



A global review of COVID-19 Assistance Program for Small Business

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ABSTRACT

Objective – This paper offers a review of the latest studies with regards to the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses in different countries around the world.

Methodology – This paper reviewed a compilation of COVID-19 studies focusing on SMEs that was conducted between 2020 and 2022. The review enables us to understand the globally common or underlying challenges to SMEs due to COVID-19, along with an assessment of government's initiatives that were implemented to alleviate the impact. The review revealed that the pandemic caused a major disruption for small businesses which also acts as a catalyst towards digitization and innovation towards competitiveness which is facilitated by government initiatives. The review process comprises systematic and vast-ranging search for articles related to the subjects to look for evidence, and secondly, for limit the risk of biasness.

Findings – This survey of experiences elsewhere might provide insights to policymakers in countries that are struggling to cope with the problem on the initiatives to consider and the additional initiatives that might be necessary to make them effective in their individual country contexts.

Novelty – Given limitations of space, we survey only a limited sample of countries from Asia and Europe, along with the US and Canada. Hopefully, their experiences will provide a broad enough spectrum of initiatives for policymakers elsewhere to consider and evaluate.

Type of Paper: Review

JEL Classification: M21, O38

Keywords: Small Business, COVID-19, Impact, Literature Review, Government Policy

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Cheong, J.Q. (2022). A global review of COVID-19 Assistance Program for Small Business, *J. Bus. Econ. Review*, 6(4), 30–39. [https://doi.org/10.35609/jber.2022.6.4\(4\)](https://doi.org/10.35609/jber.2022.6.4(4))

1. Introduction

This paper aims to provide the latest studies with regard to the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses in different countries around the world. This study provides insight and assessment into the measures implemented by the governments to aid small businesses during COVID-19. This review provides insights to policymakers not only during the current crisis but also as a reference for the initiatives to consider and for implementation in their individual country contexts in the future as well. The review will provide a broad spectrum of policies to consider and evaluate.

* Paper Info: Revised: January 16, 2022

Accepted: March 31, 2022

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The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 offers a general overview of the literature on small businesses across countries. Section 3 introduces the research methodology. The discussion and results are described in Section 4, and Section 5 concludes the paper which consists of the recommendations, study limitations, and future study directions. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the backbones of countless economies, have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) (Vandenberg, 2021). In the United States, the European Union (Shirono, K., Fan, Y., & Chhabra, 2021), and Southeast Asia (Asian Development Bank, 2020) SMEs account for two-thirds of private-sector employment (Asian Development Bank, 2020) (Shirono, K., Fan, Y., & Chhabra, 2021). The United States' Small Business Administration (SBA) identifies small businesses by their ownership structure, number of employees, earnings and industry. A small business is defined as a business with less than 10 workers. Small businesses are also defined as those with assets of \$10 million or less (Liberto, 2020).

The implication of measures implemented to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses are not well known, in part due to differences in governments' measures or policies. This paper addresses this gap by the review of measures implemented across countries. The review will assess the impact of the COVID-19 on small businesses in several countries, and subsequently on the measures implemented by the governments to aid help the small businesses covering the period of 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Globally, COVID-19 has taken a painful toll on small businesses and their owners in the initial months (Shirono, K., Fan, Y., & Chhabra, 2021) (Vereckey, 2021). The pandemic has interrupted many commercial activities around the world with the implementation of lockdown both partial and total along with social distancing requirements, as key health measures to restrain the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, these key health measures caused profound implications to businesses particularly businesses/sectors that depend on person-to-person interaction such as the sports industry, travel, tourism, hospitality and manufacturing businesses. Mandatory shutdowns were caused a rippling effect on the supply chain and led to decreased production (Long & Ascent, 2020).

Small businesses tend to be susceptible during an economic crisis, partly since they have smaller resources to adapt to an altering context. SMEs in tourism, retail, personal services, entertainment, travel and arts are among the greatest affected sectors (Bartik et al., 2020) (Centre, 2020). The ITC COVID-19 Business Impact Survey through survey of 4,467 businesses in 132 countries revealed the impact of COVID-19. Data gathered from 21 April–2 June 2020, revealed that COVID-19 has severely affected 55% of the businesses, that among SMEs two-third reported the same situation while larger businesses reported a lesser level at 40%. (Centre, 2020).

