




Enhancing the Impact of Tourism-Based Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMES) Within the Durban Aerotropolis

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates how tourism-based small, medium, and micro enterprises (TB-SMMES) can drive employment generation within the Durban Aerotropolis. Using a quantitative approach, 183 structured questionnaires were analyzed with SPSS to identify key enhancement factors. Findings highlight the need for improved government oversight, innovation, knowledge sharing, environmental awareness, and infrastructure. Recommendations include upgrading infrastructure, skill development, and better funding access to boost TB-SMME productivity and job creation. The research contributes to understanding SMMES in South Africa and underscores the importance of further studies on aerotropolis-based employment solutions.

Keywords: Factors, Tourism-Based, Small, Medium and Micro-Sized Enterprises (TB-SMMES), Enhance, Tourism, SMMES, Durban Aerotropolis

INTRODUCTION

Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprises (SMMES) have long been recognized as vital engines for economic growth and employment generation across the globe. In South Africa, these enterprises are considered instrumental in alleviating poverty, reducing unemployment, and promoting inclusive economic development. However, the tourism-based subset of these enterprises—referred to as Tourism-Based SMMES (TB-SMMES)—has not been given substantial attention within national or regional economic development strategies, particularly within the context of catalytic urban developments such as the Durban Aerotropolis.

The Durban Aerotropolis Master Plan identifies the stimulation of SMME-led economic activity as a key strategic objective. Yet, despite this policy emphasis, there remains a significant gap in both scholarly and policy-oriented research focusing specifically on the role and impact of TB-SMMES within this emerging economic zone. The Aerotropolis concept, still in its early stages of implementation in the Durban context, presents a unique opportunity to examine how tourism enterprises can be integrated into broader infrastructure and investment frameworks to contribute meaningfully to employment and economic transformation.

Government initiatives aimed at supporting SMMES—such as various national development plans and enterprise funding schemes—have been in existence for years. However, empirical evidence of their effectiveness in fostering sustainable employment through SMMES remains limited (Todes & Houghton, 2021). While tourism remains a priority sector within South Africa's economic agenda, and TB-SMMES are acknowledged for their job creation potential, most existing studies have either generalized SMMES across sectors or examined tourism enterprise dynamics in locations unrelated to the Aerotropolis, such as the Southern Cape (Mugobi, 2019). Furthermore, studies like those by Ndah and Nchise (2019) focus on broader sectors, leaving a gap in localized, tourism-specific insights.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill a critical knowledge gap by investigating the role, challenges, and potential of TB-SMMES within the Durban Aerotropolis. It introduces a new spatial and thematic dimension to the discourse on SMMES in South Africa by focusing on an emerging economic hub that is both strategically positioned and infrastructurally evolving. By exploring how TB-SMMES can be empowered and integrated into the Aerotropolis

development framework, this research aims to contribute to both academic literature and practical policy-making on inclusive, tourism-driven economic growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is fundamental to bring to the fore a clear meaning and features of SMMEs for a comprehensive understanding of their usage in this study. Several arguments have appeared in literature on the conceptualisation of SMMEs, among the definitions of SMMEs is defining SMMEs as businesses which are both small and medium in size and operations. Some definitions and meanings have been accrued for the concept of SMMEs. For example, this is largely due to the global diversity and features of SMMEs the world over (Obi, Ibidunni, Tolulope, Olokundun, Amaihian, Borishade and Fred, 2018). For Rajaram (2018), the possibility of arriving at a single definition of SMMEs has remained largely impossible owing to the distinct criteria employed by different countries both in the measurement and classification of SMMEs. In addition, Rajaram (2018) holds that different definitions accrued to the concept of SMMEs have been based on the availability of manpower, management structures and the limits of capital investment. From this definition, it is necessary to emphasise that population and economic buoyancy determine to a great extent what constitutes the definition of SMMEs in any particular country, Kok and Berrios, (2019) in their conceptualisation explicate that one of the main reasons the definition of SMMEs differs with respect to industry, country size and number of employees is to reveal accurately countries' industrial size and employment variances. In defined terms, the SMMEs sector is sectionalised into three main cogs, including Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in no particular order. Chapter one of the South African Business Act 102 of 1996 defines a small business as a distinct business unit comprising those with basic features of a sole proprietorship, close corporations, enterprises and other non-governmental organisations. They are businesses operating independently through support loans from the National Business Council (NBC) in the case of South Africa.

