

## **A Bibliography on the Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

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**Abstract:** The bibliographic study compiled reference sources on the Impacts of COVID 19 on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) across the globe. The paper aims to fill a crucial knowledge gap in LIS literature due to paucity of bibliographic information sources on this topic. The methodological approach involved queries on scholarly databases such as Google Scholar, Google.com, web of science, iCatalogue, African Journal Online (AJOL), Sabinet, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, Scopus, JSTOR, Science direct, SAGE, EBSCOhost, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, and Springer link, using the UKZN library online portal. The search strategy included the formulation of phrases, keywords and terms related to the topic. Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) were used to combine keywords to optimize retrievals. The outcome was the compilation of 447 bibliographic reference sources to aid researchers across the world with quick and reliable bibliographic reference sources to investigate the impacts of coronavirus pandemic on small and medium enterprises.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, small and medium-sized enterprises, pandemic

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### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of millions of people all over the world and has had a huge impact on the global economy since it appeared in Wuhan China in December 2019 (Zhu, Wei and Niu 2020). The COVID-19 is a highly transmittable virus that passes from human to human mainly by respiratory droplets through coughing and sneezing, and damages the human respiratory system (Rothan and Byrareddy, 2020). It was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (Bhutta et al., 2020). As of December 16, 2022, there are 647,972,911 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and a death toll of 6,642,832 worldwide (WHO 2022). The virus has continued to mutate into more transmissible strains from its inception with the omicron variant being the latest in the series (CDC 2021). The conditions and restrictions imposed in most countries to minimize the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, quarantine and shutting down of non-essential businesses have led to distortions in the system of supply and demand for goods and slackened many countries' economies. The repercussions of COVID-19 have been felt across all economic sectors and institutions including small and medium enterprises (S.M.E.s) (Hasanat et al., 2020). S.M.E.s are not only extremely important for the developing economies but also in advanced economies as well (Herr and Nettekoven 2017). S.M.E.s can be defined as a company that employs below 250 employees with a turnover not exceeding 43 million euros (OECD 2005) and play a pivotal role in economic development through job creation and innovation. COVID-19 has not only impacted Africa but all continents.

Studies (Dai, Feng and Hu 2020) show that business activities in China, the world's second largest economy, ground to a halt for a few months after the outburst of COVID-19 in January 2020. A survey conducted by NBER of more than 5,800 small businesses in the United States found that 43% of small firms were expected to be closed by December 2020 (Bartik et al. 2020). Small firms in hospitality, retail, personal services, entertainment, and the arts were most affected (Bartik et al. 2020). A survey conducted by Connected Commerce Council of more than 5,016 European small and medium-sized businesses carried out in November-December 2020 found that practically all S.M.E.s were affected, with an average of 20% decrease in sales and a 16% decrease in customer base (Digitally Driven, 2021), which shows that COVID-19 really had negative impacts on other regions of the globe. According to ILO (2020) unemployment rate surged to its highest level since 2017 as the pandemic continued to affect jobs. Governments throughout the world responded with support initiatives. In the United States, the largest program providing funds to small businesses is the Pay Check Protection Program (P.P.P) with a volume of \$650 billion during the early stages of the pandemic (Bhutta et al. 2020). COVID-19 has put a large strain on entrepreneurs who experienced unprecedented shock to their businesses (Torrès et al., 2021). Without being able to meet physically with investors and clients, some entrepreneurs had to scale down their businesses, others closed their business and solo entrepreneurs were left more isolated than before. The COVID-19 pandemic has been detrimental to the mental health of entrepreneurs.

Studies have shown that S.M.E.s are confronted with various difficulties and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, COVID-19 directly affected self-employed individuals more than employed individuals (Kritikos et al. 2020) and small businesses more than large businesses (Dua et al. 2020).

The period of closure and movement prevention policies adopted by governments in many countries have greatly affected S.M.E.s, paralyzing their operations, weakening their financial positions, and exposing them to financial risk (Omar et al., 2020). S.M.E.s have suffered from a shortage of workers and production inputs because of distortions that disfigured supply chains, which negatively affected their sales (Segal and Gerstel, 2020) and their ability to fulfil their monetary obligations and pay employees' salaries (Robinson and Kengatharan, 2020). This problem has coincided with a decline in consumer spending because of the reduction in consumers' income and widespread feelings of uncertainty (Gurría, 2020). Subsequently, many S.M.E.s found themselves insufficient in dealing with the situation. Some businesses have stopped their activities and remained closed since the first months of the outbreak (Bartik et al., 2020).

The aim of this paper is to provide an accessible list of alphabetically arranged sources such as books, journal articles (print or electronic), on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on S.M.E.s globally. Paucity of bibliographic studies on the impact of COVID-19 on S.M.E.s prompted this bibliographic research. The purpose of the bibliography is to assist researchers, academics, information professionals, students and information users who seek information on how the COVID-19 impacted on the S.M.E.s globally. This compilation puts together current and relevant bibliographic literature on the subject from around the world.

### **Methodology**

The methodology is concerned with the search strategies and techniques used to compile information sources that enabled the writing of this bibliography. This process involved a query on databases using the UKZN library web portal which includes Springer, Taylor and Francis, Sabinet, Emerald Insight, EBSCOhost, Science Direct, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. Boolean operators were used to combine the keywords to optimize search results. Harvard Referencing method was used to arrange the bibliographic information sources retrieved. The keywords that were used include COVID-19 and S.M.E.s., S.M.E.s country names in other cases was added to the keywords to optimize results from a particular country.