Globally, SMEs have experienced a varying degree of decline in revenue compared to the previous year which lead to business sentiment into severe conservatism that businesses that did were not directly by the pandemic nor the consequent recessions still cut down on their expenditures (Vereckey, 2021). The decline in expenditures, income reduction, layoffs, among the few led to a vicious and multi-faceted cycle that result in long-term decline in consumption (Long & Ascent, 2020). One-fifth of SMEs reported risk of permanent closure within 3 months however the impact on export-oriented SMEs was minimized to compared to SMEs that depended on the local market which is closed due to the lockdown (Centre, 2020).

A global study was carried out by Employers and Business Membership Organizations (EBMOs), an organization that consists of over 4,500 enterprises in 45 countries. The members were enquired questions about operative continuity, financial health, and their labor force between March and June 2020 (ILO, 2020).

The EBMOs study revealed that 78% of those surveyed had taken steps to minimize business operations to defend their businesses from the COVID-19 impact, nonetheless only three out of four businesses were still able to operate their business in some form, despite the lockdown. Another 85% of businesses had taken measures to protect their employees from the spread of virus infection in Europe, Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific, and Arab States (ILO, 2020).

A survey conducted by NBER of more than 5800 small corporates in the USA reveals that 43% of small businesses were predictable to be shut down by December 2020. On average, businesses retrenched their employees up to 40 percent relative to January (Bartik et al., 2020).

The number of active enterprises in the United States fell by 3.3 million or 22% in just 2-month from February to April 2020. The decline in the number of active enterprises was the most significant in history, and the losses were reported across all categories and industries. African American businesses experience significantly greater impact with a 41% drop-in business activity during the COVID-19. Latinx businesses activity was down by 32%, and Asian business owner activity fell by 26%. A modeling of the context and industry structure revealed that these businesses are marginally at a greater risk of business activity losses. Immigrant businesses experienced considerable losses in business activity with an average of 36% which have significant implications for policy, revenue losses, and future economic disparity (R. W. Fairlie, 2020).

A nationwide survey from SCORE, a business-oriented Non-Government Organization (NGO) revealed that the majority of American businesses were in the red in 2021. In fact, only 34 % of small business proprietors were profitable businesses which is a substantial decline from the 55% recorded in the previous years (Pilon, 2020). Almost a year after COVID-19 changed the context forcing companies to scale down processes, many business proprietors did not view the immediate prospects as promising. Data from the Small Business Pulse Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau in December 2020 revealed that around 53% of small business proprietors do not imagine the possibility of recovery to the pre-Covid level for at least another six months (El-Bawab, 2021).

Companies in the travel, arts, and culture industries suffered the brunt of COVID-19 in 2020. Despite being spared from the main brunt, construction companies, restaurants, expert services, health services, and retail businesses also struggled (Pilon, 2020). The Small Business Pulse Survey revealed that businesses are operating below their usual capacity in metro areas in the country (El-Bawab, 2021). Averagely, across the 50 main U.S. metro areas, merely 26% of small businesses have sufficient cash flow for at least 3 months, the minimum level assessed for a business to continue its operations. Many small businesses proprietors have no choice but to fork out their savings to sustain operations and keep wages flowing (El-Bawab, 2021). Many small businesses are financially fragile in nature an estimated that SMEs have more than \$10,000 in monthly expenses and less than one month of cash on hand on average (Bartik et al., 2020).

Small businesses face greater challenges in accessing funds than bigger companies, particularly during periods of economic disasters. To address this Governments often develop a range of measures to assist small businesses in weathering the epidemic. In the absence of such funding assistance, the bankruptcy rate of small businesses in United States and the European Union, is projected to rise by an estimated 9 basis points from the current rate—and it would have grave consequences (Shirono, K., Fan, Y., & Chhabra, 2021). The advent of the coronavirus crisis highlighted the vital of having sufficient cash flow for businesses to depend on when the unforeseen happens or a crisis hit (El-Bawab, 2021).

US government measures to alleviate the impact of COVID-19, particularly the CARES Act and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) have aided businesses to stay afloat to some extent. However, a study by (Vereckey, 2021) found the funds that were distributed was unequal and small businesses that needed them the most did not receive them. Many businesses planned to search for funding through the CARES act, yet a lot encountered difficulties with retrieving the assistance, like bureaucratic hassles and eligibility (Bartik et al., 2020). Although in general, the study found that business owner's average account balance in both their business and credit accounts dropped in March 2020 but recovered in April and May, after the transfer programs implemented.

