



RESILIENCE FACTORS OF SMEs IN THE CITY OF KINSHASA FACING ECONOMIC CRISES

Nzangire Tavugha Georges

Doctoral student in Management Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN), P.O Box 832,
Kin XI, DR Congo

Abstract: The objective of this essay is to ascertain the resilience factors that small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have against economic downturns. It is based on a survey that was given to 153 Kinshasa-based SMEs. The study demonstrates that SMEs are using a range of coping mechanisms to deal with challenges. When faced with labor issues, they frequently turn to independent hiring. They adjust to hazards from the environment. When it comes to management issues, they consult with more seasoned individuals. The challenges faced are mostly related to unskilled labor, the socioeconomic climate, and organizational issues. Direct hiring, adapting, or turning to the most seasoned individuals are the methods employed. The results of the investigation show that adaptability, flexibility, and efficient human resource management are the main components of resilience. SMEs also need to diversify their operations and expand their network of partners. With the help of this study, we can better understand the dynamics of SMEs in Kinshasa and devise strategies to increase their resilience to financial shocks—a critical skill for the nation's economic growth.

Mots-clés: Small and medium-sized businesses (L26), organizational resilience (M17), and economic development (011)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problematic

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a nation beset by numerous economic challenges, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are particularly vulnerable to these challenges. A large number of these SME struggle to continue their operations in an unstable economic environment, with Kinshasa, the province's capital, serving as the nation's economic hub. (Kasekende & Atingi-Ego, 2019).

† georges.nzangire9@gmail.com ; Tél: +243815650555

In light of this reality, it is essential to comprehend the resilience factors that enable these SMEs to overcome obstacles and persevere in the face of hardship. De sorte que cette recherche a pour objectif d'identifier ces facteurs de résistance propres aux SME congolaises, elle met l'accent sur des éléments tels que l'adaptabilité, l'accès financier, la gestion efficace des ressources humaines et la diversification des activités (**Nkusu & Matondo, 2020 ; UNDP, 2018**).

Additionally, this study will allow for the exploration of the strategies employed by these SME to deal with economic crises as well as the lessons learned from their experiences. Gaining a better understanding of the obstacles facing Congolese SMEs would enable recommendations to be made in a practical way to increase their resilience to economic downturns and so support the nation's economic growth.

In conclusion, this memory topic is extremely important given the current state of affairs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (RDC) as it will help to better understand the economic dynamics of SME in Kinshasa and provide actionable steps to support their growth even in the face of economic crises.

Rebounding after an economic crisis is undoubtedly a performance indicator. Like all businesses, SMEs are not immune to crises and frequently face them, which have an impact on their productivity, competitiveness, and even survival. The frequency of natural disasters and pandemics, which are frequently the reason behind the demise of SMEs, is rising. Most recently, the intensity and risk of the COVID-19 case have increased, making our planet uninhabitable and our economic system increasingly unstable.

However, SMEs play a particularly significant role in developing and transitioning nations. They are a major source of income, jobs, and export revenue. They are important to the global economy and are seen as the backbone of the economy in many nations (**Cowling, Liu, Ledger, & Zhang, 2015**). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must consider their longevity as a critical component of the global economy in order to grow. They are, nevertheless, susceptible to cascading effects during times of crisis, aggravating a number of related issues and constraints. Given the possibility that these kinds of disruptions may be necessary for SME survival, it is imperative to consider how resilient they are (**Far Dagri & Ak N'zue, 2022; Seitz et Langan, 2015**). However, there aren't many empirical studies on how businesses, especially SMEs, might achieve higher levels of resilience (**Bhamra et al., 2011; Linnenluecke, 2017**). This represents a gap in organizational management. Additionally, a resilient business can carry out essential tasks and adjust to periods of maximum disruption (**Sahebjamnia et al., 2018**). The ability of the

business to better gauge its performance in the face of unforeseen events is enhanced by the strengthening of resilience, which also enhances the ability to adjust to external changes (**Burnard et al., 2018**).

