



## Factors Affecting the Small and Medium Enterprises Management in Shanghai

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**Abstract:** Administrative aspects are recognized as crucial components for the efficient functioning of the entire enterprise, especially in influencing daily operations. Each administrative link influences regular operations in different ways. At the level of decision-making, the scientific implementation of command and control is highly urgent. The optimum performance of corporate departments relies heavily on the implementation of effective decision-making processes. Although prominent leaders and principals hold significant guiding power over each department, this authority is often misunderstood. The power of leadership should not be overexerted or left unused. Instead, it should be strategically employed to foster and enhance the efficiency and productivity of each department. This study investigates the lasting impact of administrative factors on the efficiency of enterprise management. By promoting efficient administrative practices and well-informed decision-making, leaders can ensure that each department operates at its highest potential. This approach not only streamlines the enterprise's daily operations but also contributes to its long-term success and sustainability. Overall, the study highlights the intricate and essential relationship between administrative factors and enterprise management efficiency.

**Keywords:** Management, Organizational Efficiency, SMEs, Shanghai, Administrative Aspects.

### Introduction

Shanghai, a densely populated city in China, hosts numerous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that significantly contribute to economic growth, job creation, and technological innovation (Yoshino & Taghizadeh-Hesary, 2015). However, increasing market competition and globalization pose challenges for these SMEs. Research on factors influencing SME management in Shanghai is vital for enhancing their competitiveness and sustainability. Moreover, the relevant departments of the State Council established the criteria for categorizing small and medium enterprises. The classification of a company as a micro, small, or medium-sized enterprise relies on a few factors, including its industry, operating income, total assets, and number of employees (EUSME Centre, 2021). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have distinct characteristics: first, management and ownership are often centralized, allowing for quick

decision-making and clear business objectives, which aids in profit maximization (Cronin, 2018). Second, SMEs typically rely on internal financing from personal savings and loans from family and friends due to limited external funding and difficulties in obtaining bank loans, increasing business risk (Asian Development Bank, 2022). Third, SMEs often lack awareness and application of financial management principles, failing to use financial management for supervision, control, and incentive, which is crucial for achieving managerial goals and maximizing enterprise value (Nkwinika & Akinola, 2023).

Furthermore, market competition has significantly impacted the management of Shanghai SMEs. With the market economy expanding, competition from both local and international firms has intensified. To remain competitive, these Enterprises must continuously improve product quality, service levels, and brand image (Liu, 2008). Government policies also play a crucial role in which favourable tax

policies and financial assistance can reduce costs and alleviate capital constraints, fostering growth. However, many SMEs are privately held and managed by operators without financial expertise, leading to inadequate financial management practices and a focus on technology and sales over financial control (Cronin, 2018). SMEs often lack effective financial management systems and rely on subjective assessments rather than scientific methods. This reliance increases the risk of financial and operational issues.

Initial funding for SMEs usually comes from personal savings and loans from close associates, with limited access to bank loans or capital markets due to low credit ratings and stringent listing requirements (Breunig et al., 2020). The banking sector's risk-averse nature further restricts SMEs' access to credit, exacerbating their financial challenges (Cronin, 2018). Consequently, SMEs struggle to secure the necessary capital for growth and stability. Talent management is crucial for Shanghai's SMEs. As businesses grow and market conditions change, the need for high-quality talent evolves. SMEs must continuously attract and develop skilled individuals to enhance their core competitiveness and innovation capabilities. Implementing a robust talent reward structure is essential to motivate and inspire staff (Okwuise & Ndudi, 2023).

Moreover, technology plays a vital role in SME management. Continuous adoption of new technologies, equipment, and processes is necessary to improve production efficiency and quality standards (Shahadat et al., 2023). Therefore, investing in technological research and development is crucial for product and industrial upgrades. Moreover, cultural elements also significantly impact SME operations. A positive, open, and inclusive corporate culture fosters employee loyalty and a sense of belonging. In this case, SMEs must cultivate such a culture and promote a healthy working environment and team spirit to support long-term growth (Radu, 2023). Concerning this study, globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for Shanghai's SMEs. To enhance international competitiveness, SMEs should develop and implement internationalization strategies, expand foreign market channels, and attract foreign talent. Strengthening these efforts is vital for success on the global stage (Cronin, 2018). The management of Shanghai's SMEs is influenced by market competitiveness, regulatory environment, talent, technology, culture, and internationalization. Hence, addressing these factors is essential for improving operations, competitiveness, and sustainable growth.

