



Developing Business Linkages between Large Firms and Local SMEs in South Africa: A Comparative Study

Nomso Mathe^{1,2}, Nontsiki Zulu^{2,3}, Fikile Mhlangu^{4,5}, Siphon Mthethwa¹

¹ Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

² University of the Free State

³ Department of Research, African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) South Africa

⁴ University of Cape Town

⁵ Department of Research, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

Published: 27 December 2003 | **Received:** 07 July 2003 | **Accepted:** 01 November 2003

Correspondence: nmathe@yahoo.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18778709](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18778709)

Author notes

Nomso Mathe is affiliated with Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Nontsiki Zulu is affiliated with Department of Research, African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) South Africa and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Fikile Mhlangu is affiliated with University of Cape Town and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Siphon Mthethwa is affiliated with Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Abstract

South Africa's economy is characterized by a significant disparity between large firms and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). While large firms often benefit from economies of scale, SMEs face challenges in accessing markets and resources. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative data analysis from case studies of six large firms and ten SMEs across various sectors. A key finding is that collaborative initiatives aimed at skill development for SME employees led to a 30% increase in the number of successful partnerships formed between large firms and SMEs over three years. The comparative analysis reveals that structured training programmes significantly enhance business collaboration, which in turn accelerates growth opportunities for both large firms and SMEs. Policy makers are encouraged to support development initiatives that promote skill sharing and collaborative learning environments among large firms and local SMEs.

Keywords: *African geography, comparative analysis, industrial policy, local entrepreneurship, microfinance, supply chain management, value network theory*

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

✉ **REQUEST FULL PAPER**

Email: info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

Submit at: app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge