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SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES UNDER THE TREND OF GLOBALIZATION

Qiong Xie^A, Mohd Hizam Hanafiah^B



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often faces such problems as shortage of funds and backward technology. The systematic literature review on sustainable development (SD) of SMEs can help accelerate the pace of SMEs' information management construction and promote enterprises' development and growth. A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted on empirical data on the sustainable development of small and medium-sized enterprises in China and abroad from 2000 to 2022.

Theoretical framework: Systematic review/meta-analysis refers to a research method that comprehensively collects all relevant studies, conducts rigorous evaluation and analysis one by one, and then uses quantitative or qualitative synthesis methods to process the data to reach comprehensive conclusions (Pansare et al., 2023).

Design/methodology/approach: This literature review covers 50 articles from peer-reviewed academic journals related to their theoretical area, research design, sampling/data collection methods, data analysis, and thematic areas. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) statements were used to analyze this study's systematic literature review.

Findings: The result illustrated that numerous research had been done during the past twenty years and new findings are involved with this topic area. SMEs attach more and more importance to the goal of SD and adopt systematic, structured, and formalized ways to promote the SD of enterprises.

Research, Practical & Social implications: Several pieces of literature can cover the aspects of ecological entrepreneurship, innovation, business, and environment, which are positively correlated with SD.

Originality/value: This paper summarizes existing research results, which can provide research references for the SD of SMEs.

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REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA DA LITERATURA: O DESENVOLVIMENTO SUSTENTÁVEL DAS PEQUENAS E MÉDIAS EMPRESAS SOB A TENDÊNCIA DA GLOBALIZAÇÃO

RESUMO

Objetivo: O desenvolvimento de pequenas e médias empresas (PMEs) muitas vezes enfrenta problemas como escassez de fundos e tecnologia atrasada. A revisão sistemática da literatura sobre desenvolvimento sustentável (DS) das PMEs pode ajudar a acelerar o ritmo de construção da gestão da informação das PMEs e promover o desenvolvimento e crescimento das empresas. Uma revisão sistemática da literatura (SLR) foi realizada em dados empíricos sobre o desenvolvimento sustentável de pequenas e médias empresas na China e no exterior de 2000 a 2022.

^B PhD. Assistant Professor. Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor D.E., Malaysia. E-mail: mhhh@ukm.edu.my Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1053-6488



^A PhD candidate. 1.School of business and management, Gannan Normal University, Ganzhou, China. Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Bangi, Selangor D.E., Malaysia. E-mail: p113361@siswa.ukm.edu.my Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4740-9586

Estrutura teórica: Revisão sistemática/metanálise refere-se a um método de pesquisa que coleta de forma abrangente todos os estudos relevantes, realiza avaliações e análises rigorosas, um por um, e então usa métodos de síntese quantitativos ou qualitativos para processar os dados para chegar a conclusões abrangentes (Pansare et al., 2023).

Design/metodologia/abordagem: Esta revisão da literatura abrange 50 artigos de revistas acadêmicas revisadas por pares relacionados à sua área teórica, design de pesquisa, métodos de amostragem/coleta de dados, análise de dados e áreas temáticas. As declarações Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) foram usadas para analisar a revisão sistemática da literatura deste estudo.

Descobertas: O resultado ilustrou que inúmeras pesquisas foram feitas durante os últimos vinte anos e novas descobertas estão envolvidas nesta área temática. As PMEs atribuem cada vez mais importância ao objetivo do DS e adotam formas sistemáticas, estruturadas e formalizadas de promover o DS das empresas.

Pesquisa, implicações práticas e sociais: Várias peças de literatura podem cobrir os aspectos de empreendedorismo ecológico, inovação, negócios e meio ambiente, que estão positivamente correlacionados com DS.

Originalidade/valor: Este artigo resume os resultados de pesquisas existentes, que podem fornecer referências de pesquisa para o DS das PMEs.

Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento Sustentável, Revisão Sistemática da Literatura, Pequenas e Médias Empresas, Globalização.

