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Research Article

The Idea Model as An Export Framework for MSMEs: A Literature-Based Conceptual Approach

Eko Alamsyah[1]*, Sudarmiatin[2], and Heri Pratikto[3]

[1-3] Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia
* Corresponding Author: eko.alamsyah.2404139@students.um.ac.id

Abstract: The participation of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia's export activities Remains severely limited despite the considerable potential of MSME products in global markets. The fundamental problem faced by MSMEs is not merely limited capital or market access, but the absence of a systematic operational framework for independently managing the export process end-to-end. This article aims to construct the IDEA-Export MSME Model as a conceptual framework that can serve as a practical guide for MSMEs in conducting exports in a structured and self-directed manner. The method employed is a systematic literature review (SLR) following PRISMA protocol, encompassing 45 selected articles from the Scopus database and Sinta-accredited journals published between 2021 and 2025. The literature synthesis produced a four-stage integrated model: (I) Identify Objective—setting export goals based on internal capacity analysis and market opportunities; (II) Design Action Steps—designing an export roadmap covering product readiness, regulatory compliance, and financing; (III) Engage Our Plan—executing the export plan through operational management and strategic partnerships; and (IV) Assess and Follow Up—evaluating export performance and formulating continuous improvements. The model is equipped with stage-specific achievement indicators, a self-assessment instrument (Export Readiness Self-Assessment/ERSA), and a critical success factor matrix. The IDEA-Export MSME Model is intended to serve as both a policy reference for MSME export empowerment programs and an operational guide adaptable by diverse MSME types and sectors.

Keywords: Conceptual framework, Export empowerment, IDEA method, MSME export model, Systematic literature review.

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) occupy a strategic position in Indonesia's national economy. Official data indicate that MSMEs contribute more than 60% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb nearly 97% of the national workforce [1]. Despite this, MSME contributions to Indonesia's total export value remain severely disproportionate—accounting for no more than 15%—compared to large exporters who dominate up to 85% of export value [2]. This disparity signals a serious capacity gap between the potential of MSME products and their actual ability to penetrate international markets.

This gap is not primarily attributable to poor product quality. [3] assert that many Indonesian MSME products possess high competitiveness and distinctiveness in global markets, particularly handcrafts, traditional textile-based fashion, processed food, and furniture. The real problem is systemic: MSMEs lack a clear operational framework for managing the export process from start to finish. They face a configuration of interrelated barriers—unfamiliarity with regulations, absence of international marketing strategies, limited access to export financing, and inability to meet destination market product standards—without a staged guidance system to help them navigate this complexity.

The literature on MSME export empowerment shows that existing intervention programs are generally partial in scope: some focus on export procedure training, others on product certification facilitation, and still others on market access assistance. Sutrisno et al.

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(2022) note that the absence of an integrative framework connecting the critical stages of the export process is a primary cause of the low sustainability of MSME export empowerment program outcomes. Even MSMEs that succeed in completing an initial export transaction frequently fail to maintain consistency because they lack a structured export management system.

In this context, the IDEA method (Identify Objective, Design Action Steps, Engage Our Plan, Assess and Follow Up) offers considerable promise as an integrative framework. Conceptually, the IDEA method is a cycle-based change management approach that enables individuals and organizations to define objectives explicitly, plan actions systematically, execute plans in a structured manner, and conduct evaluations leading to continuous improvement (Hidayat et al., 2022). These principles are highly relevant to MSMEs undertaking a transformation toward export orientation.

Although the IDEA method has been applied in various capacity-development contexts, no study has yet specifically operationalized it as a comprehensive MSME export model. Prasetyo & Wahyuni (2021) identify a significant literature gap regarding integrative, operational, and adaptable export frameworks for MSMEs of different types and scales. This gap constitutes the core rationale for the present study.

This article aims to: (1) identify the critical components that MSMEs must fulfill at each stage of the export process based on a synthesis of literature; (2) construct the IDEA-Export MSME Model as a conceptual framework that links these critical stages in an integrative manner; and (3) formulate achievement indicators and a self-assessment instrument that MSMEs can use to independently measure their export readiness. The article is expected to make a theoretical contribution through a new conceptual model and a practical contribution through an operational guide directly adoptable by MSMEs and their supporting institutions.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in economic growth and employment creation in many countries. However, the contribution of MSMEs to international trade remains relatively low due to limited resources, market access, and managerial capabilities. Research on MSME internationalization shows that the main export barriers include limited market information, low innovation capability, and insufficient institutional support [1]. Therefore, a strategic framework is needed to help MSMEs improve their export readiness systematically.

