

STRATEGIC INSIGHTS INTO EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Ms. Dharmishta V. Mistri*, **Prof. (Dr.) Suresh Savani****

Abstract: *This paper introduces a tool called “Degree of Turbulence”, designed to help identify which external environments are most impacted and require immediate change. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) encounter many challenges related to their external Business environment. In fostering growth of SMEs, it’s compulsory to adopt various external environment like political change, market change, change customer expectation, technology and more on. Businesses must adept changes for generate investments sources and job opportunities. Effectively responding to change in technology, change customer demands, supplier expectations, regulatory environment, and increased competition demands adept organizational change management to their success. The Degree of Turbulence model serves as a valuable self-assessment tool for SMEs, aiding in environmental scanning and facilitating assessment of future impacts. This enables SMEs to dynamic adjust to coming external changes, ensuring sustained viability. In this study, collected the data of 30 SMEs from Bhavnagar district, Gujarat, India to find their impact of external environment change and find how Degree of Turbulence helping to take any further Business decisions. This study to understand the importance of future environmental scanning for SMEs. The Degree of Turbulence model not only aids in identifying the significance of external changes but also supports SMEs in formulating strategies that organize with emerging trends and regulatory change.*

Keywords: *Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), External environment, Degree of Turbulence, Self-assessment tool*

*Department of Commerce, M. K. Bhavnagar University, Gujarat, India, dharmishtamistri@gmail.com

**Former Head & Dean, Department of Commerce, M. K. Bhavnagar University, Gujarat, India

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of countries economies, but they face major obstacle in today's dynamics world. Globalization, increasingly demanding customers, rapid technological advancements, This mapping or scaling technique is not enough for identifying the future affection of external environment of Business.

This article found a solution is the "Degree of Turbulence" model. This innovative tool is specifically designed for SMEs to help them navigate the complexities of their environment. Unlike traditional planning methods for only for large organizations, but the Degrees of Turbulence model enable SMEs to effectively assess their environments. This environmental assessment is crucial step in strategic planning. It gives a clear picture of their current situation and potential environmental risks, the model equips SMEs with the knowledge they need to make informed strategic decisions. This, in turn, allows them to formulate and revise strategies that enhance their chances of survival and growth.

The development of this unique tool is justified by several factors. Firstly, most strategic planning tools are designed for large corporations, leaving a significant gap for SMEs. Secondly, the ever changing Business

and wild competition create challenges for SME growth and survival. (Banham H. c., 2010), Unfortunately, existing Business improvement models and management techniques, developed for large corporations, often prove insufficient for SMEs.

environment demands to better adaption strategies from all organizations, including SMEs. Finally, government has known about small and medium enterprise is pillory of our economic growth. However, to meet these expectations and thrive in a dynamic environment, SMEs need this effective tools to plan and adapt future decisions and changes. The Degree of Turbulence model fills this critical gap by providing SMEs with the environmental understanding necessary to adopt in today's challenging world.

1.1 Force of Change

The drives changes in small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs)it studied only a large project's on organizational change (Retha Wiesner, heather C. Babham, Nicci Pool) (Banham 2005). But in this categories are included in tool to help SME owner think about current and upcoming issues that will be affect their operations. These forces are relating to external opportunities and threats in the broader Business environment, which are typically is a

part of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, often a first step in strategic planning management.

Table 1 summarizes changes in affected majorly in SMEs, its categorized into technological

advancement, customers' expectations, supplier's requirements, regulatory changes, and increased competition. These changes are explained in detail below each category.

Table 1 SMEs Change Environment

External opportunities	Threats
I. Technological Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a New Technology • Cost-Effectiveness of New Technology
II. Customers' Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price related Expectations by Customers • Quality related Expectations by Customers • Evolution of Products and Services
III. Supplier Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Supplier Demand
IV. Regulatory changes drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North American Free Trade Agreement • Currency Exchange Rate Fluctuations • Alterations in Government Regulation
V. Increasing Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in Profit • Rising Competition in the Marketplace • Opportunities in Export Market • Ambition to Compete Globally

New technologies becoming more available and affordable for significant changes in SMEs. Customers expecting better prices, quality, and innovative products also push Businesses to adapt all the changes. Supplier requirements to including just-in-time inventory method for

manufacturing and storing material, it helpful to reduce cost, manage all the thing related to manufacturing for receive more productivity. External regulatory changes such as trade agreements and government rules force SMEs to adjust and accept all change without any change.

