

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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

## REVIEW REPORT

I read the paper with interest, given the dynamic and contemporary nature of digital economy and its role in enhancing growth and development of SMEs. My review covers the Objective, overall areas of improvement, and additional thoughts on how the paper should have been structured to inform future research.

First, the Authors note the objective of the paper as "to understand the importance of Malaysian SMEs in grasping the opportunities embedded in the existence of the digital economy". This objective is not clear to start with. I suggest the objective should be to understand the extent to which Malaysian SMEs are leveraging Digital economy and its importance for their growth/development.

Secondly, the paper posits to ask research questions which are not consistently pursued in the paper. I am not sure if those questions were for guiding the research or for future research. I suggest the Authors should review those questions and ensure that they are either followed through the narrative of the paper or are posed for future research.

Thirdly, the language (English) used by the Authors should be improved, since it makes the paper less clear. More importantly, the substantive issues are not supported by hard evidence (data) from the Malaysian economy or Malaysian SMEs performance with respect to digitization.

This gap leads me to conclude that overall the paper is weak and not sufficiently presented for publication. As it stands, the only strength of the paper is literature review, which identifies key issues for research on the topic and offers some preliminary evidences on how and to what extent digitization is critical for the growth and development of SMEs. The posed areas for further research are good but again they are premised from unclear evidence.

Fourth and finally, it will be important to give the reader a bit of situational analysis, regarding the current status of SMEs in Malaysia with basic understanding of the (i) data and information such as share in the economy, sector and size distribution; (ii) policy direction – SME policy, digitization policy or strategies in Malaysia; and most importantly (iii) the current rate of adoption and use of digitization.

All the best!

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