

Review of: "Determinants of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Sustainable Development in Africa"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review Notes: Determinants of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Sustainable Development in Africa

Comments on the Background of the Study

The sustainable development of MSMEs in Africa from the literature is very important but the reality of making recommendations from the study based on the gaps identified for the study needs detailed reflection. There authors mention a study population gap because the aforementioned studies were focused on MSMEs at the country level, whereas the paper takes into account MSMEs from 54 countries in Africa. The following issues need attention here

1. **Justification:** The need to do a study on several countries and make general recommendations to close the gap (effect) created by studies focused mainly at the country level should be better justified. Were the country-level study findings problematic and the recommendations less impactful? Will the current study involving many countries through the same lens to propose solutions not be risky as the recommendations may be superficial, not well targeted, and therefore not impactful? Consider that the country-level data gathered may themselves have been yielded under different country circumstances including government policies. Can the literature reject this point?
2. **Sufficient Literature** Furthermore, there should be sufficient literature to warrant or justify the need for the holistic study of Africa. Has Africa a policy with mutual interest in MSMEs given that a mutually agreed definition of MSMEs exists? If so, then against this background, what has been the undesirable post-African policy development and implementation trend regarding sustainable MSME growth over the years? Going further backwards, is there literature on an African integration and cooperation agenda, ripe to achieve the basics: peace and security that underscore the MSMEs as one development route of country economies with mutual benefits? Perhaps a look at the literature on the African Union agenda for MSMEs is necessary.
3. **Government Policy:** The authors mention one research study gap affecting MSMEs' success in Africa as *the limited focus on the role of government policies and regulations*. If so, that is perhaps a good reason to narrow down and compare a few specific country government policies within a sub-regional outlook (North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, etc) instead of the wide scope of countries and factors that have been attempted. The specific barriers or factors that affect MSME growth and development in Africa from the reviewed literature can be discussed within the government regulatory policies, including, production and market constraints, Infrastructure, skills and technology challenges, excessive government regulation, corruption, bureaucracy etc.

Study Concept

A systems thinking approach involving several countries concerning MSME development in Africa may have been implied or appreciated by the author at the start of the paper. However, the discussion necessitating a study on Africa does not draw on this point. The conceptual framework therefore focuses on the factors that affect MSMEs and not the model of several countries. Indeed, the literature may reveal that a focus on in-depth studies at selected country levels within the existing African cooperation background would be equally or perhaps be impactful at country levels for now in terms of revealing the culprit factors and allowing recommendations to be better targeted, even if affected by neighbouring country factors. It may perhaps be better to do a few inter-country, intra-regional or inter-regional comparisons based on much closer homogenous conditions: social, environmental, economic, and political, given the availability of current complete and reliable data on the factors of interest.

Under Materials and methods

1. The approach involves analyzing primary data on **perceptions** collected **purposively** from 10 respondents from 54 African countries through a questionnaire. Purposiveness reveals non-probability sampling since it is judgmental or selective and subject to bias and needs to be justified. Perceptions require individuals with reasonable knowledge or practice. The purposive selection of the respondents is not described and therefore raises questions on their reliability as a data source. Are they experts in the MSME industry? Remember you mentioned the population of MSMEs, not individuals
2. **Sampling:** The sample population is 44 million MSMEs in Africa- What is the source, please? The multiplication of 54 by 10 does not give 450 respondents. And 76% of them is not 340 but 410. Kindly check the response rate of 76%. It raises issues.
3. **Variables:** What values were used for the response variable **MSMEs' sustainable development**? The descriptive statistics show a maximum of 5 and a minimum of 1. This should be explained. What were the values for the variables that were used in the regression equations?
4. **Analysis:** confirmatory tests of the data used have been made and this is good. Correlational and other analyses have been done and results duly discussed.
 - a. What type of regression analysis was done? Linear, logistic, ordinal logistic etc. and why?
 - b. What about the interactive effects among the explanatory variables affecting MSME growth? Are they not necessary in affecting responses? For instance, wouldn't the effect of Access to Finance affect Technology utilization and acting together add to the effect of each variable acting separately?

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

1. In the discussions, the results have been compared to previous findings. This is commendable. However, were the previous works that were referenced based on continent, individual countries, or regional (sub-continent) studies, given that such studies in Africa were not found in your review of literature? You may need to bring this out strongly in your discussion since the study concept seems to point to investigating the African situation which needs to be appropriately compared.

2. The conclusions drawn emphasize what is already known. Kindly tell readers what is the new knowledge here. Does this mean that across the 54 study countries, the effect of the factors is the same? Given that a country's policy to deal with the factors cannot address all due to financial constraints, It would be very helpful to facilitate this by indicating the priority factors and why, based on some analytical procedure.
3. No recommendations are made from the study. Any reason, please?

Review Recommendation

The Authors are kindly advised to review the document thoroughly and address the issues raised. They should also make sure to correct all typo errors. For instance, see Chapter 6. *Concussion* instead of Conclusion.