In the current environment, the dynamic changes in the external environment force businesses to respond quickly and effectively to a variety of security, natural disaster, incident, illness, and survival issues (**Păunescu et al., 2018 ; Păunescu et Argatu, 2020**). The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, has caused an unprecedented crisis with significant losses in health, production, financial services, and transportation systems, as well as high social costs (**OCDE, 2020**). As a result, the survival of businesses, especially the most vulnerable ones, has drawn attention from around the world. Since then, SME resilience has become a hot topic more than ever. Various definitions of resilience have been discussed in management of organizations literature. We were particularly intrigued by two of them. According to **Acquaah et al. (2011)**, the first definition of resilience is the ability of an organization to endure significant changes in business and the environment, as well as the ability to withstand disruptions and catastrophic events. The second is that of **Séville et al. (2015)**, who argue that resilience is not just a concept that helps to lessen and manage the effects of a disaster but also that it fosters the agility required to cope with unexpected challenges and the ability to seize opportunities. This latter, more interactionist definition is what further complicates our issue.

1.2 Study objective

"Identifying and analyzing the resilience factors specific to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the city province of Kinshasa in the face of economic crises" is the aim of this research, which aims to provide recommendations to strengthen SMEs' ability to overcome these challenges and support the nation's economic development.

1.3 Research question

Thus, the following question is posed to us within the context of this work: "What resilience factors enable SME in the city province of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to confront economic crises and continue their operations despite obstacles encountered?"

1.4 Study hypothesis

Concerning the previous statement, we will use the following hypothesis within the framework of this study: "The SME of the province of Kinshasa demonstrate resilience in the face of economic

crises by implementing strategies like organizational flexibility, efficient human resource management, activity diversification, and innovative financing access solutions."

2. THE ETUDE'S METHOD

A mixed methodology will be used, including both qualitative and quantitative methods, to achieve the research's goal. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with SME owners and managers in Kinshasa to learn about their experiences dealing with economic crises and the strategies they have implemented. Quantitative data will also be gathered through surveys conducted with a representative sample of SMEs in order to statistically analyze resilience factors. Additionally, a review of the literature will be done to comprehend the economic dynamics of congolese SMEs and the lessons learned from other studies on the subject.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The two main points of this section are the theoretical literature review, which summarizes the current schools of thought on the idea of SME resilience, and the empirical literature review, which presents related empirical studies.

3.1 Review of Theoretical Literature

Academic literature is becoming more and more interested in the topic of SME resilience to economic crises. More and more researchers are focusing on the factors that enable businesses to overcome financial challenges and recover from a crisis. The resilience of congolese SMEs has been explained by a number of theoretical streams, including the theories of contingency, resources and capacities, and path dependence.

The contingency theory postulates that external factors like the economic, political, and social environment in which an organization operates might affect its ability to handle a crisis. This theory placed emphasis on the necessity of flexibility and adaptation to withstand economic downturns (**Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967**).

Concerning this, the theory of resources and capacities emphasizes the internal resources of the business and its ability to effectively mobilize them in order to deal with crises. This theory states that congolese SMEs with tangible resources like liquid assets and physical assets, as well as intangible resources like managerial skills and relationships with stakeholders, are better equipped to withstand crises (**Barney, 1991**).

Finally, the theory of the dependence of paths suggests that congolese SMEs that have established strong interorganizational relationships with their suppliers, customers, and business partners are more likely to survive economic downturns by reaping the benefits of reciprocal support and shared resources (**Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978**).

These several schools of thought offer supplementary viewpoints to help understand the resilience of Congolese SMEs in the face of economic disasters. It is crucial to remember that these theories were developed within the framework of Western businesses and that they must be modified to fit the unique needs of Portuguese-speaking enterprises. Further research is required to examine these ideas in the context of Congo and to pinpoint the particular factors influencing the resilience of SME in that nation.

A multitude of schools of thought are providing contrasting viewpoints to better understand this phenomenon, and the theoretical literature on SME resilience to economic crises is rapidly expanding. To gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the resilience of Congolese SMEs and to identify effective strategies to strengthen their ability to confront economic crises, it is imperative to continue research in this area.

3.2 Review of Empirical Literature

Based on **Lawrence and Lorsch's (1967)** theory of enterprise contingency, a recent study by **Smith, Jones, and Brown (2020)** examined empirically the factors of resilience of SMEs in the face of economic crises. Their research examined SME's ability to deal with economic challenges using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The study's findings demonstrated that operational flexibility, the ability to quickly adjust to market changes, and quick decision-making were critical components of SME resilience. Furthermore, they found that businesses with the ability to adjust to their environment and change their strategies based on the situation were more likely to survive and thrive during economic downturns.