In the face of rising competition, SMEs must compete globally and deal with low barriers to entry in their sectors, which threaten profitability. (Dawson, 2001) identified key triggers for change including government regulations, globalization, technological advancements, customer and supplier demand, competition, for organizational growth, and economic cycles. These factors neatly fit into the categories of forces of change. Turbulent Business conditions, as noted by (Meers, 2007), are attributed to, technology advancement, customer Expectation, Supplier Requirements, Regulatory changes and Increasing Competition deregulation, all of which align with the five forces of change.

In essence, SMEs must continually be accepting to their dynamic forces to surviving and thrive in a competitive environment. By understanding and responding to technological advancements, customers' expectations, supplier or intermediary's requirements, regulatory changes, and competitive pressures, for making strategic planning for growth and sustainability surviving in the marketplace SMEs required to scanning all this factors relate to their external environments.

In 2001, Dawson identified several key outside factor that can force it to change of Business Policy. These include government laws,

globalization, major political events, new technology, and more. These factors are also part of what changes in a Business.

Research has shown that Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMEs) can improve their chances of survival and growth by using strategic planning. Studies by (Perren, berry, Partridge 1999) and (Paul Joycy, 2003), as cited by (Chan, 2001), highlight this link. Effective human resource practices also play a crucial role. Practices like carefully choosing employees, providing training, and using incentives have been found to boost how well organization perform (Delaney, 1996). In the service industry, factors related to how employees are treated- such as training, involvement in decision – making, and fair systems for rewards and discipline- have been positively connected to Business success (Gadenne D. , 1998). These practices help SMEs create a supportive and productive work environment, which is vital for their success.

Having a strategic plan allows leadership to proactively respond to changes in their Business environment. In contrast, SMEs without a plan can only react to these changes, does not receive any benefits or opportunities of changing environment. Ignoring these changes is usually not an option because failing to keep up can lead to becoming outdated by new technology, losing

customers by not meeting their needs, or facing penalties from new regulations. It's crucial for SMEs to continuously build a competitive edge in the face of growing competition and changing expectations from suppliers. The goal of strategic planning is to help SMEs understand their external environment better. This understanding

1.2 Degree of Turbulence

SMEs must analyze their external Business environment, using industry knowledge to assess the situation. This process involves four steps (Banham H. c., 2010):

Step One: Assigning Quantitative values to 'Force of change'

For each category below, evaluate the current situation and assign a score between 0 and 8 based judgments.

- I. **Technological Advances:** Considered how many new technologies impact your operations.
- II. **Customer Expectations:** Evaluate changes in customer expectations regarding price, product feature, delivery, warranty and service.
- III. **Suppliers Requirements:** Assess charges in requirements imposed by major suppliers.
- IV. **Regulatory Environment:** Evaluate recent regulatory changes affecting your Business.
- V. **Increasing Competition:** Assess competitive factors such as new market entrants, substitutes,

enhances their ability to accept these changes successfully, ensuring their survival and growth. By monitoring these changes closely, SMEs can effectively meet the challenges they bring and adapt accordingly. Without accepting external changes businesses cannot perform well in their field.

loss of distribution channels, and competitor alliances.

Step Two: Assess the Strength of the Force

Look at each category again and assess how significant affect each change is your Business. For instance, a technological change that affects how you process customer payment might be less impactful than one that require completely new processing equipment. Assign a score between 1 and 9 to each change based on how much it affects your Business. This help to gauges the level of influence each change has on your Business.

Step Three: Calculate the Impact Score

In Step three, increases the score assigned to each force drive of change of corresponding strength score. Each force of change is multiplied by its strength to determine the "Degree of Turbulence" factor. There are five a maximum score of eight, multiplied by nine for the strength of each force (Maximum total of 360). This

process help quantify the overall impact forces
on your Business environment.

Step Four: What does it mean?

