

Research article

# **The Role of Competition and Globalization in determining Performance of Export Processing Zone's Small and Medium Textile Enterprises in Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

Small and Medium sized entrepreneurial Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in economic development of many countries in the world. This is because they have potential of employing many people in environments where formal and full wage employment may be scarce or unavailable. SMEs within EPZ are entrepreneurial as they apply creativity and innovation to add value so as meet the needs of their clientele. In Kenya, textile SMEs in Export Processing Zones (EPZ) did well in generating job opportunities to many Kenyans since inception in 2000, contributing 18% of Gross Domestic Product to the national economy. There is limited information on the factors that determine their performance. The purpose of this research was, therefore, to investigate role of competition and globalization in determining performance of Export Processing Zone's Small and Medium Textile Enterprises in Kenya. This research was conducted using descriptive survey. It involved both qualitative and quantitative designs. The design was useful in gaining insights into what goes on among textile SMEs within the Export Processing Zones and therefore provide holistic description of their competitive performance as this will allow the description of the textile SMEs within the Export Processing Zones and hence providing insights of their performance. Given the small number of firms operating these businesses within the Export Processing Zones, an adjusted sample size from small target population was used to select a representative

sample of the study using Saunders & Thornhiel formula. This study used interview for owners (IO) and employees in addition to questionnaire for managers (QM) for data collection to achieve the objectives of this study. A pilot test was carried out to test the instruments for corrective purposes, adjustments, validity and reliability. The statistical analyses were facilitated by the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The estimate results on average of  $R^2 = 72.4\%$  and adjusted average value of  $R^2 = 55.7\%$  indicated that all the independent variables tested were significant determinants of competitive performance of EPZ textile SMEs in Kenya. The study found that credit availability and affordability is essential for their competitive performance, growth and continued profitability. Equally are backward/ local linkages of raw materials, constant sub sector specific policy and regulations and reduced operational costs are critical for their success. The study therefore recommends that quick interventions by the relevant authorities are necessary for their continued competitiveness and growth. **Copyright © FEARJ, all rights reserved.**

**Key words:** Small and Medium Enterprises, Export Processing Zones, Globalization, Performance, Competitive Performance, Policy and Regulatory Framework.

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## Introduction

Entrepreneurship is generally conceived as enterprise development in which the main goal is to create and manage own business. The entrepreneurial process involved in business creation is based on the entrepreneur's knowledge, skills and attitudes, which can initiate innovation, new enterprise and employment through renewal of trade and industry and new forms of organizations. The entrepreneurial businesses may be created in Small or Medium sized businesses and is found in all sectors of economy such as trade, manufacturing, tourism, clothing and textile and other sectors. Thus these businesses have come to be known popularly as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This study focused on textile SMEs within the EPZ in Kenya.

SMEs are key generators of local employment opportunities and enhance the use of local and appropriate technologies thus conserving scarce capital resources; and help prevent migration of young people from rural areas to urban centers (Gibb, 1988, Matlay 2005 and World Bank, 2011) looking for employment. It is very difficult for textile industries in Kenya to compete favourably with similar industries in other countries because of increased cost of production locally and high costs of raw materials unless they are highly subsidized and operate within some protected zones such as the EPZs (USSA, 2009). This seem to offer entrepreneurs who invest in these businesses some cushion and incentive to continue in these businesses. However, there is no study that has been done to establish their competitive performance. The purpose of this study was to establish the role of competition and globalization in determining Performance of Export Processing Zone's Small and Medium Textile Enterprises in Kenya

Unless strategic measures are taken, the textile/apparel SMEs will cease to exist. To be able to play an optimal role, the SME sub sector needs to grow and expand. This growth and expansion is threatened by stiff competition and globalization which the SMEs especially in the garment sector seem not prepared to meet. According to Republic of Kenya (2007), Economic Review, the SMEs in garment businesses recorded mixed performance in 2006 with the total sales increasing by 4.4 %. The businesses also have been facing additional challenges since the AGOA Quotas ended in 2005 although now renewed to 2015. Furthermore, direct employment of Kenyans in EPZ declined by 3.6% in 2006 to stand at 36,667 persons (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Much of these jobs were generated by garment/apparel enterprises with a total of 30, 813 or 86.7% of the total employment in EPZ.