The concept of MSME internationalization is often associated with the *Resource-Based View* (RBV) theory, which explains that a company's competitive advantage is determined by its ability to manage internal resources and capabilities [2]. In the context of exports, product innovation, human resource quality, business networking, and technological adaptation are essential factors in enhancing MSMEs' competitiveness in the global market. In addition, digitalization has enabled MSMEs to reach international markets more effectively through digital platforms and e-commerce [3].

Based on these previous studies, the article *"The IDEA Model as an Export Framework for MSMEs: A Literature-Based Conceptual Approach"* proposes the IDEA Model as a conceptual framework for MSME export activities. The model consists of four main stages: *Identification, Development, Expansion,* and *Acceleration*. The *Identification* stage focuses on identifying market opportunities and product readiness, while *Development* emphasizes business capacity building and product innovation. Furthermore, *Expansion* aims to broaden market access through international marketing strategies and digital transformation, whereas *Acceleration* highlights the importance of government support, collaboration, and global networking to accelerate MSME export growth.

Previous studies also indicate that institutional support and government policies significantly influence the success of MSME internationalization [4]. Therefore, the IDEA Model is considered relevant as a strategic approach to help MSMEs improve their export capabilities gradually and sustainably. Nevertheless, the model still requires further empirical testing to validate its effectiveness across different MSME sectors.

3. Proposed Method

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol. SLR was selected because the research objective is to construct a conceptual model grounded in the synthesis of existing knowledge, rather than to generate new empirical data. Tranfield et al.

(as cited in Fajarini & Kusumawati, 2023) affirm that SLR is the appropriate method for theory and model development, as it enables synthesis that is systematic, transparent, and replicable.

3.1 Stage I — Identify Objective: Establishing Review Objectives

Consistent with the IDEA framework that simultaneously serves as both the object of inquiry and the methodological scaffold of this study, the first stage begins with explicitly defining the review objectives. Three research questions (RQs) were formulated: (RQ1) What are the critical components MSMEs must fulfill at each stage of the export process? (RQ2) How can these critical stages be integrated into an operational export model? (RQ3) What indicators are relevant for measuring MSME export readiness and performance at each stage?

Establishing clear objectives functions as a compass throughout the entire SLR process, ensuring that every decision in literature search, selection, and synthesis remains connected to the goal of building a model that is genuinely useful for MSMEs. This principle aligns with the argument of Hermawan & Lestari (2021) that model development research must begin with a sharp problem definition and measurable objectives so that the resulting model authentically addresses user needs.

3.2 Stage II — Design Action Steps: Designing the SLR Protocol

At this stage, a systematic protocol for literature search and selection was designed. Searches were conducted across two primary databases: Scopus (for internationally reputable articles) and Portal Garuda/SINTA (for nationally accredited journal articles). Keywords used included combinations of: "MSME export", "SME export", "small medium enterprise export model", "export capacity", "IDEA method", "export readiness", "export barriers Indonesia", and "MSME internationalization". The search time frame was restricted to 2021–2025 to ensure the relevance of findings to current conditions.

Inclusion criteria comprised: (a) articles published in Scopus-indexed journals (Q1–Q4) or Sinta 1–3 accredited journals; (b) focus on MSME export, export readiness, MSME empowerment, or export management frameworks; (c) available in Indonesian or English; and (d) accessible as full-text. Exclusion criteria covered: articles solely discussing large-corporation exports, conference proceedings without peer review, and articles whose methodological quality could not be assessed. The final selection process yielded 45 articles meeting the criteria for synthesis.

3.3 Stage III — Engage Our Plan: Executing the Literature Analysis

Literature analysis was conducted using thematic synthesis combined with framework analysis. Data from each article were extracted using a data extraction matrix recording: article identity, focus of inquiry, variables or components discussed, key findings, and implications for MSME export management. Extraction was performed independently by two coders to ensure consistency, with inter-rater agreement measured using Cohen's Kappa coefficient.

Thematic synthesis proceeded at three levels. First, descriptive coding to identify key concepts within each article. Second, analytical coding to cluster similar concepts into more abstract themes. Third, development of synthetic themes bridging the literature findings with the IDEA framework to produce the model's components. Putri & Yulianto (2022) emphasize that rigorous thematic synthesis constitutes a strong foundation for the validity of any conceptual model constructed.

