

# **TECHNOLOGY ORIENTATION, KNOWLEDGE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY, SUPPLY CHAIN AGILITY, AND EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF SMEs IN UGANDA.**

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This study investigates the relationship between technology orientation and export performance of SMEs in Uganda. It was motivated by Uganda's lower export performance compared to its East African counterparts. Grounded in the Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities Theories, this correlational and cross-sectional study adopts a critical realism paradigm and a sequential mixed-method strategy. Data were collected through 231 questionnaires and 12 interviews with exporting SMEs, and analyzed using SPSS, AMOS, and Atlas-ti software.

The results of the study show that export success and technological orientation are positively correlated. In addition, the association between technology orientation and export performance is moderated by supply chain agility and knowledge absorptive capacity. These conclusions were reinforced by qualitative findings, which showed that businesses need to react quickly to shifts in market orders. This can be achieved by keeping an ear to the ground to gather new information (knowledge absorptive capacity). Businesses that can absorb this information and adapt their goods and services in light of this new understanding will see a rise in export sales volumes.

The study concludes that technology orientation is a crucial driver of export performance for SMEs. Enhanced supply chain agility and knowledge absorptive capacity further boost this relationship. Specifically, the use of advanced technology, efficient knowledge utilization, and agile supply chain practices lead to improved export outcomes. To the policymakers, this study recommends that the Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) and the Parliament of Uganda should revise export policies to support technological initiatives that enhance firms' innovative capabilities and exploit market opportunities abroad. Further, UEPB should invest in efficient machinery and facilitate shared access for exporters dealing in similar commodities. This will improve the production of high-quality goods that can compete favorably in international markets. Likewise, SME managers should invest in the latest technology, conduct continuous research, and integrate new knowledge into daily operations to maintain a competitive edge. By adopting advanced technologies, firms can enhance product quality, efficiency, and effectiveness, ultimately boosting export sales and volume.

This implies that to gain a competitive advantage, SME exporting firms must continually invest in cutting-edge technology, communication, and transportation infrastructure. These investments will enable the production of high-quality goods desired by customers and achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness, leading to increased export performance.