MECHANISMS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND BUSINESS ENTITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND POST-COVID ECONOMY

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Abstract

Objective: The article aims to analyze and assess the mechanisms for effective interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-COVID economy.

Methods: The study utilizes a multifaceted approach, encompassing data analysis and statistics to assess the pandemic-related activities of small enterprises. It employs correlation analysis to gauge the relationship between state support and business development. Content analysis evaluates the quality of regulatory measures during biological threats, while expert analysis, logical reasoning, and data visualization techniques facilitate data collection and interpretation.

Results: The study reveals that the effectiveness of government support measures during the pandemic is directly related to the quality and volume of regulatory policies implemented by the state and regional authorities. The research identifies the strengths and weaknesses of these measures and explores opportunities and threats associated with government-business interactions. The results demonstrate that government support played a crucial role in mitigating the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Conclusion: The study emphasizes the importance of strong collaboration between government authorities and businesses during times of crisis. It highlights the effectiveness of regulatory policies and support measures in safeguarding the business ecosystem. The conclusions drawn highlight the need for continuous improvement in the mechanisms of interaction between government and businesses to ensure economic resilience in the face of future biological threats. The lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic can inform policy decisions and strengthen the partnership between the government and the business sector in the post-COVID era.

Keywords: interaction between authorities, mechanism, biological threats, small- and medium-sized enterprises, business, coronavirus.

INTRODUCTION

In Russia, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost 67% of small businesses. The share of small enterprises is higher in those sectors of the economy



that produce services and works, as well as essential goods. In general, enterprises in this sector have faced serious economic problems during the pandemic. According to a survey conducted by the National Agency for Financial Studies (NAFI), microenterprises (up to 15 employees) were at risk (L.L. Bogomolova, A.B. Zelinskaya, 2022). Industry-specific changes occurred together with a reduction in the total number of business entities from 2019 to 2021 (more than 4%). The structure of changes in the most affected industries during the coronavirus crisis is represented in descending order: public catering (37%), tourism and recreation (34%), trade (26%), service sector (22%), entertainment sector (18%), logistics, transport, and cargo transportation (17%), sports and fitness (7%), manufacturing (6%), and beauty (5%) (Rosstat, 2021).

Currently, small- and medium-sized enterprises demonstrate significant vulnerability compared to large businesses due to the lack of working capital reserves which they had to withdraw from banks increasing interest rates. In our research, the latter affected the activities of small enterprises and led to their bankruptcy at the given period. The regulatory measures taken by the authorities and significant government support for small- and medium-sized businesses were designed to minimize the negative consequences of the coronavirus crisis, namely: preferential lending, reducing the number of inspections by supervisory authorities, reducing the tariff of insurance premiums, changing tax reporting deadlines, providing wage subsidies for each employee in small enterprises, etc. (I.V. Takmasheva, 2022).

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that based on the analysis and assessment of the mechanisms for effective interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy, an attempt was made to develop a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures implemented by the state and regional authorities in the business sector during the period of biological threats.

The study results are expected to have fundamental and practical significance for developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem (I.V. Takmasheva, D.V. Sannikov, 2018). These results can be applied by the state and regional authorities when preparing anticrisis strategies to support the business sector in the face of new biological threats.



LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The research is concerned with analyzing the mechanism for effective interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy. The entrepreneurship sector is the research object considered by many scholars, which is explained by scientific approaches to modern challenges in the global economy, i.e., biological threats to humans and society. Modern scientists (economists, doctors, ecologists, and sociologists) set themselves the task of assessing the consequences of the pandemic and the subsequent crisis and developing recommendations for leveling risks in the conditions of biological threats.