The tourism sector represents the world's largest single industry, contributing to the economies of most developing and developed countries (Kontsiwe & Visser, 2019). Tourism is an essential socio-economic phenomenon known with defined and dynamic development, with consequences for direct and indirect economic benefits (Mbele & Nyide, 2019). Specifically, TB-SMMEs are involved with the production of supplies that support holidaymakers' enterprises (Ayandibu, Ngobese, Ganiyu and Kaseeeram, 2019). Activities related to tourism engender income from the consumption of goods and services by tourists, in addition to the tax paid by the tourism industry to the government. Similarly, activities of the tourism industry also extend to employment creation in services-related sectors of the economy, such as the hospitality sector, as well as employment creation in the tertiary sector of the economy (Dladla, 2019). Specifically, the SMMEs in the tourism-based sector dominate major tourist destinations, providing jobs for rural SMMEs through direct or indirect labour (Gumede & Nzama, 2019). The South African tourism sector is generally regarded as a significant employment generator (Hlengwa & Thusi, 2018). It is the third largest contributor to South Africa's export earnings (Statistics South Africa, 2023). For example, according to World Travel and Tourism, the South African tourism sector contributed approximately R424.5bn to the overall economy in 2018 before the Covid-19 pandemic. The gains and benefits sprouting from TB-SMMEs are substantial; for example, SMMEs that are tourism-inclined have contributed largely to facilitating socio-economic regeneration and all-round development (Rambe, 2017). Nonetheless, Mathieson and Wall (2012) found that the degree to which the tourism sector can launch an association with rural tourism entrepreneurs depends on factors such as the modern development of tourism in the tourist destination and the type of tourism expansion in place.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to express the factors that enhance the growth of TB- Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises within the Durban Aerotropolis. An Aerotropolis can be defined as a multichannel cargo and commuters' passage that back structured, economical, and sustainable expansion in a defined region of profitable significance concentrated around a main airport (Hamadziripi, 2015). Others include manufacturing outlets, logistics firms and facilities built for warehousing purposes. Similarly, a fully built Aerotropolis might also incorporate office apartments, residential outlets, recreational centres and agricultural produce sales (Edita, 2019). A typical Aerotropolis is envisaged as a municipal sub-region with infrastructure, land and active economic operation at the centre of the airports. Although smaller in shape than the conventional metropolis that consists of a city's commercial centre, the Aerotropolis comprises a multimodal airport-based construction with different layers of corridors that complement each other and their terminals to the airports (Kasarda & Appold, 2014). The economic benefits ensuing

from Aerotropolis must be measured in the context of how it can improve the business conditions of SMMEs and add to the quality of life. Durban Aerotropolis is anticipated to strengthen socio-economic value via public-private partnerships. With the creation of Durban Aerotropolis, the socio-economic conditions of the region of KZN are expected to be enhanced in the following areas: employment opportunities, education, increased income, housing and business activities. All of these benefits have direct and indirect advantages to the growth of TB-SMMEs. Nevertheless, various elements can enhance the growth of TB-SMMEs within the proposed Durban Aerotropolis.