REVISIÓN SISTEMÁTICA DE LA LITERATURA: EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE DE LAS PEQUEÑAS Y MEDIANAS EMPRESAS BAJO LA TENDENCIA DE LA GLOBALIZACIÓN

RESUMEN

Propósito: El desarrollo de las pequeñas y medianas empresas (PYME) a menudo se enfrenta a problemas como la escasez de fondos y el atraso tecnológico. La revisión sistemática de la literatura sobre el desarrollo sostenible (SD) de las PYMES puede ayudar a acelerar el ritmo de construcción de la gestión de la información de las PYMES y promover el desarrollo y el crecimiento de las empresas. Se realizó una revisión sistemática de la literatura (SLR) sobre datos empíricos sobre el desarrollo sostenible de las pequeñas y medianas empresas en China y en el extranjero desde 2000 hasta 2022.

Marco teórico: la revisión sistemática/metaanálisis se refiere a un método de investigación que recopila de manera integral todos los estudios relevantes, realiza una evaluación y un análisis rigurosos uno por uno y luego utiliza métodos de síntesis cuantitativos o cualitativos para procesar los datos y llegar a conclusiones integrales (Pansare et al. ., 2023).

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: esta revisión de la literatura cubre 50 artículos de revistas académicas revisadas por pares relacionadas con su área teórica, diseño de investigación, métodos de muestreo/recopilación de datos, análisis de datos y áreas temáticas. Las declaraciones Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) se utilizaron para analizar la revisión sistemática de la literatura de este estudio.

Hallazgos: El resultado ilustró que se han realizado numerosas investigaciones durante los últimos veinte años y que hay nuevos hallazgos relacionados con esta área temática. Las PYMES otorgan cada vez más importancia al objetivo de DS y adoptan formas sistemáticas, estructuradas y formalizadas para promover el DS de las empresas. Implicaciones de investigación, prácticas y sociales: varias piezas de literatura pueden cubrir los aspectos del espíritu empresarial ecológico, la innovación, los negocios y el medio ambiente, que se correlacionan positivamente con SD.

Originalidad/valor: este documento resume los resultados de investigaciones existentes, que pueden proporcionar referencias de investigación para el SD de las PYME.

Palabras clave: Desarrollo Sostenible, Revisión Sistemática de la Literatura, Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas, Globalización.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development (SD) has been arising for about 20 years. It is generally accepted that the SD targets are to be embraced by enterprises which accordingly should reveal their social and environmental strategies and achievements in ad hoc documents

(Laura, et al., 2019). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to a business's active and voluntary contribution to economic, social, and environmental development. In particular, the concept of a socially responsible enterprise demands it to reply gratifyingly to the concerns of its miscellaneous stakeholders (Dahlsrud, 2008). Albeit investigation in CSR has concentrated initially on practices of large companies, there is a growing tendency for socially responsible reaction and sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for at least two motivations. SMEs are the backbone of the economy and represent more than 95 per cent of enterprises worldwide (Ayyagari et al., 2011). CSR practices in SMEs are vitally other than those adopted by large firms. Consequently, SD practices adopted by SMEs appear to be less systematic, structured, and official (Russo & Tencati, 2009) and integrated into their way of doing business (Spence et al., 2011). Reviewing the last two decades' literature could discover the progress of SD research and identify the conceptual and methodology limitations in previous studies. These could enhance the flexibility of future studies, the accuracy of empirical research, and reliability in drawing practical implications, which could develop theory in the future (Sutrisno et al., 2022). From 2000 to 2022, the literature shows that the SD adopted by SMEs is even less systematic, structured, and formalized. Most literature included the aspects for instance entrepreneurship, innovation, business, environment, and Lean practice, etc. are all positively related to SD (Kurniasari et al., 2022). However, the research of SD is still under care. Until now, no research has been conducted to review SD on: (a) to identify the achievements and disclose the crucial theoretical and methodological limitations of recent empirical studies; (b) to synthesize the extant knowledge and assess the status of the pertinent literature; and (c) to recognize the research gaps and give the solution to overcome them. The aim of this study is to offer an empirical review and synthesize the past 20 years' research articles, summarize the achievements and limitations of the research, include the crucial theoretical and methodological limitations of recent empirical studies, and provide solutions to future research.