The performance of SMEs within the EPZ in the era of liberalization in terms of exports has decreased according to Economic Survey (2007). The SMEs in garment recorded a mixed performance in 2006 with total sales increasing by 4.4% while total imports declined by 5.0 %. This implies that the programme faced several challenges and key among them is increased competition and high cost of production when AGOA quota ended in 2005. There is need for more inquiry into textile SMEs sub sector to ensure growth and survival to a vibrant business in Kenya in the era of globalization and stiff competition. This was the gist of this study.

## Statement of the problem

There is a gloomy picture on the future of these businesses in Kenya despite the support the textile SMEs have been getting from the government (Republic of Kenya, 2007). The AGOA initiative supported textile SMEs within the EPZ. Through this arrangement, these SMEs firms would benefit from tax exemptions, waivers of

industry regulations and exemptions from imports and exports duties to enhance their competitiveness and growth (EAC Report, 2009). However, these SMEs are seemingly facing the challenges of competitive performance and effects of internationalization despite the support from the government. (McCormick & Kinyanjui, 2003). There is little information to explain causes of these challenges. According to the Kenya Vision 2030, there is low investment and the overall lack of competitiveness by textile SMEs especially those within the EPZ in Kenya. Their lack of competitiveness has seemingly reduced their performance drastically (McCormick, 2009). The reduction in the number of workers in the textile firms over the last few years has resulted in these firms scaling down and others shutting down their operations while others shifted to other countries. This has resulted in massive unemployment, loss of income and revenue thus contributing to economic decline in the country (Evelyn, 2005 and EPZ Performance Report, 2009 and 2010).

## Research Questions

- a. To what extent do competition and globalization determine the performance of **textile** small and medium enterprises within Export Processing Zones in Kenya internationally?
- b. What recommendations and policy measures need to be taken to enhance their competitiveness in the global market?

## Literature Review

Literature review was informed by literature findings, gaps and indicators in the past studies in this area and gaps identified in Literature review. The theoretical development of entrepreneurship has its foundations in many disciplines such as sociology, psychology and economics. This makes the entrepreneurship study require multi-disciplinary approach in order to appreciate its contributions to the economic development of any country (Kibas, 1995). The theories that are relevant to this study are now discussed in this section.

The economic dimension of entrepreneurship theory indicates that entrepreneurship theoretical competitive performance framework is founded in economics. The ideas of capital provision, risk bearing, creativity, innovation, growth and expansion, and profit making, all have a bearing to economics but entrepreneurs turn them around to enhance the entrepreneurial growth of their businesses. In Schumpeter's (Swedberg, 2007), ground-breaking theory of economics development and developed further as Business Cycles (1939), Schumpeter refers to an entrepreneur as innovator. In his argument, he introduces- "new combinations"- new products, new production methods, markets, sources of supply – shaking the economy out of its previous equilibrium. Thus, Schumpeter sees an entrepreneur as a necessary innovator and risk bearer. Entrepreneurs through their innovation and creativity can enhance competition and bring about successful performance in their businesses.

Kirzner (1982), just like Schumpeter, argues that, an entrepreneur should be able to notice the unnoticed business opportunities. He asserts that these opportunities exist because of the existing un-coordinated non-equilibrium state in which previously unappreciated demands are not yet satisfied or not yet fully exploited. The action of an entrepreneur is to coordinate them for better growth and performance. The Kirznerian entrepreneur, like the Schumpeterian entrepreneur changes the future from what it would have been in his/her absence to better state. However, Penrose (1959) mentions a number of limitations that would limit a good performance of an enterprise. These include: Uncertainty of the life of the business, the managerial abilities, the availability and sustenance of the market. When these are catered for, an enterprise should be able to perform competitively well both locally and internationally.

Kirzner (1973 and 1979), again describes competition among enterprises as a discovery process. He argues that the source of entrepreneurial profit is superior foresight- the discovery of something (new products, cost-saving technology) unknown to other market participants. In more typical case, he states that an entrepreneur is alert to a new product or superior production process and steps in to fill this market gap before others. This means then, for Kirzner, success of an entrepreneur does not only come from a well specified maximization problem, but from having some knowledge or insights that one else has and the entrepreneur maximizes on it competitively.