Between 0 and 72	Changes in the environment are minimal and have little impact on your organization. Your Business operates in a very steady industry, possibly under long-term contracts. This stability allows for careful planning and implementation of Business decisions without urgent external pressures.
Between 73 to 144	SMEs in this range can adapt and change, similar to newer models of organizational change. They leverage leadership strengths and inherent flexibility. Your organization is moderately flexible and can adjust to moderate changes in the external environment. This adaptability helps in managing shifts without significant disruption.
Between 145 and 216	SMEs here face substantial external pressures due to limited market power. Despite leadership and flexibility, your organization is heavily influenced by external forces for change. Limited resources and market power can make adaptation challenging.
Between 217 and 288	SMEs in this range experience a high degree of external change. Your organization is dealing with frequent and significant external changes. It requires strong leadership, ample resources, and continuous structural adjustments to manage these dynamics effectively.
Between 288 and 360	At this level, the SMEs experiencing extreme turbulence. Your organization is almost overwhelmed by continuous and intense external changes. Management might feel like they are constantly reacting rather than leading. It's a challenging situation where maintaining control and direction becomes very difficult.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying how SMEs adapt and grow through strategic planning involves two main areas. First, understanding how these Business change is a new and evolving field. Many models for change come from large corporations, so there's a need to learn more about SMEs, which are crucial for economic growth. SMEs differ significantly from large Business in terms of resources, market, flexibility, leadership, and structure. Researcher highlight these differences to better understand how SMEs manage change and contribute to the economy. This knowledge helps develop effective strategies tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities SMEs face.

While strategic planning is typically studied in large Businesses, its relevance to small firms is increasingly recognized. Research highlights that strategic planning can significantly enhance success for small Businesses (Meers, 2007) (Richard C. Becherer, 2014). Successful implementation involves breaking down strategic goals into actionable steps and assigning clear responsibilities (Paul Joycy, 2003). Despite these benefits, many small Business owners hesitate to engage in strategic planning due to time constraints, lack of familiarity with the process, insufficient skills and concerns about sharing internal Business information (Beaver, 2007). However, adopting strategic management systems can facilitate

quicker decision-making and foster growth through innovation and adaptability (Wood, 2003). Overcoming barriers is crucial for small Businesses to leverage strategic planning is a tool for achieving sustainable growth and competitive advantage in their respective markets.

In their analysis of SMEs, (Wang, 2011) emphasized how the owner's reasons for being in Business-whether driven of beneficiary, growth, or personal fulfillment- significantly influence their engagement in strategic planning processes. (Danny Millar, 1986) similarly highlight that owner motivations are crucial in determining that extent of strategic planning involvement. Moreover, research on owner-managers reveals that SMEs often have limited access to strategic planning (Paul Joycy, 2003).

SMEs constrained by limited human, material, machinery, and financial resources (McAdam, 2002), (Vossen 1998 as cited in Huang, Soutar & Brown, 2002), often prioritize resources distributing for short-term gains. This reactive approach, as noted by McAdam (McAdam, 2002), leaves SMEs susceptible to external pressures rather than proactively shaping their strategies. (Hodges, 2007) advocate that enhancing knowledge of strategic planning processes can significantly enhance small Business success. Essential to this process is the thorough analysis of the external environment,

utilizing tools like critical success factor (CSF) analysis, ‘what if’ scenario, SWOT analysis and stakeholder assessments (Beaver, 2007). Understanding external Business conditions is crucial for effective planning.

Despite the acknowledged benefits of strategic management tools in fostering Business growth, research indicates that small firm managers, particularly owner-managers, exhibit lower familiarity with and utilization of these tools compared to counterparts in larger organizations (Paul Joycy, 2003). (Meers, 2007) found that many small firms do not employ traditional strategic planning techniques extensively. However, they underscored the importance of assessing both internal and external Business conditions for strategic decision-making. Thus, while SMEs face resource constraints, strategic planning that incorporates thorough environmental analysis remains pivotal for sustainable growth and competitive advantage in dynamic markets.

In tough times, having a clear strategic plan that everyone in the Business knows about is crucial (National Quality Institute, 2009). Research shows that planning positively impacts how well a Business performs. To move forward effectively, it’s suggested to be practical by creating and using strategic planning tools (Woods & Joyce, 2003, P-191). The approach

helps Businesses navigate challenges and stay focused on their goals, ensuring everyone understands the direction and direction and contributes to success.