Furthermore, as China's social and economic systems evolve, effective enterprise operation and management have become crucial for company

competitiveness. Simplifying management structures may save costs but can undermine daily administrative effectiveness and system construction, leading to authoritarian leadership and low administrative efficiency. Successful management requires timely completion of departmental tasks and efficient vertical transmission of administrative instructions, from top-level decision-making to grassroots execution (Hao & Li, 2014; Yang & Xin, 2014). SMEs in China face growth barriers due to restricted access to financial resources, limited creditworthiness, poor production capacity, and inefficient management systems. These challenges hinder their ability to secure external funding, including venture capital (VC), which is a viable alternative for financing and promoting economic development (Song et al., 2016; Abe et al., 2015; Ahmed & Khan, 2016). Administrative factors significantly influence firm efficiency (Cronin, 2018). They are fundamental to daily operations and decision-making processes. Thus, practical command application is crucial for optimizing departmental efficiency. In this matter, leaders should focus on fundamental decisions, leveraging administrative factors to manage execution challenges (Aarabi, 2019). These factors include decision-making, implementation, enterprise production and management plans, and cultural supervision. Proper human resource allocation is vital for maximizing administrative efficiency and enterprise development. Encouraging positive administrative roles and enhancing human resource management are essential for modern business administration.

Besides, organizational agility is vital for enterprises to address market changes and gain competitive advantages promptly. Increasing agility enables businesses to perceive market opportunities better, adjust product marketing and business processes, and improve responsiveness to customer needs and product quality (Zhang Zhengang & Yu Chuanpeng, 2014). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in various economies, including China. Defined by the European Commission as having fewer than 250 employees, SMEs contribute significantly to GDP, tax revenue, employment, and economic development (Beaufel, 2009). However, despite their contributions, there is a lack of theoretical research on SMEs' innovation capabilities (Enterprise Research Institute & Development Research Centre of The State Council, 2013). SMEs are essential for driving innovation, with studies showing that they outperform larger firms in technological advancements and new product development (Xu Guanhua, 2006). Innovation is crucial for long-term economic development, particularly in light of China's transition towards innovation-driven growth (Enterprise Research Institute

& Development Research Centre of The State Council, 2013).

To support SME innovation, it is essential to build a robust service system, enhance intellectual property rights protection, refine R&D tax deduction policies, promote industry-university-research collaborations, and encourage partnerships with larger enterprises (Enterprise Research Institute & Development Research Centre of The State Council, 2013). However, the focus on theoretical research in innovation management remains inadequate, with only a tiny portion of the literature dedicated to management innovation (Damanpourt & Aravind, 2012). As enterprises navigate resource constraints and seek to integrate internal and external knowledge for innovation, theoretical guidance and best practices are essential (Enterprise Research Institute & Development Research Centre of The State Council, 2013). While much attention has been given to technical innovation, management innovation remains understudied despite its potential impact on organizational success (Birkinshaw et al., 2008; Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between enterprise management and external and internal factors in Chinese SMEs. Moreover, the research explores the relationship between government policies and the internal management adjustment of SMEs. The manuscript provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs in Shanghai and offers recommendations for enhancing their management effectiveness and competitiveness in the dynamic business landscape.

## Method

This study employed a quantitative survey to assess the focus topics related to the factors affecting SME management, particularly enterprise architecture (EA) and strategic information technology management. Surveys are widely utilized and efficient instruments in quantitative research, employed to gather data from a substantial number of participants (Adam, 2020). They are precious for collecting data about individuals' viewpoints, actions, and attributes (Taherdoost, 2021). Surveys can be conducted using several methods, such as online questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and paper-and-pencil surveys (Jain, 2021). In this study, the researchers applied online questionnaires through Xing and LinkedIn aimed to reach a broader audience of professionals engaged in enterprise architecture and IT strategy and enhance the diversity and relevance of the feedback. The participants, drawn from various industries and backgrounds, provided insights that were critical for

understanding the current trends and challenges in these fields. The rigorous process of identifying and removing duplicate responses ensured that the data was not only comprehensive but also representative of distinct business perspectives.

Furthermore, this meticulous approach to data collection and verification underscores the study's commitment to accuracy and reliability in capturing the views and experiences of industry professionals. The refined dataset of 105 unique responses serves as a robust foundation for the subsequent analysis and findings of the research. Following the closure of the questionnaires from the two platforms, feedback was received from 178 participants. Duplicate responses were identified by cross-referencing the business names. This filtering process eliminated redundant entries from the same company, resulting in a final set of 105 complete and unique responses for analysis. Essentially, surveys enable the researchers to encompass a vast array of subjects and can be customized to meet unique research requirements (Kharuddin et al., 2020).