In the United Kingdom, self-employed employees were among the hardest hit by the lockdown implemented as a part of efforts in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Even after the lockdown had passed, self-employed employees continue to hold a pessimistic view on when their business can resume back to normal (Smith, 2021). A self-employed employee is defined as an individual who receives a living by

working for themselves, not as an employee but also not as an owner (shareholder) of a company (Murray, 2021). It was also found that the main impact of reduced self-employment hours and revenue was felt among lower-revenue, single, older personnel (Blundell & Machin, 2020).

A particular note of interest here is the observation of a rising set of self-employed workforces that found an alternative method to look for jobs, specifically through digital apps. The rising workforce is mostly related to the "gig economy" and is comprised of drivers for private-hire, parcel deliveries, food deliveries. These workers are younger and are more likely to be drawn from smaller ethnic minorities relative to other self-employed workers (Blundell et al., 2020). This group of workers whom face discrimination through conventional channel, reported more job openings; this could indicate the generation of new jobs through a shift from conventional to online platforms.

The self-employed usually receive aid from the continuous initiatives launched by many governments although awareness is an issue. Six months into the crisis, many self-employed workers were unaware of the initiatives launched by the Government in UK (Smith, 2021). It is important to make certain the rapid distribution of government aid for the self-employed, especially of funds in the short term. A quarter of self-employed persons in the lower income range do not have sufficient liquid assets (between themselves and any partner) to shelter loss of three months incomes, and 15% do not have sufficient to cover a single month in UK (Adam, 2020).

Overall, losses in income were comparatively greater for young people, females, and the self-employed, and low- and medium-skilled labour. Generally, low-paid and low-skilled occupations are at greater risk of elimination which leads to an already but larger differential in labour income for the coming years (ILO, 2021).

2. Review of Initiatives

A review of current literature on SMEs and COVID-19 reveals that the majority of the challenges encountered by SMEs comprise of financial issues (51%), business continuity plan (41%), and institutional environment (8%) (Eggers, 2020). Based on the research of the 2004–2012 economic disaster around entrepreneurial responsiveness towards crisis, entrepreneur culture and knowledge diversity are key to developing crisis resistance among small businesses in the United Kingdom (Bishop, 2019), (Kuckertz et al., 2020) claim that adequate entrepreneurial receptiveness is unable to be addressed by short-term measures and requires continuous policies toward that goal.

SMEs are severely affected by the COVID19 as they overrepresented the hardest-hit sectors like retail, hospitality, food services, entertainment services, and construction. The detection and the spread of the virus in the absence of a cure have led governments to take radical measures, such as the lockdown of the majority of society and social distancing leading to change in consumer behavior (Thukral, 2021). Some SMEs are responding to the disaster through innovation to overcome the difficulties. Nevertheless, it is through resilience that they can see a chance in survival during ambiguous times, nonetheless to convert those chances to reality, government interventions are required to negate the negative effects of lockdown by energizing the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Thukral, 2021).

(Engidaw, 2022) reported on some of the challenges of small corporates during the covid-19 virus pandemic in developing nations, particularly in Ethiopia. The secondary data analysis revealed that many small and large corporates which are undergoing difficulty closed down due to COVID-19 with the significantly decreased revenue leading to slowdown in operation that coupled with weak advertising performance lead to business closure and loss of employment. Small corporate owners should be able to explain and communicate with workers, suppliers, banks, and clients during COVID-19 on the prospect of the business and negotiate to alleviate the impact of cash flow that with the hope of decreased expenditures such as workers' salary, they might be able to sustain their finances and keep business afloat along with

exploration of alternative business models to distribute their product and recover from the crisis (Engidaw, 2022).

According to the OECD (2020), governments and central banks have taken unprecedented monetary and fiscal policy measures to combat the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies are usually enforced in a relatively short period and affect the mass public. Despite the unexpected nature of the crisis, policymakers have shown flexibility and the ability to change their approaches as implementation continues. Additionally, this also involved simplification of the systems and relaxing eligibility requirements. To date, governments have mainly collaborated with banks to channel funding to small and medium-sized businesses, utilizing their networks to reach out to them.