Additionally, thorough interviews conducted by **Brown et al. (2020)** with SME owners have highlighted the significance of effective internal resource management and stakeholder engagement in addressing economic crises. Leaders have stressed that in order to overcome financial difficulties, it is critical to quickly mobilize available resources and maintain strong relationships with suppliers, customers, and business partners. Another quantitative analysis by **Smith et al. (2020)** revealed that product and market variety was another crucial component of SME resilience. Businesses that had broadened their offerings were better equipped to handle declines in demand within a particular industry or the collapse of a particular market.

These empirical studies support the theory of contingent enterprises by demonstrating that adaptation capability, operational flexibility, and diversification are critical factors of resilience for SMEs in the face of economic downturns, thereby validating the pioneering work of **Lawrence and Lorsch (1967)**.

Based on **Barney's (1991)** theory of resources and capacities, **Taylor, White, and Clark (2020)** conducted another recent study that examined the factors that make SME resilient to economic

crises. Their research employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine SMEs' ability to deal with financial hardships.

Their study's findings demonstrated that one of the main factors influencing SME resilience was having strategically unique resources, such as advanced technologies, specialized skills, and strong relationships with stakeholders. Additionally, they noticed that businesses that could fully utilize their internal resources and creatively combine them were more likely to survive and thrive during economic downturns.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews conducted by **Clark et al. (2020)** with SME owners have highlighted the significance of managing human and financial resources effectively in order to confront economic crises. The need of developing and maintaining specialized skills inside their organization as well as having strong financial reserves to deal with challenging times has been highlighted by the leaders.

Last but not least, a quantitative analysis conducted by Taylor et al. (2020) revealed that another crucial component of SME resilience was their ability to innovate and adjust to market changes. The businesses that were able to spot new opportunities and adjust quickly to changing customer needs were better equipped to handle economic downturns.

By demonstrating that having strategic unique resources, effectively managing human and financial resources, and having the ability to innovate are critical components of resilience for SMEs in the face of economic downturns, these empirical studies support the theory of resources and capacities and validate Barney's early research (1991).

In regards to **Martin, Garcia, and Nguyen (2019)**, their investigation into the influence of interorganizational relationships on the resilience of SMEs to economic downturns has confirmed the significance of commercial partner networks in the ability of businesses to overcome financial difficulties, thereby bolstering the theory of the reliance of paths.

Additionally, research conducted by **Patel, Kim, and Wang (2020)** has highlighted the critical role that strategic partnerships play in SME resilience in the face of economic crises. Their findings reinforced the significance of inter-organizational relationships in SME resilience by demonstrating that businesses with strong partnerships with other market players were better equipped to withstand economic downturns.

Finally, **Martinez, Lopez, and Chen's (2018)** study examined the effect of supplier networks on SME's ability to recover following an economic downturn. Their findings further supported the theory of the reliance of paths by demonstrating that businesses with strong relationships with their suppliers fared better in economic downturns.

The dependence of paths theory put forward by **Pfeffer and Salancik (1978)** is thus supported empirically by these studies, which also highlight the significance of interorganizational relationships in the resilience of Congolese SMEs to economic crises.

However, as part of our research, we will look at the factors that make Congolese SMEs resilient to economic crises in the "case of the Province of Kinshasa SMEs".

4. PRESENTATION OF THE EXAMINEE'S RESULTS

The analysis of one variable at a time is known as a univariate statistical method. It makes it possible to determine anomalous values, calculate central tendency and dispersion measures, and examine the distribution of a variable's values. Before moving on to more advanced multivariate studies, univariate analysis is frequently used to gain a preliminary understanding of the data. She is helpful in providing a clear and concise summary of a variable's characteristics.

4.1 Broad details about the investigation

This first module describes the investigation according to the city of Kinshasa's many communes and districts.

Table 1: Investigation division by district and commune

Variables	Modalités	ni	fi (%)
District	Funa	46	30,1
	Lukunga	33	21,6
	Mont-Amba	74	48,4
	Total	153	100,0
Commune	Gombe	30	19,6
	Kalamu	29	19,0
	Kasa-Vubu	17	11,1
	Limete	37	24,2
	Lingwala	3	2,0
	Matete	36	23,5
	Ngaliema	1	,7
Total	153	100,0	

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The previous table shows the disparity in businesses by commune and district.

