adegbite, Ogbechie, Idemudia, Kan, Issa & Anakwue, (2016) where they stated that in various ways and markets, it has been suggested that SMME owners/managers have a strong understanding of sustainability practices without having the exposure to the theory. This proves that most entrepreneurs do have knowledge but mostly lack the finances and resources to implement sustainable practices.

5.5. OBJECTIVE FOUR: TO EVALUATE HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL VALUES, INFLUENCE SMME OWNERS TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This objective was to determine if entrepreneurial values drive entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable activities. The P value coefficient of this association was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with entrepreneurial values. The findings revealed that 190 (80.85%) entrepreneurs engaged in sustainable practices because their organisation considers corporate social responsibility as satisfying the requirements of

consumers, employees, and communities. These findings demonstrate how much of a beneficial influence SMMEs have, not just on the economy, but also on the communities in which they operate, as they are widely recognized for employment creation in and surrounding communities. These findings also reveal that companies that understand business as a social responsibility they are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. This is consistent with other studies in the review, such as Amaeshi, Adegbite, Ogbechie, Idemudia, Kan, Issa, & Anakwue, (2016) who indicate that, as compared to major corporations, SMMEs are pressed and impacted by CSR in distinct ways and frequently engage in it differently. This is also demonstrated by Uhlaner et al., (2012) who found that Dutch SMMEs had obvious ethical motivations for sustainability in their research of 111 SMMEs in the Netherlands. They concluded that CSR is often considered as a "moral obligation towards society," regardless of the firm's size. Another valuable aspect of the Dutch SMMEs is their extensive participation with their local societies and local trade associations with the purpose of identifying and upholding environmental standards. In a larger sense, this collaborative approach to problem-solving and policy formulation has been referred to as the "polder" model and underlines the significance of civil society institutions in the Dutch political economy (Uhlaner *et al*, 2012).

There were 186 (79.15%) entrepreneurs who stated that they engage in sustainable practices because their firm feels that doing so will minimize pollution. Only 110 (46.81%) of the entrepreneurs said their organization incorporates sustainable practices into their business plan. These results are consistent with a body of literature claiming that commercial activities have caused a slew of environmental problems. Market failure, for example, led in environmental harm (Cohen & Winn, 2007). Pollution, deforestation, and the exploitation of non-renewable resources are all inextricably tied to economic activity. Entrepreneurs are being encouraged to play a more active part in fixing environmental challenges, despite the fact that they can have a devastating impact on people's lives. As a result, entrepreneurs engaging in sustainable practices have been promoted as a conceivable solution to environmental problems (Dean & McMullen, 2007). Many SMMEs have discovered that going above and beyond environmental compliance makes excellent financial sense and may help them expand. Cutting costs and boosting efficiency while meeting consumer demands for sustainable practices may be achieved through lowering energy ingesting, eliminating waste, utilizing raw resources more competently, and preventing contamination.

Entrepreneurs that reported that sustainability practices are important to them were a total of 183 (77%). This is consistent with a study that was conducted by Font, Garay & Jones, (2016) in which approximately 900 tourism companies in 57 European protected areas reported that they are now more engaged in taking responsibility by being more sustainable than formerly known, as well including eco-savings related operating practices, but also reporting an extensive range of social and economic responsibilities and actions. These findings contradict the widely held belief that SMMEs are unwilling to adopt sustainable practices and actively engage in sustainability problems. These results prove that not only SMMEs are an injection in the economy but they also play a role in protecting the environment.

5.6. CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 gave a deliberation of the research results in relation to the study's research objectives. The findings were supported by prevailing literature, which was discussed in detail in chapter two of this study. The conclusions are organised in accordance with the research objectives of the study.

