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# Actionable Information enables SMEs to Journey towards Net Zero

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## ABSTRACT

The focus on the transition of SMEs towards Net Zero has emphasised barriers and enablers in a variety of theoretical approaches. These theoretical approaches range from an emphasis on the influence of stakeholders and access to resources to internal capabilities, information and firm agency. The role of values has also been highlighted. In this study we use the concepts of stakeholders, values and agency as a lens to understand those who take action on Net Zero. Where agency also involves self-efficacy and managerial capacity. Using these lenses to analyse interviews and then test those against the data from Business Futures 2022.

In addition to a modest number of interviews with a variety of businesses who were both those who adopted Net Zero practices and those who did not. The study employs a new dataset, Business Futures 2022, which is the second wave of the first Business Futures survey. This is a survey of approximately 1000 UK firms which was conducted in the autumn of 2022.

The study found that organisations with higher digital intensity, self-efficacy, formal knowledge sources, and an emphasis on innovation are more likely to engage in net zero activities. This is in line with the body of knowledge on sustainable business practices. These factors are consistent with the perspective which emphasises elements internal to the firm. Beside which the study emphasises how crucial it is for corporate managers to have access to trustworthy information in order to implement net zero. Those that were able to act said they were able to locate trustworthy information sources and frequently used information obtained both in person and online. It seems that one of the reasons for this is that the data had to be actionable information, which means that it had to be pertinent to the particular firm and setting. Consequently, we suggest actionable information is key to the adoption of Net Zero practices and we discuss what actionable information means in this context with regard to intentions and self-efficacy. We attempt to reconcile some of these theoretical perspectives with actionable information.