Tools and models play a crucial role in simplifying complex issues. One such model, “Degree of Turbulence,” aids owner of SMEs in understanding how external factors impact their Business operations. (Burke, 2002) suggests that a model should offer a practical framework to categories organizational dimensions, making planning, implementation, and change tracking more effective. For SMEs, having suitable tools tailored to their unique characteristics can significantly enhance their understanding of the external environment. This calls for the developments of new tools that leverage leadership and teamwork strengths, as highlighted by (Zeffane, 1996).

Although Zeffane’s work does not specifically focus on SMEs, it underscores that SMEs differ fundamentally from large enterprises and shouldn’t be seen merely as scale-down versions. The Degree of Turbulence tool, designed explicitly for the small Business context, facilitates environmental analysis- an integral part of strategic planning for SMEs. Unlike tools adapted from large corporations, this tool doesn’t require scaling down; it’s inherently suited to SMEs.

The study shown the growth of African economy is totally depend on Small industries (Cynthia Chizoba Ekechi, 2024) and after Covid-19 small Business and Start-up is facing so many problem to survive their Business that time many Businessmen find the opportuning among external problems related to their business (Deepkumar Varma, 2022). The impact of financial crisis has affected our Small Business (Chowdhury, 2011), (Harel R. , 2021) whenever Business is related to export and import that time more affect our Business surviving. Always performance of Business is depending their human resources, humans are also part of external factors (Deepkumar Varma, 2022), it's always affected Business decision making. in short, compare to external environment are more affected to internal environment to take any kind of Business decisions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study follows the primary data as well as secondary data collection. For in this study data was collected from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises which are located in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India.

SAMPLE SELECTION

To achieve the study's goals, 30 Small and Medium Businesses in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat, India, were randomly selected. Each

Business has registered as micro, small and medium enterprise and working on their field more than five years.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The interview questions were carefully crafted for small Businesses to gather specific information needed for the study. This questionnaire divided in three parts, the questionnaire covered essential aspects: Firstly, gathering general information about each Business; Secondly, the information regarding affecting external factors in last years. Finally, the gathering information regarding Degree of Turbulence.

ANALYSIS

After collection all the quantitative data, it's analyzed with the help of Degree of Turbulence, all the process of analysis is divided in four parts. First assigning Quantitative value to 'Forces of change', Secondly, Evaluate the impact of each change, then calculate the Impact score and last interpretation of this impact factors how much affected our Businesses or not and analyze it immediate changes are require for the Businesses or not.

1. Calculation of Degree of Turbulence

H₀: There is no significant difference between different levels of degree of turbulence.

H1: There is significant difference between different levels of degree of turbulence.

H0: There is no significant affected to external factors to small and medium size enterprises.

H1: There is significant affected to external factors to small and medium size enterprises.

In this study, follow this hypothesis and proof to there is significant difference between different level of degree of turbulence and also proof that there is significant affected to external factors to small and medium size enterprise. Now, calculating degree of turbulence.

Table 2: Step One: Assigning Quantitative Values to ‘Force of Change’

Force of change (0-8)	Technological Advances	Customer Expectations	Supplier Requirements	Regulatory Environment	Increasing Competition
0	-	-	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	3	-
2	-	-	-	3	6
3	3	3	3	9	3
4	6	3	12	6	3
5	3	3	6	3	3
6	6	12	6	-	9
7	9	3	-	3	3
8	3	6	3	3	3

In Table 2, first of all the Businessmen assigning the value between 0 and 8 according on specific circumstances and the changes observed in each category. First category, ‘Technological advances’ 9 Businessmen assign the value of ‘7’, 6 Businessmen assign the value of ‘6’, and same 6 was selected ‘4’, remaining was selected ‘3’, ‘5’ and ‘8’. In second, ‘Customer Expectations’ category among 30 Businessmen 12

Businessmen Assign the value of ‘6’, 6 Business owners selected the value of ‘8’, and remaining Businessmen assign the values of ‘3’, ‘4’, ‘5’ and ‘7’. Third category ‘Supplier requirements’, 12 Business owners assign the value of ‘4’, 6 Businessmen Assign the value of ‘6’, and 6 owner assign the value of ‘5’, remaining Business owners assign the value of ‘3’ and ‘8’. In ‘Regulatory Environment’ 9 owners selected

the value '3' and 6 Businessmen assign the value of '4', remaining Business owners assign the value of '1', '2', '5', '7' and '8'. In the 'Increasing Competition' category the 9 owners assign the value of '6', and 6 owners selected the

value of '6', and remaining Business owners assign the value of '3', '4', '5', '7' and '8'. All the Businessmen assign their quantitative value of force of change to impact their Business.

