

**Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences**

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| **Proposed Title:**  Coronavirus, financial resilience and innovation amongst ethnic SMEs - in the UK |
| **School: Birmingham City Business School** |
| **Proposed Supervisory Team:**  Professor Javed Hussain  Dr Simeon Babatunde  Dr Imran Akhtar |
| **Abstract:**  This research investigates the impact of Covid-19 on ethnic enterprises in the West Midlands region of the UK by examining their financial resilience, innovation and the survival strategies that they employ to cope with the Covid crisis. Ethnic enterprises make significant contribution towards the UK’s economy, given their position, the subject matter has received extensive attention from academics and policy makers. However, the anecdotal emerging evidence suggest Covid-19 has disproportionately negatively impacted ethnic communities and enterprises. Thus, the project analyses the strategies ethnic SMEs employed to mitigate adversities caused by Covid-19 and innovate approaches adopted to find a path for the future prosperity. In this respect, this research will use a mixed method approach, a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods, to gather data in order to understand the impact of COVID-19 on ethnic-owned businesses. Impact will be measured using semi-structured questionnaire to seek views of owners, pre and post Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, financial resilience will be tested using performance and revenues data gathered through interviews.  The study will recruit a representative sample of ethnic SMEs from within the West Midland. The participating SMEs will fill in a series of questionnaires related to their operations and financing strategies prior to Covid-19 and after. The questionnaires will be followed by a detailed in-depth, face to face interview with SMEs. Finally, results of questionnaires and face to face interviews will be used to evaluate ethnic SMEs response to Covid-19 crisis. |
| **Research Environment:**  This research will build on a well-established studies that have documented literature on the challenges and success of ethnic SMEs within the UK’s context. This research will specifically capture experiences of ethnic SMEs over the Covid -19 pandemic. The findings will inform policy makers and academics through dissemination and engagement with the wider community of researchers and practitioners. Seminars on the findings of this study, targeting stakeholders, including policy makers, scholars, and consultants will be held. This research aligns with the University’s strategy of addressing the regional and community based issues through ‘informing and transforming practice’. The findings will allow us to work with the regional stakeholders and be at the forefront in terms of engagement with businesses. |
| **Applicant Requirements:**  The student is expected to obtain a PGCert as part of his/her development. Other requirements are a good first degree in social sciences or compatible disciplines and strong analytical skills. Experience of working within organisations is highly desirable. Understanding of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods is important. Previous experience and knowledge of conducting face to face interviews will be highly desirable. |
| **Contact:**  Professor Javed Hussain-[javed.hussain@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:javed.hussain@bcu.ac.uk)  Dr Simeon Babatunde -[Simeon.Babatunde@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Simeon.Babatunde@bcu.ac.uk)  Dr Imran Akhtar - [Imran.Akhtar@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Imran.Akhtar@bcu.ac.uk) |