

Pandemic effects on small companies

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Everyone the world over has been left unaffected by the emergence of a novel coronavirus, named SARS-CoV-2 in late 2019, which led to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Our lives have been disrupted enormously by the medical, social, and economic implications of this lethal disease. Writing in the World Review of Intermodal Transportation Research, a

team from Finland offers a view from the small business manufacturing and logistics perspective in Finland.

Olli-Pekka Hilmola and Oskari Lähdeaho of LUT University, Kouvola Unit, point out that medium and large companies have continued to serve their customers and some have performed well in certain sectors. Hospitality and travel have obviously been limited in their performance because of lockdowns and social restrictions but online food retail, the information, and communications technology sector, and the pharmaceutical industry seem to be thriving in the face of the ongoing crisis. The smaller companies that need face-to-face interaction with customers for marketing, as well as their transactions, have not fared so well. Moreover, supply, logistics, and their ability to deliver their services and goods have been hurt significantly.

Smaller companies surveyed in Finland no longer have strong expectations with regard to their future ability to sell into and supply markets in China and Russia, the researchers report. They suggest that as we emerge from the worst of the COVID-19 [pandemic](#), smaller companies will grow to depend on rail transport whereas the larger companies will still be able to readily access air freight.

The team adds that as weaknesses and indications of stagnation become apparent in their case studies of small businesses, more work is now needed to improve our understanding of the various scenarios that are developing and to help predict how things might develop or continue to fail among small businesses. They point out that previous large-scale events, such as the economic crisis of 2008-2009, have enormous long-term implications. We cannot yet see how this current pandemic, which is very much still with us in many parts of the world at the time of writing, will play out for [business](#) and economies.

If we learn at least one lesson from its effects, it is that sustainability

needs to be built into future economies starting now. Sustainability is key to address the much larger problem of climate change, pollution, water and [food security](#), and perhaps allow us to face the next pandemic in the years to come with greater resilience and a more timely response so that we experience less hurt in our medical, social, and economic lives.

More information: Olli Pekka Hilmola et al, Covid-19 pandemic: small actor point of view on manufacturing and logistics, *World Review of Intermodal Transportation Research* (2021). [DOI: 10.1504/WRITR.2021.115411](#)

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