Table 3: Step Two: Assess the Strength of the Force

Strength of the Force (1-9)	Technological Advances	Customer Expectations	Supplier Requirements	Regulatory Environment	Increasing Competition
1	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	3	-	9
5	6	3	-	12	3
6	9	3	3	9	6
7	3	15	9	-	-
8	6	6	9	6	9
9	6	3	6	3	3

After assigning values to each force, assess the strength of each force on a scale of 1 to 9. This involves evaluating how strongly each identified change will impact the small scale Businesses. In Table 3, firstly the authors discussed about 'Technological Advances' 9 Businessmen assigning the strength '6', 3 Businessmen assign the strength '7', and remaining Businessmen assign the strength '5', '8' and '9'. And 'Customer Expectations', 15 Businessmen assign the strength of '7', and remain all the

owners give the strength '5', '6', '8' and '9'. In third 'Supplier Requirements' category, Businessmen allot the value of '4', '6', '7', '8' and '9'. In 'Regulatory Environment' assign the value of '5', '6', '8' and '9'. And last category 'Increasing Competition' all the Businessmen assign the value '4', '5', '6', '8' and '9'. That's means owners assign the value of strength between 3 and 9. All the Businessmen knows the how much external factors affected their Business.

In Step Three is to calculate the Impact Score. In Table 2, the authors assigned the quantitative value to force of change and Table 3 assigned the strength of each force after that multiply the

value assigned to each force by its respective strength value. Then sum up these products to obtain the “Degree of Turbulence” factor for each SMEs.

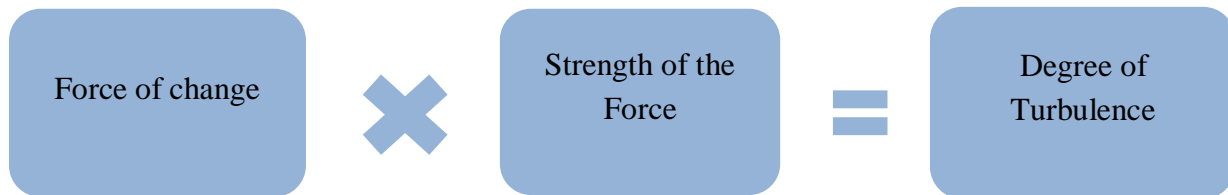


Figure 1: Degree of Turbulence Calculations

Table 4: Step Three: Calculation of Degree of Turbulence of One Small and Medium Business

Category	Assign Quantitative value to ‘Forces of Change’	Strength of Force	Degrees of Turbulence
Technological Advances	6	6	36
Customer Expectations	6	7	42
Supplier Requirements	4	7	28
Regulatory Environment	3	6	18
Increasing Competition	7	6	42
Degree of Turbulence			166

In Table 4, the authors calculated the one example with the all the figures and find out how

to find out the “Degree of turbulence”. In the category of technological Advances are assigned

a quantitative value of '6' and assessed with a strength of '6', resulting in a calculated impact of 36. Same like find the all impact of all the category respective 42, 28, 18 and 42. Then adding the all impact and find the degree of turbulence 166. This calculated degree of

turbulence, represented by the figure 166, quantified the cumulative impact of all identified forces on the Business environment. In this study, the authors collected the 30 SMEs and find the impact of "Degree of Turbulence".