The sample population for this study comprised small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Shanghai region, which were the primary focus of this extensive research initiative. These SMEs were chosen due to their significant role in the local economy and their potential for growth and innovation. Detailed information from individuals employed in business management or related fields was gathered, as their insights were deemed particularly relevant to understanding the nuances of SME management in this context. Over 1,100 invitations to participate in the survey were meticulously sent via email to ensure a broad and diverse respondent base. The list of experts invited to take part in the survey was developed based on the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) projects conducted over the past eight years. These projects provided a rich database of professionals with substantial experience and expertise in managing SMEs. By leveraging these established relationships and tapping into this pool of knowledgeable individuals, we ensured that the survey responses would be informed by practical experience and a deep understanding of the industry. This strategic approach aimed to generate valuable insights into the internal and external factors that affect SME management in Shanghai and contribute to the development of more effective management practices and policies.

This study employed mathematical and statistical methods to obtain quantitative measurements of data for hypothesis testing, modeling, decision-making, risk assessment, and policy development in various sectors by utilizing SPSS software to analyze the data gathered. The primary reason for using this software was that it significantly improved the degree of

thoroughness and quality of data processing and analysis. SPSS offers a wide range of functions, each designed to fulfil a specific role in data analysis. The analysis method emphasized objectivity and repeatability, making it crucial for scientific research, corporate analysis, and policy formulation. Moreover, to test the hypotheses, the first step involved verifying the accuracy of the data through reliability and validity analysis. The next step was to analyze the samples using regression analysis with SPSS, followed by interpreting the regression, testing the assumption of regression analysis, and reporting the whole result analysis.

In the research framework, the dependent variable is enterprise management, while independent variables encompass external influences, government policies, enterprise strategy, internal influences, and the market environment. External influences include factors such as market competition, regulatory environment, and technological advancements that shape management strategies. Government policies, including tax policies and financial regulations, significantly impact the operating environment for SMEs. Enterprise strategy encompasses internal decisions like organizational management framework, the organizational management division of labour, and corporate culture, while internal influences encompass factors like working atmosphere, employee satisfaction, and internal training. Finally, the market environment includes factors such as supply chain and customer preferences that influence management decisions.

By analyzing the interactions between these variables, the research framework provides a holistic understanding of the internal and external factors affecting SME management in Shanghai. Through rigorous examination informed by theoretical foundations, researchers could uncover valuable insights to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of SME management practices in a dynamic business landscape. Internal influences refer to the working atmosphere, employee satisfaction, and internal training as the factors affecting small and medium business management. However, the external influences that allude to the market competition, regulatory environment, and technological advancements are simultaneously the factors of the enterprise's

management. In addition, government policies in terms of tax and financial regulation would affect the overall small and medium businesses. It is, therefore, government stability in providing the regulation of the business that is highly expected in order to avoid instability of the SMEs' operation in their companies.

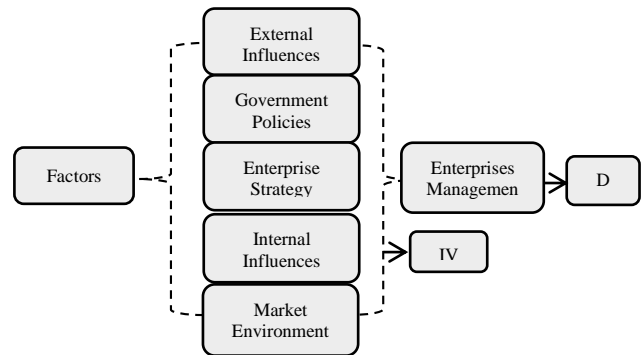


Figure 1. Research Framework

## Result and Discussion

### Result

#### 1. Demographic Analysis

The primary purpose of this survey study was not only to identify the issues that companies are currently facing but also to highlight significant organizational and cultural features that impact these challenges. These influences can be positive, reducing the frequency of difficulties, or negative, causing issues to arise more frequently under certain conditions. To achieve the study objectives, the researchers filtered the dataset, focusing on issues where at least fifteen percent of companies agreed and at least fifteen percent disagreed with the challenge. The remainder of this article focused on the problems identified through this filter, noting the overlap with the ten most critical EAM challenges. While many companies encountered these problems, some enterprises managed to prevent them. The analysis concentrated on these concerns. Additional issues within the study's scope, which showed a nearly equal split in agreement and disagreement, included outdated EAM findings and a lack of understanding of EAM benefits.

