ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PRACTICES AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN ELDORET MUNICIPALITY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Barasa, siblings, husband Kizito, son Roy and daughter Jiya for their continued support to me towards pursuing my academics goals. Thank you for always believing in me.

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ABSTRACT

SMEs in Eldoret face multiple challenges, including inadequate access to financing, lack of proper training, and ineffective management practices and this complicates their priority action on environmental conservation. Therefore, this study sought to explore the influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. The study's specific objectives were; to assess the influence of environmental conservation waste reduction practices, training practice, corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation and green energy environmental conservation practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality. This study was anchored on the Institutional theory that asserts that organizations are a subject of the institutional environment where they adopt alike structures and practices so as to match with societal expectations and norms. The study was also based on the Dynamic Capability Theory which observes that; dynamic potentials are the firm's capacity in engaging, adoption, integration and reconfiguration of internal and external organizational skills, resources, and functional competences to match the requirements of a changing environment. The study was carried out in Eldoret Municipality in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. This study employed a descriptive correlational research. The target population was 2053 comprising of owner/managers while sample size was 335 respondents from registered SMEs operating in the Uasin Gishu County. The study adopted stratified and cluster sampling technique to select the SMEs to specifically select owners or managers. Questionnaires were used in data collection from the sampled managers or the owners. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations). The analysed data were presented in form of tables. The study findings revealed that Environmental conservation waste reduction practices had a positive linear effect on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_1=0.160, p=0.004). Environmental conservation training practice was also found to be positively correlated with business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_2=0.131, p=0.011) There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between corporate social responsibility conservation practices and business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_3=0.236, p=0.000). Green energy environmental conservation practices were also found to be positively correlated with business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_4=0.342, p=0.000). The study concluded that waste reduction practices had a significant positive influence on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. Environmental training for employees leads to greater innovation in managing resources and cost-saving measures.The findings would inform policymakers and business development organizations, promoting a win-win situation for businesses and the environment.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACS - Africa Climate Summit

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

DCT - Dynamic capabilities theory

EPA -Environmental Protection Agency

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

NACOSTI -National Commission for science ,Technology and Innovation

NEMA - National Environment Management Authority

PAVI - Partnership for African Value Investment

RBV - Resource-Based View's

SMEs - Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

SMFEs - Small and Medium Forest Enterprises

VIF -Variance Inflation Factor

VRIN -Valuable, Rare, Imitable and Non-substitutable

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Business performance - is the measurement and evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of business activities within an organization (Hoerl & Snee, 2020).

Environmental Conservation – Refers to the practice of protecting the natural environment to maintain its health and sustainability for present and future generations (Saikanth, Singh, Sachan & Singh, 2023). In the context, environmental conservation practices adopted by SMEs are important for both business performance and ecological sustainability.

Environmental Management Practices - Refer to the strategies and processes that organizations implement to manage their impact on the environment (Scarpellini, Valero-Gil, Moneva & Andreaus, 2020). In the context, environmental management practices among SMEs involve educating employees on environmental issues, sustainable practices, and the importance of compliance with environmental policies.

Environmental training practice – It involves the strategies and activities designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of employees within an organization (McKenzie et al., 2021). In the context, employee training practices related to environmental conservation among SMEs involve educating employees on sustainable practices and environmental regulations.

Waste reduction Practice - A waste reduction practice refers to the systematic approach to handling waste materials from their inception to their final disposal (De Moraes et al., 2020). In the context, waste reduction practices among SMEs involve strategies to efficiently handle and reduce waste generated by business operations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are vital contributors to economies globally, as they make up a substantial portion of employment and contribute significantly to national value added (Mendy, 2021). SMEs represent approximately 70% of the total workforce globally and contribute around 40% of the national income in emerging-market economies (Islam et al., 2021). SMEs have a substantially impacted on employment generation and economic expansion. However, they frequently encounter difficulties in terms of their survival, operational sustainability, and ability to compete with other businesses (Erlanitasari, Rahmanto & Wijaya, 2020). The combination of inadequate management skills, poor recordkeeping, limited use of performance metrics, unfavorable economic conditions, and insufficient investment in human capital contributes to the overall poor performance of SMEs.

The performance of SMEs is influenced by both macro and micro drivers, including but not limited to business environment, management practices, access to financing, and education (Salamzadeh & Dana, 2022). Further, Otiso (2021), argues that, Organizations in today's fast-paced market are shifting their focus from traditional marketing approaches to customer-centric initiatives. These initiatives aim to better understand, attract, retain, and cultivate long-term relationships with profitable customers. SMEs therefore, play a significant role in environmental conservation practices. SMEs worldwide, responsible for

more than 50% of employment and up to 40% of GDP in emerging economies, collectively contribute to global climate change through their carbon footprints and emissions (Yang & Zhang, 2020). These businesses are interconnected with larger corporations, forming a chain of business transactions embedded in carbon footprints, known as Scope emissions, which are challenging to reduce (Barbosa, Castañeda-Ayarza & Ferreira, 2020).

Environmental regulations set by authorities like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States aim to ensure that businesses, both large and small, follow practices that minimize harm to the environment (Anastas & Zimmerman, 2021). Small businesses can actively contribute to environmental protection by adopting sustainable practices such as recycling, using eco-friendly materials, reducing energy consumption, and rewarding sustainable behaviors among employees (Elshaer, Azazz & Fayyad, 2023).

By creating a sustainable strategy, building an eco-friendly company culture, and choosing partners and products that align with sustainability goals, small businesses can make a positive impact on the environment while also improving their bottom line (Mady et al., 2023). Additionally, focusing on sustainability can lead to lower operating costs, increased efficiency, and improved relationships with employees and partners who share similar values. Ultimately, prioritizing environmental conservation not only benefits the planet but can also lead to long-term business success and prosperity (Clauß et al., 2022).

Boakye et al. (2020) notes that SMEs' financial performance can be positively or negatively impacted by environmental conservation efforts. Adopting eco-

friendly practices can have a positive impact on your bottom line, your efficiency, and your reputation (Gelderman et al., 2021). Similarily, the cost of implementing these practices can be a barrier for some SMEs, particularly those that are resource-constrained (Dasanayaka et al. 2022).

SMEs play a crucial role in Africa's economic landscape, accounting for 95% of registered businesses in sub-Saharan countries and contributing approximately 50% to the region's overall GDP (Pulka & Gawuna, 2022). They also provide an estimated 80% of jobs across the continent, positioning them as key drivers of economic growth (Abisuga-Oyekunle et al., 2020). Despite their importance, SMEs face several challenges, including environmental conservation practices, limited access to finance, bureaucratic onboarding procedures, lack of infrastructure, and unaffordable wage costs, all of which impede their growth and prosperity (Stevanovic & Wanyang'Ochieng, 2023). Notably, environmental conservation practices have had a significant impact on the business performance of SMEs in Africa (Anaman et al., 2023).

Ogujiuba et al. (2021) observed that environmental sustainability affects the innovation, ecological, and social aspects of firms' performance in the context of South African SMEs. This paper focused on Small and Medium Forest Enterprises in Ghana because of their contribution towards sustainable forest management. This they do through procedures including planting, reforestation, soil and water conservation and appropriate utilization of methods in harvesting (Anane, Kombiok & Afrifa, 2023). However, the operation of these enterprises without restrictions is dangerous to the society especially in the area of concern

that is tropical forests. In Senegal SMEs are affected by climate risks, which can be mitigated through conservation practices (Apfel & Herbes, 2021).

In Kenya, SMEs that adopted zero-emission discharge practices had a positive impact on their business performance, as they were able to reduce their waste disposal costs and improve their reputation on environmental management (Ontumbi et al., 2024). The Africa Climate Summit (ACS), held on September 4-6, 2023, in Nairobi, showcased Africa's climate action potential and attract global investment in sustainable initiatives. The summit emphasized renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and the processing of critical minerals like lithium and cobalt within Africa to create jobs and reduce carbon footprints. Kenya's leadership, including President William Ruto, advocated for reforms in multilateral financial institutions to support low- and middle-income countries, aiming to close climate financing gaps and promote green growth across the continent (Passarelli & Director, 2024). The outcomes of the summit are expected to influence global climate discourse and lead to the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, which outlined Africa's unified stance on climate action and development.

Eldoret Municipality, located in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, plays a key role in the county's economic landscape, especially through the contributions of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Talai, 2024). The region is characterized by its agricultural productivity, which is complemented by a growing industrial base. Eldoret is strategically positioned as a commercial hub in the North Rift region of Kenya. Its economy is heavily reliant on agriculture,

particularly maize and dairy farming, which are key drivers of local employment and income (Mawich & Owuor, 2024). The town has also seen the establishment of various industries, including food processing, textiles, and manufacturing. This industrial growth has led to an increased demand for services and products provided by SMEs, which are crucial for job creation and economic diversification.

SMEs play a critical role in Eldoret Municipality's economy, particularly in alignment with the Kenya Kwanza manifesto's focus on job creation through SME development. However, sustainable growth necessitates a balanced approach (Kimondo, 2023). This is where the influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs became crucial. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) plays a vital role in ensuring proper waste disposal by SMEs. By adhering to NEMA regulations, SMEs can not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also potentially enhance their business performance (Mutuku, 2021). This connection between environmental conservation practices, NEMA's oversight on waste disposal, and business performance of SMEs is crucial for fostering sustainable growth and aligning with the goals of the Kenya Kwanza manifesto.

This study on influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality, investigated this very link. It explored how environmentally conscious practices adopted by SMEs, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, eco-friendly packaging and zero emissions can lead to positive outcomes like cost savings, improved brand reputation, and

ultimately, contribute to the county's economic goals as outlined in the Kenya Kwanza manifesto**.**

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The challenges faced by SMEs in Eldoret Municipality, Uasin Gishu County, results to poor business performance and this is reflected in low profitability, stagnant growth, and business closures. The underperformance of SMEs affects the SMEs and with broader economic implications, leading to reduced tax revenues for the county government and increased poverty levels. Previous studies have identified factors such as ineffective cash management and poor record-keeping as significant contributors to this issue. According to Ouma (2021) an effective practice of cash management exercises a profound impact on SME financial performance reiterating the importance of effective control of cash. Nassiuma (2019) on the compliance of Record-keeping practices and SME performance in Eldoret Municipality noted that the significance of record keeping determines business prosperity. Poor record-keeping practices were identified as a common issue among SMEs, affecting their overall performance.

In order to encourage the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Eldoret Municipality, Kenei (2016) emphasized the value of support services. On the other hand, research on how environmental conservation measures affect the efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in this area is severely lacking. Partnership for African Value Investment (PAVI) and the recent Africa Climate Summit (ACS) both stressed the need for SMEs to incorporate environmental sustainability into their business plans.

Recognizing the importance of SMEs for job creation and economic activity, the ACS emphasized the need to invest in sustainable initiatives across Africa. In addition to improving operational performance, SMEs can align with national and regional climate goals by adopting environmentally friendly practices like energy efficiency and waste reduction.

The PAVI initiative further supports this by fostering collaboration between various stakeholders to create an enabling environment for sustainable investments. As SMEs in Eldoret Municipality embrace waste reduction and energy efficiency, they stand to benefit from improved efficiency, enhanced brand reputation, and ultimately, a more robust economic contribution to the region, thus addressing the critical challenges identified in the statement of the problem. This study aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap by investigating the influence of environmental conservation practices on the business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality. Recognizing that SMEs are crucial for job creation and economic activity, addressing their challenges is essential for enhancing local economic stability and growth. By exploring how adopting environmentally friendly practices can lead to improved efficiency and profitability, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for SME owners and policymakers. The study aligns with regional and national objectives regarding sustainability, offering SMEs a pathway not only to enhance their performance but also to contribute positively to environmental goals. Therefore, this study sought to bridge the gap by investigating influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality, Uasin-Gishu County.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

This study sought to explore the environmental conservation practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To assess the influence of environmental conservation waste reduction practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.
ii. To determine influence of environmental conservation training practice on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.
iii. To investigate the effects of corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.
iv. To assess the effects of green energy environmental conservation practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant influence of environmental conservation waste reduction practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality.

H_{02}: There is no significant influence of environmental conservation training practice on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality.

H_{03}: There is no significant influence of corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality.

H_{04}: There is no significant influence of green energy environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The study on the influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality is crucial. Firstly, it addresses a significant research gap by focusing on the influence of environmental conservation practices specifically on the business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality. This study is therefore important as it sheds light on how environmental sustainability can influence the financial performance of SMEs, providing valuable insights into a relatively understudied area. Secondly, this study is essential for SMEs in Eldoret Municipality as it can offer practical guidance on how integrating environmental conservation practices into their operations can lead to improved business performance. By examining the relationship between environmental sustainability and business outcomes,

SMEs in Eldoret Municipality can potentially enhance their competitiveness, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Further, conducting this study can bring about several benefits. It can help SMEs in Eldoret Municipality understand the tangible advantages of adopting environmental conservation practices, such as cost savings, enhanced reputation, access to new markets, and compliance with evolving environmental regulations. By advocating environmentally responsible and socially conscious business practices that are in line with worldwide trends, the study can also help the region's economy grow as a whole.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study may include factors such as:

The study may face limitations related to the sample size, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. Ensuring a more diverse sample could enhance the representativeness of the findings and improve the study's validity.

Challenges may arise in data collection methods, impacting the accuracy and reliability of the results. Implementing robust data collection methods, like triangulation or mixed-method approaches, could strengthen the study's reliability and validity.

