

## The Contribution of Small & Medium Enterprises to employment in Algeria (From 2010 to 2019)

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*Received: 13/01/2023*

*Accepted: 05/04/2023*

*Published: 30/04/2023*

### Abstract:

The present study aims to highlight the role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their contribution to job creation and alleviation unemployment in Algeria based on annual data between the periods of 2010-2019. In this study we used a set of statistical methods and graphs to analyze the data that we obtained from the official Algerian resources.

In this study, we discussed the problem and then some concepts related to small and medium enterprises and their relationship to creating jobs, finally we analyzed the data and reached the results related to this research, where the study concluded that small and medium enterprises in Algeria are fragile and do not contribute effectively to creating job opportunities, Where the unemployment rate is still high.

**Keywords:** Small and Medium Enterprises; Employment; Unemployment; Job creation, Economic development.

**JEL Classification Codes:** L32, E24, J21, F63

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, many countries in the world, especially developing ones, have increased interest in a new type of enterprises called Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), because of their effective role in building the integrated industrial fabric and stimulating the private sector to increase investment and expansion, and then making radical changes On the economic level, such as creating new opportunities for work, and raising the

volume of internal output by achieving significant growth rates, The role of these enterprises in economic life began with the end of the seventies and became a focus for economic studies as a different entity from large enterprises in terms of size, as well as the way of management and designing strategies.

The problem of unemployment, which has become a hallmark of contemporary economies, has laid most countries to pay more attention to SMEs, because this type of enterprises, despite its small share in the global market, it is an effective way to reduce unemployment and absorb the social pressure that various governments face.

In Algeria, a significant increase in unemployment rates has been observed over the past years, especially after the drop in oil prices, the decline and lack of public investments, as well as the freezing of employment in the public function and the pursuit of the austerity policy that increased the unemployment crisis.

In light of the pressures exerted on the government, it was necessary to find solutions to this worsening crisis. Algeria has increased its interest in SMEs because of its role and importance on more than one level, the state has established many supporting and funded bodies for this sector to facilitate growth and achieve public policy goals.

So, Algeria, after its failed experience represented by its total reliance on large enterprises and giving them priority in moving the wheel of development, tended to engage in the market economy as a new direction, so the legal and administrative framework that governs SMEs was reconsidered. Beginning in the nineties, Algeria witnessed radical transformations that resulted from regional and international changes and global economic and social transformations. As a result, it adopted deep reforms that focused mostly on the private sector. The latter is the basic structure for SMEs, so the state established a special ministry called the Ministry of SMEs in 1993, which was concerned with the establishment and development of this type of enterprise. This is due to the importance of the role it plays in the national economy and as a tool for achieving balanced development and the national goals drawn by any economy.

Through this article, this main question will be answered: Do Algerian

SMEs contribute to employment in Algeria (From 2010 to 2019)?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Small and Medium Enterprises**

A Small or Medium Enterprise is an enterprise whose size, defined on the basis of the number of employees, the balance sheet or turnover, does not exceed certain limits; the definitions of these limits differ from country to country.

SMEs are non-subsidary, independent firms which employ fewer than a given number of employees. This number varies across countries. The most frequent upper limit designating an SME is 250 employees, as in the European Union. However, some countries set the limit at 200 employees, while the United States considers SMEs to include firms with fewer than 500 employees. (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-OECD, 2005)

SMEs are a source of employment, competition, economic dynamism, and innovation; they stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit and the diffusion of skills. Because they enjoy a wider geographical presence than big companies, SMEs also contribute to better income distribution. (OJEKA, 2011)

For the OECD countries the SMEs are main type of enterprise, for nearly 99% of whole businesses, supply the primary cause of employment (around 70% of jobs), main sources to value creation (around 50% and 60%) of value added on. SMEs are crucial for increasing the inclusive globalization and economic growth. SMEs are the main players for economy and the broader ecosystem of businesses. For emerging economies, SMEs give nearly 45% of whole employment, 33% of their GDP and with adding the contribution of the informal firms SMEs causes to more than half of employment and GDP in many countries regardless of their income. (Bayraktar & Algan, 2019, p. 56)