2.1 Factors that can enhance the growth of TB-SMMEs within the proposed Durban Aerotropolis.

The success of TB-SMMEs is no doubt hinged on a constellation of factors. Challenges facing SMMEs have been the core of research for years; the basic causes are undergoing investigation and studies, precarious financial approach, inadequate skills, and racism have become unattractive to affluent customers (Gumede & Nzama, 2019). The needs of SMMEs are more critical in areas of financial assistance, skills development and training, easy entrance to markets, business mentoring support, support for networking, development of partnerships, and compliance with regulatory standards, among others (Cant & Rabie, 2018). Implementation of support structures and policies that can effectively address these needs will further enhance the contributions of TB-SMMEs. The diagram below highlights some of the factors that can enhance the growth of TB-SMMEs with the Durban Aerotropolis.

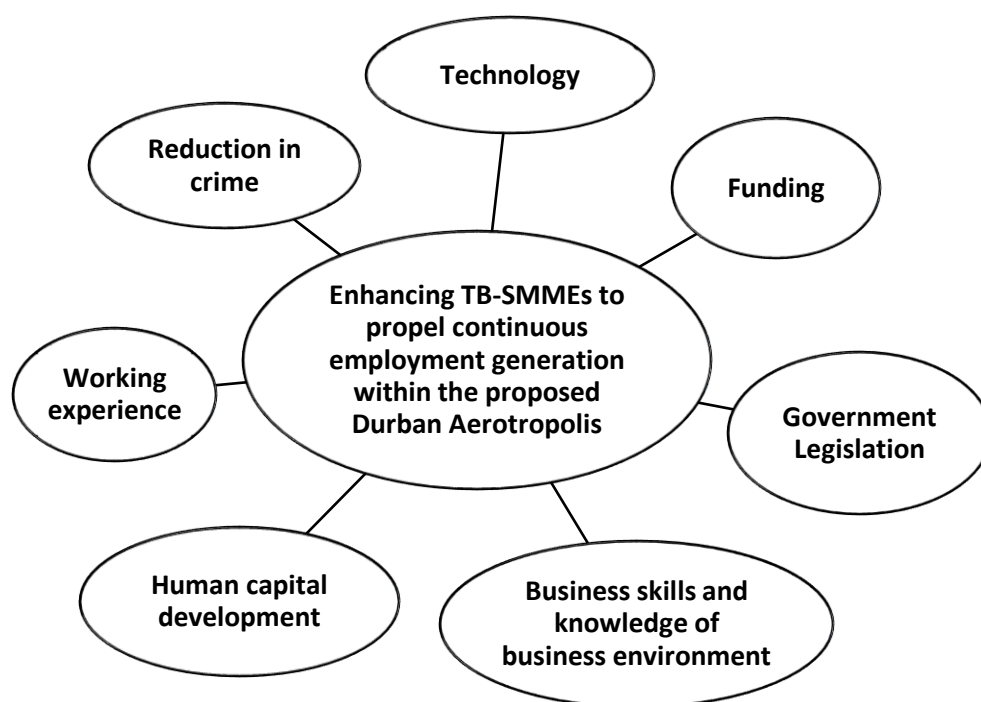


Figure 1: Factors that can enhance the growth of TB-SMMEs within the proposed Durban Aerotropolis.

2.2 Human Capital Development

To start with, the tourism literature has highlighted the significance of human capital development as an essential factor for the flourishing of Tourism-Based SMMEs. For instance, in a study investigating African entrepreneurs conducted by Rogerson (2018), it was revealed that successful entrepreneurs in the tourism sector are more likely to possess educational training beyond the elementary school level. The crux of this finding is neatly related to the assumption that entrepreneurs in possession of higher educational training are more likely to adjust to the increasing global changes that have characterised the business environment. Financial literacy among the TB-SMMES needs to be improved to engender access to funding. A review of literature revealed poor financial literacy among TB-SMMEs, resulting in a financial gap among the TB-SMMES. Human capital development in the area of finance would aid

access to the required funds essential for business expansion. The study of Radebe (2019) indicates a lack of sufficient finance as a focal factor limiting the growth and development of SMMES. Concern for finance remains a major constraint among the TB-SMMES, and several TB-SMMES still suffer rejected loan approvals due to poor credit history, insufficient financial information required by the banks to facilitate the processing of loan applications as a result of poor record-keeping, and lack of collateral assets. Accordingly, comprehension of how the TB-SMMES absorb, activate and turn knowledge into financially productive activities is essential for the development of effective knowledge transfer implementation (Mkhwebane, 2019). Tourism-based SMMES will improve their operation within the Durban Aerotropolis with continuous training and development in areas relevant to their growth and development (Adegunloye & Wissink, 2024).