External factors beyond the control of the study, such as economic conditions or policy changes, could influence the outcomes and need to be considered. By acknowledging and controlling for external influences, the study can better isolate

the impact of environmental conservation practices on Business performance of SMEs.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on SMEs operating within the Eldoret Municipality, allowing for a more targeted and in-depth analysis of the influence of environmental conservation practices on their business performance. This geographical and sectoral focus enabled the study to capture the unique characteristics and challenges of SMEs in this region, enhancing the relevance and applicability of the findings. Additionally, the study utilized primary data sources, such as questionnaires to ensure that the data collected was directly relevant to the research questions and objectives.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This research would contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between environmental conservation practices and the business performance of SMEs. The findings can shed light on whether and how environmental practices can be beneficial not just for the environment but also for the economic well-being of small and medium businesses.The results of the study can inform policymakers and business development organizations on how to encourage and support environmental practices among SMEs. By demonstrating the potential performance benefits, can help create a win-win situation for businesses and the environment. The study can serve as a foundation for further research in this area. It can inspire investigations into specific environmental practices, different business sectors, or broader geographical comparisons.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumesd that the participants in the study answered questions honestly and factually. The study assumed a common belief about the phenomenon within the study population. The study also assumed that the results of the study was relevant to stakeholders, which is the most compelling assumption, as it ensures that the results of the study was meaningful. The study assumed a level of transparency and honesty from participating SMEs when providing data on their environmental practices and business performance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section covers literature review guided by the objectives of the study, theoretical frame work, empirical studies and conceptual framework and research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by the Dynamic Capability Theory and Institutional Theory.

2.2.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory deals with how external considerations affect the whole decision-making process within an organization (Peters, 2022). It underscores the importance of social and cultural requirements ‘’forces’’ that are placed on organizations and influence their processes and systems. Ahyaruddin and Akbar (2018) contend that managerial decisions are significantly shaped by three institutional mechanisms: Coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphisms are other forms of pressure that organizations experience in the course of their operations. These mechanisms enable the development of the rationale for behaviour and the issuing of norms, so that organisations within one organisational field employ similar practices and structures.

In another study, Shubham et al. (2018) have claimed that DiMaggio can be credited to try to utilize Institutional theory to examine how the firms imitate

the environmental management practices. They argue that the primary motivations which have been driving the management of the environment in different economics has been through coercion, mostly in the form of laws and their implementation. Therefore, due to the similarities in the competitive structure of the industries, firms in each industry have followed the same practice. In line with the majority of institutional theorists, Ariffin (2019) asserts that firms operating within the same organizational field are subject to comparable influences from institutional forces originating from within that field.

Eldoret Municipality's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their environmental conservation practices can be better understood through the lens of Institutional Theory, which offers a framework for analyzing the ways in which social norms and external pressures impact company actions and outcomes. According to Institutional Theory, regulatory frameworks, cultural expectations, and industry standards are some of the contexts that impact organizations. In this context, SMEs in Eldoret face various institutional pressures, such as compliance with environmental regulations set by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and societal expectations for corporate social responsibility (CSR). These pressures can drive SMEs to adopt sustainable practices, including waste reduction, environmental training, and green energy initiatives, which are essential for improving their overall business performance.

Furthermore, the recent Africa Climate Summit (ACS) and the Partnership for African Value Investment (PAVI) initiative highlight the growing institutional support for environmental sustainability in Africa. The ACS aims to foster a collaborative environment where SMEs can thrive by adopting sustainable practices that align with national and regional climate goals. By participating in such initiatives, SMEs can gain access to resources, training, and financial support, which can enhance their capacity to implement effective environmental conservation practices. This institutional backing not only facilitates the adoption of sustainability measures but also positions SMEs to leverage these practices for competitive advantage, thereby improving their profitability and resilience in the face of environmental challenges. The study explored how these institutional influences shape the environmental practices of SMEs in Eldoret and their subsequent impact on business performance, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic growth in the region.

2.2.2 Dynamic capability theory

The study was grounded on the Dynamic capability's theory developed by Pisano and Teece in 1994. This theory stems from the RBV's inability to explain how these resources and capabilities develop and transform themselves in the competitive environment characterized by rapidly shifting conditions. It also complements the premise of the dynamic capabilities theory that a firm's sustainable advantage lies in its ability to acquire VRIN resources. It enables organisations to rearrange utilising and its resources and skills in order to quickly respond to rapidly altering circumstances. This is known as dynamic capabilities which relate to a trader's managerial competencies of sensing,

discovering, creating, and exploiting new opportunities. Dynamic capabilities theory (DCT), as its name suggests, enables a firm to assess the sustainability of its strategic and material resources in formation of a firm's competitive advantage and its record-breaking performance in uncertain environments

The failure in adaptability and innovativeness negatively impacted this firm's strategic capabilities of maintaining a competitive advantage, especially when the environment is volatile. This theory is popularly referred to as dynamic capabilities; it deals with the firm's ability to harness and manage internal and external knowledge and skills to address a dynamic business environment. This is done by building on resources already available with the aim of creating more resources that tap a specific market. When the market is in a state of evolution, emergence, division or decline, the market fruits handy undergo fluctuations. Furthermore, dynamic capabilities arise from the modification of acquired, integrated, and recombined resources, leading to the generation of novel strategic approaches. There exists a direct correlation between the performance of a company and its dynamic capabilities. In the absence of dynamic capability within the firm, its superiority and survival in a changing environment are only temporary. Cristofaro and Lovallo (2022) has offered evidence to support the idea that the creation of dynamic capabilities requires the identification of the factors that give a company a competitive edge at the organizational level. This is the determining factor for the success or failure of the firm (Moktadir, Kumar, Ali, Paul, Sultana & Rezaei, 2020).

The Dynamic Capability Theory provides a useful framework for analyzing how SMEs in Eldoret Municipality can leverage environmental conservation practices to enhance their business performance. This theory posits that firms can gain competitive advantage by developing the capacity to adapt to changing market conditions and technological shifts (Cristofaro & Lovallo, 2022). In the context of environmental sustainability, SMEs need to develop dynamic capabilities to sense emerging green trends, seize opportunities presented by sustainable practices, and transform their operations to align with these new realities.

The adoption of environmental conservation practices, such as waste reduction, environmental training, corporate social responsibility, and green energy initiatives, requires SMEs to develop specific capabilities. For example, to effectively implement waste reduction practices, SMEs need to build capabilities in waste management, recycling, and resource efficiency. This may involve investing in employee training, upgrading equipment, and establishing partnerships with waste management service providers. By developing these capabilities, SMEs can reduce waste, lower operational costs, and enhance their environmental performance.

Similarly, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives require SMEs to develop capabilities in stakeholder engagement, social impact assessment, and community relations. By engaging with local communities and understanding their needs, SMEs can design and implement CSR programs that create shared value, strengthening their social license to operate and enhancing their

reputation among key stakeholders. This, in turn, can lead to improved business performance through increased customer loyalty, employee motivation, and access to resources.

The Dynamic Capability Theory also emphasizes the importance of organizational learning and knowledge management in enabling firms to adapt to changing environments (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). By investing in environmental training practices, SMEs in Eldoret Municipality can develop the necessary knowledge and skills to implement sustainable practices effectively. This may involve collaborating with industry associations, research institutions, or government agencies to access the latest information on environmental best practices and technologies.

Furthermore, the theory suggests that firms can gain competitive advantage by integrating external knowledge and resources into their operations (Cristofaro & Lovallo, 2022). In the context of green energy practices, SMEs can leverage partnerships with renewable energy providers, technology suppliers, and financing institutions to access the necessary resources and expertise to implement solar, wind, or bioenergy solutions. By developing these dynamic capabilities, SMEs can reduce their energy costs, mitigate climate risks, and enhance their environmental performance.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section reviewed literature related to Business performance, waste reduction practice, Environmental conservation training practice,Corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation and Green energy environmental conservation practives .

2.3.1 Business Performance

Particularly in emerging countries, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) support entire economies. Both entrepreneurs and lawmakers must have a firm grasp of how well they function. The connection between an entrepreneurial attitude and the success of SMEs was investigated by Jemal (2020). In their 2018 study, Mafini and Loury-Okoumba looked at 312 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from North America, Europe, and Asia to see how environmental sustainability practices affected their company performance. Financial and non-financial performance metrics for SMEs were positively impacted by the implementation of environmental management systems, green product/service innovation, and green supply chain management. Investing in environmental conservation can boost SMEs' competitiveness and profitability, according to the study.

Demirel and Kesidou (2019) investigated how environmental regulations affect the growth of 1,500 SMEs in 10 developed countries. The findings indicated that moderate environmental regulations can stimulate SMEs to innovate and adopt cleaner production technologies, leading to productivity gains and enhanced business performance. However, overly stringent regulations were

found to hinder SME growth due to the high compliance costs. The study recommended policymakers to strike a balance between environmental protection and supporting SME development.

Revell, Stokes and Chen (2020) explored the key barriers preventing 280 SMEs across the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia from implementing environmental conservation practices. The main obstacles identified were lack of financial resources, insufficient knowledge/skills, and organizational inertia. The research emphasized the need for targeted government incentives, training programs, and stakeholder collaboration to help SMEs overcome these barriers and improve their environmental sustainability.

Epoh and Mafini (2018) evaluated the correlation between environmental management practices and the business performance of 150 SMEs in South Africa. The findings indicated that the implementation of green procurement, eco-design, and environmental monitoring significantly enhanced both financial and non-financial performance metrics for SMEs. The study advised that policymakers offer financial and technical assistance to SMEs to promote the execution of environmental conservation initiatives.

Omofowa and Omofowa 2021) investigated the influence of green product and process innovations on the competitiveness of 280 SMEs in Nigeria. The findings showed that SMEs that invested in developing environmentally-friendly products and adopting cleaner production technologies experienced enhanced market share, profitability, and overall business performance. The

study highlighted the need for Nigerian SMEs to prioritize eco-innovation to remain competitive in the global market.

Akomea, Agyapong, Ampah and Osei (2023) explored the impact of sustainable business practices, including environmental conservation, on the growth of 195 SMEs in Ghana. The results indicated that SMEs implementing green operations, resource efficiency, and environmental reporting demonstrated higher sales growth, employment expansion, and market penetration compared to their counterparts. The study emphasized the importance of government policies and support programs to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices among Ghanaian SMEs.

Oyieno (2022) investigated the correlation between environmental sustainability practices and the business performance of 120 SMEs in Nairobi, Kenya. The results indicated that the adoption of green procurement, eco-design, and waste reduction substantially enhanced both financial (profitability, sales growth) and non-financial (customer satisfaction, brand reputation) performance metrics. The study advised the Kenyan government to offer incentives and support initiatives to promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices among SMEs.

Mulee (2021) examined the influence of environmental conservation practices on the business performance of 100 SMEs in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The findings indicated that SMEs adopting waste reduction, energy efficiency, and water conservation measures achieved superior sales growth, increased profitability, and bolstered brand reputation relative to their peers. The study

advised the county government to offer financial incentives and technical support to promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices among SMEs.

2.3.2 Waste Reduction Practice And Business Performance

Waste reduction in SMEs encompasses not only the harmful environmental impacts of their operations, but also the resources they use and the overall systems and processes involved in running their production facilities. Ezenekwe (2020) suggests that effective waste reduction practices significantly contribute to business performance by enhancing service delivery efficiency, reducing operational costs through efficient operations, minimizing service time, improving service quality, and increasing productivity (Chikezie et al., 2023). According to Otiso (2021), businesses have taken to customer relationship management strategies because they help them keep in touch with their current and potential clientele, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will remain loyal customers. This boosts the company's credibility with the general public, which in turn gives SMEs an edge in the marketplace.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face challenges in cost control and in meeting the increased customer expectations for service quality and delivery speed (Singh & Kumar, 2020). The degree of success achieved by an organization is heavily reliant on its ability to adapt to the constantly evolving internal and external circumstances (Charles & Ochieng, 2023). Implementing optimal waste reduction systems can lower operational expenses by minimizing waste and improving production efficiency. Furthermore, through the

implementation of waste reduction practices, organizations enhance hygiene standards, leading to an improvement in the quality of their services and products.

A study by Paparoidamis and Tran (2019) underscores the importance of adopting eco-friendly products in waste reduction efforts. SMEs that integrate eco-friendly products into their offerings can significantly reduce their environmental footprint. These products, often made from sustainable or recycled materials, not only minimize waste but also appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. The study found that SMEs offering eco-friendly products experienced increased customer loyalty and higher sales. This shift towards sustainability can enhance brand reputation and open new market opportunities, ultimately boosting business performance.

Sustainable packaging is another crucial aspect of waste reduction. According to research by Wandosell et al. (2021), SMEs that adopt sustainable packaging solutions, such as biodegradable or recyclable materials, can significantly reduce their waste output. Sustainable packaging not only addresses consumer demand for environmentally responsible products but also helps SMEs comply with packaging regulations. The study revealed that SMEs using sustainable packaging saw improvements in their market positioning and customer satisfaction. These businesses were able to reduce costs associated with waste disposal and regulatory fines, thereby enhancing their financial performance.

Legislation plays a vital role in shaping waste reduction practices among SMEs. A study by İncekara (2022) examined the impact of environmental legislation

on the waste management practices of SMEs. The findings indicate that stringent waste reduction regulations compel SMEs to adopt sustainable practices, such as recycling and reuse. Compliance with these regulations not only helps SMEs avoid legal penalties but also provides access to government incentives and subsidies. The study found that SMEs that proactively align with environmental legislation are better positioned to gain competitive advantages, such as improved stakeholder trust and increased investment opportunities.

SMEs have been compelled by intense competition to focus on reducing costs and enhancing operational performance in order to deliver high-quality products to highly demanding markets (Aboelmaged, 2018). Organizations are increasingly recognizing the significance of waste reduction and performance in their operations (Inman & Green, 2018). Lean production systems, which aim to reduce waste by analyzing existing conditions and developing new production systems according to lean system principles and practices, are worth looking into (Nicholas, 2018).

Research by Manickam and Duraisamy (2019) highlights the significance of reducing, reusing, and recycling. Both the amount of trash produced and the efficiency of material recycling are improved by this. Reducing the amount of waste that needs to be treated and disposed of can be achieved by minimizing waste at its source (Abdel-Shafy & Mansour, 2018). Better product design and/or management of processes can achieve this goal. According to Romero-Hernández and Romero (2018), waste recycling is the process of systematically

recovering waste materials for their potential use as inputs or resources. Making new uses for waste is one way to encourage recycling and other forms of waste re-use. A process known as waste transformation can be employed to transform waste into a more economically viable or more manageable form.

Regular waste collection and disposal should be conducted, with a focus on employing individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds for this task (Marello & Helwege, 2018). The non-biodegradable material that has been gathered should be eliminated by utilizing enclosed trucks and trailers. It is important to exercise caution to prevent any accidental release of waste during transportation (Ezeudu & Ezeudu, 2019). Waste disposal should be carried out in a prescribed and scientific manner. A specialized sanitary landfill should be constructed for the ultimate disposal of waste.