In connection to study objective one, the researcher investigated the factors of coercive pressure and how they encourage entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices. In this situation, coercive pressure refers to pressure that originates from outside the organisation and has an impact on how it operates. This pressure is often exerted by the government, laws, and legislation. It is well-thought-out that the greater the government pressure, the more probable enterprises are to apply sustainable practices. To achieve this goal, the following variables were used: laws and legislations, government incentives, labour laws, and environmental regulations. The results demonstrated a substantial relationship between the sorts of coercive demands and participation in sustainable behaviours. Many businesses are working hard to incorporate sustainability into their day-to-day operations. Entrepreneurs were found to be more likely to engage in sustainable practices if they are completely aware and well educated of the environmental rules and policies that needs to be followed. In the context of the theory, the findings of this research presented in this chapter correspond with the findings of previous research conducted by Masocha & Fatoki, (2018), these authors articulated the significance of integrating sustainable practices into SMMEs, and how coercive pressure leads entrepreneurs to participate in sustainable practices.

The second objective was to explore how normative pressures effects SMMEs' engagement in sustainable practices. To achieve this objective, the following factors were used: customer needs, ecologically friendly products/services, customer satisfaction, and product reviews on a regular basis. According to the findings, normative pressures have a significant and positive impact on the adoption of sustainable practices. This indicates that the more normative forces there are, the more likely it is that entrepreneurs will embrace sustainable practices. Customers are part of the stakeholders of every business. Demands from customers might push businesses to adopt sustainable practices. In nowadays, the most predominant influence that customers have on businesses is to make sure that entrepreneurs have the interest to find out if customers are satisfied with the current products/services. Packaging must meet both essential product requirements and specific environmental objectives. In the context of the theory, the results of this study are supported by Masocha & Fatoki, (2018) study where they stated that normative pressures have greatly and positively affected all sustainable developments; the more of these pressures there are, the more entrepreneurs are likely to engage in sustainable practices. Caldera, Desha, & Dawes, (2019) reinforce this by stating that under institutional theory in normative pressures, entrepreneurs are largely driven by customer expectations.

In relation to objective three, the researcher explored how mimetic pressures influences SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. The variables investigated were competitive advantage, competitors leading by moral case, investors, possessing all necessary resources, and information sharing. Based on an alpha of .05., the data suggested that the variables were significant. Entrepreneurs who feel that engaging in socially responsible activities gives their organisation a competitive edge are more inclined to engage in sustainable practices. This suggests that investing in sustainable practices and executing socially responsible practices creates a competitive benefit for the organization. Sustainable practices are a substantial source of competitive benefit. Companies are probable to create and implement particular tactical measures linked with sustainability, denotating that these efforts should allow companies to achieve larger paybacks in contrast to their competitors, in as much as it is economically desirable. In the framework of the theory, the findings of this study revealed in this chapter link with the findings from Masocha & Fatoki, (2018) study which claimed that under institutional theory, mimetic forces impact firms and they copy legal and successful competitors in their market.

In respect to objective four, the researcher explored the variables of entrepreneurial values in relation to whether they influence entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices. To achieve this objective, the following variables were used: perceptions of the importance of sustainable practices, improving the society in which they operate, understanding business social responsibility as meeting buyer, worker, and community requirements, training on a regular basis, and willingness to put extra effort into sustainable practices. The results suggested that these factors were significant. Entrepreneurs whose companies view business social responsibility as satisfying the needs of their customers, employees, and communities were more likely to engage in sustainable practices. Sustainable practices are becoming increasingly important for all businesses in all industries. Large corporations are now taking substantial steps to reduce their environmental effect.

The next chapter will conclude by giving the summary of the research and outlining the research contributions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter concentrated on a theoretical discussion from the results acquired through the questionnaire. This chapter's goal is to present conclusions for each study objective. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the study's limitations, provides an outline of the recommendations for SMMEs to better engage in sustainable practices, and provides insights for future research.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion from the study's key findings are discussed in this section.

6.2.1 Research objective one: to determine the influence of coercive pressure on SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage in sustainable practices.

In connection to research objective number one, the researcher investigated the factors of coercive pressure and how they encourage entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices. To achieve this goal, the following variables were used: laws and legislations, government incentives, labour laws, and environmental regulations. Many businesses are working hard to incorporate sustainability into their day-to-day operations. Entrepreneurs were found to more likely to engage in sustainable practices because they are completely aware and well educated of the environmental rules and policies that needs be obeyed. Chi square tests were conducted and the P value coefficient for this pressure was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of $.05$. This means that we can conclude and say that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with coercive pressures.

