

The Effects of Political Economic and Legal Environment On Some Selected SMES Performance in Yobe State Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evaluates the effect of political, economic, and legal environment on SMEs performance in some selected SMEs in Yobe State Nigeria. The specific objectives are to firstly examine the effects of economic environment on some selected SMEs performance in Yobe State. Secondly, to identify the effect of political environment on some selected SMEs performance in Yobe State. Thirdly, to evaluate the effect of legal environment on some selected SMEs performance in Yobe State and lastly to make possible recommendation on better performance of SMEs in Yobe State, Nigeria. A survey research was performed via structured questionnaire for collection of data across the three senatorial districts within Yobe state. The collected data was analysed with SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics was used to present the respondents' responses on the bio data. Inferential Statistics was adopted via Pearson Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis to determine the relationship between the antecedent which are Political environment, economic environment and Legal environment and outcome variables which is SMEs performance. Multiple Regressions was used to test which of the environmental external variables influences SMEs Performance the most. It is believed that the study findings will be of great benefits and important to stakeholders and policy makers within SMEs industries, law enforcement agents, political gladiators and federal government at large in relation to wherewithal of overcoming possible challenges emanating from external environment which can hinder successful performance of SMEs; thereby ensuring government effectiveness coupled with sustained economic and national development in the country.

Key Words: *Political environment Economic environment Legal environment SMEs Performance*

1.1 Background to the Study

SMEs performance has generally been viewed as vital area of interest in today's Enterprises (Fu et al., 2021), so proper SMEs performance evaluation should consider owner's targets which are often designed to advance the business profitability and productivity (Sardi et. al., 2020). SMEs performance can still be adopted in viewing how the business is performing in relation to profit level, product quality and market share. Accordingly, it is a reflection of the output of enterprise members measured on indices of profit, revenue, growth, expansion and development of the entire organization (Pang and Lu, 2018). Business environment of SMEs is becoming increasingly unpredictable and dynamic as such operators of SMEs are forced to device strategies that are best in order to stay afloat (Mweta and Suwadi, 2021). Mweta and Suwadi (2021) elucidated that most of SMEs struggle to grow and survive despite their importance roles in socio and economic national development.

Mendy (2021) postulate that in spite of Small and Medium Enterprise existence, their performance has become a concern as most of the SMEs performance still dwindle as the whole SMEs are experiencing stagnancy in place of anticipated advancement and growth. There also exist some SMEs that are stagnant at the survivalist stage which could be as a result of unfavourable environmental factors that are external (Mendy, 2021). The economic, political and legal environment which are external are that system which comprises of factors that could affect enterprises from outside which are beyond the owners control of the enterprises (Kumar, et al., 2019b). Fu et al. (2021) opine that external environment has an important influence on the performance of organization and its activities.

Environment of business mostly the external environment has been marked with unstable features among of which are quality service revolution, competition, laws and regulation cum dynamic political system that compel managers and operators of SMEs to have a rethink on their approach to operational responsibilities. Owing to this paradigm shift, enterprises are developing approaches that are more responsive to their business external

environment (Fu et al., 2021). Stief et al., (2018) nauseated that the external environment of business was firstly recognized by the open systems theorists who noticed that business operates not as isolated self-contained units but in continuously inevitable interaction within the large surrounding within which the business exist.

1.2 Problem Statement

Small and Medium Enterprises are the key economic growth and developmental drivers of many countries, but SMEs contributions to Nigerian economy advancement is relatively poor when compare to other advance countries (Pulka, 2021). Pulka (2021) asserted that SMEs in Taiwan, Singapore, United Kingdom, and South Korea including South Africa contribute 49%, 38%, 55%, 50%, 55% and 57% to the GDP respectively while SMEs in Nigeria could only contribute 46.54%. Relating to generation of employment, SMEs in Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, United Kingdom and South Korea and South Africa contribute 62%, 70%, 54.1%, 70% and 61% respectively but SMEs within Nigeria only contribute 25% (Pulka, 2021). Against this backdrop, the poor performance of SMEs in Nigeria can said to be obviously noticeable. More so, the hand-pocket large-scale enterprises that are existing in Yobe State could no longer avail sufficient employment for the teaming labour force, just as that could not satisfy the demand of the market owing to continued increase in population with corresponding demand. This lacuna is beckoning on a better SMEs performance in the State and Nigeria at large.