Solid waste reduction encompasses the processes related to the six fundamental principles of waste generation, storage, collection, transfer, transport, processing, and disposal (Sharma & Jain, 2019). The quantity of waste produced and the manner in which it is disposed of has a detrimental impact on the environment (Bundhoo, 2018). Uncollected waste leads to unpleasant odors, clogged drains, attracts scavengers, creates a nuisance for the general public, and serves as a favorable breeding ground for insects.

2.3.3 Environmental Training On Business Performance

Burlea-Schiopoiu and Mihai (2019) argue that environmental training practices are essential for SMEs to foster sustainable development and improve overall business performance. Their study highlights how training enhances employees'

environmental awareness, leading to more efficient use of resources and reduced waste. This improved efficiency can result in significant cost savings for SMEs, which directly impacts their bottom line. In adopting environmentally friendly practices, SMEs can improve their market reputation, attract eco-conscious customers, and meet regulatory requirements more effectively. Cop et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of continuous environmental training to keep employees updated on the latest sustainable practices and technologies.

In a study conducted by Chege and Wang (2020), they found that SMEs that invest in comprehensive environmental training programs tend to perform better financially and operationally. The study suggests that environmental training equips employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainable resource management. These practices not only reduce operational costs but also enhance the SMEs' competitive advantage by differentiating them from competitors who may not prioritize environmental sustainability.

A study by Yafi et al. (2021) explores the impact of environmental training on the supply chain performance of SMEs. The study find that SMEs that engage in environmental training for their employees see significant improvements in their supply chain efficiency and sustainability. In training employees on sustainable supply chain practices, SMEs can minimize environmental impacts, reduce costs associated with waste and inefficiency, and enhance supplier relationships (Zahoor & Gerged, 2021). The study highlights that environmental

training should be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of SMEs to maximize its effectiveness and relevance.

In another study, Muñoz-Pascual et al. (2021) examine how environmental training influences innovation and business performance in SMEs. Their findings indicate that SMEs that invest in environmental training are more likely to develop innovative solutions to environmental challenges. This innovation not only helps in complying with environmental regulations but also opens new business opportunities and markets (Singh et al., 2020). The study suggests that environmental training fosters a culture of continuous improvement and creativity among employees, which is crucial for long-term business success and sustainability.

Amjad et al. (2021) provide evidence on the importance of integrating environmental training with other organizational practices to enhance business performance. Their research shows that SMEs that combine environmental training with strategic planning, leadership commitment, and employee engagement initiatives see the most significant improvements in performance. The study emphasizes that environmental training should not be seen in isolation but as part of a broader strategy to embed sustainability into the core business operations.

Nguyen (2020) reveals that SMEs with robust environmental training programs report higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention. The study suggests that employees who receive environmental training feel more valued and motivated, as they perceive their work as contributing to a greater cause. This

increased job satisfaction leads to higher productivity and lower turnover rates, which positively impact the overall business performance of SMEs.

A study by Cantele and Zardini (2020) explores the challenges and benefits of implementing environmental training in SMEs. Their study find that while SMEs in developing countries face resource constraints, those that invest in environmental training experience significant benefits, including improved access to international markets and compliance with global standards. The study highlights the role of external support, such as government incentives and international aid, in facilitating environmental training for SMEs in resource-constrained settings.

2.3.4 Corporate Social Responsibility On Business Performance

The influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the business performance of SMEs has garnered significant attention in recent years. A study by Oduro et al. (2022) highlights that CSR initiatives can significantly enhance the reputation of SMEs, leading to increased customer loyalty and brand differentiation. In engaging in socially responsible activities, such as supporting local communities, implementing environmentally friendly practices, and ensuring fair labor conditions, SMEs can build a positive corporate image that attracts and retains customers who value ethical business practices. This, in turn, translates into better financial performance and market positioning.

The study conducted by Torkkeli and Durst (2022) emphasizes that CSR practices contribute to the long-term sustainability of SMEs. Their study finds that SMEs that incorporate CSR into their core business strategies are more

resilient to market fluctuations and economic downturns. In fostering strong relationships with stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, and the local community, these SMEs create a supportive network that can help them navigate challenges more effectively. This stakeholder engagement not only enhances business stability but also drives innovation and continuous improvement, further boosting business performance.

Tree planting initiatives are a notable green energy practice that can significantly impact the business performance of SMEs. According to a study by Nambiar (2021), SMEs that engage in tree planting not only contribute to carbon sequestration but also enhance their corporate image. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability, which can attract eco-conscious customers and investors. The positive public perception can translate into increased sales and customer loyalty, thereby improving the financial performance of these SMEs. Additionally, tree planting can offer cost savings in the long run by contributing to local ecosystems and reducing the need for certain energy expenditures.

Equity Bank's tree donation program exemplifies how corporate support for environmental initiatives can benefit SMEs. A study by Ferretti (2023) highlights that Equity Bank’s tree donation program has provided SMEs with the resources to participate in large-scale tree planting efforts. This support not only helps SMEs to engage in sustainable practices but also promotes a sense of community and shared responsibility towards the environment. The study suggests that such partnerships can enhance the reputation of SMEs, making

them more appealing to customers who prioritize corporate social responsibility. Moreover, these initiatives can open doors for SMEs to access funding and support from organizations that value environmental stewardship.

Participation in tree planting activities is another avenue through which SMEs can improve their business performance. A study by Thompson (2019) indicates that SMEs that actively participate in community tree planting events build stronger relationships with local stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and government entities. These relationships are crucial for business success, as they can lead to collaborative opportunities, enhanced community support, and favorable regulatory conditions. The study also found that employees of SMEs that participate in tree planting activities report higher job satisfaction and morale, leading to increased productivity and lower turnover rates.

A study by Ali and Ali (2021) explores the impact of CSR on employee satisfaction and productivity in SMEs. Their study find that SMEs that actively engage in CSR activities tend to have higher levels of employee morale and job satisfaction. Employees feel proud to be associated with companies that are committed to social and environmental causes, leading to increased motivation and loyalty. This positive work environment results in higher productivity and reduced employee turnover, which are crucial factors for the success and growth of SMEs.

Carlini et al. (2019) underscores the importance of CSR in attracting and retaining talented employees. The study reveals that SMEs with strong CSR programs are more likely to attract skilled professionals who are looking for

meaningful and purposeful work. These employees bring their expertise and commitment to the organization, driving innovation and improving business performance. In retaining top talent, SMEs can reduce recruitment and training costs, further enhancing their financial performance.

The role of CSR in enhancing access to capital for SMEs is highlighted in a study by Ngo and Le (2023). Their study argue that SMEs with robust CSR practices are more likely to gain the trust of investors and financial institutions. In demonstrating their commitment to ethical business practices and sustainable development, these SMEs can secure funding and investment more easily. Access to capital is vital for the growth and expansion of SMEs, enabling them to invest in new technologies, enter new markets, and improve their overall competitiveness.

A comprehensive study by Le (2023) examines the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty in SMEs. The findings suggest that customers are more likely to remain loyal to SMEs that actively engage in CSR activities. Customers appreciate the efforts made by these businesses to give back to society and protect the environment. This loyalty translates into repeat business, positive word-of-mouth, and increased sales, all of which contribute to the improved financial performance of SMEs. The study also indicates that CSR initiatives can help SMEs differentiate themselves in crowded markets, giving them a competitive edge.

A study by Elford and Daub (2019) explores the challenges and benefits of implementing CSR in SMEs. Their study finds that while resource constraints

and lack of awareness can hinder the adoption of CSR practices, those SMEs that do engage in CSR experience significant benefits. These benefits include enhanced brand reputation, improved stakeholder relationships, and increased business opportunities. The study suggests that external support, such as government incentives and capacity-building programs, can play a crucial role in promoting CSR adoption among SMEs in developing regions.

2.3.5 Green Energy Practices On Business Performance

Prashar (2019) argues that, within the framework of sustainable development, research into the effects of green energy practices on the financial results of SMEs is essential. To improve their environmental performance and business outcomes, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up a large portion of the world's businesses, are embracing green energy practices.

Segarra-Blasco and Jove-Llopis (2019) found that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) save a lot of money when they use renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Businesses can cut costs and lessen their impact on the environment by producing their own electricity. While green energy technologies may require a sizable upfront investment, the payoff in the long run is usually more than justified. Per Apfel and Herbes (2021). The study points out that SMEs in regions with high energy costs benefit the most from adopting green energy, as they can achieve substantial reductions in operational expenses, which positively impacts their profitability.

Nuryakin and Maryati (2022) stress that using green energy makes small businesses more competitive in the market. According to their study, customers

are becoming more aware of the environment and would rather buy from companies that show they care about sustainability. In adopting green energy, SMEs can differentiate themselves from competitors and attract a loyal customer base that values eco-friendly practices. This market differentiation is particularly important for SMEs operating in highly competitive industries, where standing out can be challenging.

Purwandani and Michaud (2021) explores how green energy practices influence the public perception of SMEs. The findings indicate that SMEs that invest in green energy not only improve their environmental performance but also enhance their brand image. These businesses are often perceived as innovative, responsible, and forward-thinking, which can attract customers, investors, and partners who prioritize sustainability. The positive public perception can lead to increased sales, better stakeholder relationships, and improved access to capital, all of which contribute to enhanced business performance.

A study by Park and Kim (2020) looks at the part that green energy practices play in following the rules. In their study, they talk about how governments around the world are making environmental rules stricter to fight climate change and encourage sustainability. Small businesses that use green energy are more likely to be able to follow these rules and avoid fines or other legal problems. By staying ahead of government rules, these small businesses can gain a competitive edge and take advantage of tax breaks, grants, and subsidies for businesses that invest in renewable energy technologies.

Thomas et al. (2022) investigates the impact of green energy adoption on the overall business sustainability of SMEs. The study finds that SMEs that integrate green energy into their operations experience enhanced business resilience and sustainability. These businesses are less vulnerable to energy price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions, which can affect traditional energy sources. In securing a stable and sustainable energy supply, SMEs can ensure continuous operations and long-term viability. The study also highlights that green energy practices contribute to a positive corporate culture, where employees feel proud to work for a company that prioritizes environmental responsibility.

A study by Adepoju and Akinwale (2019) explores the challenges and benefits of green energy adoption among SMEs. Their study finds that while SMEs in developing regions face significant barriers, such as high initial costs and limited access to technology, those that adopt green energy practices experience notable benefits. These benefits include reduced energy costs, improved business performance, and enhanced competitiveness in both local and international markets. The study suggests that external support, such as government policies, financial incentives, and technical assistance, is crucial to overcoming the barriers and promoting green energy adoption among SMEs in these regions.

A survey conducted by Sypniewska et al. (2023) reveals that SMEs with robust green energy practices report higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement. Employees working in environmentally responsible companies

tend to be more motivated and committed, as they believe their work contributes to a greater cause. This increased job satisfaction leads to higher productivity, lower turnover rates, and improved overall business performance. The study also indicates that green energy practices can attract top talent, as many job seekers prefer to work for companies that prioritize sustainability.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Börner et al. (2019) define conceptual frameworks as graphical and diagrammatic representations that describe the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables of a phenomenon under study.

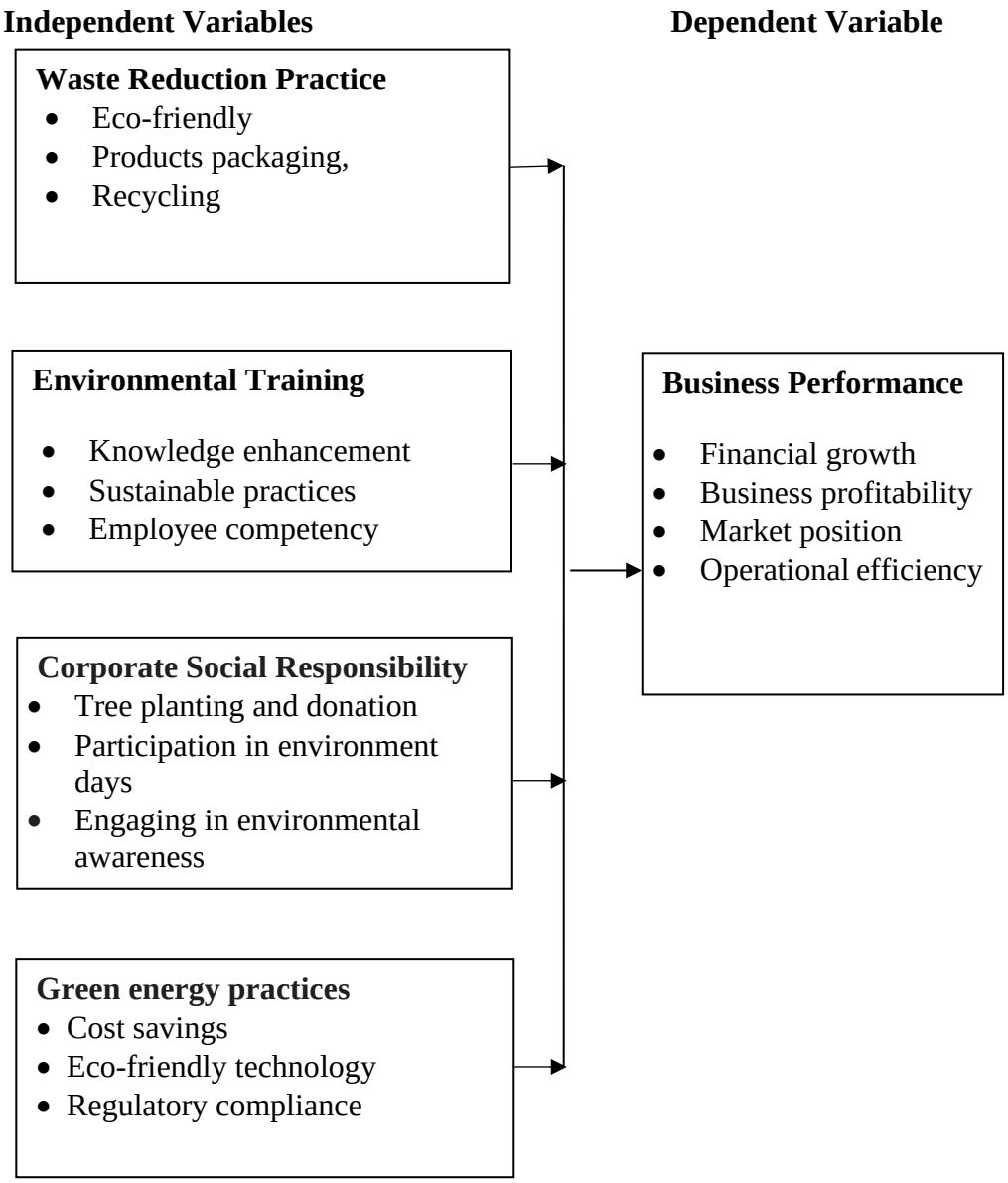


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

2.5 Research Gaps

From reviewed literature majority of studies primarily focus on waste reduction practices in specific regions like Ghana, Nigeria, and Indonesia. There is a need for more comprehensive research that covers environmental conservation practices and business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality. The previous studies relied heavily on qualitative methods, in gathering data on the subjects of determinants of household solid waste management. While qualitative research provides valuable insights, it often lacks the generalizability and statistical rigor needed to establish cause-and-effect relationships. Reliance on researcher interpretation can lead to biases in data collection and analysis. Findings may not be applicable to other contexts or SMEs in different sectors. Challenges in measuring and comparing waste reduction practices and their impact on business performance. There is a need for more quantitative research that uses statistical methods to analyze waste reduction practices and their impact on business performance. The previous studies primarily focus on waste reduction practices in specific sectors like manufacturing, service, and agriculture. There is a need for more research that covers a broader range of sectors and industries to understand the diverse waste reduction challenges and strategies among SMEs.