### **2.2 Unemployment**

Unemployment is the situation where we find people without jobs, although they are permanently looking for jobs, and are able to work and accept the existed salaries in the labour market. However, they do not find jobs under these conditions. (LOUHBAIBAT & DJELLAL)

The unemployment rate is a useful measure of the underutilization of the labour supply. It reflects the inability of an economy to generate employment for those persons who want to work but are not doing so, even though they are available for employment and actively seeking work. (International Labour Organization, 2020)

The unemployment rate is calculated by expressing the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the total number of persons in the labour force.

$$UR(\%) = \frac{\text{Persons Unemployed}}{\text{Labour Force}} \times 100$$

### **2.3 Employment**

Employees are all those workers who hold the type of job defined as paid employment jobs. Employees with stable contracts are those employees who have had, and continue to have, an explicit (written or oral) or implicit contract of employment, or a succession of such contracts, with the same employer on a continuous basis (International Labour Organization-ILO, 1993).

In 2022 there were estimated to be approximately 3.32 billion people employed worldwide, compared with 2.28 billion people in 1991 - an increase of around 1.04 billion people. There was a noticeable fall in global employment between 2019 and 2020 when the number of employed people fell from 3.3 billion to 3.19 billion, likely due to the sudden economic shock caused by the Coronavirus pandemic (D. Clark, 2022).

### **2.4 Recruitment processes in SMEs**

Recruitment in SMEs is conducted rather informally by the owner/manager. The process tends not to follow standardized procedures or selection criteria, but rather operates on an ad-hoc and case-by-case basis. Those with established procedures formalize these gradually, drawing on their experience of repeatedly recruiting and increased company size over time. (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2012)

### **2.5 SMEs and employment creation**

SMEs are the most dynamic sector of the economy, representing a key factor in employment growth. Although SMEs have been severely affected

by the economic crisis from 2008, they continue to be a more and more important source of generating jobs, regardless of size class. (PASNICU, 2018, p. 15)

SMEs account for the majority of businesses worldwide and are important contributors to job creation and global economic development. They represent about 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide. (The World Bank)

Table 1 shows the proportion of SMEs in some economies, as well as their contribution to employment (Statistics of 2004).

**Table 1.** Share of SMEs in Some Countries (%)

Countries	SMEs in Total Enterprises	SMEs in Total Employment
USA	97.2	50.4
Germany	99.8	64
Japan	99.4	81.4
England	96	36
South Korea	97.8	61.9
India	98.6	63.2
Turkey	99.5	61.1

**Source:** (MECHAALI & MAHREZ, Development of Small and Medium Enterprises(SMEs) in Algeria, 2019, p. 50)

According to the above table, it appears that SMEs represent very high percentages of the total state enterprises mentioned, and that the contribution of SMEs to employment is considered large compared to their small size.

## **2.6 Start-up and employment creation**

The word “startup” has become a buzzword in contemporary policies and public debate. Promoting entrepreneurship in the form of startups is a policy activity being given high priority all over the world. Every year, a whopping 100 million startups begin (Al Ehsan, 2021). Steve Blank defined the startup as “A startup is a temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model” (DJEKIDEL, DOUA, & MERRAD, 2021, p. 419)

Start-ups, like SMEs, have an important role in finding new job opportunities. The employment generated by start-ups, i.e. newly created

enterprises and those aged one and two years, ranges from 4% to 15% of total employment in most countries. The contribution of start-ups to total employment decreased in 2013 compared to 2008 in many countries where data are available. (OECD, 2016)

### **3. Methods and Materials**

The study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the extent to which SMEs contribute to job creation and poverty reduction in Algeria. The population consists of all SMEs active in Algeria from 2010 to 2019. This study uses descriptive statistics tools, such as:

- Average, percentage, frequency, Growth rates;
- Frequency tables and graphs;
- Time series which are a series of quantity values obtained in consecutive times, often with equal intervals between them.