Operationally, SMEs poor contribution to the national development in Yobe State may be due to some business environmental external factors like sales problems and marketing, financial inadequacy, market competition, economic factor, technological factor, socio-cultural factor, legal factors and political factor which militate against the performance of SMEs (Oluwole, 2020).

Practically, Anecdotal evidences reveals that SMEs' that are operating in different regions in Nigeria specifically in Yobe State have experience limited performance due to impeding environmental external factors like

inadequate entrepreneurial skills operators, absence of effective management techniques, low level of technology, high interest rate, unfavourable system of taxation, inflation, high regulatory burden, Lack of skilled labour, Poor utility services uncertainty about government policies, cum inadequate infrastructure supply.

Empirically, there are series of studies in the past which were conducted on SMEs performance (Abbas et al., 2019; Pulka, 2021 and Fu et al.,2021), although, Khan and Salamzadeh (2020) enunciated that consideration of some external factors in the environmental that affect SMEs is recommended for future studies from their past study during which internal environmental factors were studied; along the same vain, Fu et al. (2021) also in their research on the Inter-Relationship between Innovation Capability and SME Performance: The Moderating Role of the External Environment; suggested that future research could be done on external environmental factors such as legal, political, and economic variables with their effects on SMES performance of which this research is aim at closing this established research gap

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of political, economic, and legal environment on performance of SMEs in Nigeria. However, research of this type is often with some specific objectives among of which are:

- i. To evaluate the effects of economic environment on SMEs performance in some selected SMEs in Yobe State.
- ii. To examine the effects of political environment on SMEs performance in some selected SMEs in Yobe State.
- iii. To identify the effects of legal environment on SMEs performance in some selected SMEs in Yobe State.
- iv. To make possible recommendation on better performance of SMEs in Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research is underpinned by Dynamic Capability Theory which was postulated by David Teece, Gary Pisano and Amy Shuen in the year 1997 the theory speculated on firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigures its internal competences in order to rapidly address changing within the environments in which business operates. Within the organizational theory domain, DCT theory enunciates that organization must adapt to its external environmental factors such the political, economic, and legal environment based on the organizational internal resource-base.

The theory asserted that in order for SMEs to achieve better performance, the onus lies on the SMEs operators to constantly reconfigure and aligning their internal resources, processes, and strategies with the happening and changes within its external environment in which the organization operates (Miller, 1983; Covin and Slevin, 1989; Teece and Pisano, 1994), this is as a result of the fact that the SMEs resources are not static, therefore there is the need to SMEs internal resources to be reconfigured and aligned in line with the changes emanating from the external environment. Hence, SMEs operators need to endeavour to strengthen their formidability by inculcating various strategies that are dynamism in their management as opined by the Dynamic Capability Theory in order to ensure the realisation of their performance. Making inferences from the social context of Yobe State and literature, the study considered the effects of poor power supply on SMEs performance in the state.

2.2 Concept of SMEs Performance

Austin-Egole, Stella and Iheriohanma (2020) argued that performance could be seen on how organization is performing in terms of their loyalty level, profit, revenue, investment, growth, employees' satisfaction and expansion of the organization. Dim and Nzube (2020) also viewed organizational performance as the measure of the output level. Moreso, Adamu, UtomiI et al. (2020) said performance is accomplishments on product achievements and results in an organization. Daraba et al. (2021) saw performance as achievement of employees' duties and responsibility as assigned to them in the workplace.

