

An examination of the relationship between manager self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions and performance in mexican small businesses

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Abstract

Self-efficacy refers to the subjective beliefs that people have of their capability to perform a given task, a topic of continual research in the last two decades in different fields of human functioning. There is ample research about the relationship between self-efficacy and performance, and with entrepreneurship. Chen *et al.* (1998) in particular proposed a construct to predict the likelihood of an individual being an entrepreneur, which they tested in parallel samples of students and small business owners and executives; the construct consisted of five factors: marketing, innovation, management, risk-taking, and financial control. The present study was meant to validate the construct in a sample of small businesses in a small city of west-central Mexico, but results found show that the data converge in three factors that seem to relate to the difficulty and complexity of the task; such factors explain the business perceived performance, as well as the entrepreneurial intention of business owners and managers.

Keywords: small business, self-efficacy, business performance, entrepreneurial intentions.

Un examen de la relación entre la autoeficacia de los gerentes de las empresas pequeñas mexicanas con las intenciones emprendedoras y con el desempeño empresarial

Resumen

El concepto de autoeficacia se refiere a las creencias subjetivas que tiene la gente sobre su capacidad de desempeñar una tarea dada, y es un tópico sobre el que se ha investigado en forma continua en las últimas dos décadas en diferentes esferas del funcionamiento humano. Se ha realizado amplia investigación sobre la relación entre autoeficacia y desempeño, y con la intención emprendedora. Chen *et al.* (1998), en particular, propusieron un constructo para predecir la probabilidad de que un individuo sea un emprendedor, lo cual probaron en muestras paralelas de estudiantes y de propietarios y ejecutivos de empresas pequeñas; el constructo consiste en cinco factores: mercadeo, innovación, administración, toma de riesgos y control financiero. El presente estudio pretendió validar el constructo referido en una muestra de empresas pequeñas de una pequeña ciudad del centro-occidente de México, pero se encontró que los datos convergen en tres factores que parecen estar relacionados con la dificultad o complejidad de la tarea; tales factores ofrecen una explicación del desempeño percibido del negocio, así como las intenciones emprendedoras de los propietarios y gerentes de las empresas.

Palabras clave: empresas pequeñas, autoeficacia, desempeño empresarial, intención empresarial.

Introduction

Our interest in the study of small businesses is due to their importance for economy, which is widely recognized, and because growth rates are higher for smaller businesses, but their likelihood of survival is lower (ENSR, 2003). Growth at business level is meant as performance, and performance is measured by income or by profitability (ENSR, 2003), but low profitability might lead to business failure (Coad, 2007).

While growth has been considered a multidimensional phenomenon (Davidsson *et al.*, 2005), performance can be approached in multiple ways (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986), and self-efficacy, which is the belief of people that they can produce desired effects (Bandura, 2000) that is central to most human functioning, might be a predictor of entrepreneurial pursuits (Markman *et al.*, 2005), and has

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