China, the first nation to experience COVID-19, is also the first economy to restore and returned to growth after a targeted lockdown. (Lu et al., 2020) examined SMEs in Sichuan to evaluate the difficulties related to work continuation and the related arrangement necessities. It was discovered that most SMEs could not restart business on account of a lack of virus prevention resources, the failure of representatives to re-visit places of work, disrupted supply chains, and diminished market interest. Numerous SMEs were likewise troubled by money flow issues as they needed to keep on paying for different overhead spending in the absence of revenue.

According to (Lu et al., 2020), there are three key initiatives to aiding SMEs in this pandemic, which is comparable to a catastrophe, regardless of whether it is in China or somewhere else. The first is to improve the durability of SMEs, particularly their cash flow, by decreasing their operational charges and giving them access to financing. Second, it is important to help the SMEs to continue work and operation at the earliest opportunity. Governments should reduce limitations to allow the movement of individuals and products to guarantee that workers are able to resume work, access to necessary materials, and items are distributed to locations where they are needed. Furthermore, continuing production should be enhanced with the aim to increase utilization.

(Rathore & Khanna, 2020) investigated the health of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are the mainstay of India's industrial sector (with their contribution of approximately a third of India's GDP, and offer jobs to more than 110 million employees), along with various dimensions and business owners' expectations during the crisis. They found that with the \$260 billion rescue package provided by the Government of India, there is also an urgent need for the Government to communicate with the SMEs and to consider their concerns and suggestions. Suggested measures include the request for short-term interest-free loans for periods ranging from two months to two years, as well as the deferral or elimination of income tax and the expediting of tax refunds. Also, some companies were worried about the prospects of demand and proposed a reduction in GST rates to increase sales and make their goods more competitive. Owners have sought help in the payment of staff salaries and asked for aid in the payment of the premium to the Workers' State Insurance Company (ESIC).

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has shaken and transformed the market context, as managers have been forced into the role of running digital platforms in place of in-person communications. (Tran, 2021) presents an exploratory analysis in which he builds a model of the perceived efficiency of the e-commerce platform (PEEP) and analyzed its efficacy in sustaining the consumption behaviour of consumers. The results revealed businesses with the concern of the pandemic required PEEP to create an operative framework that protects personal and transactional statistics online against leakage of information and credit card fraud, along with economic offerings, to increase consumer consumption. Also, corporations must strategically grow e-commerce networks and work in conjunction with offline assets, as consumers go to online outlets to reduce personal contacts during the pandemic.

According to Cheong (2022), semi e-commerce could help the adoption of e-commerce in Sabah. However, the successful adoption of e-commerce depends on how integrated technology and e-commerce are in the establishments. McKinsey analysts agree that most businesses are highly susceptible to the economic

effects of the lockdown implemented to ensure social distancing. These initiatives are not only an economic shock but also have a significant effect on consumer behaviour and business models (Prohorovs, 2020). Moreover, it is also reported that the issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic would have more severe consequences on companies that are accustomed to deal with in-person interactions. These companies are now forced to adopt unconventional organisational models that fraught with significant uncertainties. The execution of social distancing makes individuals limit their movements outside their house, which subsequently limits business transactions. Hence, SMEs need to be creative and innovative in changing their business approaches.

(R. Fairlie, 2020) reported that the U.S. government has responded to concerns about long-term effects from COVID-19 on small corporate through numerous programmes. The main programme is the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which has so far allocated over \$650 billion to aid industries. Another programme is the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program of the Small Business Administration, which provided more than \$150 billion as of July 2020. Foundations and private corporations are also contributing such as Magic Johnson Enterprises made a \$100 million contribution to minority and female-owned enterprises exclusion of the PPP programme. Other current instance is PayPal, which have collaborated with the Association for Enterprise Opportunity, to create a \$10 million fund to benefit African American-owned companies, while Google dedicated \$175 million to funding and promoting African American-owned businesses.

Meanwhile, the Government of Canada has provided a 75% wage funding for more than 3 months, enabling companies, comprise self-employed employees, to delay goods and services tax and or harmonized sales tax payments until June, and providing guaranteed and subsidized government loans to small businesses via the Canada Emergency Business Account (Beland, Fakorede and Mikola, 2020). The programme as part of the government's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, offers up to \$45 billion in financing by offering new loans through Export Growth Canada and the Business Development Bank. Also, several new services and regulations have since been passed, for example company rent aid.

