

Peer Review

# Review of: "Developing a Framework for Cost Reduction Strategies through Process Automation in SMEs: A United States Perspective"

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The manuscript addresses a practical and timely issue and presents a clear set of themes that can function as a roadmap for automation-driven cost reduction.

To strengthen it, the paper should be more explicit about what it is and what evidence supports it. The method reads mainly as a qualitative synthesis of literature and case studies, even though it also claims empirical data. If the main contribution is a conceptual framework, state that directly and avoid wording that implies tested causal effects. If the paper is empirical, add the essentials: data source, sample and selection criteria, unit of analysis, and how the framework themes were identified and validated.

The case examples also need clarification. If they are illustrative, label them as such. If they are real cases, provide citations and basic outcome metrics. A short validation step, such as expert feedback or a pilot application with a small number of SMEs, would also increase credibility.

## Declarations

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.