One of the most important research areas is the effectiveness of the interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy. The fundamental changes in the effective interaction between government and business in the context of biological threats are justified through changes in the management of enterprises during economic crises, including during the pandemic, and are based on classical research on crisis management: R.S. Kaplan, D.P. Norton (2021), R.L. Ackoff (1982), H. Dietger, H. Hungenberg (2005), etc. Their scientific works laid the basis for fundamental research in enterprise management in the context of the pandemic and post-COVID economy. For scholars studying the world economy of this period, the concept of crisis or risk in enterprise management is associated with certain constants of a small- and medium-sized enterprise in a difficult situation. Scientists emphasize that during the pandemic enterprises of all sizes and forms of ownership were especially interested in introducing new digital technologies (E.W. Liguori et al., 2020; D. Sharma et al., 2020) and maximizing the use of resources of local and virtual communities (R. Floetgen et al., 2021) to maintain sustainability and flexibility during a crisis. The most valuable experience in the development of the industrial Internet and innovative digital technologies for the business community has been accumulated worldwide. These studies related to the large-scale implementation of the industrial Internet, condition monitoring technologies, predictive maintenance, digital rooms, augmented and virtual reality, and digital twins for the provision of services and solutions (M. Rapaccini et al., 2020).



Business entities are among the most vulnerable in the national economy since they are heavily affected by external factors, geopolitical risks, lockdowns, pandemics, etc. The specific impact of shock factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, on business entities is still being studied all over the world. In Russia, it is also explored to a limited extent.

To pinpoint changes in the interaction of public authorities and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy, as well as to develop possible anti-crisis measures, it is necessary to assess the latest fundamental research in all branches of science. First of all, research in the fields of medicine, politics, economics, and many other areas of human activity plays a crucial role. By combining different viewpoints and relying on their key aspects, we can identify the mechanisms for interaction between government and business and the sequence of appropriate measures applied within the framework of anti-crisis management.

Economists K.V. Glukhov, I.A. Chebashev, and A.V. Mikhalevskii conducted a comprehensive analysis of legal and economic measures aimed at state support for small- and medium-sized businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also examined the relevant regulations governing certain aspects of credit and anti-crisis state support as one of the effective tools for enterprise management. Their study highlights negative trends associated with the pandemic and emphasizes experience in the field of anti-crisis support measures, especially the high effectiveness of these programs (K.V. Glukhov, I.A. Chebashev, A.V. Mikhalevskii, 2021).

Another scientific study on the fundamental changes in the management of enterprises in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy is an assessment of trends in the evolution of the global and Russian economy based on the influence of the coronavirus crisis, including systemic transformations in economic processes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and an assessment of restrictions and challenges while simultaneously evaluating management opportunities. This direction can be found in the scientific works by E.V. Trubacheev (2021).

The economist I.Yu. Zhilina provides data on anti-epidemiological measures introduced by various countries to curb the COVID-19 spread and examines restrictions in the interaction of public authorities with business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy. The author gives forecasts for the development of world trade and mentions uncertainty factors associated with both the



pace of vaccination and the state of business after the reduction of government support (I.Yu. Zhilina, 2021). Regulatory measures and mechanisms as the basis for interaction between public authorities and business entities in the pandemic and post-COVID economy are discussed in the collective multidisciplinary monograph "Russia and the World during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities" edited by E.S. Vylkova (2020). This work addresses a wide range of issues arising in the current epidemiological crisis, including tax policy, banking, insurance, education, transport, etc.

Thus, L.L. Bogomolova examines the main trends in the development of small businesses in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug–Yugra in the context of biological threats. Bogomolova also describes the limitations, problems, and reasons for the decline in production due to increased risk and bankruptcy. The scholar emphasizes the role and mechanisms of state regulation and interaction between public authorities and business entities in the context of the pandemic and post-COVID economy, which aim at reducing the negative consequences of the pandemic and crisis in the small business sector.

The coronavirus crisis has significantly affected the transformation of the business sector, and its negative impact might have adverse consequences for the entire regional economy. We tested this assumption using the example of changes in the basic parameters of small business and the impact of crisis processes on its development. The identified features of the circumpolar northern territories are regarded by many researchers not only as negative factors but also as potential opportunities. For example, in the context of biological threats, the northern territories (remote from the center and borders) found themselves in a more favorable situation in terms of the spread of infection.