The data for this study are from the following sources:

- The official website of the Ministry of Industry, Mines and SMEs;
- The official website of National Statistics Office (ONS);
- The official journal of the Algerian Republic.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Evolution of SMEs in Algeria**

The definition of SMEs in accordance with article 5 of the SME Promotion Act 2017 is as follows: "The SMEs, regardless of its legal nature, is defined as the enterprise for the production of goods and / or services. It operates from one (1) to 250 persons and does not exceed 4 billion dinars or does not exceed the total annual budget 1 billion Algerian dinars, and meet the criteria of independence" (Ministry of industry, 2017, p. 5)

The definition of SMEs in Algeria can be described as follows:

**Table 2.** The definition of SMEs in Algeria

<b>Type of enterprises</b>	<b>Number of workers</b>	<b>Turnover (M DZD)</b>	<b>Budget (M DZD)</b>
Micro	1 – 9	Less than 40	Less than 20
Small	10 – 49	Less than 400	Less than 200
Medium	50 – 250	Less than 4000	Less than 1000

**Source:** (MECHAALI & MAHREZ, The role of Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in economic development: the Algerian experience, 2020, p. 160)

At the end of 2019, SMEs in Algeria constitute a large part of the economic tissue with 1 193339 companies. The majority of SMEs are mainly active in services, crafts and construction, while only 15.44% are industrial SMEs. In addition, the distribution of SMEs suffers from an unequal geographic distribution, because most SMEs are concentrated in the north of the country with a share of 70%. (Ministry of Industry, 2020, pp. 6-11)

Table 3 shows the evolution of the private and public SMEs number in Algeria between 2010 and 2019.

**Table 3.** The evolution of SMEs in Algeria (2010-2019)

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total SMEs	619072	653309	711832	777816	852053	934569	1022621	1074503	1141864	1193339
Growth (%)	-	5.53	8.96	9.27	9.54	9.68	9.42	5.07	6.27	4.51
Private SMEs	618515	658737	711275	777259	851511	934037	1022231	1074236	1141602	1193096
Public SMEs	557	572	557	557	542	532	390	267	262	243

**Source:** (Ministry of Industry, 2010-2019)

Table 3 shows the following:

- The number of SMEs is constantly increasing since 2010, especially in 2015, where the largest growth rate was estimated at 9.68%;
- Private enterprises represent a large proportion of the total of SMEs, This is due to the State's encouraging policy for the private sector and individual initiatives;
- The number of public SMEs has declined due to the state's move towards privatization, as well as the bankruptcy of some of them.

Algerian SMEs are also distinguished by the following: (BOUAZZA, 2015, p. 9)

- Algerian SMEs are dominated by micro-enterprise types;

- Algerian SMEs are concentrated in north Algeria: In Algeria, a disparity exists in the spatial distribution of SMEs, with a higher concentration recorded in the north, followed by the highlands, and finally the greater south;
- Algerian SMEs are concentrated in the service and construction sectors.

The identifier of the geographical distribution of SMEs is of great importance. On the basis of this, a country sets its policy according to the needs of each region, and the extent of the spread of these enterprises reflects the extent of their contribution to local development. On the one hand, these enterprises use the resources of the local community, and on the other hand, they contribute to its development and provide jobs for the local community. In this regard, we refer to the ability of these enterprises to provide an economic and social balance according to their ability to spread to the outskirts of cities and rural areas. (Zouini, 2022, p. 196)

Table 1 shows the geographical distribution of SMEs in Algeria for the year 2019.

**Table 4.** The geographical distribution of SMEs in Algeria (2019)

<b>The area</b>	<b>Number of SMEs</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
North	830438	69.59%
South	263340	21.98%
Upper plateaus	100561	8.43%
the total	1193339	100%

**Source:** (Ministry of industry, 2020)

Through Table 4, it is clear that SMEs are distributed unevenly, as 69.59% of them are located in the north, compared to 21.98% in the south and 8.43% in the high plateaus. This negatively affects the achievement of sustainable development, which among its indicators is the existence of a regional balance. The spread of this type of institutions contributes to the development of local communities and the improvement of the standard of living.



