

Summary

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Doctoral dissertation entitled:

Entrepreneurial orientation and economic performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises

Recent decades have brought unabated research interest in the role of organisational entrepreneurship in business development. Organisations that are participants in a dynamically changing market are confronted with the globalisation of both economies and competition, which entails rapid changes in the environments in which organisations are situated. Traditional management techniques are now insufficient to respond adequately to the changes imposed by the business environment and rapidly changing market conditions.

Based on the collected literature items providing the theoretical foundation for the research problem, the author of the dissertation seeks to answer the following research question - What are the relationships between entrepreneurial orientation, as a multidimensional construct, and the economic performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises?

The main objective of the research conducted was to identify and evaluate the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the economic performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises.

For the purposes of the dissertation, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted on a selected group of small and medium-sized enterprises.

As a part of the qualitative research, which was conducted by the author of this dissertation, individual structured in-depth interviews were conducted with persons responsible for making management decisions. The interviews were conducted by the author on the basis of the author's interview scenario. The purpose of the interviews was to verify the information obtained during the literature review and other publicly available sources, and to diagnose the entrepreneurial orientation of enterprises, along with the identification of characteristics specific to the SME manufacturing sector. The next stage of the research was to conduct a quantitative study on a group of 200 managers/owners of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises from the Silesian Voivodeship. The research was conducted using an original research tool - a survey questionnaire.

The dissertation is structured as follows: the first two chapters are theoretical chapters in which the author reviews the literature on entrepreneurial orientation and on SME enterprises. In chapter one, the author presents a conceptualisation of the entrepreneurial orientation.

The author characterises the multidimensionality of the construct and then characterises its dimensions - assuming for the purposes of the dissertation that the entrepreneurial orientation construct comprises five dimensions: autonomy, innovation, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness and proactivity. Within this chapter, the author presents the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the management of an SME.

In the second chapter, the author describes the determinants of the development of contemporary enterprises then characterised the SME sector enterprises looking through the prism of the economic results that these enterprises generate. The author then describes the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on economic performance, before presenting methods for measuring the constructs impact on economic performance.

The empirical part of the dissertation consists of three chapters, the third of which is a chapter describing the research methodology adopted for the dissertation, both for the qualitative and quantitative research conducted. It presents the research problem and objective, as well as the research hypotheses formulated and the research model presenting graphically the relationships studied.

Chapters four and five are practical chapters presenting the results of both qualitative and quantitative empirical research.

Within the fourth chapter, the author presents the results of the three case studies conducted, summarised and tabulated the results of the qualitative research in descriptive and tabular form. On the basis of the conducted qualitative study, the author selects an additional variable - organisational support, which could potentially mediate the relationships studied in the dissertation, i.e., the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on the economic performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises.

In the fifth chapter, the author presents and analyses descriptive statistics for the selected variables, and determined (non-parametric) correlations between all elements of the study. The verification of the research model was based on the regression analysis performed. The chapter also includes the verification of the previously formulated hypotheses and the presentation of the verified basic research model, followed by the extended research model.

The whole work ends with a final conclusion summarising the entire dissertation and indicating further possible research directions.