

Review of: "The Future of Malaysian SMEs in the Digital Economy"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear Authors

This is an interesting and timely topic in Malaysia context.

The manuscript demonstrates numerous notable merits. It adeptly incorporates recent and pertinent citations to support the discussion. Besides, the manuscript is crafted using a four-year secondary data from government papers, public announcements, and evaluations of technological acquaintances which reflect the Malaysian SMEs context. The manuscript successfully addresses the three research questions in a clear and easily understandable manner.

There are some suggestions for the authors to consider:

- It would be good to explicit mentioned the four years of data collected, i.e., 2020-2023? And some details of the government papers (e.g. working papers from MDEC, ...etc); where the public announcement domains that those data were gathered in order to enhance the credential of the manuscript, the quantity of the documents referred to.
 - Under Section 2.1, first para, authors highlighted 3 development, i.e., digital economy, Industry Revolution, Internet of Things. However, a concise link of these three developments has not clearly illustrated.
 - Under Section 2.2 The Benefits of Digital Economy, the authors have highlighted the areas which would be benefited from the digital economy. Apart from the 3 areas, marketing and sale is another core area that widely accepted its benefits reap from digital economy. In fact, in the later section of the manuscript, the authors did express that marketing is one key area impacted by digital economy.
- Under Section 2.3 Leveraging digital economy, authors explained the nature of multiple task vortex when there are several tasks occurring at the same time in achieving the similar objective of a process or production. In this context, authors could consider describing the integration between digital economy and sharing economy, for a better exploration approach in the SME setting. I also see the relevance of sharing economy in the multi task vortex coordination figure.
- Providing some precise practical examples of SMEs can leverage Digital economy. Suggest to quote a real-life example that uses digital economy like in the case of food delivery, which several activities take place in the cloud or digital platforms in browsing, selecting, ordering, paying, and rating.
 - Under Section 2.2, authors mentioned the effect of coefficient of 0.124 and 0.703 in term of modernisation of the

manufacturing sector but there is not source appended. Unlike the quoting of manufacturing industry's digital technology level index, Liu et al. (2019)'s paper was cited. As such, it would be better to remove the effect of coefficient of 0.124 and 0.703. Moreover, this manuscript is a descriptive paper and not an empirical manuscript, including coefficient effect may confuse the readers.

- Assuming authors would like to position this manuscript for a more academic approach, author can consider incorporating Technology-Organization-Environment framework.
- In the early section, authors stated Economic Digitalization and in the discussion part, networking was raised. In fact, there are few aspects of digitalization such as digitalization of data and information; digitalization of process & manufacturing, if SMEs are having a single-sided digitalization approach, the benefits will be limited. As such, holistic digitalization would be a way forward yet acknowledge that it will be a stepwise basis, depending on various factors such as industry and capital.

May these feedback helps to inspire more fruitful scholarly discussion.

Cheers