Understanding SMEs performance determining factors are viewed as a vital area of focus in today's enterprises (Fu et al., 2021). Therefore, a good organizational measurement of performance must consider the goal of the business owner as designed in order to promote the business in some specific areas such as profitability and output

2.3 Political Environment

Abbas et al. (2018) opinionated that the political law Power provide and allocates power coercion, protection of laws and rules amidst business environment. SMEs Political environment enable SMEs to develop a socio-political legitimacy which is approved by the government as a credible and appropriate organization (Zhang et al., 2020). Such approval permits SMEs to develop trust in the stakeholders which is critical to their performance. As a result of political legitimacy, when SMEs enjoy favourable political environment, it can culminate into political connections which will be beyond the normal relationship between the government and the firm (Luo et al., 2020). Most often, political legitimacy builds by favourable political environment could increase and draw more stakeholders preference to partner with the organization (Jiang et al., 2018), and also strengthen SME's position in relation to the existing relationships in manners that could reduce challenges to its SMEs performance (Otchere et al., 2020).

2.4 Economic Environment

Economic environment of SMEs according to Ebukiba and Anthony (2019), implies all those factors like exchange rate, inflation rate, rate of unemployment among others with direct bearing on SMEs performance. Ebukiba and Anthony (2019) further asserted that SMEs depends solely on economic environment for all the inputs needed. It is not a gain saying that economic environment is a vital factor in relation to SMEs performance. Pulka (2021) proclaimed that economic environment of SMEs is characterized by the nature of the prevailing system of economic as portray by the operational state of international economic forces and microeconomic such as foreign exchange rates, inflationary pressures, domestic economic activity, on-going levels of global business and purchasing power levels of

taxation. Pulka (2021) elucidated that economic system often pass through some periods of slower and faster economic activities, low and high monetary banking transactions, with varying volatility degrees in respect of exchange and interest rates. Hence, economic factors have vital impact on SMEs performance on the negative part or the positive part.

2.5 Legal Environment

Lawrence and Grant (2019) see legal system comprising of three key elements, which are culture, structure, substance. The structure of the legal system consists of elements of law enforcement agencies, law enforcement authorities, and law enforcement procedures (Lawrence and Grant 2019). The legal system, in relation to structure implies the institutions, such as legislature, judiciary and executive, and how the institutions conduct their functions. The legal system structure consists of elements relating to the law enforcement authorities, law enforcement agencies, and the law enforcement procedures. The substance has to do with the legal system's norms, rules, fundamental rules, and behaviour patterns (Lawrence and Grant 2019). Sjahran (2020) said a legal act entails that which implements administration which in concrete terms regulates the procedures and requirements that are stipulated by regulations and laws. Legal environmental stands significantly impacts activities of business as these regulations and laws allow the organization or individual to act or not to act in certain manners, as the interest of the public requires supervision of taken and not taken actions.

2.6 Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study shows the idea and flow of the research. It reveals the antecedent variables as Economic environment, political environment and legal environment and the output variable as SMEs performance. The inclusion of political environment and legal environment as recommended by Fu et al. (2021) to the study framework is a contribution to theory and knowledge as these variables were not studied in past research of Prouska et. al (2021) and Mongula et. al (2021). Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) underpinned the study which explains the manipulative effect of external

environment on SMEs performance which could be control through the internal strength of the firm in an attempt to achieve desired performance of SMEs in Yobe State.

