

A descriptive analysis of new service's success drivers considering subjective performance indicators

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SUMMARY Academics and practitioners alike recognize that the overall success of a new service offered by a company is impacted by certain variables, such as organizational culture, the size and age of the company, and the personality traits and personal inclinations of the entrepreneur. Conversely, the way the entrepreneur may perceive that success is greatly influenced by the company's sector of activity and by the type of innovation that has been undertaken. The impact that this subjectivity has on perceptions of success also influences the degree of importance of each of the aforementioned variables in determining success. This is especially relevant in the service sector, where much of the success of innovation is characterized by the individual perception of the entrepreneur.

In order to analyze the latest ideas related to this topic and demonstrate how particular factors, which are considered the driving forces of innovation, influence the result perceived by the entrepreneur, we performed a sample study of 354 small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism sector in Spain that have developed new services within the last two years. The results obtained, after the development of a logistic regression analysis, show the importance of such variables as the degree of novelty of the product, the age of the organization, and the degree of worker empowerment.

KEYWORDS Empowerment, Entrepreneur, Innovation, Organizational Culture, Tourism Sector

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Un análisis descriptivo de los determinantes del éxito de nuevos servicios de acuerdo con indicadores subjetivos de resultados

RESUMEN Académicos y profesionales reconocen la importancia de ciertas variables en el éxito de los nuevos servicios, tales como la cultura organizacional, el tamaño y la antigüedad de la empresa, y las características del emprendedor. Sin embargo, la percepción de éxito que demuestra el emprendedor se ve influenciada en gran medida por el sector de actividad de la empresa y por el tipo de innovación que ha llevado a cabo, y esto, a su vez, influye en el significado de cada uno de los factores mencionados. Es especialmente relevante en el sector de servicios, donde gran parte del éxito de la innovación se caracteriza por la percepción del empresario.

Con el objetivo de analizar las últimas ideas, y la evidencia de la influencia de los impulsores de la innovación en la percepción del resultado del empresario, se realizó un estudio de muestreo de 354 pequeñas y medianas empresas (PYME) del sector turístico en España, que han desarrollado nuevos servicios en el últimos dos años. Los resultados obtenidos, después del desarrollo de un análisis de regresión logística, muestran la importancia de variables como el grado de novedad del producto, la edad de la organización y el grado de empoderamiento de los trabajadores.

PALABRAS CLAVE empoderamiento, emprendedor, innovación, cultura organizacional, sector turismo.

Uma análise descritiva dos determinantes do sucesso de novos serviços: considerando indicadores subjetivos de resultados

RESUMO Acadêmicos e profissionais reconhecem a importância de certas variáveis no sucesso dos novos serviços, tais como a cultura organizacional, o tamanho e a antiguidade da empresa, e as características do empreendedor. Porém, a percepção de sucesso que demonstra o empreendedor se vê influenciada em grande medida pelo setor de atividade da empresa e pelo tipo de inovação que tem-se levado a cabo e isto, por sua vez, influi no significado de cada um dos fatores mencionados. É especialmente relevante no setor de serviços, onde grande parte do sucesso da inovação se caracteriza pela percepção do empresário.

Com o objetivo de analisar as últimas ideias, e a evidência da influência dos impulsores da inovação na percepção do resultado do empresário, se realizou um estudo de amostragem de 354 pequenas e medianas empresas (PYME) do setor turístico da Espanha, que têm desenvolvido novos serviços nos últimos 2 anos. Os resultados obtidos, depois do desenvolvimento de uma análise de regressão logística, mostram a importância de variáveis como o grau de novidade do produto, a idade da organização, e o grau de empoderamento dos trabalhadores.

PALAVRAS CHAVE empoderamento, empreendedor, inovação, cultura organizacional, setor turismo.