The studies give less emphasis on waste reduction practices on business performance. There is a need for a more comprehensive theoretical framework that can guide future research and provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between waste reduction and business performance among SMEs. These gaps highlight the need for more comprehensive and diverse research on

waste reduction practices in SMEs to better understand the challenges and opportunities for improving business performance among SMEs.

Table 2.1 Summry and Research Gaps

Author(s)	Topic	Methodology	Findings	Research Gaps
Chikezie et al. (2023)	Waste Reduction and Business Performance	Case Studies	Waste reduction practices improve service quality and organizational reputation, strengthening competitive advantage.	Exploration of long-term effects on business sustainability.
Charles & Ochieng (2023)	Adaptation to Internal and External Changes	Survey Research	Success in SMEs depends on their ability to adapt to changing circumstances through optimal waste reduction systems.	Analysis of the role of leadership in facilitating adaptation.
Lohana et al. (2023)	Strategic planning for growth and sustainability in SMEs in Kenya	Qualitative analysis through case studies and interviews	Highlighted the challenges SMEs face in strategic planning, including resource constraints and lack of market information, impacting their sustainability efforts.	Absence of a comprehensive theoretical framework linking waste reduction strategies with business performance; further quantitative research needed to establish cause-and-effect relationships.

İncekara (2022)	Environmental Legislation and Waste Practices	Policy Analysis	Stringent waste reduction regulations lead SMEs to adopt sustainable practices, enhancing competitive advantages.	Need for studies on the effectiveness of specific regulations.
Kamuri (2022).	Influence of innovativeness on the growth of SMEs in Kenya	Quantitative research using surveys and statistical analysis	Found that innovativeness positively affects SME growth, with implications for competitive advantage.	Need for further exploration of how waste reduction practices can enhance innovativeness and overall business performance in various sectors.
Awinja & Fatoki (2021)	Effect of digital financial services on the growth of SMEs in Kenya	Mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys	Demonstrated that digital financial services significantly contribute to the growth of SMEs, enhancing access to finance and market opportunities.	Insufficient focus on the intersection of digital financial services and waste management practices, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability.
Wandosell et al. (2021)	Sustainable Packaging in SMEs	Comparative Study of SMEs	Adoption of sustainable packaging improves market positioning and customer satisfaction while reducing waste disposal costs.	Examination of the impact of sustainable packaging on brand loyalty.

Ezenekwe (2020)	Waste Reduction and Business Performance	Literature Review	Effective waste reduction practices enhance service delivery efficiency, reduce operational costs, and improve productivity.	Need for empirical studies on specific waste reduction practices in SMEs.
Singh & Kumar (2020)	Challenges in SMEs regarding Waste Reduction	Qualitative Interviews	SMEs struggle with cost control and meeting customer expectations for service quality and delivery speed.	Investigation into strategies to overcome these challenges.
Paparoidamis & Tran (2019)	Eco-friendly Products and Waste Reduction	Empirical Analysis of SMEs	SMEs integrating eco-friendly products reduce environmental footprints and enhance customer loyalty and sales.	Research on consumer behavior towards eco-friendly products.
Aboelmaged (2018)	Cost Reduction and Operational Performance	Review of Existing Literature	Intense competition drives SMEs to focus on waste reduction to enhance operational performance	Further research on the financial implications of waste reduction strategies.

			and product quality.	
Inman & Green (2018)	Waste Reduction in Production Systems	Case Study Analysis	Implementation of lean production systems can significantly reduce waste and improve operational efficiency.	Need for longitudinal studies on lean systems in SMEs.
Nicholas (2018)	Lean Production Systems	Empirical Research	Designing production systems based on lean concepts leads to effective waste reduction and improved operational outcomes.	Exploration of barriers to lean implementation in SMEs.
Douglas et al. (2017)	Critical success factors for SMEs in Kenya	Qualitative study through interviews and surveys	Identified key factors influencing the success of SMEs, including innovation, market access, and management practices.	Lack of quantitative analysis to establish the impact of these factors on business performance and waste management practices.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three provides a comprehensive overview of the research design, target population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection method, pilot test, data processing and analysis, and data presentation.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a methodical strategy or a model for carrying out a study so that the directions of interference are brought to the bear on influencing factors that may distort conclusion of the research (Kazdin, 2021). This study adopted a descriptive correlational research which is a quantitative research method used to examine the relationships between two or more variables without manipulating them. This approach allows researchers to gather data and analyze how variables are related, providing insights into patterns and trends within the data. Descriptive research in fact is scientific, which involves a focused observation of a subject's behavioral patterns and documentation of these without attempting to control the circumstances leading to such behavior (Berg, Lune & Lune, 2004). Therefore, this design is best for investigating influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs.

3.3 Target Population

According to Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) the target population is intended as the specific units to which results of the study can be applied. The target population were the registered SMEs operating in the Uasin Gishu County,

Kenya. The location of the study area showing the Eldoret Municipality is presented in Figure 3.1. From the records of Uasin Gishu County, there is a total of 2053 SMEs having their base in Eldoret according to the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development in the year 2024. Hence, the target population consisted of SMEs operating in seven specific sectors:, the following industry sectors offer the most employment opportunity: financial and banking, retail and wholesale, telecommunication, manufacturing, and processing, food and lodging, business, consulting, and workshop industries.

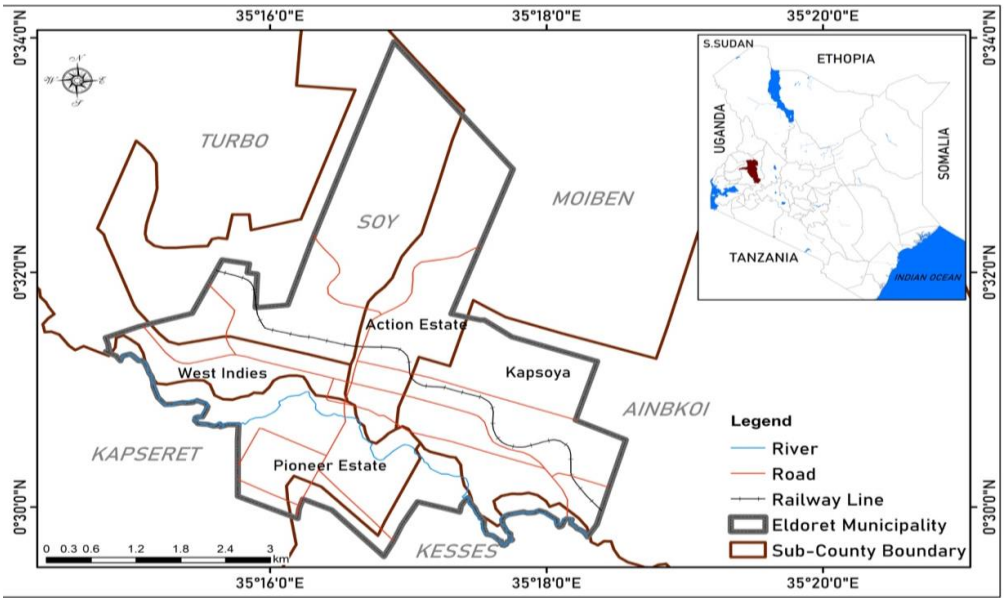


Figure 3.1; Map of Eldoret Municipality

Table 3.1 Target Population

Name of SME	Accessible
Workshop services	251
Hospitality	151
Telecommunication	389
Retail	470
Agriculture	195
Financial services	450
Professional services	147
Total	**2053**

Source: Uasin Gishu County Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development, (2024)

3.4 Sampling Frame

In the view of Muchaendepi et al. (2019) the sampling frame refers to the list of all the units of a population that were used for data collection and in this study were made up of seven sectors of the SMEs. Therefore, for this study, the unit of analysis were the managers/owners of 450 financial services, 470 retail, 389 telecommunication, 195 agriculture, 151 hospitality, 147 professional services, and 251 workshop services firms.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Design

A sample size refers to a subset of the target or accessible population that has been chosen in a systematic manner to accurately represent it. According to Lakens (2022), a sample size refers to the quantity of items that need to be chosen from the entire population in order to form a representative sample. The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1973) formula,

based on a target population of 2053 SMEs. The formula was used to select a sample size of 335 SMEs;

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

Where

n represent the sample size required

N represent the population size which is 2053

e represent the level of precision =0.05

n =2053/ (1+2053*0.05^2)

n =335

Thus, sample size were 335 owner/managers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality.

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

Sampling technique as explained by Adeoye-Olatunde et al. (2021) therefore means the approach of identifying an appropriate sample through which a researcher identified the parameters or strategies that would assist determine appropriate respondents from the accessible or target population. For the selection of SMEs, the study used the stratified and cluster sampling method from which owners/managers proceeded. Therefore, the SMEs were classified into seven broad sectors/clusters and proportional sample size determination was conducted using Neyman's (1934) ratio Formula. The idea of the method is to design a survey where the increase of its accuracy is aimed, but the sample size remains invariable. The size of the sample that must be taken from each of the

stratum h, the so-called optimal sample size can be calculated using Neyman's (1934) allocation method:

$$n_{h=}\left({}^{N_h}/_{N}\right)n$$

Where,

nh represent sample size for stratum h,

n represent total sample size,

Nh represent the population size for stratum h,

N represent the total population

Hence, distributions were as follows;

Table 3.2 Sampling Design

Name of SME	**Proportion**	**Sample Size**
Workshop services	251/2053*335	41
Hospitality	151/2053*335	25
Telecommunication	389/2053*335	63
Retail	470/2053*335	77
Agriculture	195/2053*335	32
Financial services	450/2053*335	73
Professional services	147/2053*335	24
Total	**2053/2053*335**	**335**

The researcher assigned numerical identifiers to participants on each street at random before determining the maximum value of the sampling interval (calculated by dividing the total population size by the desired sample size). Generate a random number between 1 and the maximum value, then iteratively

increase the maximum value to select the remaining SMEs. Select the sample by selecting SMEs that correspond to the obtained number sequence.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

The study used primary data. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. Questionnaires were used to collect the primary data for the project. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher in the field. Surveys are best conducted using questionnaires (Ball, 2019). The questionnaire commenced with an initial solicitation, followed by items that were categorized into three distinct sections. Part 1 was designed to collect personal information from the respondents, while Part 2 was designed to collect information on specific objectives, such as waste reduction practices, employee training practices, implementation of environmental management practices, and adoption of environmental management practices. Part 3 focused on gathering data regarding the business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality. The items were of the Likert type and were rated on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. The Likert scale consisted of five response options: 5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Undecided, 2-Disagree, and 1-Strongly Disagree. The participants read, comprehended, and selected the appropriate option. Finally the researcher administered the questionnaires to gather additional information and ensure clarity of the data provided by the respondents.

3.7 Pilot Test

Pre-testing of research instruments were done through pilot study among managers of SMEs in Nakuru town. The researcher used 33 questionnaires for

pilot study representing 10% of the sample population (Malmqvist et al., 2021). Pilot study was done to ascertain the validity and reliability of research instruments. Conducting the pilot study in Nakuru was justified due to its demographic and economic similarities with Eldoret, its relevance to understanding common challenges faced by SMEs, and its role in validating research instruments effectively. Nakuru and Eldoret share similar demographic profiles, including population size and economic activities, particularly in the SME sector. Both towns are significant urban centers in Kenya, characterized by a growing number of small and medium enterprises that contribute to local economies. This similarity makes Nakuru a suitable representative for a pilot study aimed at understanding issues relevant to SMEs in Eldoret. The business environment in Nakuru mirrors that of Eldoret, as both cities face comparable challenges such as access to finance, market competition, and infrastructural constraints. These shared conditions mean that findings from the pilot study in Nakuru can be reasonably extrapolated to Eldoret, enhancing the validity of the research instruments used.

3.7.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

Validity, as stated by Olanipekun et al. (2022), is based on the underlying belief that the object of study can be quantified and accurately represented. The term "extent" refers to the degree to which a research instrument is capable of accurately measuring what it was designed to measure. Validity encompasses several different forms, such as face validity, construct validity, and content validity. This study employed content validity to verify the research instruments by cross-checking them with the assistance of the supervisor and experts. The

aim was to ensure that the questions adequately address the variables that need to be measured.