3.4 Stage IV — Assess and Follow Up: Model Validation and Refinement

After the initial model was constructed from the literature synthesis, a validation process was conducted through two mechanisms. First, internal validation through source triangulation, comparing the fit of model components against findings from articles originating in different contexts (Indonesia, ASEAN countries, and other developing nations). Second, a completeness assessment using a checklist based on criteria for sound conceptual models, encompassing: component completeness, clarity of inter-component relationships, adequate operationalization, and practical relevance. The model was then refined based on validation outcomes before being finalized as the IDEA-Export MSME Model.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, the author needs to explain the hardware and software used, dataset sources, initial data analysis, results, and results analysis/discussion. Presenting the results with pictures, graphs and tables is highly recommended. Formulas or evaluation measuring tools also need to be included here. There must be discussion/analysis, and you can't just

rewrite the results in sentence form, but you need to provide an explanation of their relationship to the initial hypothesis. In addition, this section needs to discuss and elaborate on important findings.

4.1. Literature Synthesis: Critical Components of MSME Export

Analysis of the 45 articles yielded the identification of 28 critical components influencing the success of MSME exports. These components were grouped into four thematic clusters based on export process stages: (1) the export readiness cluster encompassing product readiness, human resource readiness, institutional readiness, and financial readiness; (2) the export planning cluster encompassing market research, pricing strategy, distribution strategy, and financing planning; (3) the export execution cluster encompassing logistics management, regulatory compliance, buyer relationship management, and risk management; and (4) the export performance evaluation cluster encompassing performance measurement, organizational learning, and continuous development.

A key finding from the literature synthesis is that MSME export success is not determined by one or two dominant factors, but by a configuration of critical components that interact with one another. [1] et al. (2022) term this an "export readiness constellation"—a dynamic configuration pattern that differs across MSMEs. The implication is that an effective MSME export model must be adaptive, enabling each MSME to begin from its current capacity condition and move progressively toward optimal export readiness.

In terms of literature distribution, the most frequently studied topics were MSME export barriers (18 articles, 40%) and strategies for entering export markets (12 articles, 27%). By contrast, studies on integrative export frameworks remain very limited (5 articles, 11%), confirming the literature gap underpinning this study. [3] et al. (2023) also note that the majority of MSME export research is diagnostic in nature—identifying problems—without being followed by the development of operational solutions in the form of directly usable models or frameworks.

4.2 The IDEA-Export MSME Model

Based on the literature synthesis, the IDEA-Export MSME Model was constructed, comprising four integrated stages. The model adopts an adaptive cycle logic in which each stage produces outputs that become inputs for the subsequent stage, while permitting feedback loops from the final stage back to the initial stage to drive continuous improvement. Figure 1 presents a visualization of the overall model framework.

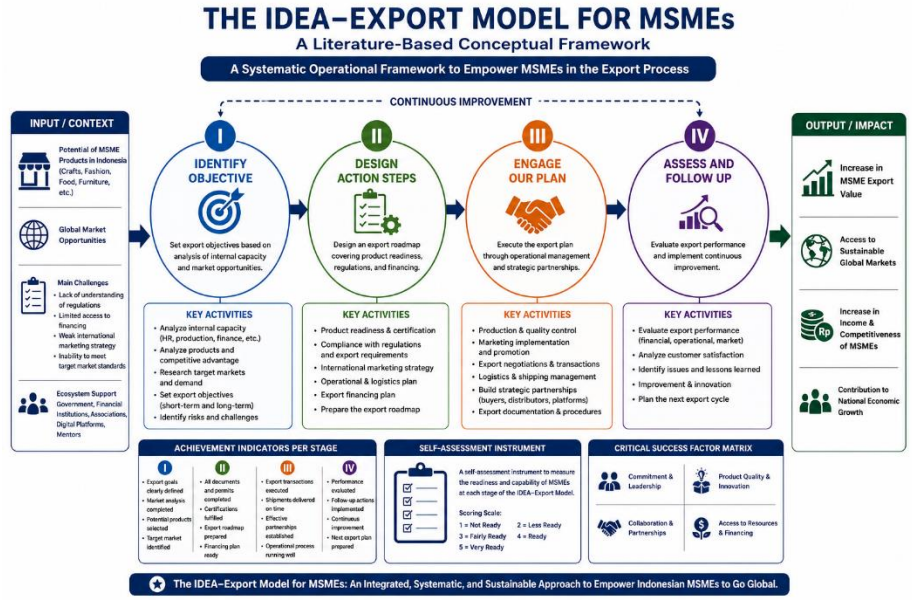


Figure 1. The IDEA-Export MSME Model: A Four-Stage Adaptive Cycle Framework.