## 4.2 Employment and Unemployment in Algeria

The Algerian economy was able to create 2.5 million new jobs during the period between 2003 and 2010, this means that the annual rate of job creation reached during the same period 360,000 jobs in a year. This numerical result invites us to ask about the method and how it created it, and to inquire about the type of jobs that have been created. (MUSSETTE, 2012)

In 2016, the number of completed jobs was estimated at 10,845,000 jobs, where the permanent employee's category has the largest number of jobs with more than 38% of the total number of completed jobs, i.e. 4176,000 jobs, and this is according to the distribution of the type of job, while when looking at diversification in terms of sector activity We find that the services sector has the largest number of jobs, with 61% of the total number of jobs completed, i.e. 6.62 million jobs. (GHANIA, BECHIKR, & MESSAOUDI, 2018)

The unemployment rate in Algeria reached 11.7% in September 2018, against 11.1% in April 2018, an increase of 0.6 point between these two periods, but stagnation compared to September 2017 (11.7 % also), according to the Algerian News Agency. The number of the unemployed population was thus estimated at 1.462 million people in September 2018, compared to 1.378 million people in April 2018 and 1.440 million people in September 2017. (The Algerian News Agency, 2019)

According to estimates from the International Monetary Fund, the unemployment rate in Algeria is expected to increase more sharply, reaching around 16% by 2022. (MOYOU, 2019)

Table 5 and Figure 1 illustrate the evolution of employment and unemployment in Algeria from 2010 to 2019.

**Table 5.** The evolution of employment and unemployment in Algeria (2010-2019) /Unit: 1000 people

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Employed Population</b>	9735	9599	10170	10788	10239	10594	10845	10868	11034	11262
<b>Unemployed Population</b>	1077	1062	1253	1176	1214	1338	1272	1440	1462	1449

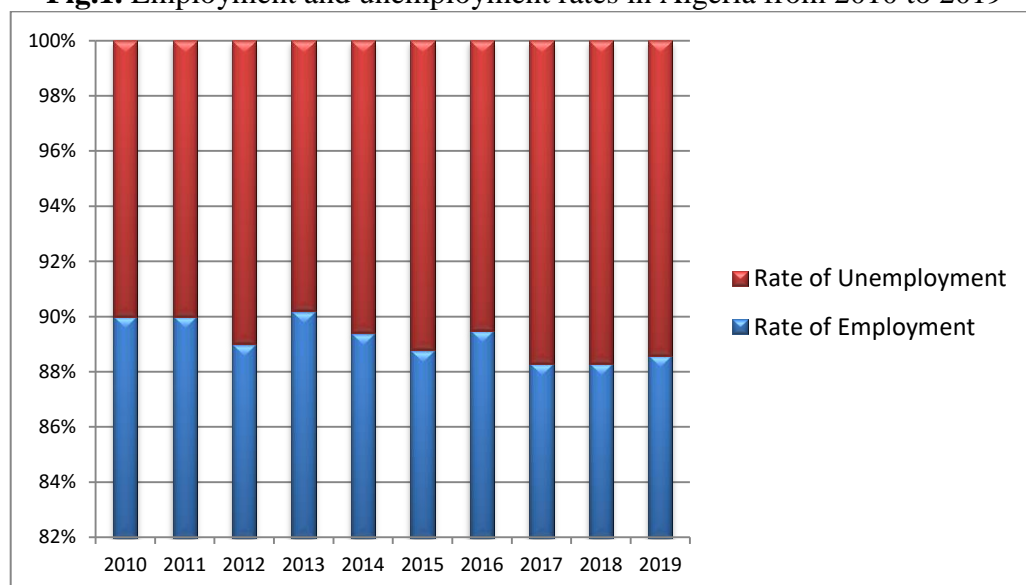
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<b>Labour Force</b>	10812	10661	11423	11964	11453	11932	12117	12308	12496	12711
<b>Rate of Unemployment</b>	10	10	11	9.8	10.6	11.2	10.5	11.7	11.7	11.4
<b>Rate of Employment</b>	90	90	89	90.2	89.4	88.8	89.5	88.3	88.3	88.6