6.2.2. Research objective two: to evaluate the impact of normative pressure on the application of sustainable practices by SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg.

The following variables were used to address the second objective, namely, customer demands, producing environmentally friendly products/services, customer satisfaction, and periodically reviewing products. According to the findings, normative pressures have a significant and positive influence on implementation of sustainable practices. Conferring to the findings of this study, customer expectations can considerably influence organizations' adoption of sustainable practices. P value coefficient for this pressure was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of $.05$. This means

that it can be concluded that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with normative pressures.

6.2.3. Research objective three: To examine how mimetic pressure influences SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg to engage sustainable practices.

The variables that were explored to address objective three were competitive advantage, competitors leading by moral case, investors, having all the required resources, and sharing of information. According to the results, entrepreneurs who feel that implementing socially responsible practices gives their organisation a competitive advantage are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. The P-value coefficient for this pressure was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. Therefore, this calls for a conclusion that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with mimetic pressures.

6.2.4. Research objective four: to evaluate how entrepreneurial personal values influence SMME owners to engage in sustainable practices.

For research objective four the researcher investigated the factors of entrepreneurial values to determine whether they inspire entrepreneurs to engage in sustainable practices. According to the findings, entrepreneurs whose organisation views business social responsibility as serving the requirements of consumers, employees, and communities are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. According to the findings of this study, if company/entrepreneurs perceive business as social responsibility, they will be more likely to engage in sustainable practices. The P-value coefficient for this pressure was $p=.001$ which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that a conclusion can be made that the engagement in sustainable practices is associated with entrepreneurial values.

6.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study were as follows:

- The limitation of this study was that the population of this study included the SMMEs that are listed under the Small Enterprise Development Agency in Pietermaritzburg. Not all SMMEs in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal or South Africa were represented by this population. However, the researcher recommends that the findings of this study should not be generalised as they offer

significant perceptions in understanding what influences entrepreneurs to be sustainable in their businesses.

6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher proposes the following recommendations based on the conclusions of the study:

- **Research recommendations**

More studies need to be conducted to understand further the intentions of practicing sustainable practices in South Africa. There is not enough data to refer to and be educated on. It is well known that there are CO2 measures and other factors in huge statistics, but more research needs to be done that will dig down to sustainability being actionable, where we can see how it affects us every day, and minute by minute. More research needs to be done in South Africa so we can have enough matrix and data, otherwise sustainability will remain as something that we aim to achieve but do not know how to get there as it is not properly measured. Once enough research has been done and people being exposed to vast information, people will start making more educative decisions especially small businesses as they indicated in this study that the lack of information makes it hard for them to implement sustainable practices. It is also suggested that further research should focus on further exploring the sustainability practices of SMMEs in-depth to ascertain the opportunities and challenges that they are experiencing in the execution of their programs.

- **Government related recommendations**

The findings revealed that government doesn't offer much when it comes to supporting SMMEs to engage in sustainable practices. Therefore, based on these findings it is recommended that the government should recognise and give incentives to businesses that look at sustainability as a competitive advantage. The government and investors need to invest into those business because that will show that sustainability brings value into life not just for the now, but for the future. Despite the fact that certain government programs are in place to promote sustainability and green economic activity in the SMME segment, communication remains complicated and restricted. The government must take a more active role in providing information to the SMME sector that not only promote holistic sustainable practices as good business acumen, but also offer an in-depth overview of how this might be done. The government should ask this question; are we indeed encouraging sustainability as a better choice either from a policy level or educational level? Education on

sustainable practices or sustainability as a whole must be adapted and attuned to match the various stages inside businesses. Numerous firms are by now focusing on sustainability in order to save long-term expenditures. While this is not a criticism, it should be highlighted that for SMMEs, the route to comprehensive corporate sustainability necessitates time and effort in training employees and pushing for buy-in. Recognizing what to communicate, how to present it, and at what level within the company to interconnect it is crucial to attaining those goal lines.