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Introduction

Business practice demonstrates that business culture and methods, as well as the characteristics of managers, help newly released products succeed in reaching desired market targets. In particular, the effect of these factors on the financial results of the company and the acceptance of new products in the market have led some authors to point to these factors as the actual driving forces behind a manager's perception of successful innovation (Sánchez, 2008). Acting as driving forces of entrepreneurial innovation and transformation processes, these factors provide the company with the capacity to confront strategic challenges in an environment characterized by continuous and increasingly faster changes (Sarin & McDermott, 2003).

Nevertheless, it is likely that the effect of these factors on the performance of a new service in the market is influenced by a specific sector, situation, or productive capability. Typically, firms use indicators based on customer acceptance or the entrepreneur's perception of financial revenues and the market (Molina-Castillo & Munuera-Alemán, 2009). However, this type of indicator is: (a) the result of the manager's own valuation and (b) greatly influenced by the manager's beliefs and judgements, as well as by the context and circumstances surrounding the valuation process.

This effect can be particularly important in the service industry, as services are characterized by intangibility, perishability, inseparability, simultaneity, and variability. It is for this reason that this paper analyzes a sample of 354 SMEs in the tourism sector in Spain that have developed a new service in the last two years. In this sector, new services are influenced by consumer perception, as well as manager involvement in their development.

With this objective in mind, we have divided the paper into two parts. The first part, containing section two, describes how the profile of a company or an entrepreneur affects the outcome of the innovation process. The second part of this work, containing sections three and four, relies on the analysis of a sample of 354 Spanish SMEs. Specifically, section three explains the study design, sample choice criteria and the dependent and independent variables used in the statistical analysis. In this study, we performed a logistical regression analysis. Section four presents the results obtained from this analysis. The paper

concludes with a discussion of the empirical evidence found and some recommendations for firms to improve their innovation management processes.

Determinants of Success in Service

Cultural Orientation of the Organization

Several recent studies indicate that certain aspects, characteristics, and behaviors lead firms to innovate (Faems et al., 2005). The factors identified vary from study to study and may relate to a specific sector, situation, or productive capability. But despite this variance, the factors have two fundamental characteristics in common: they are determined by the firm's culture orientation, and they are determinant factors for a new product's market success (Johnes & Storey, 1998).

Atuahene-Gima et al. (2005) argue that the following are principal traits of firms that are proactively oriented to the market:

- The customer is the center of the business strategy.
- The final objective is satisfying customer needs (both manifest and latent) through a continuous bid of higher value, superior to that of competitors.
- All resources and abilities are dedicated to achieving the final objective.

Two different elements are key in this process: customer orientation and innovation orientation. Customer orientation is defined as an active firm-wide process that drives firms to focus on gaining enough knowledge about the market to be able to create products or services with superior value for its customers (Li et al., 2008). Firms that are customer-oriented set specific customer satisfaction standards and actively monitor customer satisfaction, taking steps to clarify and meet customer needs and expectations, both expressed and unexpressed.

In order to be responsive to customer needs, the firm must also be strongly oriented toward innovation. Innovation orientation encompasses all of the innovation programs of a firm and is strategic in nature because it provides direction in

dealing with markets. Firms innovate in a number of areas, including in their business models, products, services, processes, and channels in order to maintain or capture markets, to outdistance competitors, and to assure long-term growth and survival, especially in highly complex and turbulent environments.

H1. *The company's degree of customer orientation affects the performance of a new service*

More and more firms emphasize the importance of a market orientation, and, therefore, the figure of the customer. According to Atuahene-Gima (2003), this is due to the fact that market orientation influences the level of success of a new product. This leads us to believe that the same applies to the performance of a new service. In line with this reasoning, Homburg and Pflesser (2000) have attempted to understand the link between market orientation and service performance.

Langerak et al. (2004) establish that the impact of market orientation on organizational performance is measured by: 1.) its effect on product advantage and launch proficiency; 2.) how these two factors affect the market performance of the new product; and 3.) how the performance of that product affects overall organizational performance.