Table 1. Demographic Analysis for the Current Study

| Challenge                                      | Agree |       | Neither |       | Disagree |       | No Response |      |
|--|-------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|-------------|------|
|  | n     | %     | n       | %     | n        | %     | n           | %    |
| The Enterprise Environment Changes too quickly | 70    | 71.43 | 9       | 9.18  | 19       | 19.39 | 4           | 4.08 |
| EAM Team Focuses Primarily on IT               | 67    | 67.68 | 9       | 9.09  | 23       | 23.23 | 3           | 3.03 |
| Reluctant Information Providers                | 62    | 64.58 | 14      | 14.58 | 20       | 20.83 | 6           | 6.25 |
| Unavailable Stakeholders                       | 49    | 51.04 | 26      | 27.08 | 21       | 21.88 | 6           | 6.25 |

|   |    |       |    |       |    |       |    |       |
|---|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|
| Late Evaluation of EAM through Stakeholders     | 47 | 51.09 | 26 | 28.26 | 19 | 20.65 | 10 | 10.87 |
| Outdated  | 35 | 37.63 | 23 | 24.73 | 35 | 37.63 | 9  | 9.68  |
| No Understanding of Benefits                    | 31 | 31.31 | 34 | 34.34 | 34 | 34.34 | 3  | 3.03  |
| Over-sized and Difficult EAM Models             | 33 | 33.67 | 24 | 24.49 | 41 | 41.84 | 4  | 4.08  |
| EAM Team does not meet the Level of Abstraction | 26 | 27.08 | 24 | 25.00 | 46 | 47.92 | 6  | 6.25  |
| EAM takes place in an ivory tower               | 17 | 17.53 | 13 | 13.40 | 67 | 60.07 | 5  | 5.15  |

Source: Developed for this Research

## 2. Statistical Analysis

This study focused on understanding how internal and external factors influence enterprise management (EAM) in Chinese SMEs. Companies were categorized by size based on employee numbers: SMEs with fewer than 1,000 employees, mid-sized enterprises (MSEs) with 1,001 to 30,000 employees, and large-scale enterprises (LSEs) with over 30,001 employees. The analysis revealed significant insights. Firstly, 63% of MSEs, 62% of LSEs, and 47% of SMEs faced EAM issues primarily related to information technology. With a p-value of 0.047, the study found a statistically significant dependence on organizational size, highlighting that internal factors such as company size played a critical role in EAM, especially in IT-related issues.

Additionally, about 52% of MSEs, 51% of LSEs, and 38% of SMEs reported various difficulties, but with a p-value of 0.420, these issues did not significantly depend on organizational size alone. It suggests that external factors like market conditions and industry trends might also influence these perceptions significantly. Further, 44% of SMEs, 67% of MSEs, and 32% of LSEs struggled with outdated EAM findings. However, the p-value of 0.397 indicated no significant dependence on organizational size, implying that both internal and external practices and external pressures, such as technological advancements and competitive dynamics, contributed to this challenge. Lastly, the perception of EAM occurring in an ivory tower was noted by 22% of LSEs, 19% of SMEs, and 14% of MSEs with a p-value of 0.341; there was no significant evidence. This perception depended on organizational size, indicating that the disconnect between management and operations might be a widespread issue across different enterprise sizes, influenced by broader factors like corporate culture and leadership practices.

The study also explored how government policies impacted internal management adjustments in SMEs. While the direct influence of government policies was not explicitly measured, inferences can be made from

the data. The significant focus on information technology among MSEs and LSEs suggests that policies promoting digital transformation may be influential. The statistically significant dependence of EAM issues on organizational size (p-value of 0.047) implied that larger enterprises, which were more regulated, responded more to such policies. The lack of significant evidence for size dependence regarding perceived difficulties (p-value of 0.420) and obsolete EAM findings (p-value of 0.397) suggested a uniform impact of government policies across different enterprise sizes. This could be due to the fact that broad regulatory frameworks affect all sizes similarly. The perception of EAM in an ivory tower, with no significant dependence on organizational size (p-value of 0.341), might indicate that government policies were perceived as top-down, underscoring the need for more inclusive policymaking.