After the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have been under pressure to generate effective business strategies to combat the challenges posed by social distancing. Research by (Alves et al., 2020) noted that firms in Macau that were included in their research have adopted versatile HR strategies as part of their response strategies. Other common survival techniques include increasing product diversification, developing new markets, and covering a steep learning curve. They also found that certain small companies had a structured pre-emergency crisis plan and strategies, and these businesses appeared to have a long history of expertise in crisis management, and work in more controlled sectors.

(Fitriasari, 2020) developed a business model that can be extended to small and medium-sized enterprises throughout the COVID-19 pandemic known as the Business Model Canvas approach. She argues that the resilience of business is supported by digital transformation. The right digitization strategy is required to attain business survival in addition to improvement of SME products or services, to be more competitive. The competitive advantage is connected to cultural variety, plurality and social motivation. Proper testing of the e-commerce infrastructure is required in the process of digital transformation.

Government strategies to manage the pandemic such as social distancing, limits on travel and restricted physical interactions have a wide-ranging impact on service-based industries such as eateries, markets, strip malls, online transportation, and SMEs. (Winarsih et al., 2021) argue that the digital solution would work better if small and medium-sized companies have a digital alteration so that they can connect to their customers. The plan is to convert their offline store to online shopping for protection and convenience. In the event of a pandemic, small and medium-sized businesses should step up promotions through online sales and logistics applications.

(Cepel et al., 2020) study the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on entrepreneurial attitudes of small and medium-sized enterprises to selected business risks in the Czech and Slovak republics. They found that businesspersons consider market risk, financial risk and personnel risks to be the most significant corporate

risks both before and throughout the coronavirus crisis in the SME segment in the Czech Republic. Recent labour surpluses resulting mass layoffs will result in a future shortage of the required skilled labour force in individual industries, along with in modern, developing enterprises using innovative processes. Other irregularities from the effects of the downturn on the business sector cannot be ruled out either. National governments should play a role in designing successful crisis management situations for potential economic development, as well as establish adequate frameworks for improving the business climate and mitigating the negative impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

The upheaval created by COVID-19 on small businesses was studied by (Liguori & Pittz, 2020). They projected that the impact of COVID-19 on micro, small and medium-sized businesses will worsen for small enterprises and their workers and this will continue until the pandemic situation improves. From their review, they argue that virtual business networks offer a unique chance to re-energize the quest for product-market fitness and the pursuit of new business models that can survive and prosper in a coronavirus affected environment. Although small business proprietors should invest sufficient time evaluating the feasibility of government assistance programme to sustain their processes, the best means of risk reduction is to penetrate new markets and new prospects for development and put some optimistic momentum back to corporate.

According to (Abdul Rashid et al., 2020), small-scale entrepreneurs who have embraced the digital business platform have not been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. It is verified from their report, irrespective of the number of users, online or digital businesses can be embraced as a new business model to encounter customer requests. The decision to use the digital business platform is constant with the Technology Adoption Model (TAM), which notes that consumers are more probable to embrace new technology and that their use of technology is foretold by a person's insight of the utility of technology. Furthermore, to promote small-scale businesspersons to engage in online or digital business projects, it is suggested that the government gives more support, build adequate infrastructure, and train more trainers so as to improve the chance, survival, profitability, and sustainability of their business (Belitski et al., 2022).

3. Research Methodology

The methodology for this study comprises of an extensive and systematic review of the literature. The review was done through online databases and the search item was guided by terms such as small business, impact, COVID-19. Articles were scanned for their fit with the specific topic of this survey. The review covered journals and articles published between 2020 and 2022. The period covered are the focus of the pandemic and the publication of related materials.

The review comprises of search, evaluation, and synthesis of the relevant information on the impacts of COVID-19 affecting the small business. This systematic review methodology made sure that the review is inclusive, comprehensive, and unbiased. Besides online databases, websites, exchanges between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers were also conducted for the related study. All relevant related literature was compared against pre-specified measures and evaluated for risk of bias using reputable appraisal tools. This is to make sure that only reliable articles and journals are included for the review. At the same time combining the most dependable indication using structured synthesis, this paper removed any article or journals rated 'medium reliability'.