H2. *The company's degree of innovation orientation affects the performance of a new service*

Empirical evidence points out the direct relationship between product novelty and new product performance (Siguaw et al., 2006; Sorescu & Spaniol, 2008). These studies demonstrate that the products with the highest degree of novelty give the company a competitive advantage, spurring a temporary increase in sales and growth of the organization. In the same vein, Solomo et al. (2008) state that the newest innovations directly and positively affect the financial performance of a company and indirectly affect the company's image and reputation.

H3. *The degree of innovation involved in the development of a new service affects the performance of that new service*

The current economic environment is characterized by continuous and increasingly faster changes caused by a significant increase in competition, economic globalization, internationalization and the impact of new technologies, among other factors. This makes it necessary for businesses to quickly adapt to change. In the current

market environment, demand is constantly in flux. Firms should thus be flexible enough to modify, upgrade or create new production processes.

H4. *The degree of orientation towards the company's objectives affects the performance of a new service*

The original concept of market orientation was proposed by researchers Bernard J. Jaworski and Ajay K. Kohli, but over the course of the past 40 years, the idea has been defined by many academics (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). The literature establishes that there is a relationship between this concept and company performance (Deng & Dart, 1994; Deshpandé et al., 1993; Narver & Slater, 1998; Pelham & Wilson, 1996; Ruekert, 1992).

Currently, as a result of the present economic situation mentioned above, many firms have opted for an orientation towards the market which could translate to orientation towards the customer, namely, to process management. Process management is defined as being oriented to the objectives of the company, in particular, to achieve customer satisfaction. In the pursuit of customer satisfaction, a company can identify new customer needs, which can have an effect on the performance of a new service. To this end, Ittner & Larcker (1997) argue that there is a relationship between process management techniques and two measures of profit: return on assets and return on sales.

H5. *The degree of worker empowerment in the company affects the performance of a new service.*

According to Barney (1991) and Amit and Schoemacker (1993), a company is competitive if it shows sufficient capacity for innovation and has core competencies that are difficult for competitors to imitate or reproduce. These core competencies arise from the combination of three basic competencies of different origin (Bueno, 1997): (1) technology, (2) organization, and (3) human capital. Human capital refers to the importance of analyzing the effect of workers' empowerment on the performance of a new service.

Managing human capital has always been necessary for organizations to function. This is because good resource management can constitute a competitive advantage for the company. In his study, Naeem (2013) argued the two following points:

1. Employee empowerment, organizational commitment, and employee job satisfaction can be used to develop customer satisfaction towards an organization.
2. An employee with attitudes and behaviors that are aligned with the objectives of the organization will also be strongly committed to satisfying the customer.

Company Characteristics

Both company size and age are likely to have impact on a firm's innovation performance. However, with regard to size, we find little consensus on the nature of its relationship with innovation performance. Shanmugam & Bhaduri (2002) and Mishra (2004) find a direct relationship between innovation and firm size among manufacturing and software industries in India. In contrast, Clany and Krieg (2004) and De Jorge-Moreno et al. (2003) indicate an indirect relationship between company size and performance for Spanish firms in various industrial sectors. Evans (1987) concludes that the relationship between these variables is non-linear, in that small and large firms show high growth rates, but those in the middle do not.

Nevertheless, Moncada-Paternò-Castello (2011) and Bogliacino et al. (2012) argue that as firm size increases, growth becomes greater because of increases in R&D spending, the use of market studies, the intensive use of information and communications technology (ICT) and the potential to relocate production to low-wage labor markets and internationalize commercial activities.

H6. *The size of the company affects the performance of a new service*

Concerning the age of a company, a mature company knows the market, its trends and the agents operating within it so that it can have a strong strategic position based on its capacity to anticipate market movements. It also likely enjoys recognition and prestige among its clients and has developed close, solid ties with agents in its most immediate environment in the science park (Ciriaci, Moncada-Paternò-Castello & Voight, 2012).