## Discussion

This part of the study delves into how internal and external elements, as well as companies, need to align their strategies and operations to maintain competitiveness and success. Internal factors, such as company structure, culture, leadership, and operational processes, also play crucial roles in succeeding companies (Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2018). These internal elements, found within the organization, significantly impact managerial approaches and overall performance. Government policies also have a notable influence on corporate management. Laws and regulations set by the government also significantly shape how companies operate (Umar et al., 2022). To ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards, companies may need to adjust internal management practices, including compliance procedures, reporting protocols, and governance structures, in response to legislative changes.

The findings above demonstrated that the role of technology is crucial in supporting the development of enterprises since it helps arrange and support the development of both the staff and the company itself,

which results in a better EAM. As stated by Muna et al. (2022), the utilization of technology, in this case, social media, impacts the operations and information exchange of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), leading to innovation potential, accelerated time to market, customer satisfaction, and enhanced business performance. Besides, organizational size is crucial to managing and maintaining a company's development (Theodore, 2011). This finding is correlated with the theory of Environmental Contingency Theory, as explained in the literature review section.

Meanwhile, for the external aspects, market dynamics comprise the factors that influence the relationship between supply and demand in a market. The dynamics encompass shifts in consumer preferences, technical progress, economic variables, and competitive activities (Sudirjo, 2023). Continuous monitoring and response to these dynamics are crucial for the success of a corporation. An essential element of market dynamics is the behavior of consumers. Given the changing demands and preferences of consumers, companies must adjust their products, services, and marketing methods correspondingly (Galvano, 2021).

Furthermore, technical progress is another significant catalyst for market changes. Accelerated innovation has the potential to transform whole industries, making conventional business models outdated completely. Organizations that adopt and utilize emerging technology to optimize productivity, save expenses, and elevate customer satisfaction are more likely to achieve sustained success in the long run (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Meantime, industrial trends refer to the recurring patterns and directional movements observed within an industry. In addition to broader market dynamics, these movements are also influenced by changes in laws, globalization, and shifts in industry standards. Gaining insight into and harnessing the potential of industry trends can enable companies to maintain a competitive edge and establish a robust market position. A further noteworthy industry development is the increasing focus on sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Consumers and stakeholders are progressively demanding higher levels of corporate responsibility for their environmental and social effects (Khuong et al., 2021). Firms that actively embrace sustainable practices and exhibit a dedication to corporate social responsibility (CSR) not only improve their reputation but also appeal to socially aware consumers and investors (Etikan, 2024). An especially noticeable phenomenon is observed in the fashion sector, where companies that give priority to ethical sourcing and strive to minimize their carbon footprint are more popular among consumers.

In addition to the external factors influencing SMEs, this study found that corporate culture and leadership

practices had an impact on the firm's development. A robust corporate culture aligns employees with the company's mission, enhances engagement, and attracts top talent, while effective leadership practices inspire, guide, and influence the organization toward achieving its goals (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). The collaboration between these two elements creates a powerful engine for innovation, adaptability, and sustained competitive advantage. Firms that invest in cultivating a positive culture and developing strong leadership are better positioned to navigate the complexities of the modern business environment and achieve long-term success (Jerab & Mabrouk, 2023).

## Conclusion

Expanding company training in Shanghai serves as a significant strategy to enhance business competitiveness, yet it comes with its challenges. Besides, emphasizing precise management, continual employee engagement, and improved training quality are essential to leverage the impact of business training effectively. The focus should be on enhancing both company management and human resources quality to establish a solid foundation for business growth. Training programs should be tailored to meet organizational development needs and employee requirements, incorporating various learning methods and forms to accommodate diverse learning preferences and capabilities. Training program formulation serves as the foundation for practical training, necessitating a reasonable allocation of training content and time based on employee skill maturity and career development needs.

The training objectives should be closely linked to enterprise operations to ensure practical value for both employees and the organization. Moreover, the training impact assessment is crucial for objectively evaluating training outcomes, involving employee satisfaction surveys, phased work outcome evaluations, and knowledge-sharing activities to foster continuous learning and progress. Furthermore, the selection of competent instructors, meticulous training structure and administration, and fostering of a motivating learning environment are pivotal for successful training activities. Motivation mechanisms, such as reward and promotion systems, contribute to enhancing employees' enthusiasm for learning and innovation. In summary, comprehensive enterprise training programs play a vital role in business development, requiring a holistic approach that considers employee and business needs, scientific program design, ongoing adjustments, and attention to various elements for long-term growth.

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