- **Consumers related recommendations**

The findings from this research also revealed that consumers have huge influence on how entrepreneurs conduct their businesses. Entrepreneurs should consider data driven approaches for sustainable initiatives where they will give information to consumers so that consumers will be able to make an informed decision. For instance, this could be done by categorising products where A- is more environmentally friendly, B- not environmentally friendly and C- the worst. By using this strategy hopefully consumers will mostly pick the A products then B or C. The government can internalise and standardise the ABC rating, as this will give power to consumers to make the subconscious decision to purchase eco-friendly products. Entrepreneurs should always prioritise customer feedback.

- **Entrepreneurial recommendations**

Entrepreneurs need to conduct training for their employees, this is because sustainability cannot be achieved through one idea but new innovative ideas are needed and learning would come in handy. Entrepreneurs need to come together with other entrepreneurs who have already adopted sustainable practices so that they can learn how to tackle it. The government can play a role by giving grants to entrepreneurs who hire and train people.

Create strategic initiatives that will aid in the establishment of a culture of sustainability for all workers in their organizations. All staff training sessions must provide knowledge and practical solutions on how to engage in sustainable practices, as well as specifics on the short-term and long-term benefits of sustainable practices.

Inspire the SMME sector to put more focus on knowledge exchange. Business owners must become more stimulating in encouraging internal innovation toward sustainable practices while remaining realistic about what can be achieved.

By means of a web-based podium/website, the private website may showcase services and abilities in which they specialize, as well as interact with comparable SMME firms. This website will act as a forum for SMMEs and major organizations to discuss issues and cooperate on solutions and suggestions. The goal of the website would be to help SMME owners improve their business knowledge and skills related to sustainable practices, help exchange ideas pertaining sustainability and then to distribute that information to the rest of their staff. SMMEs owners are encouraged to measure and document their sustainability programs in order to take advantage of emerging opportunities, such as funding from interested investors.

6.5. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study can be used as a lens for forthcoming research on entrepreneurial engagement in sustainable practices. This study used a quantitative methodological approach; therefore, future researches could use a different research method, such as a qualitative or mixed research methodologies. Alternatively, a comparison study might be done to assess the engagement in sustainable practices among SMMEs in industrialized and developing nations. Additionally, future studies could look at how education influences the intentions of entrepreneurs towards adopting sustainable practices.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance

Date:

Dear Respondent,

Researcher: Thembelihle Pita, Telephone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx, Email: xxxxxxxx-xxx-xx-xx

Supervisor: Mr. Nigel Chiweshe, Telephone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx, Email: xxxxxxxxx-xxx-xx-

xx

I, Thembelihle Pita am a Master of Commerce in Management student in the School of Management, IT and Governance, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: **Factors influencing the engagement in sustainable practices amongst Pietermaritzburg small, medium and micro enterprises.**

The aim of this study is to: explore the factors that influence SMMEs to engage in sustainability practices. this study will contribute towards creating a global awareness around Sustainable Practices in SMMEs in the South African context. The study is expected to enrol two hundred and thirty-four (234) participants in total. The study will be conducted in Pietermaritzburg, and the target sample will be composed of SMMEs founders. This study will use questionnaires procedure for data collection. The questionnaires should take about 15 minutes to complete.

The study will not involve any risks and/or discomforts. We hope that the study will provide a South African approach to the engagement of sustainability practices and contribute to building a comprehensive understanding around this subject.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00001977/2020).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0848170716, or the supervisor on 033 260 5355 or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in the study is voluntary and by participating, you are granting the researcher permission to use your responses. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in the study. Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, I.T. and Governance and your responses will not be used for any purposes outside of this study.

All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. After this time, all data will be destroyed. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely

Thembelihle Pita

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I _____ have been informed about the study entitled: *Factors influencing the engagement in sustainable practices amongst Pietermaritzburg small, medium and micro enterprises* by Thembelihle Pita

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 0848170716.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

(Where applicable)

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE – SURVEY INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE ENGAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AMONGST SMMEs

This survey questionnaire is meant for the business owners of SMME firms in Pietermaritzburg. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey questionnaire for the completion of a master's study on investigating the factors that influence engagement in sustainable practices amongst SMMEs. All information provided will only be used for educational purposes and will be kept anonymous and confidential. This questionnaire is made up of five (5) sections – A, B, C, D and E. It will take you approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please complete the following questions by clicking on the appropriate box and filling in where it is required.