2.3 Business Skills and Knowledge of Business Environment

A significant factor that can improve the contribution of tourism-based SMMES within the Durban Aerotropolis is the presence of business skills and knowledge of the business environment. According to Rutherford (2015), the lack of business skills has been identified as a major barrier to the success of entrepreneurs within the tourism sector. Their study explained that a large chunk of new entrants of entrepreneurs lack formal business-related skills and a good understanding of the industry before business start-up. Other related studies have also established that the acquisition of management skills contributes immensely to the performance of tourism small businesses (Rogerson, 2018). For instance, Brush (2014) in his study explains that a few of the essential management skills required for an entrepreneur to succeed include accounting, marketing and financial management skills. Significantly, the increasing influence of globalisation has warranted the necessity for continuous development of knowledge of the business environment and improvement of management skills for survival in this turbulent global change, especially for small business operators to remain competitive.

2.4 Working Experience

Working experience has also been shown as a formidable factor for the attainment of success in tourism businesses; this will no doubt be of great advantage to the performance of Tourism-Based SMMES with the commencement of Durban Aerotropolis. Related studies have contended that the possession of work experience is crucial for knowledge generation and can be employed as a tool to engender and stimulate entrepreneurial innovation (Agwu, 2018; Abrahams, 2019). In support of this, Hubbard's (2017) study argues that the working experience of the business owner is one of the main sources of knowledge essential for the conception of new frontiers and competencies to invent new products. In the context of Tourism-Based SMMES, individual working experience has been shown to equip start-up entrepreneurs with robust decision-making skills. For example, linking this to international business, studies have it that previous exposure to the international environment tends to alleviate possible fears and suspicions in the quest to start up a business (Lopes, J.M., Oliveira, & Zaman, U., 2021). In other words, the advantage of previous work experience represents a crucial success factor for any Tourism-Based SMMES or small business owners.

2.5 Government Legislation

The role of government assistance is another critical success factor for Tourism-Based SMMES within the Durban Aerotropolis. Wissink (2020) study highlighted the significance of investment strategy and business implementation. The result of the study explains that small businesses, with huge dominance in the tourism sector, encounter several puzzles. For instance, the study reports these challenges to include finance, poor marketing and communication skills, among other constraints. In other words, the justification for government assistance is essentially predicated on the complexity of tourist products, which are only attracting sparse private sector attention (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020). Accordingly, in the expectation of growth and success, commentators have established the need for the government to create a fitting business environment for small businesses in the tourism sector within the Durban Aerotropolis to improve productivity and competitive advantage (Luthuli & Houghton, 2019). In addition, research evidence has revealed that only government assistance programmes can upturn the tourism industry owing to the consistent fragmentation and irregular flow of business (Edita, 2019). Frequent interaction between the Department of Tourism and SMMES to address concerns will improve the service delivery of SMMES within the tourism sector. Such interaction should also focus on how tourism activities can be promoted. Thus, within the context of South

Africa, a practical tactic that should robustly involve legislative control is required for the sustainable development of Tourism-Based SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis.

