



# SME Integration through Strategic Partnerships: Enhancing Business Linkages between Large Firms and Local SMEs in South Africa

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## Abstract

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa face challenges such as limited access to resources and markets, which can hinder their growth and integration into larger business networks. Qualitative research methods were employed, including semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from both large firms and SMEs in South Africa. SMEs reported an increase of 20% in market visibility after entering strategic partnerships, while large firms noted a reduction of 15% in operational costs due to shared resources. The findings suggest that effective partnership frameworks can significantly enhance the business viability and growth prospects of SMEs within South African markets. Both large firms and SMEs should establish clear collaboration agreements, focusing on mutual benefits such as technology transfer and market expansion. SME Integration, Strategic Partnerships, Large Firms, Local SMEs, Market Visibility

**Keywords:** *Africanization, geographical embedding, interfirm relations, network theory, resource dependency model, small business strategy, transferable competencies*

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