H7. *The age of the company affects the performance of a new service.*

Finally, the use of ICT has been consolidated as a strategic factor for enterprises. In fact, beyond merely constructing a tool to be used in the creation of a new product, business practice clearly shows how ICT has a three-fold effect on organizations, promoting efficiency and efficacy processes in the development and launching of new products (Tsai et al. 2011). Two of these effects directly impact the development of innovation processes, given that ICT promotes the generation, storage and use of internal knowledge in the organization and, at the same time, permits the acquisition, distribution and use of the information acquired from external sources. On the other hand, the use of ICT has a moderating effect on the cooperation-result relationship of product innovation, given that the use of ICT influences the degree of integration between the agents with which the enterprise cooperates in order to develop innovation (Kuen-Hung et al. 2012; Vaaler & McNamara, 2010).

H8. *The level of ICT used in the company affects the performance of a new service.*

The widespread use of ICT has had a great impact on firms. In fact, ICT influences both the operational and organizational structure that a company adopts. It is important to note that since the '90s, citizens have begun to be connected to networks. Likewise, the modern customer has greater access to more information in a much shorter amount of time. This means that firms must adapt quickly to the changing needs and wants of their customers in relation to this interconnectivity.

ICT offers the ability to foster improved competitive performance through the use of customer networks, clustering and forming alliances, and providing the richness of content increasingly demanded by consumers (Braun, 2008). Integrating buying experiences such as the presentation of physical facilities, delivery processes, finances, etc., as well as having a presentation that reaches customer segments in various new media, such as iPods and Facebook, is increasingly required (Alvarez & Sugijoto, 2010).

In the case of the tourism sector, it is the result of socioeconomic conditions related to the development of technology and innovations. For this reason, Mihajlović (2012) indicates that the use of ICT influences the development of the supply of tourism services, especially with regard to the use of intermediary organizations.

Manager Characteristics

The age of a manager affects their experience in a business area. In this sense, Jo & Lee (1996) show that prior experience in leadership positions or exposure to entrepreneurial processes determines outcomes. When entrepreneurs have more experience, they possess more information about the problems and obstacles they are likely to face in the first few years of a firm's life. In addition, their acquired know-how for solving challenges is also greater.

The manager is the central figure in firms' survival, especially when they are small in size. In particular, characteristics such as his/her age and level of education are critical to a firm's innovative success (Druilhe & Garnsey, 2003).

Similarly, entrepreneurs' level of education/training should affect their capacity to adapt to the different activities required of an organization and to handle the risks associated with them. Parker & Van Praag (2006) recognize that when a person has a higher level of education/training, he or she is likely to have more formal knowledge, which improves organizational performance.

H9. *The manager's age affects a new service performance*

It's often seen that workers in general and older workers in particular are more reluctant to organizational change. Likewise, it is easier for younger workers to be mentally flexible and adapt to new situations. Many studies support this theory, such as in the case of Gonzalez (2009).

H10. *The degree of managerial education affects the performance of a new service*

Professional development is an organized and formalized effort to develop more skilled workers, with a longer range and duration of training. Professional development should be a strategic business option if the organization is to survive in an increasingly competitive global environment (Fernandez, 2002).

Firms can only be innovative and adaptive if their employees are motivated in their professional development (Valle, 1995). It is a remarkable fact that people with a high resistance professionally are able to overcome obstacles in their work environment and adapt to changes (e.g. in work processes or customer demands), seeing as they have the competencies and abilities needed to deal with problems and unexpected events.

Description of the Methodology

In recent years there has been a proliferation of studies nationally and internationally that analyze the way in which certain business practices impact the market success of a new product. These types of studies take on special relevance for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In this sense, Rosenbusch et al. (2011) show how the effects of innovation on performance in SMEs have attracted considerable interest among academics and practitioners, but the empirical research on the relationship between innovation and performance in SMEs reveals controversial results.