In practice, this study employed content validity by engaging both supervisors and experts to cross-check research instruments. This collaborative approach ensured that each question was scrutinized for its relevance and adequacy in addressing the variables intended for measurement. By systematically verifying that each question aligns with the research objectives, researchers can enhance the credibility and accuracy of their findings.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability, as defined by Mingers and Standing (2020), refers to the quality of propositions or measures in terms of their adherence to established truth. In order to ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted for this study. The study utilized questionnaires. Assuring that the items do not correlate with other constructs and demonstrating that the measured items correlate with the intended construct are the two main goals of construct reliability. Using Cronbach's alpha, the study's reliability was evaluated. In this study, a Cronbach's coefficient above 0.7 was deemed adequate (Ekolu & Quainoo, 2019). The results are as presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Reliability Test Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	.720	5
Environmental conservation training practice	.758	5
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	.750	5
Green energy environmental conservation practices	.825	5
Business Performance	.730	5

The study results in Table 3.3 revealed that green energy environmental conservation practices achieved the highest Cronbach's Alpha of 0.825, indicating strong internal consistency among its items. This suggests that respondents view these items as closely related and likely measuring a coherent construct related to green energy initiatives. Environmental conservation training practice with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.758, this category also demonstrates acceptable reliability, suggesting that the training practices are consistently perceived by respondents.

Corporate social responsibility conservation practices the score of 0.750 indicates that items in this category are reliably measuring aspects of corporate social responsibility related to environmental conservation. Business Performance has the value of 0.730 signifies acceptable internal consistency, implying that the items used to assess business performance in relation to environmental practices are reasonably reliable. Environmental conservation waste reduction practices had the lowest Cronbach's Alpha at 0.720, yet it remains within the acceptable range. While this indicates some level of consistency, it also suggests potential areas for improvement in how these

practices are measured or defined. The findings suggest that while most categories exhibit acceptable reliability, particularly the green energy practices, there is room for enhancement in areas like waste reduction practices where the internal consistency is comparatively lower.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to commencing the research, the researcher acquired a clearance from the University Graduate School. The researcher applied for a research permit at NACOSTI, the National Council for Science and Technology, before beginning fieldwork. In order to ensure that all respondents received the data collection instruments, the researcher also wrote a letter of transmittal. The researcher hand-delivered the questionnaires to the respondents. Daily follow-up evaluations tracked how far along the participants were in finishing the surveys. The data collection lasted approximately two weeks.

3.9 Data Processing and Analysis

Data were coded, cleaned, and managed after collection, and SPSS was used for data analysis. The study used descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the quantitative data. Central tendency measures like the mean, mode, and standard deviation are part of descriptive statistics. Multiple regression models and Pearson correlation coefficients r are inferential statistics. Environmental conservation practices served as the independent variable while business performance was dependent variable and the relationship between the two was tested using regression analysis.This analysis sought to determine the coefficients of a predictive linear equation that involveed multiple dependent

variables. Every variable must meet the tolerance criteria with a tolerance level of 0.05. Any variable which caused the tolerance of another variable to fall below this criterion was dropped.

The multiple regression models used in this study is given below;

$$\boldsymbol{y_1 = \alpha_i + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \varepsilon_i}\textbf{.....equation 3.1}$$

y_1 represents business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality

α represents constant.

$\beta_1 \ldots \beta_4$ represents the slope in which Business performance of SMEs in Eldoret when the independent variable changes by one unit, the municipality changes too.

x_1 represents waste reduction practice

x_2 represents employee's training practice

x_3 represents implementation of environmental management practices

x_4 represents adoption of environmental management practices

ε = error term

Table 3.4 Operationalization of Variables

Objectives	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Analysis Method	Decision Rule
1. To assess the influence of waste reduction practice on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.	**Waste Reduction Practice** • Eco-friendly • Products packaging, • Recycling	**Business Performance** • Financial Growth • Market Position • Operational Efficiency	*Descriptive statistics* *Regression Analysis and Correlation*	*P<0.05 Reject* *p>0.05 fail to reject*
2. To determine influence of environmental training practice on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.	**Environmental Training** • Knowledge Enhancement • Sustainable Practices • Employee Competency	**Business Performance** • Financial Growth • Market Position • Operational Efficiency	*Descriptive statistics* *Regression Analysis and Correlation*	
3. To ascertain the influence of corporate social responsibility on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.	**Corporate Social Responsibility** • Tree planting, • Tree donations, • Engaging in awareness about environment	**Business Performance** • Financial Growth • Market Position • Operational Efficiency	*Descriptive statistics* *Regression Analysis and Correlation*	

4. To assess the influence of green energy practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.	**Green energy practices** • Cost Savings • Eco-Friendly Technology • Regulatory Compliance	**Business Performance** • Financial Growth • Market Position • Operational Efficiency	*Descriptive statistics* *Regression Analysis and Correlation*

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought a letter of authorization from the school of business of Koitalel Samoei University College and permission from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) to allow permission to gather data. The researcher sought informed consent by ensuring that all SME owners and employees participating in the research study were fully informed about the purpose, risks, and benefits of the research. This principle emphasized transparency and the importance of obtaining informed consent from participants.

The researcher protected the confidentiality of sensitive business and financial information provided by SMEs. This was crucial in maintaining trust and ensured that SMEs were not exposed to any potential harm. The researcher ensured that SMEs were selected for participation in a fair and unbiased manner, without discrimination. This principle promoted inclusivity and representation in the research. It helped recognize the diversity of SMEs and their specific needs and constraints.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study's analysis and findings in line with the research methodology. The results were presented on environmental conservation practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.

4.2 Response Rate

The study presented the response rate of the respondents. This resulted from the presented questionnaires for the survey. Table 4.1 presented the results.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

Response Rate	Number	Percentages
Responded	314	93.8
Not responded	21	6.2
Administered	**335**	**100.0**

Table 4.1 shows that the total rate of response was 93.8%. According to Creswell (2009) a questionnaire return rate of above 75% is appropriate and is therefore suitable to enable generalization of the results to the target population.

4.3 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The study evaluated the demographic information of the respondents including gender, age, level of education and working experience

4.3.1 Gender of Respondents

The study established the gender distribution of the respondents. The findings are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	167	53.2
Female	147	46.8
Total	314	100.0

Study findings in Table 4.1 showed the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of the total, 167 (53.2%) of the respondents were male 147(46.8%) were female. The sample population in the study was fairly distribution with a slide majority of the respondents were male.

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

The study looked at the age brackets of the respondents. Table 4.3 presented the study results.

Table 4.3 Age Brackets of the Respondents

Age Brackets	Frequency	Percent
18-30 Years	40	12.7
31-40 Years	99	31.5
41-50 Years	136	43.3
Above 50 Years	39	12.4
Total	**314**	**100.0**

Study findings in Table 4.3 showed the age distribution of the respondents. Table 4.3 indicates that 40(12.7%) of the respondents were aged 18-30 years, 99(31.5%) were aged 31-40 years, 136(43.3%) were aged 41-50 years and 39(12.4%) were aged above 50 years. This implies that majority of the respondents were aged between 41-50 years.

4.3.3 Highest Level of Education

The researcher also sought to know highest level of education of the respondents. Table 4.4 presents the study results.

Table 4.4 Highest level of education of the respondent

Highest level of education	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	44	14.0
Diploma	156	49.7
Degree	99	31.5
Post graduate	15	4.8
Total	**314**	**100.0**

Study findings in Table 4.4 showed the distribution of respondents based on their highest level of education. The findings indicate that 44(14%) were certificate holders, 156(49.7%) were diploma holders, 99(31.5%) were degree holders, 15(4.8%) had post graduate degrees. This suggests that majority of the respondents were diploma holders.

4.3.3 Working experience

The researcher also sought to know how long the respondents worked in small and medium enterprises. Table 4.5 presents the study results.

Table 4.5 Working experience of the respondent

Working experience	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2 years	24	7.6
2-5 Years	158	50.3
6-10 Years	89	28.3
Above 10 Years	43	13.7
Total	**314**	**100.0**

Study findings in Table 4.4 showed the distribution of respondents based on their working experience. The findings indicate that 24(7.6%) had worked less than 2 years in SMEs, 158(50.3%) had worked between 2 and 5 years, 89(28.3%) had worked between 6 and 10 years and 43(13.7%) had worked above 10 years. This suggests that majority of the respondents had worker in SMEs sectors beween2 and 5 years.

4.4 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive data were collected from respondents, summarized and analyzed. To achieve this, a five-point Likert scale was used where; 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided.4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree and the results are shown below:

4.4.1 Descriptive Statistical for Environmental Conservation Waste Reduction Practices

The study sought to assess the influence of environmental conservation waste reduction practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality. The study findings were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistical for Environmental Conservation Waste Reduction Practices

Statements		SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	Std.
Reducing waste generation through efficient production processes has a positive impact on the financial performance of SMEs in Eldoret	**F**	134	80	67	22	11	3.97	1.113
	%	42.7	25.5	21.3	7.0	3.5		
Reusing waste materials and products within SMEs in Eldoret leads to cost savings and improved profitability	**F**	100	145	34	23	12	3.95	1.032
	%	31.8	46.2	10.8	7.3	3.8		
Implementing recycling programs for waste reduction in Eldoret SMEs results in increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials	**F**	125	100	36	35	18	3.89	1.211
	%	39.8	31.8	11.5	11.1	5.7		
Adopting a comprehensive waste reduction, reuse, and recycling strategy enhances the overall competitiveness of SMEs in Eldoret	**F**	63	138	69	22	22	3.63	1.095
	%	20.1	43.9	22.0	7.0	7.0		
Effective waste reduction practices, including reduction, reuse, and recycling, contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of SMEs in Eldoret	**F**	77	146	57	22	12	3.81	1.009
	%	24.5	46.5	18.2	7.0	3.8		

Study findings in Table 4.6 revealed that the vast majority of the respondents 214(68.2%) agreed that reducing waste generation through efficient production processes has a positive impact on the financial performance of SMEs in Eldoret. However, 33(10.5%) of the respondents disagreed that reducing waste generation through efficient production processes has a positive impact on the financial performance of SMEs in Eldoret. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed with the statement that reducing waste generation through efficient production processes has a positive impact on the financial performance of SMEs in Eldoret (Mean=3.97, standard deviation=1.113).

Further, the study findings revealed that majority of the respondents 245(78%) agreed that reusing waste materials and products within SMEs in Eldoret leads to cost savings and improved profitability. Conversely 35(11.1%) of the respondents disagreed that reusing waste materials and products within SMEs in Eldoret leads to cost savings and improved profitability. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed with the statement that reusing waste materials and products within SMEs in Eldoret leads to cost savings and improved profitability (Mean=3.95, standard deviation=1.032)

Furthermore, it was noted from the study that, majority of the respondents 225(71.6%) agreed that implementing recycling programs for waste reduction in Eldoret SMEs results in increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials. However, 53(16.8%) of the respondents disagreed that implementing

recycling programs for waste reduction results in increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed that implementing recycling programs for waste reduction results in increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials (Mean=3.89, standard deviation=1.211).

It was further noted from the study that 201(64%) of the respondents agreed and 44(14%) disagreed that adopting a comprehensive waste reduction, reuse, and recycling strategy enhances the overall competitiveness of SMEs in Eldoret. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed with the statement that that adopting a comprehensive waste reduction, reuse, and recycling strategy enhances the overall competitiveness of SMEs in Eldoret (Mean=3.63, standard deviation=1.095).

Finally, 223(71%) of the respondents agreed that effective waste reduction practices, including reduction, reuse and recycling, contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of SMEs in Eldoret. However, 34(10.8%) of the respondents disagreed that effective waste reduction practices, including reduction, reuse, and recycling, contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of SMEs in Eldoret. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed that effective waste reduction practices, including reduction, reuse, and recycling, contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of SMEs in Eldoret (Mean=3.81, standard deviation=1.009).



Source; Researcher 2024

Plate 4.1: Solid waste disposal bin at a matatu stage in Eldoret town

Plate 4.1 shows the presence of the large metal bin suggests efforts to centralize waste disposal and reduce littering in the surrounding environment. By providing a designated space for waste collection, authorities promote proper waste management, which plays a vital role in environmental conservation. The bin's location in a public space also encourages commuters, traders and drivers to dispose of waste responsibly, reducing the likelihood of waste being scattered on the ground, which can contribute to pollution.

Additionally, the image highlights a key aspect of waste reduction practices: accessibility to disposal facilities in areas of high human traffic. The organized placement of trolleys next to the bin suggests that there might be further efforts to collect and transport waste efficiently. Proper solid waste management at public transportation hubs is crucial for minimizing environmental degradation and promoting cleaner, healthier urban spaces. This initiative supports environmental conservation efforts by preventing unsightly and hazardous litter accumulation, protecting local ecosystems, and encouraging public participation in maintaining a cleaner environment.

4.4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Environmental Conservation Training Practice

The study sought to determine influence of environmental conservation training practice on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality. The study findings were presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistical for Environmental Conservation Training

Statements		SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	Std.
SMEs that provide environmental training to employees experience greater innovation in resource management	**F**	66	137	66	34	11	3.68	1.034
	%	21.0	43.6	21.0	10.8	3.5		
Employees who undergo environmental training sensitization and participation are more likely to identify and implement cost-saving measures related to energy or waste reduction	**F**	121	103	55	12	23	3.91	1.170
	%	38.5	32.8	17.5	3.8	7.3		
SMEs with a strong focus on environmental training demonstrate a more positive brand image to environmentally conscious consumers	**F**	90	113	67	22	22	3.72	1.157
	%	28.7	36.0	21.3	7.0	7.0		
Regular environmental training programs can help SMEs comply with environmental regulations more effectively, reducing the risk of fines or penalties	**F**	88	89	79	25	33	3.55	1.266
	%	28.0	28.3	25.2	8.0	10.5		
Investing in environmental training allows SMEs to attract and retain employees who value sustainability practices	**F**	76	113	79	24	22	3.63	1.138
	%	24.2	36.0	25.2	7.6	7.0		

The study results in Table 4.7 showed that majority 203(64.6%) of the respondents agreed that SMEs that provide environmental training to employees experience greater innovation in resource management**.** However, 45(1014.3%) of the respondents disagreed that SMEs that provide environmental training to employees experience greater innovation in resource management. Further, in terms of mean and standard deviation the respondents agreed with the statement that SMEs that provide environmental training to employees experience greater innovation in resource management (Mean=3.68, standard deviation=1.034)

The study further revealed that vast majority 224(71.3%) of the respondents agreed that employees who undergo environmental training programs are more likely to identify and implement cost-saving measures related to energy or waste reduction**.** However,35(11.1%) of the respondents disagreed that employees who undergo environmental training programs are more likely to identify and implement cost-saving measures related to energy or waste reduction. Additionally, the study results on mean and standard deviation revealed the respondents agreed that employees who undergo environmental training programs are more likely to identify and implement cost-saving measures related to energy or waste reduction (Mean=3.91, standard deviation=1.170).