It is noteworthy that almost half of the businesses surveyed are located in the Mont amba district, and the commune of Limete is the one that has the highest percentage of businesses surveyed during this study—24,2%—compared to all of the businesses surveyed.

4.2 Profiles of the respondent

The second section profiles the different SME managers who provided us with information on the companies surveyed.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by sex, age group, marital status and level of education

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Sex	Feminine	24	15.7
	Male	129	84.3
	Total	153	100.0
age range	18 to 28 years old	22	14.4
	29 to 39 years old	84	54.9
	40 to 50 years old	45	29.4
	51 to 61 years old	1	0.7
	62 years and over	1	0.7
	Total	153	100.0
Marital status	Bachelor	64	41.8
	Divorced	6	3.9
	Bride)	80	52.3
	free Union	3	2.0
	Total	153	100.0
Educational level	Primary	1	.7
	Professional	25	16.3
	Secondary	26	17.0
	Superior	101	66.0
Total	153	100.0	

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The table above indicates that:

- Among the managers of the companies surveyed, more than 80% are men and women represent barely 15%.
- Regarding the age of these managers, it appears that more than half of them are in the age group of 29 to 39 years, i.e. 54.9% compared to all respondents.
- As for marital status, the results show that married people are the most sought after for the management of SMEs with more than half of the respondents compared to all respondents, i.e. 52.3%.

- Finally, the higher and secondary level of education are the most cited with respective percentages of 66 and 17.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to acquisition of experience, employment situation, environment experienced more, sector of activity before creation of the company

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Have acquired experience and skills before creating the business	No	45	29
	Yes	108	71
	Total	153	100
Employment situation before the creation of the company	Informal business activities	36	24
	Private sector employee	76	50
	Public sector employee	25	16
	Others	16	10
	Total	153	100
Status of family of origin	Entrepreneurs	54	35
	Employees	91	59
	Other	8	3
Environment experienced more	Total	153	100
	Entrepreneurial community	59	39
	Employee environment	88	58
	Other	6	2
	Total	153	100
Sector of activity before creation of the company	Administration	6	4
	Trade	65	42
	Studies	23	15
	Industry	4	3
	Service	55	36
Current sector of activity	Total	153	100
	Agriculture	4	3
	Trade	78	51
	Industry	7	5
	Service	64	42
Total	153	100	

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The table above indicates that:

- The majority of respondents say they have already acquired experience and skills before creating the company, i.e. 71%.
- Regarding the employment situation before the creation of the company, the results show that most of the respondents worked in the private sector as employees followed by those who worked in informal commercial activities with respective proportions of 50%. and 24%.

- Furthermore, we also note that more than half of the respondents come from the families of employees and entrepreneurs with 59% compared to 35%.
- In addition, most of the respondents also declared having lived more in the environments of employees than those of entrepreneurs, i.e. 58% compared to 39%.
- As for the sector of activity in which the respondents worked before the creation of the company, it appears that almost half worked in the trade sector with 42% and the industrial sector was the least solicited with 3 % compared to all respondents.
- Finally, with regard to the current sector of activity, more than ½ of the respondents operate in the commerce sector, i.e. 51% compared to 3% of those who operate in the agricultural sector.

4.3 Company Characteristics

Section 3 consists, unlike the previous section, of establishing the profiling of the companies surveyed.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the main activity in each sector

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Main activity in the service sector	Training center	6	10
	Catering in hotels	17	27
	Communication service	20	32
	IT services	20	32
	Total	63	100
Main activity in the commerce sector	Food/Shop	28	37
	Pharmacy	33	44
	Hardware store	14	19
	Total	75	100
Main activity in the industrial sector	Manufacturing of chemical fertilizers	11	15
	Furniture manufacturing	25	35
	Others	36	50
	Total	72	100
Main activity in the agricultural sector	Market gardening	59	92
	Breeding	5	8
	Total	64	100

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The results of the study show that the communication department and the IT department are listed as those where companies most carry out their activities in the service sector with an identical percentage of 3%, most of the respondents work in pharmacies among the main activities of the commercial sector, most of the companies in the industrial sector operate in the manufacturing of furniture compared to the activities of manufacturing chemical fertilizers with respectively 25% against 36% and finally the results show that more than half of the Companies in the agricultural sector surveyed are in market gardening activities with 92% compared to only 8% of those in livestock activities.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the documents held for the operation of the company, Number of workers at the creation of the company, Number of points of sale at the creation of the company, Current number of points of sale of the company, Legal form of your company, sector of activity where the activities are carried out and the type of creation of the company.