2.6 Funding

Among the factors that can enhance the contributions of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis is adequate accessibility to finance (Mukwarami & Tengeh, 2020). Financial accessibility implies tangible access to credit facilities at fair cost and terms, limitation in accessing financial resources proceed from poor financial literacy, SMMEs' owners' absence of good knowledge of loans application procedures or financial institution's bias against SMMEs as a result of the high cost of administration (Khoase, Mutinta & McArthur, 2018). Capital resource is a key element to the operation of entrepreneurs, including SMMEs in tourism. Lack of collateral and a poor credit history make access to funding difficult. Financial incapability affects SMMEs' ability to stay productive in business, thereby resulting in high levels of business failure (Makwara, 2019). Access to the amount of finance required is one of the major elements that can enhance the growth and sustainability of SMMEs in South Africa; this is not an exception to the SMMEs in the tourism sector (Hlengwa & Thusi, 2019). Financial constraints experienced by the majority of SMMEs in general continue to pose a major threat; in order for SMMEs in the tourism sector to effectively contribute to the growth and economic development of the economy, finance must be accessible and adequate (Ayandibu, Ngobese, Ganiyu & Kaseeeram, 2019). The financial incapacity of small emerging entrepreneurs and the lack of ability to access funding are contrary to the objectives of supportive development as a tool to ensure economic development. (Adinolfi, Jacobs & Tichaawa, 2018). Over 73% of SMMEs' applications for loans are rejected (Naicker, 2020), which has led to most SMMEs relying on savings, inadequate funding affects the running of an enterprise and consequently its growth. This is affirmed by Bvuma & Marnewick (2020), who found that the growth and the success of SMMEs require sustained investment. Obtaining finance has been one of the challenges that have affected the growth and stability of SMMEs. Accordingly, Kontsiwe & Visser (2019) suggested desirable cooperation between the government and financial institutions in terms of lending and government guarantees, in order to expedite funds to SMMEs, resulting in the development and growth of SMMEs.

2.7 Technology

Another essential success factor for small businesses, specifically in the tourism sector, is technology. For example, in the tourism sector, there is no doubt the fact that the Internet is one of the most relevant tools used by customers in accessing available travel options such as ticket and hotel bookings. In contrast, studies revealed that despite the significance of the Internet as a veritable tool for the success of small businesses in the tourism sector, the Internet has been unsuccessful in its attempt to make a crucial impact on the successful growth of the tourism sector (Rutherford 2015). To be sure, available evidence illustrates that a small crop of small businesses in the tourism sector lack effective technology access and skills for increased profitability (Domi, S., Keco, R., Capelleras, J. & Mehmeti, G., 2019). Accordingly, Verkerk (2022) further postulates that SMMEs' contributions to the creation of decent jobs are dependent on technology. Reliable electric supply, advanced infrastructure, and good communication systems between authorities and SMMEs are suggested to aid the effective functioning of SMMEs in the tourism industry (Matshusa, Leonard & Thomas, 2021). Furthermore, Liou et. al., (2018) affirm the improvement of technology within the SMMEs as one of the drivers of job creation. This justifies the place of SMMEs as a viable tool for addressing the increased rate of unemployment. It is therefore imperative that improved technology will enhance the growth and contributions of Tourism-Based SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. With the emergence of the Durban Aerotropolis, TB-SMMEs must embrace advanced technology in knowing how to link with foreign travellers to take advantage of globalisation connected to the Aerotropolis, as tourism infrastructure in most locations is outdated and not developed.

2.8 Reduction of Crime

Increased levels of crime have posed a threat to the growth of TB-SMMEs and can negatively affect their growth within the Durban Aerotropolis. The crime rate continues to rise (South African Statistics, 2023) within Durban. Operations of diverse industries and sectors of the economy will operate within the Aerotropolis constituency, and appropriate safety measures need to be incorporated. This will provide an acceptable level of comfort to tourists who might be considering spending leisure time within this area (Cheng & Zhang, 2020). The tourism sector is a