A1. Please indicate your race

1. Black	
2. Indian	
3. Coloured	
4. White	
5. Other (Please Specify)	

A2. Please select the applicable age range

1. 18-20	
2. 21-30	
3. 31-40	
4. 41-50	

5. 51-60	
6. 61 years and above	

A3. Please indicate your gender

1. Male	
2. Female	
3. Other	

A4. Please indicate your nationality

1. South African	
2. Other (Please Specify)	

A5. Please indicate your Highest Qualification

1. Matric	
2. Bachelor's Degree	
3. Honour's Degree	
4. Master's Degree	
5. Doctoral Degree	
6. Other (Please Specify)	

A6. Reason for starting the business (Please select all that applies)

1. Inherited/family tradition	
2. Unemployed/have no alternative income source	
3. Retrenched	
4. Inadequate income from the other source	
5. I like the activity	
6. I have the skills for this business	
7. I have the equipment for this business	
8. Activity brings high income	

9. Small investment needed	
10. Unhappiness with previous work	

A7. Please indicate the number of years in current position

1. Less than 1 year	
2. 1-5	
3. 6-10	
4. 11 and more	

A8. Please indicate the industrial setting in which your company belong

1. Agriculture	
2. Mining	
3. Manufacturing	
4. Electricity, gas, and water	
5. Construction	
6. Trade and accommodation	
7. Transport and communication	
8. Finance and bus services	
9. Community	
10. Other (Please Specify)	

A9. How long have you been operating your company

1. Less than 1 year	
2. 1-5	
3. 6-10	
4. 11 and more	

A10. What form of business is your company?

1. Sole Proprietor	
2. Private Company (Pty) Ltd	

3. Personal Liability Company	
4. Public Company (Ltd)	
5. Other (Please Specify)	

A11. How many workers are in your company?

1. 1 – 9	
2. 10 - 19	
3. 20 - 49	
4. 50 - 249	

SECTION B: INVESTIGATING HOW COERCIVE PRESSURE INFLUENCE SMMEs TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing a cross (X) in the most appropriate column where: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, or 5=strongly agree.

Key terms*:

Coercive Pressure- This pressure comes primarily from governments and is a crucial factor in businesses implementing environmental management practices, companies must abide by a range of social, environmental laws and legislation.

Sustainable Practices- Practices that can be continued or a practice that maintains a condition without harming the environment. An example of sustainable is the practice of reduce, reuse and recycle.

B.1 My company engages in sustainable practices

1. Yes	
2. No	

No.	Coercive Pressure Influencing Entrepreneur's to Engage in Sustainable Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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B2	My company is fully aware and well informed that there are environmental laws and legislations that needs to be followed	1	2	3	4	5
B3	My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from the government	1	2	3	4	5
B4	The government provides us with incentives to engage in sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5
B5	My company's business social responsibility is to comply strictly with the labour and environmental laws	1	2	3	4	5
B6	We periodically review our products/services to ensure that they are in line with the environmental laws	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: INVESTIGATING HOW NORMATIVE PRESSURE INFLUENCES MMEs TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing a cross (X) in the most appropriate column where: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, or 5=strongly agree.

Key terms*:

Normative Pressure- The pressure is generated by customers. It is where consumer demand for green products is among the key drivers that lead to engage in more sustainable approach and practice in operations.

Sustainable consumption- Refers to the use of products and services that have a minimal impact on the environment so future generations can meet their needs.