The strategic priorities of anti-crisis government support for the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the context of global crises caused by biological threats are discussed in the monograph by I.V. Takmasheva, A.B. Zelinskaya, L.L. Bogomolova, and D.V. Sannikova (2022). These issues are understudied but correspond to the spirit of the times. The authors show the role of the business sector and the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the functioning of small enterprises. They propose ranking regions according to the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures of state support for entrepreneurship in the face of biological threats and assess the adaptation of



countries and regions to the current socio-economic conditions caused by the pandemic.

The economist I.V. Takmasheva also analyzes the anti-crisis business strategies of various countries in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The role of such scientific works is determined by the possibility of finding measures aimed at mitigating the threats and limitations of crisis phenomena caused by biological threats. The author claims that small- and medium-sized enterprises in turbulent conditions showed the greatest vulnerability compared to large companies due to the fact that most of them did not have reserves to cover downtime-related losses. In most considered business cases, this led to the closure or sale of the business at a minimum price. To neutralize the consequences of the socio-economic crisis caused by a new biological threat, measures of state support for small- and medium-sized businesses affected by the coronavirus were called upon. This includes reducing the rate of insurance premiums, postponing the submission of tax returns and accounting reports, reducing scheduled and unscheduled inspections of supervisory bodies, providing subsidies for each employee, as well as preferential loans (I.V. Takmasheva, 2022).

Due to the specific institutional conditions in some countries, most administrative and financial decisions to support the business sector were implemented partially or in a distorted form, which had fewer effects than planned. According to many entrepreneurs, the anti-crisis measures taken at the federal and regional levels were ineffective and insufficient. State authorities were unprepared to give an effective response to global challenges, which is confirmed by the results of numerous social surveys and socio-economic indicators showing a negative trend in the business sector (I.V. Takmasheva, 2022).

According to M. Polozkov and R. Chvanova (2015) who study regulatory measures, small businesses need special tax preferences in addition to financial and property support.

All scholars claim that the state needs to improve the interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of biological threats based on risk management and implement measures of state support for entrepreneurs to preserve small businesses that ensure social stability and create new jobs. However, scholars have no consensus regarding effective or ineffective mechanisms of interaction between government and business.



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Our study aims to analyze the mechanisms of effective interaction between public authorities and business entities during the pandemic and the post-COVID economy.

METHODS

The research object is the assessment of the interaction of the state and regional authorities with business entities during the pandemic and in the post-COVID economy. The study aims to develop scientific, methodological, and practical recommendations for improving the mechanism for effective interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities.

We put forward a hypothesis that the activities of business entities in the context of biological threats are proportional to the effectiveness of the interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities based on the timely social and economic measures taken by state regulation and general state support measures, including:

- Effective regulatory policy aimed at supporting the business sector in the context of biological threats;
 - Sanitary and epidemiological control over the activities of business entities;
 - Socio-economic anti-crisis support for the population and business.

To conduct scientific research, the following methods were used:

- 1) The methods of analysis and statistics were applied to assess data on the activities of small enterprises during the pandemic, as well as their dynamic changes;
- 2) Correlation analysis was used to calculate the correlation interdependence between state support and development of the business sector;
- 3) Content analysis as a formal and most accurate method of studying policy documents and the corresponding information was utilized for the economic assessment of the qualitative impact of regulatory measures on the activities of small enterprises in the conditions of biological threats.

Additional methods included expert analysis, logical and functional-comparative analysis, and tabular and graphical data visualization techniques.



RESULTS

The mechanisms for effective interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy have effective and urgent directions of partnerships between public authorities and businesses concluded during the outbreak of the disease that claimed many lives and reduced the population. We also identified the main problems and limitations that impede the development of mutually beneficial partnerships between the parties.