METHODOLOGY

Source of database

Pranckutė (2021) mentioned that the importance of literature databases was significantly increased because they were the primary providers of publication metadata and bibliometric indicators and were widely used to study and evaluate practices and perform daily tasks. Since the reliability of these tasks depends first on the data source, all users of the

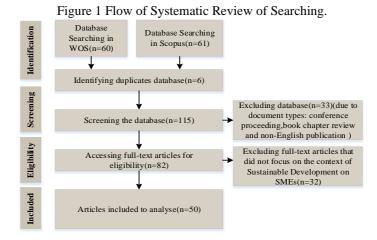
database should be able to choose the most appropriate one. Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus are two major literature databases.

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA)

Systematic review/meta-analysis refers to a research method that comprehensively collects all relevant studies, conducts rigorous evaluation and analysis one by one, and then uses quantitative or qualitative synthesis methods to process the data to reach comprehensive conclusions (Pansare et al., 2023). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Statement consists of a list of 27 entries and a flowchart of four stages (retrieval, preliminary screening, inclusion, and synthesis) (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021; Rethlefsen et al., 2021). The PRISMA argument has been utilized for the systematic literature review of this study. Firstly, we searchand identified journal articles. Secondary, we pick the relevant journals, according to the specific criteria. Thirdly, all the journal articles we selected should be elaborately synthesized. In this reviewed article, 50 references have been chosen based on the formulated criteria.

A Systematic Review Process

There are four steps contained in the systematic review process: identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion (Figure 1). The identification process is the initial step in stages. Firstly, it is identified using keywords that are integrated in the process of related articles in both Scopus and WOS databases. It is noted that keywords like SD, SMEs were used. Subsequently, the screening step issued 6 duplicate articles. At first of this step, 85 references were eligible, however, after this process, 33 articles were excluded due to the document types. Specifically, only journal articles were selected in both Scopus and WOS databases, and they should be written and published in English to avoid obstacles and confusions in language translation. Thirdly, 32 references were eliminating because they are not focus on themain research area of SD in SMEs. Last but not least, 50 empirical journal articles were employed in this paper's systematic literature review.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Main Findings

According to the above criteria, Table 1 lists some survey results of 50 articles on the SD of SMEs. Based on the statistics, most articles pay more attention to CSR and the innovation of SMEs. A number of journal articles have shown that social, economic, and environmental dimensions, organizational performance, and corporate resilience are all positively related to each other. In addition, most literature holds that innovation has become an important factor in SMEs' sustainable competitive advantage. However, many SMEs encounter obstacles in achieving successful innovation (Xie et al., 2018).

Table 1 Main findings of the review article.

No.	Publish	Main Findings		
1	Dong et al. (2021)	Government support had a significant positive impact on		
_	201g et al. (2021)	innovation input and output.		
	Jing et al. (2018)	Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM) practice and firm		
2		size are positively correlated with firm environmental and social		
		performance.		
3	Dong et al. (2018)	The higher conversion rate of innovation input to output was		
3		closely related to the financial constraints of innovation.		
4	Muddassar et al. (2020)	Social, economic, and environmental dimensions were positively		
4		related to organizational performance.		
5	Jia et al. (2020)	The increase in the turnover of SMEs had a significant influence		
3		on the growth of China's GDP.		
6	Soire at al. (2020)	The strategic significance of transformational leadership and its		
U	Saira et al. (2020)	impact on SMEs' continuous organizational innovation.		
	Barroga et al. (2021)	The understanding level of intelligent manufacturing technology		
7		and its application among micro, small, and medium enterprises		
/		in the Philippines has improved the level of intelligent		
		manufacturing among enterprises.		
8	Vlasov (2020)	Analysis of the innovation of SMEs in an industrial area		
9	Qiu et al. (2022)	Research on technology development mode of small and medium-		
9		sized private energy service companies.		
10	Min et al. (2020)	The network analytic hierarchy process determined the index.		