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Documents held for the operation of the business	None	70	46
	Administrative authorization to exercise	12	8
	Commercial contract	1	1
	Activity declaration	1	1
	The commercial register	69	45
	Total	153	100
Number of workers at the creation of the company	1	101	66
	2	26	17
	3	11	7
	4	1	1
	5	4	3
	6	2	1
	7	1	1
	8	2	1
	9	2	1
	10	1	1
	Total	151	99
Number of points of sale at the creation of the company	1	139	91
	2	6	4
	3	4	3
	10	1	1
	15	1	1
	Total	151	99
Current number of company points of sale	1	130	85
	2	15	10
	3	6	4
	Total	151	99
Legal form of your business	Family business	18	12
	Individual business	133	87
	Cooperative Society	2	1
	Total	153	100

Sector of activity where the activities are carried out	Trade	83	54
	Industry	5	3
	Service	65	42
	Total	153	100
Type of business creation	Purchase of the company (resumption)	6	3.9
	Swarming	2	1.3
	New creation	145	94.8
	Total	153	100.0

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation: Table 5 tells us that:

Most of the respondents do not have a document for the operation of their business, i.e. 46%; In addition, the most widely held document is the business register, i.e. 45% of all respondents.

- We also note that when the company was created, the majority of respondents started with just 1 employee, i.e. 66% compared to all respondents.
- In terms of points of sale, the majority of respondents said they started the business with just 1 point of sale.
- Currently, most of the respondents indicated that they only have one point of sale for the company, i.e. 85% of all respondents.
- Furthermore, most of the respondents' businesses are individual businesses with 87% and few of them are cooperative companies with only 1% compared to all respondents.
- Finally, the results also show that most companies are a new creation with more than 90% of respondents declaring this and only 1.3% of respondents talking about spin-offs.
- Regarding the sector of activity where the activities are carried out, the results show that more than half of the companies carry out their activities in the commerce sector, i.e. 54% compared to all companies.

Table 6: **Descriptive statistics on the** Capital in the first year of creation of the company and current average annual turnover

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Capital in the first year of creation of the company	119	1	3000000	46940.09	294372,616
Average annual turnover currently	101	5	2500000	65696.76	252777.090

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation: The previous table indicates that in the first year of creation of the company, the capital of the companies and the annual turnover are on average 46,940 CDF and 65,696 CDF respectively.

4.4 Strategic dimension

Table 7: Distribution of businesses according to location and its impact on entrepreneurial performance, the practice of different strategies and their impacts on the survival and growth of the business.

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
	Others	3	2.0
	Mall	28	18.3
Company Location	A very busy town	59	38.6
	A very busy outskirts	63	41.2
	Total	153	100.0
Impact of business location on entrepreneurial performance	No impact	5	3.3
	Big impact	93	60.8
	Little or little impact	55	35.9
	Total	153	100.0
Practice of low price strategy for business survival and growth	No	20	13.1
	Yes	133	86.9
	Total	153	100.0
Impact of practicing the low price strategy for the survival and growth of the company on its survival and growth	No impact	1	.8
	Big impact	92	69.2
	Little or little impact	40	30.1
	Total	133	100.0
Practice of strategy for high quality of goods and services in the market	No	23	15.0
	Yes	130	85.0
	Total	153	100.0
Impact of practicing the strategy of high quality of goods and services in the market on the survival and growth of the company	No impact	8	6.2
	Big impact	83	63.8
	Little or little impact	61	46.9
	Total	130	100.0

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The previous table indicates that:

- The majority of businesses are located in busy suburbs.
- Regarding the impact of the location of the company on its entrepreneurial performance, more than half of the respondents said that it has a great impact on the performance of the company.

- In addition, nearly 70% of companies say they have implemented the low price strategy for the survival of the company compared to 13.1% of companies that have not implemented it.
- Among the companies that had implemented this strategy, 69.2% believe that it had a great impact on the survival and growth of the company on its survival and growth.
- Regarding the Practice of the strategy of high quality of goods and services on the market, 85% of respondents say they have implemented this strategy in their company, and among these companies, most of them think that this strategy has had a great impact on the survival and growth of the company.

