

Understanding Resilience in Vulnerable Business Settings: Systematic Literature Review in Small and Medium Enterprises

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Abstract : Unfolding chaos and persistent disruptions pose threats to companies' performance especially in vulnerable settings of SME's particularly in developing countries. Attention for resilience research in the academic world has increased considerably during the last decade looking at the number of papers published. As we are interested in adding to the understanding of the foundation and development of the concept of resilience, we focus especially on structuring the literature of business resilience in those vulnerable settings. A well-structured systematic search & review procedure was deployed. First, we defined key search terms and applied these to multiple databases (Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Emerald, and Science Direct). To make our literature search more encompassing, we augmented with co-citation, reference checking including hand searching techniques. The paper offers (1) an overview of SMEs resilience literature from 2000 up to March 2017 comprising 88 articles, and (2) special attention, within that overview, to developing countries. This review concludes that resilience literature is very much diverse in definitions and its measurements, and is inconclusive about its influencing factors. Furthermore, resilience literature is based predominantly on research in the developed world. On the bases of how the concept resilience emerges from the literature we describe distinct features of resilience, give options to extend the theoretical bases of research into resilience and describe concrete ideas for further research.

Keywords : business resilience, systematic review, SMEs, developing countries

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