### **Search Strategy**

The search strategy began with the formulation of keywords and search terms coined from the topic to query the databases. The results were further refined by the use of Boolean operators such as OR, AND and NOT, to connect the keywords to create a logical phrase formore precise retrievals. Each database works differently, so the researcher adapted different search strategies and techniques for each database. The results from each database were organized in folders according to the types of the information sources. The bibliographic sources were recorded using the author-date (Harvard) referencing style.

### **Databases Used**

The under listed databases were used.

#### **Google Scholar**

Google Scholar is a freely usable Online search engine that provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, one can search across many disciplines and sources: Journal Articles, books, theses, and abstracts; from academic publishers, online repositories, professional societies, universities and other web sites. Google Scholar can filter search results within records according to user search preference in terms of relevance and year of publication. Google scholar also provides citations and library links. Phrase searching technique using the phrase "impact of COVID 19 on SMEs" was mainly used to retrieve results for this database.

#### **Google.com**

The google search engine was useful for information retrieval. The search technique was phrase searching by typing in '*impacts of COVID 19 on SMEs*' or just type in the abbreviation in full and put PDF to retrieve read only documents. Many materials were retrieved, but citing was a challenge since lots of information were not peer reviewed, Hence the researcher used few materials from this search engine.

#### **JSTOR**

JSTOR is a digital library that helps everyone discover and share ideas. It provides access to over 12 million Journals, books and academic sources in 75 disciplines. COVID 19 and SMEs were the search terms

used to retrieve information from JSTOR. Relevant results were fetched and it gave an option to download, export and save.

### **iCatalogue**

iCatalogue is a one stop tool used to identify available resources in or through the UKZN Library. It includes print and online books, theses, journals, journal articles, maps, audiovisual materials and many more. When searching in any database the researcher alternated the search terms viz: *impact of covid 19 on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises; SMEs AND COVID 19*. The database enabled the researcher to view eBooks and print books and also shows the library with the resource. One advantage of iCatalogue was that it showed suggested suggestions which saved the time of the researcher.

### **ProQuest and EBSCOhost**

ProQuest is a collection of databases that provide access to a lot of newspapers, dissertations, journals, magazines, e-books and other publications. EBSCOhost is an online research platform used by thousands of institutions and millions of users worldwide. It has quality databases and search features. Search on these databases was user-friendly and Boolean operator AND was used in between the keywords and a lot of information were retrieved.

### **Sabinet**

Sabinet database is South African Information Network that give access to a wide range of databases mostly reference to other databases. The search strategy contained all key search terms. Information on the topic related to South Africa and internationally were retrieved from this database. Not much information related to this topic was retrieved.

### **SCOPUS**

Scopus is one of the largest Citations and Abstracts database of peer-reviewed literature which includes scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. This database retrieved useful information to compile this bibliography. Although it produced only few sources that were relevant to the subject. It was user friendly; it gives an option to export the citation, download, print, email the articles.

### **Springer link**

Springer Link is an integrated full text database for ebooks, journal articles, and other materials published by Springer. It is a major publisher of journals and scientific books. This database retrieved a few sources relevant to the subject, since it focusses more on scientific documents, it was not of much help to the researcher.

### **Web of Science**

A search was conducted in this source using the key words COVID 19 and SMEs and quite a number of sources were retrieved.

### **Wiley Online Collection**

Wiley Online Library is a popular subscription-based library of John Wiley and Sons that replaced Wiley Inter Science. It is a collection of online resources encompassing health, life, and physical sciences as well as social science and the humanities. The search was done and the compiler retrieved useful results.

### **Taylor and Francis**

It contains millions of quality, peer-reviewed journal articles published under the Taylor & Francis and Routledge imprints. The search on this database did not retrieve a lot of information, phrase search was then used repeatedly changing keywords and when phrasing differently a lot appeared.

### **Arrangement of Entries**

The bibliographic entries will be divided into different sections for example books, journal articles, theses, conference papers and internet sources. If the entries are present online, the URL (Uniform Resource Locator), the date and the source accessed will be added. All databases that produced the source will be indicated. The sources used in the compilation of this bibliography will be entered using the Harvard referencing style (author-date format). All entries will be arranged alphabetically and where the author is not mentioned, the title of the source will be used.

### **Layout/Style of Entries**

The following is the Harvard referencing method guiding how entries will be listed in the bibliography.

#### **Books by one or more authors**

Surname(s), Initial(s). Date. Title: additional title information. Place of publication: Publisher. (The names the authors are separated by a comma and those of the penultimate and last authors by the word “and”.) Here are the examples:

#### **Books by editors**

Surname(s), Initial(s) (ed) or (eds.) Date. Title: additional title information. Place of Publication: Publisher.(ed.) for one editor and (eds.) for more than one editor.

#### **Journal articles by one or more authors**

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year of publication. Title of article. Name of journal volume or issue number (part number or month): inclusive page numbers. URL and date accessed for a journal article consulted online

#### **Theses and dissertations**

Surname, Initial(s). Year of publication. Title: additional title information. Description of work. Location of university: Name of university.

#### **Papers, speeches and posters presented at conferences**

Surname(s), Initial(s). Year. Title: additional title information. Details of occasion at which the paper, speech, or poster was given.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most devastating diseases in the history of mankind with huge impacts on the global economy. This bibliography on the impact of Covid-19 on SMEs has provided reliable sources of information on all dimensions. Researchers and information seekers will benefit from this compilation as a contemporary source of bibliographic information around the impacts of Covid-19 on small and medium sized enterprises across the globe.

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