



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

Nomsa Dlamini^{1,2}, Tshepo Motshabi^{3,4}, Sithembiso Khumalo¹, Gugu Motshega^{3,5}

¹ University of Limpopo

² Department of Advanced Studies, University of the Western Cape

³ Vaal University of Technology (VUT)

⁴ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Limpopo

⁵ Department of Research, University of Limpopo

Published: 14 November 2000 | **Received:** 10 July 2000 | **Accepted:** 17 October 2000

Correspondence: ndlamini@yahoo.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18722248](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18722248)

Author notes

Nomsa Dlamini is affiliated with University of Limpopo and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Tshepo Motshabi is affiliated with Vaal University of Technology (VUT) and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Sithembiso Khumalo is affiliated with University of Limpopo and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Gugu Motshega is affiliated with Department of Research, University of Limpopo and focuses on Business research in Africa.

Abstract

The South African economy is characterized by a substantial presence of large firms and a vibrant ecosystem of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, limited research exists on how these two sectors can collaborate more effectively. A mixed-method approach was used, including a quantitative survey of 300 SME owners and managers, complemented by qualitative interviews with representatives from large firms. Data were analysed using statistical software and thematic coding. Findings indicate that while approximately two-thirds of SMEs have at least one business relationship with a large firm, only about half report significant benefits from these partnerships. Key themes include inadequate funding support and limited market access for SMEs. Despite some existing collaborations, the effectiveness is suboptimal, necessitating targeted interventions to enhance mutual benefits and drive economic growth. Policymakers should prioritise initiatives that address funding gaps and improve market visibility for SMEs. Large firms are encouraged to adopt more inclusive business practices.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, geographies, networks, entrepreneurship, interfirm relationships, qualitative inquiry, collaborative frameworks*

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