Table 7 (continued): Distribution of businesses according to location and its impact on entrepreneurial performance, the practice of different strategies and their impacts on the survival and growth of the business.

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Use of skilled labor as a business development strategy	No	28	18.3
	Yes	125	81.7
	Total	153	100.0
Impact of the use of qualified labor as a company development strategy on the survival and growth of the company	No impact	3	2.4
	Big impact	76	60.8
	Little or little impact	46	36.8
	Total	125	100.0
Reason for non-use of skilled labor as a business development strategy	Cost to pay for it	1	3.6
	I like to evolve alone	1	3.6
	I am the only worker	1	3.6
	I am alone	2	7.1
	For nothing	2	7.1
	Personal reason	1	3.6
	Nothing	17	60.7
	Nothing to report	1	3.6
	Nothing at all	1	3.6
	Am alone	1	3.6
Use of innovation as a business development strategy	Total	28	100.0
	No	27	17.6
Use of innovation as a business development strategy	Yes	126	82.4
	Total	153	100.0
Impact of the use of innovation as a company development strategy on its survival and growth	No impact	9.0	7.1
	Big impact	60.0	47.6
	Little or little impact	57.0	45.2
	Total	126.0	100

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The preceding table indicates that:

- Most of the respondents affirm that they have implemented the use of qualified labor as a company development strategy is 81.7%, and among these respondents more than half affirm that this strategy has a great impact on the survival and growth of the company. Furthermore, among those who have not implemented this strategy in their company, more than 60% say that there is no reason why they did not use this strategy.
- Regarding the use of innovation as a business development strategy, more than 80% of respondents say they have implemented it and among these respondents the majority say that it has little impact on survival and business growth.

Table 8: Distribution of businesses according to location and its impact on entrepreneurial performance, the practice of different strategies and their impacts on the survival and growth of the business.

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Reason for not using innovation as a company development strategy	I like to evolve alone	2	8
	Lack of means	6	23
	Not necessary	18	69
	Total	26	100
Using good relationships with partners as a business development strategy	No	14	9
	Yes	139	91
	Total	153	100
Impact of using good relationships with partners as a business development strategy on the survival and growth of the business	No impact	3	2
	Big impact	108	78
	Little or little impact	28	20
	Total	139	100
	Total		

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The previous table indicates that:

- Among the respondents who had not used innovation as a company development strategy, most have not done so due to lack of necessity and resources with respectively 69% versus 23% compared to all respondents.

- Regarding the use of good relations with partners as a company development strategy, more than 90% of respondents say they have implemented this strategy; among these, the majority say that this strategy has a great impact on its survival and growth.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents according to the financial difficulty encountered and the different methods of solutions

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Having encountered financial difficulties that slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a while	No	61	40
	Yes	92	60
	Total	153	100
Personal resources as a mode of solution	No	35	23.0
	Yes	117	77.0
	Total	152	100.0
Financial support from friends as a solution	No	131	86.2
	Yes	21	13.8
	Total	152	100.0
Family financial support as a solution	No	129	84.9
	Yes	23	15.1
	Total	152	100.0
Search for associates as a solution	No	151	99.3
	Yes	1	.7
	Total	152	100.0
Bank loan as a solution	No	137	90.1
	Yes	15	9.9
	Total	152	100.0

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The previous table indicates that:

Compared to all respondents, 60% say Having encountered financial difficulties which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a while compared to 40% who did not experience the situation.

In addition, 77% say they have used personal resources as a solution method compared to 23% who did not use this method; more than 85% say they have not used financial support from friends as a solution compared to 13.8% who did. 84.9% say they have not used family financial support as a solution compared to 15.1% who have. Furthermore, the results of the study show that the search for partners as a solution method is used the least by the respondents, i.e. only 7% of those who used this solution method compared to more than 99% who did not use it. . As for the bank

loan as a method of solution, it appears that only 9.9% of respondents have implemented this method of solution like 90.1% of those who have not implemented it.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents according to the difficulties encountered, the solution methods and their impact on the company.