11	Teng et al. (2022)	The impact of digital transformation on the performance of SMEs board listed companies was studied.		
12	Micheli et al.(2018)	The influence of occupational safety and health intervention on SMEs was considered.		
13	Voronkova et al. (2018)	The current development trends of SMEs and individual entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation were analyzed.		
14	Alomar et al.(2019)	Research on e-procurement among SMEs and large companies in Belgium.		
15	Betlewska(2020)	Cooperative research between engineering universities and SMEs.		
16	Antony et al.(2020)	Research on SMEs in manufacturing and service.		
17	Cai et al. (2021)	The influence of leadership potential of small and medium-sized construction enterprises was analyzed.		
18	Sannegadu et al. (2021)	The factors influencing the internationalization of small textile enterprises in small island developing countries were studied.		
19	Boyken et al.(2021)	A case study of SMEs among Kenyan start-ups was studied.		
20	Wen et al. (2022)	Research on CSR of entrepreneurs of small and medium-sized tourism enterprises.		
21	Yu et al. (2021)	Analysis of the financial and human resources of SMEs.		
22	Mitra et al. (2022)	Analysis of the financial supply chain of SMEs.		
23	Zhang et al. (2022)	The obstacles to the decarburization of the enterprise supply chain were explored.		
24	Chen et al. (2022)	Assessment of the digital transformation of SMEs.		
25	Liu et al. (2022)	The determinants of robot collaborative innovation in SMEs were studied.		
26	Pongtanalert et al.(2022)	A study on the resilience and transformation of SMEs in the period of COVID-19.		
27	Wasti et al. (2022)	The survey data of high-tech SMEs in Turkish science parks were studied.		
28	Alinasab et al. (2022)	They studied the knowledge and cognitive drivers of SMEs' internationalization.		
29	Altuwaijri et al. (2022)	SMEs in Saudi Arabia's mobile application industry were analyzed.		
30	Soomro et al. (2022)	The robustness of entrepreneurship in SMEs in Pakistan was evaluated.		

For a company to achieve sustainable business success, it needs to pay close attention to the social, environmental, economic, and technological characteristics of the enterprise in order to appropriately manage risk and capture value. Technological suitability is an important risk factor, followed by technological progress, occupational safety and health, product and service liability, anti-corruption, labor practices, and technological practicality. SSCM internal practices have a significant positive influence on the economic performance of large enterprises, but have little impact on the economic performance of SMEs (Li et al., 2019; Kiely et al., 2022).

In addition, compared with domestic and foreign studies, comparing the two concepts of Industry 4.0 and Made in China 2025, the impact of German SMEs through Industry 4.0 is relatively low, which is more beneficial to large enterprises, while Chinese SMEs first see the social benefits randomly selected from the company database (Islam et al., 2020). For China, despite the introduction of the 12th Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan to support SMEs, the country still needs to improve regulatory policies to support innovative

businesses, which will help it transition to an innovation-driven economy (Biswal et al., 2019). For foreign countries, the European Community (economic) standards are the most vital green innovation standards of SSCM. FTOPSIS suppliers are best suited to implement green innovation standards at SSCM (Fraser et al., 2020). This helps managers, practitioners, and decision-makers to implement green innovation standards in the sustainable manufacturing supply chain.

It can be seen that an enterprise's motivation for internationalization depends on its scale. Large corporate-sized enterprises create global brands and enhance domestic reputations. Enterprise ownership has an obvious influence on its internationalization motivation, and enterprises in various industries also show different degrees of internalization motivation. The major obstacle to the innovation of SMEs is the lack of technical experts, and many Chinese SMEs find it difficult to achieve successful innovation. Thereupon, policies should be formulated according to internal and external constraints to promote the innovative development of SMEs.