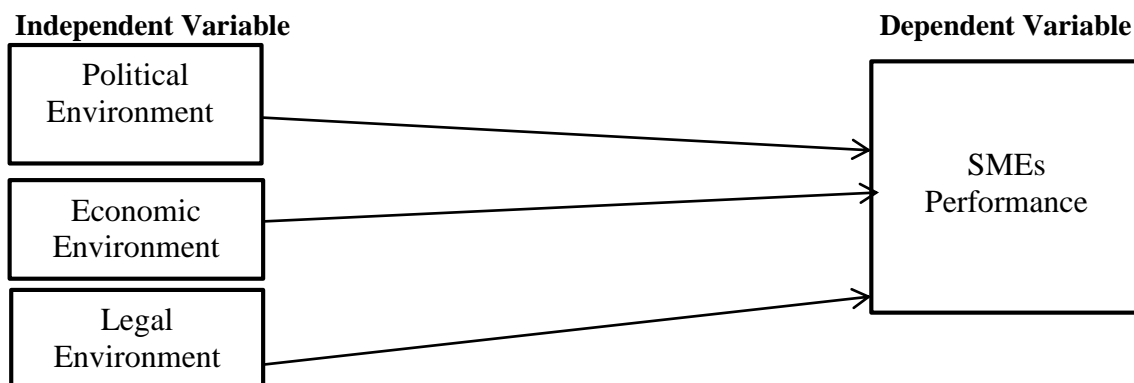


Figure 2.1: Framework of the Study
 Source: Adapted from Prouska et. al (2021) and Mongula et. al (2021).

3.0 Methodology of the Study

The study is premised on the philosophical approach related to the positivists which is based on the logic of deductive reasoning. In an attempt to achieve the research objectives, the study adopts quantitative survey research approach by cross sectional. The study is quantitative as numeric data were gathered from the respondent in an attempt to realize the research objectives. In the same vain, it is cross sectional as data were collected via questionnaire from the respondents in a one-off.

The study population were 300 registered SMEs operating within Yobe State (Yobe State Bureau on Public Procurement, 2020). Managers / Owners of SMEs were selected due to their familiarity and knowledge in the operation of the enterprise with cluster sampling technique in selecting the respondents. This study adopts the use of primary data to determine the effect of political, economic and legal factor on SMEs performance in Yobe State. The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher face to face to the owners/managers with a preamble note attached to the questionnaire guiding the respondents on how to answer questions.

3.1 Sample Size of the Study

The sample size of the study is depicted in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Sample Size of the Study

Zone	Population	Sample Size
Zone A	156	$\frac{300}{1 + 300(0.05)^2} = 112$
Zone B	92	$\frac{92}{1 + 92(0.05)^2} = 75$
Zone C	52	$\frac{52}{1 + 52(0.05)^2} = 46$
TOTAL	300	233

Source: Author’s Computation (2025).

3.2 Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were adopted in analysing the data collected. Descriptive statistics was used in describing the demographic variables and inferential statistics was adopted in the determining the relationship between the variables – antecedents and the dependent variable.

4.0 Analysis and Findings of the Study

The descriptive and inferential analyses of the study were presented in this section.

4.1 Demographic Statistics

This section presents the demographic statistics of the demographic characteristics of respondents. Table 4.1 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=233)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender			
Male	181	77.7	77.7

Female	52	22.3	100
Total	233	100	100
Age			
10-30	86	36.9	36.9
31-60	134	57.5	94.4
60 & above	13	5.6	100
Total	233	100	100
Educational background			
No formal education	13	5.6	5.6
Primary	40	17.2	22.8
Secondary	107	45.9	68.7
Tertiary	73	31.3	100
Total	233	100	100
Current Position			
Owner manager	91	39.1	39.1
Executive manager	63	27.0	66.1
Manager	70	30	96.1
Others	9	3.9	100
Total	233	100	100

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

As seen on Table 4.1, the males are more than the females with 77.7 per cent of males' respondents, while the remaining 22.3 per cent

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variables	Sample	Mean	Std. Deviation
SMEs Performance	233	3.69	0.98
Political Environment	233	3.56	1.10
Economic Environment	233	3.52	1.01
Legal-Environment	233	3.65	1.00

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

Table 4.2 reveals the descriptive statistics of the study's variables which are SMEs performance, political environment, economic environment, and legal environment. All these variables in the study were measured on five-point Likert scale. SMEs performance showed a mean score of 3.69, with a standard deviation of 0.98. Political environment showed a mean of 3.56 with standard deviation of 1.10.

Table 4.3 Correlation between Political Environment and SMEs Performance

		SMEs Performance	Political Environment
SMEs Performance	Pearson correlation	1	0.78

are females. 36.9 per cent of the respondents are between the ages of 11 to 30, 57.5 per cent are within the ages of 31 -60, and the remaining 5.6% were above 60 years. It is evident therefore that most of the respondents are between ages 31 to 60. This is anticipated as these age bracket i.e. 31 –60years is the most productive age when people venture into business.

45.9 per cent of the total respondents of this study are secondary schools certificate holders, while a hand pick of 5.6 per cent have no formal education. The owners constitute 39.1 per cent of the total respondents; with 27 per cent as executive officers, while 30 per cent are managers and not the business owners. Finally, the respondents 3.9 per cent constitute other top ranking officials which implies that majority of the respondents are owners of the businesses who are the executive officers and other top-ranking officials.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

This section provides descriptive statistics of the variables of the study, using mean and standard deviation. The result is presented on Table 4.2.

Economic environment showed a mean score of 3.52 with a standard deviation coefficient of 1.01 and legal environment revealed a mean score of 3.55 with a standard deviation of 1.00. Meanwhile, SMEs Performance has the highest mean score response and economic environment has the least of all the mean response.

	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Political Environment	N	233	
	Pearson correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	233	

**Correlation is significant at level **P<0.05; *P< 0.01 (2 tailed).

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

Table 4.3 indicates that political factor has a positive correlation with SMEs performance in Yobe state with a correlation of 0.78 **, at

0.000 significant levels which is less than 0.5 which implies that there is a positively strong relationship between political factor and SMEs performance since the correlation value of r is higher than 0.

Table 4.4 Correlation between Economic Environment and SMEs Performance

		SMEs Performance	Economic Environment
SMEs Performance	Pearson correlation	1	0.82
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Economic Environment	N	233	
	Pearson correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	233	

**Correlation is significant at level **P<0.05; *P< 0.01 (2 tailed).

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

Table 4.4 reveals the correlation findings of between economic environment and SMEs performance. The correlation value of r = 0.82** with 0.05 level of significant which an indication that there is positively strong relationship between economic environment and SMEs performance.

Table 4.5 Correlation between Legal Environment and SMEs Performance

		SMEs Performance	Legal Environment
SMEs Performance	Pearson correlation	1	0.33
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Legal Environment	N	233	
	Pearson correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	233	

**Correlation is significant at level **P<0.05; *P< 0.01 (2 tailed).

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

Table 4.5 reveals that the legal factor has a positively weak correlation with SMEs performance in Yobe state with a correlation of 0.33** at 0.000 significant level which is less than 0.5.

and independent variables (political environment economic environment and legal environment). The multiple regression analysis is been used in exploring the strength of the relationships and the analysis findings is revealed in table 4.6.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

This section discusses the relationship between the dependent variable (SMEs Performance)

Table 4.6 Summary of Multiple Regressions between SMEs Performance and External Environmental Factors (Political Environment, Economic Environment and Legal Environment).

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimates			
1	.727 ^a	.684	.778	.36074			

Coefficients ^a							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistic	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1(Constant)	.185	.258		.719	.473		
POL. ENV	.033	.038	.055	.874	.386	.616	2.941
ECO. ENV	.600	.106	.559	5.660	.000	.425	4.077
LEG. ENV	.035	.036	.057	.873	.380	.615	2.943

a. Dependent Variable: SMEs Performance

** Significance at P< 0.05

POL. ENV = Political Environment, ECO. ENV = Economic Environment and LEG. ENV =Legal Environment.

