

Technology Adoption and Informal Entrepreneurship: A Bibliometric Analysis of Web of Science

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Abstract

The emergence of information technology in the 21st century has significantly transformed human interactions and business operations. Smartphones and handheld smart devices have pushed the boundaries of entrepreneurship, enabling business expansion and market access on a global scale (Balachandran & Sakthivelan, 2013). Tamilmani et al. (2021) argue that technology adoption is a well-established research domain within the information systems (IS) literature, with ongoing investigations into the factors influencing individuals' acceptance and use of new information technologies (IT). In the context of informal entrepreneurship, technology adoption has facilitated business operations by enabling entrepreneurs to circumvent bureaucratic barriers and lengthy legal procedures associated with business formalization. Williams and Nadin (2010, p.363) define informal entrepreneurship as “the involvement of individuals actively engaged in starting a business or managing an enterprise that is less than 42 months old, participating in the paid production and sale of goods and services that are legitimate in all respects except for being unregistered or hidden from the state for tax and/or benefit purposes.”

As technology adoption and informal entrepreneurship continue to gain academic and policy attention, it is crucial to understand how digital tools impact informal business operations. This study employs a bibliometric analysis using the Web of Science (WoS) database to systematically map the intellectual structure of research on technology adoption in informal entrepreneurship. Santos and Ferreira (2017) claim that Web of Science registered its first publication in 1994.

A preliminary search in WoS has revealed over 10,000 articles related to this domain. The study targets publications (Articles and Conference proceedings) from 2000 to 2024, with data sourced exclusively from articles indexed in the Web of Science. Exclusion and inclusion criteria have been used for the search. By leveraging bibliometric tools such as CiteSpace, RStudio, VOSviewer, and Biblioshiny, this study conducts performance analysis, co-authorship network analysis, and thematic mapping to identify key research trends, influential scholars, and emerging themes. Drawing on existing literature and bibliometric methodologies, the review identifies key trends, theoretical foundations, and research gaps. The findings aim to enhance understanding of how digital innovation influences informal entrepreneurial activities and to inform future research and policy development in this emerging area.

Keywords: technology, adoption, bibliometric, informal economy, shadow economy, informal entrepreneurship