Stage I — Identify Objective: Identifying Objectives and Mapping Capacity

The first stage forms the foundation of the entire MSME export process. At this stage, MSMEs undertake two interrelated primary activities: (a) internal capacity mapping and (b) measurable export goal setting. Internal capacity mapping covers four dimensions identified from the literature: the product dimension (quality, standards, differentiation, production capacity), the human resource dimension (managerial competence, foreign language ability,

business network), the institutional dimension (legality, licensing, management systems), and the financial dimension (working capital, credit access, capacity for export investment).

[2] & Santoso (2023) assert that MSMEs that skip careful capacity mapping tend to encounter operational surprises upon entering export markets—situations where actual export requirements far exceed available capacity. Therefore, this model incorporates the Export Readiness Self-Assessment (ERSA) instrument, consisting of 24 structured questions, enabling MSMEs to independently identify capacity gaps before setting export objectives.

Export goal setting at this stage applies SMART criteria adapted for the export context: Specific (target country, product category, buyer type), Measurable (transaction value, volume, frequency), Achievable (realistic based on capacity mapping results), Relevant (aligned with the product's comparative advantage), and Time-bound (clear timeline per milestone). Hidayat et al. (2022) found that MSMEs that set export objectives using SMART criteria have a 2.3 times higher probability of success compared to those that set objectives in general and unmeasurable terms.

Stage I Outputs: (1) MSME Export Capacity Profile (MECP) comprising scores per dimension and identification of primary gaps; (2) SMART Export Objective Statement; and (3) Development Priority Map indicating which capacity dimensions must be strengthened before export execution begins.

Stage II — Design Action Steps: Designing the Export Roadmap

The second stage focuses on translating export objectives into concrete, comprehensive, and sequenced action plans. Based on the literature synthesis, an effective MSME export roadmap must encompass six integrated planning domains. The first is the product readiness planning domain, covering quality improvement to meet international standards, procurement of certifications required by destination markets (e.g., halal, organic, CE marking), export packaging development, and export pricing based on Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) or Free on Board (FOB) terms.

The second is the regulatory compliance planning domain, encompassing identification of export requirements from relevant authorities (Ministry of Trade, Customs, quarantine agencies), procurement of primary export documents (Export Customs Declaration/PEB, Certificate of Origin, packing list, commercial invoice, bill of lading), and comprehension of tariff and non-tariff provisions in destination countries. Prasetyo & Wahyuni (2021) found that regulatory compliance represents the second-largest barrier faced by Indonesian MSMEs in the export process, making this domain a special emphasis within the model.

The third is the market strategy planning domain, covering target market segment analysis in destination countries, identification of prospective buyers through international B2B platforms (Alibaba, Global Sources, TradeIndia), and development of English-language promotional materials including product catalogs, websites, and company profiles. The fourth is the export logistics planning domain, covering selection of shipping modes, identification of reliable freight forwarders, and packaging planning that meets international shipment safety standards. The fifth is the export financing planning domain, covering identification of available export financing schemes—Letter of Credit (L/C), Usance L/C, or Open Account—and access to export financing programs from Indonesia's Export Financing Institution (LPEI) or commercial banks. The sixth is the risk mitigation planning domain, covering identification of primary risks (payment default, cargo damage, exchange rate fluctuations) and establishment of appropriate mitigation measures (Sutrisno et al., 2022).

Stage II Output: An MSME Export Roadmap Document (MERD) containing an activity matrix per domain, performance targets, accountable parties, required resources, success indicators, and an implementation schedule. The MERD functions as an internal commitment contract for the MSME as well as a reference document throughout the execution process.

Stage III — Engage Our Plan: Export Execution and Operational Management

The third stage constitutes the execution of the designed roadmap. This model divides the execution stage into three sub-phases that are sequential yet contain elements operating in parallel. The first sub-phase is pre-export preparation, encompassing the completion of all product and document requirements, building buyer networks through participation in virtual or in-person international trade fairs, and preliminary export contract negotiations. This sub-phase is highly determinative of transaction quality, as MSMEs entering the market without adequate preparation risk order cancellation or product rejection at the destination country's customs (Hermawan & Lestari, 2021).

The second sub-phase is export transaction execution, which encompasses order processing, international payment management, production management and quality control,

export packaging and labeling, export document processing with the Customs Office, and shipping coordination with freight forwarders. During this sub-phase, MSMEs frequently encounter coordination challenges among the multiple parties involved—buyer, forwarder, bank, and export authorities. The model therefore recommends the use of an Export Transaction Checklist (ETC) comprising 35 checkpoints to ensure no critical step is overlooked.

