Title:

The difference in the digital transformation of SMEs in East and West China in the post-epidemic era.

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Abstract:

With the advancement and widespread application of digital technology, digital transformation (DT) is becoming an increasingly important aspect in the long-term development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). However, the facts show that the digital transformation process is delayed and has a significant impact on SMEs in China, particularly during the recent epidemic era. During the DT, Chinese SMEs face numerous problems and difficulties. The goal of this article is to compare the features of SMEs' digital transformation in China's economically developed eastern coastal districts and the economically undeveloped inland. The advancement of research on the digitalization of SMEs is critical to the practical value of boosting the digital economy in China. We employed a questionnaire to survey 300 SMEs in this study. We discovered a considerable disparity between SMEs in different regional economies: a) Eastern SMEs are more advanced than western SMEs in terms of digitisation, digital investment, and digital awareness. b) SMEs in various industries demonstrate diverse present digitalization conditions; the tertiary industry demonstrated the most significant transformation will, while the secondary industry demonstrated better transformation process execution. Furthermore, it offers practical advice to the Chinese government on how to deal with post-epidemic economic shifts, policy recommendations, and short- and long-term coping measures for SMEs' long-term sustainable development.

Keywords: SMEs, digital transformation, digital technology, policy demands; creation of digital infrastructure