To develop business during the pandemic, the authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation needed to assess the development of each functional aspect and evaluate not only the number of measures facilitating the effective interaction of the state and business entities but also the effectiveness of the measures taken since the COVID-19 pandemic was spreading and government decision-making in relation to business reduced the impact of the infection on the population and the human resources potential.

A key factor in the successful socio-economic development of the state is the formation of effective forms and mechanisms of interaction between government bodies and the business community. Therefore, in the context of the coronavirus crisis and post-pandemic economy, the priority task of the state and regional authorities is to form open partnerships with business representatives to increase the socio-economic development of local territories and restore and change the living standards of the population lost during the lockdown and pandemic. The basic directions of the interaction between government and business were formed. The main problems that impede the development of open partnerships between socio-economic entities during the pandemic were identified as the prevailing priorities of the state and business.

To restore the previous production volumes and stabilize the national economy, the authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation need to regularly assess the development of each interaction and evaluate not only the quantity but also the effectiveness of the work performed. The system of interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy consists of functional blocks that can be presented in the form of a functional diagram (Figure 1).





Figure 1. The system of interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy

Source: compiled by the authors

- Material support as a set of organizational and managerial relations between government bodies and business entities in the field of providing material resources to businesses during the pandemic.
- Partnerships are built over the implementation of joint projects, the creation of public and private enterprises and institutions on a shared basis with the participation of government authorities and business representatives, and the outsourcing of some regional issues to the commercial sector on a competitive basis.
- Project management is based on the joint development of strategies both on the national and regional level during the pandemic with the participation of large business structures and business representatives of various spheres in determining strategies for the pandemic and post-COVID economy.
- Consulting and information activities consist of providing timely information and consulting entrepreneurs on various legal issues in the pandemic and issues of state support.



- Legislation assumes the participation of entrepreneurs as experts, advisers,
 and consultants in organizing the legislative process during the pandemic period.
- Financial management forms the activities of government and business aimed at the development, approval, and implementation of budgets for financing strategic economic development programs of both federal and regional authorities with the participation of business.

Based on the government programs and projects developed and implemented at all levels, the system of interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy is still under construction and has several financial, social, and ideological restrictions. The federal and regional authorities and business entities shall constantly work on each functional parameter of the system and justify its priorities based on the development of future relationships and probable periods of new pandemics.

The problems and limitations of business activities in the context of the coronavirus infection were as follows: the COVID-19 pandemic led to the creation of various restrictive barriers (from production-related to social), which caused partial cessation or bankruptcy. During the pandemic, special conditions were created for small businesses, namely: changes in the working conditions of the personnel potential of companies and institutions. The mechanism of interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and the post-COVID economy consisted of a careful study of gradual changes in the working conditions during the pandemic. These were as follows:

- A part of the personnel staff was transferred to remote work;
- Under the law, employees had the right to take leave in advance during the coronavirus infection;
- A part of the personnel was transferred to self-isolation (employees over 60-65);
- An additional labor agreement was concluded (employees who would like to switch to remote work could conclude an additional labor agreement with the employer based on the order and the working hours at the time of the pandemic);
- Control over the remote work of business entities (using instant messengers,
 SMS, and email);
 - An employee is returned to office work upon special written consent;



– A special schedule is developed for employees who remain at their places of work (it must correlate with those of other employees working remotely and ensure the integrated work of the entire enterprise with due regard to compliance with all preventive measures).

According to the recommendations of the World Health Organization, the Russian Federal State Agency for Health and Consumer Rights, and the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, the head of an enterprise should develop measures to prevent the spread of the infection. It is also necessary to ensure the safety of all employees, as well as potential consumers of services and goods.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the main task of small enterprises was to monitor the health of their employees and conduct regulatory measures, for example, total disinfection in the premises and personal and respiratory hygiene. Much attention was paid to medical control of both full-time and remote employees. Upon written consent, full-time employees were subject to a medical examination twice a day, namely: in the morning an employee was examined by a doctor, got their temperature measured, and was checked for any signs of illness. If any were found, the employee was immediately suspended from work and sent home until emergency medical services arrived.