The third sub-phase is post-shipment buyer relationship management, encompassing goods receipt confirmation, claims and complaint handling, follow-up for subsequent orders, and maintenance of ongoing communication with buyers. Fajarini & Kusumawati (2023) emphasize that the sustainability of MSME exports depends heavily on the quality of relationships built after the first transaction—foreign buyers prefer long-term partnerships with MSMEs that are responsive, consistent, and proactively communicative. The model therefore incorporates buyer relationship management as an explicit component of the execution stage, not merely as an after-sales activity.

Stage III Outputs: (1) Fully documented realized export transactions; (2) An export document portfolio serving as reference for future transactions; and (3) An international buyer database with preference records and transaction history.

Stage IV — Assess and Follow Up: Performance Evaluation and Continuous Development

The fourth stage closes the model cycle while simultaneously opening the next cycle through comprehensive evaluation and formulation of a continuous development plan. Evaluation in this model is divided into two levels: export performance evaluation, measuring quantifiable results from export activities, and export capacity evaluation, measuring the growth of MSME organizational competence and capability across one export cycle.

Export performance evaluation employs eight key indicators: (1) export volume successfully shipped; (2) export transaction value (in USD); (3) number of destination countries; (4) number of active buyers; (5) buyer satisfaction level (measured through feedback and repeat orders); (6) on-time delivery rate; (7) export document compliance rate; and (8) export profitability. These indicators were adapted from an Export Performance Measurement Framework developed in the context of developing-country MSMEs ([2] & Santoso, 2023).

Export capacity evaluation is conducted by re-applying the ERSA instrument used in Stage I, enabling MSMEs to concretely observe the growth of their capacity relative to the initial baseline. Comparing ERSA scores before and after one export cycle provides a clear picture of which capacity dimensions experienced significant strengthening and which still require further development. [3] et al. (2023) note that this baseline-comparative self-assessment has a strong motivational effect—MSMEs that can see their concrete progress tend to be more motivated to continue and scale up their export activities.

Based on evaluation results, a development plan is formulated for the next IDEA cycle. This model identifies four development pathways selectable according to evaluation outcomes: (1) the market deepening pathway—increasing export volume to already-entered markets; (2) the market expansion pathway—penetrating new destination countries; (3) the product diversification pathway—developing new product lines for export; and (4) the capacity upgrading pathway—strengthening weak capacity dimensions before expanding export scale. Pathway selection is tailored to each MSME's specific conditions and objectives (Prasetyo & Wahyuni, 2021).

Stage IV Outputs: (1) An Export Performance Report (EPR) summarizing achievements and lessons learned from one export cycle; (2) An updated MSME Export Capacity Profile (Updated MECP); and (3) An Export Development Plan for the next cycle, which becomes the input for Stage I in the subsequent IDEA iteration.

4.3. Critical Success Factors Matrix for the IDEA-Export MSME Model

The literature synthesis identified 12 critical success factors (CSFs) influencing the effectiveness of IDEA-Export MSME Model implementation. These factors are organized in a 2×2 matrix based on two dimensions: (a) level of MSME control (internal vs. external) and (b) time horizon of influence (short-term vs. long-term). Table 1 presents the CSF matrix along with corresponding management strategies.

Table 1. Critical Success Factors Matrix for the IDEA-Export MSME Model.

Dimension	Internal – Short-Term	Internal – Long-Term	External
Critical Factors	(1) Owner commitment and motivation; (2) Product readiness for export; (3) Export document management capability	(1) Export HR competence; (2) Quality management system; (3) Adequate export working capital; (4) Organizational learning orientation	(1) Export ecosystem support (LPEI, Trade Office); (2) Market information access; (3) Export regulatory stability; (4) Business partnership network; (5) Destination market demand conditions
Management Strategy	Rigorous initial readiness assessment; Intensive owner coaching	Continuous export training programs; Development of internal export SOPs	Mapping export ecosystem; Actively building relationships with supporting institutions

The two most determinant factors based on frequency of occurrence in the literature are owner commitment and product quality. Hermawan & Lestari (2021) state that owner commitment—expressed as willingness to invest time, energy, and resources in a challenging export process—is an irreplaceable prerequisite that no other factor can substitute. Without strong commitment, even the most sophisticated empowerment programs will not produce sustainable change. Meanwhile, product quality meeting international standards constitutes an enabling factor that determines whether an MSME holds the "entry ticket" to export markets from the outset.