This systematic review process comprises the search for entirely obtainable possibly related indications, and then sifting it initially, for evidence, and secondly, for risk of prejudice. In doing so, structured approaches will be used to define and analyze the accessible research. The entire survey will be noted on specialist systematic review software (EPPI-Reviewer 4) to allow clear and precise analysis.

4. Discussion

The study provides insight into the measures implemented how government are trying to protect and help small businesses to cope during covid-19. This survey of experiences elsewhere might provide insights to policymakers in countries that are struggling to cope with the problem on the initiatives to consider and the additional initiatives that might be necessary to make them effective in their individual country contexts. Covid-19 pandemic where businesses are forced to close which happen everywhere. Small businesses tend to be susceptible during a pandemic crisis, partly since they have smaller resources to adapt to an altering context compared to large businesses. Tourism and hospitality are the most affecting sectors. Covid-19 pandemic causes the decline in expenditure, reduce revenue, and cut employment. Many small businesses will face cash flow or liquidity problems. The bankruptcy rate among small businesses is increasing.

Some of the small business owners are not aware of the policy provided by them. Policy measures are unable to help small businesses in the long term. Besides the policy provided by the government that might be able to help small businesses in the short term. The small business owner also needs to have strategies such as adopted to e-commerce. E-commerce might be one of the ways to help small businesses solve the problem. Small businesses can swift to gig -economy to sustain their business. The government could provide more initiatives or policy that related to e-commerce or program to help small businesses. Such as providing funds or training to teach the small business owner to adoption to e-commerce. Small businesses owner also can learn some digital skills that need for the adoption of e-commerce. The small business owner also can use the fund provided by the government in a more useful way. Therefore, small businesses can survive in sustainable development although through the period facing the pandemic crisis.

Increasing small businesses' access to credit and stimulus funding was another key approach. This could comprise tax incentives for small businesses that employ persons from disadvantaged categories, initiation of local microcredit funds that provide finances to local companies, and endorsing structural reorganizations that inspire financial institutions to offer fresh or special forms of loans and longer-term admission to assets (Mahajan, 2020).

Governments around the world understand that the drop in small business performance due to COVID-19 had led to the economic downturn. Aside from the health crisis, Government also has to ease the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, introducing policies to aid them to deal with short-term financial dangers and long-term business implications. It is hoped, decrease layoffs, less bankruptcy, inspire investment, and aid economies would help small businesses get back on their feet as soon as possible as the result of the crisis. According to (Mahajan, 2020), aiding small businesses in adopting to the new normal can be done through cooperation with educational institutions to offer classes on topics for instance accounting, digital marketing, and workforce development; producing entrepreneurship zones that offer owners admission to inclusive facilities and training; and subsidizing the cost of enterprise resource software.

Businesses must collaborate with the Government to resume procedures and kick-start monetary actions over the well-considered, conclusive, and actual process (Cheong et al., 2020). To rescue small businesses and improve their resilience, public-private local partnerships were formed to aid small businesses. Federal governments offered more financial aid to small businesses than previously available. The assistance packages include credits to small businesses. For example, one of the aims stated in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (which is comprised of the PPP and EIDL programs), was to arrange aid to underserved marketplaces and underprivileged business owners (R. Fairlie, 2020).

Finally, as the COVID-19 continues, monitoring policy measures to provide people and small companies affected by the epidemic will be a key activity to prepare for economic revival. Monitoring enables the identification of effective policy, the sharing of knowledge, and learning from each other (Shirono, K., Fan, Y., & Chhabra, 2021).

5. Conclusion

Small businesses are highly affected by COVID-19 pandemics. The result of this study shows that the COVID-19 pandemic is more severe for small businesses. This paper has highlighted a few key initiatives undertaken by governments to help small businesses. It is evident that in almost all countries the initiatives undertaken are similar in intent though varying in scope. Public-private partnerships could aid business proprietors and staff with facilities such as low-cost mental fitness and daycare resources, for instance. Furthermore, individuals and categories could initiate a support local community movement by purchasing from local small businesses. Policymakers must decide the scope based on their capabilities and resources available within their own country contexts. The review was limited to publications that are written in English. Since government policies are different in different countries as they address the local nuances in vulnerability and the challenges faced by SMEs. This work can be to include more countries in the future. Future work could also be expanded to other languages to obtain more information.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the project Research Grant under Skim SDK (Ref: SDK0155-2020).

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