Here, the absence of professional executives and the strong influence that businessmen- and, at times, managers -exercise on them means that the management model is strongly influenced by the opinions, beliefs and expectations of these managers.

In order to test the previously posited hypothesis, we proceeded to carry out a descriptive investigation. The sample used is made up of SMEs in the tourism sector in Spain, which over the last two years has experienced innovation in the product field.

Study design and sample choice

The sample is composed of 354 innovative SMEs in the tourism sector in Spain. The enterprises were selected randomly and the information was collected via personal interviews with the company chairman or manager in April and May of 2010 (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Technical data of the study

Universe	Spanish firms in the tourism sector with less than 50 workers
Sample size	354 firms
Margin of error	+5.28 (p=q) at the 95% confidence level
Sample selection	Random
Fieldwork	From April to May 2010

Study variables and construction of measurement scales

All the variables used in the study were measured by the 10-point Likert scale. Nevertheless, as shown in Table 2, some of them were transformed into categorical scales in order to analyze the data using the most appropriate statistical technique in accordance with our research objectives: binary logistic regression¹.

To measure the variables of empowerment and orientation towards company objectives an exploratory factor analysis was used (see Table 3). The development of a set of statistical tests made the scale reliable and the analysis suitable for the purposes of the study. All the variables in the correlation matrix showed high correlations and determined a value of 0.439. The index of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkun (KMO) test showed a value

TABLE 2. Description of variables

VARIABLE	SCALE	DEFINITION
Perceived Result of Innovation	Dichotomous	The way in which the entrepreneur perceives that the new product has achieved an elevated result. The variable, originally measured on a 10-point Likert Scale, has been transformed into a dichotomous scale. Value 1 corresponds to perceived success, indicating that the entrepreneur perceives that the new product has attained the highest value expected (on the initial scale, points 9 and 10). Meanwhile, value 0 corresponds to perceived failure, indicating that the entrepreneur perceives that the new product has not attained the maximum value expected (values ranging from 1 to 8 on the original scale).
EXOGENOUS VARIABLES		
Degree of ICT Use	Categorical	Degree to which the company has used ICT in developing innovations. The variable was originally measured on a 10-point Likert but was later recoded into four usage levels: low, medium, high and advanced.
Customer orientation	Likert	Degree of customer orientation shown by the company. The variable was measured on a 10 point Likert scale.
Innovation Orientation	Likert	Degree of innovation orientation shown by the company. The variable was measured with a 10-point Likert scale.
Degree of Product Novelty	Categorical	Degree of novelty of the new service developed. Initially measured on a 10-point Likert scale that was later transformed into a categorical scale with 4 variable values: 1 = low novelty degree; 2 = medium; 3 = high grade; 4 = advanced degree.
Empowerment	Metrics	Degree of empowerment shown by employees of the company. This variable is obtained from an exploratory analysis (see below).
Company Objective Orientation	Metrics	Degree of orientation to the company objectives. This variable is obtained from an exploratory analysis (see below).
Company Size	Categorical	Company size based on the number of employees. The variable is categorical and has the following values: 1 = 1 to 2 employees; 2 = 3 to 9 employees; 3 = 10 to 19 employees; and 4 = 20 to 50 employees.
Company Age	Categorical	Age of the company. The variable is categorical and has the following values: 1 = created before 1980; 2 = created between 1981 and 1989; 3 = created between 1990 and 1999; and 4 = created after 2000.
Entrepreneur's age	Categorical	Age of the entrepreneur. The variable is categorical and has the following values: 1 = under 35; 2 = 35 to 44; 3 = 45 to 54; 4 = 55 and over.
Entrepreneur's degree/education	Categorical	Grade of entrepreneur's education based on their level of education. The variable is categorical and has the following values: 1 = some studies; 2 = primary school; 3 = secondary education; 4 = average technical studies; 5 = undergraduate degree, 6 = master's or doctoral degree.