This mechanism of interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business entities based on legal justifications in the form of regulations and instructions was effective, contributed to a decline in the coronavirus infection, and preserved the life and health of the personnel of small enterprises (Table 1).

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the effectiveness of mechanisms for interaction of state, regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic



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Strengths	Weaknesses
1. The activities of small enterprises, especially	1. Business structures did not function
shops, were not suspended.	in full.
2. Many small businesses experienced an	2. The personnel of firms and
increase in the cost of fixed assets due to the forced	companies went on sick leave or worked
purchase of equipment and technology for online	remotely, which negatively affected the
sales and delivery of goods to the consumer.	activities of business entities.
3. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a	3. There was a decrease in income
forced increase in the qualifications of staff, which	from the provision of paid services due to a
affected the competencies of workers in the post-	decrease in household incomes.
COVID economy.	4. Increased costs for disinfection.
4. Company personnel acquired a new	5. Limited public events.
competence, i.e., the ability to work remotely.	6. Limitation on attendance of cafes
5. Due to Clause 4, there was an increase in	and restaurants.
wages for many categories of workers.	
Opportunities	Threats
1. The creation of a distance learning format for	-
additional paid services.	abandonment of many types of goods and
2. The extended range and direction of	
additional paid services and goods during the	reduction of household expenses on
pandemic.	expensive goods and services.
3. The creation of new digital platforms for	2. A sharp division into social strata of
remote interaction in various areas: interaction of the	the population, impoverishment of the
state, regional authorities and business entities,	middle strata, and their transition to other social strata. The reduction of the middle
business entities and consumers, consumers and	
government agencies, and various platforms for general and special purposes, for example:	class and the emergence of a new social status of families with children.
educational services, consulting services, online	Status of farillies with Grillaren.
medical services, etc.	
modical convicce, etc.	

Source: compiled by the authors based on content analysis of text information

Indeed, the coronavirus infection has given great impetus to the creation and improvement of an effective interaction system for the state, regional authorities, and business entities. Areas for improvement are related to identifying unresolved problems and limitations that amplify the effect of implementing measures to improve work during the pandemic.

Regulatory policy instruments during the pandemic were regarded by the state as one of the most effective government support measures taken by public authorities to maintain the previous business activity. Together with tax and monetary policy, regulatory policy was the most effective tool for removing business entities from the risk zone and served as the basis for the legal framework for the activities of enterprises in the conditions of a biological threat (for example, the COVID-19 pandemic) and one of the most effective levers used by the state.



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CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of the pandemic consequences and the post-COVID

economy, we conducted the following activities:

- We analyzed and assessed the variety of mechanisms for mutual partnership

and work of the state, regional authorities, and business entities;

- We determined the main directions for effective interaction of the state,

regional authorities, and business entities in the context of the pandemic and post-

COVID economy;

- We substantiated the economic efficiency of the interaction of the state,

regional authorities, and the business sector;

- Based on our methodology for assessing the effectiveness of anti-crisis

measures implemented by the state (region) during the period of biological threats, we

conducted a multi-parameter assessment of anti-crisis measures implemented

between 2020 and 2021.

Our hypothesis that the state of business in the context of the coronavirus

economic crisis is directly proportional to the volume and quality of regulatory policy

measures of state and regional authorities was confirmed.

The global economy has demonstrated the high effectiveness of anti-crisis,

socio-economic, and epidemiological measures in the context of the pandemic based

on effective mechanisms of interaction of the state, regional authorities, and business

entities, which have a balanced impact on the socio-economic sphere, the healthcare

system, and the business ecosystem. The result of this interaction between the state

and business in different countries was a targeted focus on government support for the

population and the business sector through the implementation of social and other

government support programs to address the main challenges of the pandemic period.

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