On top of the above findings, other findings indicated 203(64.7%) of the respondents agreed that SMEs with a strong focus on environmental training demonstrate a more positive brand image to environmentally conscious consumers**.** However, 44(14%) of the respondents disagreed that SMEs with a strong focus on environmental training demonstrate a more positive brand

image to environmentally conscious consumers. Further, the study findings also indicated, in terms of mean and standard deviation the respondents agreed that SMEs with a strong focus on environmental training demonstrate a more positive brand image to environmentally conscious consumers (Mean=3.72, standard deviation=1.157).

The study nonetheless indicated that majority 117(56.3%) of the respondents agreed that regular environmental sensitization activities can help SMEs comply with environmental regulations more effectively, reducing the risk of fines or penalties. Conversely to above findings 58(18.5%) of the respondents disagreed that regular environmental training programs can help SMEs comply with environmental regulations more effectively, reducing the risk of fines or penalties. Further, study findings also revealed, in terms of mean and standard deviation the respondents agreed that regular environmental training programs can help SMEs comply with environmental regulations more effectively, reducing the risk of fines or penalties (Mean=3.55, standard deviation=1.266).

Finally, 189(60.2%) of the participants agreed that investing in environmental training allows SMEs to attract and retain employees who value sustainability practices. However, 46(14.6%) of the participants disagreed that investing in environmental training allows SMEs to attract and retain employees who value sustainability practices. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation respondents agreed that investing in environmental training allows SMEs to attract and retain employees who value sustainability practices (Mean=3.63, standard deviation=1.138).

4.4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Conservation

The study sought to investigate the effects of corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality. The study findings were presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Descriptive Statistical for Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Conservation

Statements		SA	A	UD	D	SD	MEAN	Std
The SME's focus on environmental sustainability practices (e.g., waste reduction) has led to increased customer loyalty.	**F**	90	79	101	22	22	3.61	1.173
	%	28.7	25.2	32.2	7.0	7.0		
Implementing social responsibility initiatives in environmental conservation strategies (e.g., community outreach programs) has positively impacted the brand image.	**F**	68	112	67	55	12	3.54	1.125
	%	21.7	35.7	21.3	17.5	3.8		
Commitment to ethical sourcing of environmental materials has helped to attract new business partnerships.	**F**	135	80	44	44	11	3.90	1.201
	%	43.0	25.5	14.0	14.0	3.5		
The cost of implementing CSR practices outweighs the potential benefits for SME's financial performance.	**F**	123	89	23	56	23	3.74	1.333
	%	39.2	28.3	7.3	17.8	7.3		

Table 4.8 revealed that the vast majority of respondents 169(53.9%) agreed and 44(14%) disagreed that our company's focus on environmental sustainability practices (e.g., waste reduction) has led to increased customer loyalty. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the

respondents agreed with the statement that our company's focus on environmental sustainability practices (e.g., waste reduction) has led to increased customer loyalty (Mean=3.61, standard deviation=1.173).

Furthermore, it was noted from the study that 180(57.4%) of the respondents agreed that implementing social responsibility initiatives (e.g., community outreach programs) has positively impacted our brand image. However, 67(21.3%) of the respondents disagreed that implementing social responsibility initiatives (e.g., community outreach programs) has positively impacted our brand image. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed with the statement that implementing social responsibility initiatives (e.g., community outreach programs) has positively impacted our brand image (Mean=3.54, standard deviation=1.125). It was further noted from the study that a vast majority 215(68.5%) of the respondents agreed and 55(17.5%) disagreed that our commitment to ethical sourcing of materials has helped us attract new business partnerships. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation that the respondents agreed with the statement that that our commitment to ethical sourcing of materials has helped us attract new business partnerships (Mean=3.90, standard deviation=1.201).

Finally, the study showed that 212(67.5%) of the respondents agreed that the cost of implementing CSR practices outweighs the potential benefits for our SME's financial performance. However, 79(25.1%) of the respondents that the cost of implementing CSR practices outweighs the potential benefits for our

SME's financial performance. Analysis on mean and standard deviation revealed the respondents agreed that the cost of implementing CSR practices outweighs the potential benefits for our SME's financial performance (Mean, =3.74, Std. dev=1.333).



Source; Reseacher 2024

Plate 4.2; Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Conservation

Plate 4.2 demonstrates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by encouraging the community to take an active role in protecting the environment. It reflects an organization's or community's effort to raise awareness about environmental conservation, urging the public to avoid damaging plant life and to properly dispose of waste.

By placing such a message in a public space, the responsible entity shows a commitment to fostering environmental stewardship. This kind of initiative aligns with CSR principles, as it promotes sustainable practices like waste reduction, cleanliness, and the protection of greenery. It reinforces the idea that

all community members are stakeholders in environmental conservation and must work together to maintain a clean and healthy environment.



Source; Researcher 2024

Plate 4.3. Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Conservation

Plot 4.3 shows the environmental conservation through a local business's initiative to plant and maintain a tree in an urban area. The business, Fresh and Nice Groceries, has taken responsibility for the upkeep of the tree, as indicated by the sign on the protective metal frame. This effort demonstrates the company's commitment to enhancing the environment, contributing to a cleaner, greener community.

Such CSR activities show how businesses can actively participate in environmental stewardship by improving public spaces and promoting sustainability. By planting trees, the company helps reduce pollution, improve air quality and combat urban environmental degradation. This small but impactful initiative reflects the broader role businesses can play in supporting community-driven environmental conservation efforts.

4.4.4 Descriptive Statistical for Green Energy Environmental Conservation Practices

The study sought to assess the effects of green energy environmental conservation practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality. Table 4.9,

Table 4.9 Descriptive Statistics for Green Energy Environmental Conservation Practices

Statements		SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean	Std
Implementing green energy practices (e.g., solar panels, LED lighting) has increased SME's operational costs saving	**F**	146	86	24	35	23	3.95	1.284
	%	46.5	27.4	7.6	11.1	7.3		
The adoption of green energy sources has led to a decrease in SME's reliance on fossil fuels.	**F**	196	15	35	23	45	3.94	1.524
	%	62.4	4.8	11.1	7.3	14.3		
SME has attracted new customers due to commitment to using green energy	**F**	131	110	29	12	32	3.89	1.258
	%	41.7	35.0	9.2	3.8	10.2		
Compared to traditional energy sources, green energy practices have resulted in lower energy bills for the SME	**F**	136	93	29	34	22	3.91	1.260
	%	43.3	29.6	9.2	10.8	7.0		
Overall, green energy practices have had a positive impact on SME's brand image	**F**	129	58	70	23	34	3.72	1.352
	%	41.1	18.5	22.3	7.3	10.8		

Table 4.9 showed that 232(73.5%) of the respondents agreed that implementing green energy practices (e.g., solar panels, LED lighting) has increased my SME's operational costs. Also, 58(18.4%) of the respondents disagreed that implementing green energy practices (e.g., solar panels, LED lighting) has increased my SME's operational costs. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that the respondents agree that implementing green energy practices (e.g., solar panels, LED lighting) has increased my SME's operational costs (Mean=3.95, Std. dev=1.284).

The study findings revealed that 211(67.2%) of the respondents agreed that the adoption of green energy sources has led to a decrease in my SME's reliance on fossil fuels. On the other hand, 68(21.6%) of the respondents disagreed that the adoption of green energy sources has led to a decrease in my SME's reliance on fossil fuels. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that the respondents agreed that the adoption of green energy sources has led to a decrease in my SME's reliance on fossil fuels (Mean=3.94, Std. dev=1.524).

Also, 241(76.7%) of the respondents agreed that my SME has attracted new customers due to its commitment to using green energy. However, 44(%) of the respondents disagreed that my SME has attracted new customers due to its commitment to using green energy. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that the respondents agreed that my SME has attracted new customers due to its commitment to using green energy (Mean=3.89, Std. dev=1.258).

Inline, 229(72.9%) of the respondents agreed that compared to traditional energy sources, green energy practices have resulted in lower energy bills for my SME. On the other hand, 56(17.8%) of the respondents disagreed that compared to traditional energy sources, green energy practices have resulted in lower energy bills for my SME. Further the study findings showed in terms of means and standard deviation that the respondents agreed that compared to traditional energy sources, green energy practices have resulted in lower energy bills for my SME (Mean=3.91, Std. dev=1.260). Finally, the study showed that 187(59.6%) of the respondents agreed that overall, green energy practices have had a positive impact on my SME's brand image. However, 57(18.1%) of the respondents disagreed that overall, green energy practices have had a positive impact on my SME's brand image. Analysis on mean and standard deviation revealed the respondents agreed that overall, green energy practices have had a positive impact on my SME's brand image (Mean, =3.72, Std. dev=1.352)



Plate 4.4: A solar lamp in Eldoret town

Plate 4.4 presence of a solar-powered street light in the image is a clear example of green energy and environmental conservation practices. Solar panels convert sunlight into electricity, providing a clean and sustainable energy source that reduces reliance on fossil fuels and their associated greenhouse gas emissions. This not only helps mitigate climate change but also reduces maintenance costs and promotes a more sustainable community. The street light's ability to adjust its brightness based on ambient light conditions further contributes to energy efficiency and conservation.



Plate 4.5 Plate A solar flood lamp at one of the municipality wholesale market

Plot 4.5 shows solar-powered, represents a practical application of green energy and environmental conservation at one of the municipality wholesale market. By utilizing sunlight to generate electricity, it reduces reliance on fossil fuels, thereby mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to a more sustainable future.

4.4.5 Descriptive Statistical for Business Performance

The study sought to evaluate the business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. The study findings are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Descriptive Statistical for Business Performance

Statements		SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	Std.
SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have efficient operational processes that minimize waste and maximize productivity	**F**	123	57	79	23	32	3.69	1.327
	%	39.2	18.2	25.2	7.3	10.2		
Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are highly satisfied with the quality of products and services offered	**F**	142	56	70	35	11	3.90	1.196
	%	45.2	17.8	22.3	11.1	3.5		
SMEs in Eldoret Municipality actively promote their products and services for export to regional and international markets	**F**	144	90	34	22	24	3.98	1.241
	%	45.9	28.7	10.8	7.0	7.6		
SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have implemented effective strategies to enhance their operational efficiency and reduce costs.	**F**	144	45	57	57	11	3.81	1.285
	%	45.9	14.3	18.2	18.2	3.5		
Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are loyal and likely to recommend the businesses to others	**F**	144	45	57	57	11	3.94	1.300
	%	45.9	14.3	18.2	18.2	3.5		

The findings in Table 4.9 showed that majority 180(57.4%) of the respondents agreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have efficient operational processes that minimize waste and maximize productivity. On contrary, 55(17.5%) of the participants disagreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have efficient operational processes that minimize waste and maximize productivity. Further, in terms of mean and standard deviation the respondents agreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have efficient operational processes that minimize waste and maximize productivity (Mean=3.69, standard deviation=1.327).

The study further revealed that vast majority 198(63%) of the respondents agreed that Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are highly satisfied with the quality of products and services offered. However,46(14.6%) of the respondents disagreed that Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are highly satisfied with the quality of products and services offered. Additionally, the study results on mean and standard deviation revealed the respondents agreed that Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are highly satisfied with the quality of products and services offered (Mean=3.90, standard deviation=1.196).

On top of the above findings, other findings indicated 234(74.6%) of the participants agreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality actively promote their products and services for export to regional and international markets**.** However, 46(14.6%) of the respondents disagreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality actively promote their products and services for export to regional and international markets. Further, the study findings also indicated, in terms of

mean and standard deviation the respondents agreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality actively promote their products and services for export to regional and international markets (Mean=3.98, standard deviation=1.241).

The study nonetheless indicated that majority 189(60.2%) of the participants agreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have implemented effective strategies to enhance their operational efficiency and reduce costs. Conversely to above findings 68(21.7%) of the respondents disagreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have implemented effective strategies to enhance their operational efficiency and reduce costs. Further, study findings also revealed, in terms of mean and standard deviation the respondents agreed that SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have implemented effective strategies to enhance their operational efficiency and reduce costs (Mean=3.81, standard deviation=1.285).

Finally,189(60.2%) of the participants agreed customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are loyal and likely to recommend the businesses to others. On divergent, 68(21.7%) of the participants disagreed that customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are loyal and likely to recommend the businesses to others. Further, the study results also showed, in terms of mean and standard deviation respondents agreed that customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are loyal and likely to recommend the businesses to others (Mean=3.94, standard deviation=1.300)

4.5 Multiple Regression Assumptions Test

4.5.1 Test of Linearity

The linearity of the data was examined by means of a correlation analysis. A linear relationship between the variables is inferred if there is a significant correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. There is no linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable if the correlation coefficient is not significantly different from zero. Table 4.11 displays the results of the linearity analysis.

Table 4.11 Test of Linearity

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	.526**	.000
Environmental conservation training practice	.541**	.000
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	.599**	.000
Green energy environmental conservation practices	.625**	.000

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

Results presented in Table 4.10 revealed environmental conservation waste reduction practices had a correlation coefficient of 0.526. Environmental conservation training practice had a correlation coefficient of 0.541. Corporate social responsibility conservation practices had a correlation coefficient of 0.599 and green energy environmental conservation practices, the correlation coefficient was 0.625. These indicated that the linearity assumption was made

due to the non-zero values of the correlation coefficients for the four research variables. Inferring linearity in the data used.

4.5.2 Homoscedasticity Assumption

The homoscedasticity assumption was tested using the Levenes test of equality of error variances. Table 4.12 displays the results of the assumed-true-positive tests.

Table 4.12 Homoscedasticity Assumption

Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	3.370	13	298	0.632
Environmental conservation training practice	1.927	13	298	0.705
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	1.053	13	298	0.640
Green energy environmental conservation practices	2.183	13	298	0.745

The study results in Table 4.12 indicated that the p-value in Levenes test for environmental conservation waste reduction practices was 0.632. P-value in Levenes test for environmental conservation training practice was 0.705. P-value in Levenes test for corporate social responsibility conservation practices was 0.640. P-value in Levenes test for green energy environmental conservation practices was 0.745. All the P-values were above 0.05. Thus, the homoscedasticity assumption was made showing that data used had no heteroscedasticity.