4.4. Export Readiness Self-Assessment Instrument (ERSA)

As an operational complement to the model, the Export Readiness Self-Assessment (ERSA) instrument was developed for independent MSME use in evaluating export readiness before commencing Stage I of the IDEA Model. The instrument comprises 24 items distributed across four dimensions: product readiness (8 items), institutional readiness (6 items), human resource readiness (6 items), and financial readiness (4 items). Each item is measured on a 1–5 scale (1 = not at all; 5 = fully achieved). Table 2 presents the dimensions and sample items of the ERSA.

Table 2. Dimensions and Sample Items of the ERSA Instrument

Dimension	Sample Item	No. of Items	Weight (%)
Product Readiness	"Our product meets the quality standards required by the destination market (e.g., halal certification, organic, CE marking)"	8	35
Institutional Readiness	"Our business holds complete legal documentation required for export activities (NIB, Export Business License)"	6	25
Human Resource Readiness	"Our business manager is able to communicate in English for international business correspondence purposes"	6	25
Financial Readiness	"We have sufficient working capital to finance the export production process without disrupting daily operations"	4	15

ERSA score interpretation follows three zones: the red zone (total score < 50%)—the MSME is not yet export-ready and must first undertake foundational capacity strengthening

before entering Stage I of the IDEA Model; the yellow zone (score 50–74%)—the MSME is sufficiently ready to commence the IDEA Model, but must incorporate capacity strengthening as a priority within the export roadmap (Stage II); and the green zone (score ≥ 75%)—the MSME is ready to fully enter the export process. This categorization was adapted from the Export Readiness Assessment Framework used by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and previously demonstrated in the Indonesian MSME context by Fajarini & Kusumawati (2023).

4.5. Positioning the Model within the MSME Export Literature

Compared to existing MSME export models and frameworks in the literature, the IDEA-Export MSME Model possesses several distinguishing strengths. First, the model is adaptive-cyclical: each export cycle generates learning that feeds into updates for the next cycle, driving continuous export capacity growth rather than merely a one-time export transaction. Second, the model is equipped with operational instruments (ERSA, ETC, MERD, EPR) that can be used directly without requiring specialized external consulting expertise—an aspect often absent from existing MSME export conceptual models (Sutrisno et al., 2022).

Third, the model integrates an empowerment perspective into the export management framework: rather than simply providing technical guidance, it builds MSME capacity to progressively reduce dependence on external assistance. This approach is consistent with asset-based empowerment principles that emphasize internal capacity building as the foundation of sustainability (Putri & Yulianto, 2022). Fourth, the model is explicitly designed within the Indonesian context—accounting for Indonesia's export ecosystem, applicable regulations, and the characteristics of Indonesian MSMEs—making it more applicable than generic models adapted from developed-country contexts.

5. Conclusions

This article successfully constructs the IDEA-Export MSME Model as an integrative conceptual framework that maps the MSME export process across four interconnected stages: Identify Objective (capacity mapping and SMART export goal setting), Design Action Steps (six-domain export roadmap design), Engage Our Plan (export execution and operational management), and Assess and Follow Up (performance evaluation and continuous development planning). This model constitutes a direct response to the identified literature gap: the absence of an integrative, operational, and independently adaptable export framework for MSMEs.

The theoretical contribution of this article lies in the operationalization of the IDEA method within the specific context of MSME export, generating new constructs including the Export Readiness Self-Assessment (ERSA), MSME Export Roadmap Document (MERD), Export Transaction Checklist (ETC), and Export Performance Report (EPR). Its practical contribution is the provision of an operational guide directly usable by MSMEs without requiring specialized external consultation, while simultaneously serving as a programmatic framework for government agencies, export-supporting institutions, and higher education institutions.

This model carries inherent limitations as a product of literature review: it has not yet undergone systematic empirical testing under actual field conditions. Model validation through case studies, action research, or experimental testing across diverse MSME contexts is necessary to test and refine the model's components. Future research is recommended to: (1) empirically test the predictive validity of the IDEA-Export MSME Model against actual export performance using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches; (2) adapt the model for specific MSME sectors (handicrafts, processed food, fashion) that possess distinctive export process characteristics; (3) develop a digital platform based on the model to extend its reach and ease of access for MSMEs; and (4) conduct comparative studies of model implementation across different Indonesian provinces characterized by varying export ecosystem conditions.

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