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## Book Review

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**Productivity and the Pandemic: Challenges and Insights from Covid-19**  
by Philip McCann and Tim Vorley

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The Covid-19 pandemic has induced a crisis grasping the world abruptly, simultaneously, and swiftly (Marinov and Marinova, 2020). It already made strong impact on productivity. This book examines different aspects of how the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to shock the economy, society and governance in the post-pandemic. The book provides new thinking on many dimensions including empirical evidence, analytical arguments and conceptual insights. The aim of this book is to put essays from different perspectives for the questions of productivity, even though the edited collection examines productivity and the pandemic in the UK. The book also provides insight into the productivity puzzle in the wake of the pandemic.

This exceptional book encloses 21 chapters, either in survey form or in detailed explanations, written by a team of 44 domain experts. These articles are put together in a paper-like format that allows the reader to flow from one topic to the next. The chapters are organised following a pathway of providing a sequence of each block that help us to understand the challenges faced by Covid-19. The material is presented in five different segments; each segment highlights how the pre-existing challenges to productivity have been changed by the pandemic and points out appropriate approaches for policy-making process in response to the pandemic crisis. Within each segment, several articles are used to concentrate on companies, productivity components, governments, and environmental factors.

The first six chapters form the first segment that provides a comprehensive understanding of the likely medium and long-term implications of Covid-19. Three topics cover the implications of the crisis for impacts to companies, issues of uncertainty, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Chapter 1 describes the likelihood of the sectoral and spatial impacts from the pandemic and explains how these affect the UK economy. The most significant part of the analysis shows that the small and medium-sized (SME) companies and real estate sectors in the weaker economy are likely to get more impacts from the capital shocks during the Covid-19 crisis. On the other hand, the leading and lagging companies also faced the impacts of the crisis. Greater firms have the potential vulnerability to global value-chain shocks. How leading companies provide global solutions to overcome uncertainty based on structural responses, which has been discussed in Chapter 2, was examined in terms of the gaps between the operating with technology and knowledge evaluations. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on the examination

of the issue of uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 crisis. The behaviour of companies under the uncertainty caused by Covid-19 has been discussed in Chapter 3. Particularly, the ability of both buyer and supplier sides of restructuring the supply chain in response to the shock is examined with the importance of financial plans from the national government level. The implications of the crisis on the viability and resilience of small businesses are talked about in Chapter 4 with the observation of the measures of the national policy. Especially, a big challenge for the UK productivity performance comes from the way to address uncertainty and the increased use of digitisation during the lockdown. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the implications of the crisis for the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the role of business angels in terms of start-up companies and small businesses. Rather than focusing on the difficult economic environment, the author stresses that the current approach is a failure and policy responses are required. Similar logic has been applied in Chapter 6 that government responses focus on venture capitals and have been insufficient and fragmented.

The second segment, Chapters 7–10, deal with illustrating specific features of the Covid-19 impacts to companies' operations, internal organisations and managements, consumption patterns, and labour supplies. Implications of the shift to online consumption in retail and medical healthcare industries are discussed in Chapter 7. The author also highlights that new technologies play a critical role in changes of business models and workers' training followed by new patterns of labour developed during the pandemic, which have been illustrated in Chapter 8, with the discussion of the challenge on the skills-training progress in the post-pandemic era. Wellbeing and mental health issues caused by the pandemic have been discussed in Chapter 9. In this chapter, the author illustrates the relationships between wellbeing, innovation, and productivity. Companies also face the challenge of deploying appropriate business models, argued in Chapter 10, in short and long terms of recovery. The author also talks about how innovation is associated with workplace motivation, employee participation, and stakeholder engagement.

The next four chapters deal with the implications of Covid-19 on different aspects of infrastructure, the built environment, and economic geography. These topics are used to identify patterns that the economic and social shocks will continue to have significant impacts on work and employment. Chapter 11 highlights the profound changes in patterns of mobility. It describes insights of alternative choices of working, leisure, and traveling. Chapter 12 discusses the sectoral and spatial impacts of the pandemic recession with evidence and insights from previous recessions in the UK. As with many other chapters in this book, this chapter argues that productivity recovering will depend on government policy. Chapter 13 concentrates on the role of technological innovation in terms of reducing commuting and in-person communication. It points out that the pandemic-related social impacts lead to profound thinkings in entrepreneurship. Similar to the above chapters in this segment, chapter 14 focuses on understanding the recovery process in housing markets. Recovering housing markets requires more sophisticated considerations of the role in productivity.

The following segment, Chapters 15–17, deals with the analytical and conceptual issues about the economic system, the policy-making process, and the productivity relationship raised by the Covid-19 crisis. Some of the fundamental analytical and conceptual issues are also included in this section. Chapter 15 discusses weaknesses in the fundamental levels of the economic system exposed to the pandemic shock. Policy-making systems and conceptual frameworks should be reconsidered under the

context of Covid-19. Chapter 16 compares reflections on the shocks between the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2008 financial crisis focusing on the balance sheet of major institutions in the economy. It uncovers the relationships between policy focuses, the productivity recovery process, and the crisis. Chapter 17 provides a novel understanding of productivity relationships in the context when industries face huge impacts in a pandemic crisis. It also points out the importance of considering social inclusion and sustainability alongside productivity.

The last four chapters concentrate on the policy-making process including the recovery policy design and delivery, the labour market policy and productivity, the innovation policy, and the data sources for policy-making. Chapter 18 discusses a systems approach for designing and delivering efficient recovery policies. It is important to make connections between different policies. Isolated policy-making will be damaging in the pandemic. The challenges facing labour market and employment policies are discussed in the pandemic and post-pandemic context in Chapter 19. The relationships between labour market policies and productivity growth are also discussed in this chapter with the argument of the current employment system. Chapter 20 focuses on the challenge of innovation and innovation policy in the Covid-19 pandemic as the insufficient financial capital available for innovation. Innovation policy is needed, however, many problems such as behavioural changes, knowledge diffusion, health and environmental conditions must be taken into account in the context of the post-pandemic. Chapter 21 briefly introduces the administrative data resource (ADR), which aims to promote connections between various data sources for the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter provides a concise roadmap with a description of the data available for developing policies and guidelines in post-pandemic analyses.

Overall, this book contains a wide array of thoughts and insights for impacts on productivity in the context of Covid-19 and the post-pandemic. Topics covered in this book can be found in other similar books, i.e., Monti (2020) discusses public policy in the Covid-19-digital age; Hovestadt et al. (2021) talk about the relationships between innovation, transformation and entrepreneurship in the context of digital response of the pandemic; Ramraj (2020) presents the law and policy making in Asia, however, none of them concentrated on the productivity. The fact that this book includes a variety of different aspects allows it to be marketable to many different people. It is no question that this new monument book will help economists, scholars, and students alike to engage in this new research field. Meanwhile, this book will also be an invigorating resource for policymakers seeking more information on how the pandemic and resulting economic recession are affecting productivity. The eBook version is priced from £20/\$26 from Google Play, ebooks.com and other eBook vendors, while in print the book can be ordered from the Edward Elgar Publishing website.

## References

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