Review of: "Economic Empowerment: Unveiling Asian Bank Performance Trends"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article examines the factors influencing bank performance in specific Asian countries, aiming to shed light on technical, resource, and profit efficiency, intellectual capital, effective tax rates, loan growth, and income diversity as determinants of bank performance in the region under study. However, I have reservations regarding the originality, clarity of writing, conceptual framework, methodology, and implications of this study.

1. Novelty

The manuscript's originality in its current state requires careful consideration. Previous literature has extensively explored factors influencing banking performance, encompassing various nations at different stages of development and across different historical periods, including times of economic instability such as the 2008 financial crisis and outbreaks of epidemics (Battaglia & Gallo, 2015; Gropper et al., 2015; Irresberger et al., 2015; Karmani et al., 2024). Several studies effectively delve into specific determinants within financial technology and intellectual capital, providing improved measures and thorough explanations (Akhisar et al., 2015; Bian et al., 2023; Zhu & Guo, 2024). Therefore, the novelty of the present article's contribution is deficient.

1. Clarity of Writing

The manuscript requires improvement in various areas, particularly in its introduction. Authors are advised to seek professional academic writing assistance to address these issues. Specifically, they need to focus more on banking performance determinants rather than irrelevant debates and ensure clarity in presenting their research question and motivation. Additionally, they should highlight the uniqueness of their chosen sample of Asian economies. The revised introduction should briefly outline the research background, motivation, research question, and sample rationale while emphasizing the study's contribution to existing literature.

1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in the figure is unclear and lacks specificity regarding the research model and variables. Instead of incorporating theory references, the figure should focus on explicitly illustrating the variables relevant to the study. The current depiction is vague and does not effectively convey the research model. Clarifying the framework by identifying and delineating the variables would enhance its comprehensibility and relevance to the study.

The study's theoretical foundation appears weak, as the author fails to clearly articulate how the chosen variables support

their hypothesis. Greater specificity in linking the variables to the hypothesis and providing a more robust rationale for their selection is needed. Strengthening the theoretical framework by explicitly outlining how each variable relates to the hypothesis would enhance the coherence and persuasiveness of the argumentation.

1. Methodology

There are significant methodological concerns regarding the study's approach. Firstly, the inclusion of Hong Kong, Korea Rep., Malaysia, UAE, and Vietnam in the sample raises issues due to the diverse nature of their financial, political, and banking systems. The authors have not adequately accounted for this diversity in their regression model, which could affect the robustness of their findings. Additionally, while the authors focus on Asian economies, the sample is limited to only five countries, overlooking other critical Asian economies. The rationale behind the selection of these specific countries is unclear. If data constraints persist, they should focus their discussion on the selected countries rather than making broad claims about "Asian economies."

Moreover, the emphasis on the 2008 financial crisis in the study's narrative is questionable, given that the sample period does not cover this event. The direct adoption of the two-step system GMM method without prior exploration through simpler models such as the OLS fixed effect model is concerning. It is recommended that the authors include more control variables in their regression model and follow a stepwise approach, starting with simpler models and then progressing to more complex ones like the two-step system GMM. Additionally, testing the control variables before introducing the main variables and utilizing the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) estimation to assess model fitness could enhance the rigor of their analysis. The treatment of endogeneity in the two-step system GMM method warrants further attention. The authors should thoroughly discuss instrumental variables used to address endogeneity issues, which is currently lacking in their analysis. It is advisable for the authors to consult the suggested literature mentioned below for guidance on addressing these methodological shortcomings and to enhance the robustness of their study. By studying these manuscripts, the authors can gain insights into designing the study and methodology more effectively.

1. https://doi.org/10.1080/02102412.2021.1999145
2. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijfe.2149
3. https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2021.15655
4. https://doi.org/10.1177/10704965231211585
5. https://doi.org/10.1002/mde.3329

After addressing these major shortcomings, I recommend that the authors be given another opportunity to present their study for peer review.