## Research Methodology

This study used descriptive design of a mixed method consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in which the researcher will use multi-stage selection of subjects. There were 30 apparel/textile businesses within and /or under the umbrella of EPZ in Kenya from which the sample size was selected. The target population of this study was small consisting of 30 textile SME enterprises therefore conventional determination of the sample size of the large targets was used. The study used the adjusted sample size from small target population, hence the formula by Saunders & Thornhiel (2009) was used. Since each business had a manager and a director, every purposively selected textile business had each of their manager and director selected. The researcher sampled 380 employees out of approximately 30,000 using systematic random sampling procedure.

The study used interview guide for the directors, questionnaire for managers and questionnaire for employees as data collecting instruments. The pilot test was also done to refine the questionnaire so that respondents had no problems in answering the questions and that there were no problems in recording data. The researcher cleaned and coded the data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) out of which graphs and tables were drawn for analysis and discussion. Regression analysis was used to test research hypothesis.

## Findings and Discussions

### International Markets

This study has affirmed that there is indeed intense competition among SSA countries. The competition is even stiffer from South Asian countries of China, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Vietnam due to issues of high costs of production in Kenya. However, Kenyan textile SMEs within EPZ can do much better with widened market, improved efficiency and logistics in delivery of services especially at the port of Mombasa and opening them up to sell at the regional markets. The statements in Table 4.4.4.22 are about internationalization of textile on SMEs in textile enterprises at EPZ in Kenya. The statements indicate the extent to which internationalization affects competitive performance of SMEs of textile businesses in EPZ. The summary of respondents is given in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Internationalization

<b>To what extent do you agree with the following globalization statements ( SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, N= None of the above</b>							
		SA	A	D	SD	N	Total
1.	Internationalisation has widened our markets and improved our sales		60.7	39.3			100.0
2.	Internationalisation has slinked our markets and lowered our sales	10.7	32.1	46.4		10.7	100.0
3.	Internationalisation has networking with other business thus increasing our sales		78.6	21.4			100.0
4.	Globalization has promoted our linkages with other business thus increasing our sales		71.4	28.6			100.0
5.	Internationalisation has promoted our linkages with other business thus increasing our sales		57.1	42.9			100.0
6.	Internationalisation enhanced access to markets for our products		67.9	32.1			100.0

The study findings indicate that most respondents 60.7% strongly agree that internationalization has widened their markets and improved their sales. 78.6% agree that internationalization has enabled them to network with other businesses thus increasing their sales. However, 46.4% feel that internationalization has slinked their markets thus lowering their sales. Many respondents (67.9%) though, feel that, in the overall, internationalization has positively enhanced their access to international markets. When asked to suggest strategies for reducing the negative effects of internationalization, a significant number of respondents (35.7%) suggested improvement of efficiency and logistics in delivery of services particularly at the port of Mombasa, 28.6% suggested coming up with specific policies for EPZ textile business and 25% were of the opinion of

opening up local and regional markets for them.

Currently the EPZ textile Small and Medium Enterprises are allowed only 20% to the local markets while more than 70% are being exported to USA market. This suggests why according to EPZ programme Report (2011) indicate that during the course of the year 2011, some EPZ enterprises closed down due to the impact of restrictive EAC market. When probed further on their views on competition in relation to other competing countries especially in SSA, they said the competition is stiff, although they felt they are competitively well. Nevertheless, they agreed that a country like Lesotho was doing much better than Kenya. They said the other competing countries are Madagascar, Mauritius, Swaziland, Uganda and Kenya. These comments tally very well with EPZ textile SMEs report (2011) on comparative performance of selected SSA countries. This is supported by a report from internet ([www.org.info](http://www.org.info), 2012) which states that Kenya is ranked second to Lesotho in terms of performance index. The other countries trailing behind Kenya according to this Report are Mauritius, Swaziland, Uganda and Tanzania. The report notes for example that in the year 2011, Kenya exported to US apparel /garment worth (US \$ '000) 292,595 against the main competitor Lesotho that exported (US \$ '000) 314,335 while Mauritius, Swaziland, Uganda and Tanzania exported (US \$ '000) 169,191, 77192, 2,541, 5751 the value of exports respectively. These shows how stiff competition Kenya faces against other SSA countries ([www.org.info](http://www.org.info), 2012).