Table 5: Result analysis of 30 SMEs

Unit	Categories	Impact	Unit	Categories	Impact
1	36+42+28+18+42	166	16	21+35+32+15+48	151
2	32+24+42+40+30	168	17	36+42+28+18+42	166
3	20+42+16+24+08	110	18	32+24+42+40+30	168
4	35+42+40+42+16	175	19	20+42+16+24+08	110
5	63+56+42+24+48	233	20	36+40+36+05+08	125
6	56+24+24+10+30	144	21	72+72+72+72+72	360
7	21+35+32+15+48	151	22	35+42+40+42+16	175
8	36+40+36+05+08	125	23	30+42+30+20+24	146
9	72+72+72+72+72	360	24	63+56+42+24+48	233
10	30+42+30+20+24	146	25	56+24+24+10+30	144
11	72+72+72+72+72	360	26	36+42+28+18+42	166
12	56+24+24+10+30	144	27	32+24+42+40+30	168
13	21+35+32+15+48	151	28	20+42+16+24+08	110
14	35+42+40+42+16	175	29	63+56+42+24+48	233

15 36+40+36+05+08

125

30

30+42+30+20+24

146

In Table 5, calculating all the impact of all 30 SMEs, first multiply change force factors with their strength value and then adding the all the

multiplied figures and find the impact of all the Businesses.

Table 6: Step Four: Interpretation- What does it mean

Degree of Turbulence	Number of Units	Number of Unit in Percentage
0-72	0	0%
73-144	9	30%
145-216	15	50%
217-288	3	10%
289-360	3	10%

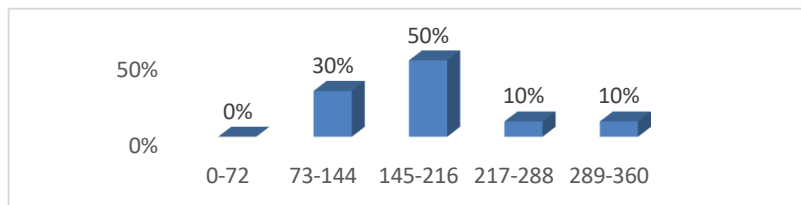


Figure 2 Interpretation Graph of Degree of Turbulence

Table 6 presents data categorizing degrees of turbulence in to five distinct range, each associated with a number of occurrences and their respective percentages. Within the first range of 0-72 degree of turbulence, no occurrences were recorded. The second range, spanning from 73-144 degrees, accounted for 9 occurrences, representing 30% of the total dataset. The third range, from 145-216 degrees, had the highest frequency with 15 occurrences,

constituting 50% of the dataset. Moving to the higher ranges, the forth range 217-288, contained 3 occurrences, making up 10%. Similarly, the fifth range, covering 289-360 degree, also comprised 3 occurrences, equating to another 10% of the dataset. This distribution reveals a clear concentration of turbulence measurements within the middle range of 145-216 degrees, indicating that level of turbulence is most frequently observed in the data.

CONCLUSION

SMEs encountering high turbulence should prioritize stable financing, flexible operations, and risk diversification. On the other hand, those with low turbulence can explore riskier markets, opt for short term financing and make long term commitments. It's crucial for SME owners and managers to understand their Business environment to respond effectively, whether through proactive planning or reactive adjustments. Not all SMEs have expertise in environmental surveillance (Joyce & woods, 2003), but the Degree of Turbulence model aims to help them built this capability. By utilizing this model, SMEs can better navigate uncertain conditions and strengthen their resilience in dynamics market environment.

In this study, proved these different hypothesis, that's there is significant difference between different degrees because all degrees have their own significance affection of Businesses like some Business affected more technological changes then legal environment factors. Same like some Businesses more affected the customer expectations and supplier requirements. In this

study also prove that there is significant affected to external environment in small Businesses in every situation when they need to take some Business decisions and change any kind of policies that time external factors affected in small Businesses in various stages. Find this study different degree affected to Small and Medium Enterprises.

Creating a new tool to help SMEs assess their external environment relationship could significantly boost their chances of surviving and growing in today's Business climate. SMEs often have little control over external factors but must adapt to them to thrive. The tool aims to simplify this complex reality and address the limited focus on strategic planning within SMEs. By tailoring tools specifically for SMEs, the authors hope to encourage more of them to engage in strategic planning, thereby enhancing their ability to meet the needs of owners, stakeholders, and regulatory requirements. This initiative seeks to support SMEs in navigating challenges and seizing opportunities. Fostering their resilience and sustainable development in a competitive market environment.

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