sector that relates mostly to tourists who are not residents of the areas that are being visited. The level of safety in a nation will either attract or discourage the option of such a nation being considered as a tourist centre. Durban has been a good attraction centre for tourists over the years; nonetheless, instability as a result of unrest caused by provincial/ethnic clashes, political unrest, and violence as a result of racial intolerance has posed a threat to the operations of TB-SMMs. It discourages the inflow of intending tourist, resulting in the reduction of economic activities in this sector, thereby restricting their opportunity for expansion. Durban Aerotropolis is at its early stage in Durban, TB-SMMs' activities will be enhanced for continued growth and employment generation if adequate measures are put in place to curb these limiting factors of crime and insecurities engendered by hostile activities.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted in this study is the positivist research philosophy. The positivist research uses experimentation and survey research design as research strategies; the outcomes of the research require the positivist research philosophy by applying quantitative research methods (Gill & Johnson, 2010). The study site was Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, and the intended audience was SMMs within the tourism sector in Durban. The study included a sample size of n=183 participants, and the quantitative data obtained from the survey were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 26) software. A detailed questionnaire was formulated for data collection, and a survey research design was chosen to assess the research phenomenon and enhance the validity of the research findings. Data were gathered over two months. Descriptive statistics and T-tests were employed to give a good understanding of how the participants reacted to the items in the questionnaire.

RESULTS

In addressing the factors that influence the growth of TB-SMMs in Durban Aerotropolis, eight questions were asked, each with a 5-point Likert Scale of 1 to 5, namely: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Strongly Agree and Agree.

4.1. Demographic Data

The demographic data used in the questionnaire administered for this study consists of five variables. The variables are gender, age, educational qualification, years of experience and monthly income. The details are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Demographic Data

Variables		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	62	33.9	33.9
	Female	121	66.1	100
Age	18 – 25	6	3.3	3.3
	26 – 33	41	22.4	25.7
	34 – 41	67	36.6	62.3
	42 – 49	30	16.4	78.7
	50 and above	39	21.3	100.0
Educational Qualification	Primary	1	0.5	0.5
	Matric	16	8.7	9.3
	Diploma	78	42.6	51.9
	Bachelor	53	29.0	80.9
	Honours	25	13.7	94.5

	Masters	10	5.5	100.0
Years of Experience	1 – 5 years	14	7.7	7.7
	6 – 10 years	45	24.6	32.2
	11 – 15 years	72	39.3	71.6
	16 – 20 years	24	13.1	84.7
	21 years and above	28	15.3	100.0
Monthly Income	5,000 – 10,000 Rands	7	3.8	3.8
	11,000 – 15,000 Rands	57	31.1	35.0
	16,000 – 20,000 Rands	47	25.7	60.7
	21,000 – 25,000 Rands	38	20.8	81.4
	26,000 Rands and above	34	18.6	100.0

Source: Own Compilation

Table 1 represents the demographic data. According to the table, most of the participants were female, representing 66.1% of the entire population, while 33.9% represented the population of males. The demographic data according to age indicates that participants between the ages of 34 and 41 represent 36.6% of the population, participants within the age bracket of 26 and 33 years represent 22.4% of the population, while participants within the age of 18 and 25 represent 3.3% of the population. Participants within the age of 42 and 49 indicate 16.4% of the population, and participants who are 50 years and above show 21.3%. The results indicate that the majority of the participants are between the ages of 34-41. The result of the demographic data according to educational qualification depicts majority of the participants hold a diploma certificate, representing 42.6% of the population. The demographic data reveal that most of the participants have 11-15 years' work experience, representing 39.3% of the entire population, and the majority earn between 11,000-15,000 Rands as monthly income, representing 31.1% of the population.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The objective of this study is to express the factors that can enhance the growth of SMMEs in tourism within the Durban Aerotropolis. The views of participants on factors that can enhance the contributions of tourism-based SMMEs were sought, and their responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, according to which they had to strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with the questions. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Establishment of an independent financial system to access loans and credit facilities	65.6	27.9	0	6	6
Increase in the knowledge and awareness of the myriad opportunities within the Durban Aerotropolis for the TB-SMMEs sector	75.4	24.6	0	0	0
Enacting robust policies and frameworks for the effectiveness of the Durban Aerotropolis towards employment generation among the TB-SMMEs.	78.7	21.3	0	0	0