**Source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data from websites:

- The Algerian National Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.ons.dz/-Emploi-et-chomage->
- The Algerian News Agency: <http://www.aps.dz/economie/99511-leger-recul-du-taux-de-chomage-a-11-4-en-mai-2019>

**Fig.1.** Employment and unemployment rates in Algeria from 2010 to 2019



**Source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data of Table 5 and using the excel program

Table 5 and Figure 1 show the following:

- A continuous increase in the labour force since 2010, when the number of people who are able to work in 2019 is estimated to be 12711000, this is due to the continuous increase in the population of Algeria.
- The growth rate of the unemployed population is greater than the employed population. In 2019 compared to 2010 (the base year), the unemployment growth rate is 34.54%, while the employment growth rate is estimated at 15.67%. These figures are not good, indicating the low performance of the Algerian economy.
- The unemployment rate has increased significantly in the last three years, due to the economic crisis and the decline in fuel revenues.

### 4.3 Contribution of SMEs to Algerian total employment

SMEs play a leading role in the job creation process and absorb a large proportion of the workforce at several levels, thus contributing to the alleviation of unemployment and ensuring the sustainability of the economic development process. (BOUAZZA, 2015, p. 9)

In Algeria, SMEs provided 2819000 jobs, accounting for 25.03% of total employment in 2019. Table 6 and figure 2 show the evolution of the number of employees in Algerian SMEs in the period of 2010-2019.

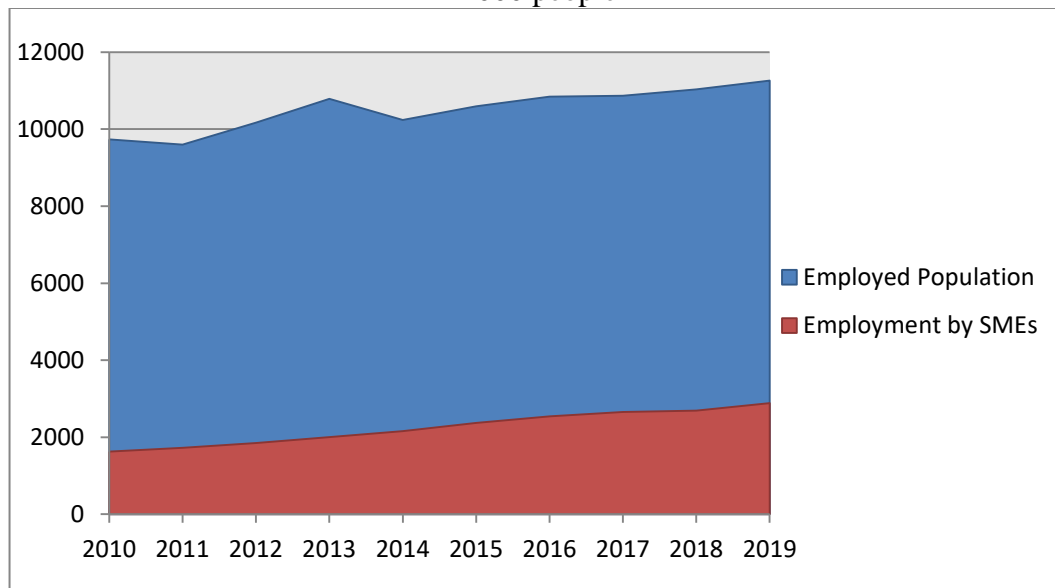
**Table 6.** SMEs contribution to employment in Algeria (2010-2019) /Unit: 1000 people

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Employed Population</b>	9735	9599	10170	10788	10239	10594	10845	10868	11034	11262
<b>Employment by SMEs</b>	1626	1724	1848	2002	2157	2371	2541	2655	2690	2885
<b>Employment by SMEs (%)</b>	16.70	17.96	18.17	18.56	21.07	22.38	23.43	24.43	24.38	25.62
<b>Unemployment rate (%)</b>	10	10	11	9.8	10.6	11.2	10.5	11.7	11.7	11.4

**Source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data from websites:

- The Algerian National Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.ons.dz/-Emploi-et-chomage->
- SMEs statistical information bulletins of Algerian Ministry of Industry: <http://www.mdipi.gov.dz/?-Bulletins-d-Tnformation->
- The Algerian News Agency: <http://www.aps.dz/economie/995111-leger-recul-du-taux-de-chomage-a-11-4-en-mai-2019>.