### The Views of Directors on International Markets

This study established that the directors of EPZ textile SMEs are positive about internationalisation and agree that they are part of global phenomenon as they are able to buy and sell in the global market. However for them to compete more favourably the government of Kenya and other stake holders involved in this business need to come up with measures that support and promote better competitive advantage such as reduction of cost of the raw materials. One of the determinants of competitiveness and growth among the EPZ textile SMEs in Kenya and the objectives of this study was internationalization of EPZ's products. To find out the extent to which this affects their performance, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on what extent they thought competition and internationalization affected their performance. Their responses are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Views of Directors on International Markets

Constraints in Working at EPZ		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Affects your choice of location and source of raw materials	1	12.5	12.5	12.5
	A great extent	4	50.0	50.0	62.5
	Positive effect	1	12.5	12.5	75.0
	Cheap imports damages the industry	2	25.0	25.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Remedies for Intervention by Directors

This study found that the directors of EPZ SMEs support government in coming up with conducive and good measures that enhance their competitive edge against their competitors in the international markets. This will be a prerequisite to competitive performance in the international market for them to remain profitable. Their responses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 reveals that to a great extent (50%) internationalization affects their business performance in terms of the choice of their business location and cheap imports of raw materials, while 12.5% say the effects are positive. The respondents were also asked to suggest possible remedies for intervention. Their responses are indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Remedies for Intervention by Directors

Constraints in Working at EPZ		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Develop strategy to deal with competition	5	62.5	62.5	62.5
	Promote local textile and cotton industry	1	12.5	12.5	75.0
	Government should put conducive and Good measures to promote	2	25.0	25.0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 shows that 62.5% of the respondents want competitiveness and developing strategies on competition be enhanced. 25% suggested that the government should come up with measures that promote conducive and good competitive advantage and 12.5% suggested promotion and revival of textile industry and local cotton production to reduce the cost of raw materials and save foreign currency used in importing raw materials. This agrees with what Pierre says that small and medium enterprises including those in textile sub-sector have not been left out of internationalization as they are part of the global phenomenon (Pierre, 2005). Kang et al also adds that internationalization has altered the production, export and employment structure of the world economy but many barriers to fall integration still remains (Kang et al, 2005).

## Discussions

The study shows that there is significant relationship between financial support and competitive performance for small and medium enterprise in textile internationally. It is therefore important for credit to be affordable to the textile SME's in Kenya to perform better in relation to others in the region and internationally.

The study also revealed that there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable (competitive performance) and the independent variable There is significant relationship between EPZ's and competitive performance for small and medium enterprise in textile internationally. Thus availability of cheap local raw materials for textile SME's in Kenya will enable them to do better competitively.

## Summary

The researcher had hypotheses which asked as follows. The research posed on how Competition and Globalization determine the performance of textile small and medium enterprises within Export Processing Zones in Kenya internationally?

The hypothesis posed as follows:

**H<sub>0</sub>4:** There is no significant relationship between Competition and globalization and the competitive performance of textile Small and Medium Enterprises in Kenya internationally.

The regression model used in this study to test the hypothesis which shows there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable (competitive performance) and the independent variable (internationalization). This is shown by the R square which is 0.734 or 73.4%. The adjusted R which is a good measure of fit explains that holding all other factors constant, internationalization explains 0.44 or 44% of all the variations in the changes associated with performance in the SME's. The model used shows the correlation coefficients between the dependent and independent variables. Since there is a positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables, the correlation is significant and thus the null hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Internationalization and competitive performance for small and medium enterprise in textile internationally, is rejected and an alternative hypothesis is formulated. H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between internationalization and competitive performance for small and medium enterprise in textile internationally. Therefore the study concluded that it is crucial for EPZ textile SME's to be cushioned against international competition by expanding their market by, for example allowing to access more local and regional market besides exposing them more to international exhibitions for their networking.

