



# Linking Giants to Gems: A Mixed-Methods Exploration of Business Partnerships Between Large Firms and Small-Scale Enterprises in South Africa,

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## Abstract

In South Africa, local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) often lack access to capital and networks that larger firms possess, hindering their growth and competitiveness. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative survey data with qualitative case studies to assess the effectiveness of these partnerships over a decade (-). The analysis revealed that while nearly half of SMEs reported improved access to markets, only one-third experienced significant financial benefits from their partnerships. Despite initial optimism, sustained and meaningful business linkages require tailored support mechanisms beyond traditional partnerships. Local governments should develop targeted policies to ensure fair market conditions for both large firms and SMEs, fostering a more inclusive economic environment.

**Keywords:** *South Africa, Geographic Focus, Mixed Methods, Small Business Development, Network Theory, Enterprise Partnerships, Entrepreneurship Studies*

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