Table 4.6 shows the relationship strength between SMEs performance and political environment, economic environment and legal environment. It shows the significance (P) of all these factors to be less than 0.05 (P<0.05). More so, the adjusted R square value is 0.778 which is somewhat high to the extent that these independent variables could highly explain the 77.8% variation of dependent variable. Hence, this is seen as a good fit. In table 4.6 (Coefficients^a), the tolerances of independent variables are from 0.616, 0.425, and 0.615 respectively which are more than 0.2. More so, the VIF of the independent

variables are 2.941, 4.077 and 2.943 respectively, which are also more than 0 and less than 10. Conclusively, the independent variables lack multicollinearity problem in the study. Hence, the multiple regression findings can said to be statistically significant.

In the same vein, ‘‘Beta’’ values comparison clearly show an indication that economic environment has the most influence on the SMEs performance. Seconded by legal environment, next to it is the political environment. In other word, economic environment is the most that strongly influence

SMEs performance among the three external environmental factors.

5.0 Discussion of the Findings

Political environment was noticed to have a positive significant relationship with SMEs performance in Yobe state which is an indication that stability and continuity in government will pave way for consistent implementation of favourable policy which will have positive effects on SMEs performance. Political instability will dwindle SMEs performance. The finding of the study supports the findings of Luo et al., 2020; Zhang et al. (2020); Ali et al. (2020) and Abraham (2021).

On the relationship between economic environment and SMEs performance, the finding is in line with the study of Abraham (2021) and Abolarinwa (2020), as these authors concluded that economic environment has a significant relationship with SMEs performance. Today's customers seem to have control of the economic environment regardless of the economic policies imposed by the government. Economic policies impact customers positively and negatively depending on the nature of the policy.

Legal environment is also noticed to have positive significant effect on SMEs performance in Yobe state. This finding supported the result of the study of Sjahran (2020); Muhamad, (2021) and Chege, Wang, and Suntu, (2020). Policies of government are to be designed in a manner in which it will create an environment that is enabling for SMEs to thrive and grow. Government should endeavour to create frameworks and rules that will make enterprises to compete against each other. Changes in government frameworks and rules could make enterprises to change the manner in which they operate.

5.1 Implications of the Study

The study examined the effect of political, economic and legal environment on SMEs performance in Yobe State with some findings emanating from the study. Thus, it is imperative to discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of the study.

5.1.1 Theoretical Implication of the Study

The Effects of Political Economic and Legal Environment On Some Selected SMES Performance in Yobe State Nigeria

The major implication of this study to theory is the combination of the three external variables used in evaluating external environment of business on SMEs performance in Yobe State. Most past related research have studied business external environment on performance of either manufacturing and banks sector of SMEs. The study has extended the purview of DCT theory on the studied variables and to another geographical environment. The framework of the study is also an extension on the DCT Theory

5.1.2 Managerial Implication of the Study

The managerial implication of the study is on how the study avails management and owners of SMEs on how they could remain competitive within business environment in which they are operating. Using this study result, political and economic environment have the highest effect on SME performance, than legal environment. Thus, owners and managers of SMEs will do well if higher importance is given to economic and political environment within which they carry out their business. Owing to this study owners and managers of SMEs now have an understanding of which of political, economic and legal environment has the most effect on SME performance.

5.2 Recommendation of the Study

Firstly, operators of SMEs need to have positive perception on the economic environment as customers tend to have some control of the economic environment. Hence, producing goods of high quality that meets the customers demand will improve the business performance.

Secondly, government should create an environment that is enabling for existing and potential SMEs and other business operators. This could be done through the improvement of infrastructural facilities such as access to stable electricity, good roads among others to enable SMEs have a favourable business environment to operate.

Finally, this study could be replicated in other geographical areas, in order that the generalizations of the findings could be made. Other factors related to environmental such as technological and sociocultural could be

included in the model for further theoretical contributions. The study could also be replicated in other sectors other than the SMEs sector. Comparative study could be done on other SMEs sector that falls within the limitations of this study in order to determine which among of the environmental factors has the most impact on SMEs performance.

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