Emphasis on prompt education and training to keep TB-SMMEs abreast of trends for expansion.	80.9	19.1	0	0	0
Promotion of TB- SMMEs activities	80.9	18.6	0.5	0	0
Promotion of the Durban Aerotropolis	80.9	18.6	0.5	0	0
Creating measures for easy accessibility to TB-SMMEs	80.9	18.6	0.5	0	0
Better Infrastructural amenities	65.6	27.9	12	0	0

4.3 Summary of Description of Results

A T-test in Table 3 was conducted at a test value of 5% level of significance on each question (1-8) as described below to test for significant agreement/ disagreement ($p < 0.05$). The mean difference score > 2.5 depicts significant agreement, while a value with a mean difference score < 2.5 indicates a disagreement.

Table 3: One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0							
Questions	T	df	Sig. (2 Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
1	21.274	183	.000	1.443	0.917	1.31	1.58
2		183	.000	1.180	0.386	1.12	1.24
3	41.418	183	.000	1.150	0.356	1.10	1.20
4		183	.000	1.130	0.332	1.08	1.17
5	43.653	183	.000	1.131	0.354	1.08	1.18
6		183	.000	1.131	0.354	1.08	1.18
7	45.812	183	.000	1.131	0.354	1.08	1.18
8	43.183	183	.000	1.443	0.917	1.31	1.58

Source: Own Compilation

4.4 Establishment of an Independent Financial System to Access Loans and Credit Facilities

The results relating to the significance of establishing an adequate financial system to facilitate easier access to loans and credit facilities by TB-SMMEs to enhance their contributions are presented in Table 2 above. According to the result, 65.6% of the participants strongly agreed to this as a required factor to aid the effectiveness of Tourism-Based SMMEs, 27.9% agreed, while 6% strongly disagreed and 6% agreed. The T-test confirms a significant agreement ($M=1.44$, $SD=0.917$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the establishment of more independent financial systems to access loans and credit facilities will enhance the contributions of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis.

4.5 Enhancing Tourism Opportunities Awareness Unlocks in Durban Aerotropolis

The result from Table 2 reveals that 75.4% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement “more knowledge and awareness of various opportunities that exist within the Durban Aerotropolis for TB- SMMEs will enhance their contributions”, while 24.6% agreed. The T-test confirms a significant agreement ($M = 1.18$, $SD = 0.386$, $p < 0.05$). This reveals that the more information and awareness Tourism-Based SMMEs have about the various opportunities that exist within the Durban Aerotropolis for them, the better their performance.

4.6 Robust Policies to Boost Durban Aerotropolis Employment through TB-SMMEs

The result reveals that 78.7% of the participants are in strong agreement with enacting robust policies and frameworks for the effectiveness of the Durban Aerotropolis as a factor that can enhance the contributions of the TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis, while 21.3% of the participants agreed. The T-test indicate a significant agreement. ($M=1.15$, $SD=0.356$, $p<0.05$). This implies that enacting policies that can enhance the activities of TB-SMMEs will improve their contributions. Furthermore, a review of the literature suggests that policies that mitigate the level of crime are one of the policies that should be endorsed by the government in order to enhance the growth of TB-SMMEs. (Cheng & Zhang, 2020).

4.7 Emphasis on Prompt Education to Keep TB-SMMEs Abreast of Trends for Expansion

Table 2 above reveals that the majority of the participants are in agreement with prompt education and training as factors that can enhance the contribution of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. 80.9% of participants strongly agreed to this, while 19.1% agreed. The T-test equally depicts a significant agreement ($M = 1.13$, $SD = 0.332$, $p < 0.05$); there was no disagreement. This shows that the more abreast and educated Tourism-Based SMMEs are, the better their contributions.