Results from the study indicate the importance of the national investment climate providing quantitative evidence for what has been showed to be linked with competitiveness of the national economy. It has observed strong correlation between the outcomes and measures of national investment environment. There is likely to be deep determinants of some of these correlations but the issues of Competition and globalization and the competitive performance of textile Small and Medium Enterprises in Kenya internationally is critical. Others include credit availability and also its affordability, sustainability, policy and regulatory framework and operational and running costs are of critical importance. The data shows strong correlation between infrastructure quality and the levels of investment, exports and employment. On the other hand factors related to business licensing or regulations in the zones are of less importance for EPZ textile SMEs in Kenya. Thus the study's major conclusions from correlation calculations using the formula used ( $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \dots + B_5X_5 + B_nX_n + e$ ) support significant relationship between independent and dependent variables in determining competitive performance of EPZ textile SMEs in Kenya. The inconsistency policy and regulations with adequate consultations and port logistics are of significant importance for performance and success of EPZ textile, SMEs like other SMEs elsewhere as confirmed by (Namsonge, Bwisa, Gichira and EPZ performance report). (Namsonge 1998; Bwisa 1998; EPZ performance report 2010 and 2011; World Bank, 2011)

In terms of performance the Kenyan EPZ's textile SMEs are performing relatively well when compared with other regional competitors. However, these textile SMEs can do better if the afore mentioned determinants are addressed appropriately by the management in collaboration with EPZ authority. In addition this sub-sector can even attract more local and foreign investors.

## Conclusions

From the findings and discussions afore mentioned, it can be concluded as follows: that although internationalization has enabled EPZ textile SMEs to access international markets and improved their linkages with other businesses internationally, there is need reduce reliance on international markets by removing restriction to US market only. This can be done by widening their market share to include local and regional markets to enhance their sustainability. This will also enhance their survival in the event of future non renewal of AGOA agreements after 2012 renewal that opened the EPZ textile business to US markets and other international markets. It is also worth noting that although Kenya faced stiff competition from region African countries besides other international countries, Kenya did relatively well. According to EPZ report (2011) Kenya retained number two position in terms of competitive index in SSA countries and in terms of its export value performance to US after Lesotho, Swaziland and Uganda. Internationalization of markets affects competitive performance of textile SMEs in Kenya in terms of restrictive use of local and regional markets and extension of preferential arrangements to other Asian countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Sri-Lanka. Also overdependence of textile SMEs on US market is risky should the market conditions change.

## Recommendations

- i. The government should open more local and regional markets and allow these businesses to sell more of their products locally and regionally. In addition the government should consider controlling the importation of second hand clothes (locally known as mitumba). This will enhance the sustainability of Kenyan EPZ textile SMEs. Furthermore the EPZ in collaboration with the government should enhance the efficiency and reduce bureaucracy logistics to enhance quick delivery of services for EPZ textile SMEs to reduce their costs on delivery of products thus enhance their profitability internationally.
- ii. There is a need for consistency in policy so as to create a sense of certainty within the subsectors' investors in Kenya.
- iii. Introductions of special power tariff structure for garment exporters should be marched with that of competing countries for them to remain competitive internationally.
- iv. Declaration of Tax Free Internet Income for banks, extending long term loans at reduced interest rates for exporters, employing more than certain number of people to harness competitive advantage with the other competing countries.
- v. Revival of defunct textile mills in Kenya and invitations and offering of special incentives to re-locate

similar plants from other developing countries in order to enhance more foreign exchange earnings for Kenya.

- vi. Provision of utilities at special discounted rates for exporters will enhance EPZ textile SMEs competitiveness.
- vii. Facilitating seminars and workshop by associations and authorities to educate the stakeholders on increasing efficiency and competitiveness.
- viii. Agreement with Trade Unions for a longer period for wage revision instead of annual or ceremonial increase will enhance employees' motivation.
- ix. Setting up of a government sponsored training centre with modern machines and advanced production techniques (donor countries can be urged to fund this in our case) in order to enhance their business quality products thus increasing their international competitiveness.
- x. The introduction of up gradation funds to facilitate the expansion and modernization of apparel and milling plants in Kenya will add to their competitive edge with the competing nations.
- xi. Introduction of cash bank incentives on exports will attract more investors in the sub-sector.
- xii. The government in collaboration with EPZ Authority to consider opening EPZ textile SMEs products to local and regional markets to tap the existing markets and enhance these businesses competitiveness and further growth.

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