**Fig.2.** SMEs contribution to employment in Algeria from 2010 to 2019 /Unit: 1000 people



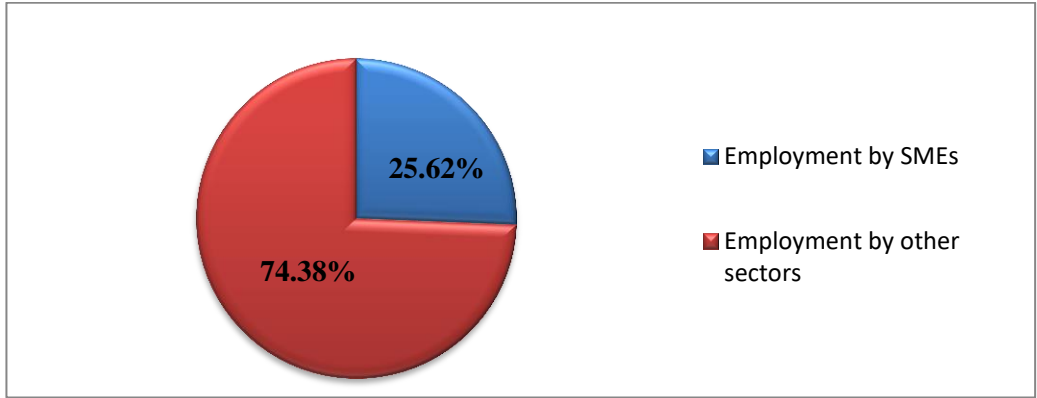
**Source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data of Table 6 and using the excel program

From Table 6 and Figure 2 it is clear that there is a continuous increase in the number of workers in SMEs during the study period as the number went from 1626000 in 2010 to 2885 000 in 2019 and the contribution rate of SMEs reached 25.62% of the total employment in 2019 (see Figure 03) This percentage is considered weak compared to other developing countries, the reason for this is due to: (BOUAZZA, 2015, p. 10)

- The state remains the biggest interferer in the economy, as the liberalization and privatization of the economy was partial;
- A large percentage of SMEs are micro enterprises (97%), meaning that the number of employees is limited;
- More than 80% of SMEs sector activities are concentrated in areas with the weakest job creation rate.

The good thing about these statistics is that the contribution of SMEs in providing jobs increased from 16.70% in 2010 to 25.62% in 2019.

**Fig.3.** Employment by SMEs in Algeria for the year 2019



**Source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data of Table 6 and using the excel program  
For the vision to be complete, it is necessary to compare the growth rate for the number of SMEs with the unemployment rates.