4.5.3 Normality Assumption Test

The study employed the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine whether or not the data significantly deviated from the assumed normal distribution. If the significance value was greater than 0.05, the data were considered to be normally distributed (Tabachnic, 2001).

Table 4.13 Normality Assumption Test

	Shapiro-Wilk		
Variables	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	.390	9	.217
Environmental conservation training practice	.750	3	.241
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	.792	12	.177
Green energy environmental conservation practices	.744	4	.134

Research results showed that all Shapiro-Wilk values in Table 4.13 were statistically significant at the 0.05 level or above. Since the significance values were greater than 0.05, the data were assumed to have come from a normal distribution. The assumption of normality in linear regression (Osborne & Waters, 2019). If the Shapiro-Wilk value is greater than 0.05, then the data is normally distributed, while if it is lower than 0.05, then the data considerably deviates from a normal distribution, as stated by Demir (2022).

4.5.4 Multicollinearity Assumption Test

Using Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) and tolerance, the research examined the validity of the multicollinearity assumption. Table 4.14 details the study's findings.

Table 4.14 Multicollinearity Assumption Test

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	.501	1.996
Environmental conservation training practice	.546	1.833
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	.374	2.676
Green energy environmental conservation practices	.729	1.371

To test for multicollinearity, we inflated the variances (VIF). Multicollinearity is present if the VIF value is greater than 10, as stated by Kim (2019). Table 4.14 displays that all VIF values are below 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a significant concern among these variables. The highest VIF is 2.676, which suggests that while there may be some correlation, it is not severe enough to impact the reliability of the regression estimates. The tolerance values range from 0.374 to 0.729. The lowest tolerance (0.374) for corporate social responsibility conservation practices indicates that this variable is somewhat more correlated with others compared to the others, but still within acceptable limits.. The data showed that the multicollinearity assumption was correct due to the high tolerance values for all variables (above 0.10).

4.6 Inferential Analysis

Correlation and multiple regression models were utilized for inferential analysis in this section. The interplay between the explanatory variables and the criterion variable was shown by means of correlation and multiple regression analysis.

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

The degree and direction of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables was analyzed using Pearson's correlation. The outcomes are shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Correlation Analysis Results

Variables		**Business Performance**	**Environmental consevation waste reduction practices**	**Environmental conservation training practice**	**Corporate social responsibility conservation practices**	**Green energy environmental conservation practices**
Business Performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	Pearson Correlation	.526**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
Environmental conservation training practice	Pearson Correlation	.541**	.432**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	Pearson Correlation	.599**	.701**	.631**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
Green energy environmental conservation practices	Pearson Correlation	.625**	.373**	.483**	.432**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	314	314	314	314	314

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

According to Table 4.15, the research found that environmental conservation waste reduction practices was positively correlated with on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (r=0.526; p=0.000). The results show a favourable, statistically significant correlation between environmental conservation training practice and business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (r=0.541**; p=0.000). Corporate social responsibility conservation practices were found to have a statistically significant correlation on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (r=0.599**; p=0.000). Green energy environmental conservation practices were positively corelated to business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (r=0. 625**; p= 0.000 statistically).

According to Orodho (2003), the presence of two or more variables with a high correlation indicates that these variables are connected to one another in a significant manner, whereas the presence of two or more variables with a low correlation indicates that these variables are not connected at all. When interpreting the results of an experiment, a value of 0.00 indicates that there is no correlation between the variables.

4.6.2 Results for Multiple Regression Analysis

The power of a link between the dependent variable and several predictor variables was evaluated with multiple regression analysis, and the relative relevance of each predictor was determined, typically with the effect of other predictors eliminated statistically.

4.6.3 Model Summary

The coefficient of determination (R^2) and correlation coefficient (R) showed the degree of correlation between dependent and independent variables. The results are presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 Interpretation of Multiple Regression Models

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.738[a]	.544	.538	.57792

Table 4.16 displays the regression findings, which showed an R-Square of 0.544 and an R-value of 0.738. The high linear correlation between the dependent and independent variables was indicated by the R-value of 0.738. According to the coefficient of determination (R^2), the independent variables provided 0.544 of the total explanation. The regression model accounted for roughly 54.4% of the observed variation in the independent variable.

4.6.4 Regression Model Fitness Test

The model's fitness was checked to see if it provided the best possible fit for the data. Table 4.17 shows the outcomes of the investigation.

Table 4.17 Fitness of Regression Model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	123.293	4	30.823	92.286	.000b
	Residual	103.205	309	.334		
	Total	**226.498**	**313**			

Table 4.17 displayed an F-statistic of (F = 92.286), which was statistically significant at the p=0.000 level, demonstrating that the model was accurate. This means that the data were well-fit by the multiple regression model. That is why it was important considering the independent variables while designing the system.

4.6.5 Regression Model Coefficients

Running a regression model yielded coefficient for use in the regression equation. Table 4.18 details the study's findings.

Table 4.18 Regression Model Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	.607	.177		3.438	.001
Environmental conservation waste reduction practices	.160	.056	.156	2.870	.004
Environmental conservation training practice	.131	.051	.134	2.575	.011
Corporate social responsibility conservation practices	.236	.064	.232	3.693	.000
Green energy environmental conservation practices	.342	.038	.402	8.935	.000

Table 4.18 shows that Environmental conservation waste reduction practices had a positive linear effect on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_1=0.160, p=0.004). This shows that a 0.160-unit improvement in environmental conservation waste reduction practices can be attained by instituting a more stringent business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. Environmental conservation training practice was also found to be positively correlated with on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_2=0.131, p=0.011) Therefore, a rise in environmental conservation training practice results in a 0.131-unit rise in on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. There is a positive and

statistically significant relationship between corporate social responsibility conservation practices and business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_3=0.236, p=0.000). This shows that a 0.236-unit improvement in Corporate social responsibility conservation practices will lead to rise in on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. Green energy environmental conservation practices were also found to be positively correlated with in on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (β_4=0.342, p=0.000). This shows that a 0.342-unit improvement in green energy environmental conservation practices lead to rise in business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. The resulting regression equation is as follows:

$Y = 0.607 + 0.160X_1 + 0.131X_2 + 0.236X_3 + 0.342X_4$……. Equation 4.1

Y Business Performance

X_1 Environmental conservation waste reduction practices

X_2 Environmental conservation training practices

X_3 Corporate social responsibility conservation practices

X_4 green energy environmental conservation practices

4.7 Hypotheses Test Results

The research hypotheses were assessed using the significance level of the coefficients from the regression model derived in Table 4.19. The objective of the study was to see if the hypothesis could be tested without rejecting or

rejecting the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The following research hypotheses were tested in the study:

4.7.1 Hypothesis Testing of the effect of Environmental Conservation Waste Reduction Practices On Business Performance

Hypothesis H_{01} stated that there is no significant influence of environmental conservation waste reduction practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret, Municipality (β_1=0.160, $p<0.05$) The findings revealed that environmental conservation waste reduction practice has a positive and significant effect on the service delivery, rejecting the null hypothesis H_{01}.

4.7.2 Hypothesis Testing of the effect of Environmental Conservation Training Practice On Business Performance

Hypothesis H_{02} stated that there is no significant influence of environmental conservation training practice on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality (β_2=0.131, $p<0.05$). The findings revealed that environmental conservation training practice has a positive and significant effect on business performance of SMEs, rejecting the null hypothesis H_{02}.

4.7.3 Hypothesis Testing of the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Conservation on Business Performance

Hypothesis H_{03} stated that there is no significant influence of corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality. The findings revealed corporate social responsibility has a positive and significant effect on business performance of SMEs (β_3= 0.236, $p<0.05$), rejecting the null hypothesis H_{03}.

4.7.4 Hypothesis Testing of the effect of Green Energy Environmental Conservation Practices On Business Performance

Hypothesis H_{04} stated that there is no significant influence of green energy environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality (β_4= 0.342, $p<0.05$). The findings revealed that green energy environmental conservation practice has a positive and significant effect on business performance of SMEs., rejecting the null hypothesis H_{04}.

Table 4.19 Summary of Hypotheses Test Results

Hypothesis	β-value	p-value	Decision rule
H_{01}. There is no significant influence of environmental conservation waste reduction practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret, Municipality	β_1=0.160	p=0.004<0.05	Rejected the null hypothesis
H_{02}. There is no significant influence of environmental conservation training practice on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality	β_2=0.131	p=0.011<0.05	Rejected the null hypothesis
H_{03} There is no significant influence of corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality	β_3=0.236	p=0.000<0.05	Rejected the null hypothesis
H_{04}. There is no significant influence of green energy environmental conservation practices on business performance of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality	β_4=0.342	p=0.000<0.05	Rejected the null hypothesis

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains summary of the core research results, conclusions, recommendations and relevant suggestions for further research as conferred under the study objectives.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings

This section contains detailed summary of the study findings based on the research objectives which were; environmental conservation waste reduction practices,environmenta conservation training practice,corporate social responsibility on environmental conservation practices and Green energy environmental conservation practices.

5.2.1 Influence of Environmental Conservation Waste Reduction Practices on Business Performance

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that reducing waste generation through efficient production processes positively impacts the financial performance of SMEs in Eldoret, while a minority disagreed. This finding aligns with research by Agyabeng-Mensah et al. (2020), which highlights that efficient waste management practices can lead to significant cost savings and improved financial performance for companies. Similarly, most respondents agreed that reusing waste materials and products leads to cost savings and improved profitability, supported by Bockholt et al. (2020), who

found that reusing materials within production processes can result in cost reductions and enhanced profitability.

Further, implementing recycling programs, a significant majority agreed that this results in increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials, despite some disagreement. This is consistent with a study by Viljoen et al. (2019), who noted that recycling programs can generate additional revenue streams from the sale of recyclable materials. Furthermore, a majority agreed that adopting a comprehensive waste reduction, reuse, and recycling strategy enhances the overall competitiveness of SMEs in Eldoret, although a minority disagreed. Islam and Huda (2019) argue that comprehensive environmental strategies, including waste reduction, can enhance a company's competitiveness. Waigwa, (2023) found that effective waste recycling strategies significantly enhance financial performance, with a notable percentage of SMEs recognizing the financial benefits of adopting such practices. Murey (2020) highlighted that SMEs adopting comprehensive waste management strategies, including recycling, reported increased revenue from recyclable materials.

Finally, a majority of respondents agreed that effective waste reduction practices contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of SMEs in Eldoret, with some disagreement noted. According to Barros et al. (2021), effective waste reduction practices contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of businesses by minimizing environmental impact and operational costs. Sugow (2022) suggests that not all SMEs are equally capable of implementing these strategies due to resource constraints and lack of awareness,

which may explain some of the disagreement noted in the original findings about the effectiveness of waste reduction practices.

5.2.2 Influence of Environmental Conservation Training Practice on Business Performance

The study establishes that majority of the respondents agreed that SMEs providing environmental training to employees experience greater innovation in resource management, while a minority disagreed. This is in line with findings by Song et al. (2021), who noted that environmental training enhances employees' ability to innovate in managing resources efficiently. Furthermore, most respondents agreed that employees who undergo environmental training programs are more likely to identify and implement cost-saving measures related to energy or waste reduction, although some respondents disagreed. This supports the research by Matthews (2021), which highlights that trained employees are better equipped to find and apply cost-saving strategies in their workplaces.

Additionally, a significant number of respondents agreed that SMEs with a strong focus on environmental training demonstrate a more positive brand image to environmentally conscious consumers, while a smaller portion disagreed. This finding is consistent with a study by Mehta and Handriana (2024), which indicated that companies with robust environmental training programs are perceived more favorably by eco-conscious customers. The study also revealed that a majority of respondents agreed that regular environmental training programs help SMEs comply with environmental regulations more

effectively, reducing the risk of fines or penalties, although some respondents disagreed. This aligns with research by Lyon and Maxwell (2019), which suggests that environmental training improves regulatory compliance and minimizes legal risks.

Finally, a majority of the participants agreed that investing in environmental training allows SMEs to attract and retain employees who value sustainability practices, while a minority disagreed. This supports findings by Salha (2022), who found that sustainability-oriented training programs enhance employee retention and attract talent committed to environmental values. The study was in agreement with Chege and Wang (2020) who found that SMEs that invest in comprehensive environmental training programs tend to perform better financially and operationally. Nguyen (2020) reveals that SMEs with robust environmental training programs report higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention.

5.2.3 Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Conservation on Business Performance

The findings showed majority of the respondents agreed that their company's focus on environmental sustainability practices, such as waste reduction, has led to increased customer loyalty, while a minority disagreed. This finding is consistent with research by Chuah et al. (2020), which shows that customers are more loyal to companies that engage in environmentally sustainable practices. Most respondents agreed that engaging in fair labor practices, including providing safe working conditions and fair wages, has improved employee

morale and productivity, though some respondents disagreed. This aligns with findings by Alam et al. (2020), who noted that fair labor practices contribute to higher employee morale and productivity.

Additionally, a significant number of respondents agreed that implementing social responsibility initiatives, such as community outreach programs, has positively impacted their brand image, despite some disagreement. This supports the study by Vuong & Bui (2023), which found that CSR initiatives enhance a company's brand image and reputation. The study also revealed that a vast majority of respondents agreed that a commitment to ethical sourcing of materials has helped attract new business partnerships, although a smaller portion disagreed. This finding is in line with research by Lysons and Farrington (2020), which indicates that ethical sourcing practices can lead to new business opportunities and partnerships.

Finally, the majority of respondents agreed that the cost of implementing CSR practices outweighs the potential benefits for their SME's financial performance, with a notable minority disagreeing. This result is consistent with the study by Shabbir and Wisdom (2020), which discusses the complex relationship between CSR investments and financial performance, noting that the costs can sometimes outweigh the immediate financial benefits. A study by Oduro et al. (2022) highlights that CSR initiatives can significantly enhance the reputation of SMEs, leading to increased customer loyalty and brand differentiation. According to a study by Nambiar (2021), SMEs that engage in tree planting not only contribute to carbon sequestration but also enhance their corporate image.