4.8 Promotion of TB- SMMEs Activities

The results depict that 80.9% of the participants strongly agreed to the promotion of Tourism-Based SMMEs activities as one of the factors that can aid the contributions of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. While 18.6% agreed, 0.5% were undecided in their opinion, and none disagreed. The T-test confirms a significant agreement ($M = 1.13$, $SD = 0.354$, $p < 0.05$). The result indicates this as a factor that can help improve the contributions of Tourism-Based SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. Additionally, Chimucheke, Chinyamurindi & Dodd (2019) confirm the necessity of promoting SMMEs to improve their growth and development.

4.9 Promotion of the Durban Aerotropolis.

Table 2 indicates that the majority of the participants, 80.9%, strongly agreed with the promotion of the Durban Aerotropolis as one of the factors that can enhance the contributions of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. 18.9 % of the participants agreed to the promotion of Durban Aerotropolis as one of the factors required for improving the contributions of TB-SMMEs. The T-test revealed a significant agreement ($M = 1.13$, $SD = 0.354$, $p < 0.05$). This result signifies that the Durban Aerotropolis needs to be adequately promoted. Likewise, the review of literature further confirms the significance of educating and creating awareness of the benefits that are accrued from Aerotropolis (Crosby & Maharaj, 2021).

4.10 Creating Measures for Easy Accessibility to Tourism-Based SMMEs

According to the result, most of the participants are in agreement with the creation of measures for easy accessibility to TB-SMMEs as a factor that can enhance the contributions of TB-SMMEs. The result reveals that 80.9% of the participants are in agreement with this statement. The T-test equally confirm a significant agreement ($M = 1.13$, $SD = 0.354$, $p < 0.05$). The more accessible SMMEs within the tourism sector are, the more opportunities they provide to dwellers in remote areas, resulting in increased business activities within the tourism sector, culminating in expansion. The review of literature further reveals the necessity of promoting and making the activities of TB-SMMEs accessible across all areas (Haidari, Kabandai & Almukhaylidz, 2021).

4.11 Better Infrastructural Amenities

Infrastructural amenities are one of the factors that can aid the contributions of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. According to the result in Table 2 above, 65.6% of the participants strongly agreed to this, while 27.9% agreed, and 12% were undecided in their opinion. The T-test in Table 3 confirms a significant agreement ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 0.917$, $p < 0.05$). The results depict that better infrastructural amenities will help enhance the contributions of Tourism-Based SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. Ibarra, Bigdeli, Igartua & Ganzarain (2020) additionally suggest the significance of modern infrastructural amenities in fostering the activities of SMMEs, thereby resulting in growth and development.

CONCLUSION

The study identifies the factors that can enhance the contributions of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. The factors expressed were human capital development, business skills and knowledge of the business environment, working experience, government legislation, reduction of crime and technology. Nevertheless, result of the study reveals that establishment of more independent financial systems that can facilitate better access to loans and credit facilities, adequate knowledge of myriads of opportunities that exist for Tourism-Based SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis, enacting of robust policies and frameworks for the effectiveness of the Durban Aerotropolis towards employment generation by the TB-SMMEs, adequate education and training, promotions of TB-SMMEs activities, promotion of Durban Aerotropolis, creation of measures that aid easy accessibility to TB-SMMEs and better infrastructural amenities will further enhance the contributions of Tourism-Based SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. The study, however, recommends improvement of infrastructural amenities of the TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis, the creation of more training program opportunities for TB-SMMEs that can improve their activities within the Durban Aerotropolis and the enactment of robust policies that can aid the effectiveness of TB-SMMEs within the Durban Aerotropolis. This study highlights TB-SMMEs as key to economic development and employment creation within the Durban Aerotropolis. Factors enhancing TB-SMME contributions are identified, but the study is limited to tourism-focused SMMEs in Durban. Future research should explore other SMMEs, compare growth factors, and address operational limitations within the Aerotropolis environment for broader insights.

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