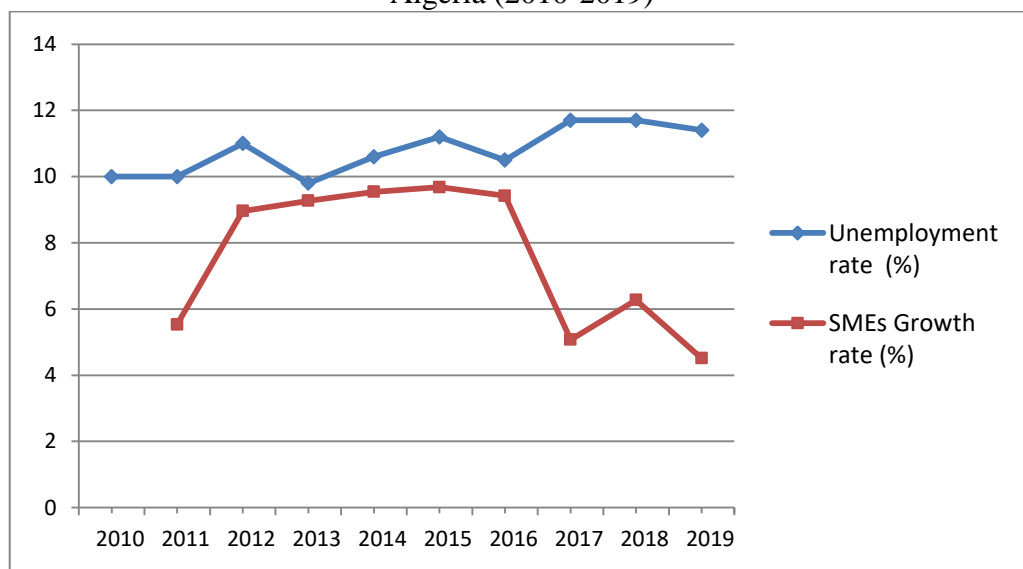
**Table 7.** The relationship between SMEs growth rate and unemployment rate in Algeria (2010-2019)

Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total SMEs	619072	653309	711832	777816	852053	934569	1022621	1074503	1141864	1193339
SMEs Growth rate (%)	-	5.53	8.96	9.27	9.54	9.68	9.42	5.07	6.27	4.51
Unemployment rate (%)	10	10	11	9.8	10.6	11.2	10.5	11.7	11.7	11.4

**The source:** Prepared by researchers based on the data from websites:

- The Algerian National Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.ons.dz/-Emploi-et-chomage->
- SMEs statistical information bulletins of Algerian Ministry of Industry: <http://www.mdipi.gov.dz/?-Bulletins-dinformation->

**Fig.4.**The relationship between SMEs growth rate and unemployment rate in  
Algeria (2010-2019)



**The source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data of Table 7 and using the excel program

Before 2015, it was noted that the increase in the growth rate of SMEs was offset by stabilization in the unemployment rate. But after 2015, it was observed that there is an inverse relationship between the growth rate of SMEs and the unemployment rate. In other words, the decrease in the establishment of SMEs was accompanied by an increase in unemployment rates. This is an indication of the importance of this type of enterprises in providing jobs, although in this period, too, fuel prices fell and what it means for the Algerian economy.

What confirms this result is a simple regression analysis between the total number of SMEs and the number of employees in these enterprises. This is indicated in Table 8.

**Table 8.**Total SMEs and employment by SMEs in Algeria (2010-2019)

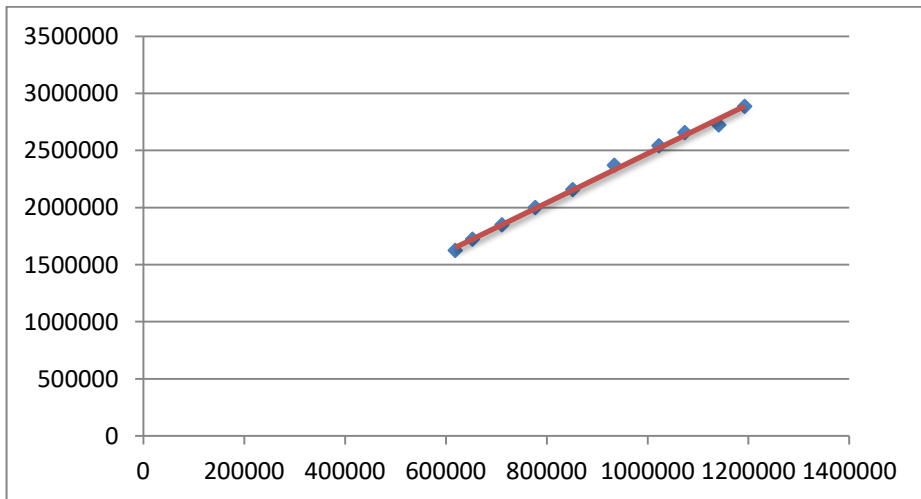
Years	Total SMEs (X)	Employment by SMEs (Y)
2010	619072	1625686
2011	653309	1724197
2012	711832	1848117
2013	777816	2001892
2014	852053	2157232
2015	934569	2371020
2016	1022621	2540698
2017	1074503	2655470
2018	1141864	2724264
2019	1193339	2885651