These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability, which can attract eco-conscious customers and investors.

5.2.4 Effects of Green Energy Environmental Conservation Practices on Business Performance

The study established that majority of the respondents agreed that implementing green energy practices, such as solar panels and LED lighting, has increased their SME's operational costs, while a minority disagreed. This finding is consistent with research by Chen and Ma (2021), which suggests that the initial investment in green energy technology can lead to higher short-term operational costs for businesses. Most respondents agreed that the adoption of green energy sources has led to a decrease in their SME's reliance on fossil fuels, although some disagreed. This aligns with findings by Zeng et al. (2022), which indicate that green energy adoption reduces dependence on traditional fossil fuel sources.

Additionally, a significant number of respondents agreed that their SME has attracted new customers due to its commitment to using green energy, despite some disagreement. This supports the study by Guerreiro and Pacheco (2021), which found that consumers are increasingly drawn to companies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability. The study also revealed that a majority of respondents agreed that, compared to traditional energy sources, green energy practices have resulted in lower energy bills for their SME, although a smaller portion disagreed. This finding is in line with research by Hansen (2019), which indicates that green energy practices can lead to cost savings on energy bills over time.

Finally, the majority of respondents agreed that overall, green energy practices have had a positive impact on their SME's brand image, with some respondents disagreeing. This result is consistent with the study by Mukonza and Swarts (2020), which discusses how green marketing strategies enhance brand image and consumer perception. Also study by Adepoju and Akinwale (2019) explores the challenges and benefits of green energy adoption among SMEs. Their study finds that while SMEs in developing regions face significant barriers, such as high initial costs and limited access to technology, those that adopt green energy practices experience notable benefits.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that waste reduction practices significantly enhance the financial performance and competitiveness of SMEs in Eldoret. Efficient production processes and waste reuse lead to cost savings and increased profitability, while recycling programs boost revenue from recyclable materials. A comprehensive waste management strategy is essential for the long-term sustainability and growth of these enterprises.

Additionally, the focus on environmental sustainability fosters customer loyalty, emphasizing the importance of such practices for customer retention. Environmental training for employees not only promotes innovation in resource management but also equips them to identify cost-saving measures. SMEs prioritizing environmental training enhance their brand image among eco-conscious consumers and improve compliance with regulations, reducing the risk of penalties.

The research also indicates that social responsibility initiatives, like community outreach, positively influence a company's brand image and can attract new business partnerships through ethical sourcing. However, the costs associated with CSR practices may outweigh immediate financial benefits, necessitating careful consideration of their financial implications.

Lastly, while implementing green energy practices incurs initial operational costs, these investments lead to reduced reliance on fossil fuels and lower energy bills over time. The commitment to green energy not only aligns with consumer preferences for sustainability but also positions SMEs for long-term cost savings.

5.4 Recommendations

The study was critical for it draws the following recommendations as follows;

SMEs in Eldoret should adopt and integrate a comprehensive waste management strategy. This strategy should encompass reducing waste generation through efficient production processes, reusing waste materials and products, and implementing recycling programs. By doing so, SMEs can enhance their financial performance, achieve cost savings, increase profitability, and improve their overall competitiveness. Additionally, this approach will support long-term sustainability and growth, ensuring that waste management practices contribute to the enduring success of SMEs.

SMEs should prioritize the adoption and enhancement of waste reduction practices. By implementing strategies such as minimizing packaging,

businesses can significantly reduce operational costs while appealing to environmentally-conscious consumers. Investment in technologies and training that support efficient waste management is crucial for promoting sustainability and improving market competitiveness. SMEs should implement comprehensive environmental training programs for their employees. This will enhance innovation in resource management, improve compliance with environmental regulations, and strengthen the company's brand image, ultimately leading to increased customer loyalty and better employee retention.

Regular and comprehensive training programs should be introduced to equip stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement sustainable practices. These training sessions should focus on the significance of environmental conservation, practical methods to reduce environmental impact, and the tangible benefits these practices can bring to business performance. Collaborating with local government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions can provide valuable resources and expertise to support these initiatives. SMEs should prioritize fair labor practices and social responsibility initiatives to enhance employee morale, improve brand image, and attract new business partnerships. However, they should carefully evaluate and manage the costs correlated with CSR practices to balance the benefits with financial implications.

SMEs are encouraged to actively engage in CSR initiatives such as tree planting, community clean-up campaigns, and environmental education programs. Such activities not only enhance the company’s public image but also strengthen

community ties. Effective communication of these CSR efforts through marketing and social media platforms can help build brand loyalty and attract consumers who prioritize sustainability. Finally, the adoption of green energy practices has been shown to positively influence SME performance. Businesses should explore the use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass to reduce their carbon footprint and achieve long-term cost savings. Partnerships with green energy providers, coupled with government incentives and subsidies, can facilitate this transition. Promoting green energy use within the company and to customers can enhance the business's reputation as a sustainable and innovative enterprise. SMEs should invest in green energy practices, such as LED lighting, to reduce long-term operational costs and attract environmentally conscious customers.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

The study concentrated on the environmental conservation practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Eldoret Municipality. However, the study recommends that studies should be undertake to analyze the long-term financial impacts of green energy investments on SMEs, including a detailed examination of the return on investment and the duration required to offset initial costs.

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APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Edith Akasiba Barasa
P.O.BOX 2717-30100
Eldoret, Kenya

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

My name is Edith Akasiba Barasa and I am a student pursuing a master's degree of business administration (strategic management option) Koitalel Samoei University college a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. As part of the requirement in the mentioned course, I am carrying out a research study on the topic; **influence of environmental conservation practices on business performance of small and medium enterprises in Eldoret Municipality.** You have been randomly selected to participate in the said research and I am hereby requesting you to participate in the study by responding to the attached questionnaire.

Your participation is much needed and very important in meeting the study objectives. However, your participation is voluntary and you may opt out of this study if you so wish. All the information you provide in this study will be treated as confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. Your identity remains anonymous throughout the study and therefore do not give any identifying details in any section of the attached questionnaire.

Yours Faithfully,

Edith Akasiba Barasa

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I: Background Information

Indicate your answer by ticking the response that best describes your answer.

1. Indicate your gender?

   Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Indicate your age bracket?

   18-30 Years [ ] 31-40 Years [ ] 41-50 Years [ ]

   Above 50 Years [ ]

3. Indicate your highest level of education?

   Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ] Degree [ ]

   Post graduate [ ]

4. For how long have you worked in small and medium enterprises?

   Less than 2 years [ ] 2-5 Years [ ] 6-10 Years [ ]

   Above 10 Years [ ]

Section II: Waste reduction Practice

The following statements are used to examine waste reduction practice. Using a five point Likert scale as follows; **1=strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree,** and **5= Strongly Agree;** please indicate the extent of agreement to the statements.

To what extent do you agree that;	1	2	3	4	5
1. Reducing waste generation through efficient production processes has a positive impact on the financial performance of SMEs in Eldoret.					
2. Reusing waste materials and products within SMEs in Eldoret leads to cost savings and improved profitability.					
3. Implementing recycling programs for waste reduction in Eldoret SMEs results in increased revenue from the sale of recyclable materials.					
4. Adopting a comprehensive waste reduction, reuse, and recycling strategy enhances the overall competitiveness of SMEs in Eldoret.					
5. Effective waste reduction practices, including reduction, reuse, and recycling, contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of SMEs in Eldoret.					

Section III: Environmental Training Practice and Business Performance

The following statements are used to establish the influence of environmental training practice on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. Using a five point Likert scale as follows; **1=strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree,** and **5= Strongly Agree;** please indicate the extent of agreement to the statements.

To what extent do you agree that;	1	2	3	4	5
1. SMEs that provide environmental training to employees experience greater innovation in resource management.					
2. Employees who undergo environmental training programs are more likely to identify and implement cost-saving measures related to energy or waste reduction.					
3. SMEs with a strong focus on environmental training demonstrate a more positive brand image to environmentally conscious consumers.					
4. Regular environmental training programs can help SMEs comply with environmental regulations more effectively, reducing the risk of fines or penalties.					
5. Investing in environmental training allows SMEs to attract and retain employees who value sustainability practices.					

Section IV: Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Performance Of Small And Medium Enterprises

The following statements are used to establish the influence of corporate social responsibility on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. Using a five point Likert scale as follows; **1=strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree,** and **5= Strongly Agree;** please indicate the extent of agreement to the statements.

To what extent do you agree that;	1	2	3	4	5
1. Our company's focus on environmental sustainability practices (e.g., waste reduction) has led to increased customer loyalty.					
2. Implementing social responsibility initiatives (e.g., community outreach programs) has positively impacted our brand image.					
3. Our commitment to ethical sourcing of materials has helped us attract new business partnerships.					
4. The cost of implementing CSR practices outweighs the potential benefits for our SME's financial performance.					

Section V: Green Energy Practices And Business Performance Of Small And Medium Enterprises

The following statements are used to establish influence of green energy practices on business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises. Using a five point Likert scale as follows; **1=strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree,** and **5= Strongly Agree;** please indicate the extent of agreement to the statements.

To what extent do you agree that;	1	2	3	4	5
1. Implementing green energy practices (e.g., solar panels, LED lighting) has increased my SME's operational costs saving.					
2. The adoption of green energy sources has led to a decrease in my SME's reliance on fossil fuels.					
3. My SME has attracted new customers due to its commitment to using green energy.					
4. Compared to traditional energy sources, green energy practices have resulted in lower energy bills for my SME.					
5. Overall, green energy practices have had a positive impact on my SME's brand image.					

Part VI: Business Performance

The following statements are used to examine the extent of business performance . Using a five point Likert scale as follows; **1=strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree,** and **5= Strongly Agree;** please indicate the extent of agreement to the statements.

To what extent do you agree that the following happens;	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have efficient operational processes that minimize waste and maximize productivity.					
2. Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are highly satisfied with the quality of products and services offered.					
3. SMEs in Eldoret Municipality actively promote their products and services for export to regional and international markets.					
4. SMEs in Eldoret Municipality have implemented effective strategies to enhance their operational efficiency and reduce costs.					
5. Customers of SMEs in Eldoret Municipality are loyal and likely to recommend the businesses to others.					

APPENDIX III: UNIVERSITY INTRODUCTORY LETTER

KOITALEEL SAMOEI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
(A CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI)
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Email: koskei@ksu.ac.ke
Website: www.ksuc.ac.ke

Telephone: +254721799266
P.O. Box 5-30307
Mosoriot, Kenya

REF: KSUC/SOB/MBA/PR/004

DATE: AUGUST 1, 2024

WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: EDITH AKASIBA BARASA: D61/0032/2020

This is to confirm you that the above person is a bona-fide student in the School. She has successfully completed MBA course work, prepared the requisite project proposal and is ready to proceed to the field for data collection.

Her project proposal is titled, ***Environmental conservation practices and business performance of small and medium enterprises in Eldoret municipality, Kenya.***

Any assistance and cooperation given to her in furtherance of her research enterprise will be welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Loice Koskei
Director, School of Business

Cc: Dr Kennedy Ntabo Otiso
Dr George Ontumbi
Coordinator, Post-Graduate Studies Committee

APPENDIX IV: NACOSTI

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RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. EDITH AKASIBA BARASA of Koitaleel Samoei University College, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Uasin-Gishu on the topic: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PRACTICES AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN ELDORET MUNICIPALITY, KENYA for the period ending : 16/August/2025.

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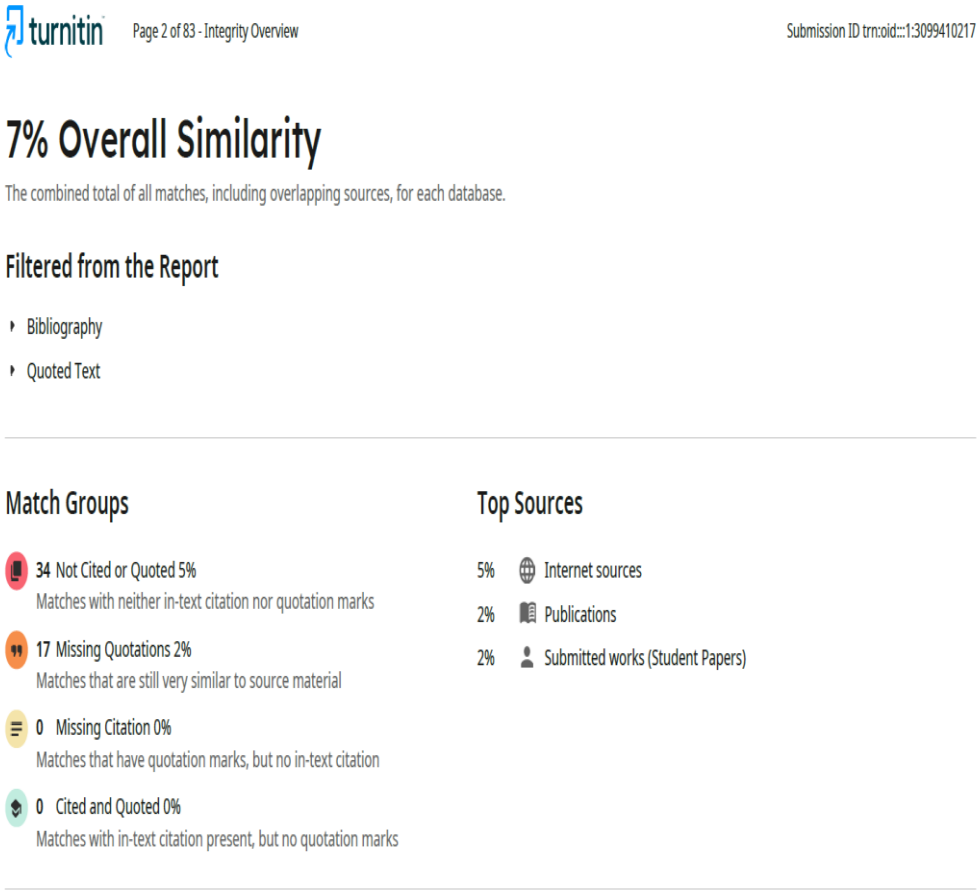
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APPENDIX V: SIMILARITY INDEX



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