Review of Articles in the Web of Science Database

After the procedure of browsing the literature in the WOS database, 50 journal articles were come up using 5 keywords. These keywords have used to key in at the query string column as listed in Table 2. The Title-Abs-Keys were into sustainable, development, on, SMEs.

Table 2 Criteria Search in Web of Science Database.

	Query String Search	
Database Web of Science (WOS)	Title-ABS-Key	
Database web of Science (WOS)	"Sustainable" and Development" and	
	Industry application"	

As demonstrated in Figure 2, 36 articles have been found from 2009 to 2022. The number of articles published starting from the year 2009 with two articles and remained for one in the next following five years, which from 2010 to 2015. However, there is no publication in SD of SMEs in the year 2014, 2016 and 2017. After that, the numbers started to increase to two articles in 2018 and continually increased by one article in 2019. It dramatically increased to six in 2020 and 8 in 2021 and to a maximum of 10 in 2022.

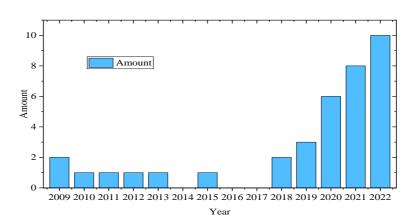


Figure 2 Number of articles in Web of Science Database

Review of Articles in Scopus Database

After the process of searching the journal articles in the Scopus database, 47 journal articles were came up using five keywords. These keywords have used to key-in at the query string column as listed in Table 3. The Title-Abs-Keys was into sustainable, development, on and SMEs.

Table 3 Criteria Search in Scopus Database

Table 5 Chieffa Search in Scopus Database.				
	Query String Search			
Datahasa Casasa	Title-ABS-Key			
Database Scopus	"Sustainable" and Development" and			
	and Industry application"			

There were 51 articles in total and the numbers changed greatly like a wave as shown in the below Figure 3. It was the lowest to one in 2012 and 2022, but highest number in 2021 whichwas nine articles. The article published starting from the year 2009 with four articles, and the number dropped to two in 2010. The number grew back to four in 2011 but eliminated to one in 2012. However, there is no publication in the year 2013, 2016 and 2017. Interestingly, the amount of literature was maintained from 2014 to 2020, which were five for each year.

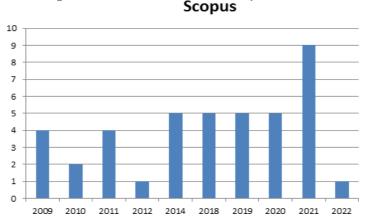


Figure 3 Number of articles in the Scopus Database

Analysis of Article's Citation Number

The citations indicate the research framework to demonstrate the study analysis's effect or consistency (Aksnes, Langfeldt,& Wouters, 2019). Appendix 1 displays the citations of 50 reviewed journal papers in the two databases. Based on the statistics in Appendix 1, it is clear that the Scopus and WOS databases have the same articles. On the grounds of the statistic figures above, obviously, there are same articles in both Scopus and WOS databases. Surprisingly, the citations for the same article in different databases are dissimilar. In spite of the selected searching year from 2000 to 2022 in the selected two databases, there are no articles before the year 2013. Maybe it is the consequences of the fresh theme for SD globally in the years from 2000 to 2010; there is an investigative white board. Therefore, all the references in WOS have not high citation.

The most cited article is by Julian et al. (2018), which has 111 citations in Scopus. This article not only summarizes the thinking of many different researchers over the years but also serves as a guide for future research and the continued development of SMEs and their environmental theories. The theories outlined in that article apply to SMEs around the world and can help these enterprises gradually grow into what they want them to be. So it gets a lot of attention. The article by Jing et al. (2018) has been cited 40 times in Scopus and 21 times in WOS, which is also a very concerning article. That paper studied the moderating effect of firm size on firm SSCM practices and firm sustainable performance (economic, environmental, and social). The results indicated that SSCM practices and firm size are positively correlated with firm environmental and social performance and firm size moderates the impact of SSCM practices on economic performance.