No.	Normative Pressure Influencing Entrepreneurs to Engage in Sustainable Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C1	My company engages in sustainable practices to meet the growing demand for sustainable consumption from our customers	1	2	3	4	5
C2	The society expects my company to produce environmentally friendly products/services	1	2	3	4	5

C3	My company now provides environmentally friendly products/services that were not provided before	1	2	3	4	5
C4	My company is interested in finding out if customers are satisfied with the current products/services	1	2	3	4	5
C5	We periodically evaluate our products on a regular basis to ensure they meet the needs of our clients	1	2	3	4	5
C6	My company engages in sustainable practices to attract more customers	1	2	3	4	5
C7	My company thinks manufacturing green products is a smart idea	1	2	3	4	5
C8	My company engages in sustainable practices because of the pressure we receive from customers	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: INVESTIGATING HOW MIMETIC PRESSURE INFLUENCES SMMEs TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing a cross (X) in the most appropriate column where: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, or 5=strongly agree.

Key terms*:

Mimetic Pressure – This is where firms tend to mimic the actions of other firms in order to minimize the risks correlated with dynamic environments.

Moral Case - A moral case refers to whether the company engages in the appropriate context correctly. For example, is this company looking after the environment as well as the people.

No.	Mimetic Pressures that Impact Entrepreneurs to Engage in Sustainable Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D1	My company engages in sustainable practices because it forms part of our main business	1	2	3	4	5
D2	We implement sustainable practices because it is our source of competitive advantage	1	2	3	4	5
D3	We implement sustainable practices because our competitors are leading by a moral case	1	2	3	4	5
D4	My company engages in Sustainable Practices to	1	2	3	4	5

	gratify the needs of our stockholders					
D5	Society expects my firm to provide goods and services in an ecologically friendly manner	1	2	3	4	5
D6	Implementing socially responsible activities generates a competitive advantage for my business	1	2	3	4	5
D7	We have all the necessary capitals to implement sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5
D8	The company budget enables us to engage in sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5
D9	We share information with competitors regarding environmental laws and regulations	1	2	3	4	5
D10	The lack of information about how to adopt sustainable practices makes it hard for me adopt them	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION E: INVESTIGATING HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSONAL VALUES INFLUENCE SMME OWNERS TO ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing a cross (X) in the most appropriate column where: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, or 5=strongly agree.

Key terms*:

Business case- A business case is a document that facilitates a decision to start or continue a new project. It contains the information necessary for the business to make a decision.

No.	Entrepreneurial Values that Lead Entrepreneurs to Engage in Sustainable practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
E1	My company understands business social responsibility as meeting consumer, employee, and community needs	1	2	3	4	5
E2	My company derives pleasure in environmentally sustainable products/services	1	2	3	4	5
E3	My company believes that sustainable practices will decrease pollution	1	2	3	4	5

E4	My company thinks it is important to engage in sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5
E5	It is important for my company to work in an environmentally responsible way	1	2	3	4	5
E6	My company engages in Sustainable Practices to improve society	1	2	3	4	5
E7	My company has a comprehensive sustainability business plan	1	2	3	4	5
E8	My company engages in Sustainable Practices as part of its business case	1	2	3	4	5
E9	My employees/colleagues think I should adopt sustainable practices into my company	1	2	3	4	5
E10	My company periodically train workers in order to present changes in the goods/services we sell, or how we do business	1	2	3	4	5
E11	I started my current business because I wanted to advance the welfare in my local community	1	2	3	4	5

E12	I started my current business because I wanted to advance the welfare in my local community	1	2	3	4	5
E13	As an entrepreneur, sustainable practices are important	1	2	3	4	5
E14	As an entrepreneur, I feel a strong obligation to have sustainable practices in my company	1	2	3	4	5
E15	As an entrepreneur, I am willing to put additional effort into sustainable practices in my company regularly	1	2	3	4	5
E16	As an entrepreneur, I feel guilty when my company does not engage in sustainable practices	1	2	3	4	5
E17	Overall sustainable practices have reduced my company's operational costs	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



27 October 2020

Miss Thembelihle Prudence Pita (215032623)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Miss Pita,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001977/2020

Project title: Factors influencing the engagement in sustainable practices amongst Pietermaritzburg small, medium and micro enterprises

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 30 September 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL** on the following condition:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

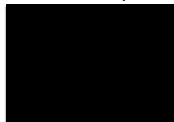
This approval is valid until 27 October 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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