**Source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data from websites:

- The Algerian National Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.ons.dz/-Emploi-et-chomage->
- SMEs statistical information bulletins of Algerian Ministry of Industry:  
<http://www.mdipi.gov.dz/?-Bulletins-d-Tnformation->

The data of Table 8 can be represented in the following figure:

**Fig.5.** Total SMEs and employment by SMEs in Algeria (2010-2019)



**The source:** Prepared by researcher based on the data of Table 8 and using the excel program

Through Table 8 and Figure 5, it is clear that there is a direct relationship between the annual development of the number of SMEs and the annual increase in the number of workers in these enterprises. Using the Excel program, regression analysis between these two variables gives us the

following equation:

$$Y = 2,1567X + 316537$$
$$R^2 = 0.9966$$

This equation can be explained as follows:

Y: dependent variable.

X: independent variable.

2.1567: Weighting coefficient, that is, For every increase in the independent variable by one unit, there is an increase in the dependent variable by 2.1567 units.

316537: Constant

$R^2$ : The coefficient of determination, meaning that 99.66 percent of the change in SMEs employment is caused by the change in the total number of SMEs.

As an answer to the problem of the study and through the previous results, it is clear that the Algerian SMEs have made a significant contribution and an active role in creating job opportunities and reducing the phenomenon of unemployment in the period under study.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Everyone understands the critical importance that the SMEs sector has in the economic life of countries, especially for the side of employment and the provision of jobs. Algeria is currently betting on SMEs to diversify the sources of income and give enough strength to cause economic growth and win the battle of globalization.

In Algeria, SMEs provide 25.03% of jobs in 2019, which is an important percentage, but it remains insufficient and could be improved in the future.

The Algerian state has been providing support and assistance to these enterprises to overcome challenges and the establishment of a ministry concerned with emerging enterprises and business incubators is in this direction. Algeria has also strengthened this sector with many laws and regulations, perhaps the issuance of the new directive law 17-02 amending and complementing the law 18-01 falls in this direction aimed at giving



stronger legal support for the development and development of SMEs in Algeria.

In this context, we believe that it is appropriate to pay more attention to this sector because it constitutes the locomotive of economic and social development if the obstacles facing it are removed. Based on the significant role of SMEs in economic growth and creation of employment the researcher recommends the following:

- The state should provide more logistical and financing assistance to SMEs, especially during the start-up period;
- The need to pay attention to the marketing aspect and encourage SMEs to penetrate global markets. And protecting this sector from foreign competition through qualifying and raising the competitiveness of these enterprises;
- Expanding the activity of SMEs, especially in our big south, where there are great investment opportunities;
- Diversifying the activity of SMEs and incorporating them in other important sectors such as agriculture, tourism and industry, as these sectors are characterized by labour intensity;
- Pay more attention to startups and give them more support to continue their business and support to build up management and leadership competences.
- The government should source foreign aid to help the SME sector. It should also allocate some funds in its budget for the SMEs;
- Giving the necessary training to workers and paying more attention to human capital, and matching SMEs' skill needs with the labour market supply, including apprenticeships and internships, as well as on-the-job training;
- Encourage entrepreneurial thought and contracting through the establishment of institutes dealing with these sciences;
- It is important that the business environment is conducive to all companies large and small, reduce entry and exit barriers, enhance the entrepreneurial image, reduce the administrative burden and enhance demand.

Finally, the opportunity still exists for Algeria to build and develop the economy by relying on SMEs to provide more and more jobs and reduce

the severity of unemployment, and this can only be done through more efforts by both the Algerian government and owners of SMEs to develop this vital sector.

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