Additionally, the article of Xie et al. (2015), Dong et al. (2018), and Xie et al. (2020) has reached 29, 21, and 27 citations in WOS, all of which are of great concern. Together, they

revealed the development strategies and directions that SMEs need to pay attention to in order to achieve long-term development. For example, the high conversion rate of innovation input to output is closely related to the financial constraints of innovation.

Analysis of Study Settings

As for the 50 commented articles, due to the fact that the topic is SMEs, research articles worldwide are distributed in many regions, as presented in Figure 4, including China, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. According to the division of the continent they belong to, the scope of the literature research is distributed in Asia, Europe, global, North America, and Africa.

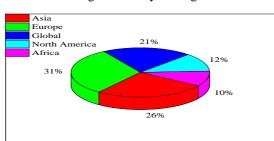


Figure 4 Study Settings

Methodology of Study

Methodology refers to a discussion of the underlying reasoning why particular methods were used. It clarifies the research inquiry and why the inquiry is imperative also the beginning stage of the research, the bearings of the research and the conceivable ramifications of the research when it is finished. In the reviewing articles, about 44 per cent of the total employed quantitative research method (as presented in Table 4), which is the dominant research method in most of the academic investigations. Additionally, 22 per cent of the references applied the general method; the percentage is higher than the qualitative research portion. Specifically, 28 per cent of the research used survey to complete the quantitative research, and 14 per cent of all utilized the mixed method.

Table 4 Methodology of Study

	Quantitative		Qualitative	Mixed	General	Total
	Survey	Secondary	Case study	Wilked	General	1000
Number	14	8	10	7	11	50
Percentage	28%	16%	20%	14%	22%	100%
Total	44%		20%	14%	22%	100%

According to the statistics of the research methods used in 50 relevant literatures, it can be found that most of the research used quantitative research methods. A small number of studies used qualitative and mixed research methods, and qualitative research only involves case study. In terms of research methods, the application of qualitative research and mixed research (such as triangulation) (Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K., 2006) can be increased.

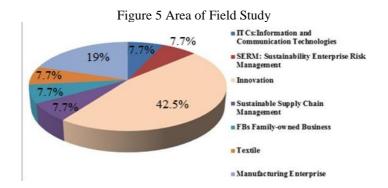
Unit of Sample

The sampling frame of the investigation is a partial of the methodology. It is vital as any interference to define the targeted population will have the erroneousness consequences (Creswell &Creswell, 2019). The literature review is based on diverse industries, including 22 per cent of manufacturing industries (Table 5), which is the dominant industry chosen by the academic research scholars. Whereas, 20 per cent of the study includes no definite industries, even more,16 percent of the articles are investigated the Hi-tec industry, and 14 per cent in textile industry.

Table 5 Sample of the Study

	Number	Percentage
Manufacturing	11	22%
Hi-Tec	8	16%
Textile	7	14%
Others	14	28%
Not available	10	20%

Analysis of Field Study



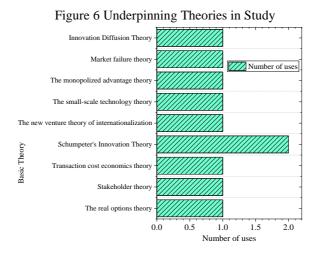
As shown in Figure 5, the research field of the system is the SD of SMEs, which has reviewed more than 50 articles, and these articles could be categorized into seven areas.it was mentioning that the main stream is innovation, which containing sustainable innovation, innovation performance, innovation in sustainable supply chain management and challenges of innovations, etc.. It might be argued that this main area is the fiery-hot area researched by scholars that get involved in the investigative field of SD. In addition, manufacturing enterprises are a secondary important research area favored by SD researchers, accounting for 19 percent. Besides, ITCS, SERM, SSCM, and the Textile industry take the same percentage of 7.7 percent. It could be concluded that various factors play different role in sustainability development in terms of different types of companies.