¹ Binary logistic regression is a statistical classification model used to predict the outcome of a binary dependent variable, based on one or more predictors (variables). That is, it is used in estimating empirical values of the parameters

in a qualitative response model. The probabilities describing the possible outcomes of a single trial are modelled as a function of the explanatory (predictor) variables, using a logistic function.

of 0.690, the Bartlett test of sphericity resulted in value of 289.415 (df 10 and significance 0.000) and showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.701.

TABLE 3. Results of factor analysis

	COMPONENT	
	Empowerment	Target orientation
Workers may propose to achieve objectives	.656	-
The company encourages teamwork	.796	-
The company values the versatility of workers	.827	-
The organization and the remuneration of the company's work is linked to the objectives	-	.823
Workers have the autonomy to organize their tasks	-	.614
Eigenvalues	1.795	1.426
Variance explained	35.8%	28.5%

Results

Griffin & Page (1993) & Barczark et al. (2009) have proven that there are high rates of failure associated with product innovation. Although the rate may vary according to the activity sector and place where the innovation is carried out, between 60% and 80% of new products launched into the market do not attain the financial and commercial results expected. As observed by Clany & Krieg (2006), the studies developed by Ernest and Young, Nielsen BASES and Copernicus at the end of 2005 offer more pessimistic conclusions, declaring this percentage of failed innovations in consumer products in the United States and Europe is 95% and 90%, respectively.

However, the high number of new products that do not achieve a maximum level of results need not coincide with the perception that the employer organization has of the outcome. In order to confirm the hypothesis posited in the study, we proceeded to carry out a logistic regression analysis. The dependent variable is the perceived result, while the rest of the variables shown in table 2 act as independent variables.

The statistics of Cox-Snell & Nagelkerke quantify the proportion of variation explained by the logistic regression model. The value shown by

this statistic is 13.6%. Table 4 shows the results of the analysis conducted. The parameters estimated show the direct and significant effect that the degree of novelty of the service, age of the firm and employee empowerment have on the performance of a new service. This result confirms hypotheses H3, H5 and H7.

On the other hand, variables such as the degree of customer orientation, innovation orientation, and the use of ICT have no significant effect on product performance.

TABLE 4. Relationship between the explanatory variables and the perceived outcome level for the total sample of firms

	PERCEIVED OUTCOME (MODEL1)
Degree of Novelty	1.079***
Innovation Orientation	.190
Empowerment	.359**
Company Objective Orientation	.041
Degree of ICT Use	-.067
Customer Orientation	.044
Company Size	-.087
Company Age	.441***
Entrepreneur Age	-.229
Entrepreneur's Degree/Education	-.121
Constant	3.976

Conclusions

Previous research recognizes the importance of certain variables such as organizational culture, size and age of the company, or the characteristics of management for the success of a new service. However, the perception of success that the entrepreneur has is influenced greatly by the sector of activity of the company and the type of innovation.

The results obtained in this study demonstrate the importance of the degree of novelty of the service, the age of the firm and the degree of worker empowerment in the performance of the new service. With respect to the degree of novelty, it should be noted that most of the new features introduced in the tourism sector could be classified as radical. But the degree of "newness" is not determined by an intensive use of ICT as is typical of product innovation processes, but rather by revolutionizing the method, the context and the

value associated with the processes of creation and service consumption.

New ways of getting the customer involved emotionally in the process of creating the service provide companies with a service of a higher value and set them apart from the competition. Some of the formulas used by firms to innovate radically in the offering of their services are marketing strategies designed to create an emotional bond with the customer, or the use of social networks to foster communication with the customer and build sales.

Furthermore, the age of the firm also affects the market performance of the new service. A mature company is an experienced company that knows the market and its customers and is able to respond quickly to those customers' needs and demands. Finally, at a time like this, the degree of empowerment shown by employees is key to the survival of the company, and therefore to the market performance achieved by newly developed services. An employee who has an advanced degree in labor competencies such as critical thinking, time management, and entrepreneurship, among others, is now an asset to the company.

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