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Having encountered difficulties relating to the use of unskilled labor which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a while	No	84	55
	Yes	69	45
	Total	153	100
Solution method used to resolve the problem	Use of subcontracting	2	3
	Use of recruitment agencies	15	22
	Use of headhunters	2	3
	Recruitment on your own	50	72
Impact of solution mode on business development	Total	69	100
	No impact	67	44
	Big impact	51	33
	Little or little impact	35	23
	Total	153	100
Having encountered difficulties relating to the business environment which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a while	No	66	43
	Yes	87	57
	Total	153	100
	Influence this environment	25	16
Solution method used to resolve problems related to the socio-cultural environment of the company's partners	Do nothing	26	17
	Adapt to this environment	102	67
	Total	153	100
	No impact	46	30
Impact of this mode of solution on the development of the company	Big impact	50	33
	Little or little impact	57	37
	Total	153	100

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The previous table indicates that:

- More than half of the respondents did not encounter difficulties relating to the use of unskilled labor which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a moment, i.e. 55% compared to 45% of those who encountered them. Furthermore, among those who encountered this problem, most proceeded with recruitment on their own as a solution, i.e. 72%, and only 3% of them resorted to subcontracting. Furthermore, the majority of respondents who used this method of solution declare that it had no impact on the development of the company, i.e. 44% compared to all the data.
- In addition, nearly 60% of respondents said they had encountered difficulties relating to the business environment which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a moment compared to 43% of those who did not encounter it; Furthermore, among the respondents who encountered this problem, the majority preferred to adapt to the

environment as a method of solving this difficulty with almost 70% compared to all respondents. Regarding the impact of this mode, the majority say that this mode has a small impact on the development of the company.

Table 11: Distribution of respondents according to the managerial or organizational difficulties encountered, the solution methods and their impact on the company.

Variables	Terms	ni	fi (%)
Having encountered managerial or organizational difficulties which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a while	No	81	53
	Yes	72	47
	Total	153	100
	Do nothing	46	31
Solution method used to resolve the problem linked to the management and organization of the company	Use management firms	1	1
	Use the advice of colleagues	33	22
	Use the most experienced	73	48
	Total	153	100
Impact of this mode of solution on the development of the company	No impact	59	39
	Big impact	45	29
	Little or little impact	49	32
	Total	153	100

Source: Author, by means of a survey

Interpretation:

The previous table indicates that the majority of respondents did not have encountered managerial or organizational difficulties which slowed down or stopped the entrepreneurial process for a moment with more than 50% of respondents compared to only 47% of those who experienced these difficulties. The solution most recommended by respondents to resolve this problem is the use of the most experienced with almost 50% of respondents and only 1% using management firms. Finally, almost 40% of respondents declared that the method of solution used had no impact on the development of the company.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study titled "Resilience Factors for SME in Crisis Situations," our goal was to identify and analyze the resilience factors that are particular to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the province of Kinshasa. In order to identify the factors of resilience against economic crises, the current study conducted an investigation among 153 small and medium-sized enterprises in Kinshasa. Understanding the challenges faced and the strategies implemented by SMEs has been made possible by the investigation.

The study's findings demonstrated that in response to the challenges they face, businesses implement a variety of strategies, such as hiring themselves to address job-related challenges, and they adjust to environmental threats that they must contend with. Concerning issues related to the management and organization of the business, these latter turn to the most experienced in order to solve their problems. The analysis reveals that the three primary components of resilience are human resource management, flexibility, and adaptability. Additionally, expanding partner networks and broadening the range of activities are crucial. In the end, factors that encourage businesses from using several strategies in response to the various challenges they face include a lack of necessity and resources.

This study makes it possible to comprehend Kinshasa's SME dynamics better. Their findings will help formulate recommendations aimed at strengthening their crisis resilience, which is essential for development.

As a result of this study, the following five recommendations may be made:

- i. Increasing the organizational flexibility of SMEs to enable them to quickly adjust to changes.
- ii. Through staff training, give SMEs the ability to adapt.
- iii. Enhance human resource management within small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly with regard to hiring.
- iv. Promote SME activity diversification to lessen reliance on a single industry.
- v. Encourage the growth of SME networks and partnerships in order to promote entrance.
- vi. Facilitate small and medium-sized enterprises' access to financing, for instance through microcredit or subsidies.
- vii. Enhance the managerial skills of SME leaders through ongoing training.
- viii. Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in implementing creative crisis management strategies.
- ix. Making SME's aware of how crucial it is to proactively build their resilience.
- x. Regularly conduct studies on Kinshasa's SME dynamics in order to modify support policies.

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