Furthermore, the current study has identified a few of findings and the future research areas are worth to doing the in-depth research as well (Kaul et al., 2022). Based on previous discussion and analysis, excluding research on manufacturing, ITCS, SERM, SSCM, and the textile, it should also involve the research on another contextual area. For example, technological innovation, corporate culture development, human capital allocation, social responsibility, corporate strategy development and risk assessment of small and medium-sized enterprises might be the relevant factors need to be involved and justified in future research (Zu et al., 2022). Therefore, the sustainable development of SMEs requires comprehensive management with people and culture, which might be the indispensable and significance variables.

Underpinning Theory in Study

An application of the attributes of the theory, enables us to absorb the phenomenon and to act more precisely (Asher, 1984), including the ability to predict (Kivunja, 2018: 45). The

50 review articles adopted nine theories through statistics, and some of them adopted the model implementing method without using theories. These nine theories are stakeholder theory, transaction cost economics theory, Schumpeter's innovation theory, new venture theory of internationalization, small-scale technology theory, monopolistic advantage theory, market failure theory, real options theory, and innovation diffusion theory. The use of each theory in the literature is presented in Figure 6. Schumpeter's innovation theory is used twice. Additionally, the other theories in the following table have been mentioned once in specific articles.



These previous studies mainly explored the successful cases of SMEs in the development process as well as the difficulties and solutions they faced. Using different theories, the development of SMEs is comprehensively elaborated from product characteristics, enterprise positioning, phased development goals, project investment, enterprise scale, and other aspects, and many constructive suggestions are also given.

For example, the core idea of stakeholder theory (Hörisch, J. et al., 2014) is that organizations should comprehensively balance the interest requirements related to various interests. Enterprises should not only emphasize their own financial performance but also pay attention to their own social benefits. Enterprise managers should understand and respect all individuals closely related to the organization's behavior and results, and try to meet their needs (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). The fundamental argument of transaction cost economic theory lies in explaining the essence of the enterprise (Foss & Klein, 2010). Due to the operation of the specialized division of labor and market price function of enterprises in the economic system, the phenomenon of specialized division of labor has emerged (Yang & Sachs, 2008). However, the cost of using the price function of the market is relatively high, and the enterprise

mechanism is formed, which is an organization formed by human pursuit of economic efficiency (Audretsch & Thurik, 2004).

The theories applied in these 50 articles include the 9 theories shown in Figure 6, indicating that these theories are currently commonly used in the field of SMEs research. Schumpeter's innovation theory is the most widely used. Whether there are other theories that can be applied to the study of SMEs and whether theories in other fields can be added? These are the questions that should be paid attention to in the future research, and also the gap in the future research.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper has assembled 50 articles related to SD in SMEs for the last 20 years and offered a synthesis of the literature involved. Theoretically, it has (a) offered new concepts and ideas in the SD in SMEs under the globalization; (b) introduced new constructs about the measurements; (c) stick out the importance of the variables relevant to SD. Managerially, it has: (a) offered insightful knowledge to SMEs' entrepreneurs about company's SD; (b) stress the sustainability in enterprises, and the methods for entrepreneurs to explore the development of SD; (c) created responsible innovations in SD for the manager to utilize in further firm management (Chen, Sousa & He, 2016).

Despite the above theoretical and managerial contributions, current research still has some limitations. The statistic method is simple, and most of the study is a cross-sectional study. The quantity of theories and models underpinning the literature is minor. What's more, the dominant statistical technique is still descriptive.

Therefore, there are several suggestions for future research in this field. (1) Further research can strive to create a dynamic theoretical model and make progress in statistical methods (Aykol & Leonidou, 2018). (2) Using longitudinal time dimensions should be encouraged and data results without response bias should be supported. (3) In research modeling, both bivariate and multivariate variables need to be emphasized in the method part. (4) In order to test theories, more theories should be learned and applied in academic articles (Levac, Colquhoun & O'Brien, 2010; Pham et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

This paper aims to provide an overview of the charts and trends of SD research among global SMEs over the past two decades. Summarizing the contents of the 50 works of literature,

it can be found that two decades can be divided into two phases: the first phase is from 2000 to 2010, and the second phase is from 2010 to 2022. These studies are based on different basic economic theories, covering various industries such as energy services, social capital, tourism, entrepreneurial thinking, and supply chain decarburization barriers (Bassi & Dias, 2020). More than one-third of these studies attempt to help SMEs enhance their resilience under the impact of COVID-19 through cross-case analysis of enterprises in the supply chain of global SMEs (Hansen & bgh, 2021). Through the study of these articles, it is found that due to the interest rate hike of the US and European countries, the global economy has entered stagflation, the demand of the international market has declined, the high commodity price of SMEs has fallen, and the pressure of raw material cost has eased. However, the international environment is grim and complex. The domestic epidemic is disseminated in many places, SMEs are affected, and the downward pressure on the economy is still great. Thereby, the development of SMEs can motivate management teams through incremental performance management, which can be linked with salary packages and employees' personal income, so as to establish an individual performance management mode based on the success of organizational performance (Dvorsky et al., 2021). Furthermore, strengthening the construction of the internal control system and setting up the internal control process in line with the actual situation of the company can effectively avoid the operating risks of SMEs (Chang & Cheng, 2019). In conclusion, this paper summarizes existing research results, which can provide research references for the SD of SMEs. The limitation of this study is that there may be some issues that have not been paid attention to. It is suggested that future research can analyze relevant studies from multiple perspectives.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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ANNEXAppendix 1 Number of Citations of the Reviewed Articles

No.	Author/ Year	Number of Citations in WOS	Number of Citations
1	Song et al. (2013)	0	in Scopus Not Found
2	Sun et al. (2021)	5	4
3	Dong et al. (2021)	0	Not Found
4	Jing et al. (2018)	21	40
5	Xie et al. (2015)	29	Not Found
6	Dong et al. (2018)	21	Not Found
7	Muddassar et al. (2020)	0	2
8	Zeng et al. (2013)	9	Not Found
9	Xie et al. (2020)	27	Not Found
10	Yang et al. (2020)	13	Not Found
11	Jarunee et al. (2015)	15	Not Found
12	Jia et al. (2020)	4	0
13	Saira et al. (2020)	7	7
14	Yang et al. (2020)	7	10
15	Julian et al. (2018)	Not Found	111
16	Sarpin et al. (2021)	Not Found	1
17	Lan et al. (2021)	Not Found	0
18	Nguyen (2021)	Not Found	1
19	Sallehuddin et al. (2021)	Not Found Not Found	0
20	Barroga et al. (2021)	Not Found	0
21	Li (2022)	0	0
22	Vlasov (2020)	1	1
23	Qiu et al. (2022)	2	2
24	Min et al. (2022)	0	0
25	Shao et al. (2022)	0	0
26	Teng et al. (2022)	0	0
27	Deniz et al. (2012)	1	Not Found
28	Micheli et al. (2012)	0	0
29	Kolbari (2019)	2	0
30	Voronkova et al. (2018)	0	0
31	LE et al. (2020)	9	8
32	Alomar et al. (2019)	1	Not Found
33	Betlewska (2020)	0	0
34	Antony et al. (2020)	1	10
35	Cai et al. (2021)	4	3
36	Sannegadu et al. (2021)	0	Not Found
37	Kemboi et al. (2021)	0	Not Found
38	Wen et al. (2021)	2	
39	Yu et al. (2021)	0	2
40	Mitra et al. (2022)	6	6
40	Zhang et al. (2022)	1	2
42	Rao et al. (2022)	0	1
42	Chen et al. (2022)	0	0
43	Liu et al. (2022)	0	0
45		0	0
45	Pongtanalert et al. (2022) Wasti et al. (2022)	0	1
47	` /	3	2
48	Alinasab et al. (2022)	0	0
48	Altuwaijri et al. (2022)		
	Ranabahu et al. (2022)